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Vol 15 No 3



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The recently completed portrait of our Colonel-in-Chief.



June 2009
Vol 15 No 3



Editor: Lt Col K Hodgson OBE

Contents

From the Colonel of the Regiment	16	<i>A Return to Kenya (The Askari Appeal)</i>	115
The Regiment	18	<i>Army Snowboarding Assn Championship</i>	117
Personalia	20	<i>Kenya (Exercise Grand Prix)</i>	119
Regimental Matters	21	<i>On Loan to the Poachers in Iraq</i>	120
The Royal Anglian Regiment Memorial Roll of Honour	24	<i>Helmand as a Stabilisation Advisor</i>	120
Mainly About People	27	<i>Op Herrick 9 - A Different Tour</i>	123
Letters to the Editor	30	<i>Attack State Red: The Vikings in Battle</i>	124
The Regimental Museum	33	<i>Combat Stress - A Personal Account</i>	124
Diary Dates 2009	35	<i>19th Century Essex Regiment Drum Discovered</i>	125
Can You Remember?	36		
The Vikings	51	Regimental Association	
The Poachers	71	<i>Obituaries</i>	127
The Steelbacks	92	<i>Association Branch Reports</i>	129
Colour Section	107	<i>Association Branches</i>	150
Special Features		Affiliated ACF, CCF and UOTC	152
<i>Portrait of the Colonel-in-Chief</i>	115		

Front cover

Poachers' Homecoming Parade in Lincoln. *Courtesy Chris Vaughan/Lincolnshire Echo.*

Back cover

C (Essex) Company, the Vikings, take advantage of the mist.

Regiment Internet Website

www.army.mod.uk/royalanglian



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From the Colonel of the Regiment



The Colonel of the Regiment chats to Pte Malin, A Company, the Poachers, in Stamford.

The biannual snapshot that *Castle* provides is a reminder of the pace and varied life of The Regiment. From our Cadet Force and Association, through to our Territorial and Regular battalions, there has been a kaleidoscope of activity and colour over the past six months. However, perhaps the overwhelming public support at the 2nd Battalion's Homecoming and Freedom parades will remain my most vivid memories of this period.

The 2nd Battalion returned safely from Iraq just before Christmas having completed its second tour in two years. They presented their experiences to a group of MPs from our counties at the House of Commons in January and the effect was revealing. All of those present were astounded at the contrast between the Battalion's violent tour of 2006 and the relative stability of 2008. The speed with which the Iraqi Security Forces have been able to take control of their own destiny is testament to the dedication and sacrifice of the British Army as a whole, but the Regiment has been at the heart of this endeavour. So it is disappointing that such extraordinary and important work has gone largely unrecorded by an otherwise preoccupied media.

Shortly after their return from Iraq, the officers and soldiers of the 2nd Battalion were presented with their medals on a bitterly cold morning in December in Celle. In March the Battalion's official homecoming was celebrated with a series of outstanding parades in Stamford, Luton, Watford and Lincoln, with the public turning out in real force to demonstrate their support. The media chose to grab the wrong end of the stick by over emphasising the role of a vocal minority of protesters in Luton, but the effect of the ensuing publicity just swelled the numbers on the streets at the parades that followed in Watford and Lincoln. Currently the Battalion is committed to a period of intense training that will see it build on its basic tactical foundations and culminate in a live firing deployment to Kenya later this year.

The 1st Battalion has experienced a rather unsettled period and has had to remain extremely flexible. Having firstly re-rolled to be a Mechanised Battalion, the Vikings then focused on deploying C (Essex) Company to Kosovo and the Battalion (-) to Iraq on Op Telic 14. Subsequently both deployments were cancelled; the latter being partially due to the huge success of the Poachers on Op Telic

12. The Vikings now find themselves re-rolling once again, this time to become a light role battalion; and currently they are also the Army's Spearhead Lead Element and Northern Ireland Public Order Battalion – a high readiness period. So a significant period of varied and complex training was necessary in order to manage these changes and maintain an operational footing, should they have been called upon. The Battalion now finds itself in a more settled period and looking towards exercising in its new role. The commemorative silver statue of Capt David Hicks MC, commissioned by the Viking Officers' Mess, has been unveiled to an audience of amongst others, his parents. The statue will act as an everlasting reminder of a wonderful and extraordinarily brave young man and the sacrifices made by so many on Op Herring 6.

The 3rd Battalion has also been heavily committed both with exercises and supporting ongoing operations in Afghanistan. In March, and supported by elements of the 2nd Battalion's Fire Support Company, they took part in a Combined Arms Test Exercise on Salisbury Plain. Currently the Battalion is finalising the training of two of its platoons that are due to deploy to Afghanistan in the autumn; the first to Kabul in the role of HQ ISAF Force Protection; the second to Helmand in support of 3rd Battalion the Royal Welsh Regiment. Throughout this busy training and operational programme, our Territorial detachments across the Regimental area continue to act as a hugely important link to our home counties. The most notable event was the Reception and Beating Retreat, organised at DISC Chicksands, and very well attended by local community leaders from both Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire.

At Duxford, the Regimental Museum Appeal and Royal Anglian Regimental Memorial project continue to develop. Ian Rank-Broadley, the same sculptor that created the Capt David Hicks MC statue for the 1st Battalion, has been commissioned to produce the centerpiece for the Regimental Memorial. A maquette of the statue is shortly to be completed and the current forecast will hopefully see it both erected and dedicated in the first half of next year. However, the Museum Appeal is only just over half way to its target of £250,000. Two vital improvements to the museum's displays have been commissioned but much more needs to be raised to complete



The Colonel of the Regiment with the Lord Lieutenant of Bedfordshire and the Deputy Lieutenant of Hertfordshire.

the task. Your further help is therefore urgently requested and I would ask that donations or offers of assistance are made to Maj Dick Gould at RHQ or to Lt Col Trevor Veitch on 01780 764802.

Your combined efforts on recruiting have once more set The Regiment apart from all others in the Army. At the end of 2008 the 3rd Battalion recruited 170 new soldiers into our Territorial detachments. The regular battalions have almost reached their limit for enrolling recruits at ITC Catterick and the quality of the trained soldiers that they are receiving is as high as it has ever been. The Regimental Council is now turning its mind to dealing with the knotty problem of 'over manning' (1st Battalion +47 over establishment at the time of going to press), but it is a good problem to have. As a Regiment we are currently one of the top two recruited regiments in the Army, but it is important now to maintain this standard and keep our focus on our home counties in order to strengthen those links that have

always provided us with such fine young men.

Finally, after the success of last year's '100 Miles for Nine Smiles' walk in aid of the 1st Battalion Afghan Memorial Appeal, Mrs Christine Bonner, supported by The Regiment, is organising the 'All the 4s' sponsored walk between 14 and 23 August 2009. Details of this important event are contained in an enclosed flier, but being in aid of our own Regimental Benevolent Charity, I would ask the Regimental Family to provide as much support as possible, either through participation or donation.

As we look to the next six months we must turn our thoughts to the officers and soldiers of the 3rd Battalion as they undertake their deployments to Afghanistan. For the remainder of The Regiment it will prove to be a period of celebration as we approach the 200th Anniversary of the Battle of Talavera and the 250th anniversary of the Battle of Minden.

Message to The Regiment: 2nd Battalion Homecoming Parades

Editor's Note: After the 2nd Battalion's Homecoming Parades the Colonel of the Regiment also sent this message to The Regiment on 16 March 2009

At the end of a remarkable week for The Regiment, during which I have honoured to represent you at three of the 2nd Battalion's Homecoming Parades, I write to place on record the deep sense of pride that once again fills me as your Colonel.

When I spoke at the parades, I explained that the wider Regiment was immensely proud of the 2nd Battalion, but that we were also very proud of where we come from; and that our links with our ten counties are at the core of what we are as a county regiment; and that these links are strong and provide us with tremendous support at difficult times.

The Poachers had already received a marvellous reception in Stamford on Monday, when, in Luton last Tuesday, and after a quite outstanding Parade, there was a difficult moment. Not for the Poachers, who had been warned to expect the small protest and were not in the slightest perturbed, but for our supporters in Luton and Bedfordshire, of whom there were thousands on the streets that day. They were outraged that their county infantry battalion had been subjected to such abuse. This sense of outrage spread across our counties and the result was entirely predictable – even more of our supporters voted with their feet in Watford and Lincoln.

All of the Homecoming Parades were led by the Minden Band in sparkling form and supported by the wider Regimental Family. The

CO of the 3rd Battalion, who deployed 24 of his number to support the Poachers in Iraq, sent senior representatives to each Parade; the CO, RSM and a strong contingent from the 1st Battalion, travelled from Surrey to support the Poachers in Lincoln; our ACFs and CCFs, where schools permitted, sent representatives or contingents; our Old Comrades and Associations proudly turned out in force; and our families travelled by the busload.

It is this close family bond that makes us so special. Our ability to celebrate the diversity of being a proud Viking, Poacher or Steelback, whilst fighting any major challenge as The Regiment. Thus we paraded last week as one of the best recruited infantry regiments in the Army and caused all of us, myself included, to feel deep pride in our association with The Royal Anglian Regiment.

I finish by congratulating the wider Regiment in general, and the Poachers, specifically their Project Officer, WO1 (RSM) Bartlett, in particular, for such an outstanding week, during which our hard fought for reputation has been further enhanced. I would also like to thank the Regimental Headquarters Team of Col Kevin Hodgson, Maj Tony Jones and Maj Bill O'Driscoll, together with their marvellous staffs, for working tirelessly for so many weeks to deliver such meticulously planned parades, which became the envy of the Army, the Services and the Country.



The Regiment

Colonel-in-Chief

HRH The Duke of Gloucester KG GCVO

Colonel of the Regiment

Gen Sir John McColl KCB CBE DSO

President of the Regimental Association

Brig RM Brunt CBE

Honorary Chaplain to the Regiment

Father K Reeve

Deputy Colonels of the Regiment

1st Battalion: Brig PD Jones MBE
2nd Battalion: Brig DJ Clements MBE
3rd Battalion: Col JD Lacey CBE DL

Honorary Colonel TA

Col JD Lacey CBE DL

Deputy Honorary Colonels TA

Norfolk, Suffolk	Col PJS Child
Lincolnshire	Col GWC Newmarch
Leicestershire, Northamptonshire	Col JBC Prescott
Essex, Hertfordshire	Col CAF Thomas TD DL
HQ Company 3rd Battalion	Col NA ffitch TD

Alliances

Australia	The Royal Tasmania Regiment
Barbados	The Barbados Regiment
Belize	The Belize Defence Force
Bermuda	The Bermuda Regiment
Canada	Sherbrooke Hussars
	The Lincoln and Welland Regiment
	The Essex and Kent Scottish
	The Lake Superior Scottish Regiment
Gibraltar	The Royal Gibraltar Regiment
Malaysia	1st Battalion Royal Malay Regiment
New Zealand	3rd Battalion (Auckland (Countess of Ranfurly's Own) and Northland) Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment
	5th Battalion the Frontier Force Regiment
Pakistan	First City Regiment
South Africa	Regiment de la Rey

The Regiment is affiliated to 158 (Royal Anglian) Transport Regiment RLC(V), 29 (R) Squadron, RAF Coningsby, and to the Worshipful Company of Poulterers
1st Battalion has a Bond of Friendship with *HMS Norfolk*

Civic Honours

The Regiment has been granted the honour of the freedom of:

Bedford, Boston, Brentwood, Bury St Edmunds, Cambridge, Charnwood, Chelmsford, Cleethorpes, Colchester, Dunstable, Ely, Grantham, Grimsby, Grays and Thurrock, Havering, Hertford, Hinckley and Bosworth, Ilford, Ipswich, King's Lynn, Leicester, Lincoln, Lowestoft, Luton, Newham, Northampton, Norwich, Peterborough, Southend, Sudbury, Watford, Wellingborough, Wisbech, Great Yarmouth, and the Colour of the Borough of Barking and Dagenham.

The Regiment has been granted the Honorary Status of Stamford.

Regimental Locations

Regimental Headquarters

The Keep, Gibraltar Barracks, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP33 3RN

Tel: 01284-752394. Fax: 752026/Colchester Military 5124

Email: chief-clerk@anglian.army.mod.uk

Shop email: e2@rhqroyalanglian.org.uk

Regimental Secretary: Lt Col K Hodgson OBE

Email: regimental-secretary@anglian.army.mod.uk

Assistant Regimental Secretary: Maj RC Gould

Email: ars@rhqroyalanglian.org.uk

Regimental Careers Officer: Capt MOG Taylor

Email: regimental-careers-officer@anglian.army.mod.uk

Area Office Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire

The Keep, Gibraltar Barracks,
Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP33 3RN

Tel: 01284-752394

Area Secretary: Lt Col AD Slater OBE

Email: ahqbse@rhqroyalanglian.org.uk

Clerk: elahqbse@rhqroyalanglian.org.uk

Area Office Leicestershire, Rutland, Northamptonshire and Lincolnshire

TA Centre, Clare Street, Northampton NN1 3JQ

Tel: 01604-635412

Area Secretary: Maj W O'Driscoll

Email: IANGLIAN-AO@mod.uk

Regimental Recruiting Teams

Army Training Regiment, Bassingbourn

Tel: 01223-204360

Goojerat Barracks, Colchester

Tel: 01206-782311

Area Office Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Essex

Blenheim House, Eagle Way,
Warley, Essex CM13 3BN

Tel: 01277-213051

Area Secretary: Maj A Jones

Email: ahqroyalanglian1@btconnect.com

Regimental Museum

Royal Anglian Regiment Museum, Duxford Airfield,

Duxford, Cambs CB22 4QR

Tel: 01223-497298

Museum Officer: Mr Andrew Murkin

Museum Archivist: Mr Noel Muncy

Email: info@royalanglianmuseum.org.uk

Website: www.royalanglianmuseum.org.uk

Battalion Locations

1st Battalion

Elizabeth Barracks,

Pirbright,

Surrey GU24 0DT

Lt Col JM Woodham MC

2nd Battalion

Trenchard Barracks,

Celle,

BFPO 23

Lt Col RW Wooddisse MBE MC

3rd Battalion

TA Centre, Blenheim Camp,

Newmarket Road,

Bury St Edmunds,

Suffolk IP33 3SW

Lt Col DG Vincent MBE

Regimental Representatives

Army Training Regiment, Bassingbourn: Lt GEJ Wyndham

Army Training Regiment, Winchester: Maj SN Pallant

Infantry Training Centre, Catterick: Lt AK Luff

RMA Sandhurst: Maj FJR Grounds (*Maj AHC Borgnis August 2009*)

Army Foundation College Harrogate: Lt HJ Willies

Cambridge University OTC: Maj NMP Brown

Personalialia

Honours and Awards

MBE

Capt IJ Robinson

QCVS

Maj OCC Brown

MSM

WO1 (RSM) Granfield

WO1 (RSM) Newton

Commissioning

The following were commissioned from RMA Sandhurst on 9 April 2009

2Lt GA Napier

2Lt JL Robinson

Conversion of Commission

Capt TGBP Coleman to IRC wef 18 September 2008

Capt AK Dart to IRC wef 18 September 2008

Capt GJ Goodey to IRC wef 18 September 2008

Capt GJR Hudson to IRC wef 18 September 2008

Capt DAW Jaggard to IRC wef 18 September 2008

Capt SR Poulter to IRC wef 18 September 2008

Capt APT Wilde from IRC to Reg C wef 12 March 2009

Maj DL Stefanetti MBE from IRC to Reg C(LE) wef 12 March 2009

Promotions

The following has been selected for promotion to Colonel

Lt Col DP O'Driscoll

The following have been selected for promotion to Lieutenant Colonel

Maj MP Aston

Maj CBK Barry

Maj DA England

Maj JJW Hart

Maj(LE) SN Pallant

The following have been provisionally selected for promotion to Major

Capt MR Cook

Capt RJ McNeil

A/Maj(LE) PN Blanchfield

Postings

Lt Col STH Andrews

Lt Col DP O'Driscoll

Lt Col JA York

Maj DSJ Biddick MBE MC

Maj AHC Borgnis

Maj (for Lt Col 09) DA England

Maj (for Lt Col 09) NA Johnson

Maj DJ Stefanetti MBE

Maj SN Pallant

from Ch G5 Plans NRDC-T

from SO1 MOD A Block

from PJHQ(UK)

from Cambridge University

from Coy Comd 1st Bn

from ACSC 12

from 2IC 1st Bn

from QM ASPT

from FTG(UK)

to AMA to UN SRSG(Baghdad)

to Ch Iraqi Offr Trg NATO Trg Mission

to Command ITDU Warminster

to SO2 Strategy-CGS DGS MOD

to Coy Comd RMAS

to SO1 Joint Warfare(Land) Fort Halstead

to SO1 EP/STP D Army RP(London)

to ADSO (4) ADSC (P) Pirbright

to OC A Sqn ATR(W)

Maj JJW Hart has been selected for a place on ACSC 13

Maj JCJ Wright has been selected for a place on ACSC 14

Regimental Matters

Regimental Council Meeting

The Regimental Council met on 8 May 2009 in London. Important issues on the agenda were:

Support to Operations

The 1st Battalion next features on the Operational Commitments Plot for Op HERRICK 16, March to October 2012. The 2nd Battalion moves to Cyprus and takes over the Theatre Reserve Battalion role for Iraq and Afghanistan in September 2010. The 3rd Battalion will have 65 soldiers on operations from August 2009 to April 2010 as the HQ ISAF PROFOR Kabul Platoon, including three members of the 1st Battalion, and a platoon for Op HERRICK 11. They are also undertaking Op TOSCA (C2 and Company Group in UNFICYP) in April to October 2011 and Op HERRICK 16 (Company Group) April to October 2012.

Care of Wounded Soldiers and Bereaved Families

Col Alasdair Wild will produce a detailed plan of work, including an estimate of support required, by 19 May 2009.

Regimental Memorial

The design of the Regimental Memorial has been approved by the IWM Duxford and is now with South Cambridgeshire District Council for planning permission. Thereafter the project will move to the full design stage with final costings, which are highly likely to increase. The Memorial Committee has approved the statue maquette subject to minor amendments. Consecration of the memorial will be not before May 2010. Much work is needed to ensure that the Roll of Honour is accurate.

Royal Portrait

The portrait of the Colonel-in-Chief (See page 14) was approved by the Council and Maj Gould was congratulated on his excellent work in overseeing this project. Each Battalion will receive an individual portrait.

Membership of Regimental Association

The Regimental Secretary will shortly promulgate the new policy on Adult Volunteer Cadet Officers, holding Type B Commissions and badged R ANGLIAN, joining the Regimental Association.

The Day's Pay Scheme

The Day's Pay Scheme continues to be strongly subscribed. The Council expressed their appreciation of the efforts made by the RSMs of the 1st and 2nd Battalions to support Regimental Benevolence in this way.

Talavera 200

The Regiment will celebrate the 200th Anniversary of the Battle of Talavera in Northampton on 25 July 2009. The celebrations will be based around the final reunion of the Northamptonshire Regiment Association who, in the presence of the Colonel-in-Chief, will parade for the last time. The Minden Band of The Queen's Division and C (Northamptonshire) Company, 2nd Battalion, will also be on the parade, the outside times of which are 1330-1440hrs. The route is from the top of Abington Street (by *Radio Northampton*) to All Saints Church from where, at 1430hrs, the Northamptonshire Regiment Association will march off parade for the last time.

Minden 250

The Regiment will celebrate the 250th anniversary of the Battle of Minden in Bury St Edmunds on Sunday 2 August 2009. The day will start at 1115hours with a Drumhead Service. This will be followed by a parade and march past by B (Suffolk) Company 1 R ANGLIAN and Old Comrades. The salute will be taken by the Colonel of the Regiment. There will be displays explaining the battle of Minden, and of current Battalion operational equipment. A new display case depicting the Malayan Campaign will be opened in the Suffolk Regiment Museum after the Parade.

Regimental Day 20 September 2009 at IWM Duxford

Regimental Day is confirmed as 20 September 2009 at IWM Duxford, on which day the new Regimental Association Standard will be consecrated. The programme will be as follows:

0930 hrs - Gates Open

1030 hrs - Regimental Association Annual General Meeting

1130 hrs - Drumhead Service

1215 hrs - March Past

1230 hrs - Bars, kiosks and stalls open

1500 hrs - Beating Retreat

1700 hrs - Bars and stalls close

All serving and ex-members of The Regiment and former Regiments are warmly invited to attend this important annual event. Entry passes are not required although possession of a Regimental Association card will help speed up entry. Bring along your own picnic, which is advisable, or use the refreshment facilities on site. Pets are not permitted.

Museum

Brig Clements will take over from Brig Groves as Chairman of the Museum Trustees with effect from September 2009. The Colonel of the Regiment expressed his sincere thanks to Lt Col Veitch, the museum fundraiser, who had raised over £119k to date for the Museum Appeal.

Dress for R ANGLIAN Staff at Training Establishments

The Council directed that the dress of R ANGLIAN staff at training establishments, less ITC(C), would be R ANGLIAN beret and stable belt, arm flash of parent battalion and DPM rank slide, embroidered in gold with rank and 'ROYAL ANGLIAN'. RHQ will order a selection of rank slides, from LCpl to Major, for purchase.

The Brig Wilkinson Bequest

The Brig Wilkinson bequest provides for free membership of the Army & Navy Club for four younger officers (under the age of 32), concurrently, for a period of two years each. The aim is to encourage them to become full members of the Club in the fullness of time. Two vacancies are currently available and those interested should contact Asst Regtl Sec for further details.

'All the 4s' Sponsored Walk

The 'All the 4s' sponsored walk through the East Midlands will take place 14 to 23 August 2009. It is being led by Mrs Christine Bonner who, with soldiers from each Battalion, will walk 150 miles in 10 days via Lincoln, Leicester, Northampton, Bedford and Hertford. The Council has asked The Regiment for their strong support for this endeavour, which is in aid of The Royal Anglian Regiment Benevolent Charity.

Deaths

RHQ has been notified of the following deaths since the last edition of *Castle*:

Gen Sir Peter Leng KCB MBE MC on 11 February 2009*

Cpl A Brown on 14 February 2009*

GR Osborne on 19 April 2009*

Sgt N Cockin on 24 April 2009

Capt W Drake April 2009

LCpl WP Bonner on 26 May 2009

Maj RK Hill TD DL on 8 June 2009

* See Obituaries

Royal Anglian Benevolence

The statistics for the Benevolence Fund over the period 1 July 2008 to 1 May 2009 are as follows:

Number of Grants made	203
Total granted from Benevolence Fund	£58,027
Average grant	£285

The covenants through the Day's Pay Scheme are still very important to enable the Benevolent Fund to do its job of helping serving and retired soldiers, and their families, who need our help.

Regimental Matters

Field of Remembrance

The Field of Remembrance opening ceremony at Westminster Abbey will this year be held on Thursday 5 November 2009. This is a most important event at which The Regiment wishes to be well represented. The facilities of the Farmers' Club (3 Whitehall Court, SW1) will be available to those attending although, as usual, a limit of 50 has to be imposed. Further details will be passed to those serving in the MOD in due course, whilst Regimental Association members wishing to attend should contact RHQ by 23 October 2009. Members of former regiments' associations should contact their respective area secretaries.

Royal Anglian and East Anglian Regiments' War Graves in Aden

A former Poacher, Chris Leach, has undertaken some excellent research into the Royal Anglian and East Anglian Regiments' war graves in Aden. The graves are split into two locations; the first is in the Ma'alla District of Aden in a Christian Cemetery; the second is in the Silent Valley Military Cemetery in Little Aden.

The original location of choice, The Christian Cemetery in Ma'alla, has British Military graves dating back to World War One. The Silent Valley Cemetery was opened in the 1960s and renamed the Cemetery of the British Military Forces until the withdrawal from the Aden Governorate Protectorate.

The following regimental soldiers are buried in Aden:

Christian Cemetery Ma'alla:

Pte J Shopland 4 Jun 1964

East Anglian



Grave of Cpl R Watson 3 R Anglian - killed in action Aden on 24 October 1966.



Silent Valley Cemetery.

Regimental Matters



Grave of Pte J Shopland 1 East Anglian, killed in Radfan 4 June 1964.

Pte B T Fox	10 Jun 1964	East Anglian
2Lt R P Barclay	12 Aug 1964	East Anglian
Pte W Frazer	31 Dec 1964	Royal Anglian

Silent Valley Cemetery

Cpl R Watson	24 Oct 1966	Royal Anglian
Pte C Roger	4 Mar 1967	Royal Anglian

The Padre's Pad

Honorary Chaplain to The Regiment

Father Ken Reeve, writes:

In Flanders Fields – An Easter Experience?

It is mid morning and we have come to Polygon Wood Military Cemetery, just one of the many that we have already visited or intend to visit on our pilgrimage to the First World War battlefields of the Ypres Salient. Each one of us, we are four in number, has come, I suspect, for different reasons, but the common link for this pilgrimage came from a desire to follow some of the 168 men from South Lynn who are named on the war memorial window in 'All Saints'.

Each one of us obviously have our own thoughts, feelings, and reflections as we visit, remember, and pay our individual and private respects to the many thousands of, mainly young, men, who fought, died and are buried in this relatively small area of Belgium. This is, most of the time, reflected in that we are quiet and almost unconsciously we split up and walk alone among the row upon row of spotless white headstones.

This morning is no different and as I walk alone I am caught up in the peaceful and pregnant silence of this place. I have, as always, feelings of bitterness and anger at the sheer waste of so many of God's sons and in spite of myself tears well up. In my thoughts I 'hear' the words... 'Why are you weeping?' I feel the eyes of the thousands that lie here watching me, I feel enfolded in light and warmth, and I 'hear' whispers: for this is a 'thin place', a place where heaven and earth blend into one and God is very near. They are whispers of hope: voices, laughter, cajoling and bantering, and are poignantly beautiful. I recognise what I hear, for I have heard them so often. These are the words, emotions and activities of young men everywhere who share life together, and through the 'mist' of all this, soft as the voice of an Angel, come the words of another young man '...He is not here he is risen'.



Christian Cemetery Ma'alla.

It is relatively easy, as we found in Flanders Fields, to see and feel the sacrifice, the horrors, the agony, the sheer waste and sense of hopelessness that death, particularly of the young and innocent, has upon us. As we come to Holy Week and the Passion of our Lord it is, I would suggest, not so difficult to be caught up in the death of it all. What for me, and I suspect for many Christians, if they are absolutely honest, is much more difficult, is to find and hold the resurrection. To do so perhaps we need to come to the place of our own Polygon Wood or Emmaus Road, alone, and in the stillness and thinness of transcendence allow Him to touch us and whisper to us words of hope, of love, of laughter, of gentle banter and persuasion. Whispers of new beginnings, of new life.

Email Communications

Please keep RHQ informed of your email address and RHQ will keep you informed of Regimental gossip and events, as and when they occur.

Next Edition of Castle

Contributions for the December 2009 issue of *Castle* should reach the Editor by no later than 23 October 2009. Contributions should be in the following format:

Text should be submitted in *Word* or *Text Only* on a CD or floppy disk.

Each article should be in a separate folder with an accurate caption; photos linked to that article should not be embedded in the *Word* documents, rather they should be supplied as separate jpg or tiff files, with appropriate captions, and then placed in the same folder.

Photo files can be in greyscale, RGB or CMYK format. In general, the jpg needs to be 300 dots per inch at the size it is to be printed. If hard copy photos are being supplied, do not write on the back of them. Instead, write the caption on a Post-it note and attach to the back. Do not supply inkjet prints of jpg photos as the quality will not suffice.

If text is supplied as hard copy, it is to be printed double line spaced, in a simple font and single column.

The Editor works on the assumption that all contributions have been edited and approved by the CO/OC/senior person. So please do your best to ensure that content/grammar/spelling/accuracy are of a high quality.

The Royal Anglian Regiment Memorial

Roll of Honour

The Royal Anglian Regimental Memorial at Duxford will be in memory of those members of the East Anglian Regiments and The Royal Anglian Regiment who have been killed on duty or as a result of enemy action. The front of the plinth, on which will stand the bronze statue, will be inscribed with The Royal Anglian Regiment capbadge, under which will be the following text:

IN MEMORY
OF THOSE MEMBERS OF
THE ROYAL ANGLIAN REGIMENT
AND
THE EAST ANGLIAN REGIMENTS
WHO DIED WHILST ON DUTY

At the rear of the Memorial enclosure, and on either side of the statue plinth, a wall will form the Roll of Honour on which the names of The Regiments' dead will be inscribed under their respective capbadge; the lettering will be in upper case giving rank, initials, surname, decorations and date of death ie:

CPL FH SMITH MM 21 MAR 1968

The names will be carved directly into the wall to create a sense of permanence and directness. There will be ten columns of lettering each eight stones high, reflecting the ten geographical counties from which The Regiment draws its numbers. There will be a plinth at the base of the wall to support wreaths, poppies or flowers.

The Regimental Council has decided that those whose names are inscribed on the Armed Forces Memorial at Alrewas will be

included on the Regimental Memorial. They will therefore follow the decisions of the Trustees of the Armed Forces Memorial Trust, but will retain discretion in all cases. If the Trustees of the Armed Forces Memorial Trust are persuaded to add a name retrospectively, then the Regimental Council may decide to do likewise.

The general principle applied by the Trustees of the Armed Forces Memorial Trust is to include the names of:

'Those members of the Armed Forces (Regular and Reserve) who were killed on duty while performing functions attributable to the special circumstances and requirements of the Armed Forces, or as a result of terrorist action, and those who died while deployed on designated operations.'

The above definition includes, in general terms, those serving with the Territorial Army. Those serving with Cadet Forces, including adult instructors are not included, although there may be, depending on the circumstances of each individual case, a reason for including Group B officers.

The Trustees of the Armed Forces Memorial Trust have absolute discretion regarding the inclusion of names. The terms of reference state that the Trustees can:

'Delegate authority to the Secretary/Administrator to include on the Memorial those names that clearly comply with the criteria. The Trustees may be asked to adjudicate on whether to include names where it is not clear whether they fit the agreed criteria. They will have discretion to include uncertain or contentious cases.'

Based on the criteria above, and using information provided by the Armed Forces Memorial, the Provisional Roll of Honour for the Regimental Memorial will be as follows:

The Royal Anglian Regimental Memorial Provisional Roll Of Honour

Rank	Initials	Surname	Decorations	Date of Death	Place or Birth/Home Town
THE EAST ANGLIAN REGIMENTS					
PTE	K	BURTON		31 OCT 1959	BUSHEY, HERTS
PTE	JF	HANDFORD		11 JUL 1962	BERMUDA
PTE	JR	SHOPLAND		4 JUN 1964	EAST LONDON, SOUTH AFRICA
PTE	BT	FOX		10 JUN 1964	ARDEE, CO LOUGH
THE ROYAL ANGLIAN REGIMENT					
PTE	K	ATKIN		24 DEC 1964	GRIMSBY
PTE	WF	FRAZER		31 DEC 1964	NORWICH
LCPL	MR	BOOTHRIGHT		20 FEB 1965	LINCOLN
CPL	CH	JACKSON		20 FEB 1965	ST IVES, HUNTINGDON
PTE	LEJ	WALLACE		4 JUL 1965	STRATFORD, LONDON
JDMR	IW	SKINNER		20 OCT 1966	DILSON, NORTHUMBERLAND
CPL	R	WATSON		24 OCT 1966	WATFORD
CPL	MG	SHIRLEY		15 NOV 1966	GRIMSBY
CPL	JE	HERBERT		3 MAR 1967	LUTON
PTE	C	RODGERS		4 MAR 1967	WORSBORO COMMON
MAJ	PD	TAUNTON		26 OCT 1970	CHATHAM
PTE	BJ	SHERIDAN		20 NOV 1970	WINCANTON
PTE	R	WILKINS		11 OCT 1971	
LCPL	IM	CURTIS		9 NOV 1971	
2LT	NE	HULL		16 APR 1972	BOW
PTE	JH	BALLARD		11 MAY 1972	GRIMSBY
LCPL	M	ROONEY		13 JUL 1972	GARRICK-ON-SHANNON, EIRE
CPL	KC	MOGG		13 JUL 1972	GREENWICH
CPL	MP	BODDY		17 AUG 1972	
CPL	JM	BARRY		25 SEP 1972	CAISTER, MARKET RAISEN
PTE	ISD	BURT		29 SEP 1972	EDINBURGH

PTE	RM	MASON		24 OCT 1972	
PTE	A	GOODFELLOW		27 APR 1973	
PTE	N	MARKWICK		12 SEP 1973	OLDHAM
LCPL	WJMA	OWENS		15 SEP 1973	MOTHERWELL, SCOTLAND
PTE	EW	EDWARDS		15 SEP 1973	BURNHAM, BUCKS
LCPL	R	GRANT		2 NOV 1973	LEICESTER
PTE	PL	HOLLIS		13 NOV 1974	ROCHFORD, ESSEX
CAPT	MGA	SHIPLEY		8 MAR 1975	KLAGENFURT, AUSTRIA
SSGT	TR	BODENHAM		28 APR 1976	STONEHOUSE, STROUDE
PTE	K	STACEY		26 APR 1977	SPILSBY
PTE	S	FOSTER		13 NOV 1978	
PTE	PA	WRIGHT		8 OCT 1979	
PTE	AA	COOPER		20 MAR 1980	NORTHAMPTON
LCPL	KH	JOHNSON		4 JUL 1980	GOTTINGEV, GERMANY
PTE	KA	BREWER		29 AUG 1981	SCUNTHORPE
PTE	T	ANDERSON		24 MAY 1982	GRIMSBY
MAJ	PC	FORD		22 DEC 1983	VALETTA, MALTA
PTE	AP	LINNETT		29 JUL 1984	LEICESTER
PTE	MR	PATTEN		22 SEP 1985	
MAJ	AF	FRENCH	MBE	22 MAY 1986	
PTE	CJ	DAVIES		9 JUL 1986	
PTE	MR	BERTRAM		9 JUL 1986	
PTE	DJ	KNIGHT		26 JUL 1986	MUNSTER, GERMANY
PTE	PA	TEE		7 OCT 1986	PETERBOROUGH
PTE	DJ	BACK		19 AUG 1987	SHEFFIELD
PTE	ND	PEACOCK		31 JAN 1989	
LCPL	S	LANGRIDGE		27 MAR 1990	KIRTON IN LINDSEY
CPL	NW	COLLISHAW		9 MAY 1990	NOT KNOWN
LCPL	PJ	FAULKNER		9 MAY 1990	RUGBY
PTE	MTJ	LINNEY		5 APR 1991	PAISLEY
JNR	JS	WINDSOR		4 SEP 1991	GRANTHAM, Lincs
SGT	JB	DEVANEY		23 MAY 1992	PORT LAOISE, IRELAND
CAPT	SP	WORMALD		29 APR 1994	
LCPL	JG	ROUT		13 FEB 1999	WISBECH
LCPL	DJ	GEORGE		9 APR 2002	
PTE	J	LEWAICEI		13 MAY 2006	
PTE	AP	MORRIS		13 MAY 2006	
PTE	C	GRAY		13 APR 2007	
LCPL	GR	DAVEY		20 MAY 2007	
CPL	DW	BONNER		28 MAY 2007	
PTE	AJ	BORKERTAS		15 JUN 2007	
LCPL	A	HAWKINS		25 JUL 2007	
PTE	TA	RAWSON		10 AUG 2007	
CAPT	DC	HICKS	MC	11 AUG 2007	
PTE	RG	FOSTER		23 AUG 2007	
PTE	AJ	MCCLURE		23 AUG 2007	
PTE	JS	THRUMBLE		23 AUG 2007	
PTE	SJ	MUGRIDGE		14 APR 2008	

The Regimental Memorial Committee has much work to do in order to satisfy the Regimental Council that the Roll of Honour is absolutely correct. Sadly, the 50 years of records at RHQ are not dependable. The Committee therefore needs the help of the Regimental Family to examine the Provisional Roll of Honour and query any entry or perceived omission. Thereafter, and before contacting RHQ, it would be helpful if Regimental members first visit the website of the Armed Forces Memorial to research their potential query (<http://www.forcesmemorial.org/roll-of-honour.asp>). They should then forward the query to the Regimental Secretary.

When the Regimental Memorial is opened, the families of our dead

will be the most important guests at the ceremony. Whilst RHQ is in contact with some, there are many such families with whom, over the years and very regretfully, all contact has been lost. These are indicated in the Provisional Roll of Honour by the inclusion in the right hand column of a mention of 'Place of Birth/Home Town'. More information on these soldiers, including in some cases the place of burial, is again included on the Armed Forces Memorial website. But in short, help is required to establish an accurate database of bereaved family contact information in time for the Memorial consecration in 2010. Again, any such information should be forwarded to the Regimental Secretary at RHQ.

Have you ever heard of the Army Benevolent Fund?

What is the Army Benevolent Fund?

The Army Benevolent Fund is the Army's Central Charity committed to the welfare of Army and ex-Army personnel and their families. We work in partnership with all Corps and Regimental Benevolent Funds and in co-operation with other service charities in identifying, investigating and, primarily, giving support to eligible individuals in **real need** amongst the Army and ex-Army community.

We aim to bring help to the many cases where State assistance is either inapplicable, inadequate or unable to meet the need at the time it is most required. In a nutshell we are **your** charity.

We provide help in two ways:

Financial support: to individuals through their Corps and Regimental Benevolent Funds. This normally takes the form of a grant to supplement whatever the Corps or Regiment has the resources to provide.

Practical help and advice: through substantial financial grants which we make on behalf of all Corps and Regiments to over 70 other charities. These are organisations who provide for the special needs of soldiers, ex-soldiers and their families.

What do we do?

Here are some examples of the kind of help we have given recently:



John - a serving soldier had an horrific car accident in Germany which resulted in him losing the ability to walk. Sadly he had to be discharged and needed specialist care and help with the purchase of an electric wheelchair. Together the **ABF** and his Regiment were able to help him.

Graham - on exercise with the Territorial Army, suffered a fall and broke his back. The local Council offered him a house suitable for his disability but it badly needed re-decoration and he also needed removal expenses. The **ABF** met the total cost.

Joshua - the son of a serving soldier, has cerebral palsy and needed a special Orthotic Walking Trainer. His father's Regiment and the **ABF** provided the £2500 that was needed.

Susan - the wife of a serving Warrant Officer, has terminal cancer. During the course of her illness walking has become very difficult and climbing stairs impossible. She was confined downstairs until the **ABF** and her husband's Regiment bought her a stair lift.

Margaret - the widow of an ex-soldier is suffering from Alzheimer's Disease. She was unable to look after herself and was moved to a nursing home. After State Benefits, there was still a weekly shortfall of fees. The **ABF** granted her £12 a week, renewable annually for the rest of her life.

Why should you support us?

The Army Benevolent Fund is in direct support of **you** and **your** family. We exist to provide help with any problems that could confront you now and in the future.

But providing that help is costly. Last year we disbursed over **£5 million** to people like John, Graham, Joshua, Margaret and Susan and the need is rising every year that goes by. We must continue to raise funds if we are to be able to carry on giving this much needed help.

All ranks of the Army are brilliant fundraisers. So please remember the **ABF** when raising money for, or giving money to charity.



The Army Benevolent Fund

... in direct support

Mainly About People

Thanks to **Capt Ben Howes**, OC Javelin Platoon, 1st Battalion, who writes: 'You would have read in earlier editions of *Castle* that Op HERRICK 6 was a demanding tour where nine soldiers of the 1st Battalion unfortunately paid the ultimate sacrifice. **Capt David Hicks MC** was one such soldier. He gave his life serving his country after a large Taliban force attacked Patrol Base Inkerman. It was as a result of his actions during this attack that he received his MC, displaying unwavering dedication to duty and inspirational leadership in the face of a determined enemy.'



Capt David Hicks MC Commemorative Piece.

The Vikings Officers' Mess decided to commission a piece of silver to commemorate the tour and agreed it would be fitting to dedicate the piece to the memory of Dave Hicks. The Mess approached Mr **Ian Rank Broadley**, who is one of Britain's foremost sculptors and has produced many acclaimed works, the most recent being the sculptures at the Armed Forces Memorial, Alrewas. He agreed to craft an oxidised silver statue. On Saturday 14 March 2009 the Vikings Officers' Mess held a reception for 70 people at which the statue was unveiled. Mr Ian Rank Broadley introduced the sculpture and explained his inspiration for the work. Mrs Hicks unveiled the piece and Mr Hicks talked about the emotional and practical journey involved in the development of the sculpture. He pointed out that although the piece did have a true likeness of David and was a moving tribute to his son, it was also a fitting tribute to the camaraderie and strength of the colleagues he had worked with. The 'Capt David Hicks MC Commemorative Piece' will now remain in the Officers' Mess as a symbol of leadership and example, but moreover as a reminder of The Regiment's continuing sacrifice on operations. Many of the soldiers from C (Essex) Company who knew Capt Hicks have already had an opportunity to see the piece and were hugely impressed'.

As highlighted in the December 2008 edition of *Castle*, **WO2 (CSM) Nobby Clark** was awarded the 2008 Poulterers' Prize for his outstanding contribution as rear party Sergeant Major during Op HERRICK 6. The Master of the Worshipful Company of Poulterers, **Mr David Bridges**, presented CSM Clark with the prize on Wednesday 18 March 2009, the same day his Commanding Officer informed him that his application for a LSGC Medal had been successful. Because of this good fortune, the Vikings now refer to this day as 'St Nobby's Day' (much to his embarrassment!)



CSM Clark receives the Poulterers' Prize from the Master Poulter

Thanks to **Lt Col Brian Davenport** who informs RHQ that both he and ex **CSgt Tony Ali BEM** attended the recent England v West Indies Test Match at Port of Spain, Trinidad, lending tone to the proceedings (and consuming a considerable intake of Carib beer).



Brian Davenport and Tony Ali at the Test Match in Trinidad (nice hat Brian!)

Capt Derek Chapman, currently the full time Adjutant at Adelaide Universities Regiment, got in touch. He left the Vikings and moved to Australia to join the Australian Army in 1980; he was RSM until 2008 and was commission this year.

Last year he was posted to the UK as RSM Exercise Long Look. He had the honour to attend a Viking WOs' and Sergeants' Mess Regimental Dinner. He sent in this photo of the 1 R ANGLIAN COP PI in Flax Street Mill, Ardoyne, Belfast, April - September 1979.



Viking COP Apr-Sep 1979: Capt Derek Chapman, centre row, extreme right

Mainly About People



RMA Sandhurst CC082 Commissioning. From left: Capt Ollie Child (ADC), Maj Freddie Grounds, Maj David Napier, Greg Napier, Col of Regt, James Robinson and Capt Andy Buxton

The Regiment congratulates **Greg Napier** and **James Robinson** on being commissioned from RMA Sandhurst in April 2009. Greg is to be posted to the Vikings (in an attempt to escape his Father, **David Napier's** reputation in the Poachers!) while James is to be posted to the Poachers.

Brig Peter Sincok tells us he wrote an article for *The Eagle* (the Journal of the Essex Regiment Association) about the drive he, **Brig Bob Pike** and **Cpl Phil Carroll** made from Bury St Edmunds to Singapore in 1960. In these days of adventure training it is hard to comprehend that they were given six weeks' annual leave, two weeks' embarkation leave and two days' travelling time as though they were flying. If that was exceeded they would have been placed on half pay and lost seniority!



Andy Thomas, C Coy 2nd Bn, on patrol in Bosnia in 1994.

Thanks to **Andy Thomas**, ex C Company 2nd Battalion, who sent in this photo of himself on patrol in Bosnia in 1994.

Brig Charles Barnes bumped into two of our soldiers on the very busy Infantry Recruiting Stand while visiting the Bath and West Show at Shepton Mallett. They were **Cpl Ian Rayfield** and **Pte Craig Sivewright**, both of whom were very impressive and clearly enjoying life. Charles said that it was nice to see representatives of The Regiment so far west.



Charles Barnes' grandchildren signing up!



Ollie Ormiston's wedding.

Thanks and congratulations to **Ollie Ormiston** who, under pressure from RHQ, sent in a photo of his wedding last year. Ollie does not have a photo of just those Royal Anglians who attended. He shamefully explains that some of his friends are indeed from other regiments!

Mainly About People



UN Medal Parade: Stevie Plume is middle row, far left.

Thanks to **Stevie Plume** who sent in this photo of the Poachers' UN Medal Parade in Nicosia on 23 March 1984.



Derry Mayer being presented with his Pingat Jasa Malaysia Medal

Congratulations to **Derry Mayer** who informed us that he, and others, have recently been presented with their Pingat Jasa Malaysia Medals at a ceremony at St Dunstons on 3 December 2008.

The Gallantry Medallists' League

The Gallantry Medallists' League is second only to the VC and GC Association, and embraces all holders of second level gallantry awards, both military and civilian, within the Commonwealth.

Holders of the following second level gallantry awards qualify for membership:

United Kingdom

The Distinguished Conduct Medal
The Conspicuous Gallantry Medal RAF
The George Medal
The Conspicuous Gallantry Medal RAF (Flying)
The Distinguished Service Order (when awarded for Gallantry)
The Conspicuous Gallantry Cross

Australia A Cross of Valour
A Star of Gallantry

Canada The star of Military Valour
A Star of Courage

New Zealand The Gallantry Star
The Bravery Star

Any holders of these awards who would like to join the GML should write to the following for an application form:

The Secretary
The Gallantry Medallists' League
Tudor Cottage, Wick Hill, Finchampstead
Wokingham, Berkshire RG40 3SW

Today's membership is drawn from seven countries and all are welcome to take part in all of our activities, particularly the biennial Musters held at the Royal Hospital, Chelsea and the Victory Services Club. The last Muster, held over the weekend of 15th and 16th September 2001, included a delegation of 58 members from Australia, as well as members from Holland, Denmark and Spain.

The cost is minimal (a single payment of £15.00 secures Life Membership) and those who choose to join can be assured of a warm welcome into the League. Age is no barrier - at present our oldest member is 94 and our youngest is still in his twenties.

Letters to the Editor



In-pensioner George Bayliss, 2nd Beds and Herts Regt.

Welcome to the Men of the British Army

Dear Editor,

I left Italy by train in March 1946 on my way home for demob. A journey that was to take us through Italy, Switzerland and France.

Our first stop was in Milan, where we stayed for two nights, and where we were fed, had a bath and the opportunity to clean up, and be briefed about the rest of the journey home.

The next stop was to be Lausanne in Switzerland. When we left Italy it was raining but as we came out of the tunnel on the Swiss side it was like another world. The sun was shining and everywhere looked so clean.

On arrival at Lausanne we were given a grand welcome. Young girls gave us cigarettes and chocolates and a card saying, "Welcome to the Men of the British Army" and inviting us back for a holiday.

We left Lausanne heading for Paris and then the ship to take us home. Today, more than 60 years on, I still have the card given to us in Lausanne. This is what it said:

Welcome to the Men of the British Army

The people of Lausanne-Ouchy are sorry that you cannot stop and stay with them for a while. The whole town would certainly have received you all with open arms, as there always has been, and always will be a tender spot in the heart of every Lausanne citizen for English friends, and happy memories will for ever remain of the many famous Englishmen who have enjoyed their stay with us.

Some of you may already know our town on the shores of the Lake of Geneva. You may also know something of its illustrious past which has left its mark in the stamp of originality constituting its principal attraction. Situated on the main route from France to Italy, in the heart of a rich and fertile countryside, Lausanne, the capital of the Canton of Vaud has developed rapidly and today has a population of nearly 100,000 inhabitants.

If you could take a walk through our streets, you would at once notice that Lausanne-Ouchy is a true city of youth, comprising many nations other than Swiss, thus lending a note of friendliness and gaiety which is irresistible in its appeal . . . !

The soldiers of the British Army, whose exploits in the field have made their name so famous throughout the world, may rest assured that we will always reserve them a warm welcome. We hope that you will all come back to us some day, on which occasion we will see to it that your stay will be a very happy one

Until we meet again, we wish you a safe and pleasant journey home and a successful return to "civvy street."

Yours etc,
I/P G Bayliss
2nd Beds and Herts
The Royal Hospital Chelsea

Show a Leg There

Dear Editor,

In February 2008, in my capacity as Secretary/Treasurer of the Romford Branch of the Normandy Veterans' Association, I was fortunate enough to arrange for the officer-in-charge of the patient support services at Selly Oak Hospital, Maj Andy Main RLC, to come to talk to us and give a presentation on the reception and treatment of our wounded lads returning from Afghanistan and Iraq. We had parties from two SSAFA branches, and a neighbouring NVA Branch joined us, and what an illuminating and heart warming meeting we had. It put to shame the various garbled and ill-informed things one reads on the subject in our press. Upon receipt of my letter of thanks afterwards, Major Andy rang me to acknowledge and to say that he had forgotten to mention that his assistant was a corporal in The Royal Anglian Regiment (The Poachers), himself an amputee, who had been fitted with several legs for varying purposes, presumably one for walking, one for running etc.

Apparently the Corporal kept one on the floor below his desk and when anyone, presumably the recovering wounded, came on strong with him about having a cushy desk job while others had to fight etc, he simply bent down, retrieved his spare leg and placed it on the desk with the desired effect.

At the Westminster Abbey Garden of Remembrance on 6 November, I was 'stick man' at our Essex Regiment plot and noticed a soldier wearing The Royal Anglian Regiment badge and now familiar desert camouflage dress and suede boots, and went over for a chat. When I asked him where he was now stationed he replied 'Selly Oak'. I enquired whether he knew Maj Main to which he replied that he had been his assistant until the major had been posted, on promotion to lieutenant colonel. I then asked if he was the corporal with a spare leg under his desk and his reply was a broad grin. And so I had met up with the corporal, now promoted to sergeant, Mark Sutcliffe. The two men he had been talking to wanted to know what this was all about so I told them the story.

It was only later, when writing to Mark, that I learned that he was injured on 7 June on Op TELIC 8. Whilst on foot patrol he was hit by an RPG-7 projectile punching through his left leg and taking it clean off. 'Fortunately,' he said, 'it did not detonate on impact otherwise I don't think I would be here now. Due to the skill of my fellow Poachers on the ground with me at that time, my life was saved, and the enemy destroyed'. Of course, he also paid tribute to the surgeons and others for his subsequent treatment.

He talks of his present role as Military Liaison Officer at Selly Oak as the most satisfying job he has undertaken in his 10 years of Army service and he hopes to continue this work for the foreseeable future.

Yours etc,
Ken Hay MBE JP

Editor's Note: Sgt Mark Sutcliffe is the Poachers' representative on Mrs Christine Bonner's 'All The 4s' sponsored walk (see enclosed flier).

Military Anecdotes

Dear Editor,

I am the very proud father of two sons currently serving with HM Forces and whilst I have not served personally, I have done so vicariously and am aware of the effects of combat stress upon both service personnel and their families. I wish therefore to contribute towards the cause of treating such individuals by raising funds for a charity dealing with combat stress. To achieve this aim I am currently compiling a book of military anecdotes and I am seeking your assistance in gathering suitable stories for inclusion in the proposed book. Upon completion it is hoped that it will be published and all proceeds derived from its sale will be donated to the above charity.

The stories/anecdotes may be from any part of service life; the only requirement is that they are humorous. All contributors published will receive full accreditation within the book through an alphabetical list of contributor's names, ranks, serial numbers and regiments.

I would be grateful if you would kindly extend an invitation to

Letters to the Editor

members of your association, colleagues and associates who may wish to contribute to this project to submit their stories/anecdotes to me at the following points of contact:

Kevin Humphreys
3 Golden Oak Dell
Stannington
Sheffield
South Yorkshire S6 6FN
Email: khumphr@westminster.gov.uk

I am sure you will agree that this is a most worthy cause and I look forward hopefully to receive stories/anecdotes from you and or your colleagues in the near future.

Yours etc,
Kevin Humphreys



Nigel Richardson and Regimental Bike.

Mid Life Crisis

Dear Editor,
Having left full time employment, hopefully for the last time, I, plus 15 others, will embark on a five-month motorbike trip from the north to the south of the Americas. The trip will involve some of the most spectacular scenery and arduous riding conditions as we travel from Prudhoe Bay on the Arctic Ocean in Northern Alaska to the world's southernmost city of Ushuaia in Terra Del Fuego, at the very tip of Argentina. As our bikes have been designed for rugged conditions, approximately 20 per cent of the 21,000 mile journey will be off road; whether through the deserts of Chile, traversing Andean mountain tracks, or negotiating jungle roads in Central America and Columbia. We start this July and en route the bike will display Royal Anglian badges to perhaps garner some interest in The Regiment. Also, I plan to 'blog' a weekly travelogue if anyone is interested. Call it a second mid life crisis if you will (the bike was the first), but I prefer

to regard the trip as a reward for 36 years hard work and a good way to 'ease' into retirement.

Yours etc
Nigel Richardson
Ex Maj 1 R Anglian
1973-1990



Suffolk Regiment Kneelers in Ypres March 2009.

Battlefield Pilgrimage

Dear Editor,

For three days in mid-March 2009 my wife and I toured some of the First World War battlefield sites and sights in and around Ypres. Having recently completed writing the final volume of *The History of The Royal Leicestershire Regiment Marching with The Tigers* (which covers the years 1955-75), the principal focus of this pilgrimage was to search the battlefields for the deeds and graves of those brave men of the Leicestershire Regiment, Regulars and volunteers, who earned earlier immortality 'in the foreign field' of Flanders. It was especially moving to find at Polygon Wood (five miles east of Ypres) the very spot where on 1 October 1917 (during the Battle of Passchendaele) Lt Col Philip Bent DSO (the 24-year-old CO of the 9th Battalion (Territorial Force)) was shot dead by a sniper as he led a counter-attack with a group of rear details and won the VC. I found the gravestone of a Scots Guards great-uncle with the DSO who is buried in Ypres Town Cemetery, having been killed in action in the second month of the war. Another poignant occasion was witnessing the *Last Post* being played at the Menin Gate on 16 March, when a wreath was laid by a group of recruits of Army Training Regiment Bassingbourn (a unit which I had commanded in the late 1980s as Depot The Queen's Division). And the following day in Ypres at St George's Church (an Anglican - not Anglian - Church!) I took some photographs (shown below), including kneelers embroidered with the capbadges of the Royal Norfolk, Suffolk, Bedfordshire, Essex, and Royal Leicestershire Regiments.

Yours etc
Michael Goldschmidt

Battle of Quebec – Still Raging!

Dear Editor,

It was gratifying to see that you included the article I forwarded in *Castle* and I know from emails I've received that it aroused quite a bit of interest.

Unfortunately however it now seems that the Battle of Quebec is still being fought centuries later! The publicity surrounding the planned re-enactment of the battle has apparently attracted considerable opposition from some of the more politically minded French Canadians. This was leading towards the possibility of demonstrations taking place and disruption of the event. In view of this most unfortunate development, the National Battlefields Commission has decided to cancel the re-enactment, to the disappointment of the majority.

Letters to the Editor

The actual outcome of the battle is however something the protestors can never change! Sorry though that we are all going to miss a worthwhile event.

Yours etc
Ray Pond

Calling All Drummers

Dear Editor,

There is precious little corps of drums material in the public domain and one rarely sees and hears the magical sound of drums and flutes marching through our streets these days; so if you would like to hear the sound of more than 70 drum and flute marches, plus some bugle calls; or get hold of the music for over 370 drum and flute marches and selections; or would like to make contact with other ex drummers throughout the UK; or would like to find a list of instrument and equipment suppliers; or would like to visit the website of other corps of drums or the Corps of Drums Society; or would like to download some tutors and manuals; or would like to join our corps of drums based in Leeds or other corps around the UK, then please visit:

www.yorkshirecorpsfordrums.com

This is the website for the Yorkshire Corps of Drums and the Guild of Army Drummers which is dedicated to sharing information, putting people in touch with each other and promoting our military musical heritage of drum, flute and bugle music and calls. I do hope you take a few minutes to visit and hopefully enjoy our website.

Yours etc
Greg Tunesi BEM
Yorkshire Corps of Drums

Essex Regiment Museum Redevelopment

Dear Editor,

Many readers will be familiar with the Essex Regiment Museum in Chelmsford, home to the Salamanca Eagle, the 2nd Essex set of silver drums, the earliest known uniform jacket with Pompadour facings (around 1790), the Colours of the 44th Foot presented in 1857 and in use until 1958, and an 1803 recruiting poster which is the earliest evidence of the use of the Pompadour nickname. There are many more fascinating items charting the history of the 44th and 56th Foot, subsequently the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the Essex Regiment, since 1741, but the museum doesn't stop at 1958 when the Essex Regiment and the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment amalgamated. Although not too much space is allocated to events since then, the Museum certainly emphasises that the Essex heritage lives on in The Royal Anglian Regiment today, specifically in C (Essex) Company of the Vikings and E (Essex and Hertfordshire) Company of the Steelbacks.

So there's a lot to see, of interest both to the 'old and bold' and also to all those serving today - but not just at present because an exciting project is underway to redevelop the museum!

Although everything in the museum is owned by the Museum Trustees, who are all members of The Regiment, accommodation is provided by Chelmsford Borough Council which runs the museum for us, alongside their Borough Museum in Oaklands Park, Chelmsford.

This pioneering arrangement was set up some 35 years ago, and has worked exceptionally well - visitors, around 50,000 per year, can enter free of charge seven days a week, and that has certainly helped keep today's Regiment in the public eye and the spirit of the Pompadours alive.

The current redevelopment, masterminded by the Borough Council, has seen the old, rather ugly, 1970s single-storey structure which housed the Regimental Museum demolished. In its place a handsome new two-storey building is rising which will provide space for displays about the industrial heritage of Chelmsford (think Marconi in its heyday!), a gallery for the Essex Yeomanry Collection, and - most important for us - completely new accommodation for the Essex Regiment Museum. All in all it's a fantastic project which will add a great deal to the enjoyment and education of visitors when it is completed at the very beginning of next year.

Chelmsford Borough Council is kindly paying most of the cost of the work, but they have asked the Museum Trustees for a small contribution. To meet this, an appeal was launched last year with a target of £125,000. To date, about £92,000 has been raised from a wide variety of sources, so only £33,000 to go!

Many members of the wider Regimental family have already donated generously to the appeal, but further contributions will be most welcome, be they from ex-Pompadours, from someone wanting to remember a relative's service in the Essex Regiment, or from those who just want to help preserve our Regimental heritage and keep it flourishing in public. If you would like to make a donation, or can help in any other way, please contact the Appeal Secretary, Maj Peter Williamson, at peter.williamson4@virgin.net or on 07979 531741.

And watch this space for a report on the new museum this time next year!

Yours etc
Peter Williamson

Destiny Malaya

Dear Editor,

Destiny Malaya is an exciting and authentic historical novel set in Malaya at the height of the Emergency. It is a distillation of events and personal experiences during the author's six years with British and Malay infantry battalions in Perak, Selangor and Pahang and his close association with Special Branch, whose operational activities are also a feature of the book. A thread of romance, suspense and intrigue enhances the tale, which also focuses on the successes and weaknesses of the Communist Terrorist Guerillas under Chin Peng. *Destiny Malaya* has been warmly received by a broad spectrum of readers - including individuals, military establishments and libraries.

Copies are available from the author, Col Peter Stock, 28 Molyneux Street, London W1H 5HW. Tel: 020 7262 1579 or 22 Trafalgar Gate, Brighton Marina Village, E Sussex BN2 5UY. Tel: 01273 679768, or e-mail prstock@tiscali.co.uk.

Cost including packaging and postage is £11.50 for the UK, £12.50 for Europe and £15 for the rest of the world.

Yours etc
Peter Stock

The Regimental Museum

Brig Colin Groves writes:

Arguably the biggest achievement since the museum opened has been its recent award of Accredited Museum status by the government's Museums Libraries and Archives Council. This award is a formal acknowledgement that the museum works to nationally agreed standards. It is recognition of the fact that the museum's displays, the care taken of the objects in the collection and its records, are as good as any museum in the country. Maj William Reeve led the museum's accreditation working party and was delighted with the result. He and the Chairman, Brig Colin Groves, particularly want to record their thanks to the curatorial advisor, Martin Boswell, to Maj Dick Gould at RHQ and to Andy Murkin, the museum officer, for the enormous amount of work they did to gain accreditation. We are sure that this sign of quality will be apparent when you come to visit the museum at Duxford.



MLA logo.

Several groups from the Regiment have done just that over the past six months. The 3rd Battalion have made two important official visits: firstly for the annual Remembrance Day ceremonies in November, and later, in February, for their Iraq medal presentation ceremony.



Cpl Helen Mattley and family; LCpl Simon Mason and fiancée.

More recently, Sgt Matt Waters from the Army Careers Office in Cambridge brought a group of potential recruits. It was a first. The young men appeared to enjoy the brief talk on Regimental history given by Andy Murkin and took the opportunity to find out more about the Regiment many of them were planning to join. By the time this issue becomes available, we shall also have held the second annual reunion of the 3rd East Anglian Regiment Malaya Veterans Group, whose first meeting, commemorating the 50th anniversary of the formation of The Regiment, was reported in the last issue of *Castle*.

Increasingly the museum is becoming recognised as a very appropriate place for groups such as those mentioned above to meet and to visit. If you are thinking of organising a visit, or a reunion of



The 3rd Battalion Colours on display at the Imperial War Museum's Remembrance Day ceremony. Rev Paul Whitehead, Chaplain to the 3rd Battalion officiates.

Regimental Museum

some kind, you will always be sure of a warm welcome and ready assistance from Andy and Noel Muncey, the museum's archivist.

Some major changes planned for the museum should be in place by the end of this year. The changes are listed in full in the Museum Appeal article following this report. The ones we aim to install are the *Recent Deployments* screen and new cabinets following the redesign of the dual exit/entrance area. Before that, the photographic exhibitions, originally described a temporary, but now a permanent fixture in the Land Warfare Hall, will be revised. All three Battalions are depicted, and as new pictures arrive, the displays are updated. New, sturdier display stands have been loaned to us by the Imperial War Museum for the 1st and 3rd Battalion displays, and the 2nd Battalion display is to include photographs of the recent Honorary Status Parade in Stamford, taken by Noel Muncey.

For the first time, we are able to count the number of visitors to the museum's exhibition area, having installed electronic 'eyes' at the entrances and exits. Knowing exactly how many people come to the museum on a daily basis, and even which way they walk round the exhibition, will be a great help in our planning of future displays.

The visitor counter came not a moment too soon. People are coming in greater numbers and visitors to the museum office have also increased. Researchers and those interested in our extensive collection

of photographs and documents, from all periods of The Regiment's history, are very welcome. Facilities are available for viewing DVDs and videotapes, as well as photographs and documents. To make an appointment please see our contact details at the end of this article.

Now a plea – the museum urgently needs copies of television news clips, videos/DVDs and films of Regimental activities, both for display and for archival purposes. For instance, we have no coverage of the recent Freedom Parades, although some film was probably copied by readers from TV, or taken by Regimental members attending the parades. Recent TV footage particularly sought are those parades in Watford, Luton, Stamford and Lincoln; an interview in December 2008 on the Mackness family; and ITV *Nightwatch* on 18 March 2009 covering the then Cpl Rayney's MC in Bosnia. There are many more that are wanted that go back years. Obviously we can try to get them from the television companies, but to obtain copies from ITV, Central and BBC, can cost up to £200 per minute. Please record any relevant TV coverage you can on DVD, plus other footage you may have taken personally and send a copy of these important records to the Regimental Museum.

Contact details: Royal Anglian Regiment Museum, Duxford Airfield, Duxford, Cambridge, CB22 4QR. Tel: 01223 497298.

email: info@royalanglianmuseum.org.uk

The Royal Anglian Regiment Museum Appeal



Draft design of the Regimental Memorial.

Image: Rodney Melville and Partners.

About this time last year *Castle* carried an article that informed its readers of the launch of a fundraising appeal for the Regimental Museum. The appeal had two aims; to raise a significant contribution towards the Regimental Memorial and to make funds available for the biggest set of improvements to the museum's displays since it opened in 1996. Those include replacing a *Recent Deployments* board with a computer assisted screen that will allow quick and easy updating after successive operational tours; radical redesign of the dual entrance/exit area, providing two new and extremely large display cases; the computerisation of the *What is a Battalion?* display; and provision for an educational and research facility.

Thanks to the tireless efforts of Lt Col Veitch, the appeal has met with considerable success. Its target is £250,000. At the time of writing £119,342.00 has been raised. That means that we are close to raising the appeal's contribution needed for the Regimental Memorial and have the funds to install the *Recent Deployment* screen and new display cases. Those three things will work closely together. The memorial will record the names of the fallen and about 200 yards away, in the museum, the *Recent Deployments* screen and new display cases will combine to tell the stories of the latest campaigns in which the Regiment has served with distinction.

Our grateful thanks go to all those who have contributed so far. The range of donors has been wide. It includes individuals, local authorities, charitable trusts, significant companies, affiliated ACF county organisations, CCF detachments and schools in the recruiting area.

Readers will appreciate that despite enormous effort, the appeal has yet to reach half-way. It needs your help and that could take many forms eg personal donation, sponsored events and fundraising functions, and the sale of museum raffle tickets at, say, Regimental Association and club meetings (tickets from Maj Gould at RHQ – telephone 01284 752394). Information sent to the Fundraiser is also a vital form of help. He urgently needs to know of any notable person (celebrity, land owner, businessperson, or someone simply rich), commercial company, clubs, family member or friend who you think might donate. Any information on which museum and Regimental Memorial appeal letters can be based should be sent to Lt Col Trevor Veitch, on 01780 764802 or tveitch@btopenworld.com

Donations should be made by cheque and be sent to the Royal Anglian Regiment Museum Trust, RHQ R ANGLIAN, The Keep, Gibraltar Barracks, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP33 3RN.

Diary Dates 2009/2010**2009****August**

- 1 Suffolk Officers' Lunch, Culford School
- 2 Morning Service, Regimental Chapel, Warley
- 2 Minden Day 250 Reunion, Bury St Edmunds
- 14-23 'All The 4s' Sponsored Walk in Aid of Regimental Benevolent Charity: Lincoln, Leicester, Northampton, Bedford & Hertford

September

- 1 Lead for Suffolk Regiment Chapel in Bury St Edmunds passes to Royal Anglian
- 3 Regimental Museum Trustees Meeting
- 6 Morning Service, Regimental Chapel, Warley
- 6 Cambridgeshire Council Meeting and AGM, ACF Centre, Waterbeach
- 11 Regimental Golf Autumn Meeting, Brampton Park Golf Club, Huntingdon
- 19 Regimental Rugby Match, Wymondham RFC, 1430 hrs
- 20 Regimental Gathering, IWM Duxford
- 26 Royal Norfolk Regimental Association General Committee Meeting, TA Centre, Norwich
- 26 Royal Norfolk and Royal Anglian Association Dinner, Norwich
- 27 Royal Norfolk and Royal Anglian Association Service, Norwich Cathedral
- 27 Royal Lincoln's Reunion and AGM, Sobraon Barracks, Lincoln

October

- 2 3rd Battalion Officers' Dinner Club Lunch, Warley
- 3 Royal Lincolns' Malaya Reunion
- 4 Morning Service, Regimental Chapel, Warley
- 10 4/5th Battalion Officers' Dinner, Leicester
- 12 Lincolnshire County Committee Meeting, Sobraon Barracks, Lincoln
- 16-18 Ex STEELBACK CADET – 3rd Bn
- 17 Royal Tigers' Cyprus Veterans Reunion
- 17 Peterborough Branch Annual Dinner, Yaxley
- 18 Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire & Essex Regiment Associations Morning Service and Lunch, Royal Hospital, Chelsea
- 24 Royal Anglian Reunion, Felixstowe
- 30 Royal Norfolk and Royal Anglian Association King's Lynn Association Dinner, Town Hall

November

- 1 Morning Service, Regimental Chapel, Warley
- 3 Essex Regiment Association Remembrance Service, Chelmsford Cathedral
- 3 Essex Regiment Association Salamanca Luncheon, Chelmsford
- 5 Field of Remembrance Opening, Westminster Abbey
- 6 Regimental Council Meeting, Army & Navy Club
- 6 Officers' Dining Club, Army & Navy Club
- 8 Remembrance Sunday
- 15 Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment Association Remembrance Service and Reunion
- 22 Norwich Branch Lunch, TA Centre, Norwich
- 28 Finedon Branch Annual Dinner, Kettering
- 29 Lincoln Branch Coach Trip to Birmingham Tattoo

December

- 1bc Fords of Europe Carol Service, Regimental Chapel, Warley
- 1bc Proposed Re-opening of The Essex Regiment Museum, Chelmsford
- 4 Royal Anglian Reunion, South Wigston Workingmen's Club LE18 4PB
- 5 Royal Tigers' Officers' Luncheon, Army & Navy Club, London
- 5 Gorleston and Gt Yarmouth Branch Dinner, Pier Hotel, Gorleston
- 6 Morning Service, Regimental Chapel, Warley
- 11 Northampton Branch Reunion and Christmas Party, Ex-Servicemen's Club, Sheep Street, Northampton

2010**January**

- 10 Morning Service, Regimental Chapel, Warley

February

- 7 Morning Service, Regimental Chapel, Warley
- 7 Royal Lincolns' Sobraon Lunch

March

- 2 Royal Norfolk Chapel Meeting, Norwich Cathedral
- 7 Morning Service, Regimental Chapel, Warley
- 27 Poachers' Grimsby Reunion, Cleethorpes

Diary Dates

April

- 4 Morning Service, Regimental Chapel, Warley
- 15 Royal Lincolns' AGM
- 23 3rd Bn Officers' Dinner Club Cocktail Party, London
- 25 Almanza Service and Rededication of Royal Norfolk/Royal Anglian Chapel, Norwich Cathedral
- 30 Regimental Golf Spring Meeting, Swaffham GC

May

- 2 Morning Service, Regimental Chapel, Warley
- 12 Suffolk Regiment Council Meeting, TA Centre, Bury St Edmunds
- 20 Royal Norfolk Regiment Council Meeting, Norfolk Club, Norwich

June

- 4 Royal Norfolk Regiment Officers' Dinner, Norfolk Club, Norwich
- 5 Royal Norfolk Regiment Officers' Lunch, Norfolk Club, Norwich
- 6 Morning Service, Regimental Chapel, Warley
- 18 Royal Anglian Reunion, Ex-Servicemen's Club, Sheep Street, Northampton
- 26/27 Royal Tigers' Weekend
- 27 Essex Regiment Association Remembrance Service and Reunion

Can You Remember?

Capt Mark Taylor writes:

Five Years Ago January - June 2004

The conversion to Bowman had gripped the Battalion and, amidst the endless 'plug-ups' and 'radio-check' exercises on Salisbury Plain, an Inter-Platoon Competition was conceived and executed in Dartmoor. Coming on the back of the field firing camp on Otterburn, this proved to be one of the most memorable in recent Viking history. A soldier could thus be forgiven for thinking that everywhere outside of Chelmsford suffers from torrential rain, only gets two hours of sunlight per day and has an animal population far greater than that of the local inhabitants!

A ski camp in Alp D'Huez, soldiers on Ex Snow Warrior and a ski team to the Alpine Ski Championships were among the sporting opportunities, along with success in orienteering. Judging from the photo, some of the tracksuits still survive to this day in the Battalion!

The Poachers concentrated on Pre-Deployment Training and subsequently their move to Ballykelly for a two-year residential

tour. Simulated riots in Rype Village and mortar base plate checks around Carr's Corner in Thetford became the normal routine; but the ever present threat of dissident action in Northern Ireland hit home when the soldiers arrived in Ballykelly to an IED on the NAAFI estate – welcome back to the Province!



Cpl Fordham ready for action.



Maj Carver, an early pioneer in R Anglian snowboarding.

Can You Remember?



LCpl Everitt takes a nap during 2Lt Medding's QBOs.



The new Army issue Arctic warfare uniform as trialled on Exercise Snow Viking.

Can You Remember?



Royal Anglian Spean Bridge Commando speed marchers at the finish point. Poachers team joined by Cpl Armon (1st Battalion) and Cpl MacTavish (2nd Battalion) from AFC Harrogate.



Vikings orienteering team. Good to see so many of the tracksuits have survived to this day!

Can You Remember?**10 Years Ago
January – June 1999**

Fresh from a Battle Group exercise in Wales and the well practised raider tactics, the Vikings returned from Christmas leave to adopt their new ORBAT for the upcoming two year residential tour in Londonderry. With the COP formed up and beginning its specialist training, the Battalion was put through a comprehensive range package in Colchester, before rioting in Longmoor, Lydd and Hythe!

The Poachers were in Alexander Barracks, Cyprus, entering the second year of a two year residential tour. With a Poacher Platoon attached to the Vikings for their upcoming tour to Northern Ireland, the Recce Platoon in the jungles of Brunei and B Coy in the Falklands, the Poachers still managed a Battle Group exercise on the LIMA training area near Episkopi – creating panic amongst the locals who thought that the Turks were invading again!



Public order training in Oakington.



Charity bike ride - Dhekelia to Episkopi - Cpl Mayall and his team (A Company).



Cpl Marshallsay (A Company) on the break.



Lt Messenger, OC 7 Platoon.

Can You Remember?



Poacher operations by air.



Pte Eggleton and Dmr Hanley on exercise.



Cpl Batty and the cast of *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels* - A Company on Exercise Poacher's Pride.

15 Years Ago January - June 1994

The Vikings were operational once again and back on the streets of Northern Ireland, taking over from 2LI in East Tyrone at the end of 1993. With A Coy in Killymeal, Dungannon and B Coy in Cookstown, the Ops Coy was also in Dungannon. They were given a warm New Years' welcome by the IRA who mounted a double proxy attack on Dungannon and Cookstown on 1st Jan and, whilst ATO declared them hoaxes, the follow up led to a command wire being found in the Ardberg Estate. This set the tone for a busy tour.

Operation Grapple training kicked in after Christmas leave, preparing the Poachers for their deployment to Bosnia, with all manner of skills cadres being run from Medics to Warrior Driver Training. Faced with a changing UN stance, the Poachers' training adapted to the requirements. Fortunately there were also plenty of sporting activities to keep everyone amused. The Poachers were subsequently crowned BAOR Novice Boxing Champions and a team of Nordic skiers, led by Lt Ralph Wooddisse, achieved fourth place in the Army and sixth in the British National Championships.



Warriors during the platoon competition in Germany.

Can You Remember?



2 R Anglian rock climbers in Sardinia.



WO2 Brooks and Sgt Tate looking for landmines.



Maj Wadman receiving the Major Unit Trophy for the brigade cross-country race (Capt O'Driscoll and Lt Wooddisse behind).



Culvert check by Pte Griffiths.



Operations Company prepares to deploy by Chinook.

Can You Remember?



Sgt Marsh and his multiple.



Sgt Jones and his multiple prepare to deploy by helicopter to Cappagh.

Can You Remember?**20 Years Ago
January - June 1989**

At the beginning of the year, the Vikings began preparations to depart from Gibraltar and looked forward to moving back to Colchester as part of 19 Brigade for a return to 'real soldiering'. But before that, there were still plenty of opportunities to be had with over 120 Vikings taking part in a ski camp in the Sierra Nevada, successfully scaring away any remaining Spanish tourists.

During early 1989, Belfast was home for the Poachers with A Coy deploying to Fort White Rock, giving them commanding views over West Belfast. Nice views aside, it was also a PIRA mortar magnet. With B Coy in North Howard Street Mill and C Coy at Girdwood Park, all the Battalion's area was covered, leaving Echelon to don their slippers and complete jigsaws at Musgrave Park Hospital!

It was to prove a difficult tour; car bombs detonating at Girdwood Park front gate, RPG and CWIED attacks on patrols from A and B coys and a number of blast bombs thrown over the walls at North Howard Street Mill. The tour was marred by the death of Pte Nicholas Peacock, killed by a Command Wire IED outside the Rock Bar on the Falls Road during the first week of the tour.

By February, the Pompadours were back in Roman Barracks, Colchester, having handed over duties in Minden to the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. Lt Col Julian Lacey assumed command at the end of the month and the Battalion quickly found itself on exercise on Salisbury Plain with some unique opportunities to compare kit and equipment whilst live firing with the MOD Police and USAF. A stir was caused in the Battalion at the arrival of some unusual looking vehicles...the Saxon! At least C Coy would have some fun picking up penguins in the Falklands....



Cpl Dear supervising an unusual range detail.



Tough going up Naval Hospital hill.

Can You Remember?



LCpl Dunn shows how a river crossing should be done.



LCpl Fullbrook assisting LCpl Port with his camouflage.



Pte Stead (A Company) covering the approach of the CSM.



Ptes Toon and Carmichael of B Company try on the new helmet.

Can You Remember?

Lt Gen Reilly with Maj Hodgson, Sgt Ralph and Lt Robinson at 'Fraggle Rock'.

25 Years Ago January - June 1984

The Vikings found themselves at home for the first Christmas in three years at Oakington Barracks. Exercise in Cyprus followed, supported by attachments from all three TA battalions as well as the Bermuda Regiment. The visits to Jerusalem for R & R proved popular, especially when Cpl Dave Hurd and others took over the ships band until 4am – some four hours after they should have stopped playing! The FTX in Cyprus did not pass without amusing incident as the Recce Platoon sank in 7m of water whilst trying to secure a beach landing site. Cue sense of humour failure from OC Recce and laughter from the rest of the Battalion!

"Coffee Shop Diplomacy" was all the rage for the Humanitarian Teams of the Poachers' C Coy, working the farming areas of the UN Buffer Zone known as Sector 2. A and D (Sp) Coy began the tour on the seas edge at Dhekelia and guarding 9 Sigs Regt at Ayios Nicholas, with field firing at Akamas, Adventure Training and sport

also on offer; B and C Coy would get their turn in April.

Following their exercising of the Freedom of Colchester, the Pompadours swapped bangers for bratwurst as they arrived to take over in Elizabeth Barracks, Minden, under the new CO, Lt Col Colin Groves. As a Mechanised Battalion, there was a steady stream of training courses and exercises with the FV432s, culminating in the 11 Armd Bde CPX. The Pompadours also continued their fine form in the GPMG (SF) Match 83 competition under the watchful eyes of Sgt Keith Smith and Cpl Steven Knifton, putting in an excellent display at the Eastern District Championship, where they outclassed all other competitors.



Finger target indication for an SF team.



CO, Lt Col Tony Calder and OC A Company, Maj David Phipps, share a joke.

Can You Remember?



D (Sp) Company - winners of the 2nd Battalion SAAM.



The winning team at the UN rifle meeting

Can You Remember?



Lt Col Alan Thompson (R) hands over the Battalion to Lt Col Colin Groves, who hands over Meeanee Barracks to Lt Col Ian Lewis 1 KOSB.



Lt Col Colin Groves takes over Elizabeth Barracks from an ex-Pompadour, Lt Col Pat Shervington.

30 Years Ago January - June 1979

The Vikings had a successful FTX with 1 Arm'd Div on AINTREE TASK where, despite having been put through their paces, all 82 FV432 vehicles made it back to camp under their own steam – you won't see those days again! The vehicle fleet was modernized to take the 'remarkable new Clansman radio sets', making the Vikings the first mechanised unit of that type. Before long though, the Battalion was training for the upcoming tour of Belfast; the APCs disappeared, civilian movement was logged unbeknown, wives had their cars and prams searched and even the Bungay Roger Club was subjected to a pub-check!

Despite having to spend Christmas on duty, the Poachers were busy in Berlin and the New Year saw an array of cadres from anti-tanks to soldier upgrading courses. A 'rent-a-mob' from the Battalion showed some *inter-Regimental* co operability by proving worthy local inhabitants during the Vikings' Op Banner training. The Allied Forces Day Parade proved to be a spectacle in central Berlin, with thousands of Berliners turning out to watch.

The Pompadours were in Northern Ireland for the beginning of the year and, in the finest tradition of bailing out the country from striking workers, turned their hand to driving oil tankers in the snows of January. This earned them praise and considerable recognition, not least from the GOC, Lieutenant General Sir Tim Creasey.



'Are you sure that you are the RSM's wife?'



Cpl Davies and Cpl Russell during one of their many crossings of the Havel.

Can You Remember?



432s in action at Hohn.



Recce Platoon vehicles on the Allied Forces Parade.



Miss 1 R Anglian visits during Northern Ireland training.



'Quickly - you run up there and I'll follow you...'



Members of HQ Company seeing how the East Germans do it.



Pte David Rouse prepares to deliver petrol during the tanker drivers strike.

Can You Remember?**35 Years Ago
January - June 1974**

Still in Cyprus, the Vikings knew that the year would be filled with unit moves, although the unexpected emergency tour of Ulster was not yet fully endorsed outside rumour control. Training for the Battalion's role in Arctic Warfare as part of the ACE Mobile Force, could not have gone better, with near freezing temperatures to endure in Cyprus; in May, the Vikings moved to Tidworth.

1974 would prove to be the Poachers only training year, whilst based in Germany, not interrupted by a tour of Northern Ireland; so the Battalion rapidly swung into action to take advantage of this gap in operations. Sport and low level training were high on the agenda, as was Adventure Training, with potholing in the Harz Mountains and skiing in the Konstanzer Valley.

Whilst waiting for snow that never arrived in January and February, the Pompadours took advantage of plenty of other Adventure Training opportunities, as well as fitting in a refresher on Mechanised Infanteering at Soltau with the 9/12 Lancers and a Battle Group exercise. A short notice call up for duty in Northern Ireland meant a temporary refocus, but this was cancelled, much to the disappointment of the soldiers – good to see the fighting spirit was never lost in the 3rd Battalion.



Cpl Michael Sedgwick shows off an Arctic-camouflaged GPMG at the Colour Presentation Parade AMF(L) demonstration.



Poachers ski expedition. Standing from left: LCpl Higgins, Lt Power, Pte Fuller, Pte Gough, Sgt Sweeney. Kneeling: Cpl Cooke, Cpl Smith, Pte Reynolds, Pte Lloyd.



Troodos Walkabout - the winning team. Lt Bill Mooring, Sgt John Ross and Cpl Des Foran.



The CO, Lt Col Mike Thorne, presents the Individual Orienteering Trophy to Sgt Whitehead, HQ Company.

Can You Remember?

40 Years Ago
January - June 1969

The Vikings took advantage of an early New Year ski trip to Aviemore, Scotland. With some practice, the inverted reverse snowplow became less common, as did the time spent in the prone position. But as the lower slopes proved quite crowded, the ski trip increasingly resembled a day of 10 pin bowling. The realisation of being based in Catterick was sinking in, as twice since the New Year the Battalion had found itself knee deep in snow. But they adapted quickly, finding that the indigenous population were near to human and could be wooed with promises of coffee and beads! As with soldiers at Catterick in 2009, Newcastle seemed to be the hub of the Battalion's social life during their stint in the North.

A short notice jaunt aboard HMS Fearless, bound for Sardinia with 45 Commando aboard, gave 10 of the quickest kit packing soldiers from the Poachers a unique opportunity to play enemy for the Marines during a 10 day exercise on the Italian Island.

A patrol and survival exercise in Iceland; a 24 Bde exercise in Denmark; the Pompadours seemed to have plenty of travel opportunities during the Spring. Just to make sure the soldiers didn't get carried away, a mobile penetration exercise in Scotland was instigated along with a bit of skiing in Glencoe.

For the Tigers, some members of C Coy thought they would try their hand at skiing in Aviemore, Scotland, during February. Little did they realize that they only needed to travel to Norfolk where A Coy were enduring snow blizzards during ranges and section level competitions on Stanford PTA.



Poachers Exercise on HMS Fearless.



Poachers Exercise on HMS Fearless.



Arrival by chopper - Ptes Smith, Hopson and Green.



Resting on the fringe of NATO.

1st Battalion The Vikings

Introduction by the Commanding Officer

Lt Col James Woodham writes:

I start this introduction by referring back to my closing words in the December 2008 Edition of Castle; 2009 was to be dominated by operations – C (Essex) Coy bound for Kosovo and the remainder of the Battalion warned for operations in Iraq as part of Op TELIC 14. Whilst I appealed for people to be flexible and comfortable with a change, I have to admit to have been slightly surprised by some of the twists and turns that have taken place over the past 6 months. By way of an illustration, we were using Forecast of Events Version 7 when I took command in July 2008 and this morning I received Version 33 in my inbox! I am very conscious that we all find life easier when there is a clear focus and plan. Whilst the focus has been clear throughout this period, it has shifted often and the plan has also had to change. I have been hugely impressed by the Battalion and our families' ability to soak up this period of uncertainty.

As many of you will be aware, the planned operations in Kosovo and Iraq have not materialised – the Vikings' contribution falling as part of the UK's reduction in troop numbers in both theatres. Whilst strategically this should be seen as a practical example of real progress, as professional soldiers there has been more than a little disappointment. However, operations are not off the card completely; the Battalion is currently on very high readiness delivering the core of the Spearhead Land Element (SLE) Battlegroup and is also the standby Northern Ireland Public Order (NIPO) Battalion. In addition, the Battalion's contribution to 12 Mechanized Brigade's Operations Company remains warned for operations worldwide and we currently have 4 soldiers deployed as augmentees on operations in Afghanistan.

Training has continued at a significant level of intensity over the past 6 months, morphing on a regular basis to keep pace with the shifts in operational focus. Much of the training undertaken has been high quality, well resourced and has delivered credible results. Of note we successfully completed TESEX in November 2008 (a capstone exercise to our conversion to BULLDOG), took part in an excellent Combined Arms Live Firing Exercise in Otterburn, C (Essex) Company produced a cracking result at the Advanced Surveillance and Reconnaissance Course at Lydd and most recently the Battalion conducted pre-deployment and public order training to ensure we were ready to assume the SLE and NIPO commitments.

The immediate future for the Battalion looks equally interesting and challenging. We have just received warning that we are likely to be re-rolled from Mechanized to Light Role Infantry and, as part of the

conversion, will be heading back to Salisbury Plain to complete another TESEX which will be pitched at achieving Collective Training Level 4. A (Norfolk) Company are warned to join the 2 R WELSH BG at BATUS and will be remaining a BULLDOG Company until this exercise is complete. Finally, the Battalion have been warned to provide the Command and Control and Support functions for a surge infantry recruit training battalion to be created at Barry Buddon from September 2009 through to April 2010. This could impact on approximately 60 people from the Battalion and might, in effect, be the equivalent of an operational tour on the East coast of Scotland!

In amongst this busy period, we have also managed to find some time for fun. The Officers', WOs and Sgts' and Cpls' Messes are in good form and all are enjoying a busy period of social activity. The Officers' Mess recently enjoyed a superb evening during which we unveiled a stunning commemorative silver statuette in the form of Captain David Hicks MC and as I write the RSM is arranging the unveiling of a painting by the military artist David Rowlands commemorating the Battalion's tour in Helmand. Over the winter we have had a number of the Battalion involved in winter sports, including 40 soldiers taking part in a Battalion Ski Camp in the French Alps and a few of the soldiers injured in Afghanistan joining the charity Battleback on a skiing trip. On the sporting front, the Battalion won the 12 Mechanized Brigade Novice Boxing Competition convincingly and has had considerable success with its Orienteering team, including a very promising Under 25 team who have just won the 4th Division Team Championship. With the onset of a bit of sun, the summer sporting activities are under way; the Battalion's cricket team recently held their first session in the nets

and 15 soldiers took part in one of the first triathlons of the season.

Overall, the Battalion is in fine fettle and champing at the bit at the sniff of the next operation.

STABILIS

A (Norfolk) Company

Carrying the Carling Cup at Wembley

Maj Stuart Smith, OC A (Norfolk)

Coy, kicks off:

LCpl "Sully" Sullivan, of A (Norfolk) Coy, delighted the 90,000 strong crowd at Wembley and millions of fans watching elsewhere, by personally escorting the prestigious Carling Cup on the day of the League Cup Final.

Answering the advert for 'someone with Number One dress' the diligent and loyal A (Norfolk) Coy stalwart enjoyed an awe-inspiring day carrying the trophy onto the pitch and rubbing shoulders with football's biggest stars. As Sully will often tell the younger Vikings, "time spent in Recce is seldom wasted". It was therefore apt that his experience started a week before the final when he and 22 other Vikings had to conduct thorough rehearsals for their part in the League Cup Final between Manchester United and Tottenham Hotspur.

LCpl D Sullivan, A (Norfolk)

Company, takes over:

On the day of the match, the Vikings left for Wembley at 09.30hrs. On arrival I was given an 'Access All Areas' pass and I made sure that I did not fail to remind my companions of that fact. A two hour tour of the impressive Wembley Stadium led me to the conclusion



LCpl Sullivan with the Carling Cup

The Vikings



Vikings receive free balloons for helping out at Wembley

that I preferred the old one as there seemed to be less atmosphere at the new version.

I was ordered to get into my Number One dress a full three hours before the match. I think this was because my 'hanger on', WO2 (CSM) Hopkin, wanted to use me to increase his prospects of impressing the ladies! Once in my kit, I started to feel the excitement and nerves build as the atmosphere grew. In the tunnel I rubbed shoulders with England internationals Rio Ferdinand and Ledley King who were the Captains for the day. I also chatted to superstars Robbie Keane and Dimitar Berbatov, but had the most time for Spurs Manager, Harry Redknapp; I enjoyed a long and jovial conversation with him which ended when I told him I was an Arsenal fan!

20 minutes before kick-off, I marched onto the pitch and apparently my name was announced to the public over the tannoy system, although I don't recall that as I was concentrating on the task at hand. Placing the large cup and lid onto its stand was like attempting a command task but, pleased I hadn't messed it up, I marched back off the pitch a very proud and relieved man. The remainder of the Viking party were decorating the pitch with large balloons and adding to the tremendous atmosphere. I had to chuckle to myself at this stage as I witnessed my Company Sergeant Major mince onto the pitch carrying a large helium balloon!

Walking back out onto the pitch with the players, just before the match actually started, I felt that I visibly grew in stature as I was the centre of attention. Standing next to the Cup and saluting, while the National Anthem threatened to raise the newly constructed roof, was amazing. Just after the event, I was quoted as saying, "It was all a blur, to be honest....one of the best days of my life...it was the chance of a life time....I was delighted and on a high all day".

Whilst I watched the match seated just behind the Man United bench and next to the opera singer, Katherine Sayles, the remainder of the Vikings were sent to watch

from Row Z up in the heavens and right in the heart of the Spurs fans. However, a few dramas ensued when it was discovered that some Manchester United fans had seeped in! Thanks to the quick intervention of the stewards, the 'Man U fans' were moved before trouble kicked off. It would have been ironic if the remainder of the Battalion, currently on SLE, was called to conduct a non-combatant Evacuation Operation from Wembley Stadium or had to deploy in public order gear to break up a riot!

At half time I missed the opportunity to talk to the England manager, Fabio Capello

as, in true British soldier-like fashion, I went off with the opera singer for a crafty fag. The match finished 0-0 after extra time in what was a pulsating, end-to-end encounter. During the penalty shoot out I stood amongst the players on the sidelines watching the drama unfold. Wayne Rooney and Gary Neville got the benefit of my wisdom and experience as Captain of the Battalion team and an Infantry football player, as did Cristiano Ronaldo when I chatted to him in the tunnel. My advice obviously did the trick as Manchester United went on to win. Amazing really that, considering I take home just over £1300 per month, while he gets a hundred times that a week! Having carried the Carling Cup onto the pitch without messing it up, I was invited back to Wembley with several other Vikings to carry the St George's flag onto the pitch at the start of the England versus Ukraine World Cup qualifying match.

Spearhead Land Element – Life as the Lead Company Group

Capt Tom Clark, 2IC A (Norfolk)

Company, writes:

There was a rapid switch of focus in mid-December as A (Norfolk) Coy were warned off that they were no longer training for Op TELIC 14, but would now become the Spearhead Land Element (SLE) Lead Company Group (LCG). This brought the Coy a new set of challenges. Most importantly, the timeline for leaving the



Soldiers from A Company carry out their petrol bomb drills

The Vikings



LCpl Ranns and Pte Maistry on First Parades

UK which had been 5 months, with plenty of time for training and leave, was now compressed into less than half of that; A Coy would need to be ready to roll out of camp within 24hrs of getting the nod from PJHQ, which meant anytime after 0001hrs on 1 March.

Fortunately the Coy was already well on its way to being fully prepared due to Op TELIC Pre-Deployment Training. However, whereas Op TELIC has a focussed training programme set by the Operational Training and Advisory Group (OPTAG), the remit for SLE is much wider as it could be deployed almost anywhere in the world, and on almost any task. The training requirement is, therefore, much more varied and includes the ability to conduct Public Order (PO) operations.

Shields and batons were therefore the order of the day throughout January and February as the pl comds and sgts dusted off their PO heads and prepared for a rather icy and snowy validation exercise in Copehill Down Village. After a slippery PI level practice exercise, the Coy deployed to conduct the three key PO tasks (Containment, Dispersal and Separation), under the watchful eye of the OPTAG team. Despite the best efforts of the weather to thwart the integrity of the lines (several backsides finding their way earthward under pressure of a crowd generated from D Coy) the Coy finished the exercise fully validated.

The CSM's and CQMS's key focus throughout this period was ensuring that the Coy would be able to deploy out of camp within 24 hours of getting the call. This meant ensuring that the contact details of all ranks were updated in the Call-Out Register, as well as making sure that their kit was

serviceable and permanently packed, as per the RSM's kit list - ready to go.

Each day an enormous fleet of four vehicles confronts LCpl Ranns and Pte Smith who conduct before-use checks regardless of whether or not they need to be used. This is in order to ensure they are permanently task-worthy and ready to move to South Cerney. A fleet 'run-out' is also conducted on a monthly basis to ensure that any problems are picked up before we find ourselves in a foreign land with a Land Rover that needs a new transmission!

The key event for assuming the role was Ex First Flight. This exercise was run by 12 (Mech) Bde and involved the whole Battle Group converging at South Cerney for

various inspections to ensure we were ready to step on a plane and deploy if required. Ex First Flight was also the first opportunity for the CO to address all ranks of the BG and put his spin on the commitment. The IO then took a moment to run through a list of potential areas in the world where we may deploy - masterfully gleaned from the red-tops at morning coffee in the Officers' Mess!

In mid-April, B (Suffolk) Coy take over the role of LCG. Until then, the SLE commitment provides an operational focus for the Coy in the absence of the TELIC 14 tour. It has also been a useful tool for ensuring the Coy's administrative systems are in place and adjusting them where necessary.



2 Platoon gear up for their first opposed Battle Exercise

The Vikings

B (Suffolk) Company 12 Mech Bde Mission Specific Live Firing

2Lt Tim Hearne, 7 Pl Comd, B
(Suffolk) Company writes:

B (Suffolk) Coy was lucky enough to head up a Bn level Permanent Range Team (PRT) for the elements of 12 Mech Bde who were deploying to both Iraq and Afghanistan in Spring 09. I was fortunate to be one of the many range conducting officers (RCOs) drawn from across the Bn to put units bound for operations through their paces.

The Bn PRT deployed to the Lydd and Hythe range complex on a Saturday in mid-March to begin 15 continuous days of live firing. The sunny South Coast beckoned as we completed our range reces and planning in order to ensure we were ready to start the next day. The next two weeks seemed like a blur of range briefs and declarations as we cycled unit after unit through a series of ranges. These included the Platoon Defended House, aka 'the Death House', run by 2Lt Benstead, the yellow painted NI/Iraq Urban CQB range run by Capt Howes, a Section in Defence range run by Lt Granell and a Section Vehicle Ambush range run by 2Lt Crosbie.

I ran a HE and Red Phosphorus Grenade range for the Fusiliers who were due to head off to Musa Qala. All ran smoothly up until the last day when I got to destroy my first blind after a L84 failed to detonate. Watched by Cpls Kennedy and Stow, I crept across the shingle, PAM 21 in one hand and my amateur PE4 construction in the other. We waited a full 10 minutes before the blind was destroyed, evidence that 'rounding up' on safety cord measurements must be carefully judged!

I was also lucky enough to run the Section Attack range at the Lydd range complex, which turned into the PRT's main effort. Through the use of B (Suffolk) Coy soldiers

conducting a casualty extraction in contact, the exercising QRF were required to deploy to deny the friendly ambushed vehicle. The scenario required the sections to use a ditch to conduct their insertion as this was the only route that provided them with effective cover. At one point the mud in the ditch was between waist and chest deep, sapping both morale and energy in equal measure!

In terms of personnel, the Bn PRT commitment totalled 103 range and support staff including integral REME and medical support. Over the 15 days we put 1437 soldiers through a two day range package at either the Lydd or Hythe ranges. Other highlights were the occasional late night trip to the local town of Rye, training a B (Suffolk) Coy shooting team and setting fire to a notable bit of real estate on the South Coast! Overall the PRT was an interesting and educational experience for all the RCOs, safety staff and range teams involved.

Crash and Burn (Ex Reiver Ace)

Back in November 2008 B (Suffolk) Coy deployed on a live firing exercise in Otterburn. 2Lt Dan Benstead sheds light on the highs and lows of an awesome exercise:

"Don't worry sir, I never get stuck." These were the words that sealed my fate on a freezing cold evening somewhere in the middle of the Otterburn Training Area. Had the driver of a 4 tonner I was commanding, Private Sayce, not uttered these immortal words, then I'm convinced everything would have been fine; but no, he had to say them. Shortly after this premature outburst of confidence, the Bedford with Private Sayce and I inside, was in a ditch at 45 degrees with one wheel off the ground. It was the start of a nine hour ordeal during which we experienced rain, more rain, wind and snow. So, you may wonder, how did this little 'accident' happen? Well, if I told you that we'd swerved to avoid a 155mm artillery



High morale in B Coy despite the Otterburn microclimate

shell crater and that, as we'd done so, the road had simply disappeared, you might think I was exaggerating slightly, but that is exactly what happened. Why, then, had the track been shelled to pieces?

In November 2008 elements of the Vikings, including B Company, deployed to Otterburn on Ex Reiver Ace - a Brigade run, live firing exercise, culminating in an all-arms company final attack, the result of which was the Bedford ending up parked in a ditch. However, the first part of the deployment passed off without incident. Week one of Ex Reiver Ace saw many of the B Company NCOs and Officers provide the PRT for the Fusiliers' transition ranges. The ranges started at individual and pairs level, working up to company level attacks and made extra exciting for the safety staff by the incorporation of 51mm mortar. It also gave us the opportunity to throw the odd jibe at our mates in the Fusiliers about their 'skills and drills'. All in jest of course!

With the Fusiliers' range package complete, it was time for us to step up and show them what we could do. I'm sure the last thing the boys expected was to be living out of harbour areas on a live firing exercise, but that is exactly what we did and the weather was not kind. Otterburn in November is a bleak place, which made living outside a real experience, but nevertheless B Company powered on. Much was learnt on all of the ranges and the progression from pairs up to platoon and company level was dealt with extremely well by everyone. The culmination of the exercise was a company attack supported by a Fire Support Group, the Royal Artillery and the RAF with Close Air Support and Support Helicopters. Live firing at this level was a fantastic experience for all in B Company and I'm sure will be remembered for a long time to come. There is certainly no chance of Ex Reiver Ace slipping my mind thanks to the Gunners destruction of the aforementioned track and Private Sayce's slight of tongue. However, if you really want to know about vehicle related mishaps, then perhaps you should talk to OC B Company, who managed to site his Land Rover CP in the middle of a bog; but I'll leave him to tell that story.....!

All that remains to say is that Ex Reiver Ace was an excellent learning exercise for the whole Company. Yes, the weather might have been a bugbear, but let's face it, what's better than rolling round in the mud firing live rounds?



Would you trust this lot to run a section attack range!

The Vikings

C (Essex) Company Op Oculus (Kosovo) – The Phantom Tour

Maj Chris Davies, OC C (Essex)

Coy, introduces:

At 1614 hrs on Friday 12th September 2008 life seemed pretty good; the sun was shining, not a single cloud blotted the sky and the Company had been fallen out for a well deserved weekend break. A few moments later, after a call from the Commanding Officer, life got even better. C Company had been selected to be the next British Surveillance Company (BSC), operating within KFOR's Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance Task Force, and after TESEX, would immediately re-orbat and begin pre-operational training ready for assuming the role in late March 2009.

Between 'ENDEX' being called on TESEX and departing on two weeks pre-deployment leave, the Company had to achieve three things; firstly all SNCOs and above had to complete the two week 'Controllers' Course run by the Surveillance and Reconnaissance Wing (our training providers) in Lydd. Secondly, every member of the Coy had to conduct varying amounts of individual training including basic and advanced photography courses, team medic cadres, driving conversion courses, as well as the normal plethora of training which underpins any operational deployment. Thirdly, and of most significance, was

completing the demanding seven week Advanced Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ASR) Course in Lydd. The course was almost identical to that which Close Observation Platoons completed prior to service in Northern Ireland, the only difference being the cultural awareness training and exercise scenarios. It therefore had a tough reputation and it wasn't long before the Company realised that the path to Kosovo was not going to be an easy one.

By early March the Company had jumped over each of the hurdles and was feeling pretty chuffed about being awarded an extremely rare 'B+' on the intense ASR course. At this stage however, uncertainty had reared its ugly head and entered the equation; the operational situation within Kosovo had changed and the requirement for a covert surveillance and reconnaissance asset was being heavily debated at the strategic and operational levels of command. Shortly after the Company embarked on pre-deployment leave, and 10 days before the advance party were due to deploy, I received a phone call from the Balkans' desk officer within PJHQ. We were no longer deploying to Kosovo and that was final. Given the Coy's efforts over the preceding five months and the likely tasks that we would have been asked to complete in theatre, it was, unlike the initial telephone call I received from the Commanding Officer, a blow.

The Company were informed of the bad news during their leave but returned to duty a week later with a remarkably stoical attitude, ready to focus forward and take our place as part of the Spearhead Land Element. I stated to C Company at the beginning of our adventure that the experience would test the character of the Company and all those within it – it transpired that events at the end of our journey proved the most testing and I am proud to announce that the Company remained positive and is much stronger as a result.

The Advanced Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ASR) Course – A Platoon Commander's Perspective

2Lt Sam Thomas, 9 Pl Comd, writes:

I had been in the Battalion for five months when C Company was informed it would be taking over as the British Surveillance Company (Kosovo) in March 2009. This would be my third change of role; I had trained for Public Order, then conventionally as Mechanised Infantry in BULLDOGAFFs and now I was to train as a Controller for SR operations! A year before, whilst at Sandhurst, we had all been told that life as an Infantry Platoon Commander would be varied, but to be honest, at this stage, my head was starting to spin. However, the more I thought about it the more I realised the huge opportunity that had been handed to me. While some of the guys I had commissioned

with were tagging-on in Iraq, I would be planning and running my own operations in Kosovo. However, before this could become a reality there were a few hurdles I had to jump over: firstly the Controllers Course, which was planned to start 3 days after TESEX finished and then the main ASR Course itself, running for 7 weeks from early January until the end of February 2009.

The Controllers Course was fast and furious and attended by the three platoon commanders and their sergeants as well as the OC, Ops Officer and CSM. The first week was about learning as much information about SR operations and technical equipment capabilities as possible and left most of us thinking we were all going to become James Bond. The second week was all about planning and being able to work up robust operational plans; this was really what our tour, as Controllers, would be about. It proved to be a very steep learning curve, especially for 2Lt Charlie Powell (11 Pl Comd) and myself who had no prior experience in this particular field. By the end of the week though we were all producing detailed, workable plans and the directing staff were happy with our performance. Somewhere along the way we also managed to squeeze in all the main PT sessions from the full course and gained some first hand tales about logs, stretchers and the infamous Lydd shingle, which we were keen to take back to Pirbright and pass on to the rest of C Company.

The main course was tough. Although still physically demanding for the controllers, we had prepared well and were in a good position to support the teams when required. In terms of deploying on the various exercises the lads had it really tough. Operating from a warm operations room, occasionally deploying onto the ground, seemed easy in comparison to what the guys managed to achieve, especially given the appalling climatic conditions they had to endure night after night. For the controllers the real test came in the form of organising, planning, decision-making and co-ordinating. At times, we had to co-ordinate the deployment and extraction of up to 14 four-man teams across Kent with very limited resources. During the exercises we looked like dead men walking and I certainly felt that way on more than one occasion.

Overall, I learnt a huge amount in a relatively short space of time including how to build and run an ops room, the operational planning cycle and how to logistically support operations in terms of moving and re-supplying teams dispersed across a wide area with specialist kit requirements. I also realised how much detail one can go into when planning team level operations and how important good tactics and rehearsing 'actions on' are. Although our tour was unfortunately cancelled, everyone in the Company has benefited hugely from the course and we may hopefully have an opportunity to put our new skills to use operationally at some point in the future.



LCpl Garner fails to understand the concept of a covert hols.

The Vikings

Team Commanding: Nowhere to Hide!

*Cpl 'Daz' Farrugia, Romeo 1 Team
Comd, writes:*

When the Company was given the Kosovo task we re-organised into Surveillance Platoons or SPs. An SP consists of four teams, each with a Team Commander, a 2IC and two team members. Right from the start of the build-up training the Company did everything by teams to get us all used to working in such small groups. This didn't change at all on the course and we found that we did everything, from PT sessions and ranges, to photography and navigation training, as a team.

During the course we conducted many Coy level exercises. Tasks were given to controllers and then teams were allocated to support them. However, once our controller had briefed us on his plan, we were really on our own. I had to brief my team and once our transport dropped us off on the ground, it was down to us to carry out the task, whether in the urban or rural environment. It was a great chance to really lead as a JNCO. Some of the team commanders had only been LCpls for a few months but they all stepped up to the task and performed very well. It was not just the JNCOs who had lots to think about though. Much of the time private soldiers also had to think about and deal with testing situations totally on their own. This ranged from using and maintaining some highly complicated technical kit, to springing a night time rural arrest operation. Unfortunately, we did not deploy to Kosovo, but the experience has been brilliant for all those involved and enabled us all to become better soldiers.

Defence School of Photography Course – Life as a 'Techy'

LCpl Howe, Unit Surveillance

Camera Operator (USCO), writes:

Shortly after learning that C Company had been selected to attend the Advanced Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ASR) Course in Lydd, I was happy to be chosen to head up the Unit Surveillance Camera Operator (USCO) Cell. This involved commanding a four man team of camera experts and attending a three week course during October in RAF Cosford, 10 miles outside of Wolverhampton.

The course was designed to teach us how to take good quality photographs in a number of conditions, such as low light, poor visibility, and through cover, the latter proving particularly pertinent to the requirements of the ASR Course. We spent a lot of time using different techniques and styles, both inside and outside of camp, and were given the opportunity to take shots of instructors pretending to be civilians going about their normal business, in order to get the best results. Whilst completing the 3

week course, the remainder of the Company attended a week-long version; this was aimed at teaching them the basics of the camera equipment and how best to use the lenses and settings in order to achieve good workable photographs.

The course also taught us how to edit photographs, which involved a lot of time spent electronically filing and labelling. This was all done by means of Adobe Photoshop which is a very powerful and capable computer programme. Having not used the system before, I found this to be particularly challenging, but got there in the end.

Overall, it would have been nice for the course to have been a little more theatre-specific, as the emphasis seemed to be on more conventional photography. However, it was interesting, we learned a lot and most definitely put it all to practice, and more, during the main ASR Course.

Op Helvetic Public Order (PO) Training

Sgt Marsh, 10 Pl Sgt, writes:

In order to qualify as a PO Coy in support of the Bn's Op HELVETIC commitment, C Coy was given just over a week to get to grips with the art of PO operations and prepare to be validated at Coy level by day and night. Apart from some very basic training in Pirbright, the bulk of the training and the validation exercises took place in Longmoor Village. The facilities were excellent and, fortunately for us, so was the standard of instruction from the instructors borrowed from A Coy.

The last time I underwent any form of PO training was during the Vikings tour of Londonderry in 1999-2001. Things have definitely moved on since then, especially the kit. The 'Robocop' protective equipment makes PO much less painful and includes

feet, thigh, groin and upper arm protectors, all designed to protect the areas which become exposed when only using a 4ft shield. The tactics have also changed greatly; the dreaded six-foot shields are no longer used, instead, each man within the Platoon now uses a four-foot shield to aid mobility. The layout of the platoon is now three ranks of four men, directly commanded by the Platoon Commander. The ranks remain primarily in open order which provides each man enough room to swing his baton when at close quarters to a riotous crowd. Each Platoon has four Snatch Land Rovers which are commanded by the Platoon Sergeant. They are primarily used for protection and to herd the crowd, although they also act as a focus for the rioters' anger. An armed, two man, counter terrorist team remain in a position of over-watch; their job is to look out for and respond to any potential threats to life. Firemen and baton gunners are also present and aid the Platoon Sergeant when conducting casualty evacuation.

As mentioned, the control of the vehicles was down to me as Platoon Sergeant, although controlling four Snatch Land Rovers is easier said than done, especially with the Personal Role Radios proving as temperamental as ever! I often had to rely on hand signals whilst being pelted by baton rounds thrown by the crowd. Long gone are the days when the streets used in this sort of training are straight, wide and fairly easy in terms of controlling a rioting crowd. Longmoor Village has a real mixture of streets and open areas as well as numerous obstacles and burning vehicles which made it very difficult to manoeuvre SNATCH vehicles. However, what did prove simple was the casualty evacuation plan. When a soldier became injured everyone would push forward and I would task the reserve team to move in and collect him. The injured person would then be back loaded to the CSM at



Petrol bomb innoculation - the author goes up in flames

The Vikings

pre-arranged RVs.

After the OC had put each of the platoons through his own demanding validation exercise (by day and night with petrol bombs and crowds etc), we moved onto the Company Validation missions which included separation, containment and dispersal. Other than Coy pride, the other big incentive to pass these tests first time was getting away on time for Easter stand-down! The missions proved both realistic and challenging with petrol bombs, baton rounds, large blocks of wood and tree trunks (in one instance) being used as missiles against the Coy. Operating at night, in the rain, with a very scratched visor to try and look through, whilst facing a highly motivated crowd, was a nightmare but everyone gave 100%. On the whole the training was very useful and it demonstrated how much value you can get out of what is actually quite a low-resourced exercise. It certainly blew out some old cobwebs and proved again that the Coy was capable of rising to the challenge and getting great results. Having completed the training I would feel confident if faced with a real situation. For many of the younger soldiers it was the first time that they had done this sort of training, but they quickly grasped the points and were able to operate very effectively. They displayed much confidence and controlled aggression throughout, which made both the Platoon Commander's and my job a lot easier. The 'look forward' now is waiting for the burns to heal and bruises to fade whilst getting moaned at from the clothing store when asking to exchange 60 pairs of burnt combat trousers!

C (Essex) Company Property – A Historical Snapshot

*Capt Ollie Ormiston, 2IC C (Essex)
Coy, writes:*

After being given the insalubrious task of checking and re-logging all of C Coy's property, I have to admit that I rather got into it – my initial trepidations quickly faded and I became increasingly enthusiastic. Rather like an old pub, quite a lot of history can be found either on the walls or tucked away in damp cardboard boxes, in dark corners. For C Coy it was no different – it boasts a plethora of plaques gifted by other units, shields won at sporting events and numerous photos, taken over the years on Minden Day. So what can I tell you without writing a history book?

Well.....the Coy has exercised with other units from all over the world, including the US's 1st Battalion 87th Infantry, whilst on exercise in Baumholder (Germany), in 1969, and a German FOO team attached for the duration of the Battalion's first TESEX in BULLDOG AFVs on Salisbury Plain in 2008. The Coy's military prowess has also been commemorated; the earliest military skills trophy dates back to Cyprus in 1972. Out of combat fatigues, the Coy has also been pretty good on the sports pitch – it



2IC C Coy's office paperweight!

won the prestigious 19 Bde Potted Sports Competition in 1992 and has won the Inter-Coy football competition for as long as anyone can recall!

The majority of property is unsurprisingly related to operational tours. There are numerous presentations from the RUC, R IRISH and UDR, not to mention internal mementos, such as a photograph of the Company in Fermanagh back in 1991 and a map of the Apprentice Boys of Derry's marching route from 2000. It is also unsurprising, given the intensity and the currency of our most recent tour in Afghanistan, that a large number of photographs relate to Op HERRICK 6 in 2007.

There are also a number of other interesting pieces of property. A large rock weighing approximately 40kg, listed as being from 'Cappagh PIRA via 8 R IRISH', commemorates the work of the Coy after an explosion in the original 'Bandit Country' – I'd be keen to know more about this one if anyone reading was in the Coy at the time (*Editor's Note: As CO 8 R IRISH at the time, you need only speak to me – carrying gifts of course!*). Terry Taylor, ex-C Coy CQMS, donated a cap badge of the original Essex Regiment, dug out of the ground at Ypres, as well as a 1914-1915 Star originally presented to Pte Bareham from the 11th Bn, The Essex Regiment.

Now that the Coy office has been repainted, from a ghastly mustard colour to a much more pleasing Army magnolia, all the Coy property has been gathered, cleaned and put on display. It adds a real depth of colour to the Coy and strengthens the links to both the Essex Regiment and all those who have had the honour of serving in C Coy over the past 44 years.

Not Over the Hill Yet!! – Completing a Queen's Division Fire Team Commanders' Course

*LCpl Alden, C (Essex) Company
Stores 2IC, writes:*

I started my Army training when I was 25 years old, so I was a bit of a late starter. However, I've completed tours in Iraq and Afghanistan and been on exercises in Northern Ireland and Kenya. I have had a fair few chances of completing a FTCC (JNCO cadre) but have always thought 'I will do the next one!' However, when I reached 29 and still hadn't done one, I thought it best to get on with it as I wasn't getting any younger – the big 'three zero' was knocking at my door! I was pretty lucky though as my fitness is still very good and I knew that aspect of the course would be hard work. In my opinion, being older gave me more determination to complete the fitness tests quicker than the younger blokes.

Before the course began I completed a pre-cadre which had all the usual tests like a CFT, PFT as well as weapon handling lessons and navigational training. This was a good beat up period for the main course which was being run from Sennybridge Training Camp and gave me a lot of confidence. I then got all my kit packed and a couple of days later made my way across to Wales. On arrival we got split down into sections and then told we had a CFT later that day – this is when I thought 'here we go!' The CFT was the same as any 8-miler, although it seemed to achieve the impossible, being 7 miles up and 1 mile down yet having the start and finish points in the same location! I completed it and

The Vikings



LCpl Alden not looking his age!

thought 'that was pretty hard' but there were a lot of younger blokes that didn't complete it which gave me even more determination.

Fitness was a constant theme on the course, but only a couple of others were anywhere near my age. The rest were a lot younger but still a good bunch of blokes, from all over the Queen's Division. As the course went on my legs started telling me 'no', but my mind kept telling me to 'carry on' and see it through. The prospect of doing it all over again didn't excite me! All in all I would recommend attempting the cadre at any age. Being older has its benefits and drawbacks, but as long as you can complete the required fitness tests and know your job, I cannot see why anyone shouldn't go for it...although that's quite easy to say now I have been promoted to LCpl and my feet are back in Pirbright (as opposed to slogging around Sennybridge Training Area and the Brecon Beacons!).

Bulldog Conversion Exercise – 'TESEX 08'

*2Lt Charlie Powell, 11 Pl Comd,
writes:*

In October 2008 the 1 R ANGLIAN Battle Group (BG) deployed on its first TESEX since taking over its BULLDOG AFVs earlier on in the year. Having recently been a Saxon Battalion, I thought we would have retained some mechanised experience within the Platoon, but at a show of hands of "who in the Platoon has used Saxon before", only the Platoon Sergeant put his hand up. Actually, most of the lads had never even seen a Saxon, or for that matter a BULLDOG. To get up to speed we completed CT1 and CT2 training and



C Coy press on after a successful dawn attack

slowly but surely became more and more used to working with the vehicles. In terms of learning how to command these beasts and operate tactically within a fully integrated BG, we were given the opportunity to attend study days and complete a week of training at the Combined Arms Tactical Trainer in Warminster. This was like a very advanced, but serious, computer simulation game, where mistakes could be made without any cost, other than occasionally one's pride (as one of the attached FOOs discovered after managing to unintentionally get 5km ahead of the BG's recce screen!).

On a cold crispy morning in October, the Battalion deployed to Westdown Camp on Salisbury Plain. The drivers were immediately set to work checking the vehicles over and carrying out any maintenance that was needed, whilst also being issued personal and vehicle TESEX equipment. After much deliberation the vehicle kits were finally fitted, and as always

with DIY, we were left with an unexplainable handful of spare nuts and bolts!

TESEX familiarisation training gave us a few days to try out the kit and also practice moving vehicles around as part of the BG. The KRH IMA Sqn taught us how best to integrate BULLDOGS with their WARRIOR AFVs. TES kit was tested by way of a 'capture the flag contest' between the Officers' and Sergeants' Messes verses the Other Ranks (ORs). Pte Facal commanded the ORs and managed to win the day but, as it emerged later, Sergeant Hill (10 Pl Sgt) had got wind of a plan by the Pl Comds to shoot the CSM and therefore managed to shoot us first.

After the familiarisation training we entered into the coy level training phase which involved three exercises, each lasting three days. The exercises were centred on key themes and included OBUA, Advance to Contact and the Contemporary Operating Environment. They were all designed to put



C Coy's three amigos - (from left) Lts Granell, Powell and Thomas.

The Vikings

the Coy through its paces and prepare us for subsequent operations as part of the BG. Needless to say they were all pretty cheeky and I was constantly amazed at how large the Coy Group became once all the various attachments joined us.

The final part of TESEX was a bit slower as we came together as a BG, but the pressure did not relent. The BG level operations, when they got going, were fast and furious and there was always plenty of scope for Mission Command. The final assault involved C Company manoeuvring to the South of Copehill Down Village in pitch darkness and then striking into its heart after echeloning through B Company who had conducted the 'break in'. Chaos reigned as our intimate support tanks were destroyed and minefields were discovered. However, once dismounted, the Company quickly established itself and forged forward to take on what was a pretty capable and well defended enemy. Needless to say, the experience was brilliant and we all learnt huge amounts about operating as a Combined Arms BG in BULLDOGS.

Overall TESEX was great training for me as a Platoon Commander. Due to the nature of Mechanised Infantry we were often given a plan at very short notice and had to move within minutes. This really stretched all commanders as we had to make decisions rapidly and brief our troops in very quick time, most of the time on the move over the radio. Having the support of the KRH worked extremely well, the best example of this was when I was tasked to clear a street in Copehill Down Village; I



CSgt Ielden (CQMS C Coy) and Sgt Hill (10 Pl) try to escape

was able to talk directly to the WARRIOR AFV commanders who stood off using their optics and firepower to feed me information on the next building we had to attack and when required, provided really effective fire support.

Having completed a Mechanised TESEX, I now look forward to deploying on my next TESEX in June 09, by which stage the Vikings will have converted to the Light Role and be getting stuck back into basic soldiering.

A Satisfied Soldier – Attached to the Vikings

Pte Meehan AGC, C (Essex)

*Company, Combat Human Resources
(HR) Specialist, writes:*

I reported for duty with the Vikings (C Coy) in Aug 08 straight after completing my Phase 1 and 2 training. I would like to say that when I arrived I was quiet and allowed people to slowly discover who I was - but I would be lying. After meeting Cpl Davies (the Coy's Senior Combat HR Specialist), and having had a guided tour of BHQ, she took me into C Coy office and introduced me to my new OC and CSM. Bearing in mind the only time I had ever spoken to a CSM was when I passed out of Worthy Down, I was not quite sure what to expect. I was met with a warm welcome, and then shown where the filing cabinet was! However, my feet were swiftly under the table and I found myself busy learning the ropes, working towards my Class 2 Clerical course and shadowing the Bn Duty Clerk. It was not long before my love for rugby became apparent and I got the chance to go on a tour of East Anglia with the Bn Rugby Team; as I am a 'Woodbridge girl' I jumped at the chance. Not only was it great to train with experienced players, some of whom have been playing longer than I have been alive, it was also great to watch lads who have never thrown a ball before step out onto the field. Throughout that week there were four things on my mind; rugby, site seeing, getting to know the lads and trying to think about my first Bn exercise which was looming over the horizon (a BG TESEX). TESEX took place in October. With my battle box full of everything I would need, ranging from admin forms to non-permanent pens, my bags were packed and, at this stage detached from C Coy and working to BHQ. I set off to Salisbury Plain for three weeks.



LCpl Page trying not to look too cool in his turret.

The Vikings



Pte Meehan, AGC(SPS) - prepared for battle!

I spent the first day helping to set up the Bn G1 Cell, ensuring that the fax, telephones and photocopier worked correctly. During the first two weeks I worked as part of a stag system, covering at least 12 hours in the G1 Cell at any one time. Photocopying was not hard work but 5 days before we were due to leave I was told I was becoming a commander for one of the Ammo trucks. I got paired up with someone who had been in the Army for twenty years, who showed me the ropes and covered such things as '5 & 20' checks and how to act as top cover. I would like to be able to report that top cover was the fun bit, but it was pouring down with rain most of the time and the road was incredibly bumpy. However, through all the noise I could still hear someone behind me screaming "faster, faster" to the driver which wasn't very helpful! Working with the Ammo trucks was a great time to meet some weird and wonderful people who all reminded me that I sound like a tour rep when speaking on the radio – this is something I clearly need to change. After ENDEX was called at approximately 2300 hrs, things got even worse in terms of trying to get some sleep – we didn't! However, I

quickly rejoined C Coy as they were busy sorting out ammunition etc. It was strange to see them after being apart for a couple of weeks, but I think they were more shocked that I was not tucked up in the Bn G1 Cell or in my office back in Pirbright. My first major exercise was over and I had survived! Whilst I am kept busy ensuring that the administration for the OC, CSM and BHQ (when required) runs smoothly, as well as making sure that all the filing is done, I am one of the few lucky ones who gets to play Corps level rugby with the AGC. Along with other ladies from all different units, and not nearly enough I might add, I get to spend one day of the month (if there is a game) tapping up, tightening studs and trying to breathe with a gum shield on. I have enjoyed my first season with the AGC girls and would encourage anyone who enjoys playing a sport to make sure they keep fit and make a point of informing their bosses of their sporting abilities and ambitions. Of course, a reason to say "no" to sport would be an operational tour and C Coy was tasked to deploy to Kosovo for 6 months as the British Surveillance Company in Mar 09. In C Coy the attached arms are required to do as much as possible with the remainder of the company in order to develop team cohesion, including PT – remember we are all soldiers first! So, during the build up training for the Coy's Advanced Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ASR) Course, I was determined to do as much as I could although I found it pretty hard work trying to keep up with the boys on occasions. Before long, Christmas leave arrived and it was the first time I had had so much time off in one go. Straight afterwards we deployed to Lydd for 7 tough weeks. The ASR Course was very intense and a bit of an eye-opener for me. If I was not doing PT at 0530 hrs in the morning, unable to see where I was going and only hearing the sound of 90 pairs of boots hitting the ground, I was driving vehicles, waiting for teams to jump out of the back and experiencing live

rounds whizzing past my ears. Although all the ranges were excellent. I found the pistol shooting particularly amazing and discovered I was a pretty good shot. It was also amusing to watch the lads worry as they were told to place loaded and made ready pistols down the front of their trousers! Unfortunately the Kosovo tour was cancelled at the last minute and with all that behind me now, I am back in Pirbright with the Company busy preparing and maintaining documentation for the SLE task we are now engaged in. This has involved making sure everyone has a passport and that they are in date, as well as checking that NOK, DOB and other records are correctly recorded on JPA and that everyone's MCCP packs are in order just in case we deploy somewhere. I am also continuing to learn as much as possible from Cpl Davies in order to prepare me for my Class 1 qualification and an exciting future as a Combat Human Resources Specialist. All in all I have been extremely fortunate to have experienced such a varied and challenging first year in the real Army.

Winning a TESEX Military Cross (TES MC)

Sgt Hill, 10 Pl Sgt, writes:

As a result of my valiant efforts throughout TESEX, including a number of isolated acts of bravery, a Major from Field Training Group (one of the guys that helped run the exercise and assessed C Coy throughout) decided to award me a TES MC – you may not have heard of this award, many haven't! To be honest, I don't think he realised how easy it was for me to take command of the Platoon.

On several occasions 2Lt Granell gave me the opportunity through his medal hunting feats of bravery, which invariably lead to him dying, and I always threw myself into the challenge. Although the MC was for the whole of TESEX, I believe the main reason was for my efforts during an attack onto Imber Village when I found myself acting as GMPG Gunner/Platoon Commander and Platoon Sergeant. I led the Platoon through a fierce battle and managed to eliminate well over half the enemy on my own.

There are however other stories..... During the TESEX build up training, the CSM was 'killed' and, just as I had stepped up to start dealing with casualties, the OC became injured and was temporarily out the battle. With the platoon commanders busy fighting the battle and the Company 2IC, Captain Olivier, some way back, I saw yet another opportunity for glory and took over as Company Commander. For the next 15 minutes the Company advanced like a rottweiler on LSD but with the synchronisation of Torvill and Deane; however, my fun ended when the OC was regenerated and returned. At every opportunity I tried to pass my responsibilities of Platoon Sergeant over to one of my section commanders, such as Cpl Adlington, but he enjoyed the job so much



The splodges were the CSMs' - from half the distance!

The Vikings

that he in turn passed in on downwards. This motion carried on throughout the Platoon until at the end, a willing enemy casualty took over the responsibility!

Some may question my actions at times on TESEX, but with my completely selfish commitment and ambitious desires, I managed to win a TES MC from a man who had spent 20 years on the 'dark side' and that was good enough for me - whoever said bluffing gets you nowhere? Having been a Pl Comd and OC I quite fancy a shot at being the RSM or CO during the next TESEX!

D (Cambridgeshire) Company Brigade Boxing Championships

Maj Chris Barry, OC D Coy, writes:
Following the success of the Inter-Company Boxing Championships held last July, the Battalion selected a squad of boxers to compete in the 12 Mechanized Brigade Boxing Championships in Bulford over the period 25-27 November. The competition featured 11 teams, drawn from across the brigade units and including 2 RRF, 3



Goodnight Vienna, Pte Joseph connects



The Vikings are coming, CSgts Head and Shand rouse the crowd

The Vikings



Best boxer Cfn Burns.

YORKS and 19 Regt RA.

Immediately following TESEX a squad, with representation from all companies, formed up under Sgt 'Bomber' Brown, and moved into the Woking Boxing Club for 6 weeks of very intensive training. Competition for the final 8 was fierce and the squad deployed to Bulford for the weigh-in feeling confident.

The preparation clearly paid off as the Vikings had 6 finalists by the end of the prelim bouts with only Pte Facal, who unfortunately failed his medical due to illness, and Pte Appleton, narrowly edged out at super heavyweight, missing from the line up. Special mention must also be made to the B stream fighters who all won their fights. This success continued into finals night where, in front of the assembled Brigade, the Vikings took out 5 of the finals with Pte Broom and Pte Joseph winning by a knockout.

The Championship was won by quite a distance and Cfn Burns took home the award for Best Boxer after another very stylish performance and Pte Purcell took the Best Runner Up as some consolation for a very harsh decision. This was a superb result; one made all the sweeter by the impeccable sportsmanship shown by both the Viking boxers and the vociferous contingent of supporters who came down from Pirbright.

Viking Boxing continues to thrive with new Inter-Company Championships to be held this summer before the team enters the Army Novice Championships in October.



Pte Waites wins at Middleweight

Three Perspectives on 12 Brigade Operations Company (BOC) The Platoon Commander's Perspective

*Capt Pete Martin, BOC Pl Comd,
writes:*

It was a sad day when I was told that I would have to hand Recce Platoon over and form a new platoon as part of the 12 Brigade Operations Company. However, I knew it would be a challenge and would involve some excellent training opportunities.

The 12 Brigade Operations Company, or 'BOC', was formed in early November 08. The remit was to create a company group of reconnaissance and surveillance trained personnel, able to conduct operations worldwide from mid to late 2009. The BOC is made up of the 3 YORKS Recce Platoon, the KRH Recce Troop and a platoon from the Vikings made up of recce, sniper, anti-tank and rifle company personnel.

The training period involved beat up training on Salisbury Plain, a Basic Camera Operators Course, the Advanced Surveillance and Reconnaissance Course and the Advanced Close Quarter Battle Course (ACQB). Additionally, all team members completed Team Medic Training. Initially, the Viking platoon was due to take on a Military Training Team (MiTT) task with an Iraqi commando company,

but this quickly changed to acting as a strike platoon in support of Op TELIC 14. However, nothing stays the same for long and as I write, the focus may be shifting to Op HERRICK and the Company may have to re-role again.

The close observation training we conducted was both challenging and demanding. It involved a two week introduction to team level skills; a week of technical training and a week of rural observation posts. A final confirmation exercise was completed in March 09 on Salisbury Plain as part of the 12 Bde MRX. Personnel at all levels had to constantly develop over the duration of the training within an ever changing environment.

One thing that enabled us to improve quickly was the healthy rivalry between the various platoons within the BOC. The physical tests involved lots of ACFT 1s, CFTs, log runs, stretcher races and shingle runs at Lydd. By the end of the course everybody was pretty trim. The team commanders took on extra responsibilities, often training to operate alone on the ground for long periods. Private soldiers also had to step up; no longer just team members, but now specialists within the team, who were expected to perform specific important tasks without assistance or supervision.

The close observation training was running nicely at the beginning of January 09 when the BOC's OC (from 3 YORKS) informed us that the roles were changing and that we

The Vikings

would now be taking on a Strike function for Op TELIC 14. This meant that the Viking platoon would complete the ACQB course and then return to Close Observation Training afterwards. The ACQB course involved a week of pistol and individual weapon instinctive and judgemental shooting. Range dispensation meant that the traditional 590 mil rule was not in effect and shooting over other team members' heads was permitted and frequently practised. This enabled battle inoculation to take place and got all the teams used to firing in confined areas. By the end of the week all personnel were competent with both the rifle and pistol at close and very close quarters.

The second week involved team level drills, including Explosive Method of Entry (EMOE) and slowly built up to platoon level strike exercises. Early morning unarmed combat sessions in the Dojo also proved to be very stimulating as well as incredibly painful! The use of 'simunition' (simulated ammunition - paintball for rifles and pistols) provided everyone with distinct bruises on unprotected body parts. Using 'simunition' in the urban training environment really enhanced the training as no-one wanted to get shot twice!

The ACQB course was well-structured and gave individuals time to develop and hone their own personal skills. Accuracy with both weapon systems and then speed of delivery were developed. It should be noted that the ACQB course doesn't replace traditional OBUA, but develops a soldier's personal skills and room clearance drills for targeted detention/strike operations. For soldiers who hadn't conducted this before it provided a good opportunity to experience training for current and future operations.

The Viking platoon has come together over the last six months, conducted some very demanding training and has remained flexible throughout. The skills learnt will enhance the individuals and should provide the Battalion with more depth once the platoon re-integrates, regardless of what we may or may not end up doing!

The Team Commander's Perspective

LCpl Murphy, Sierra 12 Team Comd, writes:

During a normal day at work in October 08 I was asked if I wanted to join the Brigade Operations Company (BOC) as a team commander. After being told what courses and jobs we would be doing I said "yes". We were formed in early November 08 and were told that we would be taking up the reconnaissance and surveillance role for a tour of Iraq or Afghanistan in mid 09.

Some of the training included a week on Dartmoor (as a whole company), doing

fitness tests and some range work. The Platoon completed the Basic Camera Operator Course which proved very useful later on. Whilst attending the main Surveillance and Reconnaissance Course in Lydd, we completed close observation training and the ACQB (Advanced Close Quarter Battle) course, which everyone thoroughly enjoyed.

I felt these courses were very useful, especially for the junior members of the Platoon who had not deployed on operations before. During the close observation training package, we were put through our paces as a platoon. The course was planned to be challenging, but it was also very rewarding at the same time. It is one of the most enjoyable courses I have been on in my Army career.

My team consists of myself, my second in command and four privates, who all have specialist roles within the team and bring varying levels of operational experience to the party. At times during the course it was challenging to keep them focused due to the fact that the plans for our deployment were constantly changing. However, the training has kept them motivated as it provided a good opportunity to keep improving their own personal skills.

Some of the kit we have learned to incorporate into our job includes the Sig Sauer pistol (our secondary weapon) and the ballistic shield. The shield is a fantastic piece of kit for the lead section on the strike to have, as the added protection is always nice

A Private Soldier's Perspective

Pte D Bonham writes:

I joined the Battalion in August 08 coming straight from an adventurous training sailing trip. As I was new to Army life as a Private Soldier in a rifle company, I was very keen to get some experience. When asked whether anyone would like to volunteer for the Brigade Operations Company with a possible tour to Iraq or Afghanistan, I jumped at the chance. No-one could tell me much about what I was going to do, but the rest of the volunteers from A Company and I were hoping for some great opportunities.

Initial platoon training was mostly PT, preparing ourselves for the courses to come. It was during this initial training that we were put into teams. Although we changed around a little, we have remained pretty unchanged for the duration. The team members all have a role to play as tech/camera equipment specialists, gunners, team medics and other more specific roles for ACQB.

We first formed up with the rest of the BOC at Knook Camp in early November 08. At first, 2 RRF were also there as the ARMAGEDDON Platoon, but were quickly taken off for operations in Afghanistan.

Whilst in Knook Camp, we did an initial close observation training brief and loads of intensive PT, including BPFA, CFTs, ACFTs, Log Runs and RMTs. We then tried to prepare ourselves for the close observation training in Lydd which included a very emotional CFT in Dartmoor and a week long Basic Camera Operators Course at RAF Cosford.

In January 09, we arrived in Lydd for the close observation training and I can honestly say it was the best thing I've done in the Army. It started with a week of ranges and some pistol work. The ranges were very different as we were taught how to fire on the move, how to use our laser light modules (LLM) and our head-mounted night vision goggles (HMNVGs) as well as how to fire instinctively i.e. without aiming. We then spent the second week doing house clearances, including Explosive Method of Entry (EMOE) which was a personal favourite of mine. Moving through the buildings was made easier with use of the new Pikitini hand guards and fore grips. At week 5, the technical package started where we learnt to use some very expensive camera kit. We went into a lot of depth about using the camera systems, both still and video, either by day or by night. The final week included a series of rural observation posts and then putting the skills to good use by setting up a night strike for the rest of the BOC.

Finally, we did our confirmatory exercise in March 09. This included night standing observation posts, a trigger operation, helicopter vehicle interdiction and numerous platoon level strikes. We also completed a live firing attack as a conventional rifle company.

The most frustrating part of the last six months has been the uncertainty of whether all the hard work will lead to us deploying on operations. All in all, I think the guys I work with are the best trained soldiers I've seen. I would suggest volunteering for this training to anyone when it comes around again.

2009 Inter-Platoon Skills Competition Winners

Lt Granell, OC Snipers, writes:

The one thing that will spring to everybody's mind when we look back on the 2009 Inter-Platoon Competition will not be the success of the winning team or even the pleasure of crawling over the roof of a mine-struck DAF (which of course wouldn't happen due to health and safety implications!). No, the one thing that we'll all remember is the snow - and there was plenty of it.

This year's competition was conducted between the 4-5 of February and was won by the ISTAR Team. No-one could have

The Vikings



Lt Granell and his victorious ISTAR Group team

predicted the two foot of snow that fell throughout the preceding night and resulted in most of the country being brought to its knees with roads and railways at a standstill. With the scene set, the Battalion undertook its annual skills competition.

Taking a total of 14 hours for the ISTAR team to complete, it had begun in the ice-covered gym with a MCCC under the guidance of Lt Morris and her team. Next, we received a set of QBOs from the Bn Ops Officer, after which we were off, and first to cross the white expanse that was the Pirbright and Ash danger area. However, our spirits quickly dropped as we soon encountered a stretcher and a PTL.... joy! After the cramps began to ease we continued our move North East to Henley Park Range where some teams chose to utilize cyalumes and torches (almost Christmas like) to create a safe path from a mine-struck vehicle to the safety of hard ground.

One of the greatest challenges faced by all was simply the amount of snow that continued to fall throughout the night, as the teams began to move from Henley Park range to Flag Pat at the top of the training area. This grueling trek saw us stopping off for a tea break at a 'broken down' Land Rover. Why we were required to replace the wheel, when half of the LAD, led by Capt Wallace (sweating from the heat captured in his cold weather kit), were present, this author has no idea! Having fixed the Land Rover, we then pulled it under the aggressive guidance of QMSJ Waddell. Afterwards, patrols were given a breather and provided with a range breakfast by a rather dry and warm looking CSgt Love. The penultimate stand, run by Capt Kelly, tested the team's ability to gain information from an individual during a house check and put in place a hasty vehicle check point.

There is no doubt that the weekend will be remembered for quite a while, although

whether it will be the snow or painful body parts that sticks in the mind is yet to be seen. Overall, it was a tremendous effort by all who took part and a great achievement for the ISTAR Team who, having covered 30+ kilometres in just 14 hours, were able to hold their heads up high after the mile and a half best effort at the finish, as this year's winners.

Exercise Snow Viking

Capt Gavin Hudson,

OC Mortar Pl, writes:

On a cold January morning 32 Vikings accompanied by four instructors left Elizabeth Barracks for the snowy slopes of the French Alps. Exercise Snow Viking

09 was underway. The first day was to prove a long one with a delayed flight from Gatwick to Turin and a three- hour transfer from Turin. After an initial brief, room allocation, boot and ski issue, as well as a much-needed evening meal, people finally got to bed at 0130hrs.

On the morning of the first ski day the lead instructor, Maj Tony Wilmore, divided the exercise into groups according to ability including two novice groups.

We were particularly lucky with the weather; the previous week the resort had seen a large amount of snowfall and on our arrival the slopes were all covered in fresh powdery snow. The resort of Risoul is in the neighbouring valley to Vars and together



LCpl Fairclough picks up some speed!

The Vikings



Some of the gang outside yet another bar!

both valleys form part of the Domaine de la Forêt Blanche, a beautiful skiing area, previously unknown to any of the exercise personnel, where all the pistes below the summits were flanked by pine forests. The pistes themselves were plentiful and offered challenges for all abilities, from the many nursery slopes close to the resort, to the numerous long and challenging red and black runs.

The hardest of these was the black Kilometre Lance where the World Speed Ski Championships were held a week after our departure. This is the steepest piste in the world; at its steepest it has a 98% gradient which causes an acceleration greater than that of a jumbo jet taking off. The fastest recorded speed on it is over 160mph. Despite Cpl Watt's best efforts, none of the group ventured down it.

The resort itself was compact and provided plenty of opportunities for shopping and socialising. The hotel provided both breakfast and evening meals, but Tuesday night was the chef's night off and therefore our opportunity to sample some traditional mountain cuisine came earlier than expected. Despite Dmr Armstrong's endeavours, the officers won a decisive victory in the cheese-eating competition, polishing off their raclette with panache and vigour.

Six full and tiring days later, Exercise Snow Viking was nearly over. Twelve novices had passed their Basic Ski Proficiency (Alpine) and everyone had learnt a lot from the instructors who accompanied the Exercise. On the final evening prizes were awarded to

those members who had stood out from the pack and they deserve special mention here:

The award for most tenacity was awarded to LCpl Fairclough. As she got on a button lift she lost her balance and fell off. Despite this she did not let go and held on for the duration of the lift... all 1500m of it!

The award for having 'all the gear and no idea' went to Cpl Hazell. He may have thought this prize unfair. On the first morning, however, we assembled for the ski assessment to determine our groups for the week. Armed with his new boots/helmet/goggles etc we watched with delight as he did his best impression of a snowball to the entire group. Dmr Armstrong was runner-up for the prize.

The award for best crash was a closely fought contest and was taken by an outsider on the final day. LCpl Goodwin showed no fear throughout the week and was easily the best beginner. On the final day he perhaps bit off more than he could chew whilst skiing with the Quartermaster's group. Words cannot describe LCpl Goodwin's crash, but the QM said it made his day. Honourable mentions should go, firstly, to 2Lt Willies for managing (unintentionally) an entire aerial summersault before landing on his back, reducing the Commanding Officer to tears and howls of laughter and, finally, to CSgt Lovett who, when temporarily lost amongst the trees, needed eight of them to bring him to a complete standstill.

Finally the award for the most improved student went to Pte Keeble who, despite being relatively inexperienced, was described by

the instructors as a natural and progressed enormously throughout the week.

The week was a success and the excellent skiing conditions made it all the more enjoyable. Most important is the fact that twelve non-skiing Vikings have now been bitten by the skiing bug and will no doubt feature on future exercises.

Headquarter Company Exercise Ardennes Ace (A Staff Ride to the Ardennes)

Capt Will Meddings, RSO, writes:

Earlier this year 12 Brigade Headquarters ran Exercise Ardennes Ace, a Staff Ride to the Ardennes region of Belgium. For those not aware of what a Staff Ride is, it is not a battlefield tour as such. Instead it is a visit by staff officers to a recent battlefield, with the emphasis on officer education and the planning of the operations that were conducted. What this means in practise is that a certain amount of work is required before the start of the Ride in order to get the most out of it. To this end Major Barry, Captains Meddings and Olivier and Sgt Hicks spent the last week of January jotting together a few rough notes on the German invasion of France in 1940, ready for the stand that they had been tasked to run a week later.

The trip to the Ardennes proved to be a bit of an epic in itself. As the country ground to a halt under a few inches of snow, two coaches

The Vikings



12 Bde ofrs and WOs by a Maginot Line bunker.

crawled from Bulford up the M3, around the M25 and down to Dover. Starting at six in the morning, the coaches had only got as far as Calais by 8pm that evening, meaning an overnight stay in a ropey Calais hotel before heading to the Ardennes the next morning. Thankfully the Brigade Commander had seen us right by booking what can only be described as luxury accommodation in Belgium.

The Ride looked at the German offensive of 1940, concentrating mainly on Guderian's XIX Panzer Corps that bypassed the French Maginot Line, allowing the Germans to effectively outflank the Allied armies. Through the excellent instruction of our resident historian James Holland, we were guided through the initial obstacle crossings and as far as the assault into Sedan. Throughout the week it was remarkable to be told that we were standing on the very spots where the German and French commanders stood, or that we were overlooking bridges at the point where the first tanks crossed. In every case the buildings and structures there looked no different to the photographs taken at the time. We visited the bunkers left over from the Maginot Line at the point outside of Sedan where the Panzers attacked and heard about the differences in training in doctrine that allowed the Germans to so effectively overrun the French.

Throughout the week each of the units from the Brigade ran a stand and discussion about the lessons that we could learn from the battles. Each unit spoke about its specialities – 26 Engineer Regiment covering the obstacle crossing, the gunners and the Brigade Air Liaison Officer speaking about German joint fires. The KRH, it must be said, ran an excellent stand overlooking one of the villages where the French virtually fought a German Panzer Division to a standstill. The Vikings were tasked with speaking about the differences between the way the Germans and French fought, a subject which shattered many of the illusions we have about the French Army of 1940. They were larger, generally better equipped,

and had tactics that in many cases could well have defeated the Germans if the French had held out for longer. Unfortunately (amongst other things) their tank doctrine and poor training let them down.

Each day was rounded off with a sociable evening in the bar and a gastronomic feast in the restaurant. The food was excellent and finished off a cold day spent standing in the snow and rain. All those attending ensured that the poor value of the Pound against the Euro didn't hold them back at the bar. The opportunity to have a few drinks and chat with the other officers and Warrant Officers from the Brigade was really useful. For a junior officer it is rare that you get the chance to meet 'loggies, gunners, engineers, medics and tankies' all in the same place.

In all, the Staff Ride was an informative and enjoyable week. Having a knowledgeable historian present really added to the experience and made the trip especially revealing. For any future Captain expecting to have to go on a Staff Ride, I would recommend the experience wholeheartedly

Vikings Recruiting and Training Update

Capt Adey Penn, RCMO, writes:

I have recently taken over as the Viking Regimental Careers Management Officer (RCMO). The last year has been another successful one for Viking recruiting with our nine recruiting offices producing some excellent results. As a whole the recruiters have managed to surpass their targets and 197 Viking recruits have entered into the Army training pipeline. A special mention must go to CSgt Holmes in AFCO Norwich who, during the period Apr 08 to Mar 09, has managed to get 52 Vikings into Phase 1 training.

Despite recruiting success, we are not resting on our laurels and have been looking for ways to improve our wastage rate, especially at ITC (C). One idea, which has been recently implemented, is a Regimental 'Look at Life' course based at St Georges'

Barracks, North Luffenham, with the first course taking place in mid-2009. This activity has now been formally named 'Royal Anglian Week' (RAW) and we hope it will better prepare Royal Anglian recruits for the culture shock experienced when joining the Army and starting basic training at ITC (C). The RAW will be co-ordinated and staffed by personnel from both the Viking Mobile Recruiting Team and the Poachers Mobile Recruiting Team and led by Sgt Gage of the Poachers. Capt Tony Bartlett (RRO in the Poachers) and I will provide the oversight of the course and provide feedback to the Recruiting Sergeants. The idea is to ensure that our valuable training vacancies at ITC (C) are filled by the best possible candidates

Essex Recruiting Update

Sgt Armon, Southend Recruiting Sgt, writes:

The last few months have been busy for the Viking recruiters working across Essex, many of whom have just arrived and are now having a really positive affect in terms of generating interest in The Regiment and attracting potential recruits. With regard to 2009, the calendar remains packed with a mixture of events such as career presentations at local schools and colleges and direct recruiting events in local towns including Basildon, Grays, Southend and Colchester. The forthcoming Southend Air Show will provide a great opportunity to interface with the public and we expect to make the most of the opportunity by having a good Viking presence.

The impact of the current financial climate has been positive in recruiting terms as the lack of civilian job opportunities has resulted in an increase in people considering the Army as a career. The success of the 'Ross Kemp in Afghanistan' documentary as well as the recent media coverage of the Poachers returning home from Iraq has also aided us. Together, these factors have resulted in an increase in young lads wanting to join the Vikings. Of note, most of our successes

The Vikings

have been in Southend, Colchester and Chelmsford.

The introduction of 'Exercise Viking Spirit' with the 1st Battalion in Pirbright has also been very beneficial. This is the first time a potential Viking gets a chance to meet members of the Battalion and see some of the kit used by us on operations. It has proven to be highly successful in terms of maintaining someone's interest, especially given that the recruitment process can be quite a long affair.

Another positive initiative is the recently introduced 'Regimental Awareness Week' (RAW). The four day course has been designed to give applicants a good insight into what initial training at the Infantry Training Centre (ITC) will be like and includes a basic introduction to such things as locker inspections, basic weapon handling, field craft lessons and fitness training. It also gives The Regiment an opportunity to look at them! The RAW culminates in a visit to the ITC to meet future Vikings and Poachers who are currently completing their training. This RAW is viewed as a really positive step in terms of making sure we are sending the best candidates to ITC(C) and that they are well prepared, as well dispelling any myths and rumours that they may have heard.

However, it is not 'all work and no play' for the Recruiting Sergeants in Essex. Sgt Guy, whilst working hard in the Colchester office amongst a strong Parachute Regiment presence, is still finding the time to play plenty of golf. Meanwhile, Sgt Neal and I are finding the time to train hard for the Southend Half-Marathon.

ITC Catterick- A Platoon Commander's Perspective

Capt Nick Denning, ITC(C)

PI Comd, writes:

I had arrived expecting pain at ITC Catterick, a Mecca of mourning, where pressed men collect under the banner of 'Permanent Staff'. Here, they lament the failings of 'the youth of today' as they try to turn them in to

something recognisably military, let alone deployable. I knew that I was entering, whether I liked it or not, the realm of red tape, OFSTED, the aftermath of a certain episode of Panorama plus one hundred other hidden traps designed to trip up young officers. Everyone knows that you have to keep your nose clean at ITC, and I could not see how I would pass through without at least one Letter of Extreme Displeasure.

I was, of course, wrong in my preconceptions; Catterick is a satisfying posting for a platoon commander. It's a long way from home for the average Viking, and further still from the Battalion but, aside from that, there are many benefits to be enjoyed. In truth, even the initially unwilling enjoy the work here. The routine is demanding, yet fulfilling, especially at the stage where a platoon of recruits really begins to grow into soldiers. I am glad to say that my platoon is at that stage as I write.

The first, and most comforting, thing that I noticed on commencing work at ITC was the team ethos within the Queen's Division Training Company. Without a shadow of doubt, there is a great deal of paperwork to be completed, in a variety of formats, but I have never found myself overly confused. Every piece of paperwork has a subject matter expert, be it the Company Clerk, the Company 2IC, the Divisional Captain or a fellow platoon commander, and I have never been sent packing on asking for advice from any of these people. Defence Writing and other clerical skills follow a steep learning curve - and I will admit that this has been a boost for as unnatural a desk-worker as I was at the outset!

Before long, a platoon commander here takes great stock from the support that the Company provides. Attempts from discharged recruits to sue the army for sustaining Non-Freezing Cold Injuries, false allegations of bullying and other such 'Panorama moments' are thoroughly scrutinised. No room is allowed for confusion with regards to the logging of

all GI problems, relevant safety briefs and minor sanctions. My experience has been, thankfully, notable in its absence of such dramas, but it has been good to know that the system supports platoon commanders to the maximum when the finger is pointed. As long as the permanent staff make the correct checks and give the correct briefs, they are completely covered against today's compensation culture.

With the paper-trail tied down, one can get to grips with the detail of training recruits. Personal character and experiences can play a commanding role in illustrating every lesson that is taught and, with a few operational tours featuring in the recent history of the British Army (and especially our Regiment), it is not hard to grab the attention and imagination of the young recruits. With so much combat experience floating around it is a great time to be doing this job. There is a genuine feeling among the training teams that the training being provided is relevant and does save lives. Nothing seems to be taught without a recent operational anecdote to back it up and the NCOs pick up more than enough reverence from the recruits to keep them happy!

A training team consists of platoon commander, a platoon sergeant and four corporals. Current recruit numbers dictate that a platoon of recruits will certainly consist of four sections and the team works very hard to instruct and administrate the soldiers under training. The banter in the training team provides the bulk of daily entertainment and working with such strong characters towards a common goal is certainly rewarding. I am lucky to have Sgt Tony Penrose and Cpl John Conroy from the Poachers in my particular team and they always do their bit to ensure that there is never a dull moment. There is a healthy ethic of practical jokes and mockery amongst us, as with any infantry unit, and heaven help the platoon commander that arrives here with a view to taking himself too seriously. Together we go about the serious business of



The author at the rear, flanked by Sgt Penrose and Cpl Conroy.

The Vikings

training the recruits in the field and in camp and it is fair to say that the bonds formed are not too dissimilar to those formed on an operational tour. I will look back fondly on my time with the team when I move on.

Above all, I am thrilled to report that this is not a place to be feared by commanders destined for a posting here. Aside from packing plenty of warm kit, the best advice that can be offered is to make time for familiarisation prior to arrival. The clerical systems are complex, yet comprehensive and, once mastered make life relatively simple. With one's head around these intricacies it is easy to settle into the satisfying aspect of leading raw recruits towards a level of professionalism and skill the likes of which most have never experienced before. The soldiers under training here know that Helmand Province beckons and the permanent staff are eager to pass them on fit and ready for the Infantry. It is therefore impossible to miss the significance of the task at hand; the job here is one that a commander can get his teeth into and enjoy.

Life at the Army Foundation College Harrogate (AFC(H))

Cpl McGee, AFC(H) Sect Comd, writes:

I started work at AFC Harrogate in September 2008 and was unsure what to expect working in a multi-cap badge training establishment, especially after the different rumours I had heard about a posting there. I started at the beginning of the training year and the first six weeks were extremely demanding. Duty normally starts very early and often finished very late; I found myself doing the most basic of things with the junior soldiers like teaching them how to wash, shave and press their uniforms. However, as you move through the first six weeks you then start to progress into weapon handling and basic fieldcraft lessons such as how to put up a poncho, how to cook and eat in the field and how to administrate yourself.

For the first six weeks a member of each training team lives in the accommodation with the junior soldiers and can expect to get two duties a week. This also depends on whether the platoon commander and platoon sergeant help which, in most cases, they do. After the intensive first six weeks is over, you may only have one or two duties a month.

Over the year long course there are a number of retention activities for the junior soldiers. These include an array of sporting activities, which as a member of staff you are encouraged to participate in. You are given the option to improve your own skills in a particular sport or even go on to gain coaching qualifications. Most of these sporting activities run every night of the week and every Wednesday afternoon. During most of the holidays overseas expeditions and sporting events are run for the junior soldiers. Most recently these have included a rugby tour to Australia and a Kayaking expedition in Belize.

As you progress through the term the junior soldiers start to focus on 'key skills' such as English and Maths and they are given the opportunity to gain qualifications up to level two literacy and numeracy. Whilst the junior soldiers are being educated, instructors get a great deal of time away from the junior soldiers which can be used to study for further educational qualifications such as the European Computer Driving Licence. There are also opportunities for instructors to go away and do other military courses including career courses.

As you start to enter the final stages of the year long course, things move away from education and back to military training. The junior soldiers complete various tactical exercises where they learn how to do section attacks, reconnaissance patrols etc. At this point in the training programme more emphasis is placed on the trainees that have been selected to act as junior lance corporals and corporals. Although supervised by members of the training team they are expected to use their own initiative and act as normal JNCOs. Watching 16 year olds leading sections is very rewarding as it demonstrates that they have learned from the training team.

In my first eight months at Harrogate I have been impressed. I have made many great friends, the accommodation is of a high standard (individual rooms with en-suites) and there is access to telephones and the internet. The day and night life in Harrogate is also excellent for both married and single personnel, offering a wide variety of pubs, clubs and restaurants as well as excellent shopping. Approx 40 minutes away is Leeds which again offers a wide variety of things to do both in the day and at night including museums, excellent shopping facilities and a great social scene.

Overall, the time I have spent at AFC (H) has been thoroughly enjoyable – in all respects. I would highly recommend this posting to anyone from section commander through to platoon commander. It is a highly challenging but rewarding job with many things to offer.

The 12 Bde Operational Arabic Course

Lt Martin Driver, B (Suffolk) Company, writes:

*"Is-salaam alaykum....sh-lownak?"
Greetings....How are you?"*

On the 1st September 2008 five Vikings (Lt Driver (B Coy), LCpl Jones (C Coy), Ptes Kilbon (B Coy), Harper (B Coy) and Wright (D Coy Atk Pl)) joined the 12 Bde contingent of potential linguists at the Defence School of Languages, Beaconsfield. The aim was to provide the Brigade and its constituent units with a pool of Level 2 operational linguists for Op TELIC 14. In essence this was a thirty week course with an end-state of creating linguists with a conversational level/grasp of Iraqi dialect Arabic (Geordie English vis-à-vis Queen's English).

The course was delivered in two parts with instruction from both Military (Tri-Service) instructors and Iraqi natives employed by the school. Level 1 introduced the language and cultural essentials and was structured around discrete key vocabulary topics, general military situations and basic "street level" conversations. It briefly introduced the essential grammar required and taught the students how to read right to left with a completely new Arabic script alphabet to learn.

Level 2 served to build on the foundations of the previous level and was more focussed on operational situations. The students' weekly vocabulary requirements increased noticeably, along with the introduction of military orientated listening tests involving numerous detailed comprehensions of pre-recorded scripts.

However, it was not all fun and games in the groundhog classroom. The school ran a cultural visit to London, starting with a guided tour of a local mosque, followed by an introduction to Arabic cuisine (for the uninitiated) in a restaurant frequented by the Iraqi natives teaching at the school. There was also the opportunity to deploy on



The Vikings' linguists.

The Vikings

exercise with half of the course role-playing on an Intelligence Corps exercise and half of the course augmenting the 12 Bde MRX on Salisbury Plain as military interpreters.

Although the impending draw down in Iraq means the opportunities for deployment are diminished, the Vikings on the course were still pleased to have had the opportunity to study Arabic and add to their academic qualifications. Pte Wright (D Coy) summarised the course by stating, "Although eight months of Arabic training seemed quite daunting at the start, it passed quite quickly and overall it was a good course. Hopefully I will have the chance to put into practice what I have learnt during the course". LCpl Jones (C Coy) added "I'm still glad I have done the course because it is such a widely used language".

"Hassa khallasna. Ashoofak badeyn. Fee amaanilla." (That's all for now. I will see you later. Goodbye.)

The Introduction of Jamieson Platoon

Capt Ian Robinson, UWO, writes:

Following Op Herrick 6 the Battalion decided that the best way of looking after its casualties was to keep them with the companies they had been fighting with during the tour. For the next year this worked well with the majority of our casualties making a complete recovery and returning to full duties. However, by the summer of 2008, it had become clear that, for a significant minority, something needed to change. The Battalion was beginning to prepare for various operational commitments in the spring of 2009 that would not involve those still recovering from wounds suffered in Afghanistan, or the significant number of soldiers who were downgraded due to the everyday demands of life in the Infantry. After much discussion at Command Group level, it was decided to group these soldiers together into a rehabilitation Platoon that would form up on 1 Dec 2008. We needed to decide on a Platoon name and, after several suggestions, the Commanding Officer decided that the name of an inspirational Victoria Cross winner from The Regiment's past would be suitable; Jamieson Platoon was born.

The Commanding Officer was very clear from the beginning that soldiers should come into the Platoon with the aim of achieving full fitness and returning to duty within the Battalion. Ultimately, those who are unable to achieve this will either take a job they can do in the Battalion or be medically discharged. The Commanding Officer's direction in terms of the programme was also very clear. Rehabilitation was the priority, but the Platoon must have a military ethos and every opportunity should be taken to include military training within the programme. The Military Annual Training Test system was used as the framework for this. Attempting to provide a varied and interesting programme that benefits the individual and the Battalion has been a

real challenge. As well as periods of rehab, general fitness training and military training, members of the Platoon have completed the following:

- Driving theory tests: 7 passed.
- Cat C driving test: 3 passed.
- Numeracy and literacy level 1 & 2 courses: 18 passed.
- Adventure Training in Spain, France or Exmoor for 10 soldiers.
- Introduction to target shooting at Bisley for 6 soldiers.

Jamieson Platoon is now a well-established part of the Battalion. Progress with individual rehabilitation is slow at the best of times and on occasions can appear to be non-existent. Ensuring soldiers do not become frustrated or disillusioned is a challenge, as is ensuring that the rest of the Battalion, who continue the normal hard work of Infantry life, do not resent the different and, some would say easier, routine of Jamieson Platoon.

Jamieson Platoon formed up with 32 members. Of these, 3 have dates for medical discharge and another 5 are likely to be medically discharged in the coming months. Five additional soldiers have joined Jamieson Platoon, with only 1 so far returning to full duty with his Company. The members of Jamieson Platoon have faced very real challenges over the last few months and the coming months and years hold many more. However, we are confident that whether their future lies within the Army, or outside it, their time in Jamieson Platoon will be a positive period that will help prepare them for the challenges ahead.

Viking Family Support Group (FSG)

Capt Ian Robinson, UWO, writes:

Tracey Cadman and Alison Burgess met during the summer of 2007 when their sons were serving with the Vikings on Op HERRICK 6. They found the support they received from each other invaluable, but struggled to get in touch with other families. Following the tour they contacted

the Battalion with the idea of a support group and on Minden day 2008, the Viking FSG was launched.

The group is open to friends and family of soldiers serving in the Vikings and now has 89 members; it uses a website, designed by Cpl Borgenvik, to promote its aims which are:

- To provide support and friendship to Viking families.
- To provide a network which will allow families to meet others in a similar situation.
- To work with the Battalion to offer information and advice to families who live away from the Battalion.

The group recently hosted its first information evening at the TA centre in Bury St Edmunds, when 24 members of the group had the chance to quiz the Welfare Officer on anything and everything to do with Battalion life. The group plans to continue raising awareness and membership of Viking FSG by holding more of these evenings in the future along with attending Battalion and Regimental events.

If you would like to know more log onto the website at www.vikingfsg.co.uk or contact the Vikings Welfare Officer on 01483 798420.

(Editor's Note: The Regiment was very saddened to hear of the death of Tracey Cadman, after a long illness, in June 2009).

Viking Orienteering: 'Not all who wonder are lost' (Tolkien)

Capt Tim Jones, QM(T), writes:

Viking orienteering continues to go from strength to strength. Since the last Castle submission, four members of the Battalion represented the Infantry Under-25 team at the Inter-Corps Day and Night Championships; namely LCpl Monks (C Coy), Pte Ainsworth (C Coy), Pte Becala (D Coy) and Pte Dodd (C Coy).

This period has also seen a continued presence in the Military League South Competition, a weekly competition against



Ptes Tyrrell and Wesley with the Young Sports Leader Course.

The Vikings



Vikings Senior Orienteering Team, Army Relay Championship

some very strong units. Other notable successes have seen the Battalion as runners-up in the Army Night Orienteering Championships, with commendable runs from the Under-25 team comprising 2Lt Hearn (B Coy), Pte Becala & Pte Dodd and the Senior Team comprising the Commanding Officer, Maj Barrett (RAO), Maj Hall (OC HQ Coy), WO2 (RQMS(T)) Main, Pte Hood and the author.

The Inter-Company Competition took place on the 17 March and saw some 100 runners competing across the Battalion. Each company team consisted of 20 private soldiers, trying to find as many controls as possible within one hour. Severe penalties were awarded to anyone over the hour which, in some cases, resulted in a minus score for their efforts! This hotly contested competition saw the following results:

Champions: A Coy with a score of 2210

Runners-up: C Coy with a score of 2040

Third: B Coy with a score of 1670

Individual results, judged against the soldier with the most individual points and the fastest times, were as follows:

First and Under-25 champion: Pte Hood (HQ Coy) with 190 points

Second: Pte Donnachie (D Coy) with 160 points

Third: Pte Hancock (A Coy) with 150 points

More recently, the Battalion Under-25 and Senior Teams won the first leg of the 4th Division Relay Championships and were runners up in the second leg, resulting in an overall silver medal position for both teams. Hence, a confident team travelled to Edinburgh to compete in the Army Relay

Championships over 29-30 April. The Under-25 teams earned very credible silver and bronze positions and the Senior Team achieved silver - pipped to first place by a mere 52 seconds! However, the senior four man team were awarded gold for having the best combined Relay Competition scores over the two days; effectively becoming the Army Relay Champions.

In summary, this has been the Battalion's best orienteering season for some years and we are thrilled to have achieved an overall third place within the 4th Division Orienteering League (one of the best leagues in the services). In terms of the future, Maj Hall (OC HQ Coy and a sprightly 52 years of age!) is very much looking forward to more and more under-25s coming onto the scene, so that he can at last retire gracefully from the sport, and we are aiming to build on our current success and achieve even greater results next season.



Ptes Dodd and Hood at the finish point



Pte Neizer finishes the Inter-Company event.



OC HQ Coy gets debriefed on the route.

2nd Battalion The Poachers

Introduction by the Commanding Officer

*Lieutenant Colonel RW Wooddisse
MBE MC, Commanding Officer,
writes.*

This is my first submission to the Castle Magazine as Commanding Officer of the 2nd Battalion and I am conscious that much of the period that I am expected to cover fell under the tenure of my predecessor. I can claim no credit for the back end of a highly successful tour of Iraq; a triumphant return to Celle marked by a moving Christmas Carol Service in Celle and a medals parade in Trenchard Barracks; and the planning for a set of spectacularly well attended and emotional homecoming parades. I also know that the Battalion are hugely grateful to my predecessor for his hard work throughout the tenure of his command and we all wish both Simon and Nicky well in the future.

I have returned to Celle after a gap of 14 years or so to command the Battalion that I joined (also in Celle) as a young platoon commander. It is a huge honour and privilege, and one I do not take lightly. For those readers who have served in Celle before, I am glad to report that the town has changed little over the years. Many of the traditional Battalion 'haunts' remain, although some have had a number of name (and owner) changes over the years. The Battalion enjoys a good relationship with the local authorities who remain proud of their connections with the British Army and the Battalion in particular.

While I have been 'in the office' for just under a month, I have already had the good

fortune to lead elements of the Battalion through the streets of Stamford, Luton, Watford and Lincoln. The turn out at all 4 events was outstanding and I am most grateful for the support we received from Regimental Headquarters and the wider Regimental family, both in preparation for the parades and throughout the week. The small demonstration in Luton caught the eye of the media rather more than it did the Battalion and our over-riding impression of the day was immensely positive. The people of Luton turned out in their thousands to welcome their Battalion home and the actions of a small minority did not detract from our enjoyment and sense of pride, although it clearly excited a debate which ensured that our remaining parades were well covered by the national press and vociferously supported.

The second significant event during my short tenure in command was the inter-Company Boxing Competition. While the detail of this highly successful event is reported on elsewhere, I would like to use this opportunity to thank the QM and his team for their hard work in organising the competition. I would also like to pay tribute to the boxers who trained long and hard then fought with tenacity, aggression and skill. The standard of boxing and fitness bodes well for the Battalion team and I look forward to updating you on their progress through the Army competitions later in the year.

Despite a period of almost continuous operational deployments punctuated by arms plot moves, the 2nd Battalion is in fine form. They can reflect on a job well done during 2 tours of Iraq, but look forward to a 'sunshine'

posting to Cyprus and an increasingly busy role as the Theatre Reserve Battalion starting in late summer 2010. Kenya and Exercise Grand Prix provides the Battalion 'focus' for 2009. However, before we get there the companies have a chance to conduct their own training in Germany and, in the case of D (Support) Company, in the Falklands. Companies have also planned a number of adventure training expeditions and a relatively quiet summer should allow the families to enjoy the delights of a (sometimes elusive) North German summer. There is, therefore, plenty to look forward to.

A (Lincolnshire) Company

Major Lawrence Ives, OC A

(Lincolnshire) Company, writes:

I write this a day or so before the Battalion will stand down for Easter Leave. It doesn't really seem that long since we came back from POTL but on reflection, we've crammed a great deal in.

In the last 8 weeks the Company has reformed with a few changed faces here and there as people move on and others arrive to replace them. Our emphasis has been on rebuilding ourselves as a Rifle Company. Certainly for the last couple of years we have operated rather more as multiples (or Military Transition Teams - MITTs - on Op TELIC 12) as we were very much an 'Iraq' battalion. With the winding up of the British presence in Iraq, we now want to concentrate on operating as a company in the Light Role. For some of us this will be a refresher, for others - chiefly the younger soldiers - it will be something they have not touched since



The CO presents the Boxing Trophy to A Company.

The Poachers



A Coy Boxing Team.

Catterick, perhaps 2 years ago.

There really has been a lot going on and it would be difficult to list it all. We have been away on ranges for a week (see Mr Quince's article later) and started to claw our way through the mandatory tests all soldiers must pass annually. On the sporting front, we contributed the core of what proved to be the largest Battalion Football squad ever raised – A Company providing 20 men alone. We have also put in a strong boxing squad into the Inter Company Finals, trained under the expert eye of Sgt Pearce.

In early March the Battalion returned to the UK to parade through 4 towns in our recruiting area. These marches did attract some media attention for perhaps the wrong reasons initially, but the level of support shown by the general public was really overwhelming. For me, as OC A (Lincolnshire) Company, to march up Lincoln High Street while the band played *The Poacher* was a tremendous event. Before the parade, in the very early morning, I had the chance to spend a few quiet minutes in St George's Chapel, Lincoln Cathedral. Looking up at the long laid up standards of the old 10th of Foot brought home to me strongly the sense of being a small part of a very long story.

After Easter we have a full programme. With our sportsmen returned to us we can start training at platoon level and above. We have access to the German countryside for training in a way unthinkable in the UK and it does feel odd to be traipsing through someone's asparagus entirely legally. The soldiers are nearly all booked on to an Adventure Training (AT) course of some description, be that falling out of aircraft or canoes. Again, this is an area that has taken a hit over the last couple of years when we had to concentrate on operations exclusively. The hope is to build a good base of experience in

the Company and train our own instructors. This will allow us to plan more ambitious AT in coming years. By the mid summer we will be exercising as a Battalion with a look towards a major exercise in Kenya in the autumn and operations late next year.

As ever, we are busy and that isn't going to change anytime soon. The demands on really quite junior soldiers to use their initiative and self start are high and without exception they're doing well. We have plenty of new recruits arriving and the Company is young, keen and fit. We are all looking forward to the rest of 2009.

Field Firing in Sennelager

Lt James Quince, 2 Platoon, A (Lincolnshire) Company writes:
NATO Week 9 saw A (Lincolnshire) Company, with a contingent from Mortar

Platoon, deploy to Sennelager for a weeks field firing. The aim of the week, in line with a Battalion wide effort, was to get the Company back to its Light Role roots prior to Exercise Grand Prix in the autumn.

Starting from a low level, the package incrementally built up from static shoots through firing from sangars to culminate in live field firing at fire team level. While it would have been easy to build the week around passing the mandatory tests, the decision was made to try to incorporate a varied and enjoyable syllabus in order to gain the maximum benefit from time on the ranges.

Prior to deploying A the Company had made good use of the Dismounted Close Combat Trainer (DCCT) to help familiarise the men with the make up of some of the shoots. This undoubtedly saved time and ammunition on the live ranges.

The Company deployed on Sunday



The German winter keeps training interesting.

The Poachers



LMG gunner provides fire support.

afternoon and made Sennelager in good order in time for an evening meal. On Monday morning the week started well with fine weather and a surprisingly helpful range control aiding an excellent days zeroing. By Tuesday only the more stubborn members of Mortar Platoon were refusing to shoot straight and, with a little help from a rifle company, these problems were soon ironed out. Wednesday saw the Company and Mortar Platoon pass the Annual Personal Weapons Test (APWT) with some excellent shooting.

As a concurrent activity a number of the more junior private soldiers were given the opportunity to throw live grenades. Thursday brought a move away from static point shooting and the introduction of more challenging and interesting ranges, with Sgt Rawdon of Number Three Platoon creating a particularly exciting Individual/Pairs Fire and Movement Lane. The week culminated with a fighting withdrawal for Fire Teams.

Throughout the week Junior NCOs provided excellent background activity ranging from fire control orders to panoramic sketching, the latter producing some very good work and some belated entries for Tony Hart. Drill was also practiced in preparation for the upcoming Freedom Parades.

While administratively and in terms of achieving its aims the week was a resounding success, it did highlight to all concerned that shooting is a skill needing to be practiced as often as possible to maintain high standards. Confidence and competence with weapon systems can only be built on being good at the basics.

Commando Speed March 7 March 2009

*Lieutenant Will Otridge, A
(Lincolnshire) Company, writes:*
After a calorie filled manoeuvre from Germany to the Scottish Highlands, the Poacher's Speed March Team arrived in



Pte Smith racing for the finish line.

Spean Bridge. We set up camp in a local Village Hall and began preparation for the next day. The Speed March replicates part of the Commando Selection process used during World War Two. After completing Phase 1 training, the top recruits were put on a train bound for Scotland. On arrival at Spean Bridge they were given a kit bag (35lbs) and told to 'Speed March' to Achnacarry Castle (Commando Training Depot used during the war).

The 7 mile journey starts with a 200ft hill climb up to the (recently constructed) Commando Memorial. From there the road undulates down to Gairloch. The bridge



Pte Routledge weighing his bergen at Spean Bridge Station.

The Poachers



The team at the finish line in Achnacarry.

over the Loch marks the half way point and the start of a 100ft climb into the forest. The remaining 3 miles is fairly straightforward, until the final hill rises up to the gate at Achnacarry Castle. 1 hour after setting off the gate would close. All those who didn't make it in the hour were sent back to the train and then on to a regular Infantry unit.

With the absence of D (Sp) Company and Company boxers, many of the regular Battalion 'super-athletes' were unavailable. This gave a lot of new lads the chance to come forward and volunteer themselves for an arduous event. Training had been sporadic and limited due to company ranges, nevertheless all 12 runners were suitably prepared for the run. There were 350 runners altogether, coming from 28 military teams. The mass start was chaotic, but everyone got away OK. As we reached the summit of the first hill we were hit with a barrage of wind and rain, but this failed to deter the runners. Bad weather continued, but so did the runners; all 12 runners putting in a good performance.

LCpl Taylor came in 5th (52 minutes), pipped to the post by the semi-professional runners from RLC HQ. Captain Jeff Bennett-Madge finished in 56 minutes, followed by myself and Pte Saul Scott who missed the hour mark by 50 seconds. LCpl 'Barry' Tanner came in at 1hr 04min to complete the 'Top 5' required for the team average.

LCpl 'Smudger' Smith and Privates Clark, Routledge, Sunman, Brotheridge, Weymouth, Smith (A Company) all finished the race in a respectable time.

The Prize Giving was held after a formal meal in Fort William. For many of the



The team at the Commando Memorial.

The Poachers

private soldiers, this was the first time they had worn a tie since school or passing out, so some felt uncomfortable about appearing so smart in public. Nevertheless, they definitely enjoyed themselves and it was an experience they won't forget. The team rankings were dominated by Para and Commando units, however we finished in the top half and got a good mention in the speeches. 7 RHA (PARA) won the event (inevitable, seeing as they entered a 40 man team) and 2 PARA came in second. We have now learnt exactly how the event works, so with the inclusion of some more Battalion fitness monsters and extra training, we could make a challenge for the title next year. We also learnt that washing in mountain streams is extremely cold, but on the other hand enjoyable for spectators. A special mention goes to Pte Stephens who flawlessly drove the minibus through snowstorms and over large distances.

Training the Next Generation of Commanders - Queen's Division Fire Team Commander's Course

Lieutenant Will Rackham, 1 Platoon, A (Lincolnshire) Company, writes:

The newly established Queen's Division Fire Team Commander's Course (QDFTCC) has recently finished its third course and sent back a fresh batch of JNCO qualified private soldiers to their battalions, ready to be promoted. The FTCC runs over a six week period on Sennybridge Training Area, where the soldiers cover all aspects required for promotion to LCpl, from basic navigation over the Black Mountains, to the introduction to the Orders Process and the 7 Questions.



The familiar sight of a GPMG in Brecon.



One of the students wonders whether this really was the only route in.

The course is progressive and aims not simply to evaluate, but also to educate those who have displayed the potential to lead a Fire Team on operations. This said, the soldiers are not simply expected to know how to work as a section 2iC. As the course progresses it takes them beyond the role of a LCpl and trains them in the responsibilities and workings of a Section Commander. This is in keeping with the Army's 'one-up' training philosophy to ensure that they are capable of stepping up to lead a section should the need arise.

This introduction to the fundamentals of being JNCOs is interspersed with the usual physical assessments. The 2-miler, Stretcher Race and the Junior Fan (a 4 hour loaded march across four peaks of the Black Mountains) are all tests designed to push the soldiers and enable the course DS to evaluate not only their levels of fitness, but also their strength of character. This is especially true of the final physical hurdle of the course, Senior Fan, a 20 kilometre group race over the Black Mountains.

Despite the success of creating a unified Divisional JNCO cadre, the QDFTCC is still in its fledgling days and the course is still trying to find its feet to some extent. Due to operational deployments and busy training programmes, the course is in competition to acquire resources in the form of manpower, vehicles and equipment from heavily committed battalions. That said, the Queen's Div battalions all recognise the value of the

QDFTCC and make sacrifices elsewhere to provide the support required.

With continued support the QDFTCC will be able to produce ever larger numbers of JNCOs, all of whom are trained to an exemplary standard. The Queen's Div is leading the way with this cadre and is demonstrating the benefits of centralised training over battalion led courses. It will be interesting to see if in the future other Infantry divisions follow suit.

Exercise Snow Warrior

Pte Tully, 1 Platoon, A (Lincolnshire)

Company, writes:

Ex Snow Warrior is a skiing course that is designed to take you, as a non skier, to a higher level of skiing. The course includes two types - skiing touring as well as alpine skiing. The course also welcomes the more experienced skier as there is also an advanced course available. The instructors did not only teach us to ski, but helped to give us a good insight into survival in the mountains and avalanche awareness.

The course was eleven days in total. The first three days were the basics of skiing i.e. stopping, turning etc. The next three days were touring, where we toured up the mountains of Bavaria and studied the dangers of the weather and other dangers that can occur in the mountains. The next five days consisted of getting more confident on the skis and having lots of fun and falls. The course wasn't, however, without challenge, as it took some grit to get up the mountain while touring. But the views, sense of achievement and the ski down the slopes, made it all well worth it. The majority of my time was spent going up the slopes on a chair lift, enjoying the view, only to ski down with my group with the instructor leading. We were given pointers to improve on for the next time, then went back up to do it again.

I would advise anyone given half a chance to get on this course for a guaranteed fantastic time.



Exercise Snow Warrior.

The Poachers

B (Leicestershire) Company

*Major Pete Smith, OC B
(Leicestershire) Company, writes an
introduction:*

Way back in November when the then CO, Lt Col Browne, was starting to cast his eye away from Iraq, towards Germany and our move back into a more conventional 7 Bde role, his final comment on his Post POTL direction was "finally, enjoy your leave, that's an order." B Coy duly did that and after five glorious weeks with our friends and family we came back to a very cold Germany ready to tackle the challenges of 2009. Our Iraq experience had been unique, but it was quickly apparent that those soldiers who went as boys to Iraq had come back as men.

This was more evident when batches of new recruits arrived, many of whom had been born in the early nineties – the OC was definitely starting to feel his age. The priority for the Company was to balance having fun with the very necessary military training that we needed to focus on with the influx of new recruits and a useful focus of an eventual deployment to Afghanistan in 2010. This was achieved through a very useful IFFC in Sennelager, some great, imaginative training around Celle, and a good number of soldiers going away on Competent Crew sailing courses at Kiel and a Basic Freefall course in Sennelager.

The IFFC was designed to push soldiers through their APWT and conduct some other field firing up to team level if possible. The conditions were interesting with Sgt Smith, from the Bermuda Regiment, knee deep in snow before he knew it. The difference was not lost on those soldiers who had stood around Iraq sweating in their OSPREY. As a



Sgt Smith, Bermuda Regiment, braving the cold

Coy we managed to throw some 66 grenades and fire significant amounts of ammunition on some realistic and challenging CQB lanes organised by Captain Bennett-Madge. This was also the swansong of WO2 Marshallsay, who has now handed over to WO2 George.

The next big event was of course the freedom parades and all present were

overwhelmed by the turnout and support given to us by the people of our recruiting areas. A special thanks must be given to the Chairman of Leicester County and the people of Leicestershire for a fantastic reception and the continuing support we receive from our home base. The Leicester soldiers are certainly a robust element of the Company, but I would not have it any other way.

The boxing came hot on the heels of the freedom parades and B Coy came a close second to A Coy. Cpls Rogers and Antoni did a fantastic job with the team and B Coy has had 7 boxers selected for the Bn team. Pte Sears had a particularly hard fight, but the courage, determination, and skill shown by the whole team is worthy of note. A big thanks to them all.

Finally, the Company embarked on a series of Adventure Training activities which started with Kiel. Pte Steel stated that he enjoyed it once he stopped throwing up from sea sickness and all received a not very subtle lesson in how cold the Baltic can be. The freefall parachute course was a great success with a number who managed to freefall on their own for significant periods of time. We are now looking forward to 'Persian Poacher,' an expedition to Greece sailing under the command of 'splinter,' aka 2Lt Roden – more to follow in the next issue.

It has been a great few months back in Germany and we are looking forward to the challenges to come in the shape of Prime Poacher (Bn exercise) and Kenya.



LCpl Ellis takes command on the IFFC

The Poachers



An excellent demonstration by Lt Jones – New Zealand Army (Ex Long Look)

Freefall Frenzy

Lieutenant James Garside, B

(Leicestershire) Company, writes:

On the 30th March 09, 14 members of B Coy started a two week Basic Freefall Parachuting Course at the Joint Services Parachute Centre (Lippspringe) in Sennelager.

After the initial welcome briefings, the first day and a half was spent learning and practising the drills for exiting the aircraft, emergency reserve drills, ground orientation and kit issue.

On the afternoon of day two, the weather was clear and so came the time for us to complete our first jump. The single engine aircraft holds up to 10 fully kitted up static line student parachutists on board, plus the jump master (a highly qualified member of the Directing Staff).

The plane would reach the altitude of roughly 3500ft and start to do a number of passes above the Drop Zone. One by one, each student parachutist would be told 'in the door' by the jump master and adopt the position taught during the first day and a half. Next, the student would receive the word of command 'look up' and finally the worst part 'go!!!!!!'. On that word of command the student would launch himself out of the aircraft and theoretically adopt a stable arch position.

If all went to plan, each student would throw themselves out of the plane, the chute would open and a minute or so later you would land on the Drop Zone - sometimes screaming into the floor. Throughout the course the members of B Coy completed over 150 jumps and fortunately not one had to use their reserve.

As we advanced through the course, some of us progressed on to freefall. The initial feeling that you were now in total control of the parachute was terrifying, despite knowing that if you did not pull your chute the reserve would automatically open at

1000ft. We started with a 4 second delay, moving up to 10 seconds, then finally 15 seconds - reaching terminal velocity.

The Basic Freefall Course is an excellent opportunity for anyone in a safe environment to experience fear and overcome it. Beating the feeling of not wanting to jump, then throwing yourself out of a plane is unparalleled.

The Competent Crew Course

Second Lieutenant Tom Roden, B

(Leicestershire) Company, writes:

With the Battalion just back from operations, it was decided that a number of Adventurous Training (AT) trips would be conducted in order to make best use of this period before the Battalion starts Pre Deployment Training, ready for Cyprus in 2010. To give the soldiers an opportunity to get out and try something different, B Coy decided upon a sailing trip around the



Pte Murby, chuffed with his first command!

Greek Saronic islands. The first step was to ensure that we could meet the qualification requirements, and with no RYA Competent Crews within the Coy, the decision was made to send 10 volunteers away on the RYA's Competent Crew Course at the Kiel Training Centre (KTC).

Like its sister organisation, JSASTC, based at Gosport, the KTC exists to give soldiers the opportunity to experience high quality AT. Courses are run throughout the year, ranging from RYA Competent Crew to Yachtmaster, with all the sailing courses free to serving soldiers. They are run on board the fleet of 10 new Hallberg Rassy 342s and although popular there are often spaces available. In a relaxed but highly professional manner, soldiers not only get qualified but also get the best possible AT experience. The work involved for the unit is minimal and equates to nothing more than an information sheet per soldier and the organising of transport there and back. The benefits on the other hand can quickly be seen, with most individuals returning to the unit confident and happy to have enjoyed doing something new.

By taking 3 of these soldiers to Greece with the Battalion, we now have the opportunity to build on this enthusiasm, putting their new found skills to good use as they will be helping to run the expedition. In addition to this, others will be competing in the Infantry



Pte Murby and Pte Steel modelling for the latest Musto catalogue.

The Poachers



Pte Minton sits to reconsider his career options!

Sailing Regatta later in the year, and the 7th Armoured Brigade Regatta to be held in Germany. In the long run it is hoped that a number of soldiers will enjoy the sport enough that they are keen to progress and gain further qualifications, allowing the Battalion, when based in Cyprus, to make best use of the Yachts available there.

Sailing as both a sport and an activity within the Army should not be overlooked; its ability to develop confidence, strength and character in an individual can easily be seen, while the extra demands of racing require high levels of communication and effort by all on the team. It is organisations such as KTC that allow the perfect kick start, training those new to the sport in a professional, enjoyable manner.

The First Chapter - My Arrival at the Poachers

Lieutenant Tom Aspinall, B

(Leicestershire) Company, writes:

On successful completion of PCBC I had very little time to prepare myself for my arrival with the Poachers. In fact, less than 24 hours after leaving Brecon, myself and Second Lieutenant Tom Roden found ourselves boarding a plane bound for Germany. I was excited and keen to get out to Celle as this moment had been a long time coming.

Upon arrival to the Mess and after the obligatory welcome drinks, we were instantly made to feel extremely welcome. Everyone in the Mess seemed very down to earth and approachable. This was the same vibe that I encountered on a Potential Officer visit almost two years ago and part of the reason I chose to join the Poachers. My arrival came just as the Battalion had returned from Telic 12 and I was obviously extremely disappointed to have just missed out on an operational tour. However, arriving just after the Battalion's return and so close to Christmas proved to be a great introduction. There simply was not a dull moment in the five days that remained before the Battalion went on Christmas leave. The highlights for me were the Austin Dinner and Sergeants' Mess versus Officers' Mess football. Second Lieutenant Roden's efforts to portray me as some sort of football

superstar unfortunately didn't fall on deaf ears. At half time I found myself replacing the athletic Captain Haggard at right-back. Despite giving the Adjutant mild concussion from a misdirected clearance all went well with the final score a close 1-0 win for the Sergeants' Mess.

The first five days with the Battalion were certainly a baptism of fire. In these first few days I also received the news that Second Lieutenant Roden and I were lucky enough to be sharing the Christmas duties between us. We were also told that on the week before the Battalion returned from leave we would be running a Fire Team Commander's Final Confirmation Cadre. This was something that I was certainly looking forward to. With a great deal of help from Colour Sergeant Reeder the programme was produced and the Training Wing set up for the week's events. The week was thoroughly enjoyable (for myself at least) and the participants seemed to take a lot away with them. As it turns out eleven of the twelve privates that we sent to Brecon were successful and it gives me great pleasure when I see them around camp wearing their recently acquired rank.

My first few months with the Poachers have been thoroughly enjoyable and educational. I have learnt an awful lot in such a short space of time with thanks to the advice and assistance of everyone here in Celle. I find myself extremely proud to be able call myself a Poacher and look forward to learning a great deal more in the future.



The author (on the left) celebrating the Austin Dinner with his fellow Subalterns.

The Poachers

C (Northamptonshire)

Company

Major Ian Chance, OC C

(Northamptonshire) Company, writes:

The period since my predecessor last wrote the introduction for C Company has been characterised by change, both in terms of outlook and personnel. With TELIC 12 all but a distant memory, the Company training focus has switched to a theme of back to basics; making sure the rudimentary soldiering skills are up to standard. Aside from the 'old favourites' of shooting and PT, fieldcraft has been a central focus (more of which in Cpl Bobsin's article). With an eye on Herrick next year the predominant theme for training will be relevance to Afghanistan; basic skills as well as physical and mental robustness will be key. There is also considerable scope whilst we are in Germany to undertake activities slightly wider than just military; the Company has recently visited Bergen-Belsen (see Cpl Alderman's article) and it is the intent to expose our soldiers to an array of different local and regional experiences in the future.

On personnel, many of the Company stalwarts have also moved on, either posted within the Bn or externally. Some soldiers have left the Army to pursue careers in their chosen civilian occupations; chief amongst those who have moved on are LCpls Dennison and Metcalf, not forgetting a key character, Pte Marshall. We wish them all the very best of luck in the future. It would be remiss not to mention the appointment of CSM Dyson to RQMS (M) - we also wish him good tidings in a critical appointment. If I could ask him, maybe we can have our block painted now you are in the chair! Finally, an extremely warm welcome to our new CSM, WO2 Graham; with the RMAS team at the helm of C Company standards of turnout and bearing are sure to rise spectacularly!

The direction given by me for C Company's contribution to this *Castle* magazine was simply to make the articles relevant, interesting and humorous to ensure they appeal to their principal audience, the soldiers of the three battalions. I hope we have achieved this aim, perhaps providing some ideas for routine training, adventure training and other pursuits. Indeed looking ahead I would welcome any advice you the readers may have on activities which may both fulfil our training needs and maintain

the interest of our own soldiers in the coming months.

Looking to the future, the Company has a number of personnel booked to attend various adventure training courses including Competent Crew sailing and paragliding. Those who have yet to be booked on courses will partake in C Company's Iberian Poacher, a joint battlefield tour and adventure training package to Talavera, Salamanca and Gibraltar in May. In particular, the education package for the battlefield tour phase of the exercise, will kick-start the Company preparations for Talavera 200 in July. Hopefully you will enjoy reading about these activities in the next edition of *Castle*.

Exercise Basic Poacher Basic Skills Week

Lance Corporal Bobsin, C

(Northamptonshire) Company, writes:

The prospect for some of going back into the field and donning the hideous issue cam cream felt daunting after spending over three quarters of a year away from the conventional warfare scene. However, with Kenya approaching in 6 months, the need to re-hone our conventional skills was needed after an unconventional tour of Iraq. But with the company strength significantly reduced due to many other commitments, all the training would be done as a 'Company' Platoon.

The week started with a Tactical Advance to Battle (TAB) out to the area where we would remind and revise everything to do with patrol harbours. This was a useful lesson as everybody does things slightly differently, so it gave us a chance to establish some SOPs. The afternoon was the start of some practical nav training, putting into practice what they had been taught in the classrooms in the weeks beforehand. After being split up into 3 groups, the NCO leading the group had the whole afternoon and around 14km in which to get every man up to a standard where they could successfully navigate themselves around the night nav later on. With 2 of the 3 groups taking a shortcut, there was obviously a bit of cheating going on with the distances travelled that day, but nevertheless, every man successfully negotiated the night nav and, by 2300hrs, all were back in camp and 'prepping' for the next day (sleeping!).

Day 2 was a round-robin of lessons (after a

rapid TAB out to the area) with basics such as fire control orders, target indication, range cards, duties of a sentry and the 6 section battle drills, all covered in great detail. After all, good soldiering is the basics done right. After some delicious range chicken curry, lessons were wrapped up and another TAB back into camp ended day 2 of our training.

Day 3 was a day of platoon commanders' discretion, but the main priority was ensuring every man jack was up to date with all the WHTs; so the NCOs had another day of thrashing out the range of weapons lessons, trying to get everyone competent enough on weapon systems that they hadn't used since training.

With Day 3 going by in the long blink of an eye, Day 4 was a chance to get on the DCCT in order to brush up on our shooting and correct little imperfections, ready for the next week, which was down at Sennelager on the ranges doing our APWTs.

Friday was the usual weapon cleaning and with that it was over. The Coy retired to the bar to say a few farewells to mates leaving the Army and to bring an end to a long, yet successful week, where every soldier in the Coy could say they learned something new.

Bergen-Belsen Trip

19 February 2009

Corporal Alderman, 9 Platoon, C

(Northamptonshire) Company writes:

C (Northamptonshire) Company of the Poachers, recently went on a battlefield tour of Bergen-Belsen, a former Nazi concentration camp close to Celle where we are currently based.

It was estimated 50,000 prisoners of war (POW) and civilian inmates died there. Bergen-Belsen was opened in 1966 as a documentation and exhibition centre on the history of the camp. In 1990 a new permanent exhibition was opened containing photos taken along with the history of the Nazi persecution and systematic extermination of the Jews. A new museum was opened in 2007; it is a concrete structure and cost 13 million euros to build.

While we were at the Visitor's Centre there was a sombre mood as might have been expected. There were films clips being played from when the British liberated the camp on April 15th 1945. These were extremely graphic showing mountains of bodies piled up, some of them having to be moved by bulldozers.

The Poachers

The survivors of the camp looked like walking skeletons that were almost impossible to tell if they were boys or girls. There were also files of former prisoners and personal possessions of some of the inmates. After our tour of the Visitor's Centre we dared ourselves to walk around the camp itself. Whilst on the walk we visited a monument called 'The House of Silence' which was a building to meditate in. We passed many other monuments, the largest of which was a wall with messages in several languages inscribed on to it.

From the tour we learnt that Bergen-Belsen was set up in 1940 as the POW Camp Stalag XI-C for 600 Belgian and French POW. Between this time and the spring of 1942 about 18,000 Soviet soldiers died of hunger, cold and disease. In 1942 it became a concentration camp and was placed under SS command in April 1943. There were no gas chambers in Bergen-Belsen, since the mass executions took place in the camps further east. Nevertheless an estimated 50,000 Soviets, Jews, Czechs, Polish, anti-Nazi, Christians, homosexuals and gypsies died in the camp. The average life expectancy of an inmate was 9 months.

C Company found this camp important to remember, not only the many people who died there, but for the families of the dead and the other concentration camps in and outside Germany. This is where many more millions of innocent men, women, and children were executed. We also found it important to learn about the history and the stories behind the camp.

Some of the blokes found it quite emotional. This due to the fact you could relate to the British soldiers of 1945 who had seen some terrible things when they discovered the camp.



Bergen-Belsen Ariel view.



Monumental wall.



Bodies being moved by Bulldozer.

The Poachers



RSM Bartlett at the Parliamentary Briefing (Big Ben meets Big Tony).

Parliamentary Brief

Private Moffatt, C

(Northamptonshire) Company, writes: On the 26th of January members of the Poachers gave a presentation to a group of MPs from the counties that the Battalion recruits from. The brief was given at the Houses of Parliament and was presented in order to give those attending some idea about our recent experiences in Iraq. The Battalion was very well equipped to give an accurate insight into the situation in Iraq due to having served there in 2006 and 2008, with an eighteen month gap between the tours. The Poachers had experienced the worst and the best of both the security situation and Iraqi quality of life. In short, much had improved and we had a lot of good news to report on.

The presentation team consisted of the CO (Lt Col Brown), the RSM (WO1 Bartlett), Capt Bredin, Capt Osborne, Capt Cook, CSgt Graham and myself. We were accompanied by several members of the 1st Battalion and a contingent of other ranks from the Poachers. After staying overnight in a very comfortable hotel (unfortunately we were woken at 0400hrs by a fire evacuation), we made our way to the Houses of Parliament. We were received by Col (Ret'd) Kemp who had organised the event with Regimental Headquarters. After two rehearsals and some dealings with the media we were given a guided tour of the two Houses (Commons and Lords) and the rest of the historic buildings.

Tour done it was time to give the brief. The brief was introduced by the Colonel of the Regiment, Gen Sir John McColl KCB, CBE, DSO. The CO was next to talk, his presentation was called 'Basra - A tale of two cities'. This was an excellent title because in those two short years Basra really had changed for the better and was in effect unrecognisable from the dangerous

and hostile city we had left in the winter of 2006. I spoke next and gave a short talk on how I thought things had improved in Basra and my experiences that provided evidence for that improvement. I also spoke about the loss of two of my C Coy mates on TELIC 8 and those guys who had been wounded in the Battalion. CSgt Graham then spoke about his role in the Brigade Surveillance Company and the roles that D Coy had taken on during the tour. The main focus of the presentation was the massive improvement in Iraq and it was a case of good news well received. We spoke to the MPs after the presentation and they expressed gratitude for us doing an excellent job despite the difficulties.

What the Battalion and the Army as a whole has achieved in Iraq is remarkable; so it was good to tell the MPs our story, whilst remembering fallen friends. It was a good day and definitely a once in a lifetime experience.

C Company Rode Home

Lieutenant Adam Mackness, C

(Northamptonshire) Company, writes:

Whilst on TELIC 12 members of C (Northamptonshire) Company took part

in a charity fundraising event called 'C Company Rides Home'. The task was to cycle continuously 24hrs a day on two exercise bikes until the distance from Basra to Celle was reached - 3916km in total.

The event was completed during the busy Operational cycle in 104hrs, raising a grand total of £6,000. This sum has now been received by Leukaemia Research.

During the Watford Homecoming Parade, Leukaemia Research Regional Manager Annette How was invited along to come and watch. After the parade she spoke to the Company and thanked them for their efforts; explaining in detail the fantastic contribution and effect they had made on the lives of those less fortunate.

C Coy could not have been so successful in raising this sum without the help of the wider Regiment and ex-members; C Coy thanks you for your support and generosity. A special thanks to 2Pl (attached for the tour) who put in a strong performance from their location in the Old State Building.

D (Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire) Company

*Major Alex Hawley, OC D
(Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire)*

Company, writes:

The first few months of 2009 have been extremely productive for D Company. On return from POTL we absorbed over thirty keen young men from the rifle companies to reinforce the support weapons platoons.

Throughout March, as some of the following articles describe, the Recce, Mortar, Anti-Tank, Machine Gun and Sniper Platoons have run their biannual support platoon cadres. Although these are early days for the newly reinforced company, much excellent training has already been completed.

The company now looks forward to an exciting and opportunity laden deployment to the Falklands Islands in May and June. The Snipers will join late as they will begin the process of converting to the .338 rifle at Brecon. I hope you enjoy the articles that follow and that they give you some feel for the variety of life in D Company.



Annette How with members of the Company in Watford.

The Poachers

Poachers Recce Platoon Reinforcement Cadre

*Captain David Haggart, OC Recce,
writes:*

The last time the Poachers' Recce Platoon had been employed in its proper role was on Ex Ullan Eagle in Poland, in October 2007. Since then the majority of the Platoon had been involved in the Brigade Surveillance Company or the Armageddon Platoon on Op TELIC 12. Therefore, the reinforcement cadre held in March this year was an excellent opportunity to both train new recce soldiers and also revise and develop the existing members of the Platoon.

Indeed, this would be the first time CSgt Neil Reeder and I had exercised our new recce skills since passing the Light Role Recce Commanders Course at Warminster in October 2008. Thankfully CSgt Sam Graham would be remaining to assist with the cadre before moving on to be CSM B Coy - allowing me the luxury of two recce qualified Colour Sergeants for the cadre!

The majority of the cadre was planned in Iraq and the decision was made to use the local 443 training areas that surround Celle. With the benefit of hindsight this decision brought mixed results. The proximity to Trenchard Barracks helped to relieve some of the administrative burden and the thick forest of the training area was good for "extremely" close reconnaissance tasks. However, this severely restricted the opportunities to conduct long range or stand off taskings. The area is also extremely



Privates Ladds and Morgan conduct a casualty evacuation on the Recce Cadre.

popular with local hunters, who regularly go shooting for deer and wild boar at night. This meant there needed to be extremely good control measures when using the area and the students had an added reason not to be seen!

The four week long cadre was mostly spent in the field. Routine tests were completed in the first week including the 8 miler where LCpl Ted Baker and Pte Ladds came first and second respectively. Latter stages of the cadre involved patrolling and covert static surveillance phases building up to "setting the conditions" for Battle Group

operations. There is a lot to learn in these particular areas and 2 Patrol, led by Pte "Ritchie" Cunningham, learnt a lot from having to deal with a collapsed roof on their sub-surface OP.

The climax of the cadre and my personal highlight was an "options brief" to the Commanding Officer. All of the students on the cadre took turns to brief and be questioned by the Commanding Officer and CSgt Reeder and I were more than happy that they were all able to do it clearly and concisely. There is of course further training and development needed but I am more



Private Simpson and Cunningham on the advance.

The Poachers

than confident that the Poachers' Recce Platoon is at the place it needs to be. The D Company deployment to the Falklands in May will provide another excellent training opportunity and the next step in our Op Herrick preparations. Finally, I would like to extend a warm thank you to WO2 Sam Graham for his help on the cadre and Cpl Dave Martin for his long years of service as he leaves us for pastures new.

Teaching on the Recce Cadre

Lance Corporal Keiran Fields, Recce Platoon, writes:

I have been a member of the Poachers' Recce Platoon since Northern Ireland in 2004 and completed the Recce Cadre in September 2005, in Jordan. Since then I have passed a Battalion JNCO cadre, was promoted and been a member of the Brigade Surveillance Company, on the Battalion's recent tour of Iraq. So even though I have been involved with the Recce Platoon for some time, instructing on the latest Recce Cadre was going to be another step up and a new challenge.

It is interesting that we had a diverse bunch of volunteers as students on the cadre. Two soldiers had come direct from ITC (C), Privates "Digger" Coleman from Woga Woga in Australia and "Hendo" Henderson had both joined the Battalion one week before the cadre started. Private "Bez" Bezuidenhout, from South Africa, showed no sign of having arrived directly from MCTC. All three guys did well, working hard to finish the cadre and display that they are suitable to work in the Recce Platoon.

I helped teach on the cadre and was section directing staff on exercise, along with Sgt Mark Tremain, and Cpls Mick Bates and Stephen Pegg. My favourite part of the cadre was a fighting withdrawal from an OP screen. It was the last thing the blokes expected and a casualty made it even more difficult, but luckily Cpl Bates was on hand to give a good demonstration of how the casualty should be extracted!



Anti Tank Combat Fitness Test.

Anti-Tank Cadre

Capt Andy MacLeod, OC Anti-Tanks, writes:

The Anti Tank Platoon had virtually been disbanded after 12 months of being spread around the Battalion to fulfil key roles in Iraq such as the BSC, Armageddon Platoon and MiTTing. So the return to work after POTL heralded the time to return to our conventional war roles as a formed Anti Tank Platoon.

As a Platoon we had a few weeks build up in Germany before moving to Salisbury Plain. This allowed us a consolidated 4 week

period covering the tactical employment of the Javelin Weapon System. The time in Germany was spent revising the basics of anti tank soldiering as skill fade had taken hold of the Platoon. Everyone's favourite subject, recognition, proved to be a particular area of neglect and many members of the Platoon spent hours pouring over micro models, including some of the more senior members of the Platoon.

Come the end of February, with the Platoon now focused on the task at hand, we moved to the UK to complete the cadre. The predominant themes of training were fitness, low level skills and JNCO command. To achieve this, the cadre was split into four phases: foundation week, mandatory skills week, TEWT week and confirmatory exercise week.

The cadre started off with a CFT. Although by no means quick, it did highlight the need for a number of the Platoon to look at their robustness when carrying the extra kit required as a Javelin operator.

By the time we had reached the confirmatory exercise week, the Platoon were all qualified Javelin operators and we had been joined by a number of 3 R Anglian attachments. This allowed us to concentrate on providing a demanding and realistic exercise that would give the Platoon confidence to operate at battalion level. The standard of individual soldiering throughout the exercise was good, with a high level of battle discipline shown by all, particularly in OPs. Map reading, without a GPS, proved to be another matter!

By the end of the cadre, the Platoon had demonstrated their ability to successfully



Cpl Hack (D Coy RSDC), the author and CSgt Reeder on exercise.

The Poachers



Above: Javelin Live Firing .

Right: Anti Tank Platoon deploying with Javelin.

employ the Javelin weapon system to its best effect. A lot of this was possible due to a consolidated period away from camp where everyone's focus could be on soldiering and nothing else. We are now in the position of being able to deploy to the Falklands, confident that we are more than capable in our role, and where we can be employed to best effect in one of the most demanding environments in the world.

Machine Gun Platoon GPMG SF Cadre

Corporal Swain, MG Platoon, writes: Unexpectedly the MG cadre started with a swift visit back to London for the 7 Armoured Brigade "March to Parliament" – something you would not have expected to do in the first day of training! However, this was one of those experiences not to miss and gave us the chance to dabble in our second role as the Poachers' Corp of Drums.

Helped by Drum Major Simon Towe, I set out to cram five days worth of lessons into two; so the pressure was on with some lesson prep from hell. Fortunately everyone passed the GPMG weapon handling tests and were ready for the later stages of the cadre. The second phase was live firing at Sennelager, combined with C Company. The ranges went well but sharing a room with forty other men and listening to Drummers Qalica and Cakau in competition for best snorer 2009 took its toll. The week went well and the AWA was passed by all, despite sharing range time with other units.

By week two I could tell that the blokes had made progress with the GPMG as cleaning times had gone from about five to three hours! For the latter stages of the cadre we were joined by Sgt Chris Wallis and his band of machine gunners from 3 R



ANGLIAN. It was good to see the amount of enthusiasm shown by the guys from the 3rd Battalion and they got to do more gunning than most of them have done in the last few years combined.

Finally came the greatly awaited SF range. After 56,000 rounds there were only two guns that needed attention from the REME staff that were on hand. The range was great, but afterward there was another marathon gun cleaning session.

Going from live firing to blank firing was a bit of a let down, but there was a confirmation test exercise that needed to be completed. It was one to remember with Sgt Baird's final extraction route directly through a swamp. The cadre ended the way it had started with a change back to our ceremonial role for a display at the Inter-Company Boxing Final.

Working with the TA on the Mortar Numbers Cadre

Lance Corporal Elkington, Mortar Platoon, writes:

Although I was already in the Mortars Platoon I was not trained on the 81mm mortar and so I joined our new reinforcements as a student on the course. We were split down into two sections, one commanded by Cpl Finnerty and the other by Cpl Green. Also

joining the sections were four soldiers from 3 R ANGLIAN who joined us for most of the cadre. These TA soldiers had been conducting their own training before they joined us and so they arrived well prepared. They settled in very well with the other lads in the Platoon. The first part of the cadre was getting to grips with the 81mm mortar itself.

The first part of the exercise was dry firing for the dets. I spent this time in a MFC party sending grids and directions to the mortar line. This was the main opportunity for the section commanders and the TA sergeants to test their dets on their drills. The conclusion of this phase was the Collishore Trophy, which was presented to the best det after a series of stands which included first aid, observation, command tasks, military knowledge and a 7km TAB with the mortar kit. My team, which included Pte Smith and Pte Fielding (TA) won the competition. The Trophy was presented to Pte Smith by Sgt Wright, an ex-Mortars Sgt.

After the exercise it was back to camp to clean kit and have a few drinks to say goodbye to the TA lads. The final week of the cadre was live firing with soldiers from 2 PWRR who had travelled all the way from Cyprus. Despite the poor weather and therefore restricted range time, this was an excellent way to end the cadre.

The Poachers

Ex Snow Jack 2008 The Army Snowboarding Championships

Corporal Knight, D (Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire) Company, writes:
After a productive TELIC 12 as Coy Medic in the BSC, I returned to Germany to represent the Poachers in the 2008 Army Snowboarding Championships. This was held on the Stubai Glacier in Austria. Having not represented the Battalion in a sport before, I was focussed on training hard and doing my best.

I arrived in Austria to attend the week long Army Minor Units' Training Camp, set up to give new and smaller teams the opportunity of professional coaching. A hard core week of training in the deep powder, with carving on the steep slopes and some Slalom training, put me on a good standing ready for the competition phase.

As the teams arrived from a wide variety of units, it was clear this was going to be a tough competition. Capt Mark Taylor with his team from the Vikings turned up too, and took me under their wing for the duration. I was more than grateful for this as before this point I had been pretty much an orphan in the Village of Neustift. Thanks guys!

The first 4 days of competition got underway with the first event, the Parallel



Cpl Knight and Regimental snowboard.

Giant Slalom. Although I had never competed in this particular event, I was confident of doing well, as it was my style of riding ... fast! I made the first of two runs

in the qualifying stage as number 108, which was the lowest seeding in the competition because I was the newest of the new. The glacier is at over 3000 meters, so it made being last to go pretty arduous. After nearly 'Going down', I got into the gate for the second run. I was told my time of the first run was 57.8, which put me in the top third of riders straight away. However, this put me off my second run and I went down going too fast and missed the gate. This effected my overall time, however I still managed to nudge myself up 24 places in the seeding to 84. This was definitely a step in the right direction and at least I wouldn't be last in the queue for the other events.

The "Slope Style" phase came after some further days of training on other mountains, due to the Glacier being closed because of poor conditions. We visited Mayerhafen which has one of the best "Slope Style" parks in Europe. It was great for the training even though I did come away with a battered body due to landing face first and eating ice a few times. The qualifying stage for the "Slope Style" ran as soon as the mountain re-opened, with 108 people huddled on the side of the Glacier in the ice cold winds, waiting to go over the four big kickers or the box rails. After eating some more ice on my practice run, I was still confident as I saw just about everyone else do the same. My first qualifying run didn't go too well as I was still judging at what speed to hit the knarly kickers. In other words I hit the first kicker too fast and got some unexpected air time with a harsh landing on my rear end.

My next and last run went much better. I executed the first two kickers with good speed and did two indie grabs in succession, then neatly went over the last box rail. I was really pleased with it as I knew that not many people had done much better. I was aware that they were only going to be picking 20 - 25 people out of the 108 that day to go through to the final, so I was quietly confident. As the team captains meeting came that evening, I found out that I was through to the final which was a massive boost to my confidence. The final came and I was really excited to be in it. I cracked on with my practice runs and was doing some nice neat grabs, with some good air. My two runs for the final were okay; this meant that I came 30th overall. For a first timer in the competition I was really pleased and think I did the Battalion proud.

The final few days of the competition saw the belated "Board Cross" competition which I was really looking forward too. Going fast over a tough course with tight turns and kickers is a really good event to be in. I made it through to the quarter finals but was beaten to the semi final by a Tanky.

All in all this was possibly the best three weeks I have spent in the Army. I am pleased to have finally represented the Battalion in a sport I love. Thanks to everyone who supported the trip. Next year we'll hopefully have a Poachers team to give the Vikings a run for their money!!



Cpl Knight goes for it!

The Poachers

Headquarters Company

Major Mick Abbs, OC HQ Company, writes:

HQ Company has gone through a period of transition on return from post-tour leave. I have taken over as OC whilst we have a new CSM, WO2 (CSM) Farrell, after his stint as Cambridge University Officer Training Corps as boxing coach (sorry, Infantry Permanent Staff Instructor!). The Company has been busy undertaking routine training tasks and supporting the Battalion effectively in this busy period.

On the training and reconstitution side, there have been various activities such as signals cadres, focusing the minds of the RSO, Capt George Osborne, and his staff, in getting the complexities of the Bowman radio system across to the next generation of signallers. A Board of Officers run by the Quartermaster took place in early February to prepare for the changeover of Commanding Officers. This major effort, counting items across the Battalion, saw a steep learning curve for many young subalterns who were spotted wandering around camp with clip-board in hand looking baffled.

In mid-March the Company was honoured to form the fourth Guard for the Battalion Freedom Parades. Inevitably this also required a huge logistical effort by the author supported ably by his G4 team; 3 R ANGLIAN at Lincoln were also very helpful and our thanks go to those who supported us. Unfortunately we had to fly over early

rather than brave the mammoth drive from Celle; so this allowed us to attend the next main event, the Poachers' reunion at Grimsby, on a Sat night! Yes we went, yes we had a good night, and yes we did have a beer for the boys who, at that time, were travelling through the night from Celle! The Company thoroughly enjoyed itself on the parades, more of which is written elsewhere. Not long after the return from these, the Company continued its training with a focus on competing as a Company in the inter-Company Boxing on the night prior to Easter leave. A valiant effort and commitment by all our boxers saw HQ Coy compete well against the rifle companies in the early bouts.

There have been numerous personality changes since the last edition, too many to mention here; but the Company would like to welcome in the following personnel: Captain Jim Francis, our new Padre; Capt Eck Stewart (SCOTS) as Unit Welfare Officer; whilst Capt Rainey MC moves to the MT. Other changeovers include Captain Bartlett on commissioning from RSM as Regimental Recruiting Officer, replaced by WO1 (RSM) Waghorn. Promotions were also awarded to Lance Corporals Pratt and Sharman from the MT, who both successfully passed the FTCC held at Brecon. In mid-March the following personnel were awarded their Long Service and Good Conduct medals for undetected crime: WO2(RQMS) Dunn RRF, CSgt Hills, Cpls Hart, Blanchard, Crozier, Murdoch, Atkins and Pte Harrison. So congratulations to all.

Poachers on Parade Post Op-Telic 12 Freedom Parades

Captain George Osborne, Regimental Signals Officer, writes:

One fine, dusty day, late into the Poachers' recent Iraq tour, the Colonel of the Regiment visited the Poachers in their various locations across the Contingent Operating Base and Basra. Following a successful visit (as judged by the project Officer) General McColl suggested to the assembled command team that the positive story of the Battalion's return to the desert must be told to our home audience in our counties, in the form of Freedom Parades. As quiet settled upon the assembled group, thoughts could nearly be audibly heard around the room. From the Adjutant "drill – no-one told me about drill when I took this job", from the Quartermaster "Weapons, accommodation and food all back in the UK – pah, easy", from the Battalion Second in Command "BUDGET!" and finally a spoken response from the Commanding Officer "Of course General, in fact we were already planning it".

Fast forward 5 months of Operational tour, Christmas parties, post-tour leave and a month of Battalion individual training and no small amount of drill; the scene was set for one of the most memorable months in the Battalion's recent history. It is no small surprise that the parades were such a success; the planning team from Regimental Headquarters, the Area Secretaries and the Poachers contingent driven by WO1 (RSM)



The author leads the Company guard whilst CSM HQ Company, WO2 (CSM) Farrell, gives a word of command.

The Poachers



With the Minden Band of the Queen's Division in the foreground the Commanding Officer leads his Battalion through Lincoln.

and now Captain Tony Bartlett, put in an enormous amount of effort. The Battalion remains grateful to them all. On the evening of Saturday 7th of March 2009 the 160 or so Poachers mounted four buses and began the long journey back to our counties. After a reasonably pain free journey the party arrived at our home for the week in Grantham and settled in. The arrival timings had been meticulously planned to allow the RSM and then RSM (Des) WO1 (RSM) Waghorn to put the four Company guards through their paces on the drill square.

Monday morning dawned and saw WO1 Waghorn putting the Battalion through their paces again on the drill square, in order to make the parade the best possible for our first day. The first parade in the attractive Georgian market town of Stamford, Lincolnshire, was a great success with hundreds of people turning out onto the streets to applaud and wave Union flags as the proud Poachers marched by. The town granted the Battalion Honorary Status, its highest honour, which allowed the 160 Poachers to march through the town with bayonets fixed, drums beating and colours flying.

As was to be the case throughout the week, the Poachers were supported by the Minden Band of the Queen's Division, who provided both an excellent beat to keep the time and their usual high musical standard. Also in attendance were the veterans of Stamford and the surrounding area who were on parade to support the new generation. Chairman of the Royal British Legion Tony Goodwin was among the veterans marching. His wife Janet summed up the feeling in Stamford saying,



Dressing the Parade In Watford.

The Poachers



The Poacher says thank you to the crowds in Lincoln.

"It is the least we can do to welcome these people back. Even if it was bucketing it down with rain everyone would still be out here supporting them."

Early on in the parade the citizens of Stamford gasped as the Poachers gave the General Salute to the Lord Lieutenant and Deputy Mayor, supported by a flypast of three Royal Air Force Typhoons from our affiliated squadron, 28 (R) Squadron RAF Coningsby, a fitting display of a Joint approach, even during ceremonial duties. Shortly after the salute the Deputy Mayor presented the Honorary Status to the Battalion, recognising the sacrifices made by the soldiers of the County and closing by saying "How proud I am to be able to do this in front of the town." In his response, the Colonel of the Regiment told the citizens of Stamford that the "the honour you do The Regiment is something much more than a generous civic donation. Thank you for granting The Regiment Honorary Status of Stamford and thank you for your support. Both are humbling."

After the ceremony the soldiers marched through the town to Stamford School where they were kindly hosted by the School and assembled local dignitaries. Headquarter Company Sergeant Major Darren Farrell particularly enjoyed the day, "We had a

wonderful time, the streets were paved with happy smiling locals who welcomed us with open arms. All of the soldiers felt appreciated, the turn out made the Parade and effort of the men worthwhile." Many friends and relatives of the Battalion tuned out to the parade, some travelling significant distances to see their loved ones. Charlotte Teasel, 19, had travelled from Grimsby to see her 20-year-old boyfriend Pte Benjamin Markanyecz march. She said: "I am very proud of him. It is an emotional day for me and for everyone here." Moira Greenhill, who had travelled from Leicester to see her son, Colour Sergeant James Greenhill, march was emotional as the soldiers marched past. "It makes you very proud and it is such a huge relief. I can't really describe how I'm feeling." After such a fantastic first day on parade the Poachers returned to Grantham all a couple of inches taller and stepping slightly smarter. It would prove to only be a taste of the reception to come.

With a longer drive down to Luton and a little more drill to do to perfect the amended parade, the Battalion awoke early the next day. After the drill practice the guards were briefed that "there may be a small protest" in Luton but not to be concerned about it. On arriving in Luton it was clear that we had an even larger turnout from local citizens, plus

a significant media presence interested in the possible protest. The parade through the town centre was supported by thousands of people and culminated in a ceremony in front of the Town hall. There were a small group of protesters who exercised their freedom of speech in a demonstration on the way to the market square, though on later enquiry many of the soldiers did not register the protest as they were drowned out by cheering crowds. On arrival in the square the Colonel in Chief, The Duke of Gloucester, took the Royal Salute prior to the soldiers being welcomed by Luton's Mayor Lakhbir Singh who said "The Royal Anglian Regiment was given the freedom of the town some years ago and we are proud to welcome them back." The Poachers on parade were then entertained by the Borough Council in a local hotel in grand style. It was particularly encouraging how welcoming and supportive all of the councillors were on a personal level. It was during the reception that the news coverage of what we had regarded as a small part of the day was aired.

It is a measure of how much coverage the parade received that the Prime Minister, the Rt Hon Gordon Brown MP, supported the Poachers on the day saying: "The whole country is proud of our brave servicemen and women who serve their country with great distinction and courage. That pride in our armed forces was shown once again today when thousands turned out to welcome the 2nd Battalion The Royal Anglian Regiment." With coverage on all of the evening news programmes and five national newspaper front pages the next day it had turned out to be a quite remarkable, but thoroughly positive, day for the Poachers.

On the following day the Battalion returned to Hertfordshire county once again to parade through Watford. On the journey down it was clear that there would be a huge amount of interest in the parade due to the national media coverage on the previous night. The MoD press office gave an indication of the scale of interest; it seemed that it would be a busy day for all involved. On arrival the 'A-Team' of those leading the parade and supporting functions walked the route; even an hour before the parade hundreds of people were out on the streets waving flags and chatting. In the last hour before the parade it became clear quite how much media interest had been generated; Sky News planned to broadcast the parade live whilst every major national newspaper had sent a photographer hoping to catch more headline grabbing stories.

As it transpired the parade in Watford was a huge success, with thousands of people on the streets up to 6 deep at points. The welcome of the people of Watford, like the majority in Luton, was overwhelming and a humbling experience for us all. Again, after the parade at the reception, the councillors and people of Watford welcomed us all warmly whilst the Commanding Officer was interviewed on ITV news outside. Again, the Watford parade was a positive experience

The Poachers



The Colours flying in Luton.

for all involved and led to some fantastic coverage in the local and national news.

For the final day of the series of parades the four guards had less of a journey in order to parade through Lincoln as a culmination of the week. The setting for the close of a momentous week could not have been more appropriate; Lincoln and wider Lincolnshire has always been very supportive of the Battalion and the people of the city came out in force. The ancient streets framed what was a fantastic spectacle for all to see. Most memorable in the final parade was a fly past by the Red Arrows of the Royal Air Force

just as the Commanding Officer gave the General Salute; with impeccable timing the 9 jets flew over pouring out red white and blue smoke, just as the final drill movement was carried out. The outgoing Regimental Sergeant Major nearly fainted with pride!

It was left to a reception with the magnificent backdrop of Lincoln Castle for the Poachers to enjoy their final reception and reflect on what had been a wonderful week. The people of all of the towns and counties through which we marched showed tremendous support and were always interested in the exploits of

their soldiers. The soldiers of the Battalion walked around all week a few inches taller and with a smile on their face knowing that the sacrifice that they make is appreciated by their friends, families and communities. The media exposure, though rather fortunate for this Media Officer, was unprecedented, with 11 national newspaper front pages in the week and countless hours of airtime on radio and TV. Whilst it might sound strange, we had a fantastic week doing drill and are rather looking forward to the next parade in Northampton at the Talavera 200 celebrations.

The Poachers

Poachers Inter-Company Boxing Competition 2009

*Major Danny Mackness,
Quartermaster, writes:*

After an enforced absence last year due to being deployed on Operations in Iraq, the Poachers returned to the noble sport of boxing in late March with the 2009 Inter-Coy Novice Class A Boxing Competition. All five coys had formed their boxing squads in Jan, and training had been pretty thorough and gruelling. However, all boxers felt the benefit, as in the Finals nearly all bouts went the distance. The finale of the gruelling 6 weeks of preparation was held in the gym on Thur 27 Mar in front of a huge crowd of all ranks of the Battalion. The event, as ever, was a highlight of the sporting year and showed the spirit of the Battalion from first to last fight.

The bantamweight competition set the standard for the rest of the evening, with Pte McPhearson B (Leicestershire) Coy and Pte Chadwick C (Northamptonshire) Coy putting on a great display in a finely balanced bout. The majority points decision went in favour of Pte McPhearson, but it was a close call. C (Northamptonshire) Coy regained the initiative in the featherweight competition when a skilled performance from Pte Ficetola saw him win a unanimous points decision over the plucky Pte Thompson of A (Lincolnshire) Coy.

The Lightweight bout was one of the best of the evening and all spectators were split on who had won it - it was that close and keenly contested. The result went the way of Pte Brewer (A (Lincolnshire) Coy) who also won the Cooper Cup, awarded to the Commanding Officer's best boxer. His opponent, Pte Sears of B (Leicestershire) Coy, won the Most Gallant Runner-Up trophy, which gives you an idea of the quality of the bout. The final bout before the break was a walkover for Pte Watts B (Leicestershire) Coy due to his opponent, Pte Walker A (Lincolnshire) Coy breaking his hand in the semi-finals. With admirable, albeit misguided, determination, Pte Walker showed true Poacher spirit, when he tried to convince the RMO that he was still able to box!

The welterweight bout had the whole crowd on their feet for three rounds as neither Pte Tofton B (Leicestershire) Coy nor his opponent, Pte Pochetty A (Lincolnshire) Coy would give ground. In what was perhaps the hardest-fought contest of the evening, both men gave it their all and fully deserved the long standing ovation they received. The majority points decision went to Pte Tofton, but was extremely close.

With two strong boxers winning the middleweight semi-finals, the final was eagerly anticipated. Unfortunately, Pte Bates B (Leicestershire) Coy, failed the medical due to a hand injury and Pte Taylor A (Lincolnshire) Coy was awarded the win by walkover. The light heavyweight bout saw an even match between Pte Huggins D



In the heavyweight bout Pte Reeve (A Company) and LCpl Chapman (D Company) in an intense contest.

(Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire) Coy and Pte Tonks A (Lincolnshire) Coy with the majority points decision going in favour of Pte Huggins.

In the cruiserweight bout, LCpl Underwood, D (Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire) Coy, boxed clever, making good use of his jab and long reach to get a unanimous points decision over Pte Davidson A (Lincolnshire) Coy. The final bout of the evening, the heavyweight competition, matched the short, but powerful Pte Reeve C (Northamptonshire) Coy, against the taller LCpl Chapman D (Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire) Coy. Despite LCpl Chapman's efforts, Pte Reeve continually got inside and scored well with some good close in work, with the result being a majority points decision in favour of Pte Reeve.

The overall result was extremely close, with A (Lincolnshire) Coy eventually winning by only one point, with B (Leicestershire) Coy coming second. C (Northamptonshire) Coy came in third, D (Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire) Coy came in fourth, with HQ Coy bringing up the rear. A lot of fresh talent was identified and the foundations have been laid for the Inter-Unit competition taking place later this year, which the Poachers will be entering for the first time in over five years.

C Company Boxing Training

Corporal Fox, C (Northamptonshire)

Company Boxing Coach, writes:

At the end of 2008 the CSM (WO2 Dyson) informed me that the Company level boxing would go ahead this year. Unfortunately, last year the Inter-Company boxing did not go ahead due to operational commitments, so the news that it was going to happen was well received. This was a chance for us to improve on the team we had in 2007 where we lost in the finals by 1 point!

C Company started out with twenty



Cpl Brown pounds the bag.

three potential boxers, some of whom had participated in the last company boxing and some had done a little boxing before joining the Army. However, most had not done any previous training. This is common at company boxing level.

The first thing I did with the team was to get them in a room to explain to them the amount of commitment, effort and discipline it takes to be a boxer. With the constant physical training and dieting you need to be physically and mentally robust. I also explained the amazing feeling of



Pte Stuart hard at work in training.

The Poachers



The C Company Team. Back row: Ptes Jackson , Hazel, LCpl Davis, Ptes Richards, Taylor, Leahy, Stuart Middle row: Ptes Reeve, Towns, Ficetola, Chadwick, West Front row: Pte Jackson, Cpl Brown, Pte Tanner.

satisfaction, pride and the glory that they will get from getting in the ring.

What most people don't realize about the boxing is that the hardest part is not the fight but the training. The fights only last three minutes, but the training is six weeks long. Everybody in the Battalion will watch the fights, but they don't see all the hardships leading up to the fights; like when your body is crying out for rest but you've still got another four rounds on the bags, or that last kilo that just won't go (LCpl Davies!).

After my brief talk I told them to get into tracksuit as they wouldn't need their green kit any more (perk of the job!). The next stage was to weigh the team and put them into their respective weight categories. There are nine weight categories in total for the inter-company boxing; they consist of bantam, feather, lightweight, light-welter, welter, middle, light-heavy, cruiser and heavyweight.

We'd start training most days with an average of a six to twelve mile run in the morning; then we would do bag and pad work to sharpen up the skills to stop those lazy jabs and the dropping of the left hand. After a light lunch we'd play football; this is to keep everyone mobile before a two hour gym session, either on the cardiovascular equipment or as a circuit; and that is pretty much how their working days were. On Wednesdays we sparred after the morning run and swam in the afternoon, giving the boxers time to relax their muscles.

Two weeks before the fights we were down to a team of sixteen; the others either came

off with injury or personal problems. Losing boxers at this stage was always expected, as I told them on my initial brief, they needed to be mentally and physically robust. We still had a boxer in each weight category and seven more boxers ready at a mix of weights should any of the first string boxers have got injured.

The sparring sessions went really well and at this stage C Company had a better than ever chance of taking the title as Inter-Company Champions. There were many of the C Company Team who had grown into stylish boxers during the training. All of the team worked extremely hard throughout; they even completed the Individual Field Firing Camp at Sennelager along with the MATTS for this year!

The final selection for C Company team was a hard decision, as I felt that each and every person had done enough to be a part of the final 9. Apart from the Bantam and Featherweight, every other weight had at least two people per category, so I thought the only fair way of choosing who represents the mighty C Company was to spar-off against each other. Despite the respect between each of the boxers, they all competed with complete desire. As the final squad had been announced, the draw for the semi-final bouts was the next big step.

The semi-finals did not go to plan for the C Company team. Unfortunately Pte Tanner (Lightweight), Pte Towns (Light Welterweight), LCpl Davies (Middleweight), Cpl Brown (Light Heavy) and Pte Richards (Cruiserweight) were defeated during

some superb bouts. Through to the final were Pte Chadwick (Bantamweight), Pte Ficetola (Featherweight) and Pte Reeve (Heavyweight). This in effect meant we could not win the competition with A Company fielding so many competitors in the final.

Despite their best efforts and one result which was hugely disappointing, the Company team finished a very respectable third place, narrowly beaten by a few points by A and B companies' teams. Pte Chadwick boxed extraordinarily well considering this was his first attempt in the ring, but alas lost the decision on points. Pte Ficetola produced a boxing masterpiece to win the bout unanimously. During the 'Clash of the Titans', Pte Reeve prevailed on a majority decision.

The boxing was superbly supported by all ranks in the Battalion and the support we were given within the Company was second to none. It made a huge difference for the fighters to walk out in front of their Company with everyone cheering with the drums beating and they were all immensely proud to have done so.

The first priority after the boxing night was re-energising the team; Pte Tanner visited Burger King 5 times in the 24hrs after he fought! Other carbohydrates were consumed as the fighters were given the opportunity to let their hair down after such a long and arduous training regime. All in all a superb effort by all involved and the talent in the Battalion bodes well for a strong boxing team this year.

3rd Battalion The Steelbacks

Introduction by the Commanding Officer

Lt Col D G Vincent MBE writes:

The first half of 2009 has been punctuated by two operational tours, one ending and one beginning. The first was the return of the cohort attached to the Poachers in Iraq; the second is the preparation of two separate platoons for deployment to Afghanistan. In addition to these operations, the Battalion has spent its training time moving from last year's Counter Insurgency based training to conducting more intensive war fighting training, focussed on Offensive and then Urban operations. The Battalion was honoured to have Mr Martin Bell present Iraq Medals on Sunday 15th February, to those who deployed with the Poachers on Op TELIC 12. The medals were presented to 8 of the 24 soldiers; however 16 soldiers and their families attended the event, taking the total present to around 90. The event consisted of a 'Thanks Giving' Service, conducted by the ex-Poachers' Padre, Robin Richardson, which was followed by a presentation on the tour by the CO, with personal reflections from Cpl Roach, Pte Johnson and Pte Collins. The event was enjoyed by all and received some good media coverage.

In April a 32 man platoon, 11 Platoon, was called out to start training at RTMC in May for a deployment to Kabul as the ISAF Force Protection Platoon. 11 Platoon, commanded by Lt Rhys Little, will deploy with 66 (Fuel) Squadron RLC, but will actually work as the 4th Platoon in a Macedonian Company and



LCpl Woods E Coy receives the Inter Company Champion Trophy for 2009 from the CO.

patrol Police Districts 9 and 10 in Central Kabul, in addition to guarding HQ ISAF. This task is similar to that carried out by the Battalion in 2007 and the Platoon Sergeant, CSgt DeKrester, will have deployed on both tours.

At short notice the Battalion was asked to supply a second platoon this summer to Afghanistan to enlarge a 3 R WELSH TA Company from 3 to 4 platoons. The CO

agreed, as supply had been greater than demand for 11 Platoon. Therefore in May, a 29 man, 12 Platoon, commanded by Lt Ian Gins, was mobilised for deployment to Helmand. The 4 platoons in the TA Company will work independently on one of the following tasks: **Combat** Logistic Patrol Protection, **IRT Protection** or **FOB Protection**. In addition to 12 Platoon, a number of individuals, including



Maj T Beighton (QM), CO and Martin Bell at Duxford.

The Steelbacks

21C and CSM C (Leicestershire & Northamptonshire) Company, Capt Swift and WO2 Nagra, will deploy.

The Offensive Operations Training Period was designed to blow away the war fighting cobwebs of the Battalion between January and April. The conceptual piece had already been completed for all officers and SNCOs with an Offensive Operations Study Period, Ex STEELBACK ASSAULT I, in early December 2008. Then, after a Company Weekend that concentrated on low level Section and Platoon Drills, the Battalion held a Battle Group Planning Day on Valentines Day, in order to produce the OPO for the main FTX, Ex STEELBACK ASSAULT II.

Ex STEELBACK ASSAULT II was held on Salisbury Plain in early March. This FTX was the culmination of the Offensive Operations Training Period and involved a Battle Group of over 250 TA soldiers, with artillery support from 201 Battery 100 Regiment RA and engineer support from 73 Engineer Regiment, along with rifle platoons from East Midlands UOTC, 158 Transport Regiment and 36 Signals Regiment. The FTX started with battle preparation and then a move forward by one company who, with an RE Section, conducted a minefield breach and assault on the covering force. This was rapidly followed by a 2 company assault river crossing, following the building of an Infantry Bridge, again by the engineers. The next phase was to achieve the aim of the Battalion raid, which was a Battle Group Deliberate Attack on an enemy Brigade HQ; this was swiftly followed by a Hasty Battle Group Attack on a second location. The FTX was testing for all levels of the Battle Group and delivered both tough and enjoyable training.

Following the FTX, three of the Battalions support weapon platoons joined DC company of the Poachers on cadres. In Celle, 11 members of the GPMG SF Platoon and 8 members of the Mortar Platoon and on Salisbury Plain 8 members of the Anti Tank Platoon were fully integrated into the training for a 2 week period. This was an excellent example of inter Battalion co-operation with the soldiers learning much from each other in addition to gaining their weapon qualification.

For a short period in March/April the Battalion focussed on competition shooting which culminated in the Battalion SAAM on a glorious weekend in April. This competition was fiercely fought by the four rifle companies, but on the day A (Norfolk & Suffolk) Company were the overall winners, with Cpl Bunn of A Company picking up the Champion Shot. The top Officer shot was Lt Ben Jacobs from C (Leicestershire & Northamptonshire) Company with WO2 Thompson from B (Lincolnshire) Company picking up the top SNCO. In addition to the other SAAM Prizes, the overall Champion Company 2008/09 was awarded to E (Essex & Hertfordshire) Company. The Officers' Mess also took the opportunity to celebrate one of the Steelbacks' main Battle Honours.



Pte Collins B Coy during OP TELIC 12.

by holding the Arnhem Dinner. It was a great privilege to have Mr Wally Hubbard, who as a TA soldier fought during the battle in April 1945 with 6 Lincolns.

The Urban Operations Training Period is now firmly in train, with a company led low level skills weekend in April being followed by Ex STEELBACK STRIKE I in Copehill Down Village in May. This exercise involved four platoon level stands: a Low Level Urban Skills Trainer (LLUST) Stand, which is high tech system for assessing platoon house clearing drills; an Explosive Entry and High Rise Attack BE Stand, including the use of TES Kit; a Platoon Defence BL Stand; and the Confidence Course and Tunnel Fighting BL Stand. There was also an Urban Operations TEWT and CPX for Battalion and Company Staff. These preparations are key to getting the maximum benefit from the Battalion's future deployment on Ex GLOW WORM 09, with the Texas National Guard in July.

During all this activity, the Battalion has continued to represent The Regiment as much as possible across the recruiting area. The principle event for this was the Regimental Representation Event held at The Priory Officers' Mess in Chicksands on 16 May. This Event, hosted by the Colonel of the Regiment and attended by the great and good of Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire, was principally sponsored by E (Essex & Hertfordshire) Company. The Battalion Band and Corps of Drums conducted an excellent Beating Retreat in

conjunction with the Minden Band. Other Community Engagement events have been held at Company level and are setting a healthy environment for recruiting, which has led to the Battalion enlisting 170 soldiers in FY 08/09.

The Battalion is at a training high at present, with the focus firmly on preparation for deployments to Afghanistan or Texas in the Summer. This is a complex period of work that requires all Steelbacks to be both proactive and flexible; this is a challenge that the Battalion has risen to exceptionally well.

Exercise Steelback Assault II: SPTA 27 Feb - 1 Mar

The last weekend of February saw the Bn forming up for a BG Offensive Ops FTX on Salisbury Plain. The BG consisted of troops from across 49 (E) Bde with 3 R ANGLIAN leading plus atts from 100 Regt RA, 73 Engr Regt, 158 Transport Regt RLC and augmentees from EMUOTC and 36 Sigs Regt.

On Friday 27th Feb the Steelback coy HQs made their way down to the Plain, overcoming the obstacles placed in their path along the way, such as the M25 being closed due to a major accident! The Bn O Gp took place on Saturday morning whilst back in the TACs the troops were reporting and boarding their Coy transport down to SPTA. The troops arrived late morning and, after being re-orbated into two coy groups,

The Steelbacks

immediately began battle procedure. The plan was to launch a raid into enemy held territory to the east, breach the border minefield, seize a bridge crossing, then seize Coombe Farm and use that as a temporary FOB to launch an op to destroy the Enemy Bde HQ and then extract back westwards to friendly territory again. After rehearsals and a visit from the Bde Comd, 1 Coy moved off and began their advance to the minefield they were to breach. As the Coy approached the area of the border they formed up behind a wood and on H Hr sent forward the elements to begin the minefield breach.

The area chosen for the breach was far enough away from the reported enemy locations to be out of sight and hopefully free of enemy interference; it was! The Engrs eventually breached the minefield and the lead platoon of 1 Coy shot through the gap to secure the wood on the far side. All was going according to plan as the rest of 1 Coy moved forward to join the lead platoon, when suddenly the sky was lit up by illum as 1 Pl were sighted on the far wood edge and a firefight ensued to destroy the enemy guard force. 1 and 2 pls aggressively fought their way forward in turn with fire support from 3 Pl and the enemy was eventually destroyed. As they were being mopped up, 2 Coy had crossed the breach free from interference and were pressing forward to seize the next objective – the bridge.

As 1 Coy finished their reorg and moved forward behind 2 Coy, they were able to gain ringside seats on top of the hill overlooking the river valley where the next battle was starting below them. The quiet still of the cold night was once again shattered by the whoosh of illum going up, followed by bursts of automatic fire, accompanied by the shouts of commanders trying to grip their troops. As the last of the enemy were eventually cornered in the dark and despatched by 2 Coy, 1 Coy were called forward for the next



OC 1 Coy briefs the Bde Comd and CO.

phase of the op. Descending downhill and across the bridge the race was now on to seize Coombe Farm.

As 2 Coy were in the middle of their reorg, a fast moving column shot up the road and right through the middle of them, as 1 Coy surged forward after their rest. Climbing up from the valley bottom towards the Farm on the high ground, the pace was unrelenting as the OC made sure he met the CO's next timing! A radio message from the CO was heard saying "yes, I'm currently at the back of a rapidly moving column" All those CFTs paid off! 1 Coy approached the Farm, shook out and moved in to seize the objective, enveloping it and clearing the woods on either side before securing the Farm itself. As 2 Coy arrived and moved in, the troops

at last got a couple of hours in their doss bags before the next phase.

No such luxury for the commanders though, as the battle procedure continued. Confirmatory orders were issued for the main event – the attack on the Enemy HQ. By 0500hrs, the coys were in a FUP ready for the dawn attack. 1 Coy were again the lead sub-unit as the attack went in. As the two lead pls moved off and shook out ready for the break-in battle, the artillery 'shelled' the objective.

The break-in battle was a savage affair, with one of the pls being decimated by some over zealous DS as the OC was pursued across the area by the Training Major with a big yellow casualty card! When your time's up, I guess it's no good resisting – your time's up!

As the OC went down due to a random piece of frag from the middle of nowhere, the FOO took over only to be shuffled sideways as the 2IC was told by the CO to move forward and take over. It must be coming up to OJAR time again...! The attack was eventually a resounding success, but 1 Coy had taken more than its share of casualties. As the battle progressed, Coombe Farm was steadily filled up with wagon load after wagon load of casevacs. The dastardly cunning enemy were then reported to be forming up on the next farm over, ready to block the BG's withdrawal back to friendly territory. Yes, it was now 2 Coy's turn to show what they were made of once more.

The attack was, of course, another success and Endex was called. All then moved back to Coombe Farm to be treated to that wonderful traditional fresh breakfast out of a Norwegian Container and a fine brew. As we all know, the sun always shines at Endex and it turned out to be a fine sunny morning as the CO addressed the BG after breakfast to congratulate it on a job well done.



Moving to the FUP.

The Steelbacks

Exercise Offensive Tiger

After a well earned Christmas break, what better way to blow out the cobwebs than to spend a weekend on Yardley Chase, bashed up and getting back to some basic infantry skills and all with the added pleasure of driving rain, and gale force winds!

And so it was that B and C companies joined together at Yardley Chase to conduct some low level Section and Platoon training. As normal, the SPSIs, PSIs and CQMS crew had set off early to get set up and carry out final recces of the area, making themselves comfortable in the old bunker set aside for the HQ element of the Company. The soldiers from both companies duly arrived in good spirits looking forward to a good nights kip, only to move straight into a pre-dug harbour in the pitch dark (much to the joy of Pte Bates, who had been heard only the night before telling those that would listen how cosy the bunker was once the cook-set had been fired up).

After a horrendous night of torrential rain, the clouds finally broke allowing training to commence on a somewhat blustery Saturday morning; with the training consisting of a number of stands which included Pairs CQB, Section Attack BE and an Actions on/SOP stand.

After a scrumptious lunch of AB biscuits and chicken pâté, it was time to put into practice the morning's lessons and conduct a number of section attacks around the area. This allowed the section commanders to get a feel for their sections and, with plenty of

ammo and the use of two GPMGs to bump up the enemy fire, it turned out to be a test of character for the commanders as well as a serious fitness wake up for the majority. On completion of the section attacks, and before anyone had a chance to relax, Mr Speechley was on hand to deliver orders to the section commanders for recce patrols leaving early that evening. So the next few hours were taken up with Maj Bevin briefing the two companies on the up coming ISAF Platoon deployment, section commanders preparing orders, 2i/cs organising models and everyone enjoying that classic British dish of chicken and herb pasta in a bag! In true military style the heavens opened just in time for the patrols to deploy onto their various objectives; the result being that the recces spent most of the evening crawling around in wet grass and muddy ditches trying to get a glimpse of a very well concealed enemy.

With patrolling completed, another night of torrential rain and gale force winds saw Sunday arrive bright and blustery. Essential admin was then completed, the harbour was collapsed, ammunition redistributed and once again Mr Speechley was on hand, but this time under a little bit more pressure as Platoon Commander, to head up the morning showdown and prepare the men for an Advance to Contact.

Again the true grit of the Platoon was tested on all fronts with a combination of left and right flanking manoeuvres, through ditches, over fences and across streams, but

all finally culminating in a well executed series of attacks, made all the better by a well-earned brunch at the end, courtesy of Sgt Taylor and crew.

Finally a huge well done to all those that took part for their effort in what can only be described as 'evil' conditions; and obviously to all the supporting staff for making the weekend the success it was.

Exercise Steelback Spirit 12-14 Dec 2008

OCdt Finbow, HQ Coy, writes:

The weekend beginning Friday 14th December saw the Battalion deploy to West Tofts Camp to complete some MATTs, ops conferences, Bn planning and, of course, see in the festive season with some well lubricated social activities.

The companies arrived on the Friday evening and were assigned accommodation and briefed on morning timings before retiring to a well stocked bar.

Following breakfast, the Battalion completed some CBRN revision before the SNCOs, WOs and officers attended an Offensive Ops Planning conference, whilst further CBRN practical revision was undertaken on the training area.

After lunch the Battalion split into company groups to undertake a cold and wet CFT. A Company led the way with the trusty HQ Company safely bringing up the rear! After two hours and a few blisters, the Battalion returned to camp safely, their



A Fire Team from B Coy ready to go into the Assault.

The Steelbacks

spirits cheered by the ever smiling Padre, a toffee wielding CO, and a well earned brew. Administration time was then used to 'glam up' for the evenings social activities, with B Company taking this a little further than the other companies by turning up in somewhat feminine attire. It was generally agreed that a majority of them looked far more attractive at the conclusion of the evening than they did at the beginning (possibly due to the volume of 'Steelback' Ale that was consumed!). The Soldier's Christmas Dinner was preceded by promotion presentations by the Honorary Colonels, before the officers, WOs and SNCOs served the feast.

Sunday morning brought some well earned Gunfire at breakfast and the Inter Company Orienteering that followed provided plenty of entertainment, the pick of which was perhaps one soldier returning to the finishing point minus a shoe. Unfortunately I was unable to obtain a name for this article....!

The Battalion then left West Tofts Camp and demonstrated their precision vehicle parking under the close supervision of the RSM, in order that all could attend a Christmas Carol Service led by the Padre. The West Tofts' Church was a fitting but chilly venue for the end of the Battalion's year as well as the announcement of the Inter Company Competition results, which were scored in both the CFT and Orienteering. HQ Company got into the festive spirit of giving by ensuring they finished in sixth place for both activities!

Mortar Cadre

Sgt Watson, Mortar Pl PSI, writes:

The opportunity for TA to train with regular units outside operational commitments comes along far less than we would like. So when the invitation to join 2 R ANGLIAN in Celle, Germany, on their Basic Mortar Cadre was extended, the Mortar Platoon grabbed it with both hands, teeth and the hipod clamp.

We left Norwich in what felt like the same bus that Michael Caine said "I've got an Idea", but after it dropped off the cliff; and the vibrations endured for the 9 hour drive made me grateful I had decided against taking my mountain bike; a bag of bolts don't ride too well.

Our contingent of mortar numbers and executives arrived in Trenchard Bks, Celle, after a seamless journey, using the Channel Tunnel and high speed Autobahns of Europe, to be greeted and settled in by Sgt Terry Fawcett of the 2nd Battalion's Mortar Platoon. As the week began we duly found ourselves warmly welcomed by OC D Coy, Maj Alex Hawley, CSM 'Big Dave' David, who is shortly due to take post as SPSI C Coy, and all members of the Mortar Platoon. This provided a great learning environment for the 3 R ANGLIAN personnel. The two week period we attended consisted of a Basic Mortar Numbers instruction with 'bolt-on' executive training on the area and in the DFCT, an updated version of the Small Arms Trainer, which allowed our Mortar Fire



Sampling the delights of a Berlin Gasthaus.

Controllers (MFCs) to hone their indirect fire skills in video form.

Their first introduction to a regular unit cadre was the Mortar CFT, a tough test for all, consisting of 8 miles carrying approximately 70-80lbs in 2 hours 30 mins.

As the cadre progressed the Steelbacks found themselves as capable as the regular Mortarmen in learning the new skills and drills. After the two weeks instructional phase, these skills were tested on a short and successful deployment onto Hohn Training



In front of the Reichstag in Berlin.

The Steelbacks

area, where the Platoon was put through its paces with basic battle scenarios which put into practice all elements taught.

Unfortunately the live firing phase of the cadre took place after our two week stay and, at the time of writing, a live firing package is being planned on STANTA in May 09.

During our stay the opportunity to take some well deserved R&R was seized upon and the group spent a Saturday in Berlin. The sheer size of the city was not fully appreciated at first, but the realisation of the almost 9 mile walk to the centre soon prompted us to use the underground. There were the obvious tourist attractions to visit such as the Reichstag, the Brandenburg Gate and Checkpoint Charlie on Friedrichstrasse, but in Berlin we found many impressive historical buildings and interesting sights to fill the day. The visit was finished off in one of the city's Steakhouses for a meal, where our British sense of adventure had us all enjoying that traditional German food of fillet steak or cheeseburger. A good day was enjoyed by all, despite our poor efforts in bridging the language barrier.

This opportunity to train with the 2nd Battalion allowed the Steelbacks to see they are capable of the same level of achievement as any and broadened many horizons. The confidence they gained from the experience was invaluable and will only serve the Regular Army well when these Mortarmen deploy in their support.

Steelback SAAM 2009

On the 3-5 April 2009, the gently undulating countryside around Beckingham in Lincolnshire provided the backdrop for the first event of the training year, the Battalion SAAM. Teams from A, B, C, E and HQ coys took part in ideal shooting conditions.



Cpl Bunn, A Coy, receiving Champion Shot trophy from the CO.



Pte Dowling, Best Female Shot.



Cpl Nash (A Coy) receives the Inter Coy SAAM Trophy from the CO.

The Steelbacks

SAAM Results

Individuals:

Best Shot Pool Bull Competition:	Capt Rushmere
Best Female APWT:	Pte Dowling
Best SNCO/WO APWT:	WO2 Thompson
Best Young Officer APWT:	Lt Jacobs
Overall Champion Shot:	Cpl Bunn
Overall Champion Shot Runner-up:	Pte Fyfe

Teams:

Match 3 (Whitehead Cup):	A Coy
Match 17 (Urban Contact Shoot):	A Coy
Falling Plate Competition:	B Coy

Bn SAAM Overall:

1st Place:	A Coy
2nd Place:	B Coy
3rd Place:	C Coy
4th Place:	E Coy

which commenced with the Pool Bull on the Saturday morning and culminated in the Falling Plate competition on Sunday. This year, two fun events were also organised, archery provided by LNR Army Cadet Force and clay pigeon shooting run by SPSI E Coy, WO2 Snow.

For a voluntary entry fee of 50p, the Pool Bull was a chance to zero weapons with the added incentive of the person getting closest to the bull, from a 5 round group, claiming the cumulated cash prize. APWT was also included in the shoots, providing an opportunity for those that took part to gain their first Bounty Test of the training year. Other events on Saturday included variations on the Match 3 and 17 shoots.

At the end of Day 1, the Battalion officers, joined by the Honourary Colonels and selected guests, departed for Lincoln TAC for the 'Arnhem Dinner', which is to become an annual event commemorating the Battalion's Arnhem Battle Honour.

On a relatively warm Sunday the Battalion arose to shoot Match 8, 31a and the Falling Plate competition. A Company got off to a good start, achieving a relatively quick time, followed by B Company who still claim the targets where on 'up and hold' instead of 'fall when hit' - sore losers!

The presentation for the Commanding Officers' Champion Company 2008/09 also took place and was awarded to E Company.

Exercise Steelback Cadet

Exercise Steelback Cadet was conducted at STANTA over the period 18-19 Oct. The aim of the Exercise was to bring together the affiliated ACF/CCF detachments of The Regiment in order to continue their nurturing by demonstrating the importance of the Regimental Family Ethos. In total around 200 cadets mustered at West Tofts before the Exercise commenced on Saturday morning.

Ahead of them were a series of stands and events run by 3 R ANGLIAN staff and a R ANGLIAN ART (Army Recruiting Team). The stands included an introductory shoot on the GPMG and LSW, BOWMAN Trg, Javelin Indoor Trainer, Assault Pioneer skills, 81mm Mortar and a presentation on the Vikings OP Herrick tour followed by the ART's Laser Quest stand.

Saturday evening brought all cadets into Camp to be centrally fed before deploying back onto the area for a busy Patrols Exercise run by the RSM. During the patrol, each section encountered a series of incidents including casualty evacuation, an observation stand and Anti Ambush drills.

On Saturday evening Bn Staff from 3 R ANGLIAN, our Dep Col and the Regt Sec, hosted a presentation and reception for some of the County ACF commandants and senior ACF staff. Sunday brought the exercise to a conclusion with a Section Attack exercise and final parade where all participating cadets were presented with a Certificate of Completion and Steelback Cadet flash.



RSM hands over the Pde to the Trg Maj during the presentation ceremony

The Steelbacks

Op Telic 12 Medal Presentation: IWM Duxford

The Battalion was honoured to have Mr Martin Bell in attendance at the IWM Duxford on Sunday 15th February, to present Iraq Medals to those who deployed with the Poachers on Op TELIC 12. The medals were presented to 8 of the 24 soldiers, although 16 soldiers and their families attended the event, taking the total in attendance to around 90. The event consisted of a Thanks Giving Service, conducted by Padre Robin Richardson, which was followed by a presentation on OP TELIC 12. The event was enjoyed by all and received good media coverage through both ITV and BBC local news.



Pte Collins poses with Martin Bell.



Martin Bell presents LCpl Parker with the Iraq Medal.

Steelbacks Adventure Training

A and HQ companies joined forces for their Adventure Training weekend centred on Stoney Middleton Quarry in Derbyshire. The site is owned by the BMC (British Mountaineering Council) and access is via arrangement with them. The weekend comprised Hill Walking, Archery, Rock Climbing and Caving, with most participants taking part in each activity.

Despite previous recces, the advanced party, having arrived early on Friday afternoon to setup, discovered that some pretty hefty rocks had been deposited across the vehicle track, making vehicle access impossible. There then followed some frantic activity in manhandling tents and cooking equipment up a pretty steep 500m slope to reach the site above.

Everything was set to go when the troops started to arrive in the early hours of Saturday morning. After a bacon sandwich breakfast, the various teams set off on their activities. LCpl Allen and his civilian team running the Rock Climbing, Archery and Abseiling; Maj Pook heading an all day walking team; Maj Rogers (Ex OC A Coy) heading a half day walking team; and Capt Rushmere heading the caving. Weather on the Saturday morning was relatively fine, but by the change over at lunch time the rain was very persistent.



Cpl Clark (HQ Coy) in Suicide Cave!!

The Steelbacks

Caving took place in Suicide Cave which is at the base of Winnats Pass, just outside Castleton. Its a relatively easy cave with a few tight spots thrown in, but ideal for beginners. Its free to use but you do need some basic equipment. There are two entrances: the one on the left is a crawl and drag through a short series of narrow passages; the one on the right is a simple walk in. Both lead to a rocky incline and then to a 3 metre drop which needs to be abseiled or rigged with a trapeze ladder. From here you access the various small chambers of the cave. The first group consisted of Headquarter Company and even Sgt Perkins managed not to get stuck!

Concurrent to this ran the Abseiling and Rock Climbing in Stoney Middleton Quarry; this took place on 40 metre rock faces to levels up to HVS (Hard Very Severe). The archery also took place on the site. Maj Rogers' walk consisted of a ramble around the countryside surrounding the Quarry and was a relatively relaxing way to spend part of a Saturday. This was in contrast to Maj Pook's mini expedition which included steep traverses, mini river crossings and, at one point, the team having to be roped together.

Following the final rotation and completion of activities on Sunday morning, and with everyone lending a hand to strike camp and carry everything back down the hill, we boarded the minibuses and headed back to Norfolk and Suffolk.

TA 100 Locomotive Naming Ceremony 8 Nov 2008

Quorn Steam Railway Station

As a busy year of TA100 events drew to a close, we could all be forgiven for thinking

that the 'name the train' event, scheduled to be C Coy's last, would be something of a formality. Little more than tea, biscuits and polite conversation, with notebook-touting, parker jacket-wearing spotters. Or so we thought. Sure, there had been bigger and better events during the year, with more bells and whistles; but as we all well know, its the last one that sticks in everybody's mind. What we were about to discover, with a mere 4 weeks to run until the event, was that the last TA100 event of the year, indeed the last TA100 event ever, was about to fall squarely at the feet of C Coy, 3 R ANGLIAN.

"Does anybody know how to do rifle drill?!" came the panicked cry from the upper echelons of the Company. "What's rifle drill - is it anything like a weapon handling test?" came the response from the ranks; and so mobilized the military might of C Coy. Our mission: to recruit, train and parade a 24-man, Royal Guard, for the National TA100 finale, to be held at Quorn Steam Railway Station and to be visited by the Colonel-in-Chief, HRH The Duke of Gloucester. Also in attendance would be Director Reserve Forces; The Lord Lieutenant of Leicestershire; Deputy Colonel, The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment; Commander 5 Div; and Comd 49(E) Brigade to name but a few. Not forgetting of course, the star of the show: Steam Locomotive *Oliver Cromwell*, which would be temporarily renamed *The Territorial Army 1908-2008*. No pressure. No pun intended.

Perhaps rather fortuitously, the whole 'Rifle Drill' panic turned out to be baseless and, after what amounted to a 2-day crash course in the subtleties of a firm grasp and a hard slap, we had what could be easily mistaken for a well-drilled body of men (and one women). On the day, things went

swimmingly. Indeed, had it not been for the heroics of 73 Engineer Regt, that may have well been quite literally the case. Fortunately for us, they were on hand with their combine-harvesters to flatten the area with hard-core, allowing us to crunch our boots and stamp our feet with maximum authority.

After introductions, a Royal Salute, an inspection of the Guard by HRH, some tunes from the 3 R ANGLIAN Band and a selection of stirring speeches, we were cordially invited to embark upon what would be a most memorable ride on the newly named *The Territorial Army 1908-2008*. Quickly polishing off the bag meals sportingly provided for us by the Great Central Railway, we settled back, in true squaddie style, for a rigorous and much deserved two-hour inspection of the insides of our respective eyelids.

On reflection, the day was a great success and an experience not to be forgotten for all who participated. In many ways, it was classic TA - last minute, buckets of goodwill and effort at the weekend, hardly any practice and funny old thing, it worked!

Our sincere thanks must go to all members of the Guard and Guard reserve, who represented themselves and their parent units flawlessly and without whom, this simply would not have been possible. We think the pictures speak for themselves.

Special thanks go to Cpl West for being tall and easy for even a Rupert to see out the corner of his eye; to Pte Waller, for slowing his guardsman's drill to a speed visible to the naked eye and for his subsequent top-drawer instruction; and to sgts Ball and Gadsden for saving the Guard Commander's voice in the run up to the event!

Quote from the weekend: "It's not a train, it's a bl***y locomotive!"



Lt B Jacobs accompanies the Col-in-Chief during the inspection of the Guard of Honour.

The Steelbacks

Last Night of the Proms

Key Theatre, Peterborough

In October 2008 the Band and Drums PSI received a phone call from the Mayor of Peterborough's secretary enquiring whether or not the Band and Drums would be available to undertake a Last Night of The Proms concert, in the Broadway Theatre, Peterborough in April 2009, in aid of the Mayor's Charities. This was a very welcome call as the Band has been trying to perform in its home city for some time now. With an initial meeting date agreed, the PSI arrived at the Town Hall to discuss the matter further.

It was discussed and agreed that this would be a joint venture between the Band and Drums and also the Gildenburgh Choir. The venue was set for the Broadway Theatre, normally home to Chubby Brown, Jim Davidson and many other top acts from around the country. This was a very exciting prospect indeed, as it was felt that the only proper way to plan this concert was to imitate the annual concert held in the Albert Hall, London. Various planning meetings were held over the next few weeks with regard to musical content, stage management, soloists required, rehearsal schedules and many other details pertaining to this kind of huge commitment.

Before we knew it, Christmas had been and gone and we were into the middle of January. Then shock horror arrived whilst reading the local Peterborough newspaper. The Broadway Theatre was no longer available due to a fire that had swept through the building. All parties were contacted and, after much deliberation, it was decided that the new venue would be the Key



Band on stage.

Theatre in the heart of the Town Centre in Peterborough.

Unfortunately this theatre could not cater for both the Band and Drums and Choir. So a decision was made that the Band and Drums would undertake this concert on their own. The music programme had to be changed and the majority of the administrative details landed on the desk of the Band PSI. Several musical/administrative meetings took place over the next few weeks, including consultation with the theatre

stage management and lighting staff, front of house publicising staff and also many meetings with the Mayor's secretarial staff. All was going well until it was pointed out that we had not discussed the production of the programmes for the evening; also the need for a Mezzo-Soprano to lead the community singing and Land of Hope and Glory (given that we had lost the choir). The Band PSI being as he is, volunteered to produce and indeed print the programmes and also search for a vocalist. Having spoken



Solo vocalist Musn Steve Humphrey.

The Steelbacks

to the Head of Music at a local secondary school, we were put into contact with Liz Williams, who lives locally in Oundle, and she was more than happy to perform alongside us. All that she required was the music that she was to sing and also timings of rehearsals etc. These were duly sent along with a heartfelt thank you.

The music programmes proved to be slightly more of a challenge. After several drafts were produced for the Mayor's perusal, a final copy was agreed upon. Then came the bombshell as it was. 500 copies of each were required (as the theatre was a sell out). This meant 500 Programmes and also 500 Song Sheets for the Community Singing etc. Without going into too much detail, my printer has just stopped smoking and the amount of ink used could have filled a pint pot thrice over. Then came the big day. Sunday 19th April 2009. The Band and Drums arrived at the theatre at 1400hrs and, after a short session with the lighting/sound guys, we were into rehearsal with a fully lit stage and microphones a plenty. The 500 seater theatre was perfect for this kind of concert. There isn't an obstructive seat in the house, as all get a clear view of the vast stage. The Director of Music ran a rehearsal of a few numbers, predominantly for the sound technicians to balance the microphones and also to allow the technical chaps to manage the lighting. Then came the time for our rehearsal with our guest vocalist Liz Williams. From the moment she started to sing we knew that we had found somebody very special. Her rendition of Rule Britannia and Land of Hope and Glory was truly magnificent, not to mention the finale of Jerusalem.

During rehearsal and performance all were very treated to a lavish light tea and refreshments, and the Mayor arrived specially to thank the Band and Drums for agreeing to perform this concert in aid of her chosen charities.

1900hrs soon arrived and after the 'nod' from the stage manager, the Band duly entered the stage ready to perform. The Director of Music raised his arms and we were off to the sounds of the Jubilee Overture. With a capacity audience of 500, including several Mayor's from local towns and villages, I knew that this was going to be something special.

Musn Simon Hobson performed a Flute Solo entitled Home Away From Home, this was his first time as a soloist and he performed it flawlessly; also, Cpl Martin Auffret (well known to all as he works in the Town Hall) performed a Saxophone Solo, Reverie, and we even had our own vocalist Musn Steve Humphrey who sang In the Wee Small Hours of the Morning and Portrait of My Love. Under Drum Major Clark, the Corps of Drums entered stage left and delivered a very exciting Stick Beating and then, to conclude the first part of the programme, Liz led the audience in community singing a selection of songs that won the war.



Corps of Drums take centre stage.

The second half started with a rendition of Toccata and Fugue in D Minor and then, especially requested by the Chief Executive of the Peterborough Town Council, the Band performed a selection from Les Miserables. What followed was a surprise to the audience, as SSgt Martin Gardner and Musns Nick Barrett and Gary Mills performed the Huntsman. Not traditionally I hasten to add. SSgt Gardner played the Post Horn, Musn Barrett The Tea Pot and Musn Mills a Toilet Seat no less. This had the audience in awe and the applause was rapturous. Musn Mike Hughes also had them on the edge of their seats as he demonstrated his skills on the Xylophone playing On the Track. With the Band settled, and Liz on centre stage, we began with the traditional Pomp and Circumstance No 1. There were flags flying and every member of the audience was singing to the music.

The Director had to stop a couple of times as is the norm, they began to sing at the wrong time. This ended with mass applause and the whole theatre were on their feet. Following this was the Fantasia on British Sea Songs. The sailors hornpipe had feet banging on the floor and again the flags were a plenty. Liz performed Rule Britannia with perfection and, after further guidance from the Director, the audience joined in, en masse, for the chorus. The Director then re-introduced onto stage the Corps of Drums and we were set for the final piece of the evening. The finale ended with Jerusalem and saw every single member of the audience on their feet clapping, waving their flags and shouting for more. They got more - another rendering of Jerusalem.

After the applause had died down, the Mayor, Councillor Patricia Nash MBE, took centre stage and thanked the Band and Drums; she also presented Liz with a bouquet of flowers. This was her last public event before her year's tenure as Mayor

was complete and she said that she could no think of a better way to finish. She also said that she had heard the words "the best Last Night of The Proms Ever" and also that "this concert will live in the memory of those that attended for some time to come". High praise indeed.

This praise was more than justified. In my 8 years in appointment, I have to say that this was one of the best performances that I have seen and heard the Band and Drums perform. They are indeed a credit to 3 R ANGLIAN and also the Territorial Army as whole.

Exercise Snow Captive 2009

WO2 Brett Thompson writes:

The 3 R ANGLIAN annual Battalion exercise took place once again in the French resort of Flaine from 23rd Jan to 1st Feb 2009. It was organised and run by Maj Sutherland (Bn 21C), with the aim of teaching and testing all participants on Basic Ski Proficiency Alpine, Ski Tour Proficiency or Advanced Ski Proficiency Alpine, according to their ability and experience. The resort of Flaine enjoys exceptional snowfall and we were not disappointed: the week prior to the exercise it snowed quite heavily. For the most part, conditions were excellent, with bright blue skies & plenty of blazing sunshine. A number of red faces quickly developed on those, who eager to bronze, decided to forego the sun cream.

The outbound journey to Flaine was quite gruelling. Normally we would anticipate a travelling time of around 13 hours; however, due to mechanical problems, we had to change trains at the Channel Tunnel and this extended the journey to 20 hours in total.

Spirits remained high nevertheless and eventually we arrived at Cluses. Here we were split down into our accommodation

The Steelbacks



End of course happy snap

groups, CILOR was issued, and we went shopping. Once in the supermarket it became a trolley dash, racing round to find a bargain. The bargain of the day was a couple of legs of lamb on special offer, for just under ten euros each!

Loaded with our provisions, we left Cluses and headed up to Flaine. By this time it had started to snow and it was beginning to get dark. The higher we got, the harder it became to drive on the winding mountain road. We had to stop when a lorry in front of us started sliding backwards! The snow chains came out and were quickly fitted for the last leg of the journey.

Tired and ready for a good sleep, we finally reached Flaine and settled in. We were accommodated in four sets of apartments,

with only a five minute walk to the slopes. Each apartment shopped and cooked for themselves and I was very fortunate to share an apartment with not just one, but two Master Chefs, WO2 Coupe (SPSI C Coy) and Cpl Holmes, who are to be congratulated for their excellent cuisine.

We enjoyed six days actual skiing in total. Throughout the exercise everyone benefited from the excellent instruction provided by the three instructors: Maj Tolan (EMUOTC), Maj Whitehead (Padre) and of course myself, with the great pleasure of teaching the beginners group! It was amusing to see that once the group had mastered going in a straight line, their sole aim was then to go as fast as possible, without worrying about how they intended to stop! 2Lt Green and

ptes Lee and Panckywitz, regularly found themselves dusting themselves down and clipping back into their skis. By Day 3 the beginners group had their first taste of skiing from the summit. Les Grandes Platières is set at 2480m with fantastic views of Mont Blanc.

Disaster struck for WO2 Coupe halfway through the exercise when he injured himself on a Green Run. I'm not sure if he was more annoyed or embarrassed. The laceration to his right calf was serious enough for him to be taken off the slopes by Mountain Rescue in a sleigh. At the hospital he recorded the repair job (9 stitches in total) to his leg on his head cam and delighted in sharing this with everyone on the big screen during one of our evening lectures. For the remainder of the exercise he assumed the appointment of photographer and took many pictures of all the groups in action. Maj Dommett (TM) paid us a visit for a couple of days, keen to see the troops in action. A keen snowboarder, it was fair to say that he found 2 planks more challenging than the large tray he is used to, particularly on some of the red runs!.

The advanced group under Maj Tolan spent the week working towards their Advanced Ski Proficiency with a strong focus on honing their technical skills. For the intermediates, the Padre prepared them for their Ski Tour Proficiency.

This involved some off piste skiing, learning new techniques such as Ski Touring, digging snow holes, search techniques and winter navigation. On the last day and with great determination, the Padre led the group successfully from Flaine to the top of Les Grandes Platières.

While we were in the resort, the British School Girls' ski racing championships were being held, with Sir Steve Redgrave's daughters among those competing. Cpl Prescott and Pte Collings seized the opportunity for a photo with Sir Steve in a



Pte Collins, Sir Steve Redgrave and Cpl Prescott.

The Steelbacks

local restaurant after a hard days skiing. The lads thanked him for all his support for the charity HELP for HEROES and enjoyed a beer with him.

Throughout the week we achieved a great balance of quality skiing along with the occasional social activity. At the end of each day all the groups would RV at one of the local restaurants, where the day's stories would be exchanged and the après ski begin. Each evening all groups would meet in the largest apartment where one or more of the instructors would provide a lecture on a variety of skiing subjects relevant to the ski syllabus. Social activities in the evening would include relaxing with a DVD or going out to one of the local bars, usually either the Flying Dutchman or the White Bar. Once again, Exercise Snow Captive was a huge success. Everyone participated in fun yet challenging skiing. By the end of the week 6 individuals were awarded their BSP, 4 were awarded the STP and 5 awarded their ASP. It is planned to run the exercise again in 2010. For anyone interested, I would recommend it as a great opportunity and very affordable way to learn to ski.

Steelback Orienteering

The Steelbacks have been the mainstay of the 5th Division Orienteering League throughout this year. The CO, Lt Col Vincent, is the 5th Division Orienteering Chairman, with the QM, Maj Tim Beighton, being the Divisional Equipment Manager. This is how the Battalion came to organise the 5th Division Orienteering Championships at Yardley Chase Training Area, Northampton, on 22 April. Much of the credit for pulling this event together goes to the QM, who worked closely with Capt McClevey of the Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland ACF, who planned and controlled the event. The event attracted 13 units: 3



QM hides his delight! on receiving the winner's trophy from the GOC.

Major, 5 Minor, 3 TA and 2 Ladies, including a team from the Infantry Battle School, led by Maj Phil Martin from the Poachers. The weather was hot and sunny, which always makes for good sport.

The Steelbacks needed a team of 3 to count; one on the 6.9km 'A' Course, one on the 5.4km 'B' Course and one on the 3.4km 'C' Course. The Battalion loaded three runners on each: the CO, Lt Ginns and WO2 (RQMS) Woolcott on the A; Capt Tate, Capt Steel and WO2 Coupe on the B; and the QM, RSM Granfield and LCpl Ehret on the C Course. In addition, a number of young TA soldiers had a run on the C Course, in order to gain familiarity with an Orienteering Map.

This spreading of experience paid off well and the Battalion had the fastest 3 man team of all other teams entered. In addition the CO was the fastest on the A Course, Capt Tate the fastest on the B Course and the QM second fastest on the C Course. The Steelbacks are now the 5th Division Orienteering TA Champions; in addition the CO picked up the individual prize of Overall Divisional Champion. Unfortunately, the Battalion will be unable to enter either the Army or TA Championships this year owing to other commitments; but all are looking forward to next year's session, which starts in September.



Winning team - CO, Capt Tate, GOC 5 Div and QM.

The Steelbacks

Steelbacks Inter-Company Rugby Sevens

Saturday the 21st February brought representative Rugby 7s teams from all coys to the Princess Royal Barracks Grantham to compete for the Inter Coy 7s title. The competition was on a league basis with all teams competing against each other. With all participants arriving on time, the competition was soon under way. B (Lincolnshire) Coy stamped their authority early on with a resounding victory over A (Norfolk & Suffolk) Coy. Equally impressive were C (Leicestershire & Northamptonshire) Coy, displaying both flare and pace.

As the competition progressed the decider was to be the match between B & C coys. In the run up to the decider, B Coy's defensive line had not been breached by any of their previous opponents; however C Coy proved to be more of a challenge. Both teams were feeling the effects of a long hard day which



The Competitors.

allowed a more open game of running Rugby.

As the game ebbed and flowed, B Coy emerged the stronger, scoring 3 tries in reply to C Coy's 2; a try-saving tackle on his own 5m line by Pte White (B Coy) secured the win and Inter Coy Championship for B Coy.

As with all such competitions the success

on the day is down to the hard work and planning done by the organisers; so a big thanks to Sgt Chris Wallis (PSI E Coy) for all the hard work done behind the scenes.

The aim now is to put together a Battalion Rugby Squad, for which many of the participants at the 7s have already staked a claim.



B vs E Company.



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1st Battalion



B Company let the crowd run out of steam.



Focussed and ready to do battle!



Spot the Minden Flash!



The Viking Snowboarding Team.



D Company show off their wares.



C (Essex) Company on St George's Day, Basildon.



Pitbull Purcell on the attack.



Pte Dixon, C (Essex) Coy, confidence course, Bramley.



Brigade Boxing Competition winning squad.

2nd Battalion



Mayor of Biggleswade presents the CO with a plaque at the Regimental Representative Event at Chicksands.



Huge crowds greeted the Poachers in Lincoln. *Courtesy Paul Tonge, Raymonds and Lincs Echo.*



Red Arrows salute the Poachers in Lincoln. *Courtesy Paul Tonge, Raymonds and Lincs Echo.*



The Deputy Mayor awarding the Honorary Status of Stamford to The Regiment.



The People of Watford turned out in their thousands.



Fantastic support from the Old Comrades and people in Luton.



The CO says thank you after a memorable week.

3rd Battalion



C Coy Guard of Honour in front of the Locomotive TA100.



CSM B Coy smiling his way through the CFT



WO1 (RSM) Penn hands over to WO1 (RSM) D Granfield at Bn HQ Bury St Edmonds.



CO, PUS for Defence & Lt R Little at Chelmsford TAC.



Members of the Corps of Drums.



Massed bands at Regimental Representative Event, Chicksands.



WO2 Farthing, Joanna Lumley, LCpl Wainright and Cpl Rodgers during *Serving Jamie's Bacon*.



Jamie Oliver and Cpl Rodgers during the filming of *Serving Jamie's Bacon*.



Happy Steelbacks on the Piste.

Army Cadet Forces



Beds & Herts ACF - SMI Derek Twigg and Cadets at the Land Army celebrations.



Cambs ACF Corps of Drums lead the way in Brecon at a Rorke's Drift Concert.



LNR ACF First Aiders Samantha Hanna (L) and Cpl Lucy Graham



Suffolk ACF on Ex Combat Cadet.



Lincs ACF preparing for Range Work on Ex Viking Warrior.



Norfolk ACF - Keeping it in the (Hamilton) Family.



City of London and NE Sector cadets on exercise at the Penhale Training Area, Cornwall.

Special Features

Portrait of the Colonel-in-Chief

Major Dick Gould writes:

The Regiment has always had portraits commissioned of its Colonels-in-Chief. When HRH The Duke of Gloucester graciously agreed to become the Colonel-in-Chief, The Regiment needed to make arrangements for a new portrait to be painted. This is not as easy as it sounds for one needs to bring together the subject and artist for sittings, at times convenient to the Royal household and when the artist is available, compose the painting so that it tells the viewer a story, arrange a venue and select an artist.

The Colonel-in-Chief kindly agreed to six sittings in his private rooms at Kensington Palace. The design, to show him in Royal Anglian Regiment uniform, at home and with a photograph of his mother, HRH Princess Alice, in the background, to show the lineage of the appointment from mother to son, was agreed. All was in place but for the Artist.

The Regiment had commissioned a young aspiring artist called Richard Stone to paint portraits of HRH Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, and HRH Princess Margaret in the 1970s. Those portraits launched his career and he is now an internationally acclaimed portraitist. RHQ thought it would be a good idea to find another young talent waiting to be launched onto a national stage. This was done and the artist Alex Russell Flint was commissioned. The name Russell Flint will be familiar to many in The Regiment. Sir William Russell Flint, Alex's great-grandfather, was a very fine artist remembered mainly for watercolours of Spanish ladies getting out of baths – usually with no tops on. Such paintings seem to have found their way into the ladies loos of most officers' messes. Alex is aged 34 and trained initially in London. Since then he has continued to paint and train in France, where he lives, under the American artist Ted Seth Jacobs. His paintings are now selling for nearly £20k and he is an artist whose name is becoming nationally well known.

He had to take his easel, paint, canvas and tailors dummy to and from the Palace for his sessions. The Butler would dress up the tailors dummy in the Regimental No 1 Dress when the Colonel-in-



Alex Russell Flint at work on the Col-in-Chief's portrait.

Chief was away so that the folds, texture, light and shade of uniform could accurately be caught on canvas. This meant that Alex could then concentrate on the Colonel-in-Chief's face when he was there for sittings. The whole process took three months. Alex will be painting one portrait for each Battalion and these should be with them by July 2009

A Return to Kenya (The Askari Appeal)

Colonel Fergus Mackain-Bremner OBE writes:

On March 2009 I was despatched to Kenya for a second time by the Royal Commonwealth Ex Services League to pay grants to around 40 ex Askari and widows throughout the country. The money for these grants comes from the Askari Appeal, started in 2002 for ex-

servicemen throughout East Africa and has now raised in excess of £330,000 to provide personal welfare payments for the many still in need. In Kenya alone there are well over 2,000 who still need help. These old men had fought throughout the Ethiopian Campaign,



With ex Askari at Maralal.

Special Features



A group of Old Comrades at Isiolo.

Madagascar, Burma and more recently in Malaya and during the Mau Mau Emergency. The actual safari was organized jointly by the British Legion (Kenya) and the Kenya Armed Forces Old Comrades' Association and took us to Kitui, Nanyuki, Nyeri and round Mount Kenya to Meru. We were then able to wander North and North West to visit old comrades and widows at Isiolo, Maralal and Marsabit.

At the end I returned to Nairobi where we were asked to report our experiences at Army HQ to the Chief of Personnel, General Sasia, visit projects run by KAFOCA where the old men run small maize mills and honey production and to give a fund raising lecture on experiences in the Oman. Finally I was able to host a small dinner on behalf of HRH Prince Philip who is the Grand President of RCEL, in thanks for all the help we had received.

It was the most moving and affectionate visit of my life. We were met everywhere with kindness and smiles. Some old warriors, aged around 90-97, and well decorated, had been badly wounded, but their sparkle and good humour was an unforgettable memory. My Swahili stood up to all the jokes and warm-hearted banter, and we came home elated by what had been achieved, but deeply sad to be leaving them all yet again. If any one had asked, "What is the most rewarding experience of your life?" – well, it was this.



An 88-year-old veteran at Marsabit.



The look of pride that says it all at Nyeri.

The Army Snowboarding Association Championship 2008

Capt Mark Taylor writes:

As the 7 Viking warriors huddled around their transport in the early hours of 3rd December 2008, their breath freezing in the air, there was a sense of excitement that had not been felt before; a sense of traveling into the unknown and very much into enemy territory.....It was not, however, into the badlands of Afghanistan that these souls were beginning to venture, but to the Alps of Austria; the enemy was not the Taliban but the corps of the Army. For these Vikings were off to the Army Snowboarding Association Championship – let battle commence.

Little known to the majority of the Infantry, the Snowboarding Championships has been up and running for 10 years now; in its early days it mimicked the Alpine Ski Championships with lots of gate races and enough Lycra to make the 1980s seem alive and well! Since then the Championships have grown and evolved in line with the sport as it has become a fully established Olympic and extreme sport, complete with baggie trousers and 'sick' lingo. Indeed, even on the professional stage the British have managed to get in on the act with their very own snow bunny, Jenny Jones, winning the Winter X-Games Slopestyle contest in January 2009. Surely the British can't actually be good at a winter sport? Whatever happened to the great failures of the Winter Olympics such as Eddy 'The Eagle' Edwards and the brothers Bell? We will have to wait for Vancouver to see for sure....

This year's Army Championships again set a record as the biggest gathering of Army snowboarders to date, with around 240 competitors present in the town of Neustift, Austria, waiting to compete on the nearby Stubai Glacier. Whilst a previous scratch team from the Battalion had competed in 2004, the Infantry presence at this event has always been poor; so the opportunity to represent not just The Royal Anglian Regiment but the Infantry, loomed before us. As it happened, a relatively inexperienced team from the Grenadier Guards had also turned up along with a team from the Duke of Lancaster's Regiment; so we were not alone from the tip of the Army's spear.

After a gruelling 24hrs in a minibus restricted to 56mph and weighed down by the bulk buying power of Sgt Ben 'Shropdog' Shropshire in Lidl, we had reached our destination intact. The plan was to have a couple of days getting used to the area and conditions before starting



Sgt Shropshire gets Inverted!

our preparations for the three disciplines that the Competition is comprised of: Parallel Giant Slalom, Boarder-cross and Slopestyle.

Initially conditions couldn't have been better with fresh snow and clear skies greeting us. The team quickly found their feet and with some instruction began practicing quick racing styled turns. Buoyed



Captain Taylor races in the final of the PGS.

Special Features

on with enthusiasm, it wasn't long before the team ventured towards the Slopestyle Park. Under the tuition of 'Shropdog' the teams' freestyle guru, we began to attack the in place kickers which were rather large. After a couple of good runs it was RQMS Main who fell foul with a large, feet first, superman/back flop, straight onto the table top! Whilst the majority of the team waited with baited breath, a shaking hand rose from a rather sore RQ to signal he was ok and raucous laughter followed the sigh of relief from the team Captain – it was after all our first day on the slopes.

We quickly established from the ASA Committee that there was a lone Poacher in attendance fresh from serving in Iraq. Cpl Pat Knight was rapidly sought out and adopted by the Vikings as a symbol of Regimental solidarity.

The competition began with the qualifying race for the Parallel Giant Slalom, amidst blizzard conditions that were affecting all the riders. Everyone was entitled to two runs with the best run time counting, the goal being to qualify in the top 30 riders. With tough conditions prevailing, Royal Anglian Representation in the final was secured by Sgt Ben Shropshire and Capt Mark Taylor, with the final resulting in 8th and 23rd place respectively. Not a shabby start by any means, considering 120 riders had ridden to qualify.

The weather continued to harass the competition from then onwards; it always seems bizarre to say that a snowboarding race had to be postponed because of 'excessive snow', but that was the case as the boarder-cross course was repeatedly buried in metres of fresh powder. Cue a totally different training regime of off-piste powder riding, cliff jumping and developing the teams' ability to find natural terrain in order to practice our freestyle skills. An away day to the lower resort of Schlick and Mayrhofen ensued to take advantage of the freestyle park and clearer weather. En route to Schlick, the team spotted a snow covered skateboard park and an

impromptu photo session ensued!

Under the watchful gaze of UK Pro-rider Nelson Pratt, the team practiced various aerial feats in the perfect conditions of Mayrhofen, building confidence and ability for the Slopestyle contest.

The Slopestyle contest was brought forward to take advantage of the clear weather gap and, with 100 riders deeming themselves capable to go through the course in qualification, it was important to perform from the start. Five of the team qualified for the final including our adopted Poacher, Cpl Knight, setting the team up well for a strong performance in the final.

The final was again over 2 runs with the best run counting; points are awarded for altitude of jumps, difficulty of trick and the overall style of the trick.

With the weather closing in there was no time for a safety run and the team decided to go all out. Sgt Shropshire was on his 'A' game, performing superb rotations and finishing one run with a rarely seen front-flip, entitling him to wear pink clothing, the snowboarders mark of having been inverted! Cpl Stewardson and Sgt Horrocks pushed hard with some strong 'grabs' earning good style points, but the day belonged to Sgt Shropshire as he was crowned Army Champion in the Slopestyle event. The team also had reason to celebrate as the combined positions of our riders meant that we had come first as a team in the Slopestyle! A night of celebrations ensued!

Sadly the good weather for the slopestyle contest didn't hold and the boarder-cross was run amidst more snow blizzards and yet more powder. Due to the time lost to the unusually high snowfall, the race went to a one run qualifier followed by a knockout contest. This played in the favour of the less experienced and the Viking team put in good performances, with three of the team qualifying for the knock out phase. LCpl Stewardson put in a strong performance, going out just before the last 16 but, fuelled by his performance in the Slopestyle, Sgt Shropshire narrowly missed out on victory, finishing in 2nd place in what was a fiercely contested final.

Once the final scores had been added up it had proved a worthwhile trip for the Vikings. Having secured both the individual and team victory in the Slopestyle event and with the good placing of team members in the Boarder-Cross and Parallel Giant Slalom, the team finished in 3rd place in the overall competition. This was an outstanding result, considering that all of the corps run their own snowboarding training camp to select teams for the competition prior to the Championships; and we had given ourselves two days of practice! With some time and resource investment, there is no reason why The Royal Anglian Regiment cannot become a strong contender for the Snowboarding Championship in the near future.

Sgt Ben Shropshire was selected to represent the Army at the Combined Services Championship in Meribel, France, during January 2009 where the Army team proceeded to dominate the podiums. Ben continued his winning streak with Gold in the Slopestyle event making him the Combined Services and International Combined Services (as the French entered teams as well) Champion.

The Army Snowboarding Association Championships for this year will be run from 6 – 20 December 2009 with an instructional week running from 29 Nov – 5 December. It is hoped that a team from both battalions will be able to enter. Further information on the competition should be sought from the RCO at RHQ. Additional pictures and video footage can be viewed at the Royal Anglian webpage at www.army.mod.uk.



RQMS (T) Main with a Roast Beef grab during Slopestyle qualifying.

Kenya (Exercise Grand Prix)

Sgt Martin, 3 (Corunna) Pl Sgt, 1st Battalion, writes:

Exercise Grand Prix (Ex GP) is a Collective Training (CT) Level 4 exercise that assists light role battalions in their preparations for operations. This exercise has changed considerably since the Vikings last conducted training in Kenya prior to deployment on Op HERRICK 6. Three of us were lucky enough to take part in Ex GP, in the role of Observer Controllers, for the 1st Battalion Grenadier Guards prior to their Op HERRICK deployment. We flew out to Kenya for the last two weeks of the exercise to observe and control during their test phase.

When we arrived in Nairobi we were quickly shuttled to Nanyuki Show Ground. Having collected our vehicles, we deployed straight out onto the training area to Exercise Control (EXCON). The tented EXCON village was impressive and you could tell instantly that the exercise was well resourced and equipped to provide training to the highest standards. We received an extensive opening brief, detailing the content of the exercise. During the brief it became apparent that, although the exercise wasn't to be tailored to Afghanistan specifically, there were some similarities.

Three villages had been constructed a couple of weeks earlier to support the exercise. They were spread out on the training area with a CIVPOP of up to three hundred inhabiting each of them. The CIVPOP were hired in from Nanyuki and they lived in the villages for the duration, being paid \$2 a day. They were the most convincing CIVPOP I have ever seen and created an amazing sense of realism. I was assigned to Queen's Company which was the sub-unit tasked with setting up a FOB near the village of Togedo. In line with the scenario, their task was to create a stable environment within the village. As an Observer Controller we had a certain amount of free play within the scenario, but it had to run in line with the main theme of the exercise. Each serial was different, ranging from basic public order to a narcotics raid and advance to contact. Queen's Company patrolled Togedo for 5 days which ended with relative normality restored to the area and a fictitious relief in place by the Kenyan Army. Once released from Togedo, the Company moved up to Archer's Post for the finale which was a Battle Group, sequential, live fire attack.



It wasn't all hard work for the Observer Controllers!

The temperature at Archer's Post was about 5 degrees hotter than the rest of the training area, which was noticeably more taxing for the rifle companies. That said, the mock compounds and Russian trench system were soon rolled up by the Battle Group, supported by 105mm light guns and 81mm mortars. CASEVAC was supported by a Puma helicopter which gave all the pl sgt's and CSMs the opportunity to really practice their evacuation plan.

The training laid on by those involved in Ex GP was some of the best I have seen. Although it was a CT 4 exercise, everyone at every level got something from it. The complexity of the scenario and the Kenyan CIVPOP made the training so realistic that it served as a definite step in the right direction in terms of preparing British troops for current operations.



Grenadier Guards prior to an Advance to Contact.

Special Features

On Loan to the Poachers in Iraq

LCpl Williams, Kohima Pl, A (Norfolk) Company, 1st Battalion, writes:

In September 2008 I got on the plane at RAF Brize Norton to join the Poachers in Basra for the second half of their Op TELIC 12 tour. At that stage I was unsure as to my exact role and what the other 11 Vikings would be doing. Obviously, we were all hoping that we would be involved in the Military Transition Team (MiTT) process, with responsibilities for training and advising the Iraqi Army (IA), as opposed to being used as extra bodies on stag. When we arrived we were pleasantly surprised to find out that we would be split into teams of four and sent to reinforce B Coy's three MiTT locations. The teams were spread throughout Basra and B Coy were MiTTing Iraqi Bns within the 52 Bde AO, stretching from the northern edge of the city all the way up to Al Querna.

A MiTT lives, trains and operates with the IA. Day to day training of the IA took place within the MiTT location. Lessons ranged from basic physical training to advanced house clearing techniques. Despite some understandable frustrations that are experienced when training a foreign army, being part of a MiTT was a rewarding experience, as the IA's constant enthusiasm for taking part and learning was fantastic across the ranks. The IA soldiers plan and lead (with guidance) all operations, whether strike, search or routine patrols. British soldiers are there to advise, intervene if absolutely necessary, but above all to lead by example from private soldier level upwards. This was done by constantly demonstrating how to do the job properly, whether carrying out 5 and 20m checks efficiently and thoroughly, or simply showing that it's not professional to patrol with a cigarette hanging out of your mouth or to throw rubbish on the floor. Because of this every soldier feels as though they have contributed towards the success that has been achieved in Iraq.

Whilst I was based in Al Querna's MiTT location with 4 Pl, we were involved in a number of operations and activities which demonstrated the continuing development of the IA within that location. An important development was training the IA to use their new Air Force helicopters. This would massively increase their ability to strike into the marshland area to the north west of Al Querna, which had been previously been inaccessible. Our role in situations like these was to provide force protection for the IA, so that these invaluable operations could take place in a secure environment. We also provided force protection for many IA 'hearts and minds' campaigns. One such initiative involved the IA supplying goal posts and footballs to a number of villages in the area, giving the local



LCpl Williams, A Company, in Iraq whilst attached to the Poachers.

children the opportunity to play their much loved game. Campaigns such as these helped to develop trust between the locals and the IA.

Iraq is a very different place to that which the Vikings will remember from their tour on Op TELIC 6 in 2005. The IA has been completely reorganised and we are now on the same side. Police Transition Teams are being introduced across the city with the hope that the Iraqi Police Service will successfully follow in the footsteps of the IA. Multinational force patrolling has been reduced to a bare minimum and Basra itself appears to be a city very much on the mend. Infrastructure is being rebuilt and the signs of progress are evident for all to see.

I feel very proud of what I helped to achieve in my short time on Op TELIC 12 with the Poachers. I would like to say a big thanks to B Coy, The Poachers, for making us Vikings feel at home straight away; they proved that a family spirit and strong ethos is evident throughout The Regiment, not just within individual battalions.

Helmand as a Stabilisation Advisor

Major Peter Chilvers writes:

Its many a year that I've been a reader of Castle but a long time since I've written for it; however, with 8 months under my belt working as a Stabilisation Advisor (STABAD) here in Helmand, and maybe another 10 or so in front of me, I thought I'd take stock and pen something from a part of the world that I know has particular significance for The Regiment and one of my old Battalions in particular – I have served in 1st, 5th and 6th in my time.

While still serving in the TA as a badged Royal Anglian in the Joint CIMIC Group, where I have been fortunate to make the re-acquaintance of several old Royal Anglians, including Maj Chris Warne from Gibraltar days, it is the Civil Military skills honed here, combined with years of experience gained working within various International Organisations, that took me to Helmand Province and specifically Garmser District and FOB Delhi.

Inspired by the actions and deeds of the Vikings and enthused with memories of my own experiences in the Hindu Kush of some 20 years or more ago, I applied for a position with the Stabilisation Unit and deployed last year on the back end of the 16 Air Assault tour which quickly rolled over into that of 3 Commando Brigade. I am now getting ready to work under 19 (Light) Brigade and will see who turns up after that. An initial 1 year contract now seems in all likelihood to be on its way to almost 18 months. That means by the time I finish out here I'll have done Op Herricks 8, 9, 10 and 11 – I've gotta get a T-shirt with that on.

The Stabilisation Unit, or SU as its known, grew out of the Iraq experience and the nascent PRTs (Provincial Reconstruction Teams). Originally called the Post Conflict Reconstruction Unit, the group found themselves doing things in environments that were not strictly conflict related and in some cases, more than just reconstruction – hence the re-branding. A tri-departmental outfit belonging to the FCO, DFID and MOD, reporting directly to the Cabinet Office, in Afghanistan it is charged with implementing the Helmand Road Map (HRM) – written in large part by a friend and colleague of mine, Dr Stuart Gordon, a Sandhurst Academic and Joint CIMIC Group member. The head of the PRT in Helmand is a 2 Star Foreign Office diplomat who oversees the individual Thematic Leads and their teams, managing the HRMs lines of Operation – Governance, Security, Development, Rule of Law, Counter Narcotics and Strategic Communications. I, as a District Stabilisation Advisor, work at BG level alongside the CO delivering on all these pillars simultaneously on behalf of the PRT. So as you can imagine, a lot of plates are spinning. Its an immensely challenging and rewarding job and even more so in Garmser since we have been able to take the District from one of a besieged rifle company with WW 1 style toe-to-toe confrontation, to one where the District Centre has a thriving bazaar – which I often walk around, a resident local Governor, a repaired hospital, a fully functioning school with 250 children and the ability for representatives of the Afghan Government to carry out their

Special Features



One of many visitors, Dr Liam Fox, Shadow Defence Secretary, doing a piece to camera at a new bridge.

work in a largely free and relatively safe environment. Outsiders blood still runs cold when I say come to Garmser and visit us and see how safe it is... but when they do, they are amazed at what they find in the DC and surrounding areas. It's not to say Thompson will be running package tours here soon, but we are able to move about and have a far greater degree of freedom of operation than many other areas in the Province.

Before I deployed I discussed with an outgoing STABAD what her daily routine was like and she advised me it largely centred around drinking tea and talking with the Governor. I couldn't imagine what there would be to talk about 'every day', but she was right. I spend an awful lot of my time discussing plans and progress with the District Governor – Abdullah Jan, how we/he can deliver services, government and justice for the people in the areas under GIROA (Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan) control. He is

an experienced and respected local man who has been the Governor on and off here for many years. A part of my job is to mentor him, and I have been able to bring a fresh and delivery focused approach to his occasionally meandering processes, but it has been a two way relationship, and as I see the way he works the elders and how at ease he is with the big Shuras, it has been a pleasure to bring development and progress to fruition with him but importantly, behind him. An analogy the QDG BG CO uses is that we are all in the same ship and that if the ship sinks we all go down, and that the Governor is the Captain – we are all here to support him and GIROA's success. He appreciates our help and feels our losses as keenly as his own. It is a true partnership.

Over the last 8 months the Governor has become a good friend as well as a work colleague and we always enjoy a friendly and happy reunion when I return from leave or he from a trip to LashkarGar. I am sure that all who have been in Afghanistan and worked closely with its people have found characters who they admire, respect and like – it is a feature of the people here that they can and do inspire admiration. The Governor readily admits he does not have all the answers and is a man of humility who seeks advice when unsure. What he does bring is a deep understanding of the people of Garmser and knowledge of what is important to them. All our efforts are focused on supporting him and GIROA and I am lucky to have such a person to work with. I discuss with my colleagues from Musa Quala, Sangin and Geresk their issues and it is apparent progress is patchy. One of the most important ingredients is a good local administrator and while prevarication and hair pulling back flips do occur, I count my lucky stars I have Abdullah Jan to work with.

Last year I spent about 1m USD in Garmser on various projects – far less than some of my colleagues in other districts, but with greater return on investment, which shows it's not always about money – a point we stress with the plethora of visitors who come, all trying to work out what's working in Garmser.

It is also very encouraging for us that all the evidence at hand suggests the population in the areas adjacent to Garmser, which are still under enemy control, are very keen for Afghan and International Forces to push out and bring to their own communities the kind



Improving the bazaar square with inevitable interest from the local children.

Special Features



Cup of Tea in Patrol Base on way to local Shura

of prosperity and Stabilisation that they see and witness when visiting the District Centre (DC), the bazaar or hospital. This is very encouraging for us and frustrating for the enemy who quite frankly are not popular, especially the foreign fighters and the more they try and intimidate people, the more they alienate them.

The joint civilian/military operation, otherwise known as the comprehensive approach, is very much maturing in Afghanistan and the benefits of its results can be seen and felt in Garmser. The US Marines Air Ground Task Force who arrived recently for a briefing were acquainted with what the Brits have been up to and were so impressed that they've asked the STABAD to work with them while they try and get something like it going themselves. So in all probability I'll be working with Uncle Sam later in the year.... one thing I will be able to count on is a good supply of steaks and gator aid... a big improvement on 10 man rat packs and compo every day...

As for now, in the FOB we have the occasional 107mm rocket to contend with and last week a Suicide IED attack in the District Centre and a roadside bomb that luckily did little more than burst the tyres on our excellent Mastiff vehicles. On our Patrol Base Line

its small arms contacts and stand off shoots that keep us on our toes. But we are also getting an increasing number of locals walking in and telling us about enemy caches of equipment and where they've dug in IEDs, and that's all very encouraging stuff. The good news continues with a police force that's becoming increasingly professional and the Afghan Army, who are taking an increasing lead in operations.

Recently the Mercians arrived to take over in Garmser centre. They had been here in 2007 and had a hot time. Talking to them now as they remember the key terrain and limits of their manoeuvre, they can't believe it's the same place.

As for the future, who can tell for sure, but occasionally I read the doom laden reports in the media about how we are 'not winning in Afghanistan' and I barely recognise the place I know and work in against what is written about the country and the state of our assistance to it. While I'm very aware that Afghanistan is a diverse and disparate place with many competing pressures, and that therefore the story is not a simple and complete one, I do feel very positive about what we are doing here and certainly the part of it that I work in and know well.



Establishing the Garmser Community Council - Governor, myself and Derek Griffiths.

Op Herrick 9 - A Different Tour*CSgt Tim Heale R ANGLIAN, 15 (UK) PSYOPS Group (and ex Poacher), writes:*

I found myself returning to Afghanistan for the third time, but although still with PSYOPS (Psychological Operations Group), this time would be different. My first tour was in 2002, under the command of General McColl in Kabul as part of the PSYOPS team within ISAF HQ, with most of the tour taken up by producing the ISAF News from its conception through to issue number ten (its now more or less in the same layout, at issue number 178, as it was when I handed it over to the Turks in June 2002).

I then had a tour on Op Telic 3 in 2004 before returning to Afghanistan on Op Herrick 5 with 3 Commando Brigade as part of their PSYOPS team. I was responsible for all matters radio, producing programmes and messages for local radio stations to broadcast on our behalf. Apart from going out on a few patrols during the tour I was pretty much fixed in Lashkar Gar. One thing I instigated during that tour was the 'Radio in a Box' (RIAB) concept, with the first one sent to Sangin where it is still running today.

I arrived back in Lashkar Gar in November 2008 on Op Herrick 9, again with 3 Commando Brigade. Once more I was responsible for all things radio. Since my last tour the PSYOPS Team have rolled out several more RIABs, along with a 4Kw transmitter, which hasn't worked properly since it arrived in the early summer of 2008! My orders were to install three new RIABs and get the 4Kw working by whatever means possible.

Two weeks in and I started my travels; first stop was Sangin, where the first of the RIABs and the 4Kw transmitter are situated. The RIAB had been running 24/7 since it was installed some 16 months previously; it was in need of some TLC; and after cleaning out a ton of dust and making a few adjustments, I got it back to full power and running sweetly.

My next task was to sort out the big transmitter. All sorts of problems had occurred to it over the summer months; the aircon unit had to be replaced, the mast had to be erected and all manner of cables required attention. This done it was ready to fire up, having first informed all comms users on site that I was going to start broadcasting; and that if they experienced any problems, to let me know.

So at 0800 hrs on the day, I put full power through the antenna - all well so far. About an hour or so later I noticed the signals types running around like headless chickens, checking cable connections and all manner of other signals stuff. Another hour passed and the signals sergeant approached me and said he thought that my transmitter had knocked out all the comms on site. So I switched off... and the site comms returned!

This left me with a problem; the transmitter had to be moved, no small feat, with a generator, box body and 26 metre mast, all requiring a new location within a small base where the power wouldn't affect any other comms. The new spot was identified, but it was water logged from the rain and the river had burst its banks; however, the sappers could prepare the ground, and then it could be moved. So the long and the short is that some weeks later, I returned and set up again; this time it worked and didn't take out any other comms; job done.

During the rest of my tour I installed a further three RIABs, serviced another four and provided additional training to the operators and interpreters to get the best out of their systems. These are now being used to good effect on current operations and are a major asset to the commanders on the ground.

I feel very privileged to have worked with so many enthusiastic and professional people. Some of the highlights of my tour were at the dam at Kajaki. During the week that I was there, I not only had some great hill walking along the ridge, but also had the opportunity to fire a .50 machine gun at the Taliban, to deter them from digging in an IED, which they ceased in quick order. Also, whilst erecting the antenna on top of the hill at Kajaki, there was a fire fight going on a short distance away when, all of a sudden, we dropped a couple of five hundred pound bombs of the Taliban; by all accounts they were defeated on this occasion.

On one of the rare occasions that I spent at Lashkar Gar, George Alagiah from the BBC was there reporting; so I took the opportunity to interview him - he is a nice bloke. Perhaps one of the lowest

**Tim Heale wrestling with comms.****Live broadcast.****George Alagiah interview.**

points of my tour was when I heard the news of the death of Capt Tom Sawyer, one of the guys I had trained on a RIAB. Having spent several days with him and his team, I had got to know him well.

The main problem I encountered during the tour was constantly being stranded, mainly due to the lack of aircraft; but on the whole I had a very good tour. One thing that impressed me as I travelled throughout the province was the high regard in which The Regiment is held. I feel very proud to be a Royal Anglian and seeing the Poachers on the news during the homecoming parades was just great. Once a Poacher always a Poacher.

Special Features

Attack State Red: The Vikings in Battle, Helmand, 2007

Colonel Richard Kemp writes:

Back in 2003 I was Commander British Forces in Afghanistan. Among other troops, I had three companies of Poachers under my command, deployed from Kabul to Mazar-e Sharif. We faced attack by suicide bombers, sniping, mines deliberately positioned on patrol routes and roadside bombs. We assaulted compounds and apartment complexes to seize Al Qaida-linked terrorists, weapons and explosives; and conducted interdiction operations against opium traffickers. We were even involved in putting down an attempted coup d'état in Kabul itself.

It sounds exciting and it was; and, unsurprisingly, the Poachers were absolutely magnificent – courageous, aggressive and bold. But this was not the full-on, high intensity combat experienced by the 1st Battalion four years later, in which the average soldier was involved in forty significant contacts with the enemy.

It has been my privilege to write a book about the Vikings' 2007 tour in Afghanistan, *Attack State Red*, to be published by Penguin in early September. During more than 200 interviews with Viking officers and soldiers, a breathtaking account of 21st Century combat has emerged. To quote my editor from Penguin, 'Readers will be genuinely stunned by a great deal of what they read. I was.'

The hallmark of the Vikings' tour was offensive spirit. Supported by air strikes, artillery, mortars, Scimitars, tracked troop carriers and Javelin missiles; often resupplied by heavy parachute drop; the platoons sniped, blasted, machine-gunned, grenaded and bayoneted their way across the desert and through the jungle-like Green Zone. In the words of the Task Force Commander, Brigadier John Lorrimer, 'The Royal Anglians carried out jungle, desert, FIBUA, armoured infantry and airmobile operations – sometimes all in the same day.'

For the Taliban, the Green Zone had become a safe haven. Carrying battle-loads of up to ninety pounds, often coming under heavy fire, Royal Anglian soldiers sweated their way across long distances in tough terrain and searing heat, by day and by night – taking the fight to the enemy. The first British military unit to do so, the Vikings frequently attacked into the Green Zone and stayed there, dominating the enemy's home ground and preventing him from intimidating and killing local people.

That was the ultimate purpose of the Vikings' combat operations: to protect the civilian population; to gain their confidence; to permit reconstruction; to extend the writ of the Kabul government; and to enable the combat development of the Afghan National Army.

Nowhere was the Vikings' success better illustrated than in the town of Sangin. In the words of President Karzai: 'Lose Sangin and you lose Afghanistan.' Under siege for many months, the most important urban centre in the district had become a virtual ghost town when the Battalion arrived. By the time they departed, most of the people had

returned and the Sangin market, critical to trade and prosperity for miles around, had become a teeming, flourishing centre of business; busier and more vibrant than anyone had known in years.

And further north, around the Kajaki Dam, Viking companies supported by air, mortars and Guided Multiple Launch Rocket Systems fired from fifty kilometres away, fought for months to drive back the Taliban and prevent their interference with the strategically important hydroelectric plant. Less than a year after the Battalion left Helmand, the vital third generator was brought in by road, an achievement that enables the supply of electric power to most of Helmand and Kandahar provinces.

Without exception, those I interviewed for *Attack State Red* told their stories willingly, in detail, with great candour and often with much emotion. The modesty of every person I spoke to, and their determination to give credit to others rather than themselves, was humbling. The remarkably strong bond between all ranks in the Battalion beamed through. Private Kenny Meighan told me, 'I went to Afghanistan with seven mates and came back with seven brothers.'

This is the first book devoted entirely to The Royal Anglian Regiment since Michael Barthorp's *Crater* to the Creggan and Tony Parker's *Soldier, Soldier*, published in 1976 and 1985 respectively. But a word of warning: *Attack State Red* is neither a detailed analysis of operations in Helmand, nor a work of military history. It is a war story, plain and simple – seen through the eyes of the fighting men who were there.

In telling the 1st Battalion's remarkable story, *Attack State Red* seeks to place the reader who has never been in battle into the boots of the Viking soldier. It aims to give some understanding of the danger, the fear, the exhilaration, the heat, the dust, the confusion, the exhaustion and of course the ever-present humour of infantry combat.

Attack State Red tells also of the tragic price paid by Royal Anglian soldiers for the success they achieved in Helmand. Nine killed and fifty seven wounded in action. These sacrifices were accompanied by heroism of the highest order. I can find no better words to sum up the Vikings' tour than those used in the Second World War by American Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, 'Uncommon valor was a common virtue.'

Over the past 45 years many members of our regiment have fought with great distinction in tough, ferocious and intensive campaigns from Northern Ireland to Beirut, from Aden to the South Atlantic. In 2007 the Vikings upheld our proud traditions and battle standards, and I would defy any Royal Anglian – past, present or future – to read this story without a shiver of pride in wearing the same cap badge as these brave and determined men.

Combat Stress – A Personal Account

Put King writes:

I left the army in 1992 and for 11 years everything in the garden was rosy. Suddenly, and with no warning at all in 2003, I was hit with a ton of bricks. I totally went to pieces over a small 'exchange of views' with someone who was a real friend. For the first time in over 20 years I got absolutely plastered, and on the following morning I realised that something was wrong and I went sick. My own GP was unavailable and I burst into tears in front of a woman doctor. She was marvellous and immediately put me on medication to help with the symptoms.

After a week or so it became obvious that the pills weren't strong enough as I was suffering from bad military dreams and the odd nightmare in which I either woke up shouting and lashing out or crying my eyes out. I had sessions of drinking – I had been teetotal for 20 years – which did not work (booze just makes the symptoms worse). I sat for days with my head in my hands in utter misery. My behaviour at home was appalling. I became a recluse and did not go out for days on end. I hated crowds and ran out of church and supermarkets several times as I found the atmosphere stifling and threatening. At the time I was a SSAFA Forces Help Caseworker

and knew of the Ex-Services Mental Welfare Society. I wrote to the area secretary, asking if he could help, and he came to see me within a fortnight.

By this time I was in a really bad state. He debriefed me and, as a result, I received a referral to Combat Stress. I was admitted to Tyrwhitt House, Leatherhead, within 6 weeks, and was diagnosed with chronic Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Me! The last person I would have thought would get it! My pills were changed to a larger dose and the long haul to recovery began. The staff at Tyrwhitt House are fabulous and we are all on the same wavelength. It is a place to relax and be with veterans who know just what you are going through.

I am now in my sixth year of treatment and the symptoms have eased considerably, helping me to lead a more normal life. I am still something of a recluse, have trouble with socialising, and have bad days nearly every week. I still have discomfort in crowded places. I have given up all my commitments bar two – the Royal British Legion and my own church. Any major event in which I am involved takes so much out of me that it results in me having at least two bad weeks after it – as I write this I am just about over a royal event in

Special Features

which I took part. There are certain things that you wouldn't miss for the world, but you attend at a price! You would also be surprised at the number of people within your local community who suffer with mental health problems and I have had terrific support from many local people.

Why did it happen? What campaign or incident is to blame? I haven't a clue. I still get military dreams, in which I am usually totally lost on some exercise or operation. Local NHS help is very slow, as they are overwhelmed, and most Combat Stress veterans talk of a total lack of understanding of what they have been through, when eventually they do get seen. Don't forget to play the veterans

card – it can speed things up. Tell your doctor you are a vet when you go sick. I do not know what would have happened to me had it not been for Combat Stress's help. The old boys (WW2) tell you that you may get better but that you won't get well. My family have been marvellous and have stuck by me, for which I am eternally grateful. We have all been to hell and back. If you think that you may have symptoms for Pete's sake seek help. Many of you may feel too ashamed to do so – I did at the beginning. Don't be! You are not potty – you are ill. You know it makes sense. By writing this piece and going public I hope that some of you will read it and take action straight away.

A 19th Century Essex Regiment Drum Turns up in London!

Major Peter Williamson writes:

I have long been interested in regimental history, specifically that related to the forebears of the battalions of The Royal Anglian Regiment in which I served, the 1st and 3rd Battalions. As a result, I have over the years built up a little collection of medals, books, ephemera and other items concerning the regiments of Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Essex. It did not therefore take too much arm-twisting for me to agree to act as Secretary of the Essex Yeomanry and Essex Regiment Museum Appeal, even though I had no experience of fundraising!

Our Appeal work really started with a batch of letters sent out on 4 January 2008, so I suppose that regimental history was very much at the forefront of my mind when, a week or so later, I travelled in to central London from my home in Harrow to meet up with a friend who is Events Officer at the Wallace Collection (a superb and completely free museum in London which not only has a fantastic collection of armour but also some wonderful art and porcelain of the era of Madame de Pompadour).

Our lunch over and our business (which actually was nothing to do with regimental history) done, I was attending to a few domestic chores prior to going to the RUSI Library to do some research connected with the Honourable Artillery Company for an ex-Pompadour chum. One of those chores was to buy a new shaving brush, and I headed down Jermyn Street to a well-known and reliable supplier. Quite suddenly I remembered that in one of the arcades running between Jermyn Street and Piccadilly there had been a medal dealer. The premises, I knew, had changed hands and focus, several years ago, to concentrate on other items of militaria, specifically military models which frankly have no interest for me. I thought, though, that I would detour all of 50 metres to see if the shop was still there.

Imagine my shock and surprise when the first thing I saw in the window was an Essex Regiment drum! It looked to be the genuine article, emblazoned '1st Bn The Essex Regt', and, as far as I could see, of a reasonable age. Well of course I went in to have a closer look and a discussion with the dealer.

He dated the drum to the late 19th Century, and to me it looked to be in good original condition, thankfully not 'restored'. I did gasp somewhat at the price tag, £2500, reflecting that I was meant to be raising money for the Museum not spending it! Nevertheless, I realised that following one of those out-of-the-blue inspirational thoughts I had stumbled upon what was really a piece of treasure. After getting the dealer to reserve the drum, arranging photographs, and recording details, I went off to report everything to Ian Hook, Keeper of the Museum – nearly forgetting my shaving brush in all my excitement.

Suffice it to say that Ian inspected the drum and reported back to the Museum Trustees, who agreed to purchase it (thankfully at something of a discount!) When the Museum reopens in its new building the drum will therefore feature prominently in one of the revamped displays, but readers can get a good feel meanwhile from the photograph included in this edition of *Castle*.

So, how can we put a date on this drum? Well, the first clue is in the battle honours emblazoned upon it. The last one is 'Nile 1884-85', which seems to be part of the original work on the drum and not something added later. That battle honour was awarded to the Essex Regiment by General Order Number 10 of 1886, published on



Drum of the 1st Battalion Essex Regiment found in London by Major Peter Williamson.

1 January 1886, in recognition of the 2nd Battalion's gallant service in the Nile campaign. So we know that the drum was emblazoned after that date.

The Essex Regiment's next battle honours reflected service (by the 1st, 2nd and 3rd (Militia) Battalions) in the Boer War, 1899 - 1902. These were not awarded, however, until Army Order Number 3 of 1905, published on 1 January that year, though they had actually been announced in a Special Army Order dated 21 December 1904. The non-appearance of these honours on the drum would set the latest date of emblazoning as December 1904, but in fact we can take that a bit further back for other reasons. As can just be seen from the photograph, the crown in the Royal Arms is a 'Queen's Crown', rather than a 'King's Crown', and it is surrounded by the monogram 'VR'. Clearly, therefore, the drum was put into use before Queen Victoria died on 22 January 1901.

A study of the Army Lists of the era does, however, enable us to suggest a refinement to the earliest date of emblazoning. Up to and including the Army List of July 1888 the battle honours for Gibraltar and Egypt are integrated in the main list of honours (thus 'Moro, Gibraltar, Egypt, Badajoz ...') and NOT specifically attached to the 'devices' of the Castle and Key, and the Sphinx. The August 1888 List, however, quotes: 'The Castle and Key, superscribed Gibraltar' and 'The Sphinx, superscribed Egypt' and does NOT include those 2 battle honours in the general list (thus 'Moro, Badajoz ...') Furthermore, the motto 'Montis Insignia Calpe' is not specifically attached to the Castle and Key until the March 1889 Army List. The drum conforms exactly to the style of this last list, which in fact did not go through any further changes until early in the 20th Century.

The evidence of the emblazoning would therefore point firmly to the work having been carried out between March 1889 and January 1901.

Special Features

Towards the rear of the drum is wording which confirms that the emblazoning was done by George Potter & Company of Aldershot (but sadly no date!) Had they actually made the drum they would probably have emphasised that, not just referred to the emblazoning. Ian Hook's close examination of the drum, coupled with that inscription, has led him to conclude that it was probably manufactured in India, and emblazoned by Potters when it was brought back to the UK. At that time official issue drums were much shallower and lacked the rope tensioning system (becoming known as 'cheese' drums). Regiments were, however, beginning to purchase their own deeper, rope-tensioned, models, such as this one, because of their superior performance and appearance.

The 1st Battalion of the Essex Regiment was stationed in India/Burma from late 1871 to November 1884 when it came back to England, then Ireland. It therefore seems quite possible that the drum was procured during that period, brought back by the Battalion, and subsequently painted up by Potters, certainly later than January 1886, but most likely soon after March 1889. It was almost certainly out of service before 1905, more probably before 1901, and in fact may well have been put into store when the Battalion embarked for South Africa in November 1899.

Will we ever know more? Well what we need is for someone to

find some good photographs of drummers of the 1st Battalion of the Essex Regiment in the 1880s and 1890s! They may exist, who knows. What does exist, though, is a comprehensive album of photographs of the Battalion taken in Quetta in 1911. This drum is most certainly not there. All those pictured are deeper, in a more modern style, and almost all appear to have a 'King's Crown', as would be expected. But there does seem to be some variety in the emblazoning, which might caution us about being too dogmatic in the deductions made earlier regarding our latest acquisition!

Footnote: The eagle-eyed (!) readers among you will have noted the absence of the battle honour Havannah both from the drum and from some of the comments above. Although the action took place in 1762 the distinction was not officially awarded until Army Order Number 295 of 1909, when it took its place as the Essex Regiment's second battle honour after Moro. The latter is, of course, unique to the Essex Regiment.

(I would like to thank Ian Hook, Keeper of the Essex Regiment Museum, for all his help in the preparation of this article, which first appeared in the Spring edition of The Eagle, the journal of the Essex Regiment Association, and is reproduced here by kind permission of the Editor, Gordon Wren.)

A hero's legacy...

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Regimental Association

Obituaries

General Sir Peter Leng KCB MBE MC



When he returned from Northern Ireland in 1975 to become Director of Military Operations in the Ministry of Defence, it was even money on Peter Leng becoming, in due course, Chief of the General Staff and Head of the Army.

He had proved to be a courageous and resourceful junior officer in the closing stage of the 1944-45 North-West European campaign, had commanded a battalion on active service in Aden, a brigade in the UK Strategic Reserve and had brought about a significant

improvement in the Northern Ireland security situation. Yet, although he became a four-star general and a member of the Army Board, the top job eluded him.

Peter John Hall Leng was born in 1925. He was educated at Bradfield College, Berkshire, and commissioned into the Scots Guards in 1944. He served with the 2nd Battalion in the Guards Armoured Division during the advance into the Netherlands and Germany and was awarded an immediate MC for his determination, leadership and gallantry in the actions to secure the villages of Visselhövede and Ottingen, 30 miles east of Bremen, in April 1945. Taking command of two platoons whose officers had been killed, he captured all the company's objectives and more than 60 prisoners. Later, he was wounded during the advance on Hamburg.

After the war he was seen as something of a loner, both in his regimental service and as a junior staff officer. His first real break came in June 1959 when he was appointed Military Assistant to the Chief of Defence Staff, Earl Mountbatten of Burma. He returned to 2nd Scots Guards as second-in-command in 1962 and, on promotion to brevet lieutenant-colonel in 1964, was transferred to The Royal Anglian Regiment to command the 3rd Battalion in Berlin and on active service in Aden, where the security situation was deteriorating rapidly.

As a brigadier, he commanded 24th Infantry Brigade in the United Kingdom Strategic Reserve until going to the Ministry of Defence to be Deputy Military Secretary in 1970. His appointment as Commander Land Forces Northern Ireland came at the height of the IRA bombing and shooting campaign of 1973, when the rate of incidents reached its peak of 12,000 during the year and there was no sign of the violence abating.

He showed originality of mind and determination to discover new ways of defeating the terrorists, so forming an excellent partnership with Lieutenant-General Sir Frank King, the GOC, complementing King's robust orthodoxy with his own ingenuity. He was a strong and charismatic leader and no stranger to counter-terrorist operations, having served with the Scots Guards and Guards Independent Parachute Company in the Middle East in the early 1950s. His familiarity with Ulster dated from his time as chief of staff of the resident 39th Infantry Brigade in 1957-59.

Although some of his proposals proved impractical, if his subordinates and staff could produce sounder alternatives he would readily accept their proposals. Whenever some new terrorist tactic

became apparent, he would hold a study period with his senior commanders and staff to which Ministry of Defence scientists and other experts would be invited. Much of the early anti-terrorist operating procedures and equipment were developed from these brain-storming sessions.

His remarkable physical stamina allowed him to spend much of his time with the soldiers and policemen on the ground, finding out for himself the reality of the conditions and the practical problems that they had to face, and making changes in commanders and techniques wherever they were needed. His support for his staff was as strong as his directions were clear, and by the time he left Northern Ireland, in June 1975, bombing and shooting incidents in the Province had dropped to a fifth of what they had been when he arrived.

As Director of Military Operations in the Ministry of Defence from 1975 to 1978 he was faced with the task of implementing the last of the Labour Government's Defence Reviews, which turned the Army primarily into a continental force with only the minimum number of troops still assigned to commitments outside the Nato area.

It was not a happy time to be in Whitehall with the cutbacks caused by the 1976 sterling crisis, which inhibited many aspects of military training and other activity. His promotion to lieutenant-general to command the 1st (British) Corps in Germany in 1978 came as something of a relief to him after struggling to make military ends meet in Whitehall; it was this nomination that led many observers to expect him eventually to reach the Army's top job.

Except for the period in Berlin, Germany had not been his scene since the war and he was in no sense a "BAOR man", yet ideas came bubbling forth with his usual zest and enthusiasm. He stage-managed and successfully executed one of the largest manoeuvres held on the North German plain in the 1970s and 1980s — Exercise Spearpoint — attracting favourable comment in NATO circles and in the international press and media.

The relief from Whitehall proved short-lived, however; in 1981 he was brought back on promotion to general as Master-General of the Ordnance.

In this post and as a member of the Army Board he was obliged to face yet another Defence Review, initiated by the Conservative Government's Secretary of State for Defence, John Nott. But the Falklands crisis blew up just in time to prevent the implementation of many of Nott's proposals, and Leng undertook a substantive role in the feat of improvisation that enabled the Army to play its part in the victory achieved in the South Atlantic.

When he retired from the Army in 1983 he took over the chairmanship of the Racecourse Association, a position which absorbed all his very considerable drive and ingenuity until he finally retired in 1989 to his home, and much-loved garden, in Dorset.

His first marriage to Virginia Rosemary Pearson was dissolved in 1981, when he married Flavia Tower, daughter of General Sir Frederick ("Boy") Browning and Lady Browning (Dame Daphne du Maurier, the novelist).

Leng is survived by his second wife and three sons and two daughters of his first marriage.

General Sir Peter Leng KCB MBE MC, Master-General of the Ordnance, 1981-83, was born on May 9, 1925. He died on February 11, 2009, aged 83

Courtesy The Times 18 Feb 09

Obituaries

Cpl A Brown



It is with great sadness that this edition of Castle must mark the death of a serving member of The Regiment, Corporal Ashley (Ash) Brown, of the 2nd Battalion. He died suddenly, whilst at home, on the 14th of February; he leaves behind his Wife, Vicky and two young children, Connor and Mollie.

Ash Brown began his career in his early 20s, joining the Poachers after a brief flirtation with the RAF- evidently he deemed planes not tough enough and moved instead to a career in the Infantry. His first experience of the

Battalion was in Celle in the early 1990s as a Warrior Battalion; whilst in Germany he deployed to Bosnia on his first operational tour of duty. Subsequently he served in Belize, Cyprus and on operations in Northern Ireland and Iraq.

In his early career he fulfilled a number of roles, including time in the Drums Platoon and its associated task of Machine Gunning. After a stint away from the Battalion with the Poachers' Recruiting Team in Bassingbourn, he moved to a G4 role in Headquarter Company prior to embarking on his true calling, working in the Battalion Medical Centre as a Combat Medic.

He swiftly passed his Regimental Medical Assistant qualifications up to the highest level, before being sent to the Medical Training Centre at Keogh Barracks to train as a Regimental Combat Medical Technician (Class 1). It is a measure of the man that he was known as the 'Gentle Giant' by those on the Course, a reflection of his compassionate nature. Throughout this time he strived to aid those who were less experienced on the Course, thus gaining the respect of his peers and instructors alike.

In the last two years of his career he was posted to the Infantry Training Centre at Catterick, where he adapted well to the training environment and established an outstanding reputation. He was not fazed by the complexities of the training environment and made the most of his time away from the rigours of the operational cycle. Nonetheless he was keenly looking forward to returning to the Medical Centre in Celle, an organisation that is now made much the poorer by his absence.

Ash always exhibited the best attributes of a soldier; he showed true enthusiasm in all he did and was a team player to the highest degree. In his medical career he was meticulous, professional and compassionate; he believed in the worth and character of his fellow soldiers at all times. As a man, his friendship was firm and constant,

backed up with an excellent sense of humour. His death was a shock to his many friends in the Battalion, many of whom made the journey to his funeral in Cleethorpes.

Corporal Ashley Brown was buried with full military honours in Cleethorpes Cemetery on 25th February. Many hundreds of mourners from the Regimental community attended to pay their respects. He will be greatly missed in the Medical Centre, in the wider Battalion and by all of his friends and family. Our thoughts are very much with Vicky, Connor and Mollie.

SP

GR Osborne



5776910 George Ranworth Osborne of Norwich, died on 19 Apr 2009, aged 91. He was one of the last four known surviving members of The Royal Norfolk Regiment who fought at Kohima.

Born in the Ferry Pub at Horning, George was called up in 1940; he served from then until 1946 with the 1st and 2nd Battalions of The Royal Norfolk Regiment. He was posted for a long time in India. He loved the Army and would enthral his grandchildren with tales of living in roughly made huts and

how, during the night, he could hear snakes slithering in the roof above where he slept. He fought at Kohima, that epic battle in May 1944, where the Battalion took severe casualties and which halted the advance of the Japanese in SE Asia. Offered promotion to LCpl just before Kohima, he declined, saying 'I am only a wartime soldier.'

When he came out of the Army, he still kept regular contact through the TA and was always present at official functions. In civilian life he was a 'Shoe clicker' (cutting out the leather on a template) and then a scaffolder. He was an enthusiastic and loyal RBL Association and Norwich Branch member; and a great character with many an amusing anecdote to tell. He met regularly with other veterans of the D Day landings. He moved to the War Memorial cottages 30 years ago. He remained a strong supporter of The Regiment and was always just happy to be with his mates.

At his funeral, the St Mary and St Margaret Church in Sprowston was filled to overflowing. His coffin, draped with the Union Flag, bore his Royal Norfolk beret.

George will be missed. Pre-deceased by his first wife Ruby in 2001, he is survived by his wife Josie, whom he married in Sep 2002.

JR



The Royal Anglian Regiment Association

Area Secretary (Lincolnshire, Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland) Royal Anglian Regiment County Activities

Major Bill O'Driscoll writes:

Since the last issue of *Castle*, serving and retired members of The Regiment have been meeting across the north of the Regimental patch frequently and in great numbers. The reasons for this are varied; however the one factor that gets people together is the power of the Internet and in particular Facebook, the social networking site that seems tailor made for the modern generation of Royal Anglians. Whilst RHQ can put out a Regimental Call to Arms, Facebook permits connection to a much wider audience and is helping to get comrades that served together back in touch with one other. The natural progression beyond this is for these friends to then meet up and the vehicle for this is a Reunion. Three very successful reunions have been held since December 08 in Leicester, Grimsby and Northampton, all of which were extremely well attended. In addition to reunions, Facebook contributed to the Call to Arms for the Poachers' Freedom / Homecoming Parades 9 – 12 March in Stamford, Luton, Watford and Lincoln. Another important and impressive turnout was for the funeral of Corporal Ashley Brown, 2nd Battalion, held in Cleethorpes on 25 February 2009. Over 300 members of the Regimental Family attended this solemn occasion to demonstrate their support for both Ash and his family.



Major Bill O'Driscoll warming the crowds up before the Lincoln Homecoming Parade.

Leicester Reunion 5 December 2008

The Royal Anglian Reunion in Leicester was held at the South Wigston Workingmen's Club on 5 December 08. This is an annual event that is organised by Denis Foran, who asked for help to improve attendance: the details duly went out on Facebook, courtesy of Tom Coley who rallied the troops. In all approx 200 turned up, with people travelling from all parts of the UK to attend. There are far too many names to mention, but everyone was particularly pleased to see Steve Gill who was seriously wounded during the Poachers' 1989 tour of Belfast. Steve was in good form at the Bar, where he explained to all his recent yachting adventure as a member of BLESMA.



Steve Askin, Darren Grant and Steve Gill.



Rob Kilsby, Tom Coley, Mark Green, Kurt Warner, Darren Grant, Peanut Payne and Nic Sanders.



Tony Green, Tom Coley, Renville Brown and Eddie Hunter

Regimental Association

Grimsby Reunion 7 March 2009

Denis Watson writes:

When I was first approached to help organise a Poachers' Reunion, I must admit to be slightly apprehensive and reluctant to commit to it. My brain told me alcohol + ex soldiers = problems, but my heart won the day as I wanted to pay something back. Who would want to support this event, who would remember me in any event?

However, I was approached by Steve (Chippan) Chew and Tim (Squeak) Smith who I had worked with in the MT Platoon in Celle days. Their concept was simply to hold a Poachers' Reunion in Grimsby.

We quickly realised that we needed to get more resources, set up a Committee and get properly organised. A few favours were called in (as you do when your backs against a wall) and, enter the arena, Pete Smith QGM and Frank Rimmer QGM. While we all recognised that the Felixstowe Reunion has continued to be successful, we wanted to establish a totally different atmosphere - more casual and less formal. This concept was confirmed when myself, Pete and Chippan visited the Reunion in Leicester on 5 December 08 and saw how the younger generation of Royal Anglians responded to the informal type of function.

Much of the time consuming tasks were completed long before the event. We needed publicity and exposure fast. Pete Smith and I were interviewed by Compass FM, a local radio station that reached across Lincolnshire. We identified our target audience via Facebook and were gob-smacked by the response (if you're not on Facebook I suggest you get on it quick; this is comms modern style!) It was only at this stage that we all knew that we wouldn't be in the bankruptcy courts and that the Reunion would be self financing.

Detailed Tasks were simple; Frank would be in charge of the Charity, Help for Heroes; Pete and I undertook advertising the Reunion; while Tim and Steve had the easier task of finding a venue and selling the tickets! Would you believe that in today's economic climate we could not get anyone to provide a buffet at a reasonable cost? Enter our very supportive wives - buffet sorted (well done ladies, you did us proud, as always)!

To cut a long story short, 240 people turned out to support the Reunion; more importantly we raised a staggering £515.00 for Help



Denis Watson, Frank Rimmer and Tim Smith with the cheque for Help the Heroes .

for Heroes, truly magnificent, thank you everyone! The Reunion was attended by serving and ex Poachers, TA, and members of the Association, wives and partners. Many old friends were reunited, many stories embellished beyond belief and, to make matters worse, some added alcohol to the spring water we all ordered!

I know that once you leave The Regiment you have to change your focus; however never forget where you have been and who with. I have often heard reference to the wider Regimental Family but it is much more than that; it's a network of like minded people who are at the end of a telephone or a click away on your computer in your hour of need.

It would be remiss of me not to mention all those that made the events successful. Bill O'Driscoll's continuous support and guidance; the Association, particularly the Grimsby Branch; all serving and Ex Poachers; Compass FM and Help for Heroes. Finally to the Committee for giving me back my faith and belief - you were brilliant. Watch out for next year's event; we will not stand still and it will evolve, see you there!



Old MT pals get together.

Regimental Association

Adjt, RAO and PMRT.

Royal Anglian Football Day 28 March 2009

This day was organised by Sgt Bannon, of the Armed Forces Careers Office Lincoln. The match was Lincoln City versus Notts County, played at Sincil Bank on a cold windy Saturday with a lacklustre performance from both teams; so much so that the Adj

of 2 R ANGLIAN who had to select the man of the match, and in a quandary of who to select, very nearly gave the award to the Standard Bearer. The Poachers had organised a coach of supporters to come from Celle at the start of their Easter Leave and, in support of this, the Poachers Mobile Recruiting Team were in attendance to exploit any recruiting opportunities.



WO1 (RSM) Burt on day release from RMTC.

Regimental Association

Northampton Reunion

3 April 2009

The Northampton Reunion was held in the ex Servicemen's Club, Sheep Street, Northampton on 3 April 2009. It was organised by the Northampton Branch of The Royal Anglian Regiment and was designed to get all those members of the Regimental Family out of deep cover and into the open. This was another well attended event with over 100 coming from all parts of the Country. A word of thanks goes to Donna and Andy Kilby for organising the raffle which raised £80.00 towards Branch funds and £43.00 to the Regimental Museum Appeal. As the pictures below indicate, a good time was had by all

Conclusion

In the past 6 months as the Area Secretary, I have been amazed at the response from the Regimental Family; it is as though a beast has been lying dormant waiting to be prodded and woken up. This has now happened and The Royal Anglian Regiment is now more out there than ever before!



What was left before last orders.



Some younger members of the Association turned up proving that you do not have to be in your dotage to attend.



Jack Hawkins, Nigel Metcalfe and Minny Minns.

Regimental Association

Colchester Branch

Lt Col Brian Davenport writes:

Two newcomers to the Branch since the last Castle are Michael Langridge and Sean Kim, both ex-Pompadours, and Michael Major has rejoined. To all of them we extend a warm welcome as they become part of our flourishing membership.

Since Christmas and the New Year, the major event has been the Annual General Meeting, as usual held in the Colchester TA Centre, and also as usual accompanied by a rather good curry, masterminded by Geordie Pattison. It is hard to believe that this was the 8th AGM – to many present at the first one on 10th April 2002 it seems like only yesterday. At this year's meeting we were pleased to note that as well as having led The Regiment in Association Standard design, we are now doing the same for the Standard Bearer's sash – and are modestly pleased about this. The accounts are in good shape and the annual subscription remains unchanged at £10. Plans for the summer and autumn include a summer function – perhaps a restaurant night again or an evening visit to Newmarket races; and there will of course be attendance at the Regimental Day.

Anyone wishing to join the Branch is most welcome – please contact the Secretary, Brian Davenport (Tel: 01206-564919. Email: davenport@colchester1737.freemove.co.uk)

Officers of the Branch : Chairman: Tony Downes; Treasurer : Martin Brewer; Secretary: Brian Davenport; Members: Tom Carr, Bob Potter, Mick Henson and Geordie Pattison.

Royal Anglian Association Club Bury St Edmunds

Tim Davies writes:

The club remains in robust health both financially and socially. Our location is still behind the Drill Hall on Newmarket Road, where we have the close support of 3 Royal Anglian (Steelbacks) and are of course grateful to share in their security systems. For the historians, our Club House is the last hut of the old West Lines that shows on a Luftwaffe air photo held in the Museum, dated August 1940. The one other hut surviving was transported to Ram Meadow to serve as a club house for Bury Town football club: it is due to be replaced this year.

Last year's big event, as always, was Minden Day. We hosted the usual Saturday night before Minden party with a lot of old faces turning up, the tough ones sleeping in the woods, the sane ones in B&Bs. We supplied 95 Sunday dinners on the big day with the dinners being transported to and from in our mini-bus.

We recently got the news that Suffolk College, who owns the square and woods, lost their £76 million grant to redevelop the area; so we appear to have the use of the square for at least two to three years more.

The Club Treasurer has instigated a "Captain's Barrel" to collect loose change at the bar; last month it yielded £200 for our wounded, which was duly delivered to RHQ. The photo shows our Captain's Barrel with our Club Stewart, Mr Robby Hay, late of the Black Watch.

Members of the current committee are: President Maj Gault; Vice President Maj Stan Bullock; Chair Mr Ron Cockle; Secretary Mr Tim Davies; Treasurer Mr John Coley.



Robbie Hay, late Black Watch, and the Captain's Barrel.

Regimental Association



The Royal Norfolk Regiment Association and The Royal Anglian Regiment Association (Norfolk)

Lt Col Tony Slater writes:

The Branches

Another busy six months around the branches. The membership numbers may be declining slowly but this has not affected the number of events or the enthusiasm for attending them. Of particular note is the annual Cyprus reunion; the 15th was held in April. Once again Ruth Grimmer welcomed Royal Norfolk veterans of the Cyprus emergency to North Elmham. Later this year Major David Clarke will represent the Association at the unveiling of a Memorial to the fallen of the EOKA campaign in Cyprus on Sunday 8th November.

The D Day veterans continue to meet monthly under the chairmanship of Captain John Lincoln. Their annual pilgrimage to Normandy in June this year marks the 65th anniversary of D Day, and will as usual include visits to Grimbosq and Sourdeval, meeting up with their many French friends at both locations.

The acclaimed book, 'Thank God and the Infantry: from D-Day to VE Day with the 1st Bn The R Norfolk Regt' by Capt John Lincoln MC, has been re-launched. John has generously agreed that £2.50 from all copies sold through the Association will be donated to the Royal Anglian Memorial Fund.

Major Tom Eaton has sadly stood down as Chairman of the 4th Battalion OCA Dinner Club. Major William Reeve attended his final dinner last October as Chairman of The Gorleston and Great Yarmouth District Branch.

The Regimental Chapel, Norwich Cathedral

The 2009 annual Almanza Service was held in the Norwich Cathedral North Transept (The Warrior's Chapel) on Sun 26 Apr. It was conducted by the Revd Canon Bill Sayer. The building of the new Choir School is continuing apace. The Cathedral authorities hope that the school will be able to move into their new building during the 2009 summer holidays. However, the Chapel will need to be deep cleaned before we can re-occupy it. Our first service back in the Chapel will be the Almanza service in April 2010.

The Regimental Museum

The museum continues from strength to strength with a steady stream of visitors, an increased number of visits from schools, and many enquiries from individuals tracing the history of relatives who

served in the Regiment. The Royal Norfolk Regimental Museum Curator, Miss Kate Thaxton, would like to involve post war veterans and ex National Servicemen in the planning of the contents of the displays and what is included in the supporting information. For more information please call the Curator on 01603 493649.

A Taste of History

At Almanza, Spain, on 25 Apr 1707, as Steuart's Regiment of Foot, the Regiment distinguished itself in being the only regiment that did not lay down its arms. It fought to the last, covering the retreat of its General, the Earl of Galway. When it returned to England a year later the Regt was barely 100 strong, such were the casualties at Almanza. Tradition states that for this memorable feat of arms Queen Anne awarded the Badge of Britannia, to be worn on the Colours and accoutrements. Officers of the Regt, named 9th Regt of Foot in 1751, wore the badge from 1759. Renamed the 9th or East Norfolk Regt of Foot in 1782, the wearing of the Badge of Britannia was confirmed in 1799 by Horse Guards, predecessors of the War Office, now the Ministry of Defence.

In the Peninsula War, the GOC of the British Army in Portugal, Sir John Moore, was killed during the Battle of Corunna in 1809. The honour of burying him was given to the 9th Foot and in recognition of this, in 1881, on the founding of the Norfolk Regt, officers were authorised to wear a black line in the gold lace in the full dress uniform. From 1884 to 1902 the buckle of the officers' belt bore 'Britannia over a Castle'.

Farewells

It is sad to report the passing of the following. Maj Bryan Coward on 21 Dec 2008, aged 90. Commissioned on 11 Nov 1939 into The Royal Norfolk Regt in Norwich he had been accepted for flying training in the RAF but then the 5th Bn were ordered overseas. Later, he applied to be a glider pilot so was posted to 2 Suffolk in Lahore.

George Osborne, on 19 Apr 2009, aged 91. He took part in that epic battle at Kohima which halted the advance of the Japanese in SE Asia. George was an enthusiastic and loyal Norwich Branch member, with many an amusing anecdote to tell. Ron Pelster



WW2 Norfolks at the April 2009 Almanza Service. Tony Ferrier, Derek Burdett, Alec Barr, John Berney and Geoff Ransome.

Regimental Association



4 Royal Norfolk Officers' Dinner Apr 2009. Mike Cadge, Patrick Palgrave-Moore, Ben Turner, Terry Thacker, Jack Salter, Derek Burdett and Richard Boulton.

died on 1 Mar 2009. He served with the 1st Bn and was a D-Day Veteran. Ron was a London Branch Member, regularly attending the Association Dinners in Norwich. Albert William Clarke (Nobby) of Crowborough, on 6 Feb 2009 aged 85, served with the 70th Bn and

in A Coy 2 R Norfolk during WW2 in Burma and India, from 1942-1948. Sgt Lou Dale on 13 Feb 2009 aged 82, after a long illness. He served with the 2nd Bn and was MT Sgt in HQ 2 R Norfolk in India, departing Bombay in Aug 1947.

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We come from two World Wars, Korea, Kenya, Malaya, Aden, Cyprus, Ulster, The Falklands and all those areas of turmoil where peace must be restored.

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THE FIRST STEP
by a recent, young double amputee

Regimental Association



The Royal Lincolnshire Regiment Association and The Royal Anglian Regiment Association (Lincolnshire)

Sobraon Lunch: 8 February 2009

John Gooding, Hon Secretary Lincoln Branch, writes:

Branch members from all over the County had met at 11am on a crisp and frosty morning with the remnants of snow and ice lurking around making it bitterly cold and totally treacherous underfoot.

How so very different, from that momentous occasion 143 years ago, when the regiments forefathers, on the plains of the Punjab in the North West corner of India, earned their heroic battle honour in temperatures considerably higher than on this occasion.

Inside the barracks, enjoying the warmth of a hot drink, they were jolted from their conversations when suddenly the bugle sounded. "Fall in", a call that not one of them would ever forget.

Quickly, they formed up outside. The Band of Lincolnshire Army Cadet Force, already on parade, gave a resounding rendition of the Regimental March, The Lincolnshire Poacher, during which the Chairman got to grips with the new fangled flagpole which had its ropes and workings inside the pole! It can be reported, however, that the solemn ceremony of Raising the Flag was successfully completed with dignity and without mishap.

There then followed a short but very emotional little ceremony. Late in 2008 Mrs Sandy Morgan from Llandudno in Wales, had contacted the Branch requesting that she be allowed to scatter her late father's ashes within the grounds of the barracks. His name was Harold Fieldhouse, late of the 2nd Battalion, Royal Lincolnshire Regiment. He had served at the barracks and was always talking of his experiences there. After the necessary permissions were obtained the Branch Secretary, John Gooding, set about making the arrangements for his ashes to be buried under the tree near to the main gate. He obtained the services of a very good friend of his, retired chaplain, the Reverend Jim Rooke, who put together a beautiful service sheet. This included the Regimental Collect, the



Relaxing after a very good lunch.

Last Post and the band playing a very, very moving version of the hymn "Abide with me", whilst Mrs Morgan and Harold's surviving sister, Nora, placed his ashes in the ground. The Padre concluded with a blessing and the Branch, with guests retired to the barracks.

Doesn't time fly once the bar opens? In no time at all (just over an hour) the bugler sounded Dinner Call, the band played "Roast Beef" and nearly 90 guests sat down and tucked in to lunch to celebrate the 143rd anniversary of the 10th of Foot's involvement in the "Battle of Sobraon" during the Sikh wars.

The drink flowed, the food came and went and the band played on. Young cadet musician Chloe Mason (14) stood and gave a solo performance of her own choosing entitled "Bring him home" which



Top Table Sobraon Lunch.

Regimental Association



Mick Reams, Wally Hibbert, David Spraggins, David Metcalfe, Cyril Key, Sue O'Driscoll.

she dedicated to his family, and in memory of, Harold Fieldhouse. As part of their APC musical training, cadets must perform a solo piece in front of a live audience. Some of the branch members may argue over the size of the "live audience" at this point in the proceedings, as the amount of alcohol imbibed appeared to have begun to take its toll. However, as the OC No 1 Coy, Major D Spraggins was in attendance, he willingly witnessed, and approved her solo recital. The bugler then moved onto bagpipes and the band concluded their programme with a stirring performance of "Highland Cathedral"

It seemed then, that in no time at all, it was time for the Chairman to make his dramatic recital of the Sikh account of the 10th's advancement on their lines, "Where not a single shot was fired". No matter how many times that the story is told, no-one can ignore the scene that it recreates, the dedication to duty and the sheer bravery of its participants. It makes you proud to be a Yellowbelly!

With the toasts played and drunk it was time to move on to the raffle. Amid cries of "Fix" and "Dig deeper", the table full of prizes was gradually distributed. In recognition of the welcome that Mrs Morgan and her Aunt had been given, they had presented to the Branch a

separate raffle prize of one week's holiday for two at her guesthouse in Llandudno. It was won, fittingly, by Mr and Mrs R Chapman. I say fittingly, as it was Mrs Chapman who had painstakingly woven two outstanding, framed tapestries of the Lincolnshire and Royal Anglian crests; these, in turn, were won by Mr David Metcalfe MBE and the Reverend Jim Rooke.

With the sound of the band's piano player tinkling the ivories in the background, the members then retired to the bar to conclude a truly memorable Sobraon Lunch.

Grimsby Branch

The Grimsby Branch of the Regimental Association held their annual April Luncheon at Cleethorpes in the Cromwell Rooms. 43 members and guests sat down for the lunch accompanied by the Deputy Lord Lieutenant for North East Lincolnshire, Mr Frank Flear, the Chair of Grimsby & Cleethorpes Civic Society, Mr Murdo McCinnes and the Regimental Area Secretary, Maj Bill O'Driscoll. A healthy table of prizes for the raffle and some of the Regimental Silver assured an enjoyable occasion.



Annual Lunch Grimsby Branch The Royal Lincolnshire and The Royal Anglian Regiment Association: 11 Apr 09.

Regimental Association



Spalding Branch. The Royal Lincolnshire and The Royal Anglian Regiment Association at the dedication of the new Branch Standard.

Spalding Branch

Colin Briggs writes:

The Spalding with Boston Branch consists of only 27 members under the leadership of our Chairman, Trevor Snell, a very dedicated and well known member of the Association. The last six months have been hectic to say the least. In the Autumn of 2008, in conjunction with local veteran groups, the Branch led the dedication of the plaques in Ayscoughfee Memorial Gardens and of course members were busy in November, representing The Regiment throughout South Lincolnshire for Remembrance activities. Various social events have taken place and, resulting from the many fundraising initiatives, the commissioning, after 40 years, of our new standard.

The highlight of 2008 must be the Christmas Dance, held at Holbeach Servicemen's Club; it was well attended by members and guests and proved an excellent run-up towards the festive season.

The dedication of our new standard took place on Sunday 15th February 2009 at St Mary and St Nicholas Church in Spalding.



Branch Standards in St Mary and St Nicholas Church Spalding.

Regimental Association



with Canon Tim Barker conducting the service. The standard was presented by Mr Ray Ball, escorted by Mr Les Wilson and Mr John Galey, with Mr Brian Ivatt supporting the old standard. The celebration was attended by over 90 members and guests, parading standards from all over the County. The service was followed by a Buffet in the Vista where Tim Barker said grace and, once settled, everyone was formally welcomed. The event coincided with the 90th birthday of Mr Tom Fowler, a well respected member and a veteran of the Norwegian Campaign and D Day Landings. Three rousing cheers were offered to HM the Queen, The Regiment and Tom Fowler, whereupon Tom was invited to cut a birthday cake emblazoned with the R Lincs Regt crest and the Polar Bear insignia (made by Janet Doy, our Secretary, who had also laid on a marvelous buffet).

The new standard incorporates, on a blue background, a Roman X, denoting the 10th Regiment of Foot, the R Lincs Regt badge, this being the Regiment in which most of our members have served and the R Anglian Badge, representing the current County Regiment and the members which we hope will join our ranks and without

whom we cannot survive. With this in mind, we implore all serving and demobilized members of the Regiment to come and join us; we are able to offer comradeship, welfare support and social assistance to both the serving soldier, the ex serviceman and their families.

The next year offers many important challenges for which the Branch is well placed. We intend to maintain a high profile by attending as many public events as possible, organize outings, social evenings and gatherings, thereby maintaining public awareness of the role of the Regiment and the Association. The chances are that those of you reading this report are already life members of The Royal Anglian Regt Association – why not contact our Branch and make your interest known! We are not just a bunch of old boys stomping around waving flags; most are dedicated veterans who are hell bent on making a good life for themselves, their families and their comrades; so come and join us and let us help you! Contact: Secretary, Janet Doy 01406 (SUTTON BRIDGE) 350985, or Colin Briggs (01205 (BOSTON) 760086).



The Suffolk Regiment Association and The Royal Anglian Regiment Association (Suffolk)

Lt Col Tony Slater writes:

250 Years Ago - 1759

The Battle of Minden

We are this year celebrating the 250th Anniversary of the Battle of Minden. Major Bob Godfrey provided the following extracts from two speeches made at a dinner to celebrate the 200th Anniversary. They describe very well what happened and why it happened.

On the 200th Anniversary a dinner was held at the Guildhall in the City of London. Representatives from all the Minden Regiments attended and no less than three Royal Colonel-in-Chiefs were present: Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother, Colonel-in-Chief of the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry; Her Royal Highness, The Princess Margaret, Colonel-in-Chief, The Suffolk Regiment and

Her Royal Highness, The Duchess of Gloucester, Colonel-in-Chief of the King's Own Scottish Borderers.

The Minden toast was proposed by General Sir Hugh Stockwell, GCB, KBE, DSO, ADC, Colonel of The Royal Welsh Fusiliers. (General Stockwell was GOC Malaya for much of the time the 1st Battalion spent out there during the Emergency.) Extracts from this speech follow:

Of the Battle of Minden I would only say this.....there have been few occasions when such courage, discipline and determination have been shown. If you can picture the steady march forward of the six British Infantry Regiments in two lines with their drums rolling. Within the first line on the right the 12th(The Suffolk Regiment), in

Regimental Association



Minden Day Parade 1932.

the centre the 37th (The Royal Hampshire Regiment) and on the left the 23rd (The Royal Welsh Fusiliers), and in the second line on the right the 20th (The Lancashire Fusiliers), in the centre the 51st (The King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry) and on the left the 25th (The King's Own Scottish Borderers); the shattering blasts of the enemy artillery fired from but 700 yards, the closing of the ranks and the halt in line awaiting the charge of the enemy cavalry, the itch to fire too soon, the stern orders which withheld that fire until the charge was only 50 yards away; a second cavalry charge and then a third and then the enemy infantry attacked in three waves, the confusion, smoke and noise of battle, the breaking of the enemy and their pursuit by the rapid fire and deployment of the batteries; then perhaps you can recapture those stirring and exciting moments and the exacting patience demanded by discipline. Some 81 officers and 1,311 other ranks, or 30 per cent of the force, were killed or wounded in the battle.

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother responded as follows:

The occasion which we are celebrating tonight occurred 200 years ago and the name of "The Seven Years War", of which it formed part, rings for many of us so distant a bell that it may perhaps be worth recalling some of its circumstances. Only thus, I think, can one properly assess the qualities of those whom we are saluting tonight – the Infantry of the Line and their comrades, the Gunners.

Across the tapestry of the 18th Century characters, half forgotten today, move so bewilderingly that the pattern changes like a kaleidoscope. Our King, then George II, was also Elector of Hanover, for which he cared far more than his English Kingdom. Frederick the Great, King of Prussia, was his nephew and they did not like each other. It seems odd, therefore, to find them allied, but they were united by a variety of different interests; Frederick's was fear of Austria and France; King George's was anxiety for his colonies, which France was threatening.....and it was the heyday of secret diplomacy. We had secret arrangements with Prussia – with the Czarina and although we were at peace with France we were conducting a brisk attack on her shipping.....The natural result was that nobody believed anybody, and quite rightly!

.....We the Colonels of the Minden Regiments count ourselves happy and proud to pay our tribute to brave men. Hardship and confusion did not weaken their resolution; though far from home and under command of officers whose ways were not ours, their discipline never faltered and they marched upon the French cavalry with an audacity which was triumphantly rewarded

Snapshots from the Past

Mrs Tooze kindly sent in the above photograph taken in the 1930's when her father, Corporal Leonard Pilgrim was serving. This photograph is of the 1st Battalion Minden Day Parade at Blackdown in 1932. While the photograph has suffered from age and is a trifle indistinct it is clearly of the Escort to the Colour during a Trooping of the Colour Parade. It should also be noted that the old Six Foot colour was being paraded and proudly bedecked with a wreath of Minden Roses.

Future Events

Minden Day Reunion – Sunday 2 August 2009

250th Anniversary of the Battle of Minden. 50th Anniversary of the amalgamation of The Royal Norfolk Regiment with the Suffolk Regiment

The day will follow the same format as previous annual Minden day reunions. The event will take place on Sunday 2nd August 2009 in the grounds of The Keep in Bury St Edmunds. The day will start at 1115 hours with a Drumhead Service. This will be followed by a parade and March past by B (Suffolk) Company 1 Royal Anglian and Old Comrades. The salute will be taken by The Colonel of The Regiment. There will be displays explaining the battle of Minden, and of current Battalion operational equipment. A new display case depicting The Malayan campaign will be opened in the Suffolk Regiment Museum after the parade.

The Band of the 3rd Battalion and the Corps of Drums of the 1st and 3rd Battalion will Beat Retreat as the finale to the day. A number of bands will provide musical entertainment during the afternoon.

The day is very much a family occasion, and as ever an excellent opportunity to meet old friends and comrades. All members of the Regimental Family are warmly invited and are welcome to attend.

Handover of Regimental Chapel – Tuesday 1 September 2009

A service will take place on Tuesday 1st September at 1130 hours to re-dedicate The Regimental Chapel in St Mary's Parish Church as the "The Suffolk Regiment and Royal Anglian Regiment Chapel". At the same time the chapel will be formally handed over to The Royal Anglian Regiment for safe keeping. All members of The Regiment are welcome to attend. The service will be followed by a reception in The Athenaeum.

Further details of both events can be obtained from, and all queries should be directed to the Area Secretary Lt Col Slater (01284 752394, E Mail: ahqbse@rhqroyalanglian.org.uk)

Regimental Association



The Cambridgeshire Regiment Association and The Royal Anglian Regiment Association (Cambridgeshire)

Future Events 2009

Association Council

Sun 6 Sep 1000 hrs at ACF Centre Waterbeach

Association AGM

Sun 6 Sep 1330 hrs at ACF Centre Waterbeach

Cambridge Branch

The Cambridge Branch held its annual New Year's lunch on Saturday 25 January at the Cadet Headquarters by kind permission of the Commandant.

A superb buffet was provided and afterwards a game of bingo produced the usual merriment amongst those present. The draw had some very good prizes. The Chairman thanked those who attended and also Colonel Derek Latchford for organizing the event.

Whittlesey and Peterborough Branch

Mr Whitwell gave details of a bench with plaque in memory of the Cambridgeshires which was placed outside the FEPOW building at the National Arboretum. The Association paid for this and donations are to be sought from branches and other interested parties. Ann and Bob Rowe donated the plaque. A service of dedication was held in the Autumn.

Cambridgeshire Regiment from 1947

When the Territorial Army was reformed in 1947 it was decided that the requirement for Cambridgeshire should be a Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment instead of an Infantry Battalion, and that this unit should be the successor to the 1st and 2nd Battalions, The Cambridgeshire Regiment. Accordingly, the Regiment became 629 (The Cambridgeshire Regiment) Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment RA TA and, although part of the Royal Artillery, was granted the right to retain its Colours, Drums, Badges and Buttons.

The first post-war Commanding Officer was Lieutenant Colonel G Colchester DSO RA. In 1949 he was succeeded in Command by Lieutenant Colonel J O Ritchie DSO RA. Lieutenant Colonel J G A Beckett TD DL assumed Command in November 1952, to be the first TA Commanding Officer since the 1939-45 War.

The Regiment was armed with Bofors and Bristol Bofors, 40mm QF Guns and was trained for the defence of Airfields in East Anglia as part of LAA Group of Anti-Aircraft Command. During its service it formed a close friendship with the United States Army's 60th Anti-Aircraft Battalion which was then stationed at Lakenheath, and with which it was associated for operational purposes.

Reservists were called up for service at Annual Camp in 1951 and

1952 and the introduction of compulsory TA service for National Servicemen resulted in a rapid build-up of strength, culminating in a peak at Camp in 1954, when the Regiment deployed 24 guns, 80 vehicles and over 600 all ranks.

On the disbandment of Anti-Aircraft Command at the end of 1954, the Regiment was honoured by selection for service with the 16th Airborne Division TA and became 629 (The Cambridgeshire Regiment) Light Regiment RA TA. As such, it was armed with 4.2 inch Mortars and was the only parachute Light Regiment in the British Army. 513 LAA Regiment in Sheffield, which had been reduced to a Battery and converted to the same role, was allotted to the Regiment as its 'R' Battery.

In July 1955, the Regiment proceeded to the Parachute School at Abingdon in lieu of Annual Camp, and 140 all ranks qualified as parachutists and won their 'Wings'. In October of the same year the Regiment provided the Guard of Honour for HM The Queen on the occasion of her visit to Cambridge. Major P D Storie-Pugh MBE MC TD was Guard Commander.

In May 1956 the 16th Airborne Division was reduced to a Brigade Group and its Artillery units were redundant. The Regiment was chosen for conversion to Infantry and once again became The Cambridgeshire Regiment.

To be continued in the next edition.

The Service of Remembrance

The Annual Service of Remembrance was held at the Cambridge County Court on 11 November 2008 when, as the Service was held on the actual day of Remembrance, all the Court staff including the Judges were present.

The Service was taken by the Regimental Padre, The Revd Alan Jesson TD, who welcomed the congregation. The Lesson was read by Colonel Derek Latchford from Ephesians 6: 10-17.

The Last Post was sounded and the Regimental Standard, carried by Wall Rookes, was lowered.

The Regimental Collect was said:

*O God our rock and fortress
uphold we pray thee, thy servants of our Regiment,
that when we pass through the waters,
thou wilt be with us, who art strong to save,
and wilt set us upon a rock in time of trouble:
for the sake of thine only son, Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Amen

Afterwards the congregation were entertained by the Court to coffee and biscuits.

Regimental Association



Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment Association and The Royal Anglian Regiment Association (Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire)

The Royal Hospital Chelsea

On Sunday 19th October 2008 it was a combined visit by the Association together with the Essex Regiment Association for the Morning Service and Parade. Two coaches were provided for the Association and many were eager to take part, but due to the limited numbers allowed on the parade, they could not all participate. Apart from this it was a very enjoyable occasion.

The Field of Remembrance Westminster

The Association was represented by the Chairman of the Association, Colonel Tony Winton OBE DL, at the Regimental Plot on 8th November 2008.

The Remembrance and Reunion at Kempston

Sunday 16th November was a cold and miserable day for the Reunion with a slight drizzle in the air for the Service and Parade. Association members, wives and friends started to arrive at the TA Centre from 10am onwards and were kindly supplied with tea or coffee by courtesy of 201 Transport Squadron RLC(V). There was also a bar opened for those who felt a stronger drink would fortify them from the cold. The Parade was in the usual form as the previous years. At 1145am the standard bearers and the wreath laying parties marched from The Keep led by the Corps of Drums of the 3rd Battalion The Royal Anglian Regiment (V), assisted by a contingent of the members of the Corps of Drums Society in their ranks. Under the command of the Parade Commander, the Corps of Drums then led detachments out of The Keep to their positions in front of the Memorial. The Chairman's party, including the Deputy Mayors of Bedford and Kempston, joined the Parade and the Service commenced. On completion of the short Service the Chairman's party left to take up position at the rear of The Keep for the march past. The Parade turned left and, with the Corps of Drums and standard bearers leading, the detachments marched off to the rear of The Keep. The salute was taken by the Chairman of

the Association, Colonel Tony Winton OBE DL. The Parade then halted on the car park in a three sided square and was addressed by the Vice-President of the Association, Major Robin Medley MBE Kt St J DL, during which he presented a military figurine and a cheque, from donations made by Association members, to Brigadier Angus Robertson for the many years he has been the Association's Chairman. He also presented Mrs Gillian Robertson with a bouquet of flowers. The standards then marched off and the Parade was dismissed. Members then dispersed either back to the TA Centre for a picnic lunch or to a Buffet Lunch for ticket holders in The Keep, where a section of the Corps of Drums played a selection of music during the meal. They also played in the TA Centre where a raffle took place. At about 4pm members started to say goodbye to their friends and made their way home. Another good day.

Freedom Parades in Luton and Watford

As already reported, the Freedom Parades in Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire were blessed with good weather and were an absolute triumph. Thousands of supporters lined the route as the 2nd Battalion The Royal Anglian Regiment marched through the streets of Luton and Watford on the 10th and 11th March. The Luton march was overshadowed by a small group of protesters, but this did not stem the strong support of the large crowd who were there to cheer the soldiers of the Battalion on their march. The Mayor of Luton inspected the troops in St George's Square where 5 Association Standards paraded along with a total of 34 Royal British Legion and ex-Servicemens' Association Standards. At Watford people took time off work on hearing of the demonstration the previous day, and were among the thousands who again lined the streets to cheer the 2nd Battalion. Here the soldiers were inspected by the Mayor and 4 Association Standards along with a total of 14 RBL Standards were paraded as the Battalion marched past. The Hertford Association Standard and The Hertfordshire Regiment Association Standard attended both towns.



Some of the Association members on parade at the Royal Hospital Chelsea on Sunday 19 October 2008.



**The Royal Tigers' Association and
The Royal Anglian Regiment Association (Leicestershire)**



Capt R Allen, Maj PM Smith, LCpl Ellis, Pte South, Pte Minton, 2Lt Aspinall, Lt Col RW Wooddlisse, WO2 Marshallsay, Pte Steel, Pte Saunders, Pte Boyle, Pte Webster, Pte Else, Pte Burgess, Pte Lungu, Pte Flower.

Poachers Hosted by Leicestershire County Council

Following the Freedom Parade accorded to 2nd Battalion The Royal Anglian Regiment in Stamford on Monday 9 March, the Chairman and members of Leicestershire County Council hosted a Reception for the members of B (Leicestershire) Company who amongst other areas are recruited from Leicestershire and Rutland.

The accompanying photograph shows the 'Leicester Lads' who with their pals, thoroughly enjoyed the generosity of the County Council. The background to the photograph shows the permanent historical display of aspects of the Royal Leicestershire Regiment, installed by the County Council.

Regimental Association



The Essex Regiment Association and The Royal Anglian Regiment Association (Essex)

A significant event in our calendar took place on 4 November 2008 when, at the Salamanca Lunch, Colonel Geoffrey Morgan handed over the Presidency of the Association to Colonel Dick Shervington.

The occasion marked the end of 26 years of devoted service by Colonel Geoffrey and he was honoured by the presence of the Lord Lieutenant of Essex, The Lord Petre, and General The Lord Walker with Lady Walker. Also on the top table was Mrs Hilary Morgan, to whom we owe an enormous debt of gratitude, Colonel Kevin Hodgson, representing The Royal Anglian Regiment, Major Irwin-Parker, OC E (Essex and Hertfordshire) Company the 3rd Battalion The Royal Anglian Regiment, and Captain Olivier, Second in Command C (Essex) Company, 1st Battalion.

Colonel Dick made a number of presentations to Colonel Geoffrey including a carved Eagle and a case of vintage Claret. Both made speeches and it was altogether a memorable occasion which the 120 guests will not easily forget.

Colonel Dick Shervington is, of course, an old serving member of the Essex Regiment family and well known to us all. We look forward to working with Colonel Dick and are confident that The Association will go from strength to strength under his guidance.

Colonel Geoffrey and Mrs Hilary Morgan were also honoured at the annual 2nd Battalion The Essex Regiment, The Pompadours, lunch on 7 November 2008. Major Barrass spoke on behalf of all Pompadours past and present when, amongst other tributes, he mentioned that "Colonel Geoffrey has worked tirelessly for the Association for 26 years".

The lunch also marked the retirement from office of Lt Col Bob



Our new President, Col Dick Shervington, with Mrs Ingrid Shervington



From left: General The Lord Walker, Col Geoffrey Morgan, Mrs Hilary Morgan and Lady Walker

Regimental Association

Payne OBE who for many years has organised the lunch. He handed over the reins to Major Bob Filby MC who presented Lt Col Bob with an engraved glass. Major Bob Filby served with both the 1st and 2nd Battalions of The Essex Regiment from Northern Europe to India.

In February we welcomed to Warley Major Chris Davies who gave a presentation on Kosovo prior to their forthcoming deployment. Although this has now been cancelled it was most interesting to get an insight into the situation there and the duties of the International Force.

We now look forward to the trip to Ypres in May when a plaque will be dedicated to The Essex Regiment, the Normandy visit and our Reunion in June

4th Battalion – The Essex Regiment (TA) Comrades Association Final Activity Report

MG Chapman, Branch Secretary, writes:

As on previous years members have continued to support the Essex Regiment Association's events including the visit to the Royal

Hospital Chelsea, the Service of Remembrance and the Salamanca Lunch at Chelmsford.

The Association's Members' Dinner was held at the Warley TAC on Saturday the 25th of October. As this was to be the last mounted by the Association it was advertised as the "Members Farewell Dinner to celebrate the Centenary of the Association 1908-2008". The event was well attended, with 81 members & guests sitting down to dine; these included WW2 veterans Lieutenant Ken Canler, Captain Maurice Mallet, Tom Stringer, Ken Jay and Malcolm Firman. We were pleased to welcome Major Ian Driver TD, OC 124 Petroleum Squadron RLC, accompanied by his wife Ann; Major Tim Irwin-Parker, OC E (Essex & Herts) Coy 3rd Bn The Royal Anglian Regiment; and Major Tony Jones, The Royal Anglian Regiment Area Secretary at Warley, accompanied by his wife Rhonda.

On this final dinner night it was seen fitting to pay some tributes to those who have served the Association well over many years. Certificates of Appreciation were presented to our two buglers from the Essex Corps of Drums, Geoff Hunwicks and John Savery, who have sounded the dinner calls at all our functions over the years, as well as turning out for members' funerals; Mrs Liz Kinnear, the concierge at the Warley TAC, Romers Caterers, victuallers for our



Buglers receiving their Certificates from Lt Col Brewer, Branch President.



The Final Salute.

Regimental Association



Cassino Veteran Lt Ken Canler.

events over many years and the Clare Quartet from Brentwood Ursuline School who have entertained us. A further special award was made to Captain Desmond Brady in recognition of the tremendous amount of personal time and effort he put in to ensure that the erection and dedication of the Memorial at Cassino to all those of the Regiment who fell in the Italian Campaign (1944) went ahead successfully in 2006.

At the end of the formal part of the evening the buglers from The Essex Corps of Drums sounded the Last Post and the Association Standard was dipped in a final salute to all Comrades lost in two World Wars and those since who were called to a higher duty. All then repaired to the bar to pass a convivial evening reminiscing over times past and speculating on the future.

Over the last few years it became increasingly difficult to mount reunion events as time took its inevitable toll. To maintain the Association viable as an independent organisation and within the rules of its charity status became increasingly difficult and it was concluded that continuation would be prohibitive. Therefore at the July 2008 General Meeting of the Committee, a resolution was passed requiring dissolution of the Association under its title and as a registered charity, effective at the end the term, which was duly ratified by unanimous vote at the Association's AGM held at RHQ Warley on the 15th December 2008. The Association ceased to operate from that point in time, with its Committee dissolved and its affairs placed into the hands of its Trustees.

Formation of a new Branch of the Essex Regiment Association, titled 4/5th Essex (TA) Branch, in October 2008, will enable a continued representation for those who wish to continue. Recruiting is going well and membership is already approaching 70, which should enable the new Branch to help maintain the Royal Anglian footprint within the County.

Thurrock Branch

Ken Hay MBE JP writes:

The second half of our year opened in its usual pleasant fashion, as is our custom, by dispensing with our monthly meeting in favour of our annual branch luncheon, which, although not a grand affair, is nevertheless a most enjoyable function in its intimacy and good company, underpinned with quality food.

This we sadly bade farewell to Colonel Geoffrey and Hilary, both of whom have served us well at the helm of the Association and at our branch level, but we were able to say hello to the new girl in the Warley office, Sue Wells, as well as showing our continuing



Back from left: Brian Morgan, Standard Bearer; Jean Godlonton, Treasurer; Nick Godlonton, Asst Treasurer and Chapel Committee. Front: Ron Crisp, Chairman; Gordon Wren, Branch President; Ken Hay, Secretary.

appreciation to Rosayne for her never-failing help and kindness.

The Mayor and Mayoress of Thurrock graced us with their presence, thus maintaining the close ties we have with the council. As an ex-councillor of Hornchurch, ex-Alderman of Havering and ex-soldier, I have never quite understood the bond that exists between local authorities and the military, but it undoubtedly does and thank God for it, it is the duty of all of us to foster this whenever we can. We were proud to find that our Standard had been carried on 10 occasions in 2008 and, while some of these were farewells to deceased members, or at memorial parades, others were the more joyous occasions such as welcoming the Vikings on their visits to our area. Although our Standard Bearer, Brian Morgan, is paid a small fee for his services, he promptly gives it back to branch funds or, as in this case, to the Chelsea Hospital towards their new building fund. Mention of Chelsea reminds me that we paid out annual visit in October. I think that the governor spoke to every one of us on

Regimental Association



Ron Crisp about to enjoy a 90th birthday drink.

parade before the usual delightful chapel service, not forgetting the substantial 'eats' that follow.

Shortly before Christmas we attended, by invitation, the Ford Carol Service in our Chapel - always an uplifting experience and serving

God and Mammon, the mulled wine and mince pies that followed were as welcome as *Adeste Fideles* and the other favourites that had gone before.

A year ago we were mourning the death of Peter Giggins, who we still miss, but at the February chapel service we rejoiced in the Christening of his great-grandson, Louie, and it was pleasing to discover that one of our lady members, Maureen Main, was herself Christened in the chapel pre-war (*I hadn't the nerve to ask her which war!*)

Our year closed with our Chairman, Ron Crisp, an Eagle & Gun, and Polar Bear Div, man celebrating his 90th birthday. *Ad multos annus*, Ron.

As Association membership has declined due to deaths and disability, so branches have dwindled so that eventually Thurrock Branch was the sole surviving branch. However, our colleagues in the 4/5th Association decided to wind up in that form and re-emerge as the 4/5th Branch. In losing our 'claim to fame', however, we bid welcome to the new branch at its April inauguration and wish it prosperity. Looking back, it hasn't been a particularly notable year but our attendance is up slightly, others have promised to come along and we have the satisfaction of knowing that we have upheld the Essex Regiment traditions wherever and whenever we have been able.



The Royal Anglian Regiment Association (Northamptonshire) and The Northamptonshire Regiment Association

Northampton Branch

A decision was made in December 2008 to change the venue of the meetings to the Ex-Servicemen's Club, Sheep Street, Northampton as of January 2009. This has resulted in some new members for the Branch.

The Branch held a Ten Pin Bowling evening at Sixfields, Northampton, at the beginning of January and invited regular Royal Anglians home on leave to join them. A raffle was held to raise

funds for the Branch and an enjoyable time was had by all those who attended.

The second Annual Dinner was held at the end of March at the hotel which is run by the Branch Chairman. Although numbers were down on last year it was a successful evening.

In May members are visiting Bletchley Park, the site of the Enigma decoding machine from the Second World War, and are hoping to arrange further social events later in the year.



Phil Tilley and Bob Pochin acquaint themselves with the more technical aspects of bowling.

Regimental Association



Nigel Metcalfe, Michael Seymour, Andy Harper, Sean Morrow and Mark Wright.

Finedon Branch

The Branch has had another full programme since the last report, attending events at local and Regimental level. The Remembrance Sunday parade was a big success and concluded with the customary Ladies Lunch at the Comfort Hotel, Kettering.

This was followed at the end of November with the Annual Christmas Dinner which was once again an evening full of fun and laughter. It was noted that this was the last Christmas where the Branch would be part of The Northamptonshire Regiment Association.

The Branch is now concentrating on our farewell to The Northamptonshire Regiment with a Beating Retreat at the Finedon Cricket Ground on 14 June 2009. The Corps of Drums of 3 Royal Anglian will perform at this ceremony in the presence of the Lord Lieutenant of Northamptonshire, Lady Juliet Townsend. This is going to be a free event for the people of Finedon and our local area to thank them for the support they have given since the formation of the Branch. Local TA and cadet units have also been invited to take part.



Porky Hale and friends enjoy the Christmas Dinner.

Regimental Association



Peterborough Branch

Mr Terry Edge and Ex-Sergeant Wright attended the Festival of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall last November and the Branch paraded on Remembrance Sunday in Peterborough.

The Branch held a well attended AGM at the beginning of February and then took part in the Help for Heroes Lunch at the East of England Showground on 22 February. 1,402 people sat down to a roast beef and apple pie lunch and a new Guinness Book of Records was set for the most people to sit down and be served within one hour. The guest of honour was Falklands' veteran Simon Weston and entertainment was provided by the RAF Staff Band. Over £4,000 was raised from the raffle and a donation from the sales of Simon's books.

Noel Muncey attended the Freedom Parade at Stamford on 9 March taking photographs for posterity; the Branch Standard was on parade on 25 April for the Anzac Day gathering which was organised by the local branch of the RBL.

It has been decided to have a speaker for about 45 minutes after Branch meetings to encourage members to stay on and socialise. The Branch will have its usual pig roast with the Cambridgeshire Regiment Association in the summer and members will be attending two forties weekends in August and September. The Annual Dinner is to be held on 17 October at the RBL Club, Yaxley.



Regimental Association

Regimental Association Branches

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 Thorpe St Andrew,
 Norwich NR7 0TX

King's Lynns Branch
 Mr H Futter,
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Suffolk

HQ The Suffolk Regiment Old Comrades Association and The Royal Anglian Regiment Association (Suffolk and Cambridgeshire Branch)
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 Mr C Smith,
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 Suffolk IP29 4TE

Ipswich Branch
 Mr D Gillingham,
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 Mr AJ Watson,
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Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire

HQ The Royal Anglian Regiment Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Association
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Lincoln Branch

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President: Col P Worthy
Chairman: Maj T Dormer TD

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Peterborough Branch

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Northampton Branch

Mr Colin Burrige (Chairman),
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LE4 6BY
Tel: (0116) 2622749

President: Maj Gen AJG Pollard CB CBE DL

Affiliated ACF, CCF and UOTC

Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire ACF

Lt Col Chris Sharwood-Smith writes:

Tuesday 10th November saw Hertfordshire's High Sheriff, Mr Paul Cherry, visiting the Headquarters at Hertford to present awards to the top achievers in Beds & Herts ACF; these presentation evenings were instigated by the Commandant to recognise the County's top achievers. The recipients are encouraged to invite their families and friends to attend. Awards included City & Guilds and BTEC certificates, Cadet Forces' Medals, Master Cadet and Four Star completion certificates; and there were staff and cadets from all five companies to receive them. The evening started with a reception in the Mess after which proceedings moved to the Conference Room where, following an introduction from the Commandant, Colonel Ian Macleod, the awards were presented by the High Sheriff. Staff, cadets and their guests were then treated to a buffet and the High Sheriff circulated and chatted with everybody.

January saw the Beds & Herts ACF Corps of Drums attend their first Music Camp along with adults who were interested in teaching or learning the drums, flutes (fifes), bugles and Bell Lyres. The newly appointed Bandmaster, SI Marshallsay, carried out the various aspects of the training and explained what was expected currently for the Corps of Drums. Cadets and adults alike enjoyed the weekend and everyone was positive about moving the Corps forward. Although practice outside was at times difficult due to the freezing winds that blew across the airfield, the Buglers kept their mouthpieces in their pockets until the last minute to prevent freezing and lack of sound. There are also two National Band Camps each year. So it is hoped that Beds & Herts cadets will be able to attend in order to give them the experience of playing with a large band and the enhanced music instruction available at a National level.

In the Autumn, Beds & Herts Training Sergeant Major, Richard Breese, was at Frimley Park, the National Cadet Training Centre, to witness the visit of the ACF's Colonel-in-Chief, HRH The Duke of



SMI Smith receiving his Cadet Forces Medal from the High Sheriff of Hertfordshire.

Edinburgh, to celebrate fifty years of cadet training at the site. Richard is also a Corporal with 3 RANGLIAN who has completed two tours in Iraq & Afghanistan. The big day arrived and went without a hitch. The Duke inspected the Course and took the salute; he seemed to enjoy himself, always smiling and asking questions. Richard was subsequently personally introduced to the Colonel-in-Chief.

Royal Anglian cadets from Hertford Detachment served tea for



The Corps of Drums practice at Bassingbourn.

Affiliated ACF, CCF and UOTC

SMI Richard Breese chatting with HRH The Duke of Edinburgh.

400 Land Army girls and their guests over two days in February. The tea was to celebrate recognition of their hard work during the last World War and was hosted by the Chairman of Hertfordshire County Council and the Lord Lieutenant, the Countess Veralum. The cadets were outstanding and worked very hard serving the guests tea, soft drinks, sandwiches & cakes, from 1500 till 1800 hrs on both nights.

Cambridgeshire ACF

Cadets Truly Stretched!

Two teams of six Cambridgeshire army cadets pitted their talents against three teams of eight cadets from the Combined Cadet Force in a gruelling test of skills organised by the Cambridge University

Officer Training Corps over the weekend of 14/15th March.

The thirty six young people aged between 14 and 18 from around the Anglia region competed to win the top team position in the annual exercise 'Cadet Stretch'. In excellent summer-like weather they were put through their paces on the army training areas at Waterbeach and the Territorial Army Centre in Coldhams Lane, Cambridge.

The Combined Cadet Force teams from independent schools at Culford, Woodbridge and Kimbolton took on the Cambridgeshire cadets at individual and team tasks designed to test leadership, physical fitness and military skills. The activities included foot and sword drill, military knowledge tests, assault courses, initiative tasks and a night navigation exercise.



The Cambridgeshire ACF team.

Affiliated ACF, CCF and UOTC



The going gets tough...

Once all results were in Woodbridge School were declared the winners with Cambridgeshire ACF second team captained by Cadet CSM Jack Maliszewski (18) as joint runner up with Kimbolton School CCF.

At the final parade CUOTC Commanding Officer Lt Col Simon Grey MBE presented each member of the winning team with a superb etched glass trophy bearing the unit crest.

Speaking after the event CUOTC Regimental Sergeant Major Lee Jay said, "High standards were set by the cadets at this year's competition and that is the benchmark for the future. Next year we hope to invite a wider range of teams from other counties in the Eastern Region and provide an even greater challenge to the young people taking part"

Army Cadet accepts Canadian Challenge

A young army cadet from Cambridgeshire will have her fitness and personal skills stretched to the limit on an all action training course in the wide open spaces of Canada this summer.

Selected from hundreds of young hopefuls from around the UK, LCpl Catherine McKeever (16), from Cambourne, is one of just 14 cadets who will train and live with Canadian cadets on a course which will test self reliance and personal qualities to the full.

The 'Connaught' Cadet Leadership Instructor Marksman Course being held at a specially equipped training centre near Ottawa between 13th July and 21st August, will provide Catherine with high level instruction to develop skills in leadership, shooting and coaching fellow cadets. At the conclusion of her training in Canada she will take part with Canadian, French and German cadets in the Canadian National Shooting Competition.

"When I was in the scouts I was looking for something different so I joined the army cadets. I never believed that one day I would be chosen for a course like this", said Catherine. "I am very proud of my shooting and have become a member of both the PYE small



Top Shot Catherine McKeever with the Kevin Pilcher Shield.

bore shooting club in Cambridge and the Bunhill full bore shooting club at Bisley in Surrey. I am determined to prove I am up to the challenge and to enjoy this opportunity to the full"

During her three years of cadet service, Catherine has served with Comberton, St. Neots and Cherry Hinton detachments and already holds a Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award. As a keen target shooter she has earned County Shooting Colours and been awarded the County's Kevin Pilcher Shield for excellence in marksmanship two years running. At the world famous Bisley range in 2008 she won the coveted National Rifle Shooting Association marksman badge and success in Canada will mean further advancement to Cadet Leader Instructor which carries entitlement to wear the special qualification badge reserved for top level cadet shots.

Catherine is currently studying sciences, history, philosophy and ethics at Comberton Village College near Cambridge and is hoping to secure a place at Hills Road Sixth Form College in Cambridge as the next step towards achieving her ambition of a career in medicine.

Local Cadets Cash In!

Army Cadets from Cambridge and Ely took central stage with at a prestigious annual awards event held at St Ivo School, St Ives near Cambridge on Thursday 12th March 2009.

Hosted and managed by the Cambridgeshire Community Foundation, this year's High Sheriff's Award Scheme event took place before many distinguished guests and local dignitaries and saw twenty youth groups, including the cadet teams, receive generous monetary donations rewarding their commitment to community activities and youth development.

Following an exciting drama performance by the St Ives Youth Theatre, the High Sheriff of Cambridgeshire, Mrs Judy Pearson, personally presented cheques to each group, starting with members of Cambridgeshire Army Cadet Force Corps of Drums led by Captain Lynn Herriot, County Director of Music John Shaw and Sergeant Instructor Tim Clarke. Looking resplendent in their scarlet uniforms Cadet Cpl Duncan Elliott, (16) from Chesterton and Cadet LCpl Jamie Martin (16) from Cambridge, received certificates and a cheque for £500 which will be used towards the provision and restoration of musical instruments so their 50 strong band can continue to play at

Affiliated ACF, CCF and UOTC



Ely Cadets (L/R) Sgt Maj Jeremy Latham, Cpl Jodi Page, LCpl Pawl Kolasa & SSI Kay Storey.



Corps of Drums (L/R) CI John Shaw, Cpl Duncan Elliott, Sgt Tim Clarke, LCpl Jamie Martin & Capt Lynn Herriot.

public events throughout the county. "This money will make a huge difference to us", said Captain Herriot. "It means we can repair and update equipment so the Corps remains one of the best cadet musical formations in the country".

Maintaining the momentum, army cadets from Ely were also on parade led by Staff Sergeant Instructor Kay Storey. Receiving certificates and their award of £200 towards the provision of camping and outdoor pursuits equipment, Cadet Sergeant Major Jeremy Latham (18), Cadet Cpl Jodi Page (16) and Cadet LCpl Pawl Kolasa (15), proudly marched on to loud applause. "We are always involved in adventure training of all descriptions", said SSI Storey; "The generosity of the High Sheriff will be put to good in use, particularly in preparing for our annual camp this July"

Visit by GOC 5 Div

Major General Martin Rutledge OBE, newly appointed GOC 5 Division, took time to visit Cambridgeshire Army Cadet Force on Saturday 21st February at their County Headquarters at Waterbeach near Cambridge.



Maj Gen Rutledge watches the training with (Left) OC Major Steve Martin and (Right) Captain Jay Annis.



Maj General Rutledge meets the cadets.

General Rutledge, who took up his appointment in January, was on a helicopter tour of local army units when he called in to see 55 young cadets aged 13 to 18 from the Cambridge and Huntingdonshire areas who were training to achieve passes in the Army Proficiency Certificate syllabus.

After first meeting personnel from East Anglia Reserve Forces and Cadets Association and the Commandant of Cambridgeshire ACF, Colonel Roger Herriot, he talked with adult instructors and senior cadets over a buffet lunch before visiting Waterbeach army training area to see other cadets mastering basic military skills including field craft and the use of map and compass.

On a newly constructed temporary range, the General was shown new CZ 200 .177 air rifles which have been acquired with funding provided by East Anglia RFCA to enable young cadets to master the skills of target shooting. The privilege of taking the first shots went to Regimental Sergeant Major Instructor Peter Lydiatt. "This new rifle is ideal for teaching marksmanship principals" he said. "Cadets using it will find it light and easy to use, greatly increasing their shooting confidence."

Afterwards the General went on to see cadets undergoing field training under the watchful eye of Regular Army Sergeant Steve Armon from 1st Battalion The Royal Anglian Regiment. Steve was a local army cadet himself ten years earlier who has subsequently seen active service in Afghanistan.

At the end of his visit Major General Rutledge said, "I am a great fan of the cadet movement and I wish the county every success for the future"

Cadets Experience Historic Event

Twenty eight Cambridgeshire army cadets experienced a very rare experience on Remembrance Sunday this year – not only did they take



The Freedom Certificate with (L-R) Councillor John Davies, Col Roger Herriot, CSgt Chris Dodson and Mayor of St Ives, Councillor Ian Dobson.

Affiliated ACF, CCF and UOTC



The cadets march past with pride.

part in the annual St Ives Commemoration Parade but afterwards were privileged to have their right to the Freedom of the town renewed.

On 29th November 1998, the then Mayor, Councillor John Davies, conferred the high honour on the cadets in recognition of their close connections with St Ives and the local community - and this year, exactly ten years after the honour was originally granted, over 50 friends, families and supporters of the cadets, met at the cadet building next to St Ives leisure centre to relive the occasion.

With standards flying, heads held high and marching keenly in step, the proud youngsters clearly demonstrated their worthiness to retain the award. They stood rigidly to attention whilst they were inspected by the present Mayor, Councillor Ian Dobson, in the presence of proud parents and senior cadet officers including County Commandant, Colonel Roger Herriot.

On renewing the award Mayor Dobson said, "It is a pleasure to confirm the award of the town Freedom to the cadets. The Army Cadet Force plays a key part in community life and it is a connection that the town council wishes to encourage and support for many years to come"; and as a special bonus Councillor John Davies, who is

now Chairman of Huntingdonshire District Council, was also there to witness the event.

After the ceremony no fewer than 28 awards and trophies won by the cadets for activities including excellence in shooting, swimming and personal achievement, were presented by the Mayor. Surprise of the day went to Cadet Michael Moriarty (15) when he was personally selected as the best turned out cadet on parade - no mean feat for a young man who only started his training in September this year.

City of London and North East Sector ACF

It has been a busy year for Royal Anglian army cadets from the City of London & North East Sector ACF, which includes Royal Anglian detachments in Newbury Park, Woodford Green and Hornchurch.

Since the beginning of the cadet year on Annual camp in July/August 2008, they have found themselves taking part in a range of military, adventurous training and ceremonial activities.



At the annual Epping Forest Festival in North East London.

Affiliated ACF, CCF and UOTC



Royal Anglian cadets from the City of London & North East Sector ACF enjoy coasteering off the North Cornish coast.

Colonel Commandant, Colonel Mark Bryant said: "You cannot overestimate what these kids get out of the ACF and how it changes some of their lives. In all this, the support we get from the regiments

to which we're badged is invaluable. As well as practical support, they provide inspiration and a link to proud traditions. Cadets and instructors alike are honoured to be part of it all."



Royal Anglian cadets give their all in the Sector's annual tug-of-war competition.



Cadet RSM Mark Walsh receives his BTEC Certificate in Public Service from the Deputy Lieutenant of Redbridge, Col Alan Hall TD DL.

Lincolnshire ACF

Cross Country

On a cold and blustery winter's day on 1st February 2009, the County held their annual Cross Country Championships at Prince William of Gloucester Barracks, Grantham. The weather forecast for the day was rather cool, with the chance of snow showers in the afternoon, but somebody miscalculated, as we were to be honoured with an earlier fall as the runners were getting into their stride.

Competitors competed in six different classes arriving at the start point by 10.30am where they were briefed on the course and selected to compete in their age group. There were separate classes for junior girls and junior boys of 2000 metres and between the ages of 12 and 13 years; for the intermediate girls and boys the distance was 2500 metres for the age group of 13 to 15 years; and for the senior girls and boys a run of 3500 metres in the age group 15 to 18 years. In the team event the first four runners in each class counted towards the trophy score and there were individual winners.



Junior boys receive their awards.

Affiliated ACF, CCF and UOTC



Intermediate boys.



Senior boys.



Senior girls.

Colonel Trevor Richmond, the County Cadet Commandant, made the presentations to teams and individuals at 1200 hrs. Individual winners were: Junior Boys, Stuart Brammer of Cherry Willingham; Junior Girls, Annie Thomas of Grantham; Intermediate Boys, Richard Nauyokas of Billingborough; Intermediate Girls, Lauren Wray of Bourne; Senior Boys, Reuben Wolfe of Grantham; and Senior Girls, Andrea Jackson of Boston.

Team placings were: 1st: 2 Sqn; equal 2nd: 1 Coy and 4 Coy; and 3rd: 3 Coy.

The cadets were out to make a good impression because this event was a warm up for the selection of runners who would represent Lincolnshire Army Cadet Force in the Eastern Region Championships to be held at Waterbeach, Cambridge, on 8th March 2009. For this event, competition was keen from all counties in the region but it was Lincolnshire who were to be declared the winners and the new Champions Shield was brought back to the County for the first time. The Intermediate Girls won their race, with Cdt L Wray of 2 Sqn being the individual winner. In the Senior Girls event, SSgt A Jackson finished a creditable 4th and Sgt R Wolfe was 5th in the Senior Boys event.

Exercise Viking Warrior

Cadets of 4 Company put their skills to the test on a training weekend held at the Regimental Flight RAF Coningsby over the weekend Friday 27th February to Sunday 1st March. Part of the aim of the weekend was to teach the cadets the responsibilities and duties of being a Junior Non Commissioned Officer, plus command and leadership skills. The course had two main objectives: firstly, to train the cadets in the technique of instruction; secondly, to assess their ability as a potential instructor. They were also taught Marksmanship Principles, Skill at Arms Coaching and a practice on the 30m gallery range and Dismounted Close Combat Training range.



Viking Warrior classwork.

First Aid Competition

A County First Aid competition was held at the Cadet Centre, Main Ridge, Boston on Sunday 21st March 2009. Two teams from each company and the Squadron entered the competition, with each team comprised of 4 cadets - a team of 3 and a reserve.

Team winners were Cpl M Teubes, LCpl A Cushen, LCpl J Smith, LCpl J Ward and Cdt E Stanbury (reserve) of Holbeach. Runners up were CCSM Ward of Sobraon, Cpl M Harris, LCpl G Cameron of Newport and Cdt Z Hindley (reserve) of Priory City of Lincoln Academy.

The winning and second placed teams will represent the County in



Holbeach Detachment, winners, with Col Richmond.

Affiliated ACF, CCF and UOTC



The 1 Company team.

the Regional First Aid Competition to be held at Chetwynd Barracks, Chilwell, on Sunday 7th June. Before this the teams will undergo further revision on Saturday 6th June at Beckingham Camp to better their skills and become more proficient.

This is not an easy competition and competitors need to be up to a high standard in both their bandaging skills and First Aid knowledge

Regimental Band

In preparation for the annual Cadet Band Concentration at Altcar Camp, near Formby, from 4th to 11th April, the County Band joined the band from Nottinghamshire for a weekend of practice at Beckingham from 27th to 29th March. There were periods over

the weekend when they practised in small groups depending on their instrument and the programme of music. In the evening other personnel who were in camp were entertained to a musical interlude in their training by a concert from the combined bands.

Lincoln Sawtooth Recruiting

1 Company were granted the pleasure of the use of the Waterside Centre in Lincoln for their display for the recruiting event on Saturday 28th March; this was very handy (and warm and dry) with the café and usual offices upstairs. This was an ideal spot as it is the major shopping mall in the City and is visited by many during the day, attracting much interest both by potential instructors and cadets. It was a bright and sunny day and the sun beaming through the windows, enhanced the display. Manning the stand were OC Major D Spraggins, 2Lt M Ginty, SI M Hellicar, Sgt J Letts, LCpl G Cameron, Cpl M Paylor and Cpl D Hayward of Newport Detachment.



Sawtooth recruiting day.



Band practice.

Affiliated ACF, CCF and UOTC

Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland ACF



First Aiders Samantha Hanna (L) and Cpl Lucy Graham.

On Friday the 30th of January at approximately 3:40pm a boy, who is a fellow pupil at Northampton Academy, was hit by a car whilst crossing the road near road works on Wellingborough Road, near Blackthorn, Northampton. Cpl Lucy Graham, and Sgt Samantha Hanna, two Cadets from Anzio Detachment, LNR ACF, witnessed and assisted at the scene.

Their account of the event, written by Cdt Cpl Lucy Graham, is as follows:

We were walking home from school at Northampton Academy. We reached the turning that leads to Blackthorn when we heard from behind us, on the opposite side of the road, a loud bang and screeching of brakes. We turned around and we saw a boy aged around 15 lying in the road. We quickly made our way back and assessed what had happened. We then saw 2 of the casualty's friends carrying him out of the road.

We assertively announced that we were First Aiders and were there to help. We made the boys place the casualty on the path; it was too late to keep him still, because they had already removed him from the incident. From there we assessed the casualty, he was conscious so we were able to see that he was alert. I (Lucy) shouted to the driver to see if he was calling an ambulance and he replied, saying he had done so. We asked Sam (the casualty) to apply pressure to an obvious large laceration to his head. He was clearly in shock, repeating over and over that he did not want to touch it, could we help. We both knew that we were unable to touch his wound bare handed, as no gloves were available. The only thing we had available to stem the bleeding was my school blazer; so we placed this on to the wound to apply pressure to stop the flow of blood coming out of his head. A woman rushed over, also announcing first aid qualifications and she used a scarf to support my blazer, stopping the blood. We spoke to the women saying that we knew where the boy lived, which was only close by, and would run and inform his parents. We ran to inform Sam's mum and then ran back to tell the Ambulance Paramedics on scene that she was coming but was unable to run. We then explained what we had already done to assist.

SSI Simon Crossley, their Detachment Commander, said "I am extremely proud of Cpl Graham and Sgt Hanna. Both of them represented the Company, County and the Eastern Region in the 2008 National First Aid Competition held at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. Their swift actions and clear thinking in a real life situation prove that First Aid Training within the ACF works through delivering simple skills that really do save lives."

Norfolk ACF

Former Army Cadet Remembered

It was with a mixture of both sadness and pride that on Easter Sunday Norfolk Army Cadet Force added the name of another former cadet to the Memorial Garden at the joint Norfolk and Suffolk Weekend Training Centre at Thetford.

Lance Corporal Ben Whately of 42 Commando Royal Marines was killed on Christmas Eve whilst taking part in a fierce engagement with Taliban fighters in Helmand Province, Afghanistan. He joins Alex Hawkins, Norfolk ACF and Aaron McClure, Suffolk ACF, both from 1st Battalion The Royal Anglian Regiment, who died in Afghanistan in 2007 and in whose memory the garden was dedicated in November last year.

Norfolk ACF Padre, Rev Mills, led a short service as Ben's name was added to the memorial benches and a commemorative wreath was laid by his parents. A tribute and poem were read by the Cadet Commandant, Colonel David Hedges and Cadet Sergeant Major Russell Bradenham presented Mr and Mrs Whately with a framed photograph of Ben, taken in 2004, during his cadet service. Also present at the ceremony were former Deputy Commandant, Lt Col Miles Green, Captain Jan Hawkins, Major Paul Lincoln and around 60 adults and cadets from Britannia Company.

Ben was a cadet with Fakenham Detachment, Britannia Company, from 2001 to 2005. He was awarded County Colours for swimming and was a member of the 2004 Norfolk ACF Cadet Team that took part in the Combat Cadet Military Skills Competition run annually by 49 (East) Brigade. He attended Litcham High School and the College of West Anglia before leaving to join the Royal Marines, something he had always wanted to do.

Ben will be remembered as a big personality and not just because of his six feet plus frame; he had a happy go lucky outlook but knew exactly what he wanted to do with the rest of his life. His Commander and comrades described him as a "tough, uncompromising Commando with a booming voice and an abundance of that magic ingredient 'presence'."



Colonel Hedges reads the tribute..



Ben's parents lay the wreath.

Affiliated ACF, CCF and UOTC

Success at a Family Level

On Easter Sunday, whilst attending a cadet training weekend at the joint Norfolk and Suffolk ACF Training Centre at Thetford, ex Cadet Sergeant Major and now Potential Instructor Samantha Hamilton, was presented with a certificate to mark her Distinction Star grading in the Level Two BTEC First Diploma in Public Service. Her success at this award is outstanding at a National Level and helped to gain Sam a place at Bangor University, where she is studying Oceanography and Marine Sciences.

There to help her celebrate were the rest of the family, who are all heavily involved in Norfolk Army Cadet Force's Britannia Company. Dad Mark, an ex Hussar, married the Garrison RSM's daughter (brave man) and has been involved with the cadets since 1995, transferring to Norfolk after a short spell with Suffolk ACF. He has progressed through the organisation and is now the Company Permanent Staff CAA and County RSM.

Mum Nicola joined the ACF in 1999 and has served as both Instructor and Detachment Commander at the Swaffham Platoon. A bit of her involvement is inherited, not just from husband Mark, but also from her father who was RSM of the Cadet Training Team and, on retiring from the Army, became CAA of Britannia Company and finally Norfolk County Quartermaster.

Sister Kimberley was a cadet for six years ending up as Cadet RSM and is now a Sergeant Instructor Platoon Commander, at Swaffham. During her cadet service she had the honour to carry the ACF National Standard at the Remembrance Day Service at the Royal Albert Hall.

Second Sister Danielle joined in 2005 and is currently a Cadet Corporal in Britannia Company. She is off to the Army Foundation College Harrogate in September this year and has been offered a place in the King's Troop, Royal Horse Artillery.

Altogether over forty years of service with the Army Cadet Force - quite a record.

Suffolk Army Cadet Force

Maj John L. Raybould TD

writes (for the last time):

Suffolk ACF continues to thrive. In Oct 2008, Exercise Steelback Cadet was held at West Tofts Camp and on STANTA Battle Area in Norfolk. Hosted by 3 R Anglian, open to cadets aged 16 years or over, the weekend programme consisted of 3 R Anglian introducing the cadets to frontline infantry tactics and weapons systems. The aim of the Exercise was to bring together the affiliated ACF/CCF detachments of The Regiment in order to continue the nurturing by demonstrating the importance of the Regimental Family Ethos. Around 200 Cadets mustered at West Tofts before the ex commenced on Sat morning. Ahead of them were a series of stands and events run by 3 R Anglian staff and the R Anglian ART (Army Recruiting Team). The stands included a introductory shoot on the GPMG and LSW, BOWMAN Trg, Javelin indoor trainer, Assault Pnr skills, 81mm Mortar and a presentation on the Vikings OP HERRICK tour followed by the ARTs Laser Quest stand run by the RSM. During the Night Patrols Exercise each section encountered a series of incidents including casualty evacuation, an observation stand and anti-ambush drills. Sunday concluded with a Section Attack exercise circuit. The 9 Suffolk ACF Cadets had a wonderful fun weekend full of fieldcraft, pyrotechnics, ammunition and hands-on learning.



LCpl Jamie Spall 11 Nov with RBL Standard.

All companies participated in the Remembrance Day services. Particular mention should be made of LCpl Jamie Spall, the first Cadet to carry the RBL Standard in Bury St Edmunds. Many ex-servicemen and women thanked him for his professional display and bearing, almost bringing some to tears with thoughts of comrades lost at about his age. Later, he won the Suffolk RBL Standard Bearers' Competition.

In Nov 2008, at RAF Honington, Suffolk ACF Girls won the Eastern Region Girls Multisports Netball and came 4th overall.

Beccles PI had a strong presence at the Nov 2008 'Beccles Late Night Shopping' event, running a raffle for SSAFA. Other detachments have raised money for ABF, 'Help for Heroes', Marie Curie, SSAFA and RBL.

We congratulate former SACF Cadet Luke Timms who was awarded a St John Ambulance (Australia) Silver Lifesaving Medal in Dec 2008. While Luke and his sister Jasmine were in the sea at Madora Bay Beach, Western Australia, Jasmine was caught by a large wave and swept out to sea as a rip tide arrived. Luke's mother Jane went to rescue her daughter but she also got into difficulty. Despite knowing that the conditions were extremely dangerous and that he was placing himself at great risk, Luke rescued his sister Jasmine, then rescued his drowning mum who at that stage was drifting unconscious in the water. Luke gained a Young Lifesaver Plus award as part of his ACF 2 Star.

March 2009 was a busy month. At the Thetford Joint Norfolk / Suffolk ACF Weekend Training Centre, our Senior Padre, The Revd Canon Michael Woods MA BD AKC TD was 'Dined Out' and presented with an Ipod and a military picture at the Officers' Mess Dinner. He has served with the TA and Suffolk ACF for many years, being awarded both the Territorial Decoration, awarded for 12 years of Commissioned TA service, and the Cadet Medal, also for 12 years of ACF service. In 2009 he removes to his retirement home in Sumatra where he served in the 1960s with VSO (Voluntary Service Overseas) and, as a Priest, in Malaysia 70-74.

The Right Honourable Lord Tollemache KStJ JP, HM Lord Lieutenant for Suffolk, presented awards to members of Suffolk Reserve Forces and Cadets at the Yarmouth Road TA Centre in Ipswich. He presented Lt Rob Simpkin, Mildenhall Detachment, A Coy and Sgt Maj Instructor John Graham, County HQ, with Certificates for Meritorious Service. Cadets, selected from the Army Cadets, Combined Cadet Force and the Air Training Corps, who have achieved exceptional results in training proficiency, bearing and turnout, were appointed as Lord Lieutenant's Cadets for 2009 and received badges, which they will proudly wear on their uniform, and certificates. Cadet Coy Sgt Major Luke Derrett, C Coy, was selected to represent Suffolk ACF. Luke's first duty was to act as part of the guard for HM The Queen and open her car door as she left St Edmundsbury Cathedral following the Maundy Money Service.

Following the Inter-Coy Cross Country meeting in Southwold, won by A Coy, 6 cadets represented Suffolk ACF at the E Region Cross Country in Waterbeach: Curtis Cronin (Intermediate Silver Medal), Libby Kelly and Katie Simpkin, A Coy; Shannon Moran (Intermediate Gold Medal) and Daniel White, B Coy; Ru Sajadi, C Coy. The Intermediate Boys were team champions, the Intermediate Girls were team runners-up and Suffolk were 3rd overall. At the subsequent National Cross Country in Warcop, the same 6 cadets represented E Region, who again won the overall championships.

The Eastern Region Rugby 7s competition at Hinckley, Leicester, was a great success. The junior team came 2nd and the senior team 3rd. Cdt C Brown and LCpl Jamie Spall were selected for the Intermediate Squad to represent E Region at the ACF National Rugby 7s Championships in Brecon.

Suffolk ACF Cadets from B Coy made a valiant effort in the April 2009 Combat Cadet Competition on STANTA. It involved a weekend of stands, a Night Navigation exercise and a March and Shoot.

With over 25 years of service with Suffolk ACF, Sgt Maj Mark Galley was promoted to RSM, taking over from Sgt Maj John Graham, who had 15 years with Essex ACF 1985 - 2000, then 9 years with Suffolk.

SSI Ian Partridge, Detachment Commander in Ipswich, at the conclusion of a week-long First Aid Trainers course at the Cadet

Affiliated ACF, CCF and UOTC



Lord Tollemache and Lt Rob Simpkin.



Lord Tollemache and SMI John Graham.



Lord Tollemache and Lord Lieutenant's Cadet, Coy Sgt Major Luke Derrett.

Training Centre, Frimley, was awarded a Level 3 NVQ in training, an A2 Assessors award and the St John's First Aid at Work Trainers Certificate. SMI (Retired) Becky Baldwin, former CSM A Coy, was

awarded a Licentiate in Youth Leadership by the prestigious City and Guilds Institute.

18 cadets and adult volunteers from Suffolk ACF travelled to Arromanches to take part in the 65th Anniversary of the D-Day landings in Normandy on 6th June 1944. They joined 500 cadets and 100 adult volunteers from all UK cadet forces (Air, Army and Sea). At the invitation of the Normandy Veterans' Association they accompanied 500 veterans for this final national commemoration. It was the first time cadets had

been invited to participate. During the final ceremony veterans charged the cadets with taking on the remembrance baton. A representative veteran addressed the cadets: 'You have heard of and seen the sites of June 1944 and of the bravery and sacrifice of so many of my friends. These events made the future and life which you have enjoyed. Please always remember these things and tell the story as often as you can.' A representative from each cadet force responded: 'I appreciate what you and your friends did for me and I promise never to forget your bravery and sacrifice.'

On a sunny May day in Colchester the Inter-Company County Sports Competition was again won by A Coy. 26 Cadets represented Suffolk at the May Regional Sports in Boston, winning 4 Gold and 5 Silver medals. The Gold medallists will represent Eastern Region at the National Championships.

C Coy again performed with mastery at the Suffolk Show.

In July 2009 it is the turn of C Coy to host an evening Reception at Ipswich TA Centre, where stands and demonstrations, manned by adults and cadets, will show local dignitaries what we do so well.

We deploy in August on Exercise Anglian Cadet for our 2-week annual camp to Otterburn, Northumberland. The training coys are named after Suffolk Regiment Battle Honours: Arras, Burma, Gaza and Mons. The 260 cadets will be accompanied by 93 adults. Activities include: Adventurous Training, Archery, Assault Course, Bronze and Silver Duke of Edinburgh Award Expeditions along Hadrian's Wall, Clay Pigeon Shooting, Fieldcraft, First Aid, Initiative Tests, Military Training, Mountain Biking, Orienteering, Paintballing, Target Rifle Shooting, Survival Techniques, 'Cultural visits', Sports and Walking. We will also welcome a US Marine squad of Cadets from Baytown, Texas, a bi-annual exchange that has been going for many years. For £75 all-found it must be the best bargain this summer!

Congratulations to Maj Cathy Bradshaw, OC A Coy in Bury St Edmunds, on her promotion and to 2Lt Kevin Betts, Detachment Commander at Haverhill, on his commission. Both are 'doubled hatted' with the TA and it indeed exemplifies the saying 'Twice a Citizen'.

None of the above could take place without the commitment and



Padre Michael Woods.



Suffolk ACF girls at the Regional Girls Sports.

Affiliated ACF, CCF and UOTC

dedication of our 'CFAV' (Cadet Force Adult Volunteers). 'Their future depends on what we do in the present. We are the present and we can help them determine their future.'

This is the final submission from the author who retires in Aug 2009 after over 41 years in Military uniform. The new PMC, PRO and Webmaster is the vastly experienced Maj Peter Malone.

'Stabilis'!

Much more can be seen on the website at www.suffolkarmycadetforce.fsnet.co.uk

We are always looking for adults, male and female, with or without former service, who wish to become Adult Instructors. Telephone our Cadet Executive Officer Maj Bob Potter MBE (former Viking, Tiger and Pompadour) on 01473 252562.

Brentwood School CCF

Mr NJ Carr, Deputy Head, writes:

The 2009/10 year started well with a record intake of 147 third formers opting to join the CCF with over two thirds of those selecting the Army Section. This was fortunately combined with a large number of sixth formers choosing to stay on as NCOs and resulted in the total strength of the CCF rising to over 500 for the first time. As a result the Contingent made a notable contribution to the town's Remembrance Day Parade, having the day before raised £1,200 in aid of Help for Heroes by packing bags in the local Sainsburys.

Army Section activities during the year in addition to the normal termly field days, have included two range days and an overnight exercise in the Mereworth Woods Training Area with 50 cadets taking part. The most recent event has been Adventurous Training where 57 cadets and 12 adults made their way to Snowdonia to participate in a week of hill walking, canoeing, kayaking, orienteering and mine exploration. Despite high winds and poor visibility, all the groups managed to reach the summit of Snowdon which was a considerable achievement considering that the bulk of the group were younger cadets who were attending for the first time. However for most of the cadets and adults present, the highlight of the trip was a talk by Lt Col Simon Hall RM OBE, the Commandant of JSMTC and a



Charity Bag Packing in Aid of Help for Heroes.

former pupil who spoke about the Reserve Forces Seven Summits expedition and his recent trip to Everest. Both the RN and RAF sections continue to flourish with a diving trip being planned by the former to the Red Sea later in the year. Four RAF cadets attended RAF Coningsby for their Easter Camp and were given the opportunity to look at the Typhoon Eurofighter, Tornado and Harrier as well as visiting the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight. The highlight of their camp was an aerial display by a Euro fighter and then a Hurricane



Brentwood on Remembrance Parade.

Affiliated ACF, CCF and UOTC



Brentwood on the way up Snowdon.

Kimbolton School CCF

Lt Col Susan Camp, Officer Commanding, writes:

During February half-term, Kimbolton School CCF supported the appeal by General The Lord Walker of Aldringham GCB CMG CBE DL to help raise funds for the new Memorial to be erected at The Imperial War Museum, Duxford, which will commemorate those members of The Royal Anglian Regiment who have given their lives in campaigns over the last 50 years. Kimbolton CCF's Army

Section is affiliated to the 1st Battalion, and is proud to have several Old Kimboltonians as members of the Regiment.

After a last minute change of venue from Bassingbourn back to Kimbolton, 30 cadets, the RSM, DV Gridley and 5 officers, gave up 2 days to undertake a 30 hour non-stop March and Shoot in the grounds and indoor range of Kimbolton School; during this time the cadets were split into 3 teams undertaking a rota of 2 hours marching, 2 hours admin, during which time they slept, fed (and had their blisters dressed!) and 2 hours shooting. Each team undertook



Lt Col Sue Camp presents Lt Col Tony Slater with the cheque.

Affiliated ACF, CCF and UOTC

The team at the end.

5 rotations. With 3 of the cadets involved in administration and score taking in the range, the teams managed to complete 103 miles, a cumulative total of 2,781 miles. Every one of the cadets also managed to gain their marksmanship qualifications. LCpl Matthew England won the trophy for best overall score, including miles marched, and Cpl Barnaby Spink, following on from his excellent performance at CADSAAM last October, won the prize for best shot.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank, most sincerely, all those who have sponsored our cadets in this venture and who have given so generously. I am absolutely delighted that we have managed to raise the sum of £3,407.22, including a generous donation from the Kimbolton Branch of the Royal British Legion. It goes without saying that I am incredibly proud of all those who took part in such a great effort. It is truly humbling to see youngsters, and the adults without whom the event could not have taken place, undertaking such a venture and thus bringing into play all the ideals of teamwork, leadership and good natured self sacrifice that being part of the Royal Anglian family really means.



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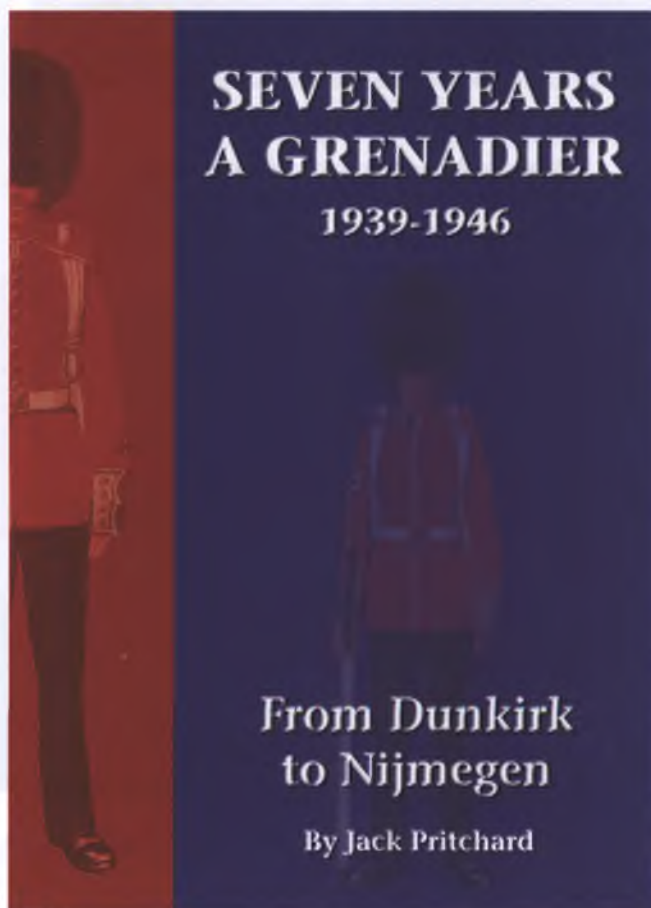
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