



# CASTLE

JOURNAL OF THE ROYAL ANGLIAN REGIMENT







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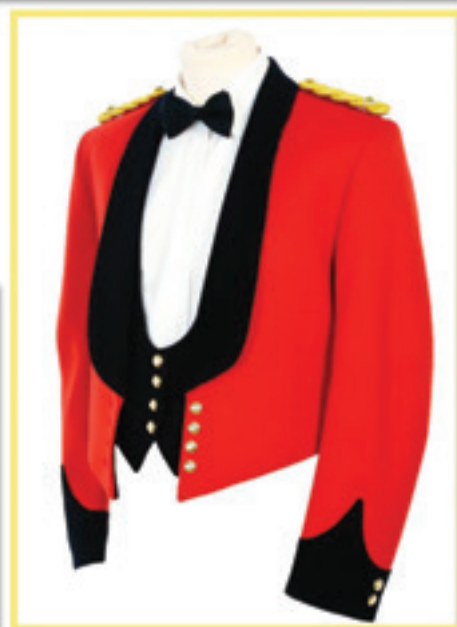
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To: RHQ, The Royal Anglian Regiment  
The Keep  
Gibraltar Barracks  
Bury St Edmunds  
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Account Name: .....

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2017  
Vol 19 No 1



**Editor: Maj RG Corcoran MBE**

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**Front cover :** 1st Battalion Inter-Company Bayonet Competition, Woolwich.  
**Rear cover top:** 2nd Battalion, Exercise Iberian Sun, Galicia, north west Spain.  
**Rear cover bottom:** 3rd Battalion, Exercise Eagle Fire, Salisbury Plain.

**Regimental Internet Website**  
[www.royalanglianregiment.com](http://www.royalanglianregiment.com)



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# The Colonel of The Regiment

## General Officer Commanding 1st (UK) Division

The Regiment warmly congratulates Major General Wooddisse on his promotion to Major General and on taking over as General Officer Commanding 1st (United Kingdom) Division in May 2017.

Major General Wooddisse joined the Army in 1991 after completing a degree at University College London. His first posting was to the 2nd Battalion of the Royal Anglian Regiment, an armoured infantry battalion based in Germany. In the first part of his career he served in a number of junior officer appointments within his unit, saw operational service in Northern Ireland and Bosnia, and trained extensively in Canada, Norway, France and Brunei.

In 2000 he was selected to command a rifle company before attending Staff College for 2 years. Post Staff College, he returned to sub-unit command where he deployed on a number of operations of varying length and intensity, including to Iraq. His first staff job was as the Military Assistant to the Chief of Staff of the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps, a post which included a 9 month tour to Kabul as part of HQ ISAF. On completion of his staff tour he served as a member of the Directing Staff at the Advanced Command and Staff Course from where he returned to Iraq on a short-notice operational tour. He assumed command of the 2nd Battalion, The Royal Anglian Regiment in March 2009, first in Germany and then in Cyprus from where he commanded the Theatre Reserve Battalion. After completing the Higher Command and Staff Course he served in the Ministry of Defence where he was responsible for military planning for a variety of operations and contingencies. He commanded 38 (Irish) Brigade between 2013-15 and served as the Assistant Chief of Staff J3 at PJHQ between 2015-2017. He assumed command of 1st (United Kingdom) Division in May 2017.

Major General Wooddisse is married to Louise and has 3 daughters aged 14, 13 and 11. When the demands of military and family life allow, he enjoys running, hill-walking, cycling and reading.

This is my first opportunity to open the proceedings of the Castle magazine having taken over as Colonel of the Regiment in September. In many ways it is an easy task: the Regiment is in excellent health, in all respects. We are recruiting well, our three Battalions are setting the standard for others to follow, and we are looking after those who have fallen on hard times, both serving and retired. None of this would be possible without the contribution made by the team in RHQ, by the Commanding Officers and RSMs, and by the Regimental Council led until recently by my predecessor Lt Gen Phil Jones (more of whom later). They are a very strong team and you should feel confident that the Regiment has been in very capable hands. I only hope



that I can do my part to maintain the standards that have been set.

I'll start with a short overview of the achievements of our people. The Regiment continues to feature heavily on promotion boards and in picking up awards, both state and non-state. WO2 Shropshire was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal in the New Year's Honours list and Capt Chris Hopkin received a CGS commendation on the same list for his support to the 1st Battalion's families. 2Lt David Rawdon was awarded the Queens' medal from the Prime Minister when she attended his passing out parade at Sandhurst and Lt Sam King was selected for the Poulter's Prize for 2017, the first time that the award has gone to an officer. Turning to appointments, Col Dom Biddick has recently been appointed to command 20 Bde out in Germany. Both he and Col Olly Brown will attend the Higher Command and Staff Course in 2018.

It is a course that takes about 12 Army officers every year and we should take some satisfaction in securing two of those places. Col Richard Lyne was also selected to attend the Royal College of Defence Studies. On the promotion side, Majors Toby Mellor, Stuart Millsom-Smith, Paul Muncey, Will Meddings, Andy Wilde, Martin Melia, Philip Birch, Adrian Grinonneau, Rich Bredin and Phil Blanchfield have all featured on the Pink List since this magazine was last published. And WO1s Spray, Greenhill and Hassan and WO2s Kearney and Kirk were all successful in gaining an LE commission this year.



They are all fine SNCOs who will make even better officers. There has been a number of changes to Regimental appointments with Brig Alasdair Wild handing over his Deputy Colonel of the Regiment responsibilities to Col Simon Browne and Maj Phil Blanchfield taking over from Lt Col Danny Mackness as the senior late Entry Officer for the Regiment. Lt Col Guy Foden has parted company with the Vikings after an exceptionally successful tour and has been replaced by Lt Col Phil Moxey. Last, but certainly not least, WO2s Mactavish and Hume are congratulated on their appointments as RSMs of the 2nd and 3rd Battalions respectively.

The standing of all three battalions is extremely high. As we have grown to expect, they have a reputation for soldiering that is second to none. They are a popular choice for young officers leaving Sandhurst and we continue to recruit the very best soldiers from our recruiting areas. The accolades the Battalions receive, whether they be on operations, in training or going about their daily business, are genuinely impressive. Little of what the Battalions do is reported in the press, but be in no doubt that they continue to make a substantial contribution to the safety of the country and the security of the world.

The 1st Battalion has had a busy year with soldiers deployed to Nigeria, Estonia, Bahrain, Jordan, and the Falklands. They have completed their training for commitments to operations and to NATO next year. They are well manned and seem to be enjoying all that Woolwich has to offer. They have also made the most of adventurous training opportunities, with skydiving in California being the pick of the year's trips. I have no doubt that they will continue to cement their reputation as a first class Battalion during a busy 2018.

The 2nd Battalion are now well established in Cyprus after their move from Cottesmore in the summer. This is the 5th time that the Poachers have been based in Dhekelia. They have made an immediate impact on the island, winning almost every sporting competition that they have entered. They are set for their responsibilities as the Regional Standby Battalion, ready to deploy at short notice throughout the Middle East and further afield. Like the 1st Battalion, they have had a busy year with soldiers deployed to Nigeria, Louisiana, Kenya and the Oman. They've also performed well in the Boxing; they reached the semi-finals of the Army Major Unit competition and separately raised £18k for Regimental benevolence through a charity boxing event. They will stay in Cyprus for the next 2 years before returning to Cottesmore in 2019.

The 3rd Battalion continue to make good progress in recruiting. They are expanding, with new company locations in Grimsby and Peterborough, both of which are doing well. They are currently the second fastest growing Reserve unit across the country. The range and number of activities that our Reservists achieve is deeply impressive. In addition to their recruiting, the Battalion has trained hard throughout the year, training that was crowned by an exercise in Cyprus over the summer. They have also managed to get over 30 soldiers away on a skiing expedition to Austria. Finally, they have done fantastic work in keeping the Regiment's profile high throughout our recruiting area; it is a task that has taken on greater importance with the 2nd Battalion now in Cyprus.

Of course the Regiment roams far more widely than the ground

occupied by our three Battalions. I am equally glad to report that the RHQ and the Regimental council continue to plough new ground in connecting us to our recruiting areas, in raising funds for soldiers new and old, and in administering those funds. We are blessed to have some quite exceptional people who give much of their time to the well-being of the Regiment, without whose support we would not be nearly as healthy as we are today. And then there is the network of Regimental supporters, who do so much to help our soldiers both past and present. I know that I speak for the whole Regiment when I say how grateful we are for all that you do.

Looking more broadly, we have seen another change to the way the Army is organised this year with the advent of Specialised Infantry Battalions. These are Battalions that are optimised for training other armies, and then operating alongside them. They are smaller than normal battalions, with fewer private soldiers and lance corporals but the same complement of officers and senior NCOs. In some ways it is not a new concept – the British Army has always excelled at working alongside other Armies – and this is a continuation of that theme. Within the Queens Division, the 2nd Battalion the Princess of Wales' Royal Regiment has been selected to take on the role. It is an exciting prospect and one that 2 PWRR is relishing. But they cannot do it without support from the rest of the Division and the Royal Anglian Regiment will play a full part in the venture, without damaging the Regimental structure that has served us so well for the last half century.

So from where I sit the Royal Anglian Regiment is in good health. It is recruiting better than most; it is better connected to its counties than ever; and it is looking after its soldiers both past and present. Most importantly, it is delivering success on operations and it is producing officers and SNCOs who will lead the Army and Defence for many years to come. Creating this success is very much a team effort and has taken many decades to generate. But I would like to conclude by highlighting the outstanding contribution of my predecessor as Colonel of the Regiment, Lt Gen Phil Jones.

Throughout his 36 years of service he has developed a reputation for professional excellence, common sense and decency that few can match. I can think of no other senior officer of his generation who is as universally liked and admired. Gen Phil took over as Colonel of the Regiment in September 2012 and has worked tirelessly for five years to attend Regimental and Battalion events, while holding down exceptionally busy jobs as Chief of Staff to Joint Forces Command, and then in a senior NATO position in Norfolk, Virginia. He has been the master of consensus building and has led the way in improving integration with the Queens Division.

Regimental highlights in his tenure include the Jubilee Colours Parade and contributing to the Regimental History in 2014, of which he wrote the last chapter. But he has also attended a large number of less well publicised but important events that have benefited from his support, like the burial of WW1 soldiers in France, and Battalion and Regimental events too numerous to mention. He leaves with the Regiment in excellent form, delivering on operations, looking after its people, and bound by a common ethos of which we can all be proud. It is some legacy and we are all most grateful for it.



# The Regiment

## **Colonel-in-Chief**

HRH The Duke of Gloucester KG GCVO

## **Colonel of the Regiment**

Major General RW Wooddisse CBE MC

## **President of the Regimental Association**

Major General SL Porter CBE

## **Honorary Chaplain to the Regiment**

Father K Reeve

## **Deputy Colonels of the Regiment**

1st Battalion: Brigadier JM Woodham CBE MC

2nd Battalion: Colonel SJR Browne OBE

3rd Battalion: Major General SL Porter CBE

## **County Colonels**

**Norfolk:** Brigadier SJ Marriner CBE

**Suffolk:** Lieutenant Colonel MH Wenham

**Essex:** Colonel CAF Thomas TD DL

**Cambridgeshire:** Lieutenant Colonel D Denson TD

**Lincolnshire:** Colonel GWC Newmarch

**Leicestershire:** Captain TR Wilkes

**Northamptonshire:** Major WT O'Driscoll

**Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire:** Major JN Whatley DL

## **Alliances**

<b>Australia</b>	The Royal Tasmania Regiment
<b>Barbados</b>	The Barbados Regiment
<b>Belize</b>	The Belize Defence Force
<b>Bermuda</b>	The Royal Bermuda Regiment
<b>Canada</b>	Sherbrooke Hussars
	The Lincoln and Welland Regiment
	The Essex and Kent Scottish
	The Lake Superior Scottish Regiment
<b>France</b>	152nd Regiment of Infantry
<b>Gibraltar</b>	The Royal Gibraltar Regiment
<b>Malaysia</b>	1st Battalion Royal Malay Regiment
<b>New Zealand</b>	3rd Battalion (Auckland (Countess of Ranfurly's Own) and Northland) Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment
<b>Pakistan</b>	5th Battalion The Frontier Force Regiment
<b>South Africa</b>	First City Regiment
	Regiment de la Rey

The Regiment is affiliated to *HMS St Albans* and to the Worshipful Company of Poulterers

## **Civic Honours**

*The Regiment has been granted the Freedom of:*

Barking and Dagenham, Basildon, Bedford, Boston, Brentwood, Broxbourne, Bury St Edmunds, Cambridge, Celle, Charnwood, Chelmsford, Cleethorpes, Colchester, Corby, Dacorum, Diss, Dunstable, Ely, Gibraltar, Grantham, Great Yarmouth, Grimsby, Harborough, Harlow, Harpenden, Havering (formerly Romford), Hertford, Hinckley and Bosworth, Huntingdon, Ipswich, Kettering, King's Lynn, Leicester, Lincoln, Lowestoft, Luton, Newham (formerly East Ham), Northampton, Norwich, Oadby and Wigston, Peterborough, Redbridge (formerly Ilford), St Neots, Southend-on-Sea, Stamford (Honorary Status) Stevenage, Sudbury, Thurrock, Uppingham, Watford, Wellingborough and Wisbech.

## Regimental Locations

### Regimental Headquarters

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

Tel: 01284-752394. Mil 94205-2001. Fax: 01284-752026

Email: INF HQ-QUEENS-RANG-ChfClk@mod.uk

Website: www.royalanglianregiment.com

Shop online: www.royalanglianregiment.com

**Regimental Secretary:** Lt Col (Retd) RCJ Goodin OBE

Email: INF HQ-QUEENS-RANG-RegtSec@mod.uk

**Assistant Regimental Secretary (Finance and Benevolence):** Maj (Retd) RP Grenfell

Email: INF HQ-QUEENS-RANG-RegtSecAsst@mod.uk

**Deputy Regimental Secretary (Communications and Heritage):** Maj (Retd) RG Corcoran MBE

Email: INF HQ-QUEENS-RANG-ASec@mod.uk

**Regimental Adjutant:** Capt S Durrant

Email: INF HQ-QUEENS-RANG-REGTADJT@mod.uk

**Records and Benevolence Officer:** Mrs J Laidlaw

Email: INF HQ-QUEENS-RANG-RecordsOffr@mod.uk

### Area Headquarters Office Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex and Cambridgeshire

The Keep, Gibraltar Barracks,

Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP33 3RN

Tel: 01284-749317

*Area Secretary:* Lt Col (Retd) P Cox OBE

Email: INF HQ-QUEENS-RANG-ASec@mod.uk

### Area Office Lincolnshire, Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire

Kendrew Barracks, Cottesmore, Rutland LE15 7BL

Tel: 01572-812241 Ext 7710

*Area Secretary:* Maj (Retd) TJ StC Brown

Email: INF HQ-QUEENS-RANG-NotonAHQ-ASec@mod.uk

Clerk: INF HQ-QUEENS-RANG-NotonAHQ-ChClk@mod.uk

### Regimental Recruiting (Support) Team (RST)

CSgt B Mackness, R ANGLIAN RST, Kendrew Barracks,

Cottesmore, Rutland LE15 7BL

Tel: 01572 812241 Ext 7668

Email: rang-rmrt@mod.uk

### Regimental Museum

Royal Anglian Museum,

Duxford Airfield,

Duxford,

Cambridgeshire CB22 4QR

Tel: 01223-497298

*Curator:* Melissa Kozlenko

Email: royalanglian@museumcurator@outlook.com

Website: www.royalanglianmuseum.org.uk

### Regimental Museum Trustees

Col PGR Horrell TD DL - Chairman

Col NH Kelsey OBE TD - Trustee

Lt Col SD Etherington OBE - Trustee

Lt Col A Powell MBE - Trustee

Maj RG Corcoran MBE - Trustee

Maj T Dormer TD - Trustee

Maj PH Williamson MBE - Trustee

Capt PR Randall - Trustee

Maj R Grenfell - Treasurer

## Battalion Locations

### 1st Battalion

Lt Col PC Moxey MBE

Royal Artillery Barracks,

Woolwich,

London SE18 4BB

### 2nd Battalion

Lt Col BD Weston

Alexander Barracks,

Cyprus

BFPO 58

### 3rd Battalion

Lt Col MS Woodeson

AR Centre, Blenheim Camp,

Newmarket Road, Bury St Edmunds,

Suffolk IP33 3SW

## Regimental Representatives

**Infantry Training Centre, Catterick:** Capt A George

**RMA Sandhurst:** Maj MR Cook to March 2018. Maj A Biggs from August 2018.

**Cambridge University OTC:** Maj M Bevan

**East Midlands University OTC:** Capt SC Hale

## Battle Honours on The Queen's Colour

Mons, Loos, La Cateau, Somme 1916, 1918, Marne 1914, Arras 1917, 1918, Aisne 1914, 1918, Cambrai 1917, 1918, Ypres 1914, 1915, 1917, 1918, France and Flanders 1914-1918, Neuve Chapelle, Macedonia 1915-1918, Gallipoli 1915-1916, Salerno, Gaza, Anzio, Palestine 1917-1918, Cassino I-II, Shaiba, Gothic Line, Mesopotamia 1914-1918, Italy 1943-1945, St Omer-La Bassee, Crete, Dunkirk 1940, Singapore Island, Normandy Landing, Malaya 1941-1942, Briex Bridgehead, Yu, Venrai, Ngakyedauk Pass, North-West Europe 1940, 1944-1945, Imphal, Tobruk 1941, Kohima, Defence of Alamein Line, Chindits 1944, North Africa 1940-1943, Burma 1943-1945, Villa Grande.

## Battle Honours on The Regimental Colour

Namur 1695, Blenheim, Ramilles, Oudenarde, Malplaquet, Dettingen, Louisburg, Minden, Quebec 1759, Martinique 1762, 1794, Havannah, Seringapatam, Corunna, Talavera, Albuhera, Badajoz, Salamanca, Vittoria, Peninsula, Bladensburg, Waterloo, Ava, Ghuznee 1839, Kelat, Cabool 1842, 1879, Moodkee, Ferozeshah, Sobraon, New Zealand, Goojerat, Punjaub, South Africa 1851-1853, 1879, Inkerman, Sevastopol, Lucknow, Taku Forts, Afghanistan 1878-1880, Nile 1884-1885, Tirah, Atbara, Khartoum, Defence of Ladysmith, Paardeberg, South Africa 1899-1902, Korea 1951-1952.





# Regimental Matters

**The Royal Anglian Regimental Battlefield Tour and Pilgrimage 2018 Thurs 17th to Mon 21st May 2018**

## **The German Spring Offensive and the Allied “100-Day” Offensive 1918**



It is only fitting that in the centenary year marking the end of The Great War we should visit and study the crucial battles of the Western Front which took place in 1918, starting with the German Spring offensive, and followed in August by the Allied “100 Day” offensive which finally brought victory to the Allies in November 1918.

According to Marshall Foch: “Never at any time in history has the British Army achieved greater results in attack”. These battles saw some of the bitterest fighting of the whole war. It is now argued that much of current conventional war operational and tactical thinking started in 1918, in particular the concepts of operational momentum and the all arms battle.

The Regimental battlefield tour in May 2018 will follow these battles with particular emphasis on the exploits of our former Regiments. We will include the initial breakthrough by the Germans on the Hindenberg Line in March and the battles for Villers Bretonneux that brought the German advance to a halt, the Allied attacks in August and the capture of the St Quentin canal in September. All of our former Regiments played key roles in these battles.

**Left: Brigadier-General JV Campbell (on bridge) congratulates soldiers of the 46th (North Midland) Division at Riqueval after their successful crossing of the St Quentin Canal.**

## Draft Programme

**17th May:** Travel to Albert with pick up points at Bury St Edmunds, Cambridge and Warley. We start our programme with an initial briefing followed by dinner together in our hotel.

**18th May:** We begin in the area of St Quentin describing the 18 Division battles (10 Essex, 6 Northamptonshires and 2 Bedfords) between 21 and 25 March at the start of the German Spring offensive. Then on to the 46 Division defence of Epephy (1/4 and 1/5 Leicesters and 1/5 Lincolns). 46 and 12 Divisions (1 Norfolk, 1 Cambridgeshire and 7 Essex) recaptured Epephy in September. We finish the day at the Bellicourt tunnel on the St Quentin canal.

**19th May:** We start at Glissy airfield where the first 4 Squadrons of the Royal Flying Corps initially landed in France in 1914. Then on to Villers Bretonneux for the defensive battle and counter attack in March (18 Division), and Adelaide CWGC where the original grave of the Australian "unknown Soldier" is located. We visit Le Hamel to discuss the 4th Australian Division attack on 4 July, the first all arms battle, followed by the start of the Allied offensive on 8 August. We end the day visiting the museum in Villers Bretonneux.

**20th May:** We start on Morlancourt Ridge with the 18 Division battles in support of the 8th August offensive. Then on to Becort to cover the retaking of La Boisselle and the Tara Usna hills. We visit Mont St Quentin to discuss the Allied attack in September and finish the day with a visit to a Cemetery where soldiers of our former Regiments are buried. Our visit ends with a final dinner in our hotel.

**21st May:** We return home.

The purpose of the visit remains to enable serving soldiers and the wider Regimental family to visit the scenes of the actions of our former Regiments, to pay homage to those who died, and to discuss what happened in the battles on the Western Front in 1918.

The cost of the trip will be £275 per person for a shared room or £395 for a single room.

An application form is attached.

## The Royal Anglian Regiment Battlefield Tour 2018 Confirmation Booking Form

\*I wish to reserve.....places on the 2018 Battlefield Tour to Northern France.

Full names of those attending

.....  
.....  
.....

Contact address including email address and telephone number

.....  
.....  
.....

- I wish to share a twin room
- I wish to have a single room
- We would like a double room

\*Delete as applicable

If you have an ancestor buried in a CWGC Cemetery in the area, it will be helpful if you can fill in, as far as you can, the detail below. Do not worry if it is incomplete.

Rank.....

Name.....

Regiment.....

Cemetery.....

Date of Death.....

Grave Number.....

Similarly, if you have any family connection to any of the specific battles being visited, the tour organisers would like to know of them

.....  
.....

### Special needs

Please specify any special dietary or other requirements or whether you are bringing a wheelchair or require a ground floor room.

.....  
.....

I enclose a cheque payable to RHQ Royal Anglian Regiment for £.....  
(Deposit £50 per person or full amount of £275 per person sharing a room or £395 for a single room).

Signature.....Date.....

This proforma and your cheque must be sent to Maj Tim Brown, Area 2 Regimental Secretary, Royal Anglian Regiment, Building 90, Kendrew Barracks, Cottesmore, Oakham, Rutland LE15 7BL by 1 March 2018.



# Regimental Matters

## Dining Out of the old Colonel of The Regiment, Lt Gen PD Jones CB CBE

The new Colonel of the Regiment, Major General RW Wooddisse CBE MC presided at the annual meeting of the Officers' Dinner Club on 3rd November in the Army and Navy Club.

The centrepiece of the dinner was dining out General Phil Jones. The Colonel of the Regiment thanked General Jones for all he had done for the Regiment in all his thirty seven years of service, and as the Colonel of the Regiment from 2012 to 2017.

As a master of consensus building, General Jones had led the Regiment, developing the right Regimental and Divisional integration. Apart from all of his wise advice, highlights of his tenure had been the support the Regiment received during the last operational tours in Afghanistan, the Golden Jubilee Colours parade and celebrations in 2014, the new Regimental History (General Jones had written the last Chapter), and all the apparently minor events which benefitted from heavyweight support, like the Burial of WW1 Soldiers in France and Battalion and Regimental events like the Freedom of Gibraltar.

The Regiment owed General Jones a huge debt of gratitude for all his positive advice, support and leadership.




### Life Plan & Funeral Cover

The One Family Elysium Fifty Plus Life Plan is now available for the members of The Royal Anglian Regiment, and predecessor regiments. Starting at £10 per month, provided you are aged between 50 and 80 and a UK resident you can apply. There is no need for a medical. Once you've paid into your plan for two years, your family can claim a guaranteed cash lump sum. The policy also pays out if you've been diagnosed with a terminal or serious illness. For more information call Mia Davis or Tony Granger at PG Protect Ltd on 01743 233000. Email: admin@elysium50plus.co.uk.

**Major and Mrs Bob Grenfell at Buckingham Palace at the Royal Garden Party.**







# **Regimental Pilgrimage and Battlefield Tour to Normandy 5-9 June 2017**

Having rested and been fed and watered in the Hotel Campanile on the outskirts of Caen following the journey from the UK the day before, 53 souls boarded the coach on the morning of Tuesday 6th June made up of 20 serving members of the Regiment, and 33 members of the Association some with their wives. In addition, we were most fortunate and humbled to have join us Cecil Deller who fought with the Suffolk Regiment in those dark days of 1944/45.

Our first duty was a ceremony at the Royal Norfolk Regiment's Memorial close to Norfolk House, the scene of stiff German resistance some 73 years earlier. In the presence of a number of French dignitaries including the local Mayor we laid wreaths and observed two minutes silence following Cpl Middleton's excellent Last Post. The weather was bright but breezy with always the threat of a heavy shower. Our next call was at the Suffolk Regiment's Memorial at Chateau La Londe and during the short journey our guide Tony Slater explained in terrific detail





# Regimental Matters



## THE ROYAL NORFOLK REGIMENT

In memory  
of our 116 comrades who fell  
on D-Day 6 th june to 9 th july 1944  
May peace and freedom  
be their everlasting memorial

En souvenir  
de nos 116 camarades tombés  
du 6 Juin au 9 Juillet 1944  
Que la paix et la liberté  
soient leur mémorial pour l'éternité





how the Suffolks fought to capture the Chateau.

Here we were joined by Capt Ken Mayhew, a mere 100 years old, veteran of the Landings and indeed of the Battle for Chateau La Londe, where he was actually staying as a house-guest with the same family who owned the Chateau back in 1944 and still to this day reside. Our wreath-laying ceremony, again woven in to our French host's schedule, was a very moving occasion as both Ken and Cecil laid wreaths and posed for photographs in sunshine following a heavy shower. We then enjoyed a Vin d'Honneur with our kind French hosts in the Town hall supping a most enjoyable cocktail made from the local cider!

It was only fitting that on this the 73rd anniversary of D-Day we should pay our respects to the Fallen at Hillman. Having had time to walk around the site and to visit the museum within the once strongly held German bunker position we took part in a formal and very moving ceremony completely organised and run by Les Amis du Suffolk Regiment.

Needless to say it was Ken and Cecil who once again stole the show by climbing the steep bank unaided to once again lay wreaths. After a very sociable gathering for a drink under "canvass" with many other pilgrims, we moved to a fine "auberge" where we were treated by Les Amis to a first class dinner rounded off with a number of speeches including one in celebration and thanks for Ken Mayhew's 100 years.

Wednesday 7th June dawned bright for some, but not necessarily for those young Poachers who had enjoyed copious amounts of beer in the company of Cecil Deller telling war stories long into the night followed by a trip en ville. Nevertheless, a full complement arrived at Dr Benamou's wonderful museum at Rots where we were able to get our hands on much of the hardware which is on display featuring both Allied and German vehicles, weaponry, clothing and miscellanea of all kinds. The Boys loved getting their hands dirty and any cobwebs from the night before were cleared away by the time we set off for Verriers Wood. Here we were joined by Major Bob Filby MC who captivated us as he talked through how his platoon and company had advanced over open corn fields line abreast to attack and eventually seize Essex Wood



in June 1944. This was a magical moment as everyone present both young and old were spellbound by Bob's graphic account of this heroic action by 2nd Bn The Essex Regiment. It goes without saying that Major Bob laid his Regiment's wreath against the Memorial so lovingly cared for by the French who then distributed large quantities of locally brewed cider for which we were most grateful.

Following lunch at the Liberty Café we moved to Omaha Beach where Mike Beard gave an excellent account of the US 1st Army Landings as we surveyed the huge expanse of beach below us. We then had time to wander around the superb US Visitor Centre and the beautiful if tragic







# Regimental Matters

cemetery.

On our final morning we studied the actions of the 2nd Battalion the Lincolnshire Regiment at H rouville Le Bourg on 8th July 1944. The battle was part of Operation Charnwood to capture Caen. Having looked over the ground we moved to the church where a plaque was dedicated on 6th June 1990 in the presence of Major-General Sir Christopher Welby-Everard, who commanded the Battalion during the battle. It was poignant that his son, Peter, was with us and thus able to lay the wreath as part of our service of commemoration.

No tour to Normandy would be complete without a visit to Pegasus Bridge, so this was where we spent the remainder of the morning in the company of an extremely knowledgeable and amusing French guide. It is a great comfort to know that there are members of the young generation who still have an intimate knowledge of the events of 1944/45 and for whom that part of their nation's history is far from forgotten.

Finally, and after much rib-tickling the Cavalry made an appearance for our last afternoon was spent looking at Op Goodwood, Monty's plan to achieve a breakout from

the Caen bridgehead created during the preceding month after so much bitter fighting. It was interesting to hear the views of our more modern sub-unit commanders as Major Ben Hawes and Major Tim Brown analysed the ground and compared the use of weapon systems deployed in 1944 to those of today. Our final act of pilgrimage was in the Banneville La Campagne CWGC where Cpl Andy Middleton of the Queen's Division Band played the Last Post and Reveille for the final time. Wreaths were laid in respect of all our forebear regiments as well as the Royal Anglian Regiment, and wooden crosses were placed amongst the many tombstones honouring our Dead.

Tony Slater planned and executed a brilliant Battlefield Tour for which we are all indebted to him. His able assistants Tom Prior (sadly for the last time) and Mike Beard gave sterling support and we thank them for their huge contribution. The last word has to go to our 3 veterans who brought this tour alive, not just in the field, but in the bar! With their tales of daring the serving soldiers sat in awe while those longer in the tooth shall remember with fondness the correct measures for a "Filby Gin Cocktail"!





# Field of Remembrance 2017



**Phil Tilley finally gets to meet HRH Prince Harry assisted by Maj Bill O'Driscoll.**

In time honoured fashion members of the Regimental family gathered in the Garden of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey on the Thursday preceding Armistice Day to attend the official opening by Prince Harry. All our forebear Regiments had a dedicated plot with a representative acting as Guardian in each case. Phil Tilley who held this responsibility for the

Northamptonshire Regiment was presented to Prince Harry with whom he enjoyed a joke! Brigadier James Woodham CBEMC was the senior serving member of the Regiment present. Afterwards, everyone returned to the Farmers' Club in Whitehall for lunch and refreshments where we were hosted by Sam Luckin, a former Officer of the Essex Regiment.



# Regimental Matters

## High Sheriff of Suffolk Visits RHQ

The High Sheriff of Suffolk, Geoffrey Probert visited RHQ on 11th May to be briefed on the Regiment, with particular reference to Suffolk and to the volunteer support given to veterans by the Benevolent Charity.

Our Regimental history and Museum showed the High Sheriff's close connections to the Regiment. His great-grandfather, William Probert of 3 SUFFOLK joined 1 SUFFOLK in Middelburg, South Africa on 30th July 1900, in time for a major action "Before the determined advance of the Suffolk Regiment, the opposition crumbled." Lord Roberts wired: "I am delighted to hear of your successful advance, and of the gallant behaviour of the Suffolks; please congratulate them from me."

The High Sheriff was particularly interested in the Boer War display and the details of those known to have served with his great-grandfather. William Probert survived the Boer war, served as Equerry to the spirited Princess Louise and retired as a Colonel.



**Col Will Probert later in life c1930.**



**Lt Will Probert as a Suffolk Officer c1900.**



**Geoffrey Probert, Regimental Secretary and Suffolk Regiment Curator in the Regimental Museum.**



# Regimental Remembrance Service at the Regimental Memorial

The Regimental Memorial was the very moving setting for the annual Regimental Service of Remembrance, about 350 members of the Regiment, serving, veterans and the bereaved families attended the service.

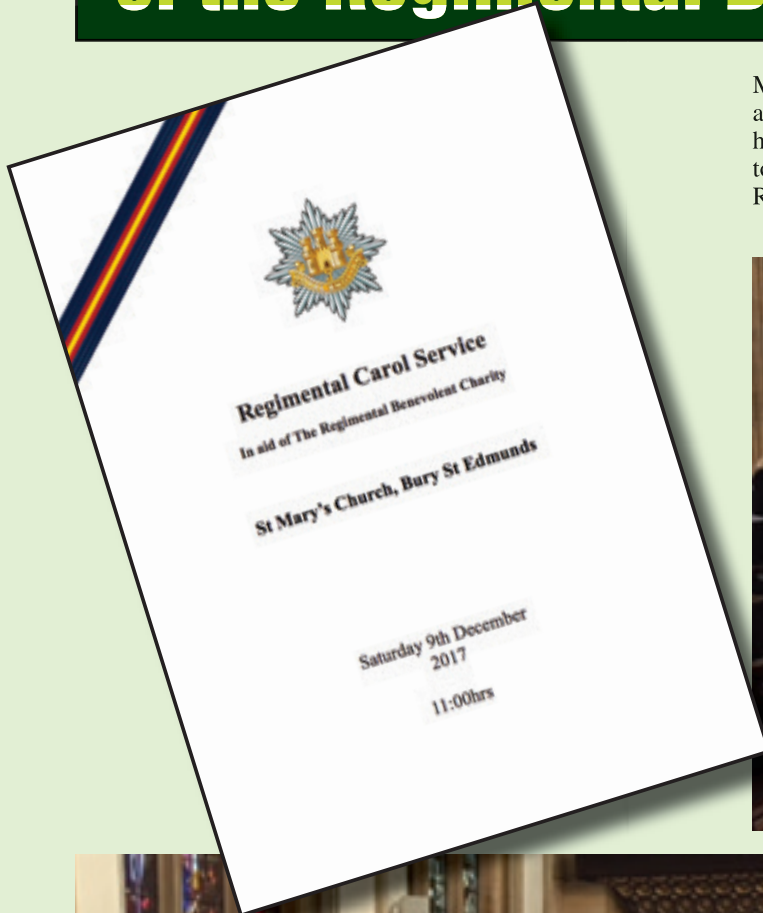


Father Ken Reeve, our Honorary Chaplain with his daughter Kate and her husband WO1 Neil Reeder, our Div Comd Sgt Maj - at the Regimental Remembrance Service.



# Regimental Matters

## Regimental Carol Service 2017 in aid of the Regimental Benevolent Charity



Members of the Regimental family gathered for our second annual Regimental Carol Service on Saturday 9th December held in St Mary's Church, Bury St Edmunds. St Mary's is home to the Chapel of The Suffolk Regiment and The Royal Anglian Regiment.

The service raised funds for our Regimental Charity and was







supported by local dignitaries, the Mayor of Bury St Edmunds and the Mayor of Sudbury. The service was led by the Honorary Chaplain to the Regiment, Father Ken Reeve with excellent musical accompaniment of the Band of the Royal Anglian Regiment, led by Captain Peter Hudson the Director of Music.

Our particular thanks to the Commanding Officer of 3rd Battalion, Lt Col Matt Woodeson not only for the use of the Band but also for personally supporting the service and bringing other members of his Battalion Headquarters. It was wonderful service, enjoyed by all, and the Regimental family enjoyed the mulled wine and minced pies afterwards.

We very much look forward to continuing this as an annual event.

The 2018 Carol Service is planned for Sunday 9th December in St Mary's Church, Bury St Edmunds. Please put this in your diaries.



## Regimental Council 2017

The Regimental Council met at the Royal Hospital Chelsea on 4th May 17 and at the Army and Navy Club on 3rd November 17. The Council:

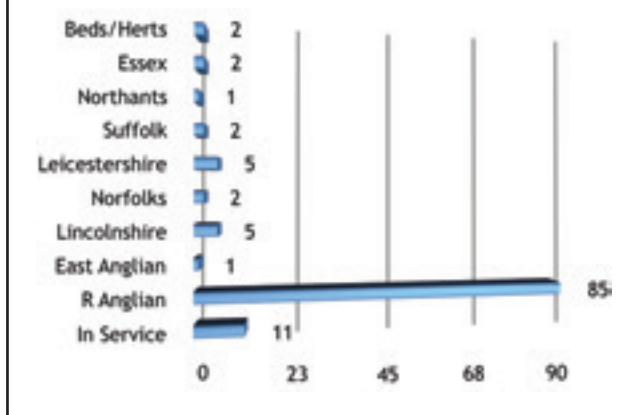
- Commended the Regiment's significant investment in recruiting, both in manpower and in money, and strongly supported the review of the Regiment's recruiting effort to help to ensure that Battalions were fully manned. Recruiting was the highest priority.
- Directed that the Regiment was to fully support the implementation and the manning of the Queen's Division's Specialist Infantry Battalion, 2nd Battalion The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment, recognising that the Division's personnel processes would need to be further developed, and that each regular Battalion was likely to be allocated responsibility for filling a proportion of the posts in the Specialist Infantry Battalion.
- Welcomed the increases in establishment of a Platoon to each Regular Company and a Company to the Reserve Battalion.
- Commended the new Regimental Communications Strategy, and encouraged all to contribute regularly to Regimental Social Media to support Regimental Communications and recruiting.
- Directed that a Customer Relationship Management System (CRMS) was to be procured to improve communications within the Regimental Family.
- At the May meeting agreed that a proposal for commercially delivered Regimental Shop was to be developed and at the November Meeting endorsed the business proposal for the new shop.
- Directed that Association Membership was to be refreshed, recognising that all our veterans were life members and were entitled to benevolence, but inviting and encouraging all veterans to become subscribing members to support the work of the Association.
- Encouraged fund raising for the Regimental Benevolent Charity.



# Regimental Matters

## Regimental Benevolence

**Requests by Regiment**



### General

The delivery of benevolence remains the priority of my post, and takes precedence over all other matters. Every effort is made to deal with cases on the same working day. This is always achievable when the caseworker has provided all the information required. Mrs Joanna Laidlaw who works alongside me is the initial recipient of the case. She completes all the preparatory work, request for additional information and in doing so ensures an easy transition to grant making, where appropriate. Figure mentioned in this article are for the Financial Year (FY) 2016-17, which for RHQ runs from 01 Jul-30 Jun. These dates allow timely input to the two Regimental Council meeting in Nov and May each year.

### Delivery

#### Grants.

Almonised delivery is requests considered by multiple agencies to apply grants. This ensures that the applicant has the best chance of meeting their need. In the FY the total almonised delivery of grants was £230.3k, down £30k on the previous year. Broken down as follows:

R Anglian Grants	£74.8k
ABF Grants	£87.9K
RBL Grants	£37k
Other	£30.6k

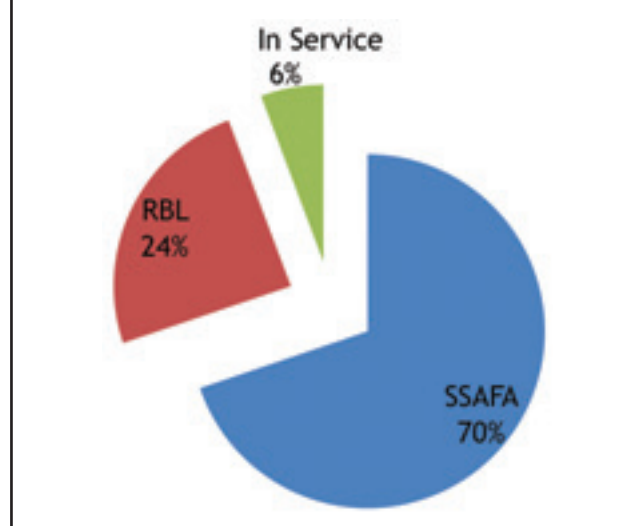
Caseworkers cannot, under normal circumstance go direct to the ABF, we refer cases to them for consideration, and as can be seen they have been extremely generous to our serving and veteran community.

#### Outreach

Regimental Headquarters has no outreach capability to complete casework. A grant is made annually to the ABF, who on our behalf award grants to organisations who support the Regiment and provide caseworkers. Casework delivery is identified in the chart below.

The chart highlights our dependence on SSAFA and RBL caseworkers, to whom we will always remain extremely grateful.

**Source Caseworker**



### Grants

In the financial year the case statistics are as follows:

Total Number of Cases	209
Grants Awarded	116
Declined	78
Rejected	15

**Declines.** When an application is received it is reviewed under the criteria laid down in Standing Instruction (SI) No.19 ensuring that it meets the criteria. The common causes for declines are funeral and care home costs, savings above threshold and when no need is identified.

**Rejected.** Rejected cases are those submitted by caseworkers where the person concerned never served with us or of our forebear Regiments. Common mistakes are confusing the Royal Artillery (RA) as R Anglian and when an attached personnel last posting was with us and the caseworker mistakenly apply to us rather than their parent Corps Benevolent Fund.

The continuing trend of the level of grants made to R Anglians over forebear Regiments continues. This comes as no surprise as we are now in our 53rd year of existence. I would hope that it goes with without saying that we will always continue support those from the forebear Regiments where the need exists. The number of 'In Service' cases has risen, and welcomed, demonstrating that we support the present and well as the past. The introduction of a simple one page application to be used by the Chain of Command has eased this process. However, when required a caseworker from SSAFA or RBL will get involved when other agencies need to be brought in.

## Dispersal

The main reasons for grants being awarded are:

*Assistance with rent and rent deposits.*

*Electronically Powered Vehicles.*

*Home mobility, wet rooms and stair lifts etc.*

*Brown and white goods*

## Social Media

Social media can be a blessing or a curse. There have been incidents where a veteran has been identified as being in need, normally homelessness, and has flashed up on social media. We monitor national press via Google alert and react where required. For social media it comes to us through a number of sources. Be assured that where possible we react, locate, make contact, get caseworkers engaged and offer support if required. In some cases we are told by the individual they are happy and do not require intervention. The difficulty lies in feedback, we always maintain the confidentiality of our clients and will not under any circumstance report our action on social media. This can give the impression that we have not reacted, be assured, where possible we have.

## Fundraising

### General

Fundraising is difficult area and one which our trustees have been looking at. In order for the charity to continue to function a robust investment policy is in place. I have

been directed to continue to grow the portfolio in order to continue to provide the required support to the Regiment. There is a need to withstand the rigours and the fluctuations of the markets. A particular area being investigated is to secure the skills of a professional fundraiser. This is work in progress.

### Source

The three income streams are:

*Interest from the Regimental Investment Portfolio*

*Day's Pay Scheme.*

*Fundraising and Donations*

**Investment Portfolio.** The portfolio is looked after by our Regimental Trustees who continue to do an outstanding job, ensuring we are financially well looked after. The income for this FY was £128K.

**Day's Pay Scheme.** The Day's Pay Scheme brought in £98.7k last FY, in the current year is expected to rise to £110k. This rise is due to a robust audit system introduced by RHQ to encourage all members to pay into the scheme. Contributions are made as follows: Officers: 210% of a day's pay; Soldiers: 120% of a day's pay.

This money is allocated as follows:

	Officers	Soldiers
Benevolence	£16941	£33452
Recruiting	£3963	£8364
Castle	£1977	£8364
Silver	£8346	
Officers Club	£1981	

The balance £15499 is to support Grants made to the Battalions for AT etc which always exceed this amount.

The MOD remits that we must give 51% on the income against

benevolence, in real terms the figure is between 70%-80%.

**Donations and Fundraising.** As most are aware RHQ is a small team, but with the few events we run, and the kindness of many in making donations and running events on our behalf just over £53k was raised in donations. This is welcomed, but not a reliable source of income. This means when preparing the budget, caution has to be exercised.

There is a lot of excellent fundraising work being done in support of national charities, well done. If you are considering an event please consider The Royal Anglian Benevolent Charity it is your own charity. We do not ask that we be the sole benefactor, although that would be nice, but please consider a percentage to our charity. You will be directly supporting those from your Regiment that fall in need, hardship or distress.

**Donation Methods.** If you wish to donate you can do so via one of the following methods:

**Gift Aid Envelope.** Send a cheque with the Gift Aid Envelope supplied within this copy of Castle.

**Cheque:** Send a Cheque made payable to the Royal Anglian Regiment Benevolent Charity

**Just Giving** Follow the link via the website [www.royalanglianregiment.com](http://www.royalanglianregiment.com) where there is option to donate using Justgiving link.

**Legacy.** No one wants to think about their mortality, but many put in place their wishes when the inevitable happens. Please consider your Regiment when preparing the distribution of your estate.

## Poppy 100

Poppy 100 is a fundraising initiative marking the end of the Great War and set up by Miss Vanessa Burkitt, a friend of the Regiment. It aims to raise a significant amount for the Charity from several varied events in Cambridge during 2018. Watch Regimental Bulletins for details and please support events where you can.

## Benevolence in Action

### General

The Benevolence Fund strives to deliver a quality of service which our serving and veteran community deserve. This section will come out including casework study. Anonymity has been maintained to protect confidentiality.

### The Children's Fund

The fund was established during the Afghanistan Campaign, the public made significant contributions. This allowed the fund to be established for the children of those who died during the conflict. An amount of money was invested on their behalf and managed by the Regiment until their 18th Birthday. It is hoped that it would be used for further education, but is entirely the recipient's call. This has been looked at by other Regiments who felt they too should have followed suit and is considered best practice.

### The Wayland Fund

The Wayland Fund is a specific purpose fund established to





# Regimental Matters

support amputees. The fund was donated by an organisation that intended to set up its own establishment in support of amputees. They realised it was not required and so donated their funds to us.

## Case Studies

### Case 1

Status: Veteran

Age: 60

Service: 4yrs 10mths

Operations: NI

Background: Married and unable to work due to ill health. Reliant upon Electric Propelled Vehicle (EPV) for mobility, current one Occupational Health assessed unsuitable. Requirement, a new EPV.

Finance: High disposable income.

Grant: £250 Almonised: £700 ABF

### Case 2

Status: Spouse

Applicant: Female

Age 40

Service: 23yrs

Operations: Bosnia, Kosovo, Iraq, Afghan

Background: Divorcing and living in rented with two children, one special needs, requires assistance to carpet new home when moving out of SLA.

Finance: No savings or disposable income.

Grant: £500 Almonised: £750 ABF

### Case 3

Status: Serving

Applicant: Male

Service: 20yrs

Operations: NI, Iraq, Afghanistan

Background: Married with children. Soldier's family member killed in a natural disaster in a Commonwealth country, needed to fly home to assist aged mother and attend funeral.

Finances: A little savings

Grant: £400 Almonised: £400 Battalion

### Case 4

Status: Veteran

Age: 29

Service: 6 yrs

Operations: Afghanistan x2

Background: Serving sentence in HMP. Completing day release at a garage in his home town, with guaranteed employment if he performs well. His tool box has been stolen/sold whilst inside. Requirement, a new set of tools.

Finance: None

Grant: £450 Almonised: £400 ABF

### Case 5

Status: Veteran

Age: 102

Service: 4yrs

Operations: World War Two

Background: Lives independently with a little assistance. Widowed, requires assistance with some new clothes and a Hoover as his is broken.

Finance: No disposable income.

Grant: £500 Almonised: Not required.

Full details of the Charities account are available from the Charities Commission website.

The Royal Anglian Benevolent Charity, No 1085050

## Remembering The Fallen

Connor George the son on the Late LCpl Darren George who died in Afghanistan in 2002 attended his School Prom travelling in a vintage military vehicle and visiting his father's grave to pay his respects on route. Lest we forget.





# HELP *for* HEROES

*Support For Our Wounded*



## ORDINARY PEOPLE, EXTRAORDINARY EFFORTS



### DO YOUR BIT TO HELP OUR BLOKES

**[www.helpforheroes.org.uk](http://www.helpforheroes.org.uk)**

Registered Charity No. 1120920





# Regimental Day







# Regimental Day 2017

The Regimental family turned out in force for another sunny Regimental Day at Duxford.

The elegant Drumhead service was kindly led by the Father Reverend Tony Rose, Assistant Honorary Chaplain to the Regiment, supported by the Reverend Iori Price, Chaplain to the 1st Battalion, who preached.

The 1st Battalion provided an immaculate Colour Party and Major Bob Grenfell mustered the Associations Standards. Colonel Simon Browne laid a wreath on behalf of the Regt, Col Charles Thomas on behalf of the Association and Mr and Mrs Roberts, parents of the late LCpl Craig Roberts on behalf of the fallen.

Capt Peter Hudson and the Regt Band supported the service wonderfully, entertained us in the afternoon during the picnic, and closed the day at the Memorial.

The 2,500 members of the Regimental family enjoyed a day of meeting old friends and comrades.





# Mainly About People

## Personalia

### MBE

Maj GJ Goodey

### Promotion to Colonel

Lt Col OCC Brown

### Promotion to Lieutenant Colonel

Maj TB Mellar

Maj SR Milsom-Smith

Maj PA Muncey

Maj WJ Meddings

Maj APT Wilde

Maj MC Melia

Maj PM Birch

Maj AG Grinonneau

Maj PN Blanchfield

Maj RJ Bredin MBE

### Promotion to Major

Capt CJ Duncalfe

Capt BS French (LE)

Capt TG Hearne

Capt PRA Lenthall

Capt JA Perring

Capt JE Powell

Capt TC Roden

### Promotion to Captain

Lt ND Barron

Lt MJ Brunsden

Lt MC Durkin

Lt JF Raschen

WO1 NS Reeder (LE)

Lt JSJ Rowden

Lt TM Shea

Lt MN Tovey

### Promotion to Lieutenant

2Lt JV Ellen

2Lt JA Mattin

### Conversion of Commissions

Capt AC Peters from SSC to IRC

### The following have been selected for conversions of commissions:

OCdt H Deed to be 2Lt 14 April 2017

OCdt DW Rawdon to be 2Lt 14 April 2017

OCdt JC Beale to be 2Lt 14 April 2017

OCdt DB Coyle to be 2Lt 12 August 2017

OCdt BC Hopkin to be 2Lt 12 August 2017

OCdt TE Hardiman to be 2Lt 12 August 2017

OCdt DJ Russell to be 2Lt 12 August 2017

OCdt G Scrupps to be 2Lt 12 August 2017

OCdt E Wynn to be 2Lt December 2017

### Retirements

#### *RHQ has been notified of the following retirements:*

Maj TGBP Coleman *wef* 6 Jan 2017

Maj RA Wicks *wef* 22 Dec 2016

Capt AJ Basey-Fisher *wef* 2 Nov 2016



# ...They drink it in the Congo

*(Editor's note, readers will be very pleased to know that after the last article the 'face' of the 2016 Army Calendar has very kindly provided even more pictures of his escapades, I'm sure we all look forward to even more in 2019!)*

Lt Col Bev Allen writes: Other than the well-known refrain from the advertisement, referenced in the title to this piece, and the fact that one of the greatest war films ever made ('Apocalypse Now', in the unlikely event that any 'Castle' reader was unaware of this) was an adaptation of the novel, 'Heart of Darkness', originally set in that country, I have to admit that my knowledge of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) was quite limited. When I was appointed as Chief Planner to the UN Force in the DRC for the best part of the past year,

I was astonished not only by the enormity of the challenges that face the DRC but also, considering the scale of the humanitarian crisis, by the lack of news coverage it receives in the mainstream UK media. For example, I had been unaware that as many civilians are killed due to armed conflict in the DRC as in the Syrian Civil War over a corresponding period. In fact, the actual toll in DRC is likely to be higher but this is difficult to verify due to the complex nature of the security situation, the vastness of the country, the jungle terrain and the remoteness of much of the population.



**Bev Allen and the Indian Deputy Chief of Staff in the Congo.**



**Viking Gunslinger atop the active Namulagira Volcano.**





# Mainly About People

I was also completely unaware of the multi-dimensional nature of the conflict (which is far too complex and opaque to do justice to in an article of this length), or of the incredible beauty, bounteous resources and potential of the place itself and the people that live there - which is what made serving in the DRC both a privilege and a tragedy at the same time.

Due to the on-going conflict, the UN has their largest peacekeeping mission, known as MONUSCO, based in the DRC to try to bring the suffering to an end. The size of the military contingent alone is corps-sized, at around 17,000 soldiers. The British military contribution to the Mission is just seven personnel but these are employed in key staff positions in the Force Headquarters (FHQ) and are thus able to exercise considerable influence over the activities of the Force. MONUSCO is the only mission to which the UN has allocated 'Chapter Seven' rules of engagement which means that it is authorised to conduct proactive offensive action in order to prosecute the provisions of the UN Mandate. Boiled-down to its essence, the UN Mandate charges MONUSCO with protecting civilians, neutralising Illegal Armed Groups (IAG) and providing support to free and fair elections. All things considered, a very interesting (and extremely difficult) problem-set.

My role in the FHQ was to lead a twelve-strong multinational plans branch that not only sought to design military operations in pursuit of the UN Mandate but also to transform the Force with a view to optimising its structures and processes, all this during rapidly shifting political, international, UN and security circumstances.

The underlying sources of the conflict in the DRC are both numerous and diverse with no single cause for the violence and no distinct, recognisable 'enemy' for the Force to defeat. The



**Bev Allen and a Plans Officer of the Nigerian Air Force...***please note the use of the correct Royal Anglian rank slide!*

multiple IAG against which MONUSCO is pitched range from the infamous Lord's Resistance Army in the far north, who are engaged mostly in poaching activity and the abduction of civilians as porters for their poached plunder, to the Allied Democratic Force - exiles from Uganda following a failed Islamist coup who now eke out an existence in the jungles of the DRC, surviving through predation on the livelihoods of the Congolese civilian population. Another IAG, the FDLR, have a similar background: they are the remnants and descendants of the 'genocidaires' from the 1994 Rwandan genocide, now also surviving in uninvited exile in the jungles and mountains of the DRC. The FDLR regularly inflict atrocities and, together with other IAGs, engage in illegal



**Bev Allen in the Congo with some peacekeepers from the Indian Army.**





**The MONUSCO Plans Team, with representation from the UK, US, Uruguay, South Africa, Ghana, India, Pakistan, Tunisia, Canada, Switzerland, Bangladesh and Nigeria.**

taxation upon the local Congolese civilians. There are profuse numbers of other IAG across most of this massive country, all of which are equally malevolent. To make matters worse, the Congolese Security Forces are, themselves, guilty of some of the worst human rights violations and the political situation, with the incumbent president's reluctance (some might say refusal) to relinquish power at the end of his constitutionally-authorised term of office, is causing further domestic unrest. Adding still greater complexity are the regional dynamics, as neighbouring countries all vie for influence and access to the DRC's vast natural resources. Against this backdrop MONUSCO is fielded, to try to navigate a way forward through this quagmire of competing issues and narratives.

Most 'Castle' readers will have probably worked on operations with a multinational element at some point or another and will therefore understand many of the inevitable frictions associated with such activity. However, the complexities of the UN as an organisation, which is in many respects considerably different from a NATO or military coalition construct, makes things even more challenging. For instance, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (of which the Mission is part) was not always the UN agency that had primacy over decisions that affected the organisation's activities in the DRC. Other difficulties include the relations between the troop contributing countries themselves – for example, the two largest contributing nations are India and Pakistan. While most of the time both contingents manage to work alongside each other in a perfectly cordial spirit of cooperation, national sensibilities and enmities begin to surface when the FHQ tries to 'brigade' Indian and Pakistani force elements together for specific military tasks even where this is proposed for eminently sensible and practical operational purposes.

The UN Mandate stipulates that 'Chapter Seven' offensive operations can only be conducted by certain elements of the Force, while other components are constrained to reactive 'framework' tasks only. This places major impediments upon the Force's freedom of action and prevents it from realising its full potential. One of the more notable achievements of the Plans 'shop' during my time with the Mission was an initiative to ameliorate this very problem. Concept WEAPONIZE was a mechanism which allowed us to 'unlock' those troops available for the conduct of offensive operations alongside appropriate combat support and enabling elements in order to form what we coined 'Kampfgruppe WEAPONIZE' for discrete, time-bounded missions.

A short vignette of the first such operation serves as a good illustration of the influence which a small British contingent, placed in key appointments, can wield in a large military formation. The South African three-star Force Commander seemed to like our 'sales pitch' when I explained the idea of forming Kampfgruppe WEAPONIZE. He then asked me to suggest a good time to conduct a trial operation against a live target – in this case, the FDLR. As we were in early December, I suggested, not for a moment thinking that he would actually agree, that if we wanted to be really 'manoeuvre-ist' we would conduct such an operation on Christmas Day, my rationale being that this would be the last day the FDLR would expect the UN to conduct an offensive operation. The General's face broke into a slightly sinister grin and the outcome was that I had ruined Christmas for everybody. Fortunately, 'everybody' also included the FDLR, as one of their field groups was dislodged from its base-camp by a joint heliborne assault resulting in



**Remembrance Day in the Congo, Bev Allen alongside a Member of the Canadian Army.**





# Mainly About People

fifty five militants surrendering themselves to the UN over the following days and weeks. Such was the success of this concept that a series of further operations were conducted as part of Concept WEAPONIZE. A minor perk of being the chief of the Plans 'shop' meant that I was allowed to choose the names of these operations. Thus Operations SPEED JAB, UPPERCUT, RIGHT HOOK, LEFT HOOK and HAMMERFIST were all launched in subsequent ventures (sadly I couldn't quite persuade the Indian Force Chief of Staff to agree to 'Operation FLYING HEADBUTT', though not for lack of trying).

Another area where we were able to make good progress was in better integrating the civilian sections of the Mission and the Force. Previously, much activity, while well intentioned, tended to be conducted in 'stovepipes' and separate work-streams were often mal-coordinated and occasionally counter-productive to each other. The problem seemed to partly stem from a lack of understanding on both parts of the differing modes of operation of the civilian sections and the military. But by seeking the support of like-minded individuals in certain influential civilian sections, notably the UN Stabilization Support Unit and the Office of the Deputy Special Representative to the Secretary General, we were able to propose a comprehensive strategy which allowed for better coordination across the Mission. That MONUSCO had been in place for 17 years and this had not previously been achieved was both surprising and somewhat frustrating. However, I was satisfied to see that a pilot scheme for such activity against the FRPI, a notorious IAG around the town of Bunia, was beginning to gain traction as my time in the DRC came to an end. I am informed by people still with the Mission that progress in this area continues to be made after my departure, which is encouraging.

There are many more things I would love to tell you about the DRC and my time there - including a flight in a Ukrainian helicopter gunship to the top of an active volcano, some 'fish-head stew' served to me by one of the national contingents and a very close encounter with a wild silverback gorilla in the jungle - but, sadly, the 'spinning of these dits' will have to wait for another time.

Suffice to say that, while tragic in many ways, the DRC is an absolutely stunning country in terms of its natural beauty, its wildlife and its people. It was both an incredible experience and a huge privilege to have had the opportunity to serve there. Although I concede that I had failed to 'fix the Congo' during



**Giving it big-licks with the Canadian C4 on the ranges in the Congo.**

my tenure, I also came to the conclusion that the UN Mission faces a massively uphill task to accomplish the same thing. I take some consolation from the fact that, in spite of the many frustrations and difficulties that MONUSCO experiences, there are many civilians alive today in the DRC who would not be had the Mission not existed. To have been able to make a small contribution to that effort was, of itself, highly rewarding.

## Christmas visit to hospital

**Major Bob Grenfell visited the Regiment's In-Pensioners at the Royal Hospital Chelsea to extend Christmas wishes on behalf of the Regiment. Michael Riley and Dougy May are both in good health and remain active, with George Bayliss residing in the Infirmary where he is really well looked after.**





Dick Gould

# Bishkek Bound

I am a glutton for alliteration and 15 years ago it took me from Bures to Beijing on the Trans Siberian railway. The downside is that I seldom get much further than the third page of the atlas index and will almost certainly never visit Zaboli or Zyryanka. On my retirement I felt I needed a project and a break clean activity to mark the transition from paid work to unpaid work. I have visited Central Asia quite extensively but always being driven in a bus, taxi or car by other people, denying me the opportunity to deviate or stop when I wanted to. So I took out the atlas, found page two of the index and settled on Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan (how is that for a name with only one vowel in a 10 letter word!) as my destination.

For me half the pleasure of travelling is in the planning. Trained by the Army I never expect the plan to survive the first contact with officialdom, but at least it gives you a platform to start from. I found a left hand drive VW Golf Mk4 with 80k on the clock ('lively little runner, mate') paid the requested £750 and started to plan. My plans were thrown into disarray by our daughter Jo's decision to get married. The plan had to be shelved until after the wedding, which stretched, what with one thing and another to July this year.

So, with my car loaded with presents for friends in Central Asia, spare tyres, tow ropes, fire extinguishers, old army rations, a case of whiskey to lubricate my passage across boundaries and a TomTom satnav I set off to Harwich to cross to the Hook of Holland. This was an excellent way to start my journey, with a day of dozing in my cabin, interspersed with eating and watching the waves.

It was the most stress free cross Channel journey I have ever had and I easily made Osnabruck for the first night. Up early for the real start of my journey I hit the autobahnen and managed to cross Germany and enter Poland, getting as far at Wraklow the first day. This beautiful city is a former capital of Poland and boasts a huge salt mine which at one stage provided 80 per cent of Poland's GDP. It has a castle overlooking a river, and a city centre with what is one of the largest squares in the world. A place I would love to return to.



The Polish drivers are worth a mention. It is said that at the start of WW2 in one battle Polish cavalry charged the German tanks on horseback. That same gene that motivated those cavalymen to charge still remains in all Polish drivers. A total disregard for their own safety and that of everyone else in a glorious but ultimately futile, display of bravado. I survived to cross my first international boundary and enter Ukraine. I stayed outside Kiev where the terrain was typical of the rest of the country. Rolling





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steppes intersected by river carved valleys. Beautiful in its own gentle way. My next stop was at Kharkiv, an important city close to the Russian border. Onion domed churches covered the cityscape which was entered by a five-mile avenue of trees and parkland, which was quite spectacular. I stayed there for a night and set off early for Russia.

I was stopped at a police checkpoint and asked if I had had anything to drink in the last 48 hours. I had enjoyed a beer with my lunch the previous day said so. I was quite happy for them to breathalyse me as I knew that the alcohol would have passed through me by then. Imagine my horror when the reading came out at 25. I insisted that another test be given, and this time it was 26. I had been set up, and the bent coppers were using falsely calibrated breathalysers. I was offered the opportunity to have a blood test, but felt that if the coppers could be bent, what were the odds that a nurse at the hospital might also be in on the act. I was warned that my car would be confiscated until a trial could be called, probably a week later. My visas were tight to allow me two days either side of my planned itinerary, but not a whole week. I am ashamed to say that I accepted the policeman's 'offer of help' and paid my \$100 bribe. So, if anyone follows me and drives in Ukraine, do not drink at all until you leave the country.

With a slightly sour taste in my mouth against bent Ukrainian policemen I crossed the border into Russia. It took four hours for the Byzantine Soviet bureaucratic system to let me through. It had recently been improved by computerisation, which now meant that as well as a paper trail, as in the past, all data had to be manually entered into the computer!

It was a short drive to Prokhorovka, a place I particularly wanted to visit. This was the site of the greatest tank battle ever fought. In 1943 the front line between the German and Soviet armies had an unwelcome bulge of soviet forces at Kursk which, in Operation Citadel, the Germans sought to slice off. They advanced from the north and south, intending to link up in the middle. In the south the advance got to Prokhorovka, a small railway junction and town where Russian T34s charged down the hillside and



rammed the German tanks in an effort to stop them. I suspect that this was a good propaganda story, but a few tanks may well have collided in the dust and smoke. This did not stop the Germans and the Soviets lost the town. However such was the bravery of the Soviet soldiers that the site now has a huge memorial and not one, but two museums. I was able to lay a wreath at the memorial on the actual anniversary of the battle in tribute to the sacrifices made by the Soviet troops.







I spent a day there and then I had planned to stop at Volgograd for the night, but arriving there at 1600 felt I could press on a further 250 miles to Astrakhan. My route took me parallel to the great Volga and over its flood plain. As dusk came I could see first the silver of the river through the muddy banks and clumps of bushes, which then changed to blood red as the sun set. Arriving at Astrakhan at 2300 I could not find my hotel. My satnav could get me close but not exactly to the place. So, at a

fast food joint I asked a lad if he spoke english. No he replied, but his friend did. A group of five of them, all students from the Caucasus countries of Chechnya, Ingushetia and Daghestan took me through dark alleyways and parks to my hotel. Such kindness was again reflected the following morning when a Russian man drove 10 miles out of his way to get me onto the right road for Kazakhstan. Astrakhan was really the start of Central Asia for me. It is a large university town founded on the Volga River with







two enormous bridges crossing two streams of the river. It was far more central Asian than Russian, with the smells, appearance and culture of Central Asia

It is close to the border with Kazakhstan which was one of the smoothest border crossings I passed through as Russia has a trade agreement with the Kazaks. Kazakhstan is largely desert and has probably the worst roads I encountered on my travels. Potholes deep and long enough to conceal cars. The smaller potholes fill with water which the camels and wild horses come to drink blocking the road until they have had their fill. The speed limit on Kazak roads is 60mph. A video exists of me doing 70 mph. This was taken from a Kazak police car travelling in the opposite direction. He quickly did a U turn and I stopped to enjoy the video. After showing it to me he said: 'Surprise!' Did he want me to spread my arms and go 'Da-na'? Was he going to surprise me by letting me go free? It is not really a surprise if you ask for it and know what it is. I latched on and had to tell him the word he wanted to use is 'bribe'. I paid up and felt quite pleased that I had helped to double his English vocabulary.

The national sport of Kazakhstan is Kokpar. This is a mixture of polo and rugby using a goat or lamb carcas as the ball and is conducted on horseback. It involves a lot of jostling, pushing and shoving. All Kazhak seem to practise Kokpar when they drive cars. Four cars will line up at two lane traffic lights, with the person on the outside quite likely wanting to turn across the whole stream of traffic. There maybe a nanosecond when no one moves at traffic lights, but I did not notice it. Orange seemed to mean everybody. Whilst not good for safety or cars it does mean that the Kazak team is the Eurasian Kokpar champion at the moment.

I stayed in a desert outpost with a group of oil contractors who looked after me using Russian as a common language. The next leg of my journey was 450 miles across the desert into Uzbekistan. I set off at 0630 and just as I was about to leave the town I stopped for someone hitching a lift. He had a bottle of beer in his hand. Whether this was breakfast or left over from last night I was not certain. He was a 50-year-old Uzbek worker going home for a spot of leave. He was, it turned out, going to to the same small town as I was, 450 miles and an international border away. He looked after me at the border crossing mocking the young conscript border guards, hassling the officials for delaying me and amusing the queuing Uzbeks. That crossing took the customary four hours and we headed off into Uzbekistan. We pressed on with me grunting appropriately at the right points in his commentary on life and Uzbekistan and made good time.




We stopped off at a desert tea house for an evening meal when about 60 miles from our destination, where he had a bite to eat and three large vodkas. He dropped off to sleep almost as soon as we left, and made himself very comfortable in the back of the car. Every so often as he stretched a foot, fortunately socked and not booted, would wave before my eyes. I knew the way to our town so he could sleep in peace until we got there. Waking him was the most difficult thing I encountered on my whole journey, but eventually I was able to get him out of the car and into a local taxi.

In Khiva I stayed for three days to recharge my batteries and relax. I have friends there and could enjoy pottering about the town, the bazaar and surrounding countryside. Across another desert, the Kyzyl Kum lay Bukhara, my next destination. The







filling stations only have a certain amount of fuel on two days per week. If you miss those days, or they run out before you have been able to fill up, you have to purchase black market fuel. Those selling fuel place a milk bottle full of petrol outside their front door. It is slightly more expensive, but provides a good service without the queues! Bukhara was quite warm at 45C, but the week before had been 55C which was too hot for the locals let alone me. I headed south towards Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan. This was to be my stopping off place for a couple of days before I set off for the Pamir Highway, a road/track circling the Pamir mountains and with passes of up to 15,000 feet. The Russians had set up a garrison, half way round the route, at a place called Murghab from where they would patrol southwards towards Afghanistan where the British held influence. It was the highest garrison town and not a good place to be sent. Murghab has no trees, no grass, indeed nothing but grit and dust. It is twinned with Mordor (Hobbit fans will get this). Unfortunately the River Panj had washed away the road and I could not get up to start the Pamir Highway. I had to change my plans.

I decided to cross Tajikistan and re-enter Uzbekistan briefly before entering Kyrgyzstan at Osh. Tajikistan is largely mountains. They ask there of mountains in your own country, are they grass or rock mountains. Theirs are all rock and very beautiful. The road across the country goes high up over passes with steep lake-filled valleys below, populated only by sheep and shepherds. Numerous dark, unlit, dusty tunnels cut through the rock, some 3km long. It was a journey I have never done before and a beautiful one too.

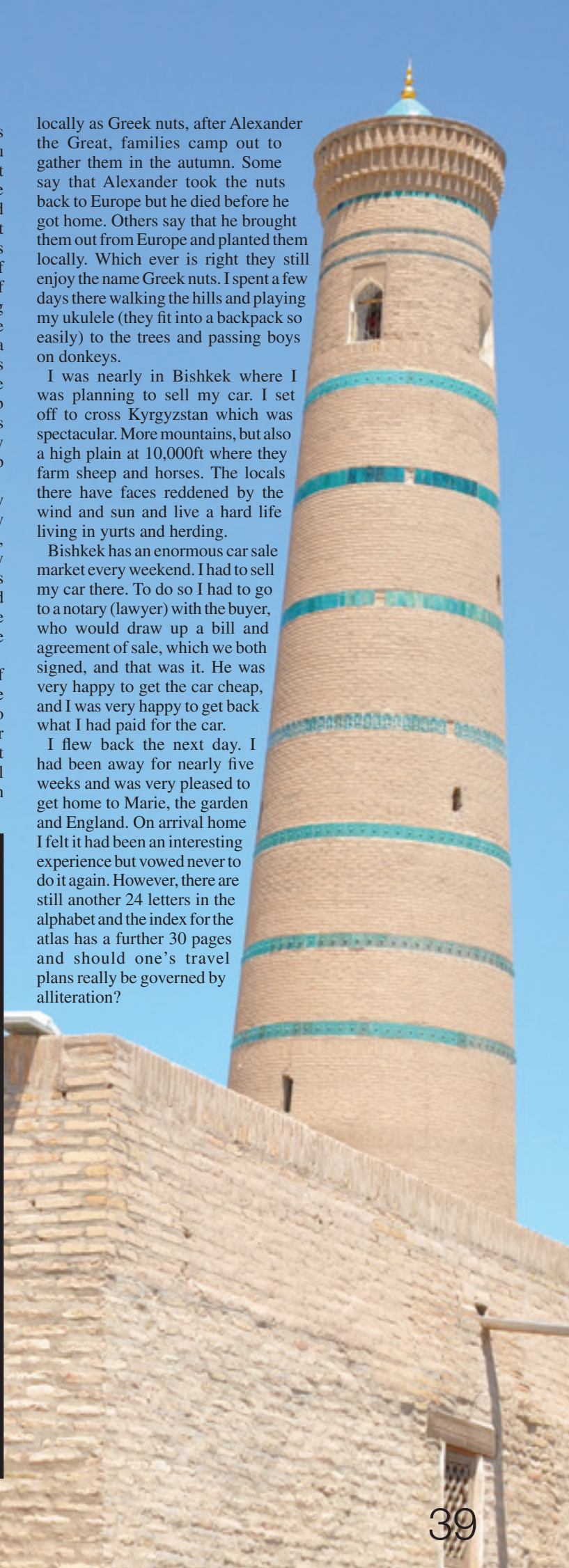
I quickly found myself in Osh, famous as the midway point of the silk road from China to the Mediterranean ports. From there I went to Arslanbob, a small town in the mountains. It has two beautiful waterfalls and has long been a summer hill station for the wealthy of Osh and Jallalabad. It is situated in the largest walnut tree forest in the world. These beautiful trees cover all the slopes of the mountains, the valleys and flood plains. Known

locally as Greek nuts, after Alexander the Great, families camp out to gather them in the autumn. Some say that Alexander took the nuts back to Europe but he died before he got home. Others say that he brought them out from Europe and planted them locally. Which ever is right they still enjoy the name Greek nuts. I spent a few days there walking the hills and playing my ukulele (they fit into a backpack so easily) to the trees and passing boys on donkeys.

I was nearly in Bishkek where I was planning to sell my car. I set off to cross Kyrgyzstan which was spectacular. More mountains, but also a high plain at 10,000ft where they farm sheep and horses. The locals there have faces reddened by the wind and sun and live a hard life living in yurts and herding.

Bishkek has an enormous car sale market every weekend. I had to sell my car there. To do so I had to go to a notary (lawyer) with the buyer, who would draw up a bill and agreement of sale, which we both signed, and that was it. He was very happy to get the car cheap, and I was very happy to get back what I had paid for the car.

I flew back the next day. I had been away for nearly five weeks and was very pleased to get home to Marie, the garden and England. On arrival home I felt it had been an interesting experience but vowed never to do it again. However, there are still another 24 letters in the alphabet and the index for the atlas has a further 30 pages and should one's travel plans really be governed by alliteration?







# Mainly About People

## The 25th Eagle and Garter Salamanca Dinner 2017

On the 22nd of July 2017 (Salamanca Day) the Eagle and Garter Dinner Cub held the 25th Annual Salamanca Dinner at the Marks Tey Hotel in Colchester. The Dinner Club has come a long way since its early meetings in TA Centres, before moving to Bassingbourn Barracks where it enjoyed a long and excellent relationship. The Marks Tey Hotel is now the preferred venue and over the past number of years has provided great service and very good food.

The Pompadours as always were in a great mood to enjoy themselves and they did, a very good evening was had by all. The Guest Speaker, Simon Etherington, gave a very interesting and well received presentation which contained relevant humour and information. A big thank you to Simon, we all enjoyed it. The Corps of Drums of the Essex Army Cadet Force entertained us with a very accomplished and professional display enjoyed and appreciated by all.

It is always hard to put into words what a fantastic atmosphere is created when so many old comrades and friends come together to remember times gone by, remember the characters we have known and the experiences shared, nights like this can only be experienced. We always share a few moments of thoughts to remember those who cannot be with us anymore.

For the past 25 years Bob Potter has been at the forefront of organising the annual Dinner, year after year and without his dedicated contribution the Dinner Club would not be the success that it is. A special presentation was made to Bob on behalf of



all members by Brigadier Colin Groves, a big thank you to him and hope the gift will assist him in improving his handicap and enjoying many days on the golf course. It was a total surprise to Bob who will continue as Secretary and we all look forward to many more great Dinner nights in the future.

Next year the Dinner will be held on the 21st July at the Marks Tey Hotel Colchester we look forward to seeing you all there.

All the fours.

## Presentation to Mrs Margaret Legg of her Imperial Service Medal

Margaret Legg served as a trusted Civil Servant for most of her adult life. However, it was only in the latter stages that the Regiment had the honour and good fortune to employ her as Assistant to the Area 2 Regimental Secretary. For the bulk of this time she looked after Major Bill O'Driscoll, which deserves a medal in its own right!

Bill retired in September 2014, but his replacement was not found until March 2015 during which time Margaret held the fort running the office in the impeccable manner in which only she could. Her handover to Bill's Successor, Tim Brown, could not have been more efficient. She was the perfect assistant; highly effective, totally trustworthy and most importantly she threw herself into the job wholeheartedly attending most functions often in her own time. Best of all she knew everyone in the Association and beyond.

On Thursday 5th October 2017 we were finally able to present Margaret with her Imperial Service Medal (ISM) for 25 years of perfect service as a Civil Servant, a medal which is only awarded upon retirement. A strong group of admirers from various previous chapters in Margaret's life assembled in the Officers' Mess at Kendrew Barracks to witness the occasion. After champagne and speeches the presentation took place and this gracious Lady was honoured by all those who have known and worked with her for her total devotion to her work, and her friendship.



# Allied Withdrawal Battlefield Study

Brigadier James Woodham CBE MC led the Army Training Branch on a recent Battlefield Study of both Aachen and the Allied withdrawal through France to Dunkirk in WWII. Brig Woodham and fellow Royal Anglian, Major Frank Atkins laid a wreath at the Commonwealth War Grave Cemetery in Le Paradis, the site of the massacre of 97 soldiers and officers of the 2nd Battalion, The Royal Norfolk Regiment on 27 May 1940.

Head Training (Army), Brig Woodham commented "This battlefield study has allowed us to examine many of the issues involved in fighting in complex terrain, and to capture the implications for the way in which we train. From studying the manoeuvrist approach in attacking the Siegfried Line, through urban operations in Aachen, to the delay battle in Normandy we were able to bring to life a wide range of issues with great relevance to contemporary Army training.

The final stand in Le Paradis, honouring the sacrifice made by the men of the Royal Norfolk Regiment, was a fitting way to highlight the personal experiences that typified the valiant efforts of so many throughout the campaign."

Maj Frank Atkins, currently an SO2 serving in Army Training Branch, was delighted to be able to visit the locations where



Le Paradis - Brig Woodham and the author.



Le Paradis graves.





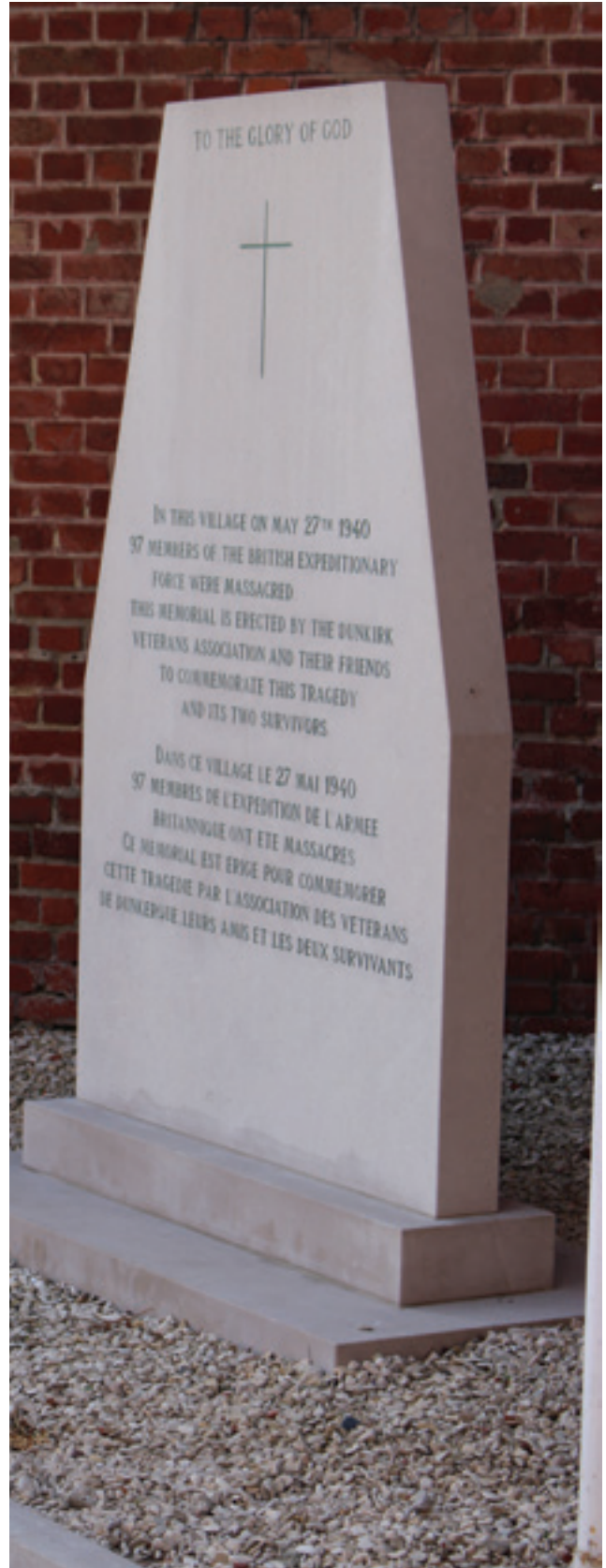
# Mainly About People

his grandfather served in the 2nd Battalion, The Royal Norfolk Regiment. Dennis Atkins, pictured, was a Sgt at the time of Le Paradis and had been separated from the rest of the Battalion at the time.

“My grandfather knew the officers and soldiers who were massacred, so it meant a great deal to lay a wreath and pay my respects.” Dennis Atkins, fought in the delay to Dunkirk and was evacuated from the beaches. He later served with the 2nd Battalion in Burma where he commissioned from CSgt in 1944.



Le Paradis - Royal Norfolks headstone.



Le Paradis headstone.

# Officers' Club Annual Dinner



Lt Col Kevin Hodgson assembled a cohort of 13 friends who all served together in Munster. Clockwise from extreme left: Chris Groom, Dick Michael, Roger Brunt, Brian Davenport, Dick Harrold, Alan Deed, Kevin Hodgson, Peter Willdridge, David Baylis (hidden), Tom Longland, Mike Beard, Bob West, Robin Chisnall. The date of next year's dinner is 2 November 2018. Should anyone wish to reserve a table as above please contact the Assistant Regimental Secretary to discuss.

The Officers' Club's Annual Dinner was held at the Army & Navy Club (The Rag) on Friday 3rd November 2017. 81 members and 4 guests dined. The guests were The Master, The Upper Warden and Renter Warden from the Worshipful Company of Pouters, and Mrs Vanessa Burkitt a friend and supporter of the Regiment. The Colonel of the Regiment Maj

Gen RW Wooddisse CBE MC gave an address giving an update on the work of our Battalions and taking the opportunity to thank and make a presentation to his predecessor Lt Gen PD Jones CB CBE for all his hard work on behalf of the Regiment. Loyal Greetings were sent to and received from the Colonel-in-Chief, His Royal Highness The Duke of Gloucester.

## Congratulations in Order

The Regiment congratulates its former Colonel, General Sir John McColl, on having been appointed a Knight in Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem in August 2016 when Lieutenant Governor of Jersey (L.G. 5 Aug 2016 - see <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/notice/2589550>)

The only other former officer of the Regiment to be so elevated was Major General Sir Douglas Kendrew KCMG CB CBE DSO (Deputy Colonel The Royal Anglian Regiment (Leicestershire) 1964-65 and the last Colonel The

Royal Leicestershire Regiment 1963-64). He was made a Knight in the Most Venerable Order in June 1964 (L.G. 26.6.1964 – see <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/43367/page/5541> when Governor of Western Australia 1963-73 (to whom Major General Patrick Stone, the late Captain David Michael, and Colonel Michael Goldschmidt were ADCs in WA when Captains). see also <https://royalleicestershireregiment.past-view.com/entity/102135-kendrew-sir-douglas-anthony-kcmg-cb-cbe-dso?q=>







# Mainly About People

## Sacrifice and Remembrance Project

On retiring from the Army in 1997 I was fortunate to take up the position of CEO of a local charity in Leicestershire with my immediate predecessor being Col John Heggs who had strong Regimental connections having served with the Royal Leicestershire Regiment.

The charity supports and empowers rural settlements to take control of their own well being and growth by encouraging community activity to maintain essential services through voluntary participation.

In 2013, I pondered on how best the charity was going to offer support to communities in their own commemoration of the 100th anniversary period of WW1. Like most service personnel I have always had an interest in the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) and in my travels have always sought out any war cemeteries in the local area. Visits to Gallipoli, El Alamein and Kanchuburai in Thailand and of course those on the Western Front have only added to my interest in this subject.

The idea was born to put together a presentation on the CWGC which I entitled Sacrifice and Remembrance and to submit an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund which at the time were fortuitously running a funding stream to support the commemoration of WW1. The bid was successful and this allowed the charity to promote the presentation to communities, buy the necessary equipment, recruit a small team volunteers to help in the delivery and pay their travel expenses.

The presentation covers the scale of the sacrifice in WW1, the evolution of the CWGC and its founding principles, the personalities involved, some stories behind the headstones and how we now commemorate the fallen in recent conflicts. I stress at the start of the presentation that I am not commenting on the rights and wrongs of going to war or even the conduct of such conflicts. Like many in our Regimental family, who have seen sacrifice at first hand, I believe that if we are to send our young men and women to war that we should remember their sacrifice. Importantly I feel strongly that the torch of remembrance must be passed to the younger generation so that in time they too





can continue the remembrance of their forebears. This aspect will become harder as hopefully their memories of conflict will become ever more distant than older generations. Audiences ranged from schools, W.I.s, U3As, Rotary and Probus Clubs, Cadet units and community historical groups to name but a few and the team were kept busy delivering to very receptive audiences. To date the presentation has been given to over 5,000 people.

On retiring after 18 years from the charity in 2015 our family relocated from Leicester to Southsea to be close to where my wife worked. With time now on my hands I decided to offer the presentation in the local Hampshire area but first had to think of ways of making interested audiences aware of what I was offering. By chance I came across a W.I annual year book which offered guest speakers the chance to be entered in this book provided they attended an audition of W. I. members. This audition was successfully completed and numerous bookings resulted and now most engagements are a result of word of mouth recommendations between organisations and groups.

From interest and questions poised by audiences other presentations were developed the first being The Miracle Flower-From Flanders to the Tower.

This presentation follows the evolution of the Poppy in Remembrance from Capt John McCrae's moving poem In Flanders Fields, the involvement of two women in its promotion, Moina Michael an American and Anna Guerin from France and Major George Howson who established the Poppy Factory.

The story then moves to Afghanistan which found British soldiers once again patrolling in poppy fields but not the species found on the Western Front but the opium poppy and the difficulties in trying to encourage farmers to grow other crops instead and the backlash this caused which pushed them under the influence of the Taliban. The controversies of the Poppy are mentioned in particular the reluctance of the then Irish President to lay a wreath of poppies alongside the one placed by the Queen due to its association with the conflict in Northern Ireland. Also the refusal and reasons of the broadcaster Jon Snow to wear a poppy and the hijacking of the Field of Remembrance by Gordon Brown and David Cameron for a publicity photoshoot after a remembrance service attended by the Queen in Westminster Abbey.

The presentation ends with the story of the Blood Swept Lands

and Seas of Red display at the Tower of London in 2014 where one ceramic poppy was planted for every soldier who died in WW1.

Whilst every memorial, however small, is important there are some that stand out by their sheer scale and significance. This led to the next presentation "Iconic Memorials for the Fallen". The Thiepval Memorial, the Cenotaph, The Tomb of the Unknown Warrior, Iwo Jima and Vietnam memorials in Washington, and more recently the Armed Forces Memorial at Alveras, the Ring of Remembrance, and the Bomber Command Memorial are just some of memorials highlighted.

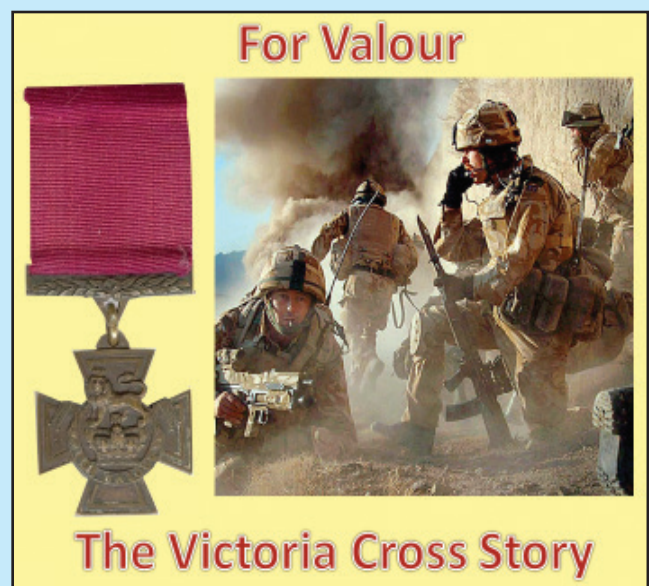
There is one particular inscription on a memorial in America which for me sums up the act of remembrance "We were young, We have died, Remember us."

As these presentations touched on the bravery of so many soldiers it seemed a natural progression for the final presentation to be entitled "For Valour – The Victoria Cross Story"

The presentation highlights the important role of Queen Victoria in the instigation of the medal, other gallantry medals ranking alongside the VC, and the stories of a selection of VC winners and their actions from WW1 to Afghanistan.

In my research I was fortunate to be invited to visit Hancocks the jeweller, based in Great Burlington Arcade in London, who have had the honour of producing all VCs from their conception in 1864. They explained the process for making and inscribing each VC and I was shown their record book containing information of all VC recipients.

In the course of researching and providing these presentations one thing that became apparent is that remembrance cannot be taken for granted. A case in point is that of Private Robert Benner, a Royal Anglian but at the time serving in the Queen's Regiment in Northern Ireland. He was murdered by the IRA off duty visiting his fiancé in S Armagh in 1971. On visiting his headstone in Narborough Cemetery, Leicestershire I noticed that his name was not on the war memorial located 100 metres from his grave. The reason being that during the conflict Parish Councils were reluctant to place the fallen on their war memorials as to them Northern Ireland was not regarded as a war. Thankfully attitudes have since changed and now the fallen in that conflict are quite rightly recognised on local war memorials.







# Diary Dates

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## January

Sun 7 Chapel Sunday, Warley

## February

Sun 4 Chapel Sunday, Warley

Sat 10 **Sobraon Day**

## March

Sun 4 Chapel Sunday, Warley

Wed 14 Regt Museum Trustees Meeting - IWM Duxford

Wed 21 County Colonels' Annual Meeting - RHQ Bury St Edmunds

## April

Sun 1 Chapel Sunday, Warley

Thu 12 Regt Benevolence Meeting - RHQ Bury St Edmunds

Wed 25 **Almanza Day**

Sat 28 Royal Anglian Band Spring Concert - Northampton

## May

Fri 4 Regt Council Meeting

Sun 6 Chapel Sunday, Warley

Thu 17 -

Mon 21 Regt Battlefield Tour

## June

Sun 3 Chapel Sunday, Warley

Sat 16 -

Sun 17 Royal Tigers Association Weekend

Mon 25 **Hindoostan Day**

## July

Sun 1 Chapel Sunday, Warley

Sat 7 Regt Cricket Match - Cambridge

Fri 13 Regt Representative Event - Euston Hall Suffolk

Sun 22 **Salamanca Day**

Fri 27 **Talavera Day**

## August

Wed 1 **Minden Day**

Sun 5 Chapel Sunday, Warley

Sun 12 **Blenheim Day**

Bedford Branch Blenheim Day Service, Church of Transfiguration, Kempston

## September

Sat 1 Regt Rugby

Sun 2 Regt Day - IWM Duxford

Sun 2 Chapel Sunday, Warley

Wed 19 Regt Museum Trustees Meeting - IWM Duxford

## October

Sun 7 Chapel Sunday, Warley

## November

Thu 8 Field of Remembrance Service and Farmers' Club Lunch

Sat 10 Poppy Dinner - Cambridge

Sun 11 Regt Remembrance Service, IWM Duxford

**December**

Sat 1 Royal Leicestershire Regiment Officers' Luncheon - Army and Navy Club - London

Sun 2 Chapel Sunday, Warley

Sun 9 Regt Carol Service - St Mary's Church - Bury St Edmunds

**Royal Anglian Regiment Inter Battalion Fishing Competition**

Match 1	Friday 1 June 2018	Decoy Lakes - Oak Lane
Charity Open	Friday 29 June 2018	Decoy Lakes - Willows Lake
Match 2	Friday 27 July 2018	Decoy Lakes - Yew Lake
Match 3	Friday 28 September 2018	Rookery Waters Pidley - Magpie Lake

*All anglers, serving or retired are more than welcome to attend, further details are available from Paul Halleybone; [Paulw.hallybone@ntlworld.com](mailto:Paulw.hallybone@ntlworld.com)*



**TeamArmy**  
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Army boxing**

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**If you want to know more about Team Army or discuss it further with our CEO, Major General Lamont Kirkland CBE, please contact Gerald Callus at [gerald.callus@teamarmy.org](mailto:gerald.callus@teamarmy.org) or on 07427 175 530, who will facilitate the next steps.**





# Regimental Museum

## Exhibitions

### A Teenage Tommy on the Western Front

In line with the First World War Centenary, the Museum has been focusing on key themes and individuals from the histories of the antecedent Regiments. Thanks to the Suffolk Regimental Museum and Suffolk Archives, we have been able to display facsimiles of the letters of Oliver Hopkin, a young Private (later LCpl), who



Contemporary Collecting.

served on the Western Front with the Suffolk Regiment, from 1915 to his death at Arras in April 1917. In exploring the experiences and the feelings of a particular individual, we hoped this would enable people to make connections to their own lives, and most importantly give an enhanced understanding of conditions for the average soldier on the Western Front. The Curator conducted a radio interview on BBC Cambridgeshire and gave a talk to Herts Police Great War

Society around the letters. If you'd like more information on Oliver please contact the Curator on [royalanglianmuseumcurator@outlook.com](mailto:royalanglianmuseumcurator@outlook.com)

The Museum is interested in collecting both personal stories from the Regimental Family and also material relating to the Regiment. Please get in touch if you would like to help with either of the two.

## New Acquisitions

We have been quite quiet on the acquisitions front, but the Museum would like to extend its thanks to Lillie Sutcliffe, who kindly donated to us the medals of the late WO2 Barry Sutcliffe of the 3rd Battalion.

## Work Experience Placement

In July we facilitated a work experience placement with a cadet from Cambridgeshire. Here is what he had to say about his visit:

### My Work Experience at the Royal Anglian Museum, Duxford 10/11 July 2017

I am a Lance Corporal with the Cambridgeshire Army Cadet Force (3rd Company 'Ironside') and I spent two days of my work experience in the Royal Anglian Museum at IWM Duxford with Joe, the Curator. I wanted to learn about the Poachers because this is what my detachment group is called. Firstly, why is the 2nd Battalion called The Poachers? The name of the Poachers goes back to the First World War and incorporates the Lincolnshire,



July visit for young people associated with the Royal Bermuda Regiment.

Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, Rutland, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire regiments and the battalion is nicknamed after the song called The Lincolnshire Poacher.

A group of about 15 cadets were visiting the museum from Bermuda. There is a historical connection that goes back to WW1 linking the Poachers with Bermudan regiments who fought alongside the Lincolnshire Regiment on the Western Front .

There were some good stories about the Poachers . There was a watch on display that had been worn by a Royal Anglian officer in the 2nd Iraq War that had stopped the moment that Iraqi artillery started hitting the Palace in Basra. The watch had stopped at 12.58. It was awesome but a bit alarming as well!

There was also a shell that had landed at Basra Palace but it was a dud. It was detonated in a controlled explosion and the soldiers brought back some shrapnel from it as a war trophy.

In the cabinet in the office there was also a collection of deactivated weapons. Amongst them there was a Belgian made FAL 308 rifle but this was probably not a military version because there was no bayonet lug. They also had an Armalite AR180 chambered in 5.56mm and 2 captured Taliban RPGs, a Beretta 9mm compact pistol and a Smith & Wesson revolver. I loved looking at those.

I also noticed that there seemed to be a lot of sportsmen who had played for the army from the Poachers regiment.

Thanks Joe for a great couple of days!!

**Matthew Parker – aged 15  
Cottenham Village College**

### **Recording Memories**

This year we have visited two WW2 veterans for the Recording Memories project.

The first was John Lincoln, formerly of the Royal Norfolk Regiment. John served in France and participated in front line action around Holland and Germany. He was awarded with the Military Cross for exemplary leadership of his Platoon.

You can see a short clip from John's interview on Youtube. Simply type 'John Lincoln - Assault on Venray' into the search bar.

The second interviewee was Ken Hay, formerly of the Essex Regiment and Royal Dorset Regiment. Ken landed in Normandy a few weeks after D-Day, and subsequently made his way through the hedgerows, farms and villages around Caen. On patrol he was captured by an SS Unit and forced to spend the rest of the War in a POW Camp in Poland. As the Allies approached, he was later forced on one of the infamous marches from the east back in to Germany, before he was liberated by the Americans.

You can see a short clip from Ken's interview on Youtube. Simply type 'Ken Hay - Recording Memories' into the search bar.

We are still on the lookout for more interviewees to assist us with this project. We'd love to hear from you.

### **Cadets Visit**

In July, the Museum facilitated a trip for young people associated to the Royal Bermuda Regiment. It was great to be able to give a walkthrough quiz of the Gallery and to hear about life in Bermuda.

### **Regimental Day**

Thanks to everyone who visited us in the tent at Regimental Day. If you missed it, we ran a small display around 10 particularly interesting photographs from various different theatres and tours that the Regiment had conducted. We would be interested in your feedback.

## **Museum welcomes new Curator**



**The Regiment welcomes the new Curator of the Regimental Museum at the IWM Duxford, Melissa Kozlenko. Originally from Canada, Melissa did an Honours degree in the Niagara region before moving to the United Kingdom to pursue a career. She has worked for the Essex Regiment Museum for many years as well as the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum. She is very passionate about Regimental history and is excited for her new role at the Royal Anglian Regimental Museum.**





# Can You Remember?

**40**  
YEARS AGO



C Coy on the March during exercise Cold Winter, 1977.



Pte Clover broke the Army and Inter-Services Javelin record with a throw of 80.98 metres.



The Commanding Officer at the head of the march past during the Queen's Jubilee parade at Happy Valley.





**The officers of Tactical Headquarters celebrate the Queen's Silver Jubilee. From left to right: Capt Chisnall, Capt Greenfield, Capt Thornton, Capt Barnes, Maj Woodrow, Lt Col Barnes, Capt Longland.**

1977 was a rather exciting year for the Vikings with exercises in Norway, Italy, Jamaica, Guyana and Denmark. With so many overseas exercises the 2IC was heard to remark that the training cycle was like his folding cycle – small wheels and no brakes. But it was also a successful year for the Battalion, particularly in the field of shooting, athletics and football.

The Poachers joined the 6th Field Force, the United Kingdom's Mobile Force. They completed two large NATO exercises in Denmark and Salisbury Plain and an emergency tour to Belfast. In addition to these, the Battalion competed in the usual run of

Skill At Arms Meets, and notably received a visit from the then Deputy Colonel In Chief, Princess Alice.

The Pompadours continued their operational commitments around the island of Cyprus. Exercise Booted Eagle saw training around the south of Paphos with 1 PARA providing the contesting forces, whereas the enemy was provided by the Gurkhas for the defensive Exercise Dry Stone in the heat of the summer. The usual sporting and adventurous training activities continued, with notable victories for the football team (winning the Carter Cup) and the orienteering team (running 'Walkabout Time').



**The Chief of the Defence Staff, Sir Edward Ashmore, being briefed by Pte. Platten of A Company.**



**Summer in Cyprus... and the ever present threat of fire. LCpls Cooper and Dale, with Ptes Stock and Vorster, attempting to control a blaze.**





# Can You Remember?

**20**  
YEARS AGO



**Pte Rimmer enjoying a lull in the battle at Castlemartin.**

In 1997 the Vikings were beginning to settle back into Oakington Barracks, balancing a busy lifestyle as the only regular Battalion in 49(E) Bde. They returned from Belfast in May, conducted a short stint of recruiting and freedom parades, before preparing for Exercise GRAND PRIX in Kenya, which took place in early 1998

The Poachers enjoyed a training year, supporting the development of the rest of the UK based regular Army, before beginning to prepare for a unit move to Cyprus! Highlights included hosting the filming of the 'Big Breakfast', a live-firing and AT package in Wales, and a freedom march in Lincoln. Notably, a double-page spread was reserved in Castle '97 for the incumbent 'Miss Poacher', Melinda Messenger, and her visit to Warminster..



**WO2 Cooper in fancy dress at Minden Day. At the time he hoped it wouldn't be published ... it still is!**

**The Commanding Officer presenting Minden Roses to HQ Company.**



**A Company at the close of their live fire package.**

**10**  
YEARS AGO



Ross Kemp with the Javelin Platoon.



C Company at Kajaki celebrate St. George's Day.





# Can You Remember?

Op HERRICK 6 dominated 2007 for the Vikings. The most demanding tour the Battalion had completed in decades, over 100 Coy operations were completed in just over 6 months. Over 1000 Taliban fighters were defeated during the course of 350 engagements. Key missions included Operation Silicon, clearing a Taliban stronghold north of Gereshk, Operation Lastay Kulang, clearing the area north of Sangin, and Operation Ghartse Ghar, which again saw the clearing of the green zone and included long night marches for A and B Company, who acted as cut-offs

2007 saw the Poachers settling into Celle, Germany, once more. Highlights of the year included accepting the Freedom of Loughborough, enjoying the coming of the digital age with BOWMAN, and Exercise POACHER's RAT, a particularly rainy CT1&2 validation in Otterburn.

The Steelbacks enjoyed a busy year's training, focussing on offensive and then switching to defensive operations. Crucially, they provided much support to the sister Battalions on active operations, either in the form of manpower, or the vital roles of casualty notification and visiting officers back home. 2007's FTX, exercise HARD KNOCK, took place in Sennybridge, and an exotic annual camp brought the Battalion to Kazakhstan.



Overlooking a sniper observation post.



The CO and RSM inspect a PJNCO cadre.



The Steelbacks visit Flaine for Ex Snow Captive.



The Colonel-In-Chief visited, pictured here presenting the LS&GC to WO2 Riley.



Pte Wray becomes the first Fijian JNCO.





# Can You Remember?



**Capt Child flies the D Company flag on Ex FLYING POACHER.**



**Sgt Hardy on patrol with C Coy, the Vikings.**



**D Coy marches off the parade in Peterborough,**



**B Coy supporting Ex GRIM WARRIOR.**



**A Company returning from a joint strike.**





**Minden Day celebrated at FOB PIMON.**

2012 for the Vikings was dominated by Operation HERRICK 16, the focal point of which was handing responsibility to the ANSF within Nad-e-Ali. By their return, 90% of the security across this vital district had been handed over to the Afghans.

The Poachers had just completed the reverse of the unit move that they are currently conducting – they had just arrived in Cottesmore having moved from Cyprus. This involved handing over the previous barracks, assuming command of an empty RAF camp, acquiring a Battalion's worth of equipment from Germany and collecting a fleet of vehicles from across the UK. Once (barely) settled, the Battalion turned its attention to the up-coming exercise Askari Thunder in Kenya.

The Olympics demanded support from the Steelbacks in 2012, and 80 soldiers were mobilised, despite 120 having already deployed to support operations in Cyprus and a further 30 had deployed to support the Vikings in Afghanistan. A key achievement for the year was the winning of a silver medal at the Cambrian Patrol competition. Throughout all this, the announcement of Army 2020, and all the changes that were due to come for the Reserves, kept the Battalion at the forefront of Regimental minds.



**The silver medal winning Cambrian Patrol team.**



**The Viking's homecoming parade in Ipswich.**





# 1st Battalion The Vikings

Lt Col Guy Foden



## From the CO

I write this introduction in a reflective mood as I will shortly handover command of the 1st Battalion to Lt Col Phill Moxey MBE. In the last two years, Vikings have deployed to eighteen countries, trained 14,963 members of the Nigerian Armed Forces and achieved the highest level of training competence available to a fighting unit. My personal highlight has been the Battalion achieving its well deserved CT 4 certification in the summer on Exercise WESSEX STORM (TESEX to the old and bold). That said, there have been many other highlights.

The year started with the D (Cambridgeshire) Company cadres where we practiced and developed specialist skills, which paid dividends later on. Concurrently, we deployed platoons to the USA, Jordan, Kenya and Oman. At the same time the Battalion Headquarters Team deployed to Kenya to recce our planned exercise in Kenya. As soon as we had developed a plan for the exercise we were told that the exercise had been cancelled and we would be going to Salisbury Plain instead. This decision was swiftly followed by a Short Term Training Team (STTT), from B (Suffolk) Company, deploying to Nigeria to train the Nigerian Navy SBS. A (Norfolk) Company, reinforced by a team from the Poachers and the Band from the



Steelbacks, then deployed to Gibraltar to exercise the Freedom which had recently been bestowed on the Regiment. It was a great honour and we were very well hosted by the government of Gibraltar and supported by the Gibraltar Regiment. We then managed to squeeze in a week of pre-WESSEX STORM training (minus A Company) before the exercise started in earnest.

The Vikings deployed a thousand man battle group onto Salisbury plain on a demanding exercise. Despite the enemy's and the Brigade Headquarters best efforts, we emerged victorious. The result was testament to the enormous amount of work that was put in by the whole Battalion and the fighting ability of my sections, platoons and companies. Before departing on some well-deserved summer leave we managed to fit in a free fall parachuting adventure training expedition to California; definitely not your average adventure training trip.

The autumn has been dominated by C (Essex) Company deploying to Fort Polk, Louisiana on Exercise RATTLESNAKE where they joined a US battle group from the 82nd Airborne Division. Concurrently, Lt Tim Lister deployed a platoon from A Company to the Falklands for four months. Whilst C Company was away we deployed three training teams to Nigeria drawn from A, B and D Companies. In late November, B Company will deploy to India on an exercise with the Indian Army. We have also managed another adventure training expedition to the Atlas Mountains in Morocco.

As you can see it has been quite a year. As ever, it would not have been possible without the support of our families and the wider regimental family. Thank you.



As we move into the Christmas period there have been some big changes within the Vikings.

Both RQMSs have changed appointment, a few Company Commanders have changed appointment and Lt Col Guy Foden has finished command and has moved to Army Headquarters. The Battalion wish everyone good luck in their new jobs.

For me the highlights of the year have been fruitful. Visiting my boys in the USA, Nigeria and the Falkland islands and watching them soldier has been particularly special.

The overriding highlight has to be watching the men operate on Exercise Wessex Storm. Conducting Room combat, dominating the fields and folds of Salisbury plain and constantly giving the excellent OPFOR of the Grenadier Guards a headache.

In February I also hand over command as the Viking RSM. I know full well that that day will be particularly sombre for me but I move to the QDC wing in Brecon for my last year in the Army which I am looking forward to. Thanks for everything men, you are my Viking Brothers and my closing advice is this. Stay hard because the world is getting soft! More importantly remember what you need to be and how you need to command. Be safe, if you can't be safe be thorough and own the problem.

Stabilis.







# 1st Battalion The Vikings

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2017 has been another fast paced and varied year for A (Norfolk) Company. The first few months saw us conducting platoon and company level training in order to prepare for the tasks ahead. The Machine Gun Platoon spent six weeks in Otterburn sharpening their GPMG skills whilst a team from the Company

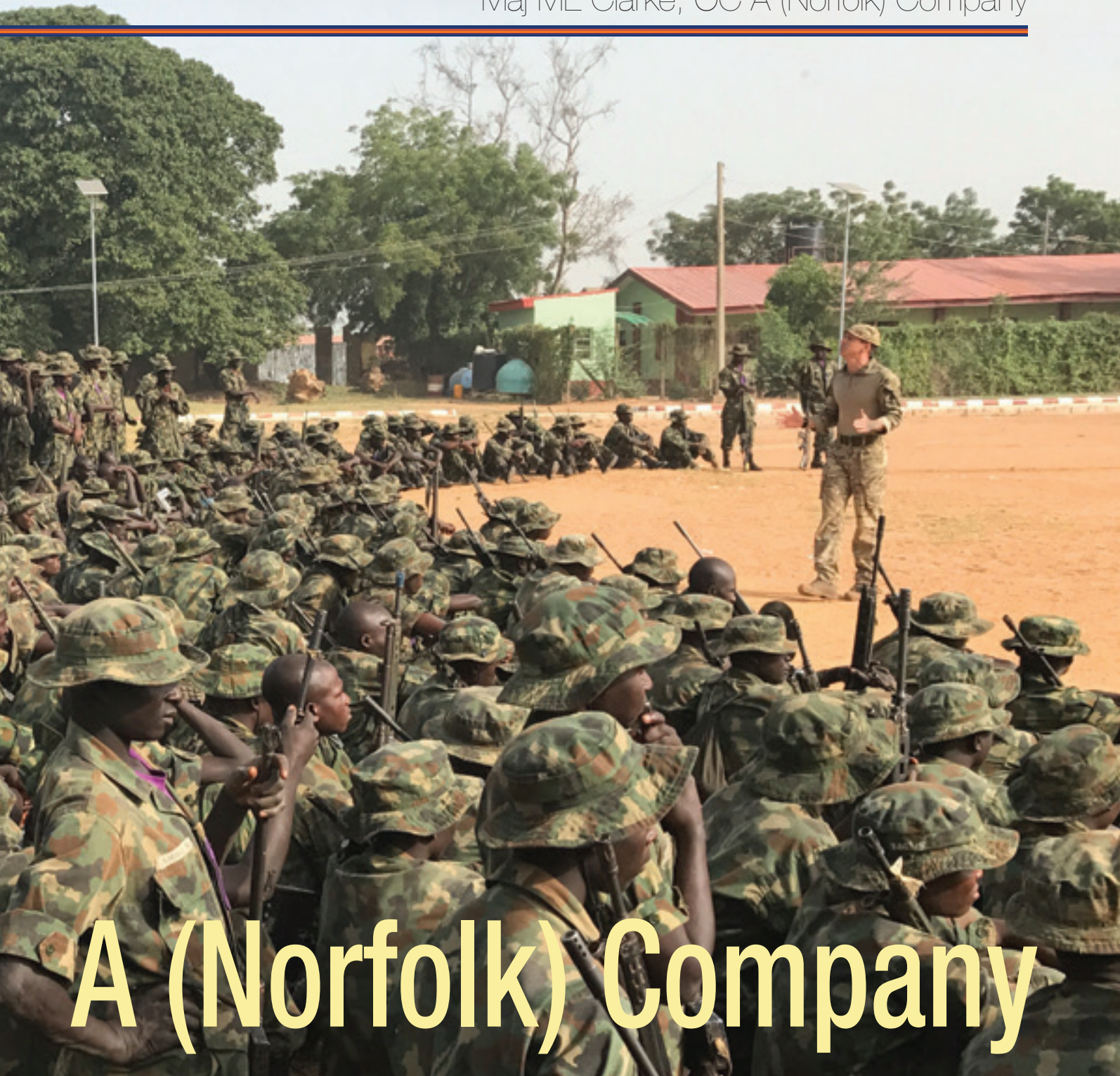
deployed to Bahrain to provide protection and support to a British 2\* HQ exercise.

Soon thereafter A (Norfolk) Company deployed en masse to Gibraltar for three weeks. We conducted two weeks of training, including tunnel warfare, urban training and a challenging section competition covering various military

skills. Having finished that, and after a Company run to the top of the Rock (promoting two Ptes to LCpl at the top), we relaxed with some fishing, paddle boarding, kayaking and a tour of the historic tunnels. Finally we broke-out our No. 2 dress for a very enjoyable Freedom Parade and were kindly hosted



Maj ME Clarke, OC A (Norfolk) Company



# A (Norfolk) Company

by the Mayor afterwards. The entire Company thoroughly enjoyed our training in Gibraltar and the support shown by the many residents who lined the streets to welcome us and celebrate our friendship.

Exercise WESSEX STORM was the culmination of the build-up training and saw the Battalion spending a testing eight

weeks on Salisbury Plain. Firstly we continued our live-fire training up to and including some challenging Company attacks at night. That done the blank phase tested us in a variety of tactical actions at Company level before a final Battlegroup attack onto Copehill Down. This was conducted at lightning pace

and lauded by our observers as the fastest to clear the village in recent years. The overriding memory however for most members of the Company will probably be digging trenches during an unusually hot British summer!

Following some well-earned summer leave (and my take-over from Maj David





# 1st Battalion The Vikings



Cpl Brown oversees an A Company bayonet fighting lesson.





### **A Company are warmly welcomed as they exercise the freedom of Gibraltar.**

Haggar) the majority of the Company have deployed overseas again. 2 Platoon headed south to the Falkland Islands for three months attached to the Resident Infantry Company (provided by 2 MERCIAN). Whilst down there they are enjoying the freedom of section-level patrols across the vast islands and conducting some particularly enjoyable live-firing training, including support

weapons. They have also taken the opportunity to visit some of the battlefields and see the penguins and seals. Simultaneously 1 Platoon were training in America with the US Army and C (Essex) Coy for six weeks on Exercise RATTLESNAKE. Particular mention should go to Cpl Shaun Allen who received a "hero of the battle" award from the US Task Force commander



**The Minister for the Armed Forces, Mark Lancaster TD, and OC A Company are thanked by the Nigerian Army Depot Commandant for the work of the training team.**



**Sgt Murphy tests the Nigerian Army recruits in their casualty evacuation drills.**





## 1st Battalion The Vikings



### **Inter section competition in Gibraltar.**

for his determined leadership during one attack. The remainder of Company were in Nigeria delivering Pre-Deployment Training to Nigerian Army recruits to support their battle against Boko Haram

in the North East.

The Company will re-group prior to Christmas for festive celebrations before heading on leave. 2018 promises to be another enjoyable year, with the Battalion

ski camp in January and further overseas training tasks on the horizon. We will also stand ready to deploy as part of the Joint Expeditionary Force Light Brigade should other operational tasks arise.



**Members of the Company enjoying some well earned R&R after training in Gibraltar.**



# Exercise Barbary Sun 2017

Gibraltar is a small peninsula to the south of Spain, and the gateway to the Mediterranean Sea from the Atlantic. It is a strategic position that has seen it become one of the most fortified and fought-over places in Europe. It has been occupied countless times by various empires until in 1713 when the Kingdom of Spain ceded the territory to Britain as part of a peace treaty. Fast forward just over three hundred years and one could mistake the high street in Gibraltar for any high street in the UK but for the sun shine, warmth and the Barbary Apes that dominate the Rock.

2017 added another key date to the great history of Gibraltar. Between the 12th – 27th May, the Royal Anglian Regiment deployed to the Rock to obtain the Freedom of the City, and conduct an important Company level exercise and some adventure training. All three Battalions within the Regiment were represented – Viking, Poachers and Steelbacks. A (Norfolk) Company under the command of Major Dave Haggard, formed the main body, with a section from the 2nd Battalion, as well as the Regiment's Bandsmen.

Upon arrival A (Norfolk) Company deployed straight into some military training, but this was not the cold and wet woodblocks of Brecon, or the never-ending plains of Kenya. This was tunnels - miles of them. During the Second World War, defensive positions

and logistical tunnels were constructed that stretched for over 30 miles, ranging from ones one may mistake for the Dartford tunnel, to some just big enough for the smallest of soldiers to squeeze through. The British Army has trained in these tunnels for years but none more than the Royal Regiment of Gibraltar. They provided their subject matter experts to pass on their expertise to the Viking commanders of A (Norfolk) Company. The training saw sections and platoons operating in these tunnels for up to 48 hours at a time with long periods in complete darkness contributing to the challenge. There was light at the end of the tunnel however with some training conducted above ground too. The very southern tip of Gibraltar (Buffadero Training Area) provided opportunity to conduct some 'fighting in built up areas' (FIBUA) training. This area provided some high-quality training and great views of the African and European continents. The end of the exercise phase saw a section competition take place which involved marching nearly 21 km both in and out of the tunnels, and up and down features for a total elevation gain of 300 metres. Eight sections competed with there being an ammunition carry, section attack, assault course, casualty evacuation and tunnel clearance. In some extreme temperatures, each section took around four hours to complete with the competition being won



The Band of the Royal Anglian Regiment.





# 1st Battalion The Vikings







**The Mayor of Gibraltar inspecting A (Norfolk) Company.**

by Cpl Hyde and his section.

Another task for the Regiment was to receive the Freedom of the City from the Mayor of Gibraltar. The parade formed up and marched onto John Mackintosh Square, and as expected, with North

Africa just 13 miles across the Med, the sun and heat were oppressive. The Colonel of the Regiment, General Phil Jones, and the Mayor of Gibraltar, Her Worship Kaiane Aldorino, inspected the soldiers and officers on parade. Once inspected the Mayor gave the Commanding Officer the freedom to march the Regiment through the city of Gibraltar with bayonets fixed, colours flying and drums beating. The citizens of Gibraltar were terrific and displayed







# 1st Battalion The Vikings

Lt Johnston -  
lord of all he  
surveys.





their recognition for the importance of the day with applause and cheers and the Regiment marched through their city. The Royal Anglian Regiment had now further sealed its ties with Gibraltar.

Gibraltar has so much more to offer other than military training and drill. Its history is fascinating as revealed by WO1 Jackson, a resident of Gibraltar who led us on some great tours. The programme had the lads taken across the peninsula to learn about the great fortifications, why they were built and by whom. Other facts of interest included the early arrival of Neanderthals many centuries ago, up to the SAS shootings of IRA members in 1988. In addition to these

cultural activities there was also a great opportunity to conduct adventure pursuits – paddle boarding and fishing. It was a welcome end to some arduous training before the Company was plunged

into EX WESSEX STORM the following week.





## 1st Battalion The Vikings

# B (Suffolk) Company

For B Company, 2017 has been one of the busiest years in the post Afghanistan era. The Company has: deployed on two overseas training exercises, in Jordan and India; provided pre-deployment training for Nigerian special forces on two occasions; played its part in the Battalion's success on Exercise Wessex Storm; and entered two silver medal winning teams on Exercise Cambrian Patrol – a stimulating and varied mix of overseas activity and testing training in preparation for high readiness next year.

The foundations of the year were laid in late 2016 with a good run out on Salisbury Plain in support of the D Company cadres, which got the Company back into conventional operations following its focus on Op ELGIN in Bosnia. Shortly into the new

## From the OC

year, half of the Company, under the command of Lt McCurley and Sgt Green, deployed to Jordan with 2 PWRR on the six week Ex OLIVE GROVE. With Queen's Division reputations at stake, and often in bitterly cold conditions, the Vikings set a high bar for the Tigers to aspire to. Meanwhile, a team of 21 from the Company travelled to Nigeria to prepare the Nigerian SBS for Counter Boko Haram operations in the North East. The Nigerians



Hard training in Jordan on Ex OLIVE GROVE set the foundations for Ex WESSEX STORM.





2Lt Beale assisting the young Nigerians.



B Coy establishes itself in Nigeria.





# 1st Battalion The Vikings



Heading back to the makeshift camp after a day of instruction in Nigeria.

were eager to learn and grateful for the professionally delivered training. For the Company, it was a job well done, tinged with a little frustration that we were unable to accompany and mentor the NN SBS on their subsequent operations.

As spring gave way to summer the Company turned its focus to Ex WESSEX STORM - the Viking Battlegroup's test exercise which would secure its place at readiness in 2018. The start of the exercise featured the reinstated annual inter-company bayonet fighting competition, at which B Company's victory cemented

its nickname as The Bayonet Company. As the Battlegroup progressed to the all-important final stages, B Company managed to find itself in the thick of the action on each mission. On several occasions when the battle hung in the balance, the initiative of junior officers and NCOs, and the tenacity of those in their charge proved decisive, typifying the Company's determined and professional overall performance.

After a well-earned summer break we were straight back into a busy programme. At fairly short notice a repeat mission



Cpl Davison instructing Nigerians out in the bush.





**Lt Reid suggests going straight up the middle to the Nigerian platoon commander.**



of Nigerian SBS training was ordered, with similarly positive results. At the same time, with A and C Companies committed, B Company was tasked with leading the Battalion's Cambrian Patrol campaign. Generally speaking, for a rifle company to generate a single successful Cambrian Patrol team is a significant undertaking, but the Company set itself a more ambitious target, with two teams, plus reserves, taking up the challenge. Lt Reid and Cpl Taylor were given the hefty responsibility of leading the teams, with Sgt Green acting as head coach and team manager. Cpl Taylor has written an excellent account of the exercise, which ultimately resulted in silver medals for both teams. To put this into context, of the 131 teams from all over the world that took part this year, only 9 gold and 33 silver medals were awarded. For two of them to go to the Company's two teams is a notable achievement, but, just as important, a host of Vikings benefited from the experience and will be better soldiers as a result.

Finally, by the time this article goes to print the Company will have completed Ex AJEYA WARRIOR in India, a combined three week exercise in Rajasthan with the 20th Battalion The Rajputana Rifles, and a suitably adventurous and interesting finish to a great year.



**Marksmanship coaching.**



**Cpl Taylor going through the stages of a section attack.**





## 1st Battalion The Vikings

# Exercise OLIVE GROVE

Driving through the night on the Desert Highway of Western Jordan, I began to realise what a unique opportunity awaited us on Ex Olive Grove. A week previously, thirty six other Vikings and I had departed South East London for the Kingdom of Jordan, with a brief stop in Cyprus to integrate with C Company Group 2 PWRR. We were headed for the Al Quereya Training Area in South West Jordan – once an ancient sea, now a mountain range home to one of the most diverse training environments available to the British Army.

We hit the ground hard with a series of platoon level battle exercises that set the standard for a highly motivated platoon. The exercise had us operating in conditions at climatic extremes and in an environment none of us had imagined. The burning heat of the day was replaced by frozen nights interspersed with what can only be described as bizarre storms. These Vikings proved themselves in testing conditions. Whilst others faltered they stuck to their task with the tight knitted and understated ethos that is so prominent in our soldiers.

Jordan's vast training areas gave us the opportunity to conduct live fire tactical training with the full suite of infantry platoon weapon systems. As such a large platoon, with attachments from 2 PWRR Support Company, we were able to manoeuvre behind firepower I had never experienced. With 60mm mortar, multiple GPMG teams and snipers, I was given the resources to conduct larger tactical actions that my Vikings were more than willing to enable. During the heat of the day, we conducted attacks against complex defended positions and cable systems. As tracer lit up the night, we cleared positions through valleys carved out by the sea. The skill and confidence of the platoon



**CQB at the King Abdullah II Special Operations Training Centre.**



**Keep on climbing...**

# Jordan

shone through as they were developing into a highly capable fighting unit.

In the middle of the deployment, an opportunity to train at the King Abdullah II Special Operations Training Centre ( KASOTC) became available. We seized the opportunity to conduct platoon level actions at one of the world's foremost urban training facilities. Our Urban Operations Instructors were quick to develop the skills of this young platoon and lay the foundation of knowledge to bring into Wessex Storm later in the year.

The final exercise saw us operating as part of a 2PWRR Coy Group of 120 men. The finale again demonstrated the skill and decision making of our junior commanders that thoroughly impressed throughout. As the final action of my posting as a platoon commander I was sad but proud to be handing these troops back to the Company.

Less than 12 hours since the last position had been cleared in a gruelling final attack we were in the ancient city of Petra. With a majority of us having never left Europe, this was an amazing opportunity to experience a once in a lifetime visit to a wonder of the world. With 48 hours R&R in Aqaba, we were rightly able to relax in the company of a group of men who had proved their worth in Jordan's deserts.



Vikings enjoying the KASOTC – a world class training facility.



Lt McCurley and Sgt Green.





## 1st Battalion The Vikings

# Short Term Training Team

B (Suffolk) Company deployed a team of twenty-one soldiers on a Short Term Training Team (STTT) to Nigeria from 22 March to 20 April 2017. The team was directed with delivering the Pre-Deployment Training to a platoon of Nigerian Navy Special Boat Service (NN SBS) personnel, who were due to deploy just two weeks after the training package ended. The team was mindful of the significance of the task, both in terms of what we wanted to deliver, but also of the considerable impact it would have on the troops about to deploy on combat operations and their likelihood of success.

Upon arrival, our first task was to establish our base at 'Camp Rhino'. Within a few days, a dusty and isolated handful of buildings had become home, with the B Company flag flying proudly at the entrance. The team leaders determined appropriate locations for their training and set about putting the finishing touches to their serials. The value of the task was not lost on anyone in the Training Team, with regular updates on occurrences in the war-afflicted parts of Nigeria. With this in mind, a varied and stimulating training package was planned, which included conventional, urban, LFTT and counter insurgency training. We identified early on that a British-style PDT was rather more demanding than what the NN SBS had become accustomed.

Nonetheless, the troops responded extremely well to the training. This was facilitated by including a mentor, a British JNCO, in each team. This 'hands on' approach worked well and was received positively by the Nigerians. The Training Team took the NN SBS back to basics, going through basic fieldcraft and navigation before moving onto a thorough and comprehensive C-IED and urban operations package. Not only were the troops put through their paces during the working day, but most mornings began with PT at sunrise, alternating between a British and Nigerian PTI. The singing and body-shaking caught some of us by surprise, but was typical of a group of soldiers who were upbeat and enthusiastic. Indeed, this attitude was invaluable to our effective delivery of the training.

As the package progressed, and it became clear that the Nigerians were improving rapidly under our supervision, the Training Team put together some excellent LFTT which included a CQB shoot through and section attacks. As ever, the training value afforded by live firing cannot be overstated and was largely viewed by the NN SBS as the pinnacle of a demanding – though enjoyable – training package. The package itself culminated with some validation missions, conducted at platoon level, which included an ambush, a rural platoon attack on a fixed



Cpl Taylor instructing ground sign awareness.



# - Nigeria



The Viking Vs SBS football matches ended with an aggregate win for the Nigerians over the two deployments.



Cpl Scott debriefing the Nigerians.





## 1st Battalion The Vikings



### **Morning PT in Nigeria.**

enemy location, and finally a cordon and strike operation. The missions were brought to life by realistic scenarios, timeframes and resources offered to the NN SBS and, not least, by some imaginative work by the Training Team ‘playing enemy’. A genuine sense of accomplishment was felt across the Company when comparing the NN SBS before and after our involvement in their development as soldiers. The end state – that we would prepare a platoon of Nigerian specialists for operations in varied and challenging circumstances – had been achieved.

In true B (Suffolk) Company spirit, the training team approached the mission with diligence, initiative and hard work, features which become the hallmarks of the Company. Upon our return we were swiftly into our preparation for Exercise WESSEX STORM, but three weeks in Nigeria were a valuable, enjoyable and thoroughly worthwhile investment of our time and will equip us better as soldiers as we look to the future and the operational challenges therein.



# Exercise Cambrian Patrol 2017

## The Teams

### Team 1

Lt Reid  
Cpl Atkinson  
LCpl Barford  
Pte Bloomfield  
Pte Harper  
Pte McVeigh  
Pte Rogan  
Pte Root

### Team 2

Sgt Taylor  
Cpl Roberts  
Pte Webster  
Pte Briant  
Pte Cornwell  
Pte Gibbs  
Pte Jackson  
Pte Touhey

When the Battalion returned from summer leave in September, the men of B (Suffolk) Company were tasked by the Company Commander, himself a Cambrian Patrol veteran who was keen that as many others as possible experience the same pain, to represent the Battalion and enter two teams from the Company.

A training programme was created by Sgt Green, the head coach and patrol manager, which consisted of some progressive physical training and making sure the men's skills and drills were at the high standard required for the patrol. We started in camp with some light PT, a CFT, military swim tests and revision of the basics. Weeks two, three and four were predominantly spent in the Brecon Beacons. The men would push themselves physically, tabbing more than 30km a day, with increasing weight on each march.

We also spent a lot of time on navigational training, radio skills, section SOPs, medical skills, Counter-IED training. A lot of time was also spent on the core infantry skills. Week five saw us spend the week in Woolwich, where we finalised the teams and made sure all kit was accounted for and ready, practised river crossing drills at a local swimming pool in full kit, and brushed up on our foreign weapon systems and armoured fighting vehicle recognition. By the end of the training period both teams were quietly confident, with the men and commanders alike having prepared well for the task ahead.

On the 15th October at 0700hrs my team arrived at the designated assembly area, where initial rigid kit checks were







# 1st Battalion The Vikings







conducted and the commanders were taken away to receive their orders. With orders complete, the patrol stepped off at 1200hrs on their long range covert reconnaissance patrol, which would see us cover roughly 64km in 48hrs. The patrol was roughly five hours underway before the first real test presented itself, in the form of a drone-supported chemical attack. Following our excellent CBRN extraction, we then pushed on, on task toward the target area.

We arrived on task at the recce roughly 20 hours after we had first stepped off. Recce complete, we withdrew to a lay-up point to write our patrol report, to be handed in at our next RV. From here we were warned of a high priority tasking from higher, and were told we would need to move off immediately to secure a crashed British drone in hostile territory. The next RV found us having to conduct a tactical river crossing, across the frigid

Usk reservoir, whilst Storm Brian was looming overhead. With all men across safely, and the bank secure, we moved off to a hasty harbour where we could conduct administration and prepare the patrol to cache the bergens, in line with the 'Fight Light' school of thought.

After a short vehicle move onto the Sennybridge Training Area, the team patrolled toward their next RV. Here we were met by a member of the RMP, who was working in the area and had heard reports of an incident that was unfolding between local nationals and an international NGO. He asked us to investigate further. We closed in and detained two men who were threatening the aid worker. With the scenario complete we remained on task, heading through a series further of RVs that included: extracting a casualty from a minefield, calling in fires on enemy vehicles, enemy vehicle recognition. We would finally patrol to B Range, where we were met by a member of local





# 1st Battalion The Vikings



special forces (played by a member of the Rifles), who led us in to a questionable (Rifles planned) section attack to secure the crashed drone. With the drone secured and the enemy destroyed, we extracted from the location and made our way to a 'UN Patrol Base' 4km away. Here we were subjected to a thorough debrief and final kit inspection. With all this complete, the team was informed that the patrol was over and that we had successfully finished Ex CP17.

After a short period of administration in Sennybridge Camp we paraded at the awards ceremony, where the team was presented with a silver medal. As the patrol commander I was extremely disappointed not to be awarded the gold medal, but after some inspirational words from Sgt Green and members of the Battalion, Cpl Roberts congratulated the team and they are now ready to bring home gold next year for the Vikings.

Lt Reid's team followed two days later on a subsequent phase of the Exercise. Having had a member of the patrol forcibly removed by the staff running the exercise just 6km

from the finish due to suspected early-stage hypothermia, despite his protests, they were heavily penalised – for each man who does not finish the team is docked 20% from the overall mark. So, having completed their patrol, the team's hopes were not high at the medal presentations – a bronze with a man down would have been a good result. As it was, the team had achieved almost perfect scores throughout and were awarded a silver – the only team in the Exercise this to do so after one of its number had dropped out. Ultimately both teams were striving for gold and narrowly missed out, with fortune playing its part as it always does. But two silver winning teams for the Company is a good result. And perhaps more importantly, those who took part and trained hard in each squad have benefitted hugely from the experience, and will be better soldiers as a result.



# Exercise Frosted Blade

In early December eight members of the Vikings travelled to the French village of Val D'Iserre to compete in the Infantry Alpine Ski Championships, Exercise FROSTED BLADE (FB). The Battalion hadn't entered a team into the championships for over 10 years and

so, with some generous grants from the Commanding Officer and London District, the team arrived in France ready to go with some brand new gear, but very little idea.

The aim of Ex FB is twofold: to identify skiers with the potential to

represent the Infantry team in the Army Championships; and to introduce novice skiers to the demands of alpine racing. The level of tuition from the professional French instructors that everyone receives is frankly fantastic - regardless of ability on arrival everyone left a much better

**LCpl McConkey,  
still searching  
for that racing  
line...**







# 1st Battalion The Vikings



**The French were left perplexed by our Christmas Eve fancy dress.**



**Thanks to the PRI and London District, the team arrived with excellent kit.**

skier, able to tackle almost any slope with confidence.

The training programme is very well structured and progressive. Novices spend the first week learning how to ski, whilst those with some experience skiing spend the week with the instructors getting their snow-legs back. From the second week onwards the training is all focused on race technique – everyone was getting faster and turning quicker after each session, to the credit of both the students and the instructors.

After two weeks training there was the opportunity to take part in a night race as part of a divisional team, held on the formidable 'Le Face' slope in the centre of Val D'Isere. To his credit Cpl Taylor was selected as the Queen's Division vice-captain, despite having never skied before the exercise, with the team reaching the quarter finals.

The training was admittedly fairly intense, but the programme did include a day off once a week and allowed the perfect opportunity to test Val D'Isere's reputation as being 'the Ibiza of the Alps'. The village itself is very popular with English holidaymakers, and with nearly

everyone who works in the winter season being English,

LCpl McConkey had no problems introducing himself to the numerous female bar staff. Taking part in Ex FB also means the team stayed in Val D'Isere for both Christmas and New Year. This is definitely a good thing as everyone, both military and civilian, is in the festive spirit and even a disastrous lunch courtesy of Lt Reid didn't ruin what was an excellent Christmas.

The final week of the six week exercise sees the training put into practice, with teams and individuals competing for medals in the slalom, giant slalom, super giant slalom and downhill events. Medals were awarded for individual events and the scores combined, contributing toward the overall team score.

The races are certainly challenging, each is held on slopes that regularly host the FIS World Cup and there's no question it's a dangerous sport. The majority of teams suffered injuries and unfortunately for The Vikings, Cpl Dunster was hospitalised mid-way through training with a fracture to both his tibia and fibula in his left leg.

Happily the team exceeded all

expectations however, finishing 16th of 32 teams - a great achievement for what was in essence a motley crew of novice racers, with many more experienced teams finishing behind us. Equally unbelievable was Lt Reid ending up 17th of 256 in the individual rankings, narrowly avoiding selection for the Infantry Ski Team and their hideous red ski jackets, a lucky escape.

Experience for Ex FB is certainly not needed. Of the eight Vikings on the team, none had ever raced, two were keen snowboarders, only one had more than 6 weeks experience on snow and two had never skied before! And yet the team left with 5 medals in total, notably Pte Parker with gold in the junior (U19) slalom and Cpl Davison with silvers in the novice slalom and downhill races. That said, the Viking Ski Team is now well placed to build on these recent results. With funding approved for the 2017/18 season, 8 members of The Vikings will have the opportunity to once again head to Val D'Isere this coming winter, to train and compete amongst the best skiers in the infantry, and win more medals for the Battalion.

# C (Essex) Company

In the summer I took command of C (Essex) Company from Major Martin Hedley MBE and I would like to thank him for his leadership he provided. The Company has had a year dominated by fixed tasks and training events: Force Protection in Kenya; the Army Expeditionary Warfighter Experiment in Georgia; Ex WESSEX STORM on Salisbury Plain and; Ex RATTLESNAKE in Louisiana.

Early in 2017 the Company deployed a platoon on a Force Protection task to support the British Army Training Unit Kenya (BATUK) under the command of Lt Grant Stanners. In addition to the routine security tasks the platoon helped with training delivery to the Kenyan wildlife service; unfortunately this was cut short due to rising tensions in the area. The soldiers did a great job and BATUK

HQ commented on their professionalism.

A platoon also deployed on the Army Expeditionary Warfighter Experiment in Fort Benning, Georgia under the command of Lt Jonny Taylor. This 'force-on-force' training aimed to develop future equipment to assist war-fighting in the 21st Century. The US Army experience gained by the soldiers greatly assisted the Company deployment on Ex RATTLESNAKE later in the year.

The main event of the year was Ex WESSEX STORM which saw the Battalion validated on a test exercise on Salisbury Plain. The preparation for this exercise included training in Thetford, Sennybridge and Salisbury Plain. The most notable event from C Companies' perspective was the infiltration into Copehill Down – a bold tactic which proved remarkably successful. The

Company were first-rate and could go on summer leave justifiably proud of their achievements.

In the autumn, C Company Group, deployed to the Joint Readiness Training Centre (Fort Polk, Louisiana). The Company were embedded with the 1st Bn of the 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment (1-505) as part of the 3rd Bde Cbt Team, 82nd Airborne Division. This was a test exercise for 3/82 BCT and was their 'crucible' training event. The exercise saw approximately 6500 soldiers pitched against a live, free-playing enemy called Geronimo (permanently assigned Parachute Infantry Regiment). Exercising troops comprised force elements from across A Company and D Company but also more widely from 1 RHA, 26 RA and 2 R ANGLIAN.

The exercise started with a Joint Forcible







# 1st Battalion The Vikings



Entry (JFE) where the Company deployed using a C-130 and then fought the enemy to 'expand the lodgement'. The second phase was Live Fire Tactical Training (LFTT) within a Bde context which used a full range of assets including UAV, AH and artillery. The final 'force on force' phase included: a Battalion Air Assault onto a village, company attacks and area defence.

The Company performed brilliantly; LTC Wright (Battalion Comd 1-505)

commented on how 'Essex Company' had to bail-out the Battalion on two objectives where other rifle companies had failed to achieve their missions. This was recognised also with several soldiers being awarded the Army Achievement Award for outstanding performance: Pte Crowson, Pte Morley, LCpl Newman, Cpl Sellors and Lt Taylor. At the end of the exercise the soldiers had the opportunity to explore the USA under their own arrangements with many having a great

experience. Ex RATTLESNAKE was an excellent challenge and opportunity and the Company was truly tested to their limits.

As the Company prepares for the wind-down before Christmas they will have their sights firmly focussed on the tasks in the New Year. These include another deployment to Kenya; assuming the role as the ARRC Force Protection Company at high-readiness, and commencing Mission Specific Training for operations in 2019.









1st Battalion  
The Vikings

# **D (Cambridgeshire) Company**





2017 has been incredibly busy for D (Cambridgeshire) Company. Building on the superb training opportunity provided by the Support Company Cadres completed at the end of 2016, the Company attacked a seven month build-up to Ex WESSEX STORM while simultaneously satisfying a thunderous volume of other tasks and commitments.

This also included the Company delivering the 7 Inf Bde Operational Shooting Competition, hosting many visits, parading through Ely, and assisting with the delivery of the Cambridgeshire ACF Annual Camp. Most recently, elements of the Company, together with RHQ, assisted with the burial of nineteen WW1 soldiers at New Irish Farm in Ypres. At the time of writing this article the Company has a four month long Enduring Training Team (ETT) and a one month Short Term Training Team deployed to Nigeria conducting Defence Engagement, and is currently preparing to deploy soldiers for another ETT in the near future. All in all, it has been an incredibly challenging, diverse and rewarding year for the Company.

The varied training opportunities in the first half of 2017 served the Company well.

At the start of the year, on the backend of completing the Recce Operators course, Recce Platoon and attachments deployed to Oman with B Company 2 RANGLIAN as part of Ex JEBEL STORM. Providing the ideal platform for the platoon and their attachments from Anti-Tanks, Snipers, Mortars and Assault Pioneers they further developed as a platoon and thanks to the input from their attachments, began the important steps of operating as a Recce Group. During the same period the remaining elements of the Mortar Platoon sacrificed consecutive weekends travelling across South East England training 3 PWRR Mortar Platoon, and in May the Vikings mighty Mortar Platoon deployed to Otterburn with C Company 2 RANGLIAN and provided 81mm live-fire to Ex AGILE POACHER.

Woven into the busy forecast of external taskings of early 2017, the Company took every opportunity to deploy on LFTT and training in preparation for Ex WESSEX STORM. Grateful for the relatively long lead-in, and the freedom granted by BHQ to execute Company training, the Company was able to be well prepared without being exhausted as we deployed as an ISTAR Group for the six weeks

to STANTA and then SPTA from June through to July. Throughout Ex WESSEX STORM the soldiers performed superbly. So well in fact that after the first phase the appointed Field Training Unit 'Observer Mentor' was retasked to a non-Viking sub-unit in greater need!

Particularly impressive during Ex WESSEX STORM was the high standard of leadership by the Company JNCOs. Throughout the exercise the Cpls and LCpls demonstrated an impressive understanding of their role and grasping of the bigger picture. Frequently the audacious brilliance of NCOs and soldiers from across the Company showed their quality by ably striking the decisive blow against the enemy during the final phases of the Battle Group training. Working in harmony as an ISTAR Group the platoons and non-Viking attachments demonstrated an impressive skillset and the soldiers and JNCOs in particular were continuously singled out by the Field Training Unit as exceptional.

Only three days after returning from Ex WESSEX STORM, the Company paraded through Ely and began preparing for Minden Day. The Assault Pioneer Platoon hastily stowed their field equipment and







# 1st Battalion The Vikings

turned their attention to rehearsing the Beating Retreat for Minden Day. Then in mid-August and after a shortened summer leave, the Assault Pioneer Platoon deployed to Zaria Army Depot in Nigeria as part of a four month ETT.

At the time of writing this article, D (Cambridgeshire) Company has a global footprint. OCs' Recce, Anti-Tanks and Mortars have drawn the short-straw and are currently on their qualifying courses at the Specialist Weapons School, Warminster.

OC Snipers and his team have gone slightly further and are delivering the Queen's Division Sniper Operators Course in Sennybridge. Meanwhile OC Assault Pioneers has the Company lead in Nigeria where he and his team are training groups of up to 1950 Nigerian infantry soldiers and delivering bespoke 'train the trainer' packages to allow the Nigerian officers and NCOs to train their own men in the future. 2IC Recce has also deployed with a team to Nigeria for a one month task, and those remaining in barracks are undergoing pre-deployment training ready to deploy in the near future. Thank God for Mission Command!





# Enduring Training Team Nigeria

## 6 August to 17 December 2017



### ETT Makurdi team with 707 Bde.

Soldiers from D (Cambridgeshire) Company and HQ Company deployed to Nigeria for four months in Aug 17 to continue the task of providing an Enduring Training Team (ETT) to the Nigerian Army. The deployment has seen the team deliver a range of tasks across multiple locations in Nigeria in an effort to improve the Nigerian Armed Forces ability to counter insurgents and, in particular, in the fight against Boko Haram in the NE of the country.

After a handover from the Poachers, the team settled into the Nigerian Army School of Infantry (NASI) which is akin to the Specialist Weapons School in Warminster and the Infantry Battle School in Brecon combined. NASI and 'Camp Viking' quickly became home to the Viking ETT with the soldiers conducting numerous training packages across the school including vital life saving skills such as Battlefield Casualty Drills,

Counter Improvised Explosive Device techniques and tactics lessons. The ETT has also delivered bespoke Pre Deployment Training for Nigerian Army battalions deploying across Africa both as part of Nigerian Army operations and on UN peacekeeping missions. The ETT has been busy and has delivered important training to over 5000 soldiers during our time in Nigeria.

An interesting aspect of the deployment

has been the training of a company from the Nigerian Army's fledgling special operations force, 707 SF Bde. This has seen 12 members of the ETT deploy 7 hours south of the rest of the team to Benue State to deliver a bespoke 6 week Advanced Infantryman Course to 100 Nigerian soldiers to prepare them directly for offensive operations against Boko Haram.

This task has seen Viking soldiers teach

across a wide range of infantry tactics in austere and challenging environments. The progress the 707 SF Bde soldiers have made has been excellent and Viking soldiers can be content in the knowledge that they have set the conditions for 1 SCOTS, as a Specialised Infantry Battalion, to carry on the work we have begun. This has been an outstanding task and one that has seen all members of the team delivering instruction at platoon and



Cpl Monks meets Min AF.





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**Cpl Monks instructs contact drills.**

company level.

One of the main benefits for the British Military Training Advisory Team Nigeria (BMATT) is the utility of the ETT. Flexibility is a key aspect of the deployment and teams from the ETT are able to deploy at short notice across the country. For example, a team led by Cpl McKay was able to deploy to Lagos at short notice and deliver a two week PDT package to the Nigerian Navy. This flexibility and willingness to deliver instruction across the Nigerian Armed Forces demonstrates the value that the soldiers from D (Cambridgeshire) and HQ Coy are providing.

The deployment has been an outstanding opportunity for Viking soldiers to develop their instructional ability and deepen their knowledge of tactics and doctrine. Pte soldiers have been routinely delivering complex lessons to large audiences and have developed significantly as a result. This has been a task that will benefit the soldiers as they progress through their careers and I am sure the Battalion will benefit from a group of soldiers who have developed their personal instructional skill, tactical knowledge and confidence. Vikings deployed on the ETT have also had the opportunity to deploy in a relatively austere environment, but their



**Platoon deliberate attack.**





**Visit of Min AF to 707 Bde.**

humour and resilience has been a credit to their professionalism and teamwork.

With Defence Engagement and partnering becoming of increasing

importance across the army, the Vikings on the ETT have had the opportunity to practice these skills over a range of different tasks from one day packages to 6 week battle camps. As we move forward I have no doubt that we will have a cohort of skilled soldiers within the Battalion who will draw on their experience and understand fully the cultural aspects and instructional challenges of conducting Defence Engagement that supports the UK's strategic interests. Without doubt it is another string to the Viking bow and an opportunity we should embrace as the Regiment continues to be engaged in West Africa.

Overall, the Viking ETT enjoyed its time in Nigeria and feels that it has added real value to the Nigerian Army. All members of the team have developed personally as the task has progressed and have enjoyed instructing in challenging environments. Defence Engagement is clearly an important activity and hugely appreciated by those Nigerian soldiers about to deploy to the fight against Boko Haram, and so for the Vikings who spent four months on task, it was without doubt time well spent. The ETT recovers in December 2017 and all soldiers are looking forward to being reunited with their families and enjoying a well-deserved Christmas break before re-joining the Battalion and the challenges of 2018.



**Minden flash and union flag at Nasi.**





# 1st Battalion The Vikings

Headquarters Company is always one of the harder articles to write. By its nature the company is the key planner and enabler of the battalion's activities but as a result will rarely deploy anywhere as a formed unit. The best way to imagine the company is as the brain and vital organs of a human body, essential to the working of the wider whole but rarely seen or heard. A pancreas might be vital to the human body, but you rarely see or hear from a pancreas.

Every single event you read about in the Vikings section of this magazine will have only been possible due to the hard work and skill of the men and women of HQ Company. The glamorous A Company deployment to Gibraltar was only the success it was thanks to the tireless HQ functionaries planning and enabling every aspect of it. On Exercise WESSEX STORM the battalion deployed with over a thousand

soldiers including attachments, and with hundreds of vehicles. The logistics involved in coordinating and manoeuvring something so large against a determined enemy was phenomenal.

It is a testament to those working in HQ Company, from the QM's to the LAD to the Ops Staff to the Personnel Administrators, that such a large body moved around the country, operating to the high standards expected of the Vikings, seamlessly. Logistics is one of those unsung areas where it is only noticed when things go wrong, but because in the Vikings it so often goes right, it rarely gets the recognition it deserves.

In addition to looking after the rest of the battalion, HQ Company is still able to look after its own soldiers with many of them able to take part in some absolutely fantastic adventurous training. The company sent soldiers on the

# HQ

Battalion ski trip in January and February to Chamonix at a very heavily subsidised rate. The powdery slopes, free flowing continental wine and abundance of chalet girls was the highlight of many soldiers year – not bad to be sent there by work as a perk of the job. However the company didn't just limit itself to Chamonix, it also got soldiers away on other adventure training activities including Ex VIKING DROP, a free-fall parachute exercise



AGC SPS on AT.



Capt Edwards UIO

# Company







# 1st Battalion The Vikings

in California, and Ex COCKNEY TOUBKAL, a mountaineering expedit to summit Jebel Toubkal, the highest peak in North Africa. As the articles written about these expeditions makes clear, these were some of the best bits adventurous training deployments conducted by the army this year, with soldiers from HQ Company getting full benefit.

Despite the fact that the company is so often split and working separately in support of the other companies, as much effort is made as possible to maintain company cohesion. One of the departments within the company that made a special effort to do this was our AGC SPS detachment. The highlight of the Detachment's year had to be the Adjutant General's

Corps 25th Anniversary celebration, held at the Royal College of Defence Studies in Victoria. Members of the Detachment had the opportunity to meet the AGC's Colonel-in-Chief, HRH The Duchess of Gloucester, wife of The Royal Anglian Regiment's Colonel-in-Chief.

For a disparate and busy company the HQ element of the battalion has achieved a lot. Having a hand in planning and enabling every single activity and deployment during a fantastically busy year for the battalion, but still finding time to ensure that its soldiers have every opportunity to take part in rewarding activities is no mean feat. HQ Company have managed that feat and have had a very successful year.



HQ Company on skiing.



Logistical support.





Lt Howard Johnston

# Exercise Viking Drop

10-29 July 2017

Back in 2015 I revealed to Capt Brunndon, a then fresh, young-looking Lt Brunndon, that I was going to take some members of the Battalion skydiving for Adventure Training. He bet me a beer it wouldn't happen.

On the 10th July 2017, fourteen members of the Vikings, who had that very same day just finished a very arduous Ex WESSEX STORM, were sat at RAF Netheravon airfield receiving instruction on how best to throw themselves out of a perfectly good aircraft at around 13,000ft. Around 8 seconds after exit from such a perfectly good aircraft, a person will reach an average speed of around 127 Mph as they plummet in free-fall for 50 seconds before saving their life by pulling their parachute.

The expedition deployed to Lake Elsinore in California which has a Drop Zone (DZ) which is considered one of the best in the world. It has well maintained aircraft with the ability to lift two planes together, and a bunkhouse with a kitchen in which to be accommodated. But it is the consistently good weather that cements Lake Elsinore's place as a world renowned DZ, with there being almost guaranteed







# 1st Battalion The Vikings







jumping from 0700hrs – 1500hrs everyday which is integral in completing a jump programme for absolute beginners.

The programme involves a novice student jumping three times with two instructors followed a further five times with just one instructor. Each jump escalates in complexity. The first jump looks to ensure that the jumper remembers to pull his parachute (Pte Rogan take note), with the eighth jump progressing to unsupported backflips, controlled turning and tracking - falling with style. For fourteen students, this process takes a long time and good weather is essential. Our instructors had a combined total of around 20,000 jumps between them with our Advanced Instructor, Nick Brownhill, being instrumental in developing the soldiers and officers that took part in this expedition.

The expedition saw all the Vikings progress through stages 1 – 8 with diligence, and we soon found ourselves on consolidation jumps. These were ten solo jumps dispatched via one of the

advanced instructors. This sounds a lot easier than it is, but actually the intensity of the training, both physically and even more so mentally, meant that the Vikings needed some time to decompress. Around seven of us decided to take the opportunity and visit Death Valley. It has some of the hottest temperatures recorded in the world and the views look as if you could be standing on Mars. Due to the length of the drive to Death Valley, we decided to stay in a hotel close by at a little place called Las Vegas. It was ok. As they say, 'what goes on in Vegas, stays in Vegas. The other half of the group took themselves off to San Diego which is a tourist and cultural hotspot not far from the DZ.

After the much needed 'rest period' the expedition reformed and continued with the jump programme. With all members racing through the consolidation jumps, it was not long before some members could progress to the next stage in their licences. Two members obtained their B licence which allows the holder to flight-line check fellow licence holders,

ensure all their equipment is correct, and authorises them to dispatch jumpers out the plane. This is an important job. Due to the numbers jumping, the airspace can get quite crowded if not dispatched in the correct manner. Three other Vikings also qualified for their formation skydiving certificate which enables the jumper to jump in groups, the next level up in the sky diving fraternity.

Ex VIKING DROP was an excellent opportunity for the soldiers and officers to obtain civilian accredited skydiving licences worth thousands of pounds. Overall, the Vikings accumulated 568 jumps; gained fourteen A licences; two B licences; two FS1 qualifications; and Captain Arnold even learned how to pack his own parachute and jump it. Fortunately it worked. A big thank you goes out to Nick Brownhill, Mike Smith and Mark Whitehead who qualified the Vikings to jump and to the staff at JSP Netheravon for their support in such a memorable trip. Capt Brunson is looking to organise Ex VIKING DROP II in 2018, so stay tuned.





## 2nd Battalion The Poachers

# From the CO

2017 has, once again, been a significant year for the Poachers comprising a staggering number of missions, tasks and deployments. Some of which may sadly be overlooked here due to word count restrictions.

Each Rifle Company has deployed on its own Overseas Training Exercise (OTX): A (Lincolnshire) Company deployed to Louisiana in the US in January, B (Leicestershire) Company to the Jebel Akhdar in Oman in March and C (Northamptonshire & Rutland) Company to Galicia in Spain at the end of September. D (Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire) Company continued our engagement in Nigeria sending one Short Term Training Team (STTT) and two Enduring Training Teams (ETTs) to mentor and partner the Nigerian Armed Force's preparation for their on-going fight against Boko Haram.

Over the Summer we deployed on two separate Battalion Battle Camps in preparation for our future role. The first, Ex AGILE POACHER, saw us deploy to Lydd & Hythe Ranges to undertake an Urban Operations package for two weeks followed by a week at the other end of the country Live Firing in Otterburn. And the second, Ex BASELINE POACHER, deploying once again to Lydd & Hythe to complete our mandated Public Order Training. HQ Company, as always, have supported and enabled all of this activity.

A fantastic achievement given the geographical spread and size of each of these tasks. And to top it all we were crowned Army Individual Boxing Champions 2017 at a particularly tense night of boxing in Aldershot at the beginning of the Summer.

The back drop to all of this has been our move over the Summer back to Cyprus. Our fourth time back in Alexander Barracks, Dhekelia. And once again all those involved in the move, but in particular Major Adey Penn (the Unit Move Project Officer) and Captain Joe Hayhurst (the Welfare Officer), were superb. Ensuring that a particularly stressful time and activity was thoroughly well planned, briefed and then executed. I must pay public recognition to 2 PWRR, Dhekelia Station and 77

Armoured Engineer Squadron from 35 Engineer Regiment for their approach and understanding as we moved in and also the significant improvements that have been made since we were last here. The Dhekelia Water Sports Centre and the Poachers' Beach Club cove area have been transformed.

Everything from the electrics in the bar, to the new crazy golf course and the very generous donation from Regimental HQ towards the cost of a new speedboat. Poachers' Cove provides a real focal point and hub for our single soldiers and families. We will keep these improvements going and ensure that we handover an even better facility to 1 PWRR in 2019.

So what now? Following a short period immediately upon our arrival as the Cyprus Operations Battalion we are now prepared and ready to deploy under the banner of PJHQ's Regional Standby Battalion. We have a Lead Company Group on 48hrs Notice To Move to deploy anywhere in the Middle East and North Africa for a wide ranging number of tasks. And a Force Protection Company



deployed to RAF Akrotiri providing flight line security for operations in Syria.

This year has been really busy, with plenty of frictions, upheaval and deployments. But we're here, good to go, in Cyprus, ready to deploy on operations, and enjoying the opportunities that life in Cyprus brings. From being crowned British Forces Cyprus Swimming Champions within one month of arrival, the plethora of Adventurous Training on our door step, the sport and our new boxing gym to the thriving mess life, we very much look forward with confidence to 2018 and the challenges and opportunities it may well bring.

And the bedrock behind all of this has been our families – not only those with us in Cyprus but those of our married unaccompanied personnel and single soldiers back in the UK. We could not have done this without you.

Thank you.





# FROM THE RSM

The past 12 months has been a very busy period for the Poachers, it has seen them committed to Short Term Training Teams in Nigeria which have been an enduring task for the Battalion, further building on the bond created with the Nigerian Army. We ran a number of Battalion led battle camps including exercises such as Baseline Poacher in Lydd focussing on Public Order as well as Agile Poacher which shifted the focus to Live Firing, taking place in Otterburn earlier in the year. These demanding exercises helped to prepare the Battalion to deploy to Cyprus as the Regional Standby Battalion (RSB).

Early in July the unit saw ISOs arriving in camp at the same time as sending advance parties to Cyprus in preparation to start the handover - takeover with the PWRR, the unit move had started to pick up pace back in the UK as Kendrew Barracks was getting packed away and the Battalion was getting ready to take some well earned leave.

As we arrived on the Island B

(Leicestershire) Company deployed to the outstations to cover the Cyprus Ops commitment (Op TIMBERN) which still remains a Platoon Commander and Sergeants' ball game, it lends itself as a great opportunity to practice the low level drills and skills that are key to the Infanteer. Meanwhile, the remainder of the Battalion and its families were arriving on island in the blistering 40 degree heat, taking over their quarters and unpacking camp ready to make it their home for the next two years. Alexander Barracks hasn't changed much, it's like we'd never left.

In October the Poachers took over the Regional Standby Battalion (RSB) role which saw A (Lincolnshire) Company on the Op SHADER commitment at the other end of the Island on a 6 week rotation as well as having 108 men committed to the Lead Company Group, on standby to deploy anywhere in the Middle East and North Africa at short notice on tasks ranging from Non-Combatant Evacuation Operations (NEOs) to full scale war fighting.



The Poachers are enjoying the Cyprus offer which provides the Battalion the opportunity to conduct great training in an ideal climate for the role that we are in. Cyprus is also a great base to achieve some superb adventure training (AT) and get AT qualifications under their belts which the boys haven't wasted any time doing.

This will be my last entry as RSM of the Poachers, as I move to be the Unit Welfare Officer. I can honestly say, that after 22 years as a soldier in this Battalion, we have never been in such a good place. The opportunities are many, but more importantly, the quality of the Poacher soldier, the NCO's and Officer's has never been so high. It has been an absolute privilege to be the senior soldier in the Battalion and I wish you all the best for the future.







# 2nd Battalion The Poachers

## **A (Lincolnshire) Company**

*Maj Jeff Bennett-Madge*

A (Lincolnshire) Company's activity over the last 12 months has been varied. We have exercised in the USA on Ex RATTLESNAKE where you will read more below, and in Otterburn and Lydd focussed on Urban Operations and Public Order training. Since our arrival in Cyprus, we have been delivering against the Cyprus Operations Bn requirement to protect strategic assets on-island.

In the sporting arena, A Company were the most successful Rifle Coy in the Inter-Company boxing and football tournaments. We have also begun to put a dent in the BFC Cross Country league in which a number of soldiers are regularly competing for the Battalion.

In terms of development, we have enjoyed several successes on SCBC welcoming back LCpls Brereton, Devally, Condon and Eccott as full-Cpls. Our flock of AA PTIs is increasing with LCpls Brown, Jones and Buchanan now wearing their ill-fitting vests. We look forward to more successes in due course.

The future looks promising. In November, the Company will return to the UK to conduct TLFTT at Hythe Ranges before support Lincoln City in their match against Port Vale where we will reaffirm our links with Lincoln. We will also look to focus on Non-Combatant Evacuation training with the Royal Navy. The beginning of next year will see us deploy to the United Arab Emirates to deliver an Urban Operations package with the Presidential Guard. All in all, a busy and exciting time has been had by all. The future remains bright and interesting for A (Lincolnshire) Company.

## **B (Leicestershire) Company**

*Maj Mark Garner*

2017 has provided the Company with another high tempo and rewarding year; we have been provided a plethora of training opportunities in which to hone our infantry war-fighting edge, in readiness for The Poachers to assume the Regional Standby Battalion (RSB) role that we now occupy. Exercises have covered a broad range of infantry tests, including deployments to Kenya, Oman, Lydd and Otterburn. As a result the Company feels trained, current and ready. The tempo has also been felt with the significant change over of Company

personnel: I recently took over from Maj Hudson as OC B (Leicestershire) Company; I'd also like to welcome CSgt Price (CQMS), Sgt McPherson (5 Pl), Lt Dom Parker (6 Pl), CSgt Taylor (8 Pl) and Sgt Cousin (8 Pl) to the Leicestershire Tigers! I'd also like to wish the best of luck to: Lt James Mattin (ITC(C), Lt George Eatwell (RM), Sgt Daly (CQMS D Coy) and Sgt Harding (Mor Pl). The soldiers of the Company have continued to provide the steady professionalism, dedication and agility for which they are renowned, as they have faced and excelled in every challenge.

At present, B (Leicestershire) Company are the Lead Company Group (LCG) of the RSB, the Army's Extreme High Readiness (EHR) company group prepared to respond to a range of crises within the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) within 48 hours. We sit in Cyprus as a versatile, forward-based and acclimatised force ready to deploy anywhere, anytime and on any operation. The journey here has been testing and has dominated the last 12 months, physically and conceptually; the range of mission specific training conducted has provided unique soldiering and lifelong experiences for the troops.

The journey to LCG began in Kenya 12 months ago, on Ex ASKARI STORM. During this CT3 exercise the company delivered a strong performance and set the foundations for our current role. Then commanded by Maj Gavin Hudson, this exercise provided the perfect platform to build team cohesion while adapting our basic infantry skills to an austere and demanding environment prior to embarking on our pre deployment training. The soldiers' performance set the perfect conditions from which to build to our current task.

B Company's focus on returning from Kenya then switched to preparing to unit move to Cyprus as well as planning and executing another OTX, to Oman. Training in Oman allowed the Company to operate in stunning and unique terrain, the Jebel Akhdar. Ex JEBEL STORM focussed on defence engagement, infantry skills and Adventurous Training (AT). While the training was first class and the experience of working alongside host nation forces, The Sultan of Oman's Parachute Regiment, invaluable; the exercise also provided the company with relevant experience of deploying a company group into the MENA region, which could prove critical during our time

as the LCG.

Further mission specific training was conducted during the summer and the company performed well during Ex AGILE then Ex BASELINE POACHER. As well as cementing our infantry basics and sharpening our command and control, these exercises saw the company master our battle craft fundamentals: fighting at night; public order; operating in the urban environment; combined arms manoeuvre.

Subsequently our focus shifted to moving to Cyprus and assuming Cyprus Security Operations. We were the first company to move our soldiers and their families to Dhekelia. The move was seamless and the company have settled quickly. On arrival we took over as the Ops 1 Company, responsible for the protection of the island's key sites. Alongside being the first company to move to Cyprus and the first to take on the Cyprus Ops 1 responsibility, B Company are first again in taking over as LCG. While on island we have also exploited a range of opportunities, we have: conducted a Battlefield Tour of the EOKA campaign, following the path of the Royal Leicestershire Regt; visited Wayne's Keep to commemorate all those from our antecedent Regt who fell during the Cyprus Emergency; and deployed a number of troops on AT courses.

The path to LCG has been arduous, for both the soldiers and our families. But having now settled in we intend to grasp all of the many benefits of being posted to Cyprus, indeed we have already begun! Of course, throughout, we will remain prepared to deploy as LCG if called upon.

## **C (Northamptonshire & Rutland) Company**

*Maj Jim Phipps*

C Company has once again had a very busy year and this high tempo does not look like letting up any time soon. We have been heavily committed to training and operations with members of the Company deployed to Nigeria, the USA, Oman, Spain and Italy.

Following the Company's success in Kenya in autumn 2016, the focus turned to providing support to both A and B Company ahead of their respective deployment on overseas exercises to the United States and Oman. C Company Platoons supported these exercises and



there were a small handful of soldiers who were fortunate enough to deploy on both. Working with the other rifle companies provided an opportunity for C Company troops to operate alongside not just other Poachers, but to also work alongside allies from partner nations. Alongside this the soldiers of 12 (MG) Platoon have been put through their paces under the guidance and mentorship of Lt Forsyth and Sgt Green and have gone from strength to strength, proving the value of the machine gun platoon. This has most recently culminated in their employment in Spain on Ex IBERIAN SUN where they worked alongside Spanish MG, Recce and Snipers to support a multi-national Battlegroup.

The pace has not reduced since C Company moved to Cyprus. The Company reformed under a new command team and immediately on arrival on the island assumed the Cyprus Operations commitment whilst also preparing to deploy to Spain on Ex IBERIAN SUN. The deployment to Spain gave the opportunity for the Company to work together for the first time in some months and to conduct progressive and realistic training alongside the Spanish Army. Against a demanding timeline and in an unforgiving environment C Company were able to achieve a high level of training with all elements of the Company producing the goods. The high standard achieved puts the company in a strong position as we take over as the Regional Standby Battalion and face the challenge of maintaining readiness.

There have been a lot of changes in key personnel over the past year. Maj Ben Hawes has departed to 1 (UK) Division in York handing over command of the Company to Maj James Phipps in August. WO2 John Rawdon has moved on to be the Ops Warrant Officer, with WO2 Gav Williams taking the reigns as Company Sergeant Major. CSgt Erik Rawdon has taken over as CQMS replacing CSgt Antoni who becomes the AIO. Lt Sam King, previously OC 9 Platoon, has replaced Capt John Snoddon as Company second-in-command. Lt Kyle Forsyth is now commanding 12 (MG) Platoon, partnered with Sgt Anthony Green, and Lt James Ellen joined the Company in December 2016 and leads 9 Platoon with Sgt James Baker. Most recently 2Lt Harry Deed has joined the company and he has

taken command of 10 Platoon alongside Sgt Brett Vine.

Alongside the work, the soldiers and officers of the company, as well as their families have been able to enjoy all the benefits of being posted to a Mediterranean island; Adventurous training, sport and experiencing the local culture have all been highlights. The company is making the most of Cyprus life and looks forward to the remainder of its time in the Mediterranean. We have all been (and continue to be) hugely grateful for the support that the Company has had from friends and family, as well as the wider Battalion and Regimental family in what has been another relentless period for C (Northamptonshire & Rutland) Company.

As the Battalion assumes the role of Regional Standby Battalion C Company are the first to take on the role of Op Shader Flight-line Security Company, providing force protection to the Royal Air Force Expeditionary Air Wing whose Typhoons and Tornados are conducting the nightly fight against Daesh in Iraq and Syria.

## **D (Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire) Company**

*Maj Mark Webster*

As I write this D Company are now fully established in Cyprus and conducting Cyprus Operations as the Ops 2 Company whilst also significantly supporting Ops 1 (A Company) protecting the Strategic Communications Assets (SCA) sites at Troodos, Ayias Nikolaos and Salt Lake Site (SLS). Ops 2 are responsible for guarding Alexander Barracks and conducting Anti-Mist Netting operations on Cape Pyla in support of the SBA Police.

D Company=y started the year with an eye on the forthcoming STTT and subsequent ETT in Nigeria. The first of those deployed early March, following by the DMaj and the ETT.

During April D Coy also received an uplift of around 46 soldiers from across the Battalion in preparation for future cadres for the Support Platoons, due to the frequency of commitments those reinforcement cadres are only being conducted now in Cyprus with live firing planned in the UK after the first rotation of Regional Standby Battalion (RSB). On return from the STTT elements of the Company deployed on Ex Agile Poacher

and Baseline Poacher in preparation for Cyprus. A number of the Company also went on a Battlefield Study to the Somme.

As the year flew by the Company got ground rush with the Unit Move to Cyprus upon us. However the Company still found time to exercise its right to march through Broxbourne on a sunny July afternoon. After clearing up after a fantastic Talavera celebration week it was all hands to the pumps for the G4 main effort of store handovers and the changeover of OCs. The Company then moved to Cyprus on MB3 with the exception of the ETT under DMaj Rosson, who remained in Nigeria before joining us on MB4.

After some well-earned leave and a short RSOI package D Coy assumed the role of Ops 2 Company. The Ops 2 Company is stood by to provide troops for a range of tasks, from supporting SBA Police, SBA Customs, and the SBA Fire Service to additional FP tasks. Currently the Company is providing the Alexander Barracks and Dhekelia Station guard. Additionally Anti-Mist Netting operations are being conducted in support of the SBA Police.

With RSB nearly upon us, the Company is preparing to reinforce the Lead Company group with 37 soldiers who include the mandated Mortar line and a Recce section. The reconstitution of the Company as Support Weapons Specialists continues.

Congratulations to CSgt Rosson on his promotion whilst in Nigeria. Cpl now Sgt Steel (Recce Pl) and also to LCpls Hemmings, Rosser, Reid, Myburgh, Nicholls and Rogers on their promotions to Cpl.

The Company has bid farewell to a number of key individuals including the OC Maj Rich Weston who will be a civilian in the New Year after sterling work in ensuring the Company is in good order and well qualified for its role in Cyprus. The new OC Maj Mark Webster has now taken over after his move from 77 Brigade. Capt Eaton is now the Adjt and Capt Smith left on deployment to Mali. WO2 Fawcett has left after a full 22 yr career and we have also said farewell to Sgt Ireland (MT), Sgt Dawe (The Vikings), Sgt Ingram (Watersports) and Sgt Smit (RDS).

We have welcomed CSgt Daly as the new CQMS and CSgt Bergh from 1RRF as the Assault Pioneer Pl Comd.





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# Agile Poacher



AGILE POACHER was an urban training and live firing exercise designed to achieve the required readiness for the Rifle Companies, and was split over 3 weeks in Lydd and Otterburn. This may sound extreme – having two halves of an exercise spread between the furthest north and furthest south training areas in England – but it meant minimal compromise on the areas and facilities for the training we wanted to conduct.

Lydd and Hythe have the best

and most versatile urban complex of any training area, whether the live-fire street range, the compound clearance range, the simunition room clearance facility in the Redoubt, or the two large villages with a variety of different buildings: nowhere else has such facilities. Likewise, in Otterburn there are a host of ideal Platoon and Company sized field-firing areas, with room for support weapons, and an accommodating range team with a pragmatic approach to adapting the ranges to make them fit the training.





So why compromise and try to fit everything into one mediocre area?

For the first week we were lucky to be able to have some training assistance from the urban warfare training team who managed to take a break from teaching Sandhurst OCdts to come down and run some bespoke lessons on building clearance. Within our own training wing we had a couple of our own urban warfare instructors, but it really helped to have a bit of extra expertise to deliver the lessons and provide slightly more in-depth knowledge on the subject. The Rifle Companies then went into a round-robin of blank battle exercises in the village (training through repetition until they were happy it was slick), live ranges on the street range, and working through the Redoubt in Hythe.

The Dymchurch Redoubt is a particularly interesting place to train. It is an old oval-shaped Napoleonic-Era fort (think Fort Boyard, but on land) with a courtyard in the centre. Around the outside are all the old barrack rooms, housed within the brick and



Simunition in the skills house at the redoubt.





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stone walls of the fort itself: this maze of rooms has been kitted out with cameras and targets, and can be completely blacked out. This makes it ideal for training and looking at camera footage of how the soldiers performed, and where improvements can be made.

Most importantly, this can all be done in the complete dark during the day time, with soldiers using night vision. In the centre of the courtyard, there's a skills house which has a complete viewing platform above the room plan and dividing walls – so observers can watch the troops as they clear through it.

The second week saw the start of the exercise rotation within the village complex itself. For a 72-hour period the Company lived in the FOB within the village, and conducted urban patrolling, building strikes, searches, and ended with a clearance through most of the village. Rype Village was built as a training aide for troops going to Northern Ireland, and it's been designed to have a strangely claustrophobic feel with the boundaries of the village walled off

and made to look like more housing.

Typically, when working on other training areas at Company level, urban training consists of attacking a group of two or three houses in the middle of a field, or on a hill (the larger facilities are almost always booked), so the troops really leaned into the complexity of the training environment. A lot of the more experienced (old and bold) CSgts and CSMs who'd done Northern Ireland tours were at pains to teach the younger Pte Soldiers how to patrol in a proper urban environment, and drill into them that they really had to have eyes in the back of their heads to see in all the different directions that they had to, to maintain situational awareness. Inevitably the fast-moving 'enemy' who knew the different rat-runs in the area got the drop on the troops the first couple of times, as they struggled to cover every angle. But the troops quickly improved at all levels and even in a 72-hour period, the change was noticeable.

After two weeks in Lydd and a brief weekend it was time for the long coach ride up to Otterburn. What







Cpl Wallace reloads, march and shoot, Lydd.



Lt Mattin considers his plan in Otterburn.

Otterburn lacks in phone signal it makes up for in hills and clouds. A few of us had been fortunate enough to spend the weekend up there beforehand to prepare the ranges, building sandbag grenade bunkers and making sure everything was safe and in-place. The Company 2ICs did a cracking job under a fair amount of pressure on the first day to open their ranges and begin exercising their platoons through platoon attacks, as well as grenade stalks, to get everyone up to the required standard for the subsequent Company ranges.

The Company attack ranges were quite different from each other and offered a decent opportunity for the Companies to try out different tactics, formations, and SOPs. On the first range, which was based around a fairly open valley which the troops attack down into then out the other side and was about 2km long, the key was firepower. BHQ and Maj Hawes (the SRCO) managed to book and coordinated fast-jet overflights at low altitude over the range, we also had 81mm mortars firing high explosive along the rear of the range and .50 cal's with GPMG providing fire support. The Companies also had a whole load of grenades to throw and bespoke bunkers to throw them from. It was very satisfying to see the grass catch fire from all the firepower when A Company went through – though it did mean pausing the range to put it out! The second range was slightly subtler: it started for each Company in the late afternoon and finished by midnight, so they had to consider

the transition to night time. There was less firepower available overall (GPMGs could still support, and mortars provided a backdrop of illumination), but more opportunity to skilfully manoeuvre units through the valley which the range ran along, and over the high ground on the left and right. Both Companies managed to somewhat wrong-foot the RCO when they completely outflanked the second position and almost came at it from behind (all well-managed and still perfectly safe, I might add).

The week ran smoothly, which is

always very satisfying, and (most importantly) the Companies got the opportunity to practice their warfighting capability at the Coy level using live ammunition which, normally, is a fairly rare occurrence. It so happened that, with Kenya, Louisiana, and Oman within the previous year the two Company Commanders had previously conducted at least three live attacks each and most of their soldiers had participated in at least one. But it must be stressed that that's not necessarily reflective of every







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Company Commander's experience in today's more limited training environment so the chance to do so many has to be relished.

What was particularly heartening to see and experience was the ability to do interesting and challenging training on excellent areas within the UK. The perception can often be that to do something really interesting you have to go abroad, and that an exercise in the UK means Brecon, or Salisbury Plain, or Thetford and the space to only really conduct Platoon attacks. That's simply untrue and, what's more, because the ranges in the UK are (on the whole) much better provided for it can also end up simpler and better for both the planners and the exercising troops. The fact that it's cheaper can't be ignored either: the budget for Agile Poacher was around £1 500 000 and that allowed for challenging Company level training without having to ship everyone over to Kenya where the heat often has to stop training, local thieves try to steal your most expensive kit, and the RAF mess up the baggage. It might not so closely reflect the potential reality of a deployment abroad for those exercising (and there is of course value in that), but a complex, interesting and challenging exercise in the UK can provide as good a learning experience for a light-role infantry Company practising high-intensity warfighting.



The Redoubt.



Rehearsals in Lydd.







# Baseline Poacher

**Pte Bennyworth, A Company:** A (Lincolnshire) Company deployed on a public order exercise, Baseline Poacher, during the summer of 2017 down in Lydd. It was a good couple of weeks training where the platoon, section and I learnt a lot in a short space of time. We started learning low level, basic public order drills initially, this involved how to correctly wear and operate in the public order gear, basic movements and the words of command. It was important that we got used to the basics and were comfortable operating and working in this heavy gear, which at times can be jolly hard work.

As the exercise progressed, we moved onto bigger and better things, and before long found ourselves working as a platoon against real 'rioters'! These were played by either spare Poachers, or Yorkshire UOTC, who made a good enemy; they couldn't get enough of us and kept coming back for

more! Having a real civilian population meant that it was a very realistic exercise and we gained a lot more from it, with 1 Platoon being one of the best Platoons in the battalion to go down the range.

I am looking forward to future Public Order exercises out here whilst we are in Cyprus, and will relish the opportunity should some more university students want to have a go!

**Lt Heaton, A Company:** The opportunity to take 1 Platoon on a two week public order exercise was an opportunity which I was keen to get stuck into. It is a relatively simple form of training, but one which demands that the lads perform to a high standard. I found that the lads picked up the drills pretty quickly, and in what felt like no time, the guys were smoothly advancing down streets clearing everything and anything that was stupid enough to get

in their way.

It was a fantastic opportunity for all involved with the Poachers showcasing their professional prowess and controlled aggression in what was a very demanding environment. From a Platoon Commanders perspective, I found it to be a simple yet challenging task, requiring the utmost command and control. In the chaotic action one had to ensure that the platoon was aggressive and maintained momentum, working in their small teams to clear larger groups, fighting toe to toe and shoulder to shoulder in what was a physically and mentally demanding situation.

The platoon learnt many lessons at an individual and team level from the exercise, and I can guarantee every man benefitted from the experience. I am looking forward to future public order exercises or opportunities where we can put these skills to good use.







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**Sgt Brazel, A Company:** Having Attended the Public Order Instructors Course a few weeks prior to Ex Baseline Poacher, myself and other instructors were quickly pulled out of the Companies to teach lessons and act as safety on the exercises. We moved straight into the teaching phase, with the vast majority of the Bn having not done any Public order before this was all new.

We started from the basics, putting

the kit on correctly, fighting stances and words of command, which gradually led up to Pls manoeuvring around Rype Village conducting serials at Platoon and Company level. The Civilian Population was made up of other Companies, so the men were giving out what they received on the last serial, which made for intense, motivated crowds of 'Civvies'.

After the teaching phase we moved onto CT1 and CT2 exercises. These varied

in length and scenarios were different every time.

The men were put under strain by the aggressive bunch of Yorkshire UOTC, who were keen to make the lives of A and B Companies as miserable as possible, with scenarios lasting into the night, being petrol bombed and having projectiles launched at high velocity to their centre of mass. All in all a good training package before deploying to Cyprus.







## 2nd Battalion The Poachers

On the 10th October 1955 The 1st Battalion, The Royal Leicestershire Regiment was transferred from Sudan to Cyprus sailing on board the SS Charlton Star. It disembarked at Famagusta at the outbreak of the Cyprus Emergency, and from there the Regiment spent 3 years fighting a counterinsurgency campaign in against EOKA guerrillas who opposed British colonial rule.

In B (Leicestershire) Company we are incredibly proud of our links to our antecedent Regiment and feel it is incumbent on us to ensure that the memory of the Battalion's service is remembered and commemorated. Given that the Wayne's Keep cemetery sits in a UN buffer zone in Cyprus, and is therefore hard to reach when we're based in England, we decided to take the opportunity to commemorate the Regiment's soldiers who died during the Emergency and are now laid to rest there.

Wayne's Keep is a Commonwealth War Graves Commission Cemetery (CWGC) located within the UN buffer zone in Nicosia and is overlooked by both Republic of Cyprus National Guard and Turkish Army observation posts. It is splendidly maintained by the CWGC team





while the Greek Orthodox cemeteries abutting it continue to fall into a state of disrepair. This creates a unique, tranquil, and poignant atmosphere: memories of the EOKA campaign and the aftermath are tangible at the cemetery. A total of 15 Royal Leicestershire Regiment soldiers are buried there and our remembrance service sought to commemorate both them and those that were repatriated to the UK.

Padre King held a short service and the Roll of Honour was read out by Lt Mattin and after the Last Post, Maj Garner laid a wreath at the foot of the memorial. After the service the Company visited each Royal Leicestershire Regiment soldier's grave where the name, the details of their Army service and the circumstances of how they were killed were read out. Following a period of individual reflection we then rested a cross on their headstone. We did this fifteen times: once for each soldier. Strikingly, the service marked 61 years to the day since the death of Private D A Morris, aged 20.

Services of Remembrance are important for the moral development of all service personnel, and yet we are often limited to only observing Remembrance Sunday each year. This particular service tied in with B Company's study of the EOKA campaign and history of the Regiment which will hopefully better prepare for us morally and conceptually for any future deployments. There is much to learn from our forebears, and we will continue to both educate ourselves on their hard work, and remember their sacrifices.

### **Life in Cyprus.**

*Sgt Steel (D Company, Recce Pl)*

Cyprus so far has been nothing short of amazing! Moving overseas was a big decision for my family, taking them away from everything that's normal to them back in the UK to live a completely different life style here in Cyprus wasn't easy, but they love what this island offers and the children have settled into school just fine. This is my second time in Cyprus having been here back in 2010 to 2012.

The working hours over here coincide with the children finishing school at 1.30pm, which means we can all go and explore the island with most of the afternoon spare. We feel very lucky to have a family beach on our doorstep with free water sports offered nearly every day including paddle boarding, banana boat, wake boarding etc. for both soldiers and



their families.

Since we've been on island we have been very busy. After having been on island for only 8 days I had completed RSOI and moved to one of the out stations where I took over duties as force protection 2IC from 2 PWRR for 5 weeks. That was soon over, and I was back in D Company with Recce platoon supporting the commitment with OPs 2 Company. Being back in camp you get to see how busy the Battalion really is, having a rifle company committed to the outstations on island, the preparation for the RSB (Regional Standby Battalion), the overarching guard force commitment on camp as well as providing troops at 12 and 24hrs notice support the SBA (Sovereign Base Area) Police. Then on top of that we have an anti-bird poaching operation with the SBA Police every few days, and provided troops to go on the overseas exercise to Spain with C Company. But, even with

the work load, when there is time to stand down you have all the opportunity to enjoy the life in Cyprus.

### **Life in Cyprus**

*Sgt Craycraft*

I've been looking forward to Cyprus since I found out the confirmed flight dates; having been posted here last time I knew what to expect and how good it can be. Last time I was single and living in, this time I'm married with twins on the way it would be a slightly different experience; but I knew that the Watersports centre had been upgraded, it was the middle of summer and peak tourist season on Island: what wasn't there to look forward to?

We received several briefs beforehand which showed the families accommodation, the nearby amenities and a plethora of other useful things which set us up well. The heat took some getting used to, but





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after many litres of water and the proper acclimatisation we were on our way to being settled in. It didn't take long for the guys to start taking advantage of the life in Cyprus, cliff jumping at Cape Greco, parachuting for adventure training, wakeboarding at sunrise with families and, of course, nights in Ayia Napa. Despite being busy on the current Ops cycle, we use as much down time as possible to enjoy Cyprus. For me, it has been brilliant being back on island, with my family this time, and having a break from the typical British weather.

It has, however, been challenging for all ranks to get used to the pace of life in Cyprus as it is very different from what the men were used to in Cottesmore. The Guard commitment at Alexander Barracks is long hours, working 4 days on with 2 days off is physically and mentally draining, but the men perform their duties diligently. We also provide guards on various sensitive sites owned by the UK and the men will spend time away providing security and protection to those sites. The rotations are clear and planned, with briefs conducted before deployments everyone is well informed as to where they will be going and for how long which helps when it comes to those who are here with their families. It will take some time to get used to the work cycle and lifestyle in Cyprus but I am confident that we will soon have ironed out any creases and be working to the required standard and providing a professional level security and be ready to



deploy on Operations at a moment's notice if required. We are trained to work under pressure and welcome a challenge and we will continue to work professionally in all areas as well as ensuring we enjoy our time in Cyprus.

### **Anti-Bird Poaching in Cyprus**

*CSgt Bergh*

The past 2 months have seen D Company conducting joint operations with the

Sovereign Base Area Police (SBAP) to stop the illegal poaching of protected songbirds that are consumed as a local delicacy. The main concern is the Eurasian Black Cap which migrates through Cyprus every Spring and Autumn. Each year an estimated 880 000 Black Caps are caught using 2 methods: one is by placing lime sticks in trees where the perching birds would get stuck, but this offers a low yield so a second more industrial method has been devised. Firstly, Acacia trees are





planted and irrigated with long corridors cleared between the rows of trees with large expanses of mist nets being erected in the clearing, next poachers place out an audio transmitter playing bird song to lure birds into the area. Once the birds have been drawn to the area and perched for the night, the poachers then raise the nets high above the trees and use sticks to beat the trees, chasing the birds into the nets: on average 1 net will capture approximately 200 birds per night.

D Company's task has included locating audio transmitters and mist nets, and the removal and destruction of irrigation lines to deter future use of locations with the emphasis on preservation of evidence which could lead to prosecution. The Police provide local knowledge and legal authority and so, working as a team, vast areas of the SBA have been cleared through vehicle patrols, dismount patrols, and the use of sophisticated surveillance equipment which includes an SBAP drone fitted with thermal optics.

For the men on the ground it has been a very rewarding operation, but one that has required a lot of physical effort and mental stamina, with the migration season coming to an end (and therefore the Operation too), D Company now look forward to the next challenge and a well-deserved Christmas leave.

### Corps of Drums in Israel

*Sgt Townsend*

I received an email out of the blue from the Adjt mid-September, for a possible job in Israel and whether the Corps of Drums could provide 4 Drummers to drum-out Lt Gen Rudesheim (The Security coordinator for Israel and Palestine) at a dinner held at the Ambassador Hotel in Jerusalem, and



for a short separate display. After a bit of liaison with Capt Sawyer (LANCS), who works at the Palestinian Officers Academy (and was organising the event), we were on our way to Tel Aviv.

Myself, Dmrs Cato, Jaggard and Wiles were met by Capt Sawyer and driven swiftly to our apartment at 0430 so we could get some sleep. We spent the day preparing our kit – which had to be spotless – and rehearsing at the venue, and of course we managed to find the bar with time to kill. The performance on the night went swimmingly, and we wooed the crowd. The General was more than happy with our display and afterwards we were well looked after by him and all the guests. The hotel waitresses took a lively interest in the drummers too, though it was probably more due to our uniforms than our first-class chat and rugged good looks.

Nursing a hangover, we visited Jerusalem

with a guide from the area who shared with us his experiences as a child during the 6 Day War in 1967. We visited the holy site of the Mount of Olives south of the city before moving north into the city to the Wailing Wall, going via the Crying Church. We managed to squeeze in a quick visit to the President Arafat Museum which gives the Palestinian viewpoint on the city's history. We visited all the sectors in the city which was fascinating: each one had a distinct character, whether smells of the strong spices in the Muslim area or the amount groups of people wearing white collars in the Christian part. It is a truly an amazing place and not what we were expecting. The views were remarkable and the amount of history we covered in the 8 hours was outstanding – from the time of Christ, through the Crusades, to present day. We experienced something that we might not have the opportunity to







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# Exercise Rattlesnake

*A Platoon Commander's perspective*



In early January 2017, A (Lincolnshire) Company deployed to Fort Polk in Louisiana to undertake a rotation of the Joint Readiness Training Centre (JRTC). A Company was incorporated into the ORBAT of the 2nd Bn of the 14th Infantry regiment (2-14IN) as a Company Gp, in order to aid in the development of interoperability between the American and British Armies at the tactical level. A Company was employed as 2-14's fourth rifle Company in the light role. The exercise was very different to the ones I had experienced with the British Army, with greater resources, a slower pace and a different mindset.

I arrived in Bn soon after finishing the Platoon Commanders Battle Course in Brecon. I was fortunate in that I as thrown straight in at the deep end, and after being in Bn for a week I was going on a Bde level exercise with my Pl. The exercise worked in three phases, firstly when we arrived we had a few days to 'shake out' in order to enable us to deploy in good order which lasted a few days. Subsequently, began the live fire phase, which involved a three day, Bn live fire range package culminating in A Company attacking and clearing a village





occupied by enemy. Then followed the main exercise phase itself, the 'Force on Force'. As the name suggests, this entailed our Bn and Bde fighting a real-life enemy, Geronimo, for a period of eleven days; here lay the first major difference and was something no one had experienced before in training.

There were several things which made the exercise different to anything I had experienced so far, the first one being how the Americans dealt with casualties. Before we began the Force on Force phase, we were issued individual casualty cards, in an envelope. These were only to be opened, by an Observer/Mentor in the event we were killed or injured, which our simulation equipment would decide. Upon said card, was our injury, which included type of wound, location and effect, and these varied widely from shrapnel wound to the head, to KIA, to triple amputee all the way through to STI. The idea behind this was to fully test the Bde's medical responses. Further to this rather different approach to casualties, it would take a few days before we had our losses replaced as the entire system of BCR replacement was enacted. One might be out of the fight





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Maj Ben Hawes



for a week whilst casualty processing was conducted. Therefore, at times we were only working with 12 man platoons, which made life very difficult! But in true Poacher fashion, we cracked on with the task in hand to the best of our ability, making the best of a tricky situation. Finally, a slightly bizarre observation was the Americans triaged real casualties with play ones. Consequently, a US soldier

with a dislocated soldier had to wait until his colleagues with 'more severe' but play injuries were dealt with first, I imagine much to his dismay!

Operating as part of a BG, against a real-life enemy, as part of an organisation that worked differently to us meant that we faced some experiences that we might not, for example, have done so in Kenya. Before the exercise commenced,

there was a general feeling that it would be kinetic, exciting, well-resourced, that we would be travelling in helicopters everywhere and so on. The reality on the ground however, was slightly less exciting than many of us had expected. Initially we found ourselves acting as flank protection, patrolling through Louisiana's finest swamps in challenging weather, whilst the remainder of the Bn cleared a series of villages. In Kenya, this might have been 'notional', but in JRTC, with an entire Bde in the field our flank protection did exactly that. It was in fact observed that our left hook was made so quickly that we caught Geronimo off guard as they looked to establish their C2 node early. 1 Pl stumbled across them and conducted a hasty assault putting Geronimo on the back foot. We then settled into a number of days of flank protection utilising a combination of standing patrols, routing patrolling and ambushes. Whilst this was an important job, it was challenging for different reasons to clearing urban areas from live enemy, and certainly not as exciting. A reality of the exercise was that we were not always 'the tip of the spear', and were working within a BG context. It soon dawned on me that this was probably a very real way of employing Infantry and that the pace of life within a Bde battle was quite ordinary.

Fighting a real-life enemy meant that we all learnt a great deal, compared to the 'scripted' serials that we tend to find on British Army exercises. We soon found that we were at a significant disadvantage because Geronimo had better knowledge of the ground, better





kit and more freedoms than us. Fighting this constant threat of a live enemy added to the exercise and meant the guys had to perform in order to defeat Geronimo. One certainly learns more from setbacks, and this was very true at JRTC. For example, on a couple of occasions our Company was rendered combat ineffective due to enemy strengths that had been woefully underestimated by Bde and BG G2. At one point were attacked by T-80s supported by BMPs at 0300hrs – there's a lot that small arms can do against this threat when the Bde's stock of Anti-Armour weapons has been depleted through enemy action! However, this constant threat emphasised to the guys how important their low-level skills and drills were. Fighting a real-life, active, free-thinking enemy was more realistic, and in many ways meant we had to work harder to out-think, second-guess, and out-manoeuvre our opposition.

Finally, another reality of Ex RATTLESNAKE, was that it tested the supply chain to an extent that is unheard of for us Brits! We lacked the safety net that exists on British exercises, and Geronimo would actively target resupplies, which meant by the end of the exercise things like CSups, ammunition, fuel and food were scarce! Even the field kitchens were not safe and chefs were frequently targeted by Geronimo in an attempt to sap our will to fight. It was considered fairly ordinary by American soldiers for there to be a lack of food and water and that hardships were a rite of passage when attending JRTC.

In conclusion, going on Exercise RATTLESNAKE was quite a different exercise to what I think many of us had been expecting. The realism of many parts of the exercise meant that every man, from Company Command down to the most junior Pte soldiers gained and grew after the exercise. As a young, fresh platoon commander it was a fantastic opportunity for myself and an excellent way to start my career.

#### **A view of working 'the American Way' from a JNCO**

*LCpl (now Cpl) Brereton*

We were greeted by the US Bn making comments like 'alright mate' and 'do you want a cup of tea?' Never had I heard so many bad attempts at an English accent and this continued throughout our four weeks there. It was a fantastic opportunity to come out and work with the Americans who are quite similar soldiers to us.



My first impressions from working with the Americans is that many subtle differences exist, even though we conduct the same job within the military. This spans from patrolling, to different ways of clearing a building. On our first day, we conducted training with Alpha Company's first platoon, nicknamed 'The Wolf Pack'. We compared our SOPs and we were pleasantly surprised that the Americans preferred some of our room clearance drills and adopted them throughout the rest of the exercise.

The first exercise phase of our deployment was the LFTT which the Americans conduct in a different way.

We set off as a Company Gp within a BG context and had our own objective which was a village, numbering eight buildings. The major difference was that we initially conducted the attack dry, then blank and then finally live. To us this was strange as we normally train without seeing the ground first. There were many pros and cons to this. It is good in a sense due to the fact that you can make mistakes and then rectify them, seeing where you have improved as a Sect. In contrast though, once you get to the live phase, you already know what's going to be around the corner so I thought for realism purposes, the American way isn't as good as back home.







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However, to compensate this having an American mounted FSG firing 50 cal and GMG, plus an Apache C/S as back up made things a lot more exhilarating.

The next phase was an 11 day exercise in a different training area they called 'The Box'. This was by the far the biggest exercise I have been involved in and we were fortunate enough to have been embedded with the American Alpha (Terminator) Coy, swapping with an American Pl. The amount of resources that were used was impressive. They had everything from tanks, attack helicopters and artillery to NGOs and civilians working in the fourteen towns and villages throughout the training area; actors playing the local population. They also had a Bn-sized peer enemy which were free roaming. They were based there for two years so they had thorough knowledge of the ground we were working in which was a massive disadvantage for us. For us, this made things a lot more interesting and challenging as we knew the enemy would want a scrap with us Brits.

In summary, Ex RATTLESNAKE presented a completely different training opportunity. Although, there were times where the exercise was perhaps a bit slow, this was just down to the sheer scale of it. Being able to work so closely with the Americans was a real eye-opener and delivered genuine training value.

### **A newly arrived private soldier's perspective**

*Pte Rao*

My name is Jason Rao. I'm 31 years old and originally from Australia. I've had numerous jobs since leaving school at 16, from working in the food industry to door-to-door sales to electrical maintenance. My decision to join the British Army was an impulsive one, as I felt as though it would be able to offer me adventure and excitement which no other job could. It has been everything I had hoped for so far and more. I expressed interest at 29, and a year later I had finished ITC Catterick as a trained soldier and was ready to join my Battalion.

I joined the Battalion in December and the pace of life was fast. I joined A Company, who were in the midst of preparing for their deployment to Louisiana. Ex RATTLESNAKE would be my first major exercise with the Battalion and I was excited. With only two weeks before we fell out for Christmas leave, I

didn't have that much time to find my feet before we were off!

I felt welcomed into the Company and pleased with warm reception I received. People helped me and worked hard to ensure that I deployed with the correct kit and in good order. I arrived in America in January, excited and in awe of the situation, thinking that six months ago, I had been labouring on a building site and was now half way across the world! When we arrived, much to our shock and horror, the temperature was below freezing, having expected tropical heat and packed accordingly! However, due to the unique weather system, within a few days, the temperature rose to a sweltering 27°C. This however, soon deteriorated into torrential rainfall within the first 24 hrs of exercise which went on for days!

Having joined fresh from training, I was thoroughly dropped in the deep end, but relished the challenge. Fortunately, I had a great mentor, Corporal Wade, thorough and knowledgeable, he demonstrated professionalism at the highest level. I

enjoyed the live fire phase, not only was the weather on our side, but it was my first exposure to a BG live fire attack, what a spectacle to behold! Our part in the attack was on a small village and it was time to use the skills we had been practising the days before. I felt as though A Company really set a good standard and impressed the Americans with our aggression and professionalism. After the live fire phase, we were given two days to administrate ourselves in preparation for the force-on-force exercise.

During the force-on-force it was very realistic, fighting a real thinking enemy over a large area, who were equipped with tanks, helicopters and plethora of other vehicles. The training area was dotted with small villages and towns with actors playing the role of civilians. The exercise phase lasted eleven days, which was a great experience and I learnt a great deal.

It was the best opportunity for me to be given the chance to actually do real soldiering straight out of training and put the skills I had learnt into practice.







As with every overseas exercise, planning began many months before the beginning of the soldiering phase. Ex IBERIAN SUN was no exception to this rule, and following a somewhat turbulent period of planning troop and freight movement, the exercise in the Galicia region of North West Spain was a great success. The initial phases of planning began in Kendrew Barracks in Cottesmore with the final details being tied up a matter of days before the company departed Cyprus via RAF Akrotiri.

IBERIAN SUN was viewed as a fantastic opportunity for a company that had been supporting both A and B Coys on exercises to America and Oman, to come back together as a formed body and train together on a challenging exercise. Further to this, the company had just completed the Ops 2 commitment and the company was itching to get some good exercise time under its belt. For the OC it was a welcome chance to get back to being an infantry officer following his two years in Army Headquarters!

The preparation and deployment phases were plagued with frantic planning following logistical and financial challenges throughout.

# Exercise IBERIAN SUN 17





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Amidst freight delays and last minute flight planning that took the main body from Cyprus, via Brize Norton, London Heathrow, Madrid and then finally to Pontevedra, the troops arrived at their destination on Sun 22 September 2017.

The first week was a fantastic opportunity for the platoon commanders, platoon sergeants and section commanders to get amongst the tactical aspects of operating in both urban and rural environments. Base General Morillo, which served as the base location for the majority of the exercise, boasted bespoke urban training facilities, as well as brilliant areas of high ground which quickly turned into the playground for the machine gun platoon.

This low level training, which embodied the Army's current

focus on 'back to basics' training was invaluable to soldiers and commanders alike and set the conditions for success later in the exercise.

Company HQ were keen to instil the sentiment that the section is the fundamental building block and getting this right, will ensure success at both platoon and company level. The rifle platoons undertook and achieved an array of training objectives, ranging from building clearance, to the ever-vital section attack in the rural environment, and even to exploring actions on drones. Most importantly, the platoons invested plenty of time in training at night. As any soldier or commander will explain, operating with no white or infrared light, in the complex and congested built up environment,

is an art. The platoons also had the opportunity to work with the Spanish Army, comparing weapons and tactics. Soldiers integrated and practiced their urban skills together working as mixed nation sections, clearing through buildings. This was a brilliant chance to work within a multinational context - a likely aspect of future work.

Away from the rifle platoons, the machine gun platoon grafted on the high ground. With the burden of GPMGs, tripods and no shortage of 7.62mm, the platoon certainly earned its pay. The machine gun platoon has gone from strength-to-strength this year and Spain gave the force element a chance to continue to test its capability and to ensure that when required, it can offer ample fire support to the troops of the rifle





platoons in the low ground. MG platoon focussed on establishing gun lines, casualty extraction and then collapsing gun lines. Throughout the first week especially, the platoon became even more accustomed with carrying the great weights that machine gun platoons have to bear!

The first week was a resounding success and the art of staging on the main entry points on Dhekelia Garrison had been replaced with the mind-set of infantry operations in both the urban and rural environments. The first five days of CT1 level training set the conditions for the platoons transitioning into week two, on a new training area, where they would work within a company context.

The second training area was a significant departure to that in







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Pontevedra. Parga is far smaller (at around 4 sq Km!), flatter and is more of a wooded environment. This week incorporated both urban and rural interfaces once again. The Company conducted an echelon Company attack in order to capture and then occupy platoon houses. The static located then threw up the challenges of defending the location, liaising and de-conflicting with other call signs, and then conducting various patrols so to disrupt and then defeat the enemy throughout. Fighting patrols, recces, hasty attacks, as well as the ever-present challenge of defending their positions against a free-thinking

and agile enemy became the norm. Fighting at night was a continuing norm and the relatively newly formed Company HQ were given a valuable run out.

The third and final phase of the exercise saw the company move back south to Pontevedra to put all they had learnt to the test as part of a multinational Battlegroup operation against a well-equipped and tenacious enemy provided by the Spanish. This phase was to culminate with two company attacks; one by day, one by night. Once back in camp the company patrolled straight out onto the area in order to establish

itself in a company harbour area. To the delight of the entire company, the move out (all uphill and on very uneven ground) was with bergens and full ammunition scales – proper infantry soldiering! The “fight light” concept was fully embraced by the MG platoon who moved out carrying just fighting kit, a couple of cold Spanish nights were a small price to pay to maximise maneuverability and allow the carriage of a precious few more minutes of fire support.

Once established in a woodblock the company went into a rhythm of battle prep ready for the next days attack; the MG platoon went off to set up the gun line, the Spanish snipers and reconnaissance platoon recced and overwatched the village, and the rifle platoons went through the orders process. In the morning the OC delivered his set of confirmatory orders, which saw the village being split into four sectors; each British platoon taking a sector and the Spanish platoon taking one. No mean feat for the OC trying to control four rifle platoons, for one of which English wasn't a first language. The attack went well and reflected that the platoon level training completed in the first week had paid off. The company patrolled back to the harbour area in order to prepare itself for the final attack of the exercise; a night attack this time only with only the three British platoons. Thursday night saw the company get little sleep, 9 Platoon set off early to mark and secure the Company FUP and insertion routes, the other platoons in the harbour area spent much of the night getting probed by enemy patrols. At 0500 hrs the company stepped off from the harbour area with 9 Platoon providing guides to the bergen cache and subsequently the company FUP. At 0600 hrs, with fire support from the MG platoon, the company launched a 2-up attack on the village; a complex task that demanded strict control measures. The company operated well in the dark managing to clear the complex village in little over an hour with no use of white light. Once the sun rose the company posed for a quick photo before heading off to lunch with





the Spanish. A giant feast of Paella waited – a befitting way to finish an exercise in Spain.

Cpl Craig Davey, section commander in 10Pl: ‘The exercise was a great experience, especially for our younger soldiers who hadn’t had the chance to work with another army before. I had seen first-hand how much work went into planning the exercise and it’s safe to say it was a success.’

LCpl Jason Spence, section second-in-command, 10Pl: ‘In my opinion Ex Iberian sun was an all-round great experience. It was an opportunity to work alongside our Spanish allies and learn from them and their drills as well as getting eyes on their ability to operate when put into chaotic scenarios. It also gave us the chance to experience their culture and see first-hand what their day to day life was like.’

In summary, the exercise was an invaluable two week window within which the company achieved a vast amount. Working alongside the Spanish was a unique experience, and the defence engagement benefitted both partner nations. C Company soldiered very well and the culmination event, the company black attack onto the FIBUA village shows clear capability throughout the entire company. C Company looks forward to assuming regional



standby battalion commitments, as well as the training opportunities, and general life in Cyprus.

### MG interoperability with the Spanish MG Platoon

*Lt Kyle Forsyth*

Working alongside various technical parts of the Spanish infantry allowed for some interesting comparisons of tactics, equipment and weapon systems.

The MG platoon spent a good period with their Spanish cousins who are dual qualified on the Israeli ‘Spike’ Anti-Tank weapon and the German MG42 machine gun is the

Sustained Fire role. Key learning points brought out highlighted the advantages of deliberate style occupations, and physical graft required, used extensively by the British as compared to a purely hasty, less tactical but quicker method preferred by the Spanish.

The infamous ‘Jesus Carry’ of a GPMG mounted on a tripod, used to extract from a gun line in a matter of seconds in emergencies was complimented by the Spanish especially with Pte Swaine running back uphill faster than a Spanish mountain goat! The British troops were equally impressed by the high rates of fire and rapid barrel changed that could be achieved by the Spanish on their MG42.







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# Exercise JEBEL STORM



In February 2017, B (Leicestershire) Company, 2 R ANGLIAN supported by Reconnaissance Platoon, 1 R ANGLIAN deployed on Ex JEBEL STORM 17. This is an annual overseas training exercise whereby a British Army Infantry Company exercises alongside the Sultan of Oman's Parachute Regiment. Overseas training exercises are an excellent opportunity to develop our core infantry skills and warfighting capability in new and challenging environments and, where possible, to work with foreign armies which encourages close bilateral Army-to-Army relationships.

The first phase of Ex JEBEL STORM saw an STTT (Short Term Training Team) deploy two weeks in advance of the main body. The STTT's role was focused on training the Sultan of Oman Parachute Regiment in British Army tactical training practices in order to facilitate interoperability for the latter stages of the exercise. The STTT was tasked to focus its training on tactics in the urban environment. The Omani soldiers were enthusiastic and receptive to their British counterparts and a mutual respect was immediately struck. The training was intense but rewarding for both Armies and perhaps most successful was the urban training facility that was designed by The Poachers STTT and built by the Sultan of Oman's Parachute Regiment carpenters section, which offered excellent training value.

B (Leicestershire) Company Group was based to the north of the city of Niswa in the Jebel Akhdar region, a name that translates to the 'green mountains'. The scenery was spectacular yet also unforgiving, sitting at an altitude of just under 2000m above sea level. In order to acclimatise to the altitude, and heat, training was initially focused on physical fitness and basic soldiering such as target indication, judging distances, patrolling and mountain manoeuvre. The challenge faced during this phase





was to maintain the ability to manoeuvre whilst dominating the ground tactically. The training area is situated on a rocky plateau with steep wadis carved through it and imposing mountains. The ground is littered with enormous rocks and boulders that make covering ground at speed difficult. Our Omani counterparts were well accustomed to the terrain and moved at impressive speeds whilst manoeuvring tactically.

In the next phase of the exercise platoons were tested in their ability to clear the mountainous terrain of an enemy force by day and night in a number of advance to contact and deliberate attack actions. The enemy force was equipped with small arms and sniper rifles which tested the platoons by occupying high ground. The key to defeating the enemy using these tactics was the platoons' ability to concentrate firepower, conceal its combat power whilst manoeuvring and use the manoeuvrist approach to outthink the enemy and defeat them. Training in this type of environment was a first for almost all the soldiers thus offering excellent training value.

Next, a complete shift in environments ensued and the Company then focused







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its training on operating in the urban environment using the Oman Army's Mountain and Urban Training Unit (MUTU) facility located in the Jebel Ahkdar. The MUTU facility is a purpose built urban training village with complex room design and tunnel networks. Sections were given the time, real estate and resources required to master urban operations with a particular focus on night operations. This is an outstanding training opportunity and the quality of the soldiers' urban skills improved exponentially. This phase culminated with a joint Omani-British Army Company attack on the MUTU village, demonstrating interoperability.

The final soldiering phase of Ex JEBEL STORM saw the Company Group move to the Safrat Ad Dawr training area to conduct Live Fire Tactical Training (LFTT). The terrain was completely different to what the Company had been exercising on beforehand. The area was less undulating with the occasional rolling sand dune and rocky wadis with only limited vegetation providing cover from view.

The platoons concentrated on their marksmanship with static ranges by day and night and progressed onto LFTT platoon advance to contact and deliberate attack actions. Perhaps the highlight of the entire exercise was the final company attack onto a large dug-in enemy platoon objective. The firepower delivered by a Company group is always a spectacle!

After a challenging soldiering phase in the mountains and then in the desert, the troops swapped the dry, hot and dusty conditions for an oasis of sun, sand and

turquoise coastlines in Muscat on the Gulf of Oman Sea where the Company enjoyed some well earned rest and recuperation. Some explored the markets and mosques of Muscat and enjoyed some time on the beach and a total of 40 soldiers, 38 Poachers and two Vikings soldiers took part in a three-day diving exercise named Ex JEBEL TIGER where soldiers completed their PADI Open Water Diving Qualification. The PADI Open Water Diving qualification allows the recipient to dive anywhere in the world to depths of eighteen meters with a dive buddy who is similarly qualified.

The course was delivered by Euro-Divers Oman and they were excellent. Day one saw lessons in understanding the theory and physics of diving at depths and the effects this can have on the body as well as emphasising the safe practice of diving. The soldiers were then familiarised with the kit and equipment they would be using. By the end of day one, every soldier had experienced diving in the ocean and practiced skills such as hand signals, kit assembling, pre-diving buddy checks and under water drills such as mask clearance and using the emergency regulator. Just when the soldiers thought the hard part was done, just in case the military swim test was not enough, the soldiers had to remove their diving equipment and prove their swimming abilities by swimming 200m metres followed by 10 minutes of treading water in the ocean, before climbing back on the boat. Credit is due to both the soldiers and Euro-Divers for achieving all this on the first day!

In the morning of day two the soldiers completed their diving theory exam. This

exam was mandatory in order to attain the PADI Open Water Diving Qualification. In the afternoon, all soldiers then conducted their second open water dive developing on the skills learnt the previous day but the skills became slightly more testing. These included a full removal of the diving equipment, using your buddy's emergency regulator and swimming eight meters in full kit on one breath of air.

The instructors even turned off the air to each soldier's tanks so they could appreciate what it felt like losing air and how to react safely. The skills practised at depth put a number of soldiers outside of their comfort zones and some had to overcome genuine fear to pass the skills phase. These skills are challenging but fundamental in ensuring the diver knows what to do in the event of an emergency underwater.

Day three was the day the soldiers were most looking forward to. They had proven they understood the theory of diving and could complete their diving skills efficiently and with confidence. They were now ready to complete fun dives at two separate locations where they could explore the rich marine life native to the Gulf of Oman.

None of the groups were left disappointed witnessing the beautifully clear waters home to colorful coral reefs and marine life such as sting-rays, flat fish, puffer fish, turtles, clown fish, damsels, starfish and shoals of various species. This was a great end to an excellent three days diving and a great end to a successful exercise in Oman.

Achieving the PADI Open Water Diving qualification offers fantastic opportunities for our soldiers. As previously stated, this



allows the recipient to dive anywhere in the world to depths of eighteen meters with a dive buddy who is similarly qualified. This is fantastic news for the Poachers in particular in light of the impending unit move to Dhekelia, Cyprus in July this year. The PADI qualification will allow soldiers to dive in their spare time or even when on duty on similar diving exercises in the future. Dhekelia is home to a Joint Service Adventure Training Wing (Cyprus) with diving facilities and it is hoped for those who have caught the diving bug, this is the start to their diving instructor path.

Overall, Ex JEBEL STORM was an exhilarating and formative experience for all members of the Company. We are grateful to have gained some experience of deploying a Company Group into the Middle East prior to assuming our role of Lead Company Group; and of course, another benefit of the exercise was to demonstrate the close bond The Poachers and Vikings share. Their Recce Platoon was superb throughout and built on the already strong relationship we share with our fellow Battalion.

### **A Private Soldier's Perspective**

*Pte Fuller*

Exercise JEBEL STORM was a great chance to work alongside another Army, The Sultan of Oman's Parachute Regiment. I took a lot away from working with them that I will apply if deployed as part of the Lead Company Group. At the soldier level I learned that you must be able to communicate if working with a host nation Army. This is why hand signals and basic skills are so important as it makes communication much easier. You simply have to be able to talk to your counterparts even if an interpreter is not around and we found ways to do so. The highlight was training alongside the Omanis in the MUTU.

Having completed Ex AGILE POACHER it was good to improve on our urban fighting skills, and the Omani's are very good at it! We don't get much time to train in urban fighting in the UK so this was a great experience. Oman is definitely a tough environment that tests your soldiering skills. The close fighting of the Jebel is totally different to the open expanses of Safrat Ad Dawr. I particularly enjoyed achieving my PADI diving qualification during the AT phase and I hope to add further diving experiences to my log book whilst in Cyprus!



# Nigeria ETT

Despite having recently completed a Short Term Training Team (STTT) task in Zaria with D Company I jumped at the chance to go back on an Enduring Training Team (ETT) for an extra 4 months. I had won every quiz and the coveted STTT chess championship title and I wanted to continue my winning streak.

Due to the imminent unit move to Cyprus the training team personnel were patched together from Poachers and some Tigers. I was 2ic to Capt. Jack (by name, and by nature) Bowden of 2PWRR. I met the team in country and told them: "By the way we have 2000 Nigerians on PDT

to train starting tomorrow."

The team took this as their stride and rapidly constructed a training programme concentrating on Counter IED, Battlefield Casualty Drills and fieldcraft/tactics. We were very fortunate in having an excellent set of JNCOs and Ptes who really sought to deliver the best training they possibly could. This was to be the nature of the beast for the remainder of our time. We would be called upon to deliver lessons at short notice which is why having an ETT in place permanently is so advantageous, both for the Nigerians' training and also the UK's reputation with them.





## 2nd Battalion The Poachers



Halfway through the 4-month tour, half the team were sent south to Makurdi in rather austere conditions where they conducted a 6-week package to help develop the Nigerian Army SF capability. This smaller team did a fantastic job and returned to us having covered themselves in glory. Indeed, the lads' professionalism throughout maintained the strong links between the battalion and the Nigerian Army and ensured that whenever "The Poachers" are mentioned in Nigeria, it's a byword for excellence.







### Inter Company Boxing

The Boxing season for us started after finishing Ex ASKARI STORM last year, when the decision was taken to run an Inter Company boxing competition to allow us to select some new members of the Bn boxing team. After a 6 week long training camp which culminated in the competition finals taking place on the 8th December, best boxer was won by LCpl Frost. With real quality boxing on show throughout the week, in usual Poacher fashion the competition did not disappoint.

### Army Major Units Competition

The draw for the Army Major Units competition was made in late November, so the battalion already knew that they would be facing 3 Para sometime in March. With a long and varied training camp, which saw the boxers going to different civilian gyms gaining some valuable experience sparring a lot of

different fighters and further training in Totley Camp, they felt ready to face the formidable 3 Para who were unbeaten in 14 years of competition. With fight week closing in fast, the (good natured) verbal jousting on social media hit full flow between the 3 Para boxing team and members of the Poachers and on the 9th of March supporters from the Poachers drowned out the Para chants in Colchester – despite being away and outnumbered 3:1.

In the end it wasn't quite to be, and after a tough night's boxing the Poachers eventually lost 5-2. Some might argue that, with 3 split decisions from 5 lost bouts, the end score flattered 3 Para and the night could have really gone either way. The 2 winners from the Poachers Team were Middleweight LCpl Clarke by Knock Out and Light Heavyweight LCpl Kimanze by decision. Pte Cargle also won most gallant boxer after putting up a skilled and gutsy resistance.

### Army individual competition

The Boxing Team had shown real spirit and competence during the build-up to, and match against, 3 Para so, despite the agonising defeat, the Battalion decided to keep the Boxing Team formed up and enter into the Army Individual competition which took place in June. On fight night, troops from the Poachers travelled down to the home of Army Boxing in Aldershot to cheer on their fighters (the only unit to do so).

The competition took place in the 1st week of June with final being held on the 8th June, the team entered 5 fighters into the competition and gained an honorary 6th Poacher in Pte Ella Morgan from 1 Military Working Dogs (1 MWD) who won her bout by decision. Not only did she wear the Poachers tracksuit she was also cheered on by the army of Poachers there in support, who were in full voice throughout the evening. The team also joining forces with RIFLES, PWRR,





# 2nd Battalion The Poachers







SCOTS and PARAs as part of an Infantry team.

Pte Cargle and Griffiths both fought well and lost very narrow decisions in the semi-finals, whilst LCpls Clarke and Call, and Pte Cherry, came through their early bouts to make Thursday's final. The 1st Poacher bout was the highly talented LCpl Clarke who had knocked out a Para on his way to the final. He fought a tricky southpaw from the Artillery in a very cagey affair LCpl Clarke was unlucky to be on the losing end of a split decision. Next up was the undefeated Pte Cherry, who had won his previous bout by stoppage against a 2 SCOTS boxer. Next was a fighter from 13 Air Assault (Major Unit Champions), in a fight that Cherry won by decision.

Last to fight was team captain LCpl Call who won his semi-final fight by stoppage. His final saw him fight a boxer from 2 SCOTS in a one-sided affair which he won by unanimous decision.

Overall The Poachers

came out as the winners of the Army Individual Championship and The Infantry (with the help of The Poachers) won the Corps event.

### **The Future of Boxing**

July and August saw the Battalion complete a unit move to Cyprus and with that comes new tasks and challenges. With most of the Battalion team either over (or close to) their maximum allotted fights to be classed as novices, the new challenge is to start all over again and select a new battalion boxing team, with a new boxing officer and warrant officer. We have decided to run inter Company boxing in March 2018 to allow us to select fresh faces for the battalion team and then re-enter and defend the title won in the Individual Competition, and then eventually submit a team for the Major Unit Competition in 2019. With the culmination of moving country, new members and a brand new boxing gym the future of the Poachers boxing looks bright and we hope to emulate the past achievements of so many Poachers boxing teams before us.







## 3rd Battalion The Steelbacks

# From the CO



The Steelbacks are in great form. It is a real privilege to Command one of the premier, Infantry Reserve Battalions in the Army. With 2017 disappearing behind us, the Battalion is looking to the future – there are some major changes ahead.

As of now, Headquarter Company will re-designate in to a 5th Rifle Company, aptly named 5 Company and each Company will grow a section of Recce and GPMG. Additionally, the Headquarters will re-structure and develop Media and Communications, Engagement, Training and Recruiting cells. These cells are configured to ride out any future developments within the Reserve environment. The Companies will reap the reward of these dividends and, for the first time, be able to offer a real choice of service and role to both men and women throughout the entire geographical spread of the Battalion. There is still much to do and every Steelback has the task: Recruit, Train, Retain and Deliver.

It is pleasing to see the continued development of every Steelback. From the Private Soldiers all the way through to the Officers. The level of









## 3rd Battalion The Steelbacks

experimentation within the Battalion is impressive, individuals are pushing their own boundaries and are clearly prepared learn from any failures that they may encounter along the way. I am routinely humbled by the efforts and the commitment of all the Steelbacks. The Director of Reserves commented on the enthusiasm and professionalism of the Battalion when he visited Cyprus, as did the Poachers who were embedded into the Battalion throughout the Overseas Training Exercise.

The Steelbacks continue to deliver. This year we have placed 112 individuals into Defence, most have joined the Army, specifically the Regiment, but others have joined the Cavalry and the Parachute Regiment. We have even had two join the Royal Navy. This underscores the point of the Reserve, the delivery of Mass to the Field Army and Defence.

The Battalion's links with our local Cadet Forces will be re-invigorated and strengthened throughout 2018. The Battalion will run the 7 Infantry Brigade annual Cadet Exercise – JERBOA Cadet at Beckingham, as well as running a Regimental Cadet Exercise – STEELBACK Cadet.

In sum, the future is bright for the Battalion. Another overseas exercise, to Italy, where it is anticipated that due to demand our numbers will exceed 150; a diverse, yet challenging training year – one that pushes the Steelbacks at Platoon level; the continued growth of our Companies; JERBOA Cadet; STEELBACK DRAGON 2018; STEELBACK Cadet. I could go on.

The Battalion is always on the look out for those that wish to challenge themselves, be they Ex - Regular, civilian or a Reservist from another Unit. The diverse nature of roles that are being created will afford a real span of choice. This diversity of talent and skills will propel the Battalion forward into and through 2018.







# From the RSM

As already highlighted by the Commanding Officer, it has been another excellent twelve months for the STEELBACKS.

Command and Leadership continues to develop within the Battalion. The newly revised



Command Cadre has seen a shape-shift in both attendance and attitude, whereupon, our Soldiers feel better prepared, and more confident than ever, when attending promotional battle courses alongside their regular counterparts. Additional Leadership Study Days for Officers, SNCOs, and JNCOs have now become the norm within the FoE. The most recent of which involved the JNCO cohort converging on Battalion Headquarters in their droves to further enhance their Leadership skills, a testament to the STEELBACKS' commitment to their professional military development.

Integration of STEELBACKS with VIKINGS, POACHERS and other Infantry Units continues at pace. The last twelve months have seen contingents

of STEELBACKS deploying with the VIKINGS on EX WESSEX STORM, live firing in India, Public Order training with the POACHERS, and deployments to both Canada and Cyprus in support of 2 PWRR. Exposure to regular soldiers, integration in austere environments, and conducting demanding training remains key to both recruiting and retention within the Battalion.

The Warrant Officers' & Sergeants' Mess continues to prosper. Traditionally we could only manage two functions a year due to limited time and availability of mess members. Due to the growth in numbers, excellent work from SPSIs and PSIs, and a developing mess ethos, an additional Hindoostan dinner night was held in June for the first time. It was a great success, 57 members out of 67 were in attendance; no mean feat considering that those who attended had to travel the length and breadth of the country in order to support the function.

As I reach the end of my tenure as Regimental Sergeant Major I continue to be humbled by the selfless commitment of both our Officers and Soldiers. Their ability to balance their busy civilian jobs, family life and service in the Army Reserve never ceases to amaze me. They all have my utmost respect.





## 3rd Battalion The Steelbacks

# 1 (Norfolk and Suffolk) Company

1 Company have had a varied year with troops deploying on a assortment of training missions and exercises across the globe including CSgt Chambers spending a very rewarding six months in Mali supporting the EU training mission. We have also had soldiers deploy to Canada, Cyprus, India, the United States and on the Battalion Ski Trip to France. We've also supported a number of fellow Queens Division Battalions on exercise in the UK. This year has seen the long term 1 Company stalwart Capt Tam Steele retire after 20 years' service with the Company and Battalion. This followed an impressive 22 years' service with the Scots Guards. Tam was dined out in a formal mess dinner by the Company which was also attended by many former members who returned to thank him for the loyal, unwavering service which he gave to the during his tenure as both the CSM and PSAO.

Geographically the Company remains split between two locations- Norwich and Lowestoft. Company headquarters, Mortar Platoon and 1 Platoon parade at Norwich Army Reserve Centre (ARC) and 2 Platoon from Lowestoft.

Under the drive and vision of Sgt Walker and Cpl Harvey the Company continues to recruit and bring troops in a good rate, and the future of the platoons looks strong.

This year as the Poachers move to Cyprus the Company has already began to engage with 2 PWRR, our new paired Battalion. Ptes Mason and Broughton enjoyed a three month deployment to Cyprus assisting in security duties in the spring. This was an incredibly useful insight not only into integrating to a regular unit but also into the life and culture of our counterpart regular Battalions. We've had Pte Cater deploy with 2 PWRR to Canada on Ex Maple resolve which was a large

US and Canadian forces exercise at Battle group level in which the 3 Royal Anglian soldiers got to work in varying environments from the open Prairies to the Urban combat facilities and utilised airframes such as the Blackhawk which are rarely available. We are also currently supporting the live fire package of 2 PWRRs Mortar Cadre.

Under the drive and mentorship of both CSgt Chambers and the Mortar PSI Sgt Warburton, 3 R Anglian Mortar Platoon have live fired on a number of occasions this year. The last time the Platoon Live fired was







around nine years ago. This success has in large part been due to the links formed and opportunities exploited with our fellow Queens Division units. Cpl Fielding, LCpl Fuller and Ptes O'Callaghan and Neil made it out to the US on Exercise NORTHERN STRIKE this year and not only got the chance to fire live but also got to great couple of days down time exploring the US.

1 Company once again enjoyed a massively successfully

Halloween and Fireworks night thanks in large part to Sgt Walker, over 100 people attended the party. The event began during the day with lots of family themed activities and games for all ages which was thoroughly enjoyed. Food was then laid on following which Cpl Feaks once again provided a professional standard fireworks display. Much of the company stayed on for the remainder of the evening enjoying the company Disco under the direction of own DJ Pte Medler. The Following day members of the company attended a local 'Zombie Run' Event.

The Rifle Platoons are consistently growing in both numbers and ability throughout the year. Our main training cycle began with a hugely successful deployment on Ex BRITANNIA DAWN to STANTA. This laid the foundation for the 1 Company Elements under command of Lt McIntosh to have a notably successful FTX during Ex LIONSTAR in September 2017.

The Company looks forward to the challenges that 2018 brings, with a steady stream of recruits joining and getting through the training process our focus must be on investing and developing our Platoons, empowering our junior commanders and developing our soldiers.







## 3rd Battalion The Steelbacks

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Shortly after stepping in as OC, 3 Company were awarded the Champion Company trophy which, in addition to the performance on training events, reflects the strong attendance and commitment of the individuals within. I am pleased to say that this has continued and is as varied as individuals supporting exercises overseas to engaging in the local community.

For the first time in as long as individuals seem to remember, we have a full complement of Officers, one of whom had a warm introduction to the Battalion as ensign to the Colours for the WO & Sgts mess earlier this year. The recruiting successes highlighted in previous articles are also bearing fruit, as talented individuals are coming to the surface allowing us to

# 3 (Essex and Hertfordshire) Company



Salamanca Dinner Night.



## Maj Mark Hart, OC 3 Company



**Company Past and Present.**

close the gaps in the rest of the ORBAT, though we still have work to do. This is certainly helped by the annual Salamanca Dinner hosted by the CSM including all LCpls and above, both past and present, where the numbers continue to swell.

On a similar theme, this year also saw the 50th anniversary of the Company being formed which was marked by various gatherings – the highlight being a Past & Present curry lunch hosted at the Army Reserve Centre. This was a fantastic opportunity for the current serving members to see some footage and photos of those that had gone before them, for the “old and bold” to have some exposure to the current kit and equipment and for those spanning both groups to catch up with old acquaintances.

In terms of training exercises, two highlights for the Company in addition to the Battalion exercises, were Ex EAGLE FIRE, our GPMG SF training exercise, and Ex EAGLE SUNRISE which saw the Company training using simunition; more detail on these events follow.

As ever though, this is supplemented with individuals supporting various engagements, exercises and deployments, including participating members in the Battalion Skiing exercise to Austria, the Cambrian patrol, the Hertfordshire County Show, and Cambridge UOTC Camp.

Further afield Capt Harry Macleod was privileged to be selected for an exchange with the US National Guard as part of the Military Reserve Exchange Program (MREP) which is covered in a separate article.

As we look ahead to urban Ops training early in the New Year, followed by shooting packages, the trend is set to continue as we move towards the end of another busy training year.



**Lts Fulford and Bromley meet past members.**







## 3rd Battalion The Steelbacks



# Exercise EAGLE FIRE

In early November, members of 3 Company's MG Platoon set out to Salisbury Plain for Exercise EAGLE FIRE. Weeks of training on the General Purpose Machine Gun (GPMG) had culminated in this exercise - which would see a section of soldiers pass their GPMG SF ACMT and qualify to use the guns.

In the weeks leading up to Eagle Fire, the MG Section had carried drills dry, ensuring they acted effectively and at speed. With Weapon Handling Tests carried out and passed, we deployed out of Chelmsford and made our way to Salisbury Plain. Night had fallen and, keen to get our heads down, we ignored the presence of a full company of Gurkhas

who had occupied the barn we were accommodated in.

Undeterred by wind and rain, we set out early in the morning to the ranges. Standing on the firing line, we could all appreciate what lay before us: hard targets in the form of rusted, decommissioned tanks. We set up and the MG Section started carrying out the drills. Teams were immediately competitive, each seeking to establish their position the fastest. Operational requirements allow for 90 seconds, which the teams achieved with ease.

The teams carried out iron sight engagements. After some adjustments to the weapon gas plugs, the rates of fire

across the three gun teams achieved a rhythmic, dull bass note that was carried across the plain. More comfortable with the weapon systems, the section proceeded to mark and record targets. Doing so allows teams to fire at obscured targets, or quickly switch between marked targets rather than manually lay on the target each time. Carrying out C2 Sight engagements adds a level of complexity but when effectively used makes the GPMG SF a versatile asset. It is a weapon system favoured by Reservists, and the GPMG SF's operational demands has steered our soldiers to hone their skills on one specialist asset.

With the day's shooting completed, we





### Exercise Eagle Fire Gun Teams.

waited for the twilight and re-occupied the firing line that night. The section tactically occupied their firing positions and tested their skills in accurately recording their

positions. With tracer rounds lighting the night sky, the teams could tell they were still hitting their targets accurately. Appropriately for 4th November, the display the three gun teams produced rivalled firework shows in neighbouring towns.

After a good day and nights shooting, the teams turned in. In the morning, the teams carried out their final test, the ACMT. Each

team passed, the real difficulty for the gun controllers was out-doing the other.

Ex EAGLE FIRE was a great opportunity for 3 Company to showcase their specialist skill sets and introduce new gunners to the weapon system. The gun teams will look forward to further training opportunities in the New-Year where they can use these weapon systems in a tactical environment.



Exercise Eagle Fire Day Shoot.





## 3rd Battalion The Steelbacks

# 4 (Lincolnshire) Company

The Year 2017 started well as we learned that WO2 John Limb had been honoured with a CGS Commendation for the tireless work that he has dedicated to recruiting over recent years. In September, CSgt 'Wangy' Sheils discovered that he had been awarded the Lord Lieutenant's Certificate of Merit for his commitment and work for the unit.

The year has seen the Company grow – both in strength and in proficiency. In July 2017 we learned that the Company had been made official and formally established under Army 2020 (Refine) and this was reflected in the Battalion's revised establishment issued in October. At the time of writing, various individuals are busy ensuring that all IT platforms are updated correctly to ensure that the administration of the Company is effective. This includes JPA, RAPS, ODR and CHURCHILL. We now await the increased equipment, vehicles and civilian staff to further enhance capability.

In an attempt to put 4 Company on the map, we have invited various local dignitaries to visit us – in training, whilst recruiting and during an Open Day at Grimsby Army Reserve Centre. Some of these have kindly presented stable belts to individuals who have completed the Reserve Combat Infantryman Course. This Community Engagement is aimed at spreading the word that 4 Company is firmly established in the county. Amongst



**Act of Remembrance with Lincoln City Football Club at Sincil Bank.**

others, we have been fortunate to see The High Sheriff and Lord Hailsham at Lincoln and The Mayor for North East Lincolnshire and, at Grimsby, the MPs for both Great Grimsby and Cleethorpes.

The civilian community in Grimsby and Cleethorpes once again showed their support on Armed Forces Day in the summer after hosting the National event last year. The crowds were huge and the encouragement and applause was pride-inspiring. The Company's concurrent recruiting stand was well attended

and further cemented the Company's connection with the local populace.

Looking ahead, it is hoped that recruitment remains buoyant across the county and it is anticipated that some of the Company's females may be amongst the first to attempt the Combat Infantryman Course – obviously time for a renaming!



**Rifle to pistol transition training.**



**Capt Adam Hindson who came 1st in the Brigg 10km Military Challenge.**



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## 3rd Battalion The Steelbacks

### Cambrian Patrol Training 9-23 September 2017



As an alternative to OTX in Cyprus, 13 soldiers remained in the UK to carry out Cambrian Patrol training under the critical eye of WO2 Knight (SPSI – HQ Coy). Carrying 20kg and covering vast distance over arduous terrain, the team all completed the navigation phase with the final route taking them to the top of Pen ‘y’ Fan. The second week of tactical training was conducted on Leek Training Area and started with the orders process! The

continuation training included: CPERS, CASEVAC, CBRN as well as many recces followed on by the production of detailed patrol reports.

The team were all set to commence the event, but with the worst weather conditions the competition has ever had, the team failed to finish and were not placed. Undaunted, the team is looking forwards to next year, where they have a score to settle.



### Steelback Charge

Eight Teams from 3 R ANGLIAN took part in STEELBACK CHARGE, the Battalions Patrols Competition. Held on the weekend of 12th to 14th May on Leek Training Area,

the competition saw Section sized teams navigating their way through a series of stands including CPERS, River Crossing, Signals and Section Attacks. For most the exercise was

conducted on unfamiliar hilly terrain which further tested their tactical skills. The Victorious Team were Team A, 2 Company lead by LCpl Lloyd.





**IED component parts, lesson 1 being delivered.**

This year I had the privilege to deploy on OP NEWCOMBE 8 to Mali, as one of two British Infantry instructors within a six-person training team, attached to the EU Training Mission Mali (EUTM-M). The deployment lasted six months and aims to enhance the operational capability of the Malian Armed Forces. The EUTM-M consists of circa 575 troops from 28 nations.

To set the context for the deployment I'll explain a bit about the situation in Mali. The long term peace is threatened by instability in the wider region by criminal gangs, Boko Haram and Islamic State. The Malian Armed Forces are heavily engaged in the north of Mali in Gao and Timbuktu. Violence in Mali continued throughout Op NEWCOMBE 8. A failed Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosive Device (VBIED) at GAO airfield and a second VBIED detonating within the military garrison resulted in 77 Malian military deaths and over 115 injuries. The recent alignment of 4 Islamist terror organisations under Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) will ensure international focus remains on Mali.

My initial move to Mali proved uneventful, an excellent outcome. All flights ran to schedule and Irish military pickup from Bamako International Airport ensured swift processing. After being handed to our predecessors we made our way along a two hour night move 60km away to Koulikoro Training Camp (KTC).

In-processing into the camp was straight forward. In-mission training (the EU's form of RSOI), ran for 2 weeks overlapping in part with a very short handover from our 1 RGR predecessors. The in-mission training helped standardise fundamentals across all partner nations but often repeated aspects delivered in the UK - but with much dumbed down content. It proved to be a necessary activity and made me realise the high standards of the British Army compared to many partner nations.

KTC proved a very comfortable camp with little in the way of hardship. As most departments were mixed from many different nations, cohesion events were frequently organised. Burns night, St Patricks day, Pizza evenings became commonplace. The accommodation

varied from 2 to 12 person rooms. The British team being so small had the luxury of being 2 to a room. Electricity and water was freely available with no restriction on showering. There were times when these failed but service usually returned quickly. The camp had the usual amenities: gym, running route, a small shop, a single hairdresser, medium sized cookhouse, German PX as well as a couple of well controlled bars. British welfare was available in the form of Internet access, 2 BFPO TVs and a range of training equipment and games (Xbox/PSP).

My role was primarily an Infantry Trainer but also necessitated the ability to deliver medical and internal humanitarian law lessons. I also acted as CQMS for all EUTM-M and BRITFOR personnel. Although not CQMS trained I found this a very enjoyable aspect of the job although it often competed for time when trying to plan and deliver training.

Taking time to learn some key phrases in the local language (Bambara) paid dividends with the interpreters and Malian soldiers very quickly. I lacked any meaningful ability to speak French





## 3rd Battalion The Steelbacks



**Op NEWCOMBE 8 British contingent of EUTM-M Instructors.**

and this would certainly have been a useful talent.

My first training cycle deployed me to KATI for 8 weeks supporting CMATT2 (Combined Mobile Advisory and Training Team). I worked in a 4 man team consisting of a Spanish Capt, Irish Sgt,

Belgian Sgt and myself. Topics taught included: fire and manoeuvre, range craft, patrol base skills, reaction to ambush, ambush placement and occupation of patrol harbours.

Training the Malian soldiers was routinely a frustrating experience, and

it could be easy to get emotional when numerous issues arose. A simple mind-set change was necessary early into the deployment and once expectations were tailored to reflect what could practically be achieved it was easy to mould lessons to deliver a viable and valuable training.

# Exercise Lion Star 6

On 9th September 2017, troops from 3rd Battalion deployed to Cyprus on our Annual Deployment Exercise, Exercise Lion Star 6. Upon landing at RAF Akrotiri, it was immediately clear that we had left the cold, damp weather of the UK behind us. Joined by two US Army officers on an exchange, the Battalion moved in to Bloodhound Camp.

The first phase of the exercise consisted of a rotation through providing a guard to Bloodhound Camp, Field training, and adventure training at Mount Troodos. After 2 days of providing the guard, my platoon headed up to the mountains to conduct the AT phase. The first day consisted of a series of mountain bike trails around the mountain. Whilst there were a few crashes, fortunately no one was any more hurt than a few cuts and bruises. The second day of AT was rock climbing. A few challenging climbs up



**Ranges Cyprus - 2Lt Wilman.**



2Lt Matthew Wilman







## 3rd Battalion The Steelbacks

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a sunny rock face was a welcome break from the danger of serious injury from the day before. Once we were safely back at Bloodhound Camp, we went in to 2 days of field training, fine-tuning basic infantry skills, such as the platoon attack and platoon ambush, ahead of the field exercise phase.

After a morning of battle PT on the beach, we deployed into the field at night, and successfully established a Company harbour by first light. Operating against a fictional enemy on the island of Cobush, we were to be picking up pockets of resistance left behind from an invading force. After conducting ambushes on two enemy logistics moves, and then a night spent clearing enemy from their stronghold and command and logistics centre in Paramali village as a Company, securing the Episokpi Dam was the final objective. In the early hours of the morning, the 2 platoons swept in and cleared the dam of enemy. Upon endex being called, this provided a great backdrop for a Battalion photo.

After a hot and hard few days in the field, showers and a good nights sleep



was welcome respite. The final phase of the exercise saw a day on Tunnel Beach. Everyone enjoyed a relaxed day of water sports and games. Some took this as a final opportunity to top up their tan before returning home, while others were just glad to be on the beach and in the sea for

the first time since arriving in Cyprus.

The Battalion experienced a challenging but fun exercise in Cyprus. Operating in a climate such as Cyprus was a new experience for many. The exercise challenged commanders and soldiers at all levels, and was thoroughly enjoyed by all.





## Employers.

### OTX – LION STAR

#### Company 2IC's perspective

An overseas exercise is always a big deal for any Army Reserve Unit and this year the 3rd Battalion was off to Cyprus. We arrived on the 9th of September to an unseasonably hot autumn Cyprus, with the first order of the day being acclimatisation, for this the Company was split into three groups; Adventures Training, lessons and guard. I was one of the lucky ones to get Adventures Training first, so we headed off the Troodos Mountains, for 2 days of mountain bike and rock climbing.

This was a great time for us to learn something new and to push ourselves outside our comfort zone, I learnt very quickly that I was ok at mountain biking when I'm required to go downhill, but stopping or turning were not things that came easily to me. That being said the AT was and acclimatisation was a great way of starting the OTX, but the real fun was to be had on the field exercise element.

Having received its orders and conducted its battle prep the Company deployed to the field on the 16th to set up its harbour areas and settle into routine. With normal exercise being only a weekend this was an excellent opportunity for the soldiers to get experience in proper field routine. This was punctuated by local patrols and ambushes, a chance for the platoons to confirm what they had learnt during the lessons of the first week. 2 days after deploying to the field we were augmented



#### Dam Attack.

by a section plus from the Poachers. This not only gave the Company a greater mass to utilise but also allowed for the cross pollination of ideas, allowing everyone to learn new ideas from each other.

The first major test for the Company was an urban deliberate night attack, which required careful planning and coordination. The attack itself was a strange experience for me. This was my first real opportunity to carry out the role of Company 2IC, which as someone who likes to be as close to the point of contact as

possible, was a bit of a culture shock. Being based in a Land Rover, many kilometres away from the battle, behind a radio, with no ability to directly influence the situation would require very different skills to what I was used to. I could hear the sound of contact bouncing off the mountains all around, but I wasn't close enough to see the operation itself. That being said it wasn't an unenjoyable experience, keeping track of the battle and updating the Ops room back at Blood Hound Camp. The fast paced nature of the battle required a





## 3rd Battalion The Steelbacks

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detailed level of concentration and focus as even though this was a training exercise MIST and 9 liners had to be delivered timely and accurately. It was eye opening to say the least.

The following morning we were greeted by a visit of Army Reservist employers,

the value of which cannot be overstated. Most employers have precious little understanding of the Army, let alone the Army Reserve, and giving them the opportunity to see what their employees are doing during 2 weeks of their annual leave is of great benefit to both parties, allowing







the employees to demonstrate the positive skills of their time away. The employers were taken around the harbour areas, pausing to talk to those soldiers who weren't occupied in sleeping, and all seemed very impressed when they left that afternoon. With their departure the Company prepared for its final task, a deliberate attack on a dam in our AO. With far more complex moving parts there was much more liable to go wrong, and as such I

was to be forward mounted, alongside the guns group, with the Land Rover to ensure communication, whilst the remainder of the Company took the long route through the dead ground to get as close as possible before launching the attack.

Well before dawn we moved out, the guns and my group following the high ground to get into position, being careful not to expose ourselves to the enemy forces on the dam. With the guns set and in position it was important to confirm where the rest of the Company was, and at this point things started to travel sideways. comms failed. Even with the power we had at our disposal we couldn't raise the troops in the dead ground, even though they were less than 2km away, and H Hour was less than 30 minutes away.

This required a solution, and I am indebted to Cpl Reilly for finding one. By attaching the 12m vertical ground mounted monopole to the front bumper of the Land Rover we managed to get comms with

the recce call-sign, guns group and intermittent comms with the Company main. And not a moment too soon as the CO arrived at my location to get an update on what was going on. Like I said, I owe Cpl Reilly some drinks. Once the attack started I was able to move my vehicle forward to drop in behind the guns group, which gave me the opportunity to watch elements of the battle whilst dealing with the reports and returns of the battle unfolding in front of me. Whether this made it easier or harder I'm not actually sure, but throughout the attack there was a group of people standing around the final assault position, an odd place to be standing around, but they turned out to be the employers, watching their employees dig out blind to clear the dam of all enemy forces. Again the benefits of this are immense, seeing their employees carrying out something which they have, sometime, no understanding of, can only be a good thing for all involved.

All in all it was an excellent exercise, which lots of challenges and learning points from all involved. For myself I can say the learning curve was steep and I look forward to the next opportunity to put those skills to the test.





## 3rd Battalion The Steelbacks

# Exercise SPIRIT



### 2 Company Assault Course.

“It’s beginning to look a lot like Christmas”. Not only do these words form the instantly recognisable opening line of the Christmas song of the same name by Johnny Mathis, but also that of the Reverend Ken Reeve’s address during the Regimental Carol Service at St Mary’s Church, Bury St Edmunds. He certainly was right for, at the same time as the Carol Service was taking place, the soldiers of 3 R ANGLIAN were in STANTA for the Battalion’s annual deployment on Ex SPIRIT.

Hugely popular, this year’s Ex SPIRIT saw record attendance for an end of year exercise that promised a diverse offering of challenging military training, social gatherings, Christmas dinner, and an inter-Company sports competition. When all was said and done, it was the newly designated 5 Company (formerly HQ Company) that reigned supreme,



HQ Company v 4 Company netball.





### 1 Company Assault Course.

yet, in the margins there was a separate, somewhat more rivalrous, competition taking place – the Officers' Mess vs Sergeants' Mess football match.

As snow fell early on Sunday morning, it was doubtful that the match would even take place. However, a pitch inspection deemed the surface and conditions playable, so both messes eagerly made final preparations for the task ahead. Although a time honoured tradition in the regular Battalions, this was only the second game between the Officers and Sergeants of 3 R ANGLIAN (the Officers coming out on top in the inaugural fixture in 2016). In spite of the snow, and lack of latent footballing ability among many of the participants, the match was played in a full-blooded, yet respectful, manner. Unfortunately, there could be only one winner and, notwithstanding a spirited display from the Sergeants' Mess, it was



### Officers' Mess football team.

the Officers who retained the bragging rights for another year following a hard-fought 5-2 victory.

For all those that doubt the magic of

this time of year, heavy snowfall and an Officers' Mess footballing triumph can mean only one thing - that it is, indeed, beginning to look a lot like Christmas.



### Soldiers' Christmas dinner.





## 3rd Battalion The Steelbacks

Exercise STEELBACK TYPHOON took place in Copehill Down Village on Salisbury Plain in July and was the culmination of the Bns urban Ops package, building on the previous successes of Company level urban training packages. A composite Company was drawn from across the Battalion progressing Battalion training towards CT2 level in order that the Bn can augment our paired regular Bn with a capability that has utility.

The training ramped up rapidly once the exercising troops deployed onto the ground. The training team took full advantage of the Urban Confidence Course getting soldiers in the zone for the physically demanding nature of high

# Exercise STEELBACK TYPHOON





Matt Ottaway







## 3rd Battalion The Steelbacks



tempo operations in built up areas. There followed a number of serials which acted as a remind and revise opportunity and allowed the Company group on the ground to pick up on the atmospherics and pattern of life within the village, as well as build some TTPs / and SOPs for the way they were working.

Over the course of the exercise the tempo changed along with the situation on the ground and activity began to become more kinetic. Much of this was

aimed at Platoon level and was designed to stretch commanders at all levels ability to maintain command and control and situational awareness - despite the increased complexities of moving from a rural environment into an urban one. The exercise scenario grew into a Battle Group operation.

The exercising Company deployed into the western end of the village in order to conduct a deliberate attack – to clear enemy forces from Copehill Down

Village.

Maximum use was made of Battle Group assets and the Battalion Machine Gun Platoon were put to use supporting the Company throughout.

Ex TYPHOON was a progressive, challenging and ultimately retention positive training event. The exercise represented a further step forward in Bn training and proved valuable preparation for the OTX in Cyprus, Ex LION STAR 6, later in the year.



## Steelback Marksman

**(Leicestershire and Northamptonshire) Company, tops shots, winning this year's Battalion Shooting competition.**

All 3 R ANGLIAN Companies took part in STEELBACK MARKSMAN, the Battalions Operational Shooting Competition. Held on the weekend of 21st to 23rd April 17

with 2 Company being crowned as champions.

The result of the Champion Company Competition was also announced and won by 3 Company.





# Special Features

## USAAF 75th Anniversary at Bassingbourn

11 November 2017

The former RAF station at Bassingbourn has a rich Air Force and Army history, the latest event which took place on a sunny afternoon 11 November 2017. That day a Memorial Service was held to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the arrival of the United States Army Air Forces' 91st Bomb Group (Heavy). The Group was to operate from Bassingbourn from late 1942 for the final 30 months of the war in Europe. Its story and contribution to the war effort merits being retold, as does a tour d'horizon of that South Cambridgeshire military establishment's wider history spanning almost 80 years.

Opened in 1938 with grass runways and brick buildings, RAF Bassingbourn was constructed as part of the RAF's expansion scheme to meet the threat of the growing German Air Force. The Hawker Hind was the first aircraft type to be based there, followed in 1940 by Blenheim and then Wellington bombers, many of which took part in the early 'maximum effort' 1,000-bomber raids on occupied Europe.

In winter 1941-42 three concrete runways were constructed, surfaced with asphalt. B-17F Flying Fortress bombers requiring such runways from which to take off with a full bomb load, in October 1942 the 91st Bomb Group (Heavy) arrived at Bassingbourn, which was consequently renamed 'USAAF Station 121'.

The 91st Group comprised four bomber squadrons, each of eight aircraft, with three spares. Beginning operations on 4 November 1942, as part of the US Eighth Air Force, it conducted 340 daylight bombing missions over Europe. It was not until January 1944 that these daylight missions were escorted by long-range fighters, significantly reducing the attrition rate. Nicknamed 'The Ragged Irregulars', the Group had at least 392 B-17s assigned to it at some point of the war. 244 were lost: 197 in combat, 37 written off, and 10 in training crashes. Approximately 5,200 crewmen flew combat missions for the 91st from 1942 to 1945: 19% were killed or missing (887 KIA and 123 MIA) and 18% (959)

became POWs; 33 others were killed in flying accidents; of the 35 original crews to arrive at Bassingbourn, 17 were lost in combat (47%). Daily records indicate that for the first six months of operations, 22 of 46 listed crews were lost (48%). The 91st suffered the greatest number of losses of any heavy bomb group in WW2, and in the whole of the USA's Armed Services only seven US Army divisions (all infantry) had KIA rates higher than the 91st BG. What those losses conceal is the immense contribution and sacrifice which the Group made in the successful strategic bombing campaign in Europe. It was twice awarded a Distinguished Unit Citation, for gallant missions on 4 March 1943 and 11 January 1944. A book 'The Ragged Irregulars of Bassingbourn' was published in the USA in 1995.

Of famous individual Flying Fortress aircraft of the 91st, in May 1943 the 'Memphis Belle' was the first to survive 25 missions over occupied Europe, whereafter it returned to the USA to a hero's welcome and to recruit aircrew;







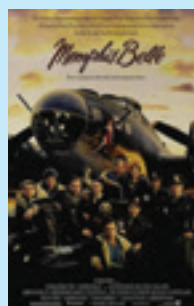
# Special Features

it was the subject of the eponymous 1990 fictionalised feature film directed by David Puttnam. 'The Careful Virgin' completed 80 bombing missions over occupied Europe.

RAF Bassingbourn served as the location for the fictional '28th Bomb Group' in the 1950 Humphrey Bogart film *Chain Lightning*. It was also the setting for the airfield-based shots in the famous 1955 film *The Dambusters*, featuring Richard Todd and Michael Redgrave. Additionally, Bassingbourn Barracks was the setting for the 1987 Stanley Kubrick film *Full Metal Jacket*. On land within the airfield perimeter was built a massive assault course (replicating one from the USMC Recruit Depot at Parris Island in North Carolina) and a Vietnamese village, complete with attap huts – and palm trees (embedded in earth in concealed metal skips).

Ownership of Bassingbourn reverted to the RAF in 1945, where for the next seven years it was a base for long-range transport aircraft; and its Avro York, Avro Lancaster and Douglas Dakota aircraft took part in the 1948-49 Berlin Airlift. In 1952, for Canberra bombers it became the first jet bomber Operational Conversion Unit (OCU) in the world. Canberras of 231 OCU operated from RAF Bassingbourn for 17 years, and for many years into the 21st Century one of the aircraft was on static display there. From 1963 to 1969 the Joint School of Photographic Interpretation was also located there. And in 1969 the RAF handed the Base over to the Army, and it was renamed Bassingbourn Barracks, which remains its name up till the present day.

David Crow, a local man, set up 'UK Friends of the 91st' in 1973, along with a museum in the wartime Control Tower (which seems lucky to have survived



11 November 2017, which was conducted by Rev Keith Stott, of the Shingay group of parishes. Of the military present that day were Lt Col Hugh Lohan (late Queens), and Lt Col Peter Worthy and Col Michael Goldschmidt (both late R Anglian). As the first GSO2 HQ Queen's Division, in 1969 the then-Major Peter Worthy had formally taken over RAF Bassingbourn to make it the Army's Bassingbourn Barracks. It became the home of Depot The Queen's Division (DQD) and of HQ Queen's Div (moving in from Colchester in 1970, with the Div Brig being the then-Brigadier Mike Holme (the future father-in-law of the future Field Marshal The Lord Walker)). DQD began training recruits in January 1970, under the command of the then-Lt Col Bill Deller, erstwhile CO of Depot R Anglian at Bury St Edmunds, who was joined by staff collocating from the former Depot Queens at Canterbury and Depot RRF at Sutton Coldfield. Bill Deller was awarded the OBE for his period of command.

With seven surviving former DQD COs from whom to choose, Hugh Lohan

WW2 and which contains a large selection of memorabilia covering all stages of the Base's RAF, USAAF and Army history). For many years USAAF veterans visited Bassingbourn for biennial pilgrimages.

David Crow was one of the instigators of the striking Memorial by the main gate which features a Flying Fortress propeller and historical details of the 91st Bomb Group; the Memorial was dedicated in 1978. The story of the 91st detailed above gives a clear indication of the significance of the 75th anniversary of its arrival in October 1942. Assisted by Chris Murphy (Curator of the Tower Museum), David Crow organised the Memorial Service on







was invited to the Memorial Service on 11 November because in his time as CO there had been an International Air Show at Bassingbourn in May 1978. Forty-eight different aircraft types were present; most of the DQD recruits were used as GD men (!), and the Show raised £36,000 for the Army Benevolent Fund. Michael Goldschmidt was invited because during his time as CO in 1988 there was a celebration of 50 years of Bassingbourn being a military base. This included an Open Day over which flew a B-17 Flying Fortress and a formation of four Canberras – the last time those aircraft types have overflown Bassingbourn. Hugh Lohan

laid a wreath in honour of the 91st, and Michael Goldschmidt a wreath “from All Ranks The Royal Anglian Regiment who served in Depot The Queen’s Division at Bassingbourn Barracks 1969-93”.

From 1970 DQD trained recruits for the three Regiments of The Queen’s Division for 23 years. In 1993 the recruit training unit was renamed Army Training Regiment Bassingbourn with an expanded role, and it continued until 2012. Since then the Barracks has been largely empty and exists ‘on a care and maintenance basis’, although it was used

in 2014 as the location where The Black Watch trained elements of the Libyan Army. In the next few years the Barracks is due to be re-activated, to house the Operational Training & Advisory Group, the Mission Training and Mounting Centre (Individual), the Band of The Queen’s Division, and elements of the MOD Police and MOD Guard Service.

**Floreat Bassingbournium**  
MKG







# Special Features

## Private Christopher Cox VC 7th Battalion Bedfordshire Regiment

On 16/17th March 2017 it was 100 years exactly since the actions of Pte Christopher Cox, a stretcher bearer with the 7th Battalion Bedfordshire Regiment, which were to earn him the Victoria Cross. Representatives from the Regiment visited Achiet-le-Grand on 19 March to commemorate the events of that battle.

Christopher was a farm labourer from Kings Langley in Hertfordshire, who enlisted shortly after the start of World War One. He survived the war and is buried in Kings Langley Churchyard.

On 30 April there was a parade, including the unveiling and dedication of a memorial stone beside the War Memorial adjoining the Churchyard.

The parade, commanded by Maj Bill O'Connor, marched through Kings Langley High Street led by the Herts ACF Youth Band. The Parade was







made up of local branch Standards, the Mayor, veterans and Army Cadets. At the memorial there was a short service led by the Vicar of Kings Langley Church following which the Mayor of Dacorum, Councillor Robert McClean, unveiled the stone.

Watching were members of the Cox family, along with local British Legion and Beds, Herts old comrades from the Royal Anglian Regiment Association.

After the ceremony everyone retired to the local United Services Club.

By all reports Christopher Cox was a simple humble man who did his duty. What he would have made of this parade and service in his honour, one can only speculate.







# Special Features

Gareth Pugh

## Lance Corporal Allan Lewis VC 6th Battalion Northamptonshire Regiment

*Leonard Allan Lewis was his name as Christened although he was readily known as Allan by the family as he grew up. This article follows the family convention.*

Lance Corporal Leonard Allan Lewis was awarded the Victoria Cross (V.C.) on 21st Sept 1918 for conspicuous bravery and leadership, in helping stop and turn back the last major offensive of the German Army in the First World War.

His VC citation shows his "splendid disregard of danger" and praises his leadership at a critical period when his senior officers had been killed or wounded.

In the midst of danger, he provided an inspiration to those around him and enabled his fellow soldiers to advance and secure their objective. As such, and as an example to others, it is right to commemorate this man's courage and bravery at the centenary of his death in action.

Allan Lewis was a true scion of the soil and was born in West Herefordshire to a family that worked on the Whitney Estate. His love of the countryside was evident in pictures taken of him on the banks of the River Wye.

His was a large family (five boys and four girls) and so education was truncated and Allan helped out in the kitchens on the estate before taking up early employment as a farm-hand tending cattle. It would be at this time (1910 onwards) that the first reliable tractors would have appeared



**Cpl Allan Lewis VC.**

along with cars and this provoked an interest to Allan which was to shape his life.

Life on the farm must have paled to a young man and after working as a gardener at Llandeilo, he applied and succeeded in becoming a Motor Bus Driver for the Great Western Railway based in Neath.

It was in this very different community that he started to learn Welsh and developed his more spiritual side. But the outbreak of war in 1914 changed his life forever and his mechanical knowledge and ability to drive shaped his part in the first truly industrial-scale conflict.

Whilst being in a reserved occupation, the call to arms and to serve his fellow men and country must have been strong in Allan.

He volunteered and was accepted as a driver in the nascent Royal Army Service Corps (R.A.S.C.) Mechanical Transport Section in 1915. He served in France and was invalided home in early 1917 with jaundice.

He recuperated at Longleat. Fact becomes merged with fiction at this point as allegedly when recuperating, he caught the eye of the daughter of the Marquis of Bath and subsequently incurred the wrath of the Father: He was a good-looking lad with a bright open demeanor and strong physique!

Perhaps, as a result of this alleged wartime

affair or his desire to take up a more active role; Allan found himself in the infantry where life was very much tougher and expectations few.

Hishonest and upright character must have impressed his officers as he was promoted to Lance Corporal after a few months in the Northamptonshire Regiment. This rank is reckoned to be one of the toughest to hold in the Army as you work and live alongside your fellow privates yet are expected to show leadership and discipline as required. Allan was made of such stuff as his V.C. citation shows.

He has no known grave, but is commemorated on the Vis-en-Artois Memorial in France and on the war memorials at both Whitney on Wye and Brilley Churches. Appearing on two war memorials is not common, but perhaps showed the high regard Allan and his family was held in within these two rural parishes.

He is allegedly the only Herefordshire-born VC holder and whilst it is right to commemorate him at a local parish level; Herefordshire was his home county and his tough early life in a farming community by the River Wye must have influenced and instilled in him the virtues of service to his fellow man.

Herefordshire should be proud of Allan Lewis and his sacrifice for his fellow men. In his short life, he grasped at opportunities that we take for granted today. That he achieved much after a straitened early life is testimony to the character of the man. Herefordshire would do well to remember him.

**AFTERNOTE:** The A Lewis VC Memorial Fund plans to raise money to commemorate the centenary of Allan's death in action and award of the VC. The intention is to have a life-sized bronze statue made and placed in the centre of Hereford. Ceremonies and parades to commemorate L/Cpl Lewis VC will be held locally in Brilley and Whitney on Wye on the 21st Sept 2018 and in Hereford on the 22nd Sept 2018. A Facebook page has been set up: LA Lewis VC Memorial Fund and details of how to contribute can be found there.



**Memorial in Whitney churchyard.**



## 11th Bn Essex Regiment Ancestor Research

Recently we have had a short article sent to RHQ for inclusion in the Regimental Newsletter. The article was researched and prepared by a former "Poacher", Pte (Retd) Andrew Thomas. The article recounts Andy's Great Uncle Jackson Bacon who was born in Haverhill in 1894 and was sadly killed in 1917.

"Jackson was born in Haverhill in 1894 to Stephen Bacon and his wife Kate, née Marsh. They had married in 1890 and for at least the next twenty years were living at 85 High St, Haverhill. By 1911 they had had nine children, but four had died.

At the age of 16 Jackson was working as a milk boy. When war broke out he enlisted at Warley, Essex as Private No. 35760 in the 11th Battalion, the Essex Regiment.

He must have come back to Suffolk on leave, in the spring of 1917 as he married Rose Jane Bowers, who was working as cook to a farmer's family at Kirkby Hall, Castle Hedingham in



Essex. Not long after returning to the front, Jackson was killed in action on the 28th June 1917. He was awarded the British and Victory Medals and he is remembered on a plaque on the Loos Memorial.

In the South West Suffolk Echo of 21st July 1917:- "Readers will regret to learn that Mrs J Bacon has received news that her husband, Pte J Bacon, 356760, 11th Essex Regt.,

was killed in action on June 28th. Pte Bacon, who was well known in Haverhill and district, was a son of Mr and Mrs S Bacon of 85 High Street, Haverhill.

Second Lieut Ernest S Fitch has written to Mrs. Bacon as follows:- "It is greatest sorrow that I write to inform you of the death in action of your husband. He was killed while assisting to get a badly wounded officer across No Man's Land. Your husband was a good soldier and a brave man, and during the attack behaved with the greatest bravery and devotion to duty. I was his Platoon officer and I cannot tell you how sorry I am to lose him. Although gone from here the spirits of the brave men like your husband lives on. Assuring you of my deepest sympathy with you in your great loss"

In this time of centenary commemorations of World War One, it is pertinent to remember the personal loss and tragedy that that conflagration brought to so many families.

## Hip or Knee problems? Then this is for you...

As a veteran, you can ask for a referral to a specialist Orthopaedic clinic at The Robert Jones & Edith Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital, Oswestry, Shropshire SY10 7AQ.

There is a specific Veterans Clinic run by Lt Col Carl Meyer, an Army Reserve consultant surgeon who also works with 202 Field Ambulance and Reserve Hospital. "I (Ruscombe Symth-Piggot) applied for a referral in August, this year, and on 6 Oct saw Lt Col Meyers who specialises in hips and knees.

If you don't mind a few days away from family, I am told it's more like a hotel than a hospital, and the food is really good. Having a long wait ahead of you all at your local GP and hospital, this might be the way to go to achieve a much quicker result". W

What is it? A service for military veterans to have their hip or knee arthritis assessed and, if appropriate, have joint replacement surgery and is led by Lt Col Carl Meyer, Military Consultant Hip and Knee Arthroplasty Surgeon at Oswestry's specialist orthopaedic hospital. Lt Col Meyer is an Army Reserve officer who

has been on three tours to Afghanistan and one to Iraq. He is an orthopaedic trauma surgeon with 16 Medical Regiment, 202 (Midlands) Field Hospital.

**Who is it for?** Anyone who has been in regular military service, including national service.

**Where is it?** The Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (RJAHS) Oswestry, Shropshire SY10 7AQ, and is a centre of orthopaedic excellence specialising in lower limb replacement surgery.

**When is it?** Outpatient clinics are held fortnightly at RJAHS (Normally on a Wednesday) though mine was a Friday.

How do I obtain an NHS referral? Through your GP - Ask to be referred to the Veterans' Hip and Knee Surgery Service at Oswestry - and ask your GP to make a named referral to Lt Col Meyer.

### Contact information

Email: rebecca.ann.jones@rjah.nhs.uk  
Fax: 01691 404067 : Tel: 01691 404344  
Your records at your GP needs to

be annotated with the NHS codes for military/veterans, take photocopies of your red discharge book, because he will ask for proof that you're a veteran.

### Military medical codes:

- 13J1 Military veteran
- 13JY History relating to Military Service
- 13Q0 History relating to Army Service
- 13Q1 History relating to RN Service
- 13Q2 History relating to RAF Service
- 13Q3 Served in the Armed Forces

Lt Col Meyer wants to "do" more operations for veterans, but he has two problems - Finding the patient, he knows that are out here, it's letting us know he's there for us, and getting the money from the NHS, but, the more ops he does the more money they will give him, therefore the more ops he can do.

Word is getting around and his list is getting longer. If the one initial injury occurred in service, your case becomes urgent.





## Special Features

# Attic find's historic story

Twenty years ago I inherited a number of old wooden 'Pacific Island' paddles that had been sitting in the attic of my grandmother's house since before anyone could remember. No one knew where they came from or who had brought them. It was only when researching my great uncle, Capt Robert Woodward of the South Wales Borderers who was killed on the Western Front in 1915, that I discovered that my great-great uncle, Lt Alfred Woodward had served in the 12th Regt of Foot, one of the Royal Anglian Regiment's predecessor Regiments, in the 'New Zealand Wars'.

On leaving Radley in 1862, Alfred purchased an Ensign's commission in the 12th Regiment of Foot, and was sent out to Sydney the following year, where the Regiment was stationed as the garrison. However, the start of the 2nd Taranaki War broke out that year, and two companies were sent to New Zealand. Over the following four years the rest of the Regiment joined them, albeit to locations in New Zealand further north, including Tauranga. In 1864 the Ngai Te Rangi iwi, the Maori iwi (tribe) based at Tauranga, had their great victory at the Battle of Gate Pa, when 350 of their warriors beat off 2500 Imperial Troops, including members of the 12th Foot.



**The author being presented with the 'taiaha' by Chief Kihī Ngatai. A member of the Ngai Te Rangi iwi.**

However all of this was unknown when I looked at the paddle, albeit it with renewed interest, and noticed the word 'NGATAI' carved on it, which meant nothing to me. Some quick internet research indicated that there had been a chief of the Ngai Te Rangi iwi, Hori Ngatai, who had



**One of Alfred's gilt '12th Foot' buttons, found in a drawer at my grandmother's house.**

been one of the warriors at Gate Pa. I wondered if this paddle could possibly have anything to do with him. I enquired of cousins in New Zealand as to whether there were any descendants of Hori Ngatai still around. They discovered that Hori's great grandson, Chief Kihī Ngatai, was a 'rangatira' (elder) of the same iwi.

Such is the nature of modern communications that this information was accompanied by Kihī Ngatai's mobile phone number, so I made contact. I sent a photo of the paddle, and asked if it could have anything to do with Hori Ngatai. The response came back that it could not have belonged to anyone else. As a result of a gap-year spent working on a sheep farm in New Zealand alongside several Maori, I knew the importance to them of such items, indeed they call them 'taonga' (treasure). I therefore suggested to Kihī Ngatai that I return the paddle to him. He readily accepted, so we planned a trip to Tauranga in December last year.

Further research revealed an article from the Tauranga Argus of November 1866, which contained a report of the Waiwhatawhata Expedition, in which both Alfred Woodward and Hori Ngatai were named as members of the expedition, since by then the Ngai Te Rangi iwi was seeking a peaceful outcome to the war. Hearing this information, Chief Kihī Ngatai confirmed that the paddle was therefore likely to have been given as 'koha' (a reciprocal gift) by Hori Ngatai to Alfred.

Of Regimental interest is that the Waiwhatawhata Expedition was centred on a hill to the SW of Tauranga which still bears the name 'Minden Peak', named at that time by Alfred's Company Commander, Capt Edward Marcon, after the 12th's most famous Battle Honour. I discovered that Alfred died of typhoid on his return passage to England in July 1867, which is why the paddle had remained unremarked in the attic for 150 years.

On 14 December 2016, my wife, daughters and I, along with 14 New



**The name 'NGATAI' carved into the 'hoe' (paddle).**



**The top section of the 'taiaha' that I was presented to the author by Chief Kihī Ngatai, showing the 'arero' (tongue) and 'upoko' (head), carved from rata wood.**



Zealand-based Woodward cousins, gathered at the entrance to the Ngai Te Rangi iwi's Whareroa Marae at Tauranga. We discovered that the paddle was even more important than we thought as such 'taonga' are in fact imbued with the spirit of the ancestor. As a result we received a three warrior 'wero' (challenge), the highest that can be given. After an emotional handover ceremony that included speeches and songs, and during which the spirits of the ancestors were



**Capt (later Major) Edward Marcon who was Alfred's Company Commander in Sydney and New Zealand.**

invoked, Kihī Ngatai presented me with a 'taiaha', the traditional Maori warrior's fighting staff. Around the taiaha was tied some black platted material, which was to represent the ongoing link between the Woodward and the Ngatai families.

There is much to see in both Sydney and New Zealand that relates to the 12th Regt of Foot's time in the Antipodes, and it is well worth a visit for any interested. The memory of the 12th Regt of Foot is still alive.

## Lieutenant Colonel Edgar Mobbs DSO One Hundred Years On



Edgar Roberts Mobbs was born in Northampton, one of six children of Oliver Linnel Mobbs and his wife Elizabeth Anne.

His father was an engineer and his mother came from a background in shoe making, for which Northampton was famous. Edgar's

education was at Bedford Modern School, where records show him as a modest scholar who was taken away early and put to work, being at one time a car salesman and later director of the Pytchley Auto Car Company. Although a promising sportsman, his early departure from school meant that he did not feature there in the 1st XV. He was soon playing rugby at club level though, first with Olney and then 234 times for Northampton, for whom he was captain from the 1907/08 season until 1913.

He captained East Midlands (for whom he was also the RFU committee member) for a similar period and also played for the Barbarians. His seven caps for England came in 1909 and 1910, and included captaining the side to an 11-3 victory against France in Paris in 1910.

### The Sportsman's Battalion

When the war came he immediately volunteered (aged 32) but was too old for a Commission. Mobbs therefore formed his own special corps. 264 men (out of over







# Special Features

400 who volunteered) joined and, as the Sportsman's Battalion, formed a large part of the 7th Battalion, Northamptonshire Regiment. They fought in the Battles of Loos, Somme and Arras. Mobbs was wounded three times, mentioned in Despatches twice and awarded the Distinguished Service Order in 1917.

Wounded three times, he returned to his Battalion after his third injury, but tragically Colonel Mobbs was to die in the Third Battle of Ypres, at Passchendaele.

He was not supposed to be involved in the fighting but, finding that his men were in serious trouble pinned down by machine gunners, he decided to lead a two-pronged rugby flanking movement.

He set off with another runner, taking some hand grenades, around the side of the machine gun post but was shot in the neck and fell into a shell hole just 30 yards short.

Even as he lay dying, he scribbled out the machine gun post's map reference for HQ to eliminate it, asked for reinforcements, and finally added: "Am seriously wounded". When they reached him 10 minutes later, he was dead. Edgar's body was never recovered – his name is listed among all those of the missing on the Menin Gate in Ypres.

## Mobbs' Memorial Match

On 10 February 1921, the East Midlands played the Barbarians in the first Mobbs' Memorial Match, which became an annual fixture and, apart from the six years of WW2, was played for the next 90 years. From 2012, it has become a game against the Army and alternates between Northampton and Bedford. There



are 27 England players recorded on the Twickenham War Memorial, of which Mobbs is one of only two who reached the high rank of Lieutenant Colonel. His name also appears on memorials in Northampton and Olney, as well as the Northampton Saint's one in Franklin's

Gardens. Bedford Modern School has "Mobbs' House" in his memory, and a connecting road from Northampton to the A45 is named "Edgar Mobbs Way". This year to commemorate 100 years since his death a full size bronze statue was erected at the Guildhall in Northampton.

## 3 (UK) Division HQ Ski Trip to Tignes

The purpose of this article is to extol the benefits of conducting Adventure Training (AT) and to remind Castle Readers of the Regimental Fund which supports such training.

3 (UK) Division HQ enjoyed a week's skiing in the French Alps in March 2017. Half a metre of snow fell on the night we arrived and the rest of the week was warm, sunny and dry – the perfect conditions. The group was accommodated in a UCPA hostel which is a non-profit French organisation that makes sports holidays affordable. The hostel provided: a high standard of accommodation, 3 square meals, ski equipment and a bar – all within a 'stone's throw' of the slopes.

The personal contribution for this activity was only £75! The Regimental HQ provided money to offset this trip and anyone organising AT must consult with the Regimental or Assistant Regimental Secretary; you will feel well supported.

We live in times of austerity and one of the first things financiers look to constrain is AT. 3 (UK) Div HQ is particularly busy (as are all HQs) but it still finds time to conduct AT. It is important to protect AT as it has significant moral and physical benefits. If you need any more convincing then the policy states: '33% of Regular Unit personnel and 15% of Reserve personnel are to conduct a minimum of 5 days AT per year' (AGAI Vol 1, Ch 11).



**Maj NJP McGinley (posing for his crate fine).**



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## John Roy Stubbings

### The war and how he settled back into Ely



It is now just over 10 years since Roy Stubbings died. Roy was an Ely chorister from 1923 – 29 and a Lay Clerk from 1945 – 70. He was an unflaggingly energetic member of the

Society of Ely Choristers committee until not long before his death in 2006.

As a chorister from 1973-76, I remember him being involved in the life of the cathedral. However, I never really knew him and it wasn't until recently that I began to think about how the second world war must have shaped him as a man. Roy had a particularly gruelling time for three and a half years as a prisoner of war at the hands of the Japanese where survival was the only aim and most prisoners died of disease and starvation or at the hands of brutal captors. How do men who have experienced these horrors settle back into normality?

How do they adjust to the ordinary aspects of life we all take for granted, such as having a career, raising children, and

how do they hold on to the values that a civilised society expects of them?

Roy was a Colour Sergeant in the 2nd Battalion, The Cambridgeshire Regiment which was raised in 1939. This was a Territorial Battalion so was made up of local part time soldiers with regular staff being instructors and holding key command roles.

The local barracks was in Barton Road, Ely. His Company commander was Major Beckett, the local solicitor in Archer and Archer, who Roy worked for and then fought alongside for a few intense weeks in Singapore.

In 1939 the Battalion organised itself into A Company, which drew its soldiers from March, B Company from Ely, C Company from Wisbech and D Company from Chatteris. The battalion moved to the North Norfolk coast in early 1941, then to Dumfries and to Cheshire. Finally, in October 1941, having been visited by the Bishop of Ely, they set sail on the SS Mount Vernon from the Clyde and by a circuitous route via Canada, South and East Africa (Christmas spent in Mombasa) arrived in Singapore in January 1942.

They disembarked in the middle of an air raid and set up tented camp on the muddy Bukit Timah racecourse. Within three days they were pushed into battle in

north Johore and started to take casualties from dive bombers. The battalion was unacclimatised having been on board ship for three months and were now thrown into a desperate fight for their lives against an enemy who had taken the British garrison completely by surprise. What must have it have been like for men from the fens to be in a tropical climate fighting hard with so little preparation? Things went from bad to worse and they were soon running out of supplies of food and ammunition. Confusion reigned as the battalion was ordered to withdraw. They were then turned around and ordered to retake the town they had just left which was, by now, occupied by the Japanese. Eventually, after a chaotic retreat, the battalion ended up on the island of Singapore. On the 15th February 1942, the order was given to lay down arms and surrender to the Japanese army. The Cambridgeshire's had fought gallantly and stuck together as a spirited and cohesive battalion; they were unbeaten. After only 4 weeks of fighting Roy and his comrades were now set to endure three and a half years of captivity. Of course, at the time, they would have had no idea how long it was going to last, if they would ever get home to Cambridgeshire or even if their war would ever end.







# Special Features

For the next few months Roy was a prisoner in Changi in east Singapore. The prisoners were used as forced labour without any rights as the Japanese did not recognise the Geneva Convention. Death from illness and malnutrition was common and prisoners were shot for not obeying orders. 7,000 men were crammed into a prison meant for no more than 1,000; disease was rife. Roy, being the son of a baker, was put in charge of the field ovens, fashioned from old barrack lockers, so was able to make himself useful. He was then sent to work on the notorious Burma Railway where over 12,000 prisoners died during the course of its construction.

In 1943 the Cambridgeshires were split up and the fitter ones, including Roy, were transported by sea to the Japanese mainland. Being one of the fittest was surely a relative term only. Roy must have had an iron constitution and a will to survive. (Ironically, his future brother-in-law, ex-chorister and RAF airman Dennis Tunnell, was busy at the time attacking these Japanese convoys.) Roy then worked in the coal mines on the Japanese mainland and, on the 9th August 1945, he saw the cloud rise from the detonation of the atomic bomb at Nagasaki. The only casualties in their camp were the lice and fleas which dropped off the prisoners'

bodies because of the radiation.

Roy returned to Ely, a living skeleton. He was told he would not live for more than 15 years and would never have children (he died aged 93, the proud grandfather of five grandchildren). Being the man he was he soon recovered. He married Eileen, (herself the sister of three Ely choristers) and raised two children. He continued to work for Colonel Beckett in the offices on the Market Square in Ely and he ran the family bakery in Newnham Street.

Amazingly, Roy held no grudges against the Japanese. One of his grandsons married a Japanese girl in 2007 and works in Tokyo for the Japan Times. Roy loved to meet his future granddaughter, Toyoko. He welcomed Japanese people if he met them in the Cathedral. He forgave the nation, maintaining that cruelties in war are perpetrated by all sides and not by everyone; he had experienced kindness at times amidst the prevailing cruelty.

Roy threw himself into everything. He worked, ran a horticultural society, was a member of Ely Operatic Society, was the secretary of the Cambridgeshire Regimental Association and was the backbone of the Society of Ely Choristers for over 50 years. There were numerous other societies and committees which Roy

engaged with. He went abroad, once, to France. Holidays were taken locally, with churches being the focal point of his trips. His home was Ely and he never really wanted to leave it again.

So, what was he like, this straightforward man of Ely? How did he put the horrors of war behind him and be such a generous and forgiving person, setting such an example of positivity? His faith, I am sure, played a big part. Being part of a community and working and fighting alongside his friends from Ely and his civilian employer were almost certainly important. He channelled his energy into enterprises that encouraged and celebrated comradeship, hardly surprising, given his wartime experiences. He was certainly not one for sitting around, a tendency probably intensified by years of captivity. His children say he was stubborn and refused to give up. He clearly saw the goodness in everything, although quite how he managed to sustain this while in the Far East is a mystery, but he must have done it. I would like to think that after what he had experienced he looked at Ely and its people, the cathedral and the choir and was just pleased to be alive.

**Robin Laird**  
**Society of Ely Choristers**

## Vikings Wessex Lunch



To mark the 310th anniversary of the Battle of Almanza (of 9th Foot/Norfolk infame), on 25 April 2017 sixteen former Viking Officers who live mostly in Wessex gathered for an 'Almanza 310' lunch in Wincanton, Somerset.

Pictured from left: Richard Haes, David Voy, Julian Rawlins, Michael Goldschmidt, Mike Meredith, John Tilley, Kit Stallard, Mike Edwards, Jeremy Prescott, Bob Pike, Mike

Willdridge, Roger Williams, Dan Bailly, Peter Ferrary, John Keep, and Rupert Conder. Twelve of them had served together in 1st Battalion in the AMF(L) role at Tidworth in the middle 1970s, under command of the then Lt Col Bob Pike. There is every likelihood that a similar 'Almanza 311' lunch will be held in April 2018; details will be published in the Regimental Newsletter in the New Year.





# Book Reviews

## Official Aden 50th Anniversary Publication

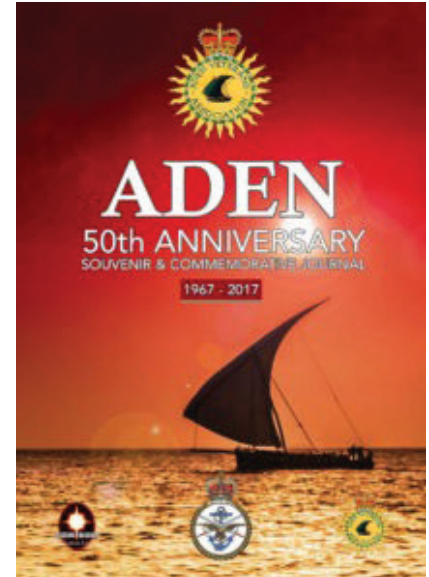
The Aden Veterans Association commissioned Horizon Publications to produce their 50th Anniversary Aden Commemorative Journal, to which the Regimental Charity has made a modest contribution.

Pages 42 and 44 are about and by Maj Gen Jack Dye as CO 1st Battalion and then Commander South Arabian Army.

With a message from HM The Queen, the Journal reflects on a bitter conflict and the sacrifices made by the three services

of the Armed Forces, The Royal Fleet Auxiliary and The British Police Force.

The Journal is distributed throughout the UK – and to British Forces in Germany, Gibraltar, Cyprus and The Falkland Islands. A free issue is available to the Armed Forces Community and Veteran's Organisations. Hard copies of the Journal are available for the general public to purchase online, and it is also available in PDF format at [www.horizonpublication.co.uk](http://www.horizonpublication.co.uk).



## Afghanistan - Britain's War in Helmand

ISBN : 978-0-9557813-3-9

Britain's armed forces spent a decade in Afghanistan, first deploying to the north followed by a move into Kabul, Kandahar and Helmand. More than 100,000 personnel from all three services served in what became known as Operation HERRICK.

The 1st Battalion The Royal Anglian Regiment were among the first to deploy, arriving in Kabul in 2002 then in 2007 the Regiment fought a 'bloody summer' when it deployed as part of 12 Mech Brigade.

Now the first historical account has been published by DRA Publishing which documents the conflict in ten chapters and profiles the challenges of the initial 'baptism of fire' faced by UK forces in 2006 as well as the achievements made across Helmand.

From Royal Navy personnel who worked across the Task Force in support roles from aviation to medicine, the Royal Air Force who provided the vital support helicopters and close air support to the young soldiers who faced the daily threats of a resourceful enemy.

Among the many accounts of bravery are the Grenadier Guardsman who won a Victoria Cross. The Royal Marines who went back to rescue a colleague at an old fort in Garmsir and the Riflemen who

were hit by two massive IEDs and gave medical care under fire in one of the most courageous incidents of the war which saw five soldiers killed.

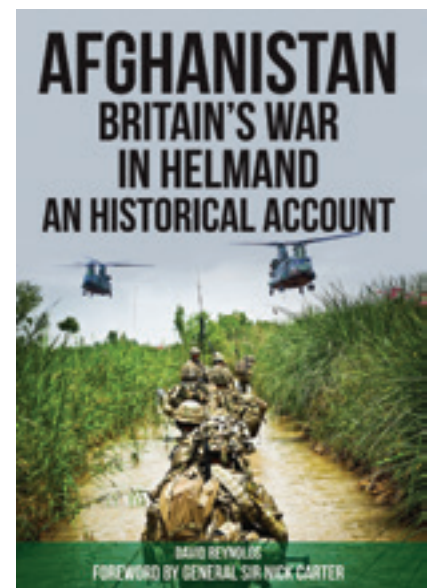
In 2007, A Company 1 R ANGLIAN relieved the Royal Marines at Nowzad and within days found themselves under enemy fire. The courage of the Vikings was tested when a Private Chris Gray was shot in a face to face firefight with the Taliban and his colleagues soldiers evacuated him under heavy fire.

A film crew was with the patrol and recorded the harrowing scene, but despite the best efforts of his colleagues to save him, he sadly died from his wounds.

By the end of the tour the unit had reportedly killed 1,000 Taliban and received plaudits for their efforts in talking the fight to the enemy.

The book pays special tribute to every man and woman who was killed in the conflict and lists the deployment of each brigade and its units, some like the RAF and Army Air Corps who had an enduring presence in Helmand.

It is available from high street book shops at £25 or direct from the publisher at the discounted price of £20. Email: [office@dramedia.co.uk](mailto:office@dramedia.co.uk) or call direct 01752 403333.







# Obituaries

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

Mike J Davison	on 8 December 2016
Maj Chris Davies	on 28 January 2017
John Hazlewood	on 31 January 2017
Thomas Jarvis	on 5 February 2017
Alan Birrell	on 5 February 2017
Michael Harley	on 6 February 2017
David Charles Dumbleton	on 11 February 2017
James Foley	on 11 February 2017
George Weedon	March 2017
Jim Townrow MBE	on 28 March 2017
Anthony Walker	April 2017
Major PJS Child MBE	on 2 April 2017
John "Robbo" Robinson	on 4 April 2017
Reginald Thomas Marshall	on 17 April 2017
Lieutenant Colonel JM Barstow	May 2017
Major (Retd) Albert J Pryce-Howells MBE TD	on 8 May 2017
Nigel John Snelling Coyler	on 22 May 2017
John R Pacey	on 15 June 2017
Douglas Frank Langrish	on 18 June 2017
Graham Baum	on 19 June 2017
Colin 'Sam' Davies	on 28 June 2017
Ray John Holohan	on 2 July 2017
Major Ronald (Ron) Arthur Breary Rogers	on 4 July 2017
John Howes	on 5 July 2017
Major John Standring	on 8 July 2017
Major Julian (Jules) Charles Dominic Griffin Pollard	on 20 July 2017
Mick Faulkner	August 2017
Leonard Edward Loader	August 2017
Robert Birtwistle	August 2017
William John Chapman	on 5 August 2017
Major Peter Lawrence Purdy	on 15 August 2017
Stephen "Benny" Benns	on 23 August 2017
Major Peter Cliffe	on 4 September 2017
Malcolm Dodds	on 20 Sept 2017
Peter Gill	on 21 Sept 2017
Tom Fowler	October 2017
Donald George Webster	on 3 October 2017
Colonel Robin G Greenham	on 5 October 2017
Albert Dopson	on 9 October 2017
Mick Rinder	on 11 October 2017
Peter Ian Jarvis	on 12 October 2017
Reg Green	on 13 October 2017
John Mackness	on 16 October 2017
Les Ward	on 27 October 2017
Captain LPJ Dickens	November 2017
Lt Col Seymour PM Blyth	on 12 Nov 2017



## Capt Michael Alfred Ashton MC



Mike died on 7 Jan 2016 aged 95: 'fighting to the end' said his daughter Judy.

He was one of the two surviving Officers of 4th Battalion Royal Norfolk Regiment

captured in Singapore in 1942.

The photograph above is of Mike on the cover of 'Britain-at-War-Magazine Issue 118 Feb 2017'. It is sub-titled 'Tomforce Evader - Courage of Lieutenant Mike Ashton MC'.

Vice President of the 4 Royal Norfolk Comrades Association, Mike was a regular attender at the 4 Royal Norfolk Offrs' dinners until he requested removal from the mailing list in 2006 as 'getting too old'!

Born in Linton, Cambridgeshire, on 1 Feb 1920, he enjoyed the country life with his grandparents, horses and dogs. His mother Pearl pursued a career in journalism in London, his father having departed soon after his birth.

Michael was educated at Haileybury where he joined the OTC. He had hopes of being a farmer but his mother, who was working for Odhams Press, suggested a job on 'The Sporting Life'. Neither came to pass and on leaving school he started training at the Royal Veterinary College in London and joined the Honourable Artillery Company from where on 7 Jan 1939 he was commissioned into the 4th (Territorial) Battalion of the Royal Norfolk Regiment.

As a Lieutenant he trained in Norfolk and worked on the coastal defences, fondly remembering his cosy billet in Acle. However there was to be no training for jungle warfare in East Anglia!

On 29 Oct 1941 the Battalion put to sea from Liverpool for an unknown posting. They had been destined for India but after the bombing of Pearl Harbour they were sent to Singapore.

On 29 Jan 1942, the ship docked in Keppel Harbour, Singapore, un-noticed by the Japanese due to heavy cloud. The invading enemy aircraft were raiding night and day.

For the first few days Michael and his men helped women and children evacuate the island. On 10 Feb 1942,

with a party of men, they became cut-off when B Company was moving forward from positions forward of the Swiss rifle range. Surrounded by the enemy, he hid in undergrowth for a day and a half and at dusk on the second day, collected his men and worked his way back the 3 miles to the lines, meeting several enemy parties which they attacked and inflicted casualties. They had no food and only water from drains and arrived back at the lines, exhausted after over 40 hours. His information about the enemy was invaluable. For this episode Captain Ashton was later awarded the Military Cross.

The Japanese landed on the north West of the Island and on 11 Feb made a strong attack on the ground and in the air. The Allies had no air support and by 15 Feb supplies and water were almost spent and the order to surrender was received. Ashton was first taken to the crowded Changi barracks then housed in the RAF HQ before spending several months at the Golf Club and cricket field, converting the greens into a Japanese shrine.

He was then sent by train to Thailand in the North where the railway was being built at Tarso in the jungle where the conditions were the worst. After that part of the railway was built, in Jun 1944 they were sent to Tamuan, a large camp of 10,000 prisoners.

Here Col Knights gave Ashton the job of overseeing the care of the ducks, goats and some cattle. The meat ration was only 1 oz per man/day. They deceived the guards about the quantities of produce and shared it amongst the men. The goat-keeper often drank some of the milk, replacing it with his own urine for the special consumption of the Japanese officers. For some 40 years Michael kept these memories to himself. Occasionally in convivial company a story might come out. One such tale was the removal of his appendix, using home made instruments and without anaesthetic. That was just one of many close brushes with death.

In Jan 1945 the officers were separated into a small camp at Tamarkan near the Kwai bridges and it was from there that he saw the allies bomb the bridge.

The war in Europe was over by 8 May but Japanese hostilities continued until the atom bombs were dropped in Aug and the peace declaration signed on 2 Sep. It was another month before the news reached the PoW camps, and longer still for the emancipated prisoners to arrive home.

His favourite pastime aside from horses was fly fishing. He was a fine salmon fisherman and every year would escape to Scotland with convivial friends.

At the Service of Thanksgiving for Michael in Arundel the sun shone brightly and the church was packed.

Mike's one time partner vet gave a long tribute, telling the story of the MC and lots of horse vet tales. The first one concerned Mikes refusal to buy anything from Japan. One day a party came from Japan to view a stallion for sale. One chap peered underneath and said 'he only got one ball'. Mike defended the animal and convinced them to buy it. After they left he turned to his partner saying: 'That will serve those little buggers right. That horse only fires blanks!'

You can all imagine how that went down with the vicar and the old ladies in the choir!

Mike is survived by his wife Ann, daughter Judy and son Charles.

Judy Dyer (daughter) & JLR

## Lt Col JM Barstow



Lieutenant Colonel John Barstow died on 26 April 2017. This is a Tribute given by his close friend and brother officer, Brigadier Michael Aris CBE DL at the Burial Service held at St George's Church, Kencot on 9 May 2017.

I look upon it as a great privilege to have been asked by Marjorie and her family to speak for a short time about John's military career.

I have been most fortunate to have been





# Obituaries

able to read his memoirs. And I will find it difficult to do justice to such a full and interesting life in so many parts of the world.

John was educated at Stamford School in Lincolnshire and at St Edmund's Hall at Oxford where he read history.

But after a year, in 1943, he came down from Oxford, to join the Army. He enlisted in the Royal Artillery and after training saw active service in Normandy, Belgium, Holland and Germany and this included the ill fated Parachute Division operation at Arnhem.

John was commissioned into the Royal Lincolnshire Regiment in 1945 and this was immediately followed by him serving in various places both in India and Malaya.

In his memoirs these journeys, and the various appointments which he held in those countries, read like a fascinating adventure story at a time when England was relinquishing its Empire.

John briefly left the Army in 1947 but, after toying with ideas of farming, he was recommissioned into his County Regiment.

However almost at once he was sent to Sierra Leone and served there in that terrible debilitating climate for 18 months. Granted a regular commission in 1952 he joined the 1st Battalion of the Royal Lincolnshire Regiment in Goslar in Germany.

I would also mention that subsequently John was sent to Iserlohn to gain staff experience and there met his future wife Marjorie who was a teacher at the Army Children's School.

Soon afterwards in 1955 the Battalion moved to Malaya for 3 years on active service. John commanded a Rifle Company on jungle operations against the Communist Terrorists and was Mentioned in Despatches for his outstanding service there.

I first met him towards the end of our tour there after he was appointed Battalion Adjutant, the man responsible for all the staff work and total administration of the Battalion.

Over many years, in various difficult countries, he had developed sound and well proven skills, and these were tested to the full and put into effect, in the move of the Battalion by troop ship to Aden. Then, after a short operational stay there, back to England.

He then mounted the smooth move of the Battalion, over 600 soldiers and some 200 families, to Minden in Germany. This

arduous and efficient work was very much appreciated and admired by all of us. The Battalion had simply and totally depended on his ability to do all this.

At the end of our tour in Minden, John prepared the Battalion for a further move to Watchet in Somerset in order that the Regiment could amalgamate with the Northamptonshire Regiment.

The fact that all these complex and detailed individual and unit moves from Minden were successful was entirely due to John's sterling work, total commitment, attention to enormous detail and the exacting standards which he set himself.

John's ability to train both Officers and soldiers alike was fully realized when he was made responsible for the training of a wide spread TA Battalion in Lincolnshire.

He carried out this arduous and difficult work with quiet skill and imagination and most importantly an ability to lead, guide, motivate and encourage part time Lincolnshire soldiers.

An appointment of enormous responsibility is that of Second in Command of a regular infantry battalion and John was appointed as such in 2nd Battalion Royal Anglian Regiment. His first task was to move this battalion from Felixstowe to Cyprus in 1964.

There he was not only responsible for the overall training in the Battalion, but also its operational role in that politically difficult island.

Suffice to say that John carried out these many roles in a most effective and efficient manner and thus enhanced his already high reputation.

The highest point in an Officer's career is to be selected to command a battalion and John possessed the proven ability to lead, train and administer both regular and TA officers and men.

He was therefore, rightly rewarded, by his appointment to command a TA Battalion situated across the County of Essex.

John was highly respected as a Commanding Officer who set and obtained sound and lasting results in the development and training of Officers and Soldiers alike. He could look back on this period in command and all he achieved with great pride.

After command he carried out various successful senior staff appointments in the area of Army and then Joint Services Works Study.

This entailed examining the methods and systems used in the Services, and which

in some cases might well be changed or improved. John decided to retire in 1979.

Perhaps John could best be described as one of the former dedicated Regimental Officers who are now seldom found.

He was highly motivated in everything he did, most calm under pressure, gave sound practical advice and total commitment. Throughout his career he always put the needs of the soldier first.

He was a modest man, kind and friendly, generous and approachable with a sense of humour and fun. Wherever he served and whatever appointments he held John was highly respected.

John and Marjorie have always kept in close touch with their many friends in the County Regiment. We all looked upon John as the last member of the old regiment.

I would also like to mention the enduring support he received throughout his life from Marjorie.

Wherever John's career has taken him she has quickly made a home in various parts of the world, sometimes in very difficult places and circumstances. Marjorie has always been a most popular person and a tower of strength.

I could not end without mentioning two examples of personal kindness which my wife Sheila and I have received from John and Marjorie.

In Minden, frequently, John used to ask me to go and see him in the early evening and for an hour or two would talk to me and discuss the role and responsibilities of an Adjutant. This was invaluable help and advice which served me well in the future.

When Sheila and I became engaged John and Marjorie invited her to stay with them and thus see and experience something of Army life. We shall never forget their kindness.

It has been a great privilege for us to have known Marjorie and John and to be their close friends.

I count myself very fortunate indeed to have served with him in the Royal Lincolnshire Regiment. John will always be remembered and very sadly missed by his many friends.

Very sadly John's wife Marjorie died suddenly on 2 September 2017. She had given her husband continuous support throughout his career. As a regimental wife Marjorie was highly respected by everyone and made a lasting impact on all those she helped and supported. She was a tower of strength and a popular member of the Royal Lincolnshire Regiment.



## Lt Col SPM Blyth



Lt Col Seymour Blyth was educated at Haileybury College, Hertford where he was awarded an Army Scholarship to the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. He was commissioned into the Royal Anglian Regiment in 1973.

His early career was spent at Regimental duty with the 3rd Battalion, the Pompadours, where he served in Germany, Cyprus, Colchester, Belize, and on operations in Londonderry, Northern Ireland. During this period he was also a training platoon commander at Depot the Queen's Division, Bassingbourne, and Adjutant of 7 R ANGLIAN.

He then completed an SO3 G2 Intelligence Staff appointment in West Berlin where he specialized in East Berlin prior to unification. He returned to the Pompadours in Minden where he commanded a Mechanized Infantry Company, which included a tour in Belfast and training in BATUS. He was fortunate to also command a Mechanized Infantry Company with 2 QUEENS in Minden for an additional year.

Lt Col Blyth was subsequently posted to the Joint Force Operations Staff where he was responsible for the planning and co-ordination of major Tri-Service exercises outside NATO. During the first Gulf War he was AMA to General Sir Peter de la Billiere in his outer office in Riyadh. He escorted the brand new Prime Minister John Major throughout the Gulf region for three days on his first visit to the military on succeeding Margaret Thatcher, which gave a fascinating insight into his evolving relationships with the three Services.

After a tour at senior Regimental duty he was seconded to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and became the UNPROFOR operational military advisor to the United Nations Secretariat in New York over a particularly complex period in the Former Yugoslavia where he reported directly to Kofi Annan in the Department for Peace Keeping Operations. This was followed by two years as Chief of Staff of a major joint Army/RAF Headquarters in Rheindahlen, Germany.

From Germany he moved in 1997 to the Army Personnel Centre in Glasgow to work with the Military Secretary where he was responsible for the detailed career management of the Queen's Division officers. After a lengthy selection process he became the Army nominee to be Equerry to HRH The Prince of Wales, although the job eventually went to the Royal Navy on that cycle. On promotion to Lt Col he became a student at the NATO Defence College in Rome, before heading north to Verona to be employed as the SO1 J7 Exercises in JHQ South where he planned and conducted major NATO and Partnership for Peace exercises throughout Western and Eastern Europe.

In November 2003, and after four years in Italy, he was posted to HQ DETS(A) in Upavon, as the SO1 Personal Development Policy where he managed a team in the research and development of new learning policies in support of senior strategic Government initiatives. He moved to the Ministry of Defence in 2006 and ran five handpicked Combined Services and Civil Service Defence Presentation teams across the United Kingdom. For his last tour he remained in London and was the military lead for the Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force as the SO1 Internal Communications within the Directorate for Media and Communications in Whitehall.

Lt Col Blyth was a keen sportsman and was an Army athlete and had a full Army rugby trial. He enjoyed tennis, squash, golf, skiing, all aquatic activities, and parachuting in his early days. He was a member of the Royal Geographical Society and his last expedition was to Burma in 2006.

On retirement in 2009 he became a consultant both in England and at SHAPE, Belgium, where he was the International lead Project Manager for enhancing NATO's security posture by introducing a secure, cost effective, single identity management system (ID

Card) for all military, civilian staff and families throughout NATO. This required considerable diplomatic skill in order to include designing the Card in accordance with all NATO nations, plus their specific financial, procurement and production requirements.

His last job was as the Managing Consultant, and a member of the Management Team, with an international crisis management organization, where he ran the London office with consultancy geared towards Crisis Communications and Crisis Management.

Lt Col Blyth was diagnosed with Prostate Cancer in 2008, which gradually curtailed his activities and he was unable to work full time from early 2014. He was however on the Committee of the Bob Champion Cancer Trust and helped to organize an annual tennis tournament in Battersea Park which has raised considerable sums towards Prostate Cancer research. He also briefly worked in sporting event management with Formula One, which included organizing charity cricket matches between the Lord's Taverners against F1 teams, plus working in the Grand Prix Race Week, and attendance at the Monaco Grand Prix.

For the past ten years Seymour lived in Wiltshire with his wife Deborah and their two children, Kiki and Alexander.

## Maj Shaun Brogan



SAS officer who saw fierce action in Oman and trained a local defence force to tackle insurgents, he is pictured in his shemagh in Oman with the SAS (1970s): he

was shortlisted for the role of James Bond

Major Shaun Brogan, who has died aged 73, was awarded an MC and a Queen's Commendation while serving with the SAS in Oman.

In January 1972, Brogan returned to 22 Special Air Service Regiment in Dhofar Province, Oman, having been wounded only a few weeks earlier. As squadron operations officer, he had been responsible for training 250 irregular Dhofaris who had been formed into independent units known as Firqats.

On January 17 he led an operation to establish a firm base in territory





# Obituaries

controlled by rebels. His troop and 100 irregulars were supported by the Sultan of Oman's Air Force. They were flown in by helicopter at first light and moved through difficult country towards their objective.

When they came under heavy fire, the irregulars refused to go on. Brogan went forward, however, and by sheer force of personality persuaded them to continue the advance. No sooner had they dealt with the opposition than they came under sustained fire once more. The irregulars refused to continue but Brogan, with a display of courage and determination, got them moving ahead again.

Soon afterwards, when his rearguard came under attack, he went to their assistance, directed their fire and killed the area rebel commander. After seven hours of fighting, the objective was reached and secured. Brogan was awarded an MC. The citation stated, that, over a long period, he had shown outstanding qualities of leadership, initiative and bravery.

Shaun Michael Brogan was born at Stamford, Lincolnshire, on May 24 1944. It was two weeks before D-Day and, for security reasons, there was a clamp-down on Army leave, so his father, who was taking part in the Normandy landings, had to obtain special permission to visit his newborn son.

Shaun was educated at Ratcliffe College, near Leicester, where he excelled at rugby, boxing and swimming. He studied for a year at Harvard School, Hollywood, California, on a student exchange scheme, after being awarded a scholarship.

In 1965 he was commissioned from Sandhurst into the Royal Anglian Regiment (RAR). During his time at the RMA, he drove a car carrying the banner "Make Love Not War." The commandant was furious and ordered him to remove it but he refused on the grounds that the vehicle was not his but had been borrowed.

After three years with the RAR, he asked for permission to apply to join the SAS. During a spell of leave before the selection process, he and his friend, Chris Keeble, ran a diving school in Malta.

One evening, they were invited to a smart black-tie party at the Ramla Bay Hotel on the coast. As a tease, they put on wet suits and scuba kit over their dinner jackets, and swam up the long underwater conduit that linked the sea with the hotel's saltwater swimming pool. On arrival, they stripped off their wet suits and joined the other immaculately attired guests seated around the pool, in their dripping clothes.

In May 1971 Brogan was serving with "A" Squadron 22 SAS in Dhofar where the Squadron was responsible for training about 250 irregular Dhofaris. Three months later, the force, which was controlled from the HQ at Salalah, numbered some 400. Wireless communication and logistical support of every kind was limited and was further restricted by the monsoon.

In July, with eight SAS soldiers and 60 irregulars, Brogan cleared an area of 350 square miles of rugged, mountainous terrain. The commander of the rebels and several of his men were killed. Others were wounded and the group that had previously controlled the region was broken up and driven out of the territory. The Firqat suffered no casualties.

Before he left, Brogan formed, armed and trained a local defence force which was capable of dealing with insurgents and sending intelligence reports to government forces. His leadership, determination and skill in resolving a most complex problem was recognised by the award of a Queen's Commendation.

While he was in the SAS, Sean Connery retired from his role as James Bond and Brogan's troop encouraged him to apply for the part. He got on to the shortlist but during the screen testing he was on operations and his application went no further.

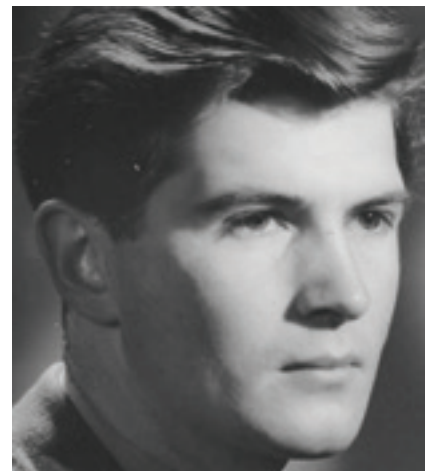
Brogan took time out by going up to Lincoln College, Oxford, to read PPE. After the successful conclusion of the Dhofar campaign, he returned to Oman and took a post with the Civil Aid. He devoted two years towards "building the peace" by becoming involved in medical and reconstruction programmes. His wife, Catherine, whom he had met at Oxford, worked as a flying doctor. For the following two years, Brogan trained the Sultan's Special Forces.

In 1980 he returned to England and worked for Control Risks, the security company specialising in anti-kidnapping and close protection duties. During this period, he provided a personal bodyguard for the Duchess of Westminster.

He went back to Oman in 1985 to work for the Ministry of Health. With the help of his wife, he set up an immunisation programme which saved many lives. In 1990 he returned to England and, having joined the NHS, eventually became chief executive of the Vale of Aylesbury Primary Care Trust, Buckinghamshire. The onset of Parkinson's disease forced him to retire in 2003.

Shaun Brogan married, in 1976, Dr Catherine Clubb, who survives him with their two sons.

## Peter John Solomon Child



John Child, who died after a 12-year battle with cancer on 2 April 2017, had a unique career in the Regiment, having spent time cap-badged Royal Norfolk followed by regular service in two out of the three East Anglian regiments and all four of the Royal Anglian battalions, as well as being the Honorary Colonel TA for the Norfolk Company after leaving the army.

He was born at Banham in Norfolk on 28 May 1941, went to school at Beeston Hall, followed by Gresham's School and the Norwich City College, all in Norfolk. From 1959 through to 1962, he read biology at Bristol University, where he joined the OTC and was commissioned into The General Service Corps and cap-badged Royal Norfolk, on the books of the TA battalion, 4 Royal Norfolk.

He joined the regular army in July 1962, being among the first of the new graduate officers to be commissioned straight from university. After a very short period of being taught 'some basic drill and how to salute', he was posted temporarily to the 3rd East Anglian Regiment at Ballykinler, whilst the 1st East Anglian Regiment was in British Guiana. In December 1962, on their return, John joined them at Normandy Barracks, Felixstowe, where they remained until being posted to Aden, a year later.

Initially, the regiment was based in the town of Aden with a company 'up country' in the Radfan, but in May 1964, the whole battalion was deployed up into the Radfan. On the night of 10/11 June 1964,



after preliminary action by a battalion of the Federal Regular Army, the regiment, under the command of Jack Dye, mounted a night attack on the sheer sides of the 5,500 foot high Jebel Huriyah, the spiritual heartland of the dissidents. Supported by the guns of 3RHA, with flares dropped by RAF Shackleton aircraft to light the way, the objective was seized by 04.50 hours and the regimental flag broken out. John's platoon was the lead platoon for part of the operation.

Marked with a parade at Waterloo Lines, Aden, on 1 September 1964, the 1st East Anglian Regiment became the 1st Battalion, the Royal Anglian Regiment.

In 1965, an opportunity to serve in Malaysia occurred and John having been selected, was seconded to 3 Police Field Force in Sarawak, in the rank of Assistant Superintendent, commanding a company of 180 local tribesmen. Based at Miri, he always remembered this two-and-a-half-year adventure with great fondness.

He returned to the 1st Battalion in Catterick, briefly, until head-hunted by John Akehurst, to become adjutant of the 2nd Battalion at Felixstowe. From December 1968, the battalion were sent to Gibraltar for nine months and on return, they moved from Felixstowe to Colchester. On 13 December 1969, John and Helen were married and three children, Tim, Simon and Beth and 10 grandchildren followed.

Next it was to the 4th Battalion (which became Tiger Company, during John's time with them), followed by a staff job with 51 Brigade in Hong Kong and Staff College in 1974. Subsequent postings included Tidworth 1975-77 with the 1st Battalion in the ACE Mobile Force role, two G2 jobs, one in HQ BAOR and in between to the 3rd Battalion as second in command.

John was eager for more Far East postings, thus, in 1985, he returned to Hong Kong and spent three years with the 10th Gurkhas. This was followed by two very happy years in Kathmandu, where he and Helen made the most of their time in Nepal, and Helen, a radiographer, was commended for her work in the Dharan military hospital in the aftermath of the 1988 earthquake. John's last two years in the army were spent in Hong Kong, first with HQ Brigade of Gurkhas, and then 10th Gurkhas, as second in command.

In August 1992, John left the army and settled back in Norfolk where he was appointed Director of the Norfolk and

Norwich Association for the Blind, a post he held for 20 years. John was a terrific people person, and, as a result he was superbly fitted for this task, transforming the Association into an organisation that became recognised nationally as an example of just what could be achieved by a well-run charity. The Association was honoured with two visits by Her Majesty the Queen during this time and he was very deservedly made a Member of the Order of the British Empire for services to the blind and partially sighted in Norfolk.

In failing health, but still eager to be involved with people, John took on the fresh challenge of working part-time, receiving visitors at Norwich Cathedral, where he was also a trustee. Previously, he had retained his links with the regiment, as in 1994, he was appointed the Honorary Colonel TA for the Norfolk Company and was also, for many years, a trustee of the Royal Norfolk Museum in Norwich.

There was a full house at his thanksgiving service, which took place in Norwich Cathedral with fittingly, the Rt Revd Graham James, Bishop of Norwich, giving an excellent address in recognition not only of Peter John Solomon Child's time in the army but also his dedicated service to the county of Norfolk.

## Peter Geoffrey Cliffe



Peter Geoffrey Cliffe passed away peacefully on 4th September 2017 at St. Peter's Hospital, Chertsey, aged 96, after a short illness.

Peter Cliffe was born in Burton Salmon, Yorkshire on 28th April 1921. He went to school in Gerrards Cross and then to Rossall School in Lancashire, where he took a keen interest in sports. Whilst working in the family timber firm, he joined the Territorial Army and was subsequently commissioned into the Royal Lincolnshire Regiment in 1940. During the first years of the war he was stationed at the regimental headquarters in Lincoln. In 1944, as a Captain, he commanded the anti-tank platoon in S Company 2nd Battalion and on D-Day he landed in Normandy on Sword beach with the third wave of troops.

On 8th July 1944 Captain Cliffe took part in the battle for Hérouville, just north of Caen, as part of Operation Charnwood. Whilst reconnoitring a route to bring the anti-tank guns forward into the village, he was shot and wounded. Following surgery, he was airlifted back to the UK.

After recovering from his wounds, he joined the Supreme Allied Airborne Expeditionary Force rounding up Nazi officers and SS troops in Germany in the last months of the war. He went on to undertake parachute training with the Parachute Regiment.

Following the end of the war in Europe, Captain Cliffe was due to travel to India in preparation for an assault to retake Singapore from the Japanese. However, with the cessation of hostilities in the Far East he was sent instead to Palestine. It was while on leave from there in 1947, that he met his future wife, Stella, during a holiday in Switzerland and they married the following year.

After returning from Palestine, Captain Cliffe worked at the War Office in London and during his time there he was Mentioned in Dispatches in recognition of his work. He then went to become an instructor at the Royal Military Academy in Sandhurst and subsequently at the Mons Officer Cadet School at Aldershot.

Peter Cliffe retired from the army with the rank of Major in 1960. He then qualified as a chartered secretary and worked as a company secretary and accountant in Fleet, High Wycombe and later in Slough.

After retiring, Peter Cliffe and his wife moved from Littlewick Green, Berkshire to Pyrford in Surrey. He continued his passion for the outdoor life by going for walks and working in the garden. He is survived by his brother, three children and three grandchildren.





# Obituaries

## Alf Davey



Alf Davey, 4 Royal Norfolk and FEPOW, died on 31 Aug 2017 aged 97.

He was the last known surviving soldier of 4th Battalion, The Royal Norfolk Regiment, captured in Singapore in 1942.

The father of two spent three and a half years in Japanese captivity, most of it as forced labour on the 258 mile long railway line from Burma to Thailand through near impossible terrain.

For many years, Alf was our 4 R Norfolk Comrades Association 'Blackburn Rep'.

More than 100 people packed Pleasington Crematorium Chapel to celebrate his life.

The Regiment was represented by the 4 R Norfolk Comrades Association Chairman, WO2 (Retd) Pat Budds.

The photograph above is of Alf relaxing in his garden.

Alf was born, educated and worked in Bungay until 1939, when war broke out. He was a Territorial Army soldier, serving with 4th Battalion, The Royal Norfolk Regiment, so was mobilised. He spent the majority of the war years as a FEPOW, initially at the Changi POW Camp.

His memoirs, 'From farm boy to soldier, to prisoner of war', were published on the website: [www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/55/a4050055.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/55/a4050055.shtml)

Later, they appeared in 4 parts in 'The Britannia & Castle'; B&C 114 Jun 2010; B&C 115 Dec 2010; B&C 116 Jun 2011 and B&C 117 Dec 2011.

In his memoirs Alf describes some of the horrors he and his friends endured, seeing nurses raped, doctors bayoneted as

they operated and his own colonel being beaten every day for disobeying orders.

'When you passed a Japanese, even a private, you saluted him. If you didn't you would be beaten and kicked most mercilessly.'

Alf recalls one of the worst jobs the soldiers endured was building a trellis bridge from green timber around a cliff.

'We had to drill through the rock, with your mate holding the drill and you striking with a 14 lb hammer. If he was weak he would move and you hit his wrist, sometimes breaking it.'

The lads who couldn't move out of the way fast enough would be blasted to death, but the Japanese just laughed and pushed the dead over the side into the river below.'

Wearing just a loin cloth and clogs made from bits of wood, the soldiers got their own back on their tormentors when they could, Alf recalls them once collecting all the bugs they could find and putting them in the Japanese huts to give them sleepless nights!

Finally, in August 1945 the war was over. Alf declared: 'Apparently the Japanese had received orders to shoot us all and if the atom bomb had not been dropped, thousands of soldiers would not have lived and I would not be here today to tell my story.'

After a joyous welcome at his Suffolk home he came up north to Blackburn to see Elsie, the girlfriend he had met on a blind date while training to go to war. The couple were married for 52 years.

Said Alf: 'Her father advised against it 'cos I wouldn't last long after what I'd been through but, needless to say, I have out-lived her.'

After being unable to find work post-war in Bungay, he and his wife Elsie returned to Blackburn and Alf found employment with Blackburn Corporation Highways Department. After 14 years of physical labour, he started working for the Lancashire Evening Telegraph and worked there for 21 years in the Despatch Department until he took early retirement at age 62 when the Company moved premises.

In retirement he had many interests, his favourite being Trout Fishing. He also loved playing Crown Green Bowls and Indoor Bowls. He loved his garden, growing his own vegetables and giving his produce away to family, friends and neighbours. He also like to bake, cook and socialise, dancing and playing bingo at various Working Men's Clubs with

Elsie. They took holidays for many years returning to his home town of Bungay and visited surrounding seaside resorts.

Sadly, Elsie passed away on 6 Oct 1998 after Alf cared for her in the latter years of Alzheimer's Disease.

Alf was very proud of all his family and would visit as often when he could taking his famous fruit cake, jams and chutneys to give away.

Latterly, Alf lived independently, apart from the family driving him to various social events. He enjoyed eating out, playing bingo and being with family.

Alf is survived by his children Jennifer and Michael; seven Grandchildren: Diane, Warren, Dean, Donna, Janeen, Stuart and Graham; eleven Great-Grandchildren: Lucas, Grace, Joshua, Thomas, Alexander, Sadie, Johan, Milo, Freya, Elliot and Ella.

Jennifer Pickup (daughter) & JLR

## Malcolm Eric Dodds

Malcolm Eric Dodds was born on July 21st 1941 in Lincoln, to parents Nelly and Tommy Dodds. He had a sister and two brothers, and a typical 1940s upbringing: one childhood story recalls him and his sister skating downhill on just one roller skate each, with the pair split half between them. At fourteen he missed the best part of a year's schooling due to ill health as he was confined to the sanitarium, and when he returned to the family home it was to find his mother had left.

Malcolm's military career is a defining feature of his life story, having served in the army for twenty two years and travelled around the world with the Royal Anglian regiment second battalion - the Lincolnshire poachers. His postings included Cyprus, Singapore, Germany, Ireland and Gibraltar. During this time, he married his first wife Dawn in July 1965, a union blessed with Scott, Jason, Sharon and Brett and which has gone on to make him a grandfather seven times over and a great grandfather twice.

He was never one to speak too much of his experiences in the army, but he came away from his service having been awarded a number of medals and with the camaraderie of friendships which went on to last an entire lifetime. Malcolm's trademarked expression "I am the best" was definitely borne of his time in the military, though, and a statement filled with pride at his long service. When he retired from the army in 1984, he had achieved the rank of warrant officer and long earned the stripes he'd admired



those years before. It is in the colours and insignia of his regiment that his coffin is decorated today.

He invested his retirement settlement into taking over the Rose and Crown pub in Balderton, Newark, where he lived at the time. It's of course debatable as to which side of the bar he spent most of his hours, but as a consummate host the landlord role suited him perfectly. Although they only had the pub for two years, all of the premises they've run ever since have been licenced - and I'm sure that's appropriate, given that for many people here, the image in mind of Malcolm is one holding up a glass of brandy.

From his earliest cars to the Jaguars we all know him for driving, it was impossible to drive past a garage forecourt without him wanting to stop for "just a quick look." For his 75th birthday, his youngest son Elliott surprised him with tickets to the Silverstone Grand Prix and he was thrilled to have experienced the top end of British racing. This year's birthday was spent at Cadwell Park, underlining the enthusiasm for motorsport he carried throughout his life.

In the last few years, a number of illnesses affected his health but never quite managed to dampen his indomitable spirit. From heart disease and the triple heart bypass operation through to strokes and most recently cancer, he overcame all of these hurdles and survived with his humour almost entirely intact. It's an irony, then, that his passing came through a tragic incident after he'd survived so many other difficult things. He had always said that "you can't take it with you" though - and whether this attitude was generated by the proximity to mortality in the army or his sheer bloody-mindedness about overcoming so many illnesses that might have weakened a lesser spirit, it came through in an endless generosity. Malcolm was never short with his time, affection or his bar tab, and this generosity is what I know will be remembered when we raise our glasses to him later.

Above this, though, and to conclude, is that chief amongst everything for my dad was family. He is so fiercely proud of all of us for what we've achieved and to him we can only say thank you for everything he gave us through his lifetime. I know full well that he'd have given me the moon on a string if I'd asked, and to his chosen friends across the town and the wider country he had a similar generosity of spirit which asked for little but respect in exchange.

For that, for the opportunities he's created for me and the endless support, I will be eternally grateful.

I am proud to be his daughter just as I know we are all proud to be his family and that has always been his number one priority. And just as he's always done absolutely anything for us, all we can do now for him is to say thank you for everything, that we love him and will miss him more than I think we can bear right now, but we will continue to do him proud.

### **Maj Richard Anthony Plowden Gournay (Tony) Ferrier**



Tony died on 3 Nov 2016 aged 96. He was the last surviving Royal Norfolk Regiment Officer captured in Singapore in 1942.

Tony served with 1st, 2nd and 5th Bns The Royal Norfolk Regt and as a 1950s PARA in Egypt, Palestine, Cyprus and Germany before retiring in 1960.

He was OC D Coy in Cyprus during the 1956 fire which claimed 5 fatalities from the ranks of the Norfolks. The photograph above is of Tony in 1985.

Born in Gorleston, he spent his childhood at Hemsby Hall. Tony was proud of his Norfolk heritage and his family can trace its roots to at least 1549 from the reign of Edward VI. One ancestor was MP for Great Yarmouth from 1708-1715.

After leaving Radley in Oxfordshire, he went to Sandhurst for two years and was commissioned in July 1939, just weeks before the outbreak of war.

In Oct 1941, the 21-year-old officer boarded a troopship with two other Royal

Norfolk battalions as Task Force 14, later known as 'Winston's Specials' and sailed for Halifax, Nova Scotia. There, they transhipped to American ships in Nov 1941 for the long voyage to Basra, Iraq, via Capetown in South Africa. During a brief break there, they learned of the attack on Pearl Harbour on 7 Dec.

As the Japanese advanced at speed through Malaya, the Norfolks were diverted to defend Singapore. It became the longest 'trooping voyage' in British military history as they crossed the Equator six times and steamed the equivalent of more than once around the world.

As a company commander in the 5th Bn Royal Norfolk Regiment, he spent almost four years in a Japanese prison of war camp.

He was also a training officer with the Norfolk Army Cadet Force for many years.

After retiring in 1960, returning to his native county, he spent four years with seed merchants McGill & Smith, before joining the CLA (Country Landowners' Association) in November 1964 as secretary responsible for Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely and then five months later took on Norfolk as well.

During his 21 years as regional secretary he built up the membership and extended the CLA influence across the counties.

A keen supporter of the work of the St John Ambulance Brigade and a former president of the Dereham area, he was made a Commander of the Order of St John of Jerusalem in April 1966.

Awarded a 'blue' at Sandhurst, he took up golf again after a 41-year break, playing at Reymerston and later at Dereham for many years. He also shot and was a keen dinghy sailor for many years on the north Norfolk coast.

Tony is survived by his wife Peta and leaves two sons, Richard and Michael; stepdaughters Adrienne and Caroline; grandchildren Louisa, Victoria and Giles and great-grandchildren Arabella, Sam and Hugo.

After a private family funeral an extremely well attended Service of Thanksgiving, conducted by The Revd Canon William Sayer, took place in Norwich Cathedral on 13 Feb 2017.

Tony was indeed a Gentleman whom it was an Honour and a Pleasure to have known.

Michael Pollitt (Eastern Daily Press) & JLR





# Obituaries

## Robin George Greenham



Robin was born and schooled in Ipswich, and as a Suffolk lad, it was not unexpected that he joined the local Royal Anglian Regiment. And he had a remarkable military career. A

gentle giant of a man – physically and metaphorically; he was affectionately nick-named “Boots” by his boys, as his huge feet demanded boots that were not available from the quartermaster’s stores.

There were three main themes to Robin’s military career. The first was to do with his love of and competency in languages. In September 1969, as a senior lieutenant, his interest in languages found him awarded a place on the long Russian Course at the Army School of Languages in Beaconsfield. His success there set his military career on its unique course. But he was not just a fluent Russian speaker, he was also fluent in French and, of course, German. And it was not unknown for him to lapse into a Suffolk drawl.

His first posting to employ his Russian language was as a Captain to the British Military Mission in Berlin – known as BRIXMIS. It was 1973 and at the height of the Cold War – during which he was a tour officer spying the activities and training of the group of Soviet Forces in the German Democratic Republic. In this environment Robin was perceptive, proactive, cool, resolute, professional and efficient, and produced consistently excellent results as well as having some pretty exciting moments.

His outstanding success at this early stage resulted in him being chosen to return to the same organisation from 1989 to 1991 as a Lieutenant Colonel. He described this as the most fascinating posting of all, enabling him to witness the events leading up to the collapse of the GDR regime and subsequent German reunification from both sides of the Berlin Wall as it came down. He became widely known throughout the German, French and Russian elements of the Berlin military community who liked and respected him.

Having had such unique experience of the Soviets, Robin was the ideal candidate to become the Military Attaché in Moscow in 1996 during the latter days of Yeltsin’s

presidency. He was also accredited as the Defence attaché to Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, a considerable portfolio. He was viewed by his ambassador as a highly productive officer with a dynamic *modus operandi*. While there he organised a unique charity concert, with the support of the international business community and the Mayor of Moscow, raising \$100,000 for Russian military orphans.

The second theme to his career was more conventional. Unlike many of his generation he served in all three regular battalions; in Aden with the 3rd Battalion earning the Aden Medal, with the 1st Battalion in Germany and the UK and with the 2nd Battalion in Germany – including Berlin – and the usual several sorties to Northern Ireland during the troubles.

At company level, much of it in Northern Ireland, he and Barbara were a strong team, with Barbara taking a deep interest in the welfare of the families.

He attended staff college and had two staff postings; one in the Military Operations branch of the MoD where his boss said he had a particular genius for detail and accuracy and one as Military Assistant to the Chief of Staff of the Northern Army Group based at Rheindahlen in Germany, where his linguistic skills paid particular dividends. These latter two posts were reserved for officers who were among the top students at the Staff College.

Robin’s final time at Regimental duty was from 1985 to 1987 during the Cold War, when he commanded the 5th Battalion of the Regiment. This was a reinforcing battalion for NATO, should it be required, and he trained and exercised it both in the UK and Germany. He took great interest in and developed the Regimental Band and established two companies of the then new Home Service Force. His tireless and meticulous leadership produced a battalion with high standards and high morale.

The third theme of his career was related to his second home country, Germany. This was at the latter end of his service. He was, as a Lieutenant Colonel, a member of the directing staff and UK Liaison Officer at the German Armed Forces Staff College in Hamburg teaching German officers their trade. The Commandant felt that Robin stood out from his fellow instructors and did a great deal to improve the support provided to UK students. This was followed by 3 years as the Senior British Liaison Officer at the German

Army Office in Cologne. He was the first in the post and had to set it up. Here he coordinated British Army co-operation with the German Forces and represented the UK at professional gatherings.

In 1998, he left the army and joined the British Forces Liaison Organisation as a civil servant, establishing a new office in Berlin, with responsibilities for dealing with the local authorities concerning the stationing and activities of British Forces Germany. On retirement from there in 2003, he developed his special interest in military history and conducted battlefield tours, specialising in the Battle for Berlin from the Oder to the Reichstag in 1945 and in the Cold War period in Berlin. He also lectured on those and similar topics.

Alongside his military career, his love of tennis continued throughout his life. In 1982 he won the men’s singles in the Northern Ireland Military Championships. He qualified as a Lawn Tennis Association intermediate coach, organised tennis coaching courses and was the founder, and later Chairman, of the British Berlin Tennis Club.

Overarching his career and sports, by far the most important to him, was Robin’s love for his family and family life. He seemed to have the extraordinary ability to balance the demands of his jobs with his family life. He had been an only son and family was very important to him. He kept the family home in Ipswich, although, latterly, he lived mostly in Berlin. He married Barbara in 1975 and she loyally followed the flag, providing Robin with the happiest of homes in what must have been, at the start, a pretty strange environment for her. Robin and Barbara were very gracious and welcoming hosts to the single younger officers under his command wherever they were. The arrival of Georgina while Robin and Barbara were in Rheindahlen and then Marie-Louise when they were in Berlin some 3 years later was a delight for them both. Latterly Robin was repaying Barbara’s love and support by running things at home while Barbara was being a headmistress of a school in Berlin.

Robin was a kind and thoughtful man with a generosity of spirit. He was a professionally brilliant and perceptive man. He was a man of intensity and integrity and a loyal and dependable friend. He loved family and as a family man he was a devoted father and a loving husband.

MJDW



## Col Pat Hopper



After a long illness Colonel Pat Hopper died on 22nd December. He had a military career that spanned 45 years' service to the Queen taking in operations in 4 different theatres, command of a Battalion and latterly providing a vital service to the Territorial Army.

Pat joined the Army straight from school, entering Sandhurst as one of the early post-war intakes in 1949. He was commissioned into 1 Suffolk in 1951 and went immediately to Malaya where the Battalion was employed in tackling the Communist bandits.

On 23rd May 1953 Pat was commanding a platoon of A Company 1 Suffolk when he was sent out to ambush a jungle track following information received. The ambush produced no results so the jungle nearby was searched revealing a newly constructed bandit shelter. Four bandits were then seen returning to the shelter, fire was opened and 3 were killed. Newspaper posters went up throughout the country exclaiming "The Suffolks Do It Again". Pat rightly received a Mention in Despatches for this operation. He was further honoured when he carried the one of the Battalion Colours at the farewell parade in Kuala Lumpur.

The thrill of active service in Malaya drew Pat to volunteer for the Parachute Regiment. After qualifying he served with 3rd Battalion the Parachute Regiment in Aldershot. In 1956, in the middle of his 2 year tour, he took part in the Suez operation, dropping on to the El Gamil airfield. The operation was short lived but Pat recalled wading through sewage

with his company while chasing elements of the Egyptian army.

In 1957 he left the Parachute Regiment and returned to 1 Suffolk initially as the Signals Officer and later Adjutant, again on operations, this time in Cyprus. He had much to do with the Intelligence Section which had among its number one Martin Bell. Cpl Bell had the temerity to correct the grammar of one of Pat's signals. On seeing that his text had been altered Pat called Cpl Bell in and said "The trouble with you Cpl Bell is that you think too much". Perhaps Pat would not have been so dismissive if he had known that 60 years later Martin Bell would win Celebrity Mastermind. This incident is referred to in Martin Bell's recent book in which he says that Pat was "an able but slightly raffish officer – a man of deeds rather than words and not the least bit interested in grammar".

While he was with 1 Suffolk Pat showed that he was a fine Regimental athlete, excelling at both Hockey, Rugby and Football as well as representing the Battalion at Cross Country running and pistol shooting. He was in the team that won the Far East Land Forces Major Unit Hockey Championship. This led to an Army trial for hockey. Later in life he took up golf which he thoroughly enjoyed until an old back injury from parachuting forced him to give up.

Pat, on becoming Adjutant, was regarded as a hard taskmaster, especially by his Assistant Adjutant Charles Barnes, who on one occasion, when orderly officer, was given a lift to the camp cinema by Pat. On arrival Charles found that he had left his hat behind and was therefore improperly dressed. When he told Pat this, Charles expected a lift back to collect his hat, but instead was told to report to his office the next morning to receive an extra duty. I think Charles only recently forgave him.

While in Cyprus he met and later married Gemma, thus breaking the hearts of many of the other young and not so young officers. Gemma has been a wonderful Army wife, supporting Pat in his various postings around the world, especially when he later commanded 5 Royal Anglian in Peterborough.

From the excitement of Cyprus the Battalion returned to Shorncliffe in preparation for the amalgamation with 1 Royal Norfolk in Iserlohn later that year. Pat was posted to HQ 4 Division in Herford as a staff captain, so he missed the ceremonies associated with

amalgamation.

Two years later he was back with the Battalion in Harwich, again as Adjutant. It was clear that various CO's recognised that, with Pat as Adjutant, the day to day management of the Battalion was in firm and sensible hands. Patrick Stone recalls that when he arrived back in the Battalion he was unaware of the post – amalgamation tensions between old Norfolks and Suffolks that were still evident. The infamous Arthur Campbell was the CO and Pat was the Adjutant, to whom Patrick reported on his first day. After a brusque "how do you do", Pat marched him in to meet the CO. On emerging from the CO's office, Pat looked at him hard and said, "Norfolk or Suffolk?" Not thinking Patrick said, "either, it really doesn't bother me". "Well it jolly well bothers the rest of us!" said Pat – "now clear off and join your company."

The Battalion was then deployed to British Guiana for an emergency tour. The stories of their time are legion. After they had been in George Town a few days, Patrick Stone was summoned to see the CO, who informed him that he was the only officer in the Battalion with any colonial experience and did he know anything about controlling civil disobedience? On saying that he did have some experience he was told to get on and get the Battalion trained by the following day! As Patrick left the CO's office, Pat whispered in his ear, "Battalion HQ is far too busy for any of this ruddy nonsense, so leave us out of it!"

For the next 10 years Pat spent most of it on the staff in a variety of postings – Shrewsbury, Herford again and Bassingbourn. But there were some returns to Regimental duty, in Singapore as a loan officer and back to 1 Royal Anglian in Catterick as second in command. But no doubt the pinnacle of his career came in 1973 when he was selected to command 5 Royal Anglian in Peterborough.

The highlights of his time in command were when Princess Alice Duchess of Gloucester consented to a special relationship with 5 Royal Anglian. She also accepted an invitation to attend the annual officers' cocktail party when the drill hall was transferred into a garden party. The other highlight was the presentation of Colours to all the Battalions in Tidworth in 1974.

Pat decided to retire early in 1977 and was selected as the deputy Secretary at





# Obituaries

Territorial Army and Volunteer Reserve Association in Chelmsford and then later took up the Secretary's post in 1986.

When I arrived in Colchester from Norway in the early 90's Pat was already the Secretary. Very early on he invited me to lunch at a Pub near Chelmsford to tell me about the TA and the work of his Association, which I greatly appreciated. The waitress who came to take our order was dressed in a pink shell suit with white shoes, and she had platinum blonde hair and lots of make-up. As she approached he nudged me in the ribs and said "You know you are in Essex now". I think it was his favourite pub.

There is no doubt that Pat really enjoyed his work at TAVRA and he was good at it too. I learnt a lot from him about the TA especially as I had not served with them before. Pat particularly enjoyed the opportunities for a bit of entrepreneurial wheeler dealing. He negotiated a deal with Sainsbury, of which he was particularly proud, whereby he sold them a plot of TAVRA land for sufficient money to build an excellent premises for Cambridge University OTC and a Royal Anglian TA Company as well. I am sure that if Pat had gone into business himself his energy, and negotiating skills would have made him a real success. Sadly the Civil Service has now recovered any such free-thinking activity and so no latter-day Pats can follow his lead.

While he was at Chelmsford Pat had an immense loyalty to the Suffolk Regiment Old Comrades, becoming the President of the Hemel Hempstead Branch and for many years playing an active part on the Council of the Suffolk Regiment. At the same time he maintained his links with the Royal Anglian Regiment when appointed an Honorary Colonel. He was also proud of being selected as a Deputy Lieutenant for the County of Essex.

He was regarded by his friends and comrades, without exception as a thoroughly nice man, who everyone liked. He had a great sense of humour, a fund of stories and was always positive and cheerful. He was a loyal, conscientious and brave officer who we will all miss.

On behalf of all who knew him in the Suffolk Regiment, the 1st East Anglian Regiment and the Royal Anglian Regiment, may I offer our sorrow, sympathy and condolences to his wife Gemma, to his daughter Jo and to his grandchildren Tiggy, Simon and Ben.

Pat Hopper's Obituary 24 January 2018

After a long illness Colonel Pat Hopper died on 22nd December. He had a military career that spanned 45 year's service to the Queen taking in operations in 4 different theatres, command of a Battalion and latterly providing a vital service to the Territorial Army.

Pat joined the Army straight from school, entering Sandhurst as one of the early post-war intakes in 1949. He was commissioned into 1 Suffolk in 1951 and went immediately to Malaya where the Battalion was employed in tackling the Communist bandits.

On 23rd May 1953 Pat was commanding a platoon of A Company 1 Suffolk when he was sent out to ambush a jungle track following information received. The ambush produced no results so the jungle nearby was searched revealing a newly constructed bandit shelter. Four bandits were then seen returning to the shelter, fire was opened and 3 were killed. Newspaper posters went up throughout the country exclaiming "The Suffolks Do It Again". Pat rightly received a Mention in Despatches for this operation. He was further honoured when he carried the one of the Battalion Colours at the farewell parade in Kuala Lumpur.

The thrill of active service in Malaya drew Pat to volunteer for the Parachute Regiment. After qualifying he served with 3rd Battalion the Parachute Regiment in Aldershot. In 1956, in the middle of his 2 year tour, he took part in the Suez operation, dropping on to the El Gamil airfield. The operation was short lived but Pat recalled wading through sewage with his company while chasing elements of the Egyptian army.

In 1957 he left the Parachute Regiment and returned to 1 Suffolk initially as the Signals Officer and later Adjutant, again on operations, this time in Cyprus. He had much to do with the Intelligence Section which had among its number one Martin Bell. Cpl Bell had the temerity to correct the grammar of one of Pat's signals. On seeing that his text had been altered Pat called Cpl Bell in and said "The trouble with you Cpl Bell is that you think too much". Perhaps Pat would not have been so dismissive if he had known that 60 years later Martin Bell would win Celebrity Mastermind. This incident is referred to in Martin Bell's recent book in which he says that Pat was "an able but slightly raffish officer – a man of deeds rather than words and not the least bit interested in grammar".

While he was with 1 Suffolk Pat showed that he was a fine Regimental athlete, excelling at both Hockey, Rugby and Football as well as representing the Battalion at Cross Country running and pistol shooting. He was in the team that won the Far East Land Forces Major Unit Hockey Championship. This led to an Army trial for hockey. Later in life he took up golf which he thoroughly enjoyed until an old back injury from parachuting forced him to give up.

Pat, on becoming Adjutant, was regarded as a hard taskmaster, especially by his Assistant Adjutant Charles Barnes, who on one occasion, when orderly officer, was given a lift to the camp cinema by Pat. On arrival Charles found that he had left his hat behind and was therefore improperly dressed. When he told Pat this, Charles expected a lift back to collect his hat, but instead was told to report to his office the next morning to receive an extra duty. I think Charles only recently forgave him.

While in Cyprus he met and later married Gemma, thus breaking the hearts of many of the other young and not so young officers. Gemma has been a wonderful Army wife, supporting Pat in his various postings around the world, especially when he later commanded 5 Royal Anglian in Peterborough.

From the excitement of Cyprus the Battalion returned to Shorncliffe in preparation for the amalgamation with 1 Royal Norfolk in Iserlohn later that year. Pat was posted to HQ 4 Division in Herford as a staff captain, so he missed the ceremonies associated with amalgamation.

Two years later he was back with the Battalion in Harwich, again as Adjutant. It was clear that various CO's recognised that, with Pat as Adjutant, the day to day management of the Battalion was in firm and sensible hands. Patrick Stone recalls that when he arrived back in the Battalion he was unaware of the post –amalgamation tensions between old Norfolks and Suffolks that were still evident.

The infamous Arthur Campbell was the CO and Pat was the Adjutant, to whom Patrick reported on his first day. After a brusque "how do you do", Pat marched him in to meet the CO. On emerging from the CO's office, Pat looked at him hard and said, "Norfolk or Suffolk?" Not thinking Patrick said, "either, it really doesn't bother me". "Well it jolly well bothers the rest of us!" said Pat – "now clear off



and join your company.”

The Battalion was then deployed to British Guiana for an emergency tour. The stories of their time are legion. After they had been in George Town a few days, Patrick Stone was summoned to see the CO, who informed him that he was the only officer in the Battalion with any colonial experience and did he know anything about controlling civil disobedience? On saying that he did have some experience he was told to get on and get the Battalion trained by the following day! As Patrick left the CO's office, Pat whispered in his ear, “Battalion HQ is far too busy for any of this ruddy nonsense, so leave us out of it!”

For the next 10 years Pat spent most of it on the staff in a variety of postings – Shrewsbury, Herford again and Basingbourn. But there were some returns to Regimental duty, in Singapore as a loan officer and back to 1 Royal Anglian in Catterick as second in command. But no doubt the pinnacle of his career came in 1973 when he was selected to command 5 Royal Anglian in Peterborough. The highlights of his time in command were when Princess Alice Duchess of Gloucester consented to a special relationship with 5 Royal Anglian. She also accepted an invitation to attend the annual officers' cocktail party when the drill hall was transferred into a garden party. The other highlight was the presentation of Colours to all the Battalions in Tidworth in 1974.

Pat decided to retire early in 1977 and was selected as the deputy Secretary at Territorial Army and Volunteer Reserve Association in Chelmsford and then later took up the Secretary's post in 1986.

When I arrived in Colchester from Norway in the early 90's Pat was already the Secretary. Very early on he invited me to lunch at a Pub near Chelmsford to tell me about the TA and the work of his Association, which I greatly appreciated. The waitress who came to take our order was dressed in a pink shell suit with white shoes, and she had platinum blonde hair and lots of make-up. As she approached he nudged me in the ribs and said “You know you are in Essex now”. I think it was his favourite pub.

There is no doubt that Pat really enjoyed his work at TAVRA and he was good at it too. I learnt a lot from him about the TA especially as I had not served with them before. Pat particularly enjoyed the opportunities for a bit of entrepreneurial

wheeler dealing. He negotiated a deal with Sainsbury, of which he was particularly proud, whereby he sold them a plot of TAVRA land for sufficient money to build an excellent premises for Cambridge University OTC and a Royal Anglian TA Company as well. I am sure that if Pat had gone into business himself his energy, and negotiating skills would have made him a real success. Sadly the Civil Service has now recovered any such free-thinking activity and so no latter-day Pats can follow his lead.

While he was at Chelmsford Pat had an immense loyalty to the Suffolk Regiment Old Comrades, becoming the President of the Hemel Hempstead Branch and for many years playing an active part on the Council of the Suffolk Regiment. At the same time he maintained his links with the Royal Anglian Regiment when appointed an Honorary Colonel. He was also proud of being selected as a Deputy Lieutenant for the County of Essex.

He was regarded by his friends and comrades, without exception as a thoroughly nice man, who everyone liked. He had a great sense of humour, a fund of stories and was always positive and cheerful. He was a loyal, conscientious and brave officer who we will all miss.

On behalf of all who knew him in the Suffolk Regiment, the 1st East Anglian Regiment and the Royal Anglian Regiment, may I offer our sorrow, sympathy and condolences to his wife Gemma, to his daughter Jo and to his grandchildren Tiggy, Simon and Ben.

## **Major RAB (Ron) Rogers**

This obituary is taken from the eulogy given at his Service of Thanksgiving by Archdeacon Jonathan Smith and Ron's record of service, together with some personal reminiscences.

Ron Rogers was born in Bedford in 1917. He spent his early years in a pretty idyllic and carefree childhood. An only child, and a lively and energetic one at that, Ron loved the outdoor life, especially camping and swimming. Sport of many kinds was integral to his life, but rugby union was his main occupation and interest throughout his life.

Blessed with a keen intelligence, Ron won a scholarship to Bedford School. In the classroom maths was his forte but it was on the games field where he excelled, especially in rugby, but also in cricket,



running, swimming and diving.

He chose the profession of accountancy but had not had much chance of making an impact before the war broke out. He had joined 5th Battalion Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment in March 1939, and remained there until January 1940 when he was sent for officer training at Sandhurst. After commissioning he was posted in May to 1 Suffolk at Cucklington in Somerset, joining those from the Battalion evacuated from Dunkirk and hundreds of newly trained recruits. Thus began a precious and deeply held association for Ron which was to last for nearly eighty years.

He commanded 10 Platoon B Company for about a year before another year as Signals Officer. After a short stint at the 3rd Division Battle School at Moffat Ron was sent back to 1 Suffolk as 2ic A Company under Captain Geoffrey Ryley, a man he admired tremendously for his leadership and courage. Ron landed on D Day on Sword Beach with the other company seconds in command behind the rest of the Battalion, so that they could bring forward reinforcements. A Company led the assault on the Hillman bunker, suffering several casualties including Captain Ryley who was killed. Ron arrived at Hillman the next morning to be greeted with the astonishing sight of the Germans emerging from the bunker,





# Obituaries

some of whom were carrying their luggage and briefcases.

Ron remained with A Coy, now commanded by Captain Prescott, and was involved in the battle for the Chateau de la Londe. However in August 1944 he was wounded at the battle of Tinchebray and was evacuated to the UK. After recovering Ron re-joined the Battalion in January 1945 at Wanssum, returning to A Company under the command of Major Hugh Merriam.

In April he was given command of A Company after the attack on Brinkum taking them through the rest of Germany and ending up at Bremen. Ron remained in occupied Germany until October when he was posted to 5th Battalion Durham Light Infantry until March 1946 when he was demobilised. He was awarded a Mention in Despatches during his time with 1 Suffolk.

In 1942, Ron met and married a young lady who was studying at the Froebel College in Bedford training to be a teacher and in 1944 they had a daughter. A son followed in 1948, completing the family. Ron worked initially in a market gardening partnership, then as an accountant in for Kennings Motor Company, for Joseph Ranks Flour millers, and for Remington Typewriters. In 1951 the family moved to Harrold in Bedfordshire beginning a 66 year long association for Ron. He had a ten acre small holding, with a breeding herd of landrace pigs, geese and chickens, and also grew fruit and vegetables, and Ron discovered that he was, at heart, a rural man.

He then became a director of WH Adams & Co Insurance Brokers for the remainder of his working life.

He absorbed village life in all its aspects; churchwarden, cricket, but now adding tennis and snooker, and then becoming a founder member of Bridgman Bowling Club. Fishing also became a passion of his and the skills needed - preparation, patience and perseverance - were perfectly matched to his character.

Reunions with the Suffolk Regiment became occasions of much importance to Ron and the award of the Legion D' Honneur was a source of great pride to him.

Ron was a remarkable human being with many gracious virtues. He elicited warmth and affection from people without really trying. He cherished the concept of serving others, whether military or civilian, and he had a profound belief

## Major Julian Pollard



Jules joined the Regiment and the 1st Battalion in 1979 from Rugby School and from a Regimental family. His leave from Sandhurst was shortened, and he sped to Germany, to be dined in on the same occasion as

his father, the Commanding Officer, was dined out.

Jules was often known in the Regiment as Polaris, a good nick name, comforting to have on your side, but to be deployed with great care. An irrepressible personality, with an ungovernable joie de vivre, if Jules was there, the day and the duty was going to be great fun – and probably very noisy as well.

His brilliance with people was a part of his success as a young officer. He was passionate about his soldiers, and loved soldiering, and soldiering with them. He served with the Regiment and the Army for almost 15 years. Initially as a rifle platoon commander in C Company in Celle, then in Northern Ireland and in Belize, where latterly he was 2IC of B Company. He was then an instructor at Depot Queen's Division before returning to the 1st Battalion in Londonderry as B Company's Operations Officer, and later as the Battalion Operations Officer. He was Adjutant of the 7th Battalion in Leicester. His appointment on the staff was as SO3 Intelligence in HQ 19 Infantry Brigade in Colchester. Returning to the 1st Battalion in 1993 he was OC C Company and OC HQ Company before retiring in 1994.

Jules was everything a great young Officer should be – and his soldiers adored him for it. There was a job to be done well, and he always did it well, but there was also fun to be had, and everybody got a share of the noisy fallout – whether they wanted it or not.

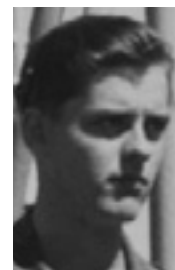
He was a remarkable all round sportsman and fine shot. Rugby, Athletics and sometimes Cricket. He took his rugby seriously and loved it. He led Regimental Rugby, playing for the Infantry and led the Depot's Rugby side to become the Minor Unit Army Champions – no mean achievement. While Adjutant he played

for Stoneygate RFC, reaching the final of the Leicestershire inter-club competition, playing at Leicester Tigers' ground at Welford Road. Jules was probably the best the Rugby player the Regiment had since 2Lt Colin Simpson of the 1st Bn who played for England.

Regimental life was a deal quieter and a lot less fun after Jules left. In civilian life he worked for the Iceland retail Company, and jointly ran the Trampled Underfoot trampoline company. In 2012 he cofounded Scarlett and Mustard. Jules was happiest surrounded by his beloved family, and many, many friends. At the party after the Service of Thanksgiving for Jules's life, Sandy produced a limited edition Scarlet and Mustard product line, pots of Colonel Mustard's Honey Mustard, and on the back label were listed: Ingredients kindness, generosity, passion, humour, loyalty, love, impatience, enthusiasm, laughter, decency, noise, romance. Allergens The EU, beetroot, goat's cheese, boats, snobbiness, technology, left wing cakes, bureaucracy, pettiness, public transport, health and safety.

RCJG

## Private Peter Todd



It is with great sadness that I announce the passing of Peter Todd. Peter passed away in Ipswich hospital at 1645hrs on 3rd August aged 84, surrounded by his wife and family. The Funeral took place

at Seven Hills Crematorium, on Friday, August 25. There was a guard of Honour, three Standards and Mr Phil Hubert Sounded Last Post.

Peter was called for National service in 1952. After his basic training at Blenheim Camp, Bury St. Edmunds, he joined the 1st Battalion in Malaya being posted to 6 Platoon, 'B' Company, known as the "Kangaroo's" – in honour of the Australian heritage of the Commanding Officer. Shortly before the Battalion returned home in January 1953, Peter transferred to HQ Company and remained with them when the Battalion went to Trieste later that year. In the time in between, he took part in the Freedom Parades given in honour of the Regiment in Bury St Edmunds, Sudbury and Ipswich.



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Local men of the towns were placed in the front rank when inspected by the Mayor. After Peter's demob he worked for the railway on telegraph and communications.

Peter was a loyal and long-serving member of the Felixstowe Branch Old Comrades Association and a committee member for many years. He and his family always attended the meetings and numerous functions. He also kept in regular contact with his former comrades and life time friends in 6 Platoon; Ron Norton, Ron Newlands, Dick May, John Blench and Sid Brace and they returned several times to Malaya to revisit the places where they had served.

Peter was very much a family man, very quiet and modest. Peter will be greatly missed by us all in the association and all who knew him. Rest in Peace. Our prayers and thought are with all the family.

**Barry Grunnell**  
**Chairman Felixstowe Branch**

## **Major Richard George Wilson MBE**

Richard Wilson, who died in early August 2016, served in the Suffolk, East Anglian and Royal Anglian Regiments from his commissioning in 1952, until his retirement from the Army in 1977. During this time, which was one of recession from Empire and of Cold War - with progressive reductions in the size of the Army and amalgamations of regiments

- he saw a wide variety of service. This included service in Malaya (Emergency), Trieste (Occupation), Berlin (Cold War), Aden, twice, (Emergency), and Libya (Occupation).

Then there periods when he was stationed in England. Notably there were times spent in Suffolk, such as the period at the start of the 1960's when he was the adjutant at the Suffolk Regiment Depot at Bury St Edmunds. Here he could indulge his great love of National Racing and of the Point to Point scene in East Anglia. It was this scenario that was to lead to his shared enthusiasm for racing with Rachel Bagnell, to whom he married in 1964.

Richard was essentially a very good regimental officer in both regular and territorial units, and was loved and respected as such. He was, unusually, adjutant to no less than three different commanding officers, and saw service as both platoon and company commander on four emergency tours - in Malaya, Cyprus and Aden.

It was his qualities of trustworthiness, reliability and steady responsibility that led to his substantial contribution to the local community around his home near Shoreham in Norfolk during the years after he retired, and right up to his death forty years later. This included twenty eight years as Divisional Secretary and Case Officer for SSAFA, covering the Attleborough and Thetford areas. An estimated eight hundred families helped,

and rewarded by a richly deserved award of the MBE in 2005.

He combined this with twenty years involvement with the Great Hockham Parish Council as Chair, Clerk and Councillor. Next, and of special importance to Richard, his fourteen years happy engagement with The Western Front Association - and notably with the Norwich and Waveney branch. In tandem with Richard's involvement with The Western Front Association was his steady support for the Royal British Legion over all the years after he retired from the Army. Then, finally in this wide ranging record of service in the community, there was his role as a Governor of Riddlesworth Hall School and his continuing support for Greta Hockham Primary School.

Balancing Richard's service to the local community there was, to an increasing degree in the 1990s, his involvement in the National Hunt Racing and Point to Point circuit around the country.

This, in turn, developed into an interest in and active participation with his wife Rachel in the breeding of racing bloodstock. Hockham Lodge Stud becoming the project that still goes on and has had treasured success.

Richard had a rich and enjoyable life of service and commitment to the Army and to East Anglian life. He is survived by his wife Rachel, and his three children, Patrick, Rupert and Lucy.





ACF



# Cambridgeshire ACF

Eight Senior Cadets from Cambridgeshire ACF joined other County Teams for an actioned packed training weekend on STANTA run by the 3rd Battalion.

The aim of the weekend was to provide Cadets with the opportunity to engage and interact with Reserve Soldiers and gain an insight into weapons systems, kit and equipment used by the Army.

The weekend included: Sections Attacks; 81mm Mortar; GPMG Command task/obstacle course; Navigation; Signals; Pistols.

County Commandants were also invited to attend a briefing by the new 3rd Battalion Commanding Officer Lt Col Matt Woodeson before visiting cadets in the field.

Thanks to CSM Downing and SSI Williams for their support to this weekend and providing the pictures.

Colonel Mark Knight MBE, Commandant said "It was a great weekend for our Senior Cadets and gave them valuable insight into the working with the Reserves."

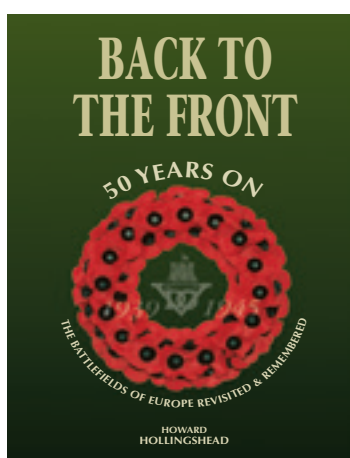






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# Regimental Association

The Regiment's Association continues to evolve as our forebear Regiment's associations become less active, and as an increasing proportion of Regimental/Association business is conducted less formally and by use of email, on the Regiment's website and by social media. The Regiment and the Association are increasingly perceived as, and increasingly run as a single entity - the Regimental Family.

The majority of Regimental/Association events are open to all

members of the Regimental Association, and for the majority of events there is no charge for attending. The aim is to have an annual Regimental/Association programme including those events shown below.

Also the County Colonels and County Committees supported by Area Secretaries run events in each County, typically, annual: Services, All Ranks Lunch/Tea/Dinners and Offrs'

Date	Event	Attendance	Remarks
First Sunday of Each month	Chapel Service at Regt Chapel Warley - light refreshments	All	No charge
Last Saturday in April	Band Concert	All	In aid of Regt Benevolence
May	WOs and Sgts Mess P&P Dinner	All WOs and Sgts	Charge to those attending
Early June	Pilgrimage/Battlefield Tour	All	Charge to those attending
Mid June	Regt Representative Event and Beating Retreat	By invitation	No charge
First Sunday in September	Regt Day at Duxford Drumhead Service and Beating Retreat	All	No Charge
Sunday in late September	Regt Chapel Service at RHC Light lunch	All	No charge
First Friday in November	Officers Club Dinner	All Officers	Charge to those attending
Thursday before Remembrance Day	Opening of Field of Remembrance Light lunch	All	No charge
Remembrance Sunday	Regimental Remembrance Service at Regt Memorial Light refreshments in museum	All	No charge
Regt Carol Service for Beenevolent Charity	At one of our Regt Chapels Light refreshments	All	No charge Collection in aid of Regt Benevolence





## The Royal Anglian Regiment Association (Norfolk)

Malcolm is a founder member and staunch supporter of the Branch which was established in 2011. He lives in Brandon, Suffolk, and is employed by Landmarc at West Tofts Camp (STANTA).

He enlisted in Norwich on 4th May 1970 aged 15 and joined Junior Soldiers Company, Depot Queens Division, Basingbourn the next day. There were 90 Junior Recruits in his intake including our Branch Treasurer Alf Todd.

He trained as a cornet player in the Queens Division Junior Band and was posted to The Poachers stationed at Oxford Barracks Munster in 1972.

In 1973 he attended the Pupils Course at The Royal Military School of Music, Kneller Hall, returning to The Poachers in 1974.

As a member of The Poachers Band Malcolm served and performed in Austria, Barbados, Belgium, Berlin, Cyprus, Denmark, France, Gibraltar, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Northern Ireland, Saudi Arabia, Switzerland, USA, West Germany and of course throughout our home counties on many Freedom Ceremonies.

In 1990 he was mobilised with the Band and attached to 5 Armoured Field Ambulance based in Munster before deploying with them on Op GRANBY.

In 1994 he was with the Band, when it gave its last public performance, which took place in the Stadt Halle Braunschweig, Germany.

Poachers Bandmasters during his service were Peter O'Connell, Gordon (Joe) Joseph, Dave McCrum and Chris Shearer.

Having completed 22 years with the Colours Malcolm was discharged through the 5th Battalion.

He is a Member of both Lincoln and Dereham Branches of the Regimental Association and is also Membership Secretary and Club President of Brandon RBL.

The photo depicts Malcolm at the height of his career.



The Branch meets every two months. Point of contact is Dave Whitehead 01362 694787.



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The Army Golf Association Magazine







# Regimental Association

## The Royal Anglian Regiment Association (Lincolnshire)



**Chairman of The Grimsby Branch at The Sovereign's Ball Held at Sobraon Barracks on 24th June 2017.**

The Branch has had another successful year, in which membership has increased. It has also held two successful Lunches, and has sent representatives to the Spalding and Lincoln Armed Forces Days, and also while at Lincoln the Chairman and Vice Chairman with their partners and two other members of the Branch attended the Sovereign's Ball held at Sobraon Barracks

in June. The Branch has had two enjoyable outings this year to Leeds Armouries, and to the Birmingham Tattoo, both well supported by Branch Members.

The Branch has also laid on two informal Tapas nights at the No1 Public House on Cleethorpes Station run by friend and former Poacher, David Snook, both well supported.





**Above left: Presentation of Life Membership Awards to Mr Tony Bradwell and Mr Joseph Robinson, by Grimsby Branch Chairman Mr Allan Carlile.**



**Above: Guests Enjoying The Great Grimsby Branch Sobraon Lunch.**

**Left: Pelham Suite where The Grimsby Branch held their Sobraon Lunch.**



**Grimsby Armed Forces Day.**





# Regimental Association

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Members of Lincoln and Grimsby Branches at Lincoln Armed Forces Day.



Members of The Spalding, Grimsby and Lincoln Branches at Spalding Armed Forces Day.



# The Royal Anglian Regiment Association (Suffolk)

## Minden Day 2017

This year's Minden Day reunion took place at the former Gibraltar Barracks, Bury St Edmunds on Sunday 30 July 2017. The day began with a Drum Head Service, conducted by the Honorary Regimental Chaplain, Father Ken Reeve, at 11.15am. Following the service there was a parade during which veterans of both The Royal Anglian Regiment and The Suffolk Regiment marched onto the former Depot Square (now the car park of West Suffolk College).

The parade formed and marched under the eagle eye of KC Jones. The parade was ably supported by The Band of The Royal Anglian Regiment who struck up the Regimental March whilst the Colours of 1st Battalion (The Vikings) were marched on. The salute was taken by the Mayor of St Edmundsbury, Cllr Terry Clement and the President of The Suffolk Regiment Association Brigadier Tony Calder OBE DL.

There was the usual stands and displays including some historic vehicles and additional musical accompaniment by The Ely Military Band. The Suffolk Regiment Museum was open for the day, and Minden Roses were on sale, as were Suffolk Regimental Souvenirs in the Museum shop tent. As usual, the refreshment area became a focus of many reunions.

## Felixstowe

The Felixstowe branch continues to thrive and we have had some very good functions and outings over the past year. As usual our Tinsel and Turkey 5 day break was excellent. We went to Llandudno. I remember going there as a child and it brought back many good memories. We welcomed other branch members from Stowmarket and Ipswich to join us to bump up the numbers. This year we will be going to Bournemouth. Our members also enjoyed a trip to the pantomime ('Oh yes we did'!) to see Alice in Wonderland. This was in memory of Len Faiers as his son in law was the "dame"

The Christmas Dinner was a great success with over 60 Comrades sat for our usual 6 course meal in the Brook Hotel. We have used this hotel for years and have a very good relationship with the owner and Manager. They are very good to our Association. We were entertained by a solo performer "Shane Baxendale" who sings music from the Elvis repertoire. He doesn't dress like him but he was excellent. After the Dinner it was my pleasure to present the French Legion of Honour to Mr Basil Harper one of our Members. As the Medal was sent through the post, I thought it should be presented to him to make it more special. The Christmas dinner was the perfect time.

We are very fortunate in Felixstowe to have a community building on the promenade that can be hired for the day. Each year we have a day there with either a barbeque or buffet. This year it was a glorious sunny day with lots of people up and down the promenade watching us old codgers having a great time. So many people come into the compound to order food and drink. It is such a shame that I have to tell them it's a private function. I could make a fortune for the OCA but the council would not like it. I have to chuckle.

Today as it happens we have the Norwegian Defence Attaché visiting Felixstowe to present the Norway Participation Medallion



Mr Harper showing his awards.



Felixstowe chairman Mr Barry Grunnell presenting Mr Basil Harper with his Legion d'Honneur.





# Regimental Association



**Mr Harper with his wife Renee.**

to 93 year old Basil Harper. I would recommend that if you have any of your members that are eligible for this medal to get it. It is very simple and the Norwegian people are searching for soldiers that took part. In the first instance email [jensingeegeland@gmail.com](mailto:jensingeegeland@gmail.com). If you have a certificate which was given to all, attach a copy of it. This will really speed the process.



**Mr Harper with the Norwegian defence attache John Andreas Olsen.**

## Suffolk



**LCpl Barford being presented with the Fairclough award for the best Soldier in B (Suffolk) Company by Lt Col Dixon on behalf of the Trustees of the Suffolk Regiment Association United Charities'.**

## Minden Day 2017

This year's Minden Day reunion took place at the former Gibraltar Barracks, Bury St Edmunds on Sunday 30 July 2017. The day began with a Drum Head Service, conducted by the



**Veterans on parade.**



*(Pictures courtesy Bury Free Press/Antony Kelly)*



#### **The Vikings Colours on Parade.**

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#### **Parade Salute.**





# Regimental Association

## Cpl Sidney Day VC 100th Anniversary Memorial Paving

A ceremony took place on 26 August 2017 at 11am on St Peter's Street, Norwich in front of the Norwich War Memorial. It was an unveiling of a Victoria Cross paving stone to commemorate Corporal Sidney Day VC of The Suffolk Regiment. Regimental attendance was led by Brigadier Tony Calder OBE DL, a former Royal Anglian Regiment senior officer, (Chairman of The Suffolk Regiment Association). In addition a uniformed party from our 3rd Battalion (The Steelbacks) led by Major Gavin Rushmore. There were, additionally, members of the Friends of the Suffolk Regiment present.



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## The Royal Anglian Regiment Association (Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire)

There has been a lot going on in the Bedford Branch since the last edition of the Castle and the Branch continues to go from strength to strength in relation to membership numbers and Branch Trips.

In November 2016 we held our Annual Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire Regiment Remembrance & Reunion parade at the Keep in Kempston where over 200 people attended the event. Later in November there was a trip to see the Birmingham Tattoo then in December, the Branch enjoyed its Christmas Lunch with

over 50 people in attendance at the Keep.

Amongst other trips, members from our Branch enjoyed visit's to the Major Generals Review and a tour around the Houses of Parliament and were able to see, first hand, how the debates took place in both, the House of Commons and the House of Lords. The Rt. Hon Alistair Burt MP was our escort for that evening.

This July saw a group from our Branch undertake a Battlefield Tour in Ypres (see following report) which was organized by



Bedford Modern School CCF.



Band of 7 RIFLES play outside the Keep during the Remembrance Service.





# Regimental Association



## Bedford Branch Article - Remembrance Reunion Parade Old Comrades.

our member, Terry McHugh and there may be a possibility of another European Tour next year.

The Branch celebrated Blenheim Day on 13th August with a service at the Church of Transfiguration in Kempston followed by lunch at the Keep. This is our Battle Honour and a date that must never be forgotten.



## Bedford Branch Remembrance Reunion Parade 2nd Battalion Wreath.



## Bedford Branch Tour of Parliament.

In September, with banner in situ, Bedford Branch Members enjoyed a most enjoyable day in Duxford to attend the Regimental Reunion with all, in step, marching past.

The Branch committee are, at the time of writing, hard at it, organizing the Remembrance and Reunion parade for 19th November 2017 at the Keep in Kempston where unfortunately, we will no longer have the use of the Army Reserve Centre which will obviously have a knock-on effect due to there being no car parking available in the Keep for those from afar who wish to attend this event. It is also unfortunately anticipated that this might be the last time the event takes place in November but with more emphasis being placed on Blenheim Day in August to hold the reunion, and in much finer weather, then on 3rd December, the



## Gordon Kinns thanks the Rt Hon Alistair Burt MP.





### **Blenheim Day Service.**

Branch will be holding its Christmas Lunch at the Keep which is always a very enjoyable event and finally In March 2018, the Branch will hold its Annual General Meeting at which the new committee will be elected.

TI have the sad duty to advise that the following Bedford Branch Area comrades have passed away since the last edition of the Castle Journal: - Major John Standring; WO2 Reg Green; Mick Hunt; Michael Harley.

For Associations to continue to thrive and survive, it is essential that they are not considered as forums only for retired or ex members of the Regiments that they represent hence this offer to all Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire based serving soldiers in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the Royal Anglian Regiment to consider the very small annual fee of £10.00 as a valuable contribution to an Association that you would want to remain in place when you eventually leave the services but want to continue to be part of the wider family.

Please Contact; Basil Hirniak. Bedford Branch Secretary, Email: royalanglianassociationbedford@aol.co.uk. Tel: (M) 07950 341340.

## **Battlefield Tour 2017**

*Terry McHugh*

To celebrate and remember the fallen from the Bedfordshire Regiment in the Great War [1914-1919] it was decided that branch

members would undertake a battlefield tour in July 2017. The tour was undertaken by the following branch members & guests -

Terry McHugh - Tour Lead, Brian Soper, Pete Willars, Brian Sutton, Gordon Kinns, Clive Homan, Chris Ashworth, Kevin and Belinda Arnold, Nick and John Mackay, Jeff Henman, Gavin Conder, Graham and Robin Taylor, Kevin McHugh - Royal Signals and Lawrence Jarvis - Royal Signals

The 4 day tour was provided by Leger, from Friday 21 July to Monday 24 July and this included 2 days travel and 2 full days touring battlefield sites in and around the town of Ypres, Belgium.

Day 1 - The branch members duly arrived at Bedford train station for the coach departure to Ashford and eventually onto Dover, the team were in high spirits looking forward to the trip. The coach arrived [new 2017 plate] and after all boarded we set off for the coach changeover point near Ashford [stop 24], this was the place where all tour members disembarked to allow the staff to changeover over people from their feeder coaches onto their respective "tour" coaches. At this point we were introduced to our crew for the trip and our tour guide "Tim" who joined us for the trip. Following this brief stop we set off again for the port of Dover, this time the coach was full of like-minded people who had an interest in WW1 battlefields. The ferry crossing was uneventful with the highlight being Brian Soper getting his wallet out of retirement to get the beers in!! The trip from Calais was smooth with the party arriving at our hotel «Novotel Ypres» 5 mins walk from the Menin Gate around 7pm local time. The rest of the evening was spent visiting the local bars to ensure that the local brew was on top form [which it was]. The highlight of the evening was some of the tour meeting a group of male voice choir folks who were invited to sing at the Last Post ceremony the following night.

Day 2 - Following an excellent breakfast we set off for our first day of visits. In the morning, we took a brief stroll to the Menin Gate itself for an excellent briefing from Tim on the war itself and the impact on areas local to us and the people, we then set off for a visit to the Flanders Field museum which was a very interesting and interactive place. After re-joining the coach near the Menin Gate we moved off through "Hellfire Corner" so called as it was a place of focus for the German guns trying to take the town of Ypres. We arrived at the Hooze Café and Cemetery, we stopped for lunch here and visited the cemetery over the road, the view down the hill to Hellfire Corner and Ypres was an indication of



### **Blenheim Day Lunch.**



### **Secretary ,Vice Chairman and Chairman after Lunch.**





# Regimental Association



## Duxford March Past.

the need to take and hold the high ground.

After lunch, we moved off to our main focal point of the day "Tyne Cot", the largest CWWG cemetery in the world, it was at this point we placed our first wreath at the memorial to the Bedfordshire Regiment the Bedfordshire Regimental Prayer was said by Gordon Kinns with all members proudly displaying the new Branch Banner. The next stop we visited the German cemetery/bunker at Langemark, very impressive, we were shown a picture of Hitler visiting the place in WW2. Following

that we then newly discovered trench system in a large factory complex, this was called the "Yorkshire Trench" after the regiment who served there, and the tunnel complex system was shown using marker paths on the ground.

That evening we visited the Menin Gate for the Last Post ceremony, this is carried out every day and has been since the end of WW1, the local Fire Brigade carry this out on behalf of the town of Ypres, the second wreath was placed at the Bedfordshire Regiment wall at the upper end of the gate, the Regimental Prayer of the Royal Anglian Regiment was said by Kevin Arnold. It was at this ceremony that we heard the wonderful voices of the Welsh Male Voice choir singing the song "Bring Him Home" very emotional indeed.

Day 3 - Again following an excellent breakfast we moved off to our first stop of the day, Hill 60, a very impressive site, it is a World War 1 battlefield memorial site and park in the Zwarteleen area of Zillebeke south of Ypres. It is located about 4.6 kilometres (2.9 mi) from the centre of Ypres and directly on the railway line to Comines. The site comprises two areas of raised land separated by the railway line; the northern area was known by soldiers as Hill 60 while the southern part was known as The Caterpillar. It was here that Gordon Kinns paced out the distance between the respective lines of defence which was only 124 meters. It was also from here that the British initiated an attack on German lines by setting off 3 mines.

lunch was taken at the excellent museum and preserved



## Bedford Branch at Duxford.





### Bedford Branch Battlefield Tour Tyne Cot.

trenches at The Memorial Museum Passchendaele 1917 in Zonnebeke, this is a Belgian museum devoted to the 1917 Battle of Passchendaele (also known as the Third Battle of Ypres), where in 1917 in only 100 days, almost 500,000 men were killed for only eight kilometres gain of ground. The museum is housed in the historic château grounds of Zonnebeke and focuses on the material aspects of WW1. Lunch was in the upstairs dining area and was substantial with impeccable service. Some of resumed the motion as it were by having a cheeky second beer in the sunshine in the beer garden

We then moved off to the memorial to Harry Patch, the oldest survivor of WW1 [died aged 111 on 25 July 2009, he was the longest surviving combat soldier of World War I, but he was the fifth longest surviving veteran of any sort from World War I, it was at this memorial site at dawn, on 16 August 1917, the 7th Battalion, Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, 20th (Light) Division, crossed the Steenbeek prior to their successful assault on the village on Langemark. This stone was erected to the

memory of fallen comrades, and to honour the courage, sacrifice and passing of the Great War generation. It was a gift of former Private and Lewis Gunner Harry Patch, No. 29295, C Company, 7th DCLI, the last surviving veteran to have served in the trenches of the Western Front

We made a brief stop at the large mine crater called the Pool of Peace or the Spanbroekmolen crater, another brief stop was made at smaller mine crater on the private land was called the St Eloi crater. We stopped again at modest but excellently designed memorial called The Ploegsteert Memorial to the Missing, this is one of several CWGC Memorials to the Missing along the Western Front: those lost within the Ypres Salient are commemorated at the Menin Gate and Tyne Cot Memorial to the Missing, it was here that our third wreath was placed at the foot of the panel remembering the Bedfordshire Regiment fallen, the Regimental Prayer was said by Gordon Kinns.

Our next stop was the German trench on the Messines ridge was called Bayernwald Trench and apparently Hitler served here as a company runner earning the Iron Cross and returned to the area in 1940 at the same time as he visited Langemark. Moving on we visited the site of the Christmas Truce [well one of them] it was here that a football kick about was noted to have happened, much to the consternation of the senior officers!!

Our final visit of the tour was to a small cemetery at Kemmel Chateau Cemetery, it was here that we found a grave of a Bedfordshire officer named Acting Captain L.A.L Fink of the 2nd Bn, we placed our final wreath which was made out to all ranks of the regiment with the Regimental prayer of the Royal Anglian Regiment being read out by Kevin Arnold.

Day 4 - We made our weary way to Calais via the local shopping centre, another crossing made mostly inside the bar, we said our farewells to the tour guide Ian and made our way back to Bedford via Dover and the wonders of the UK motorways.

All in all, a thought provoking and very interesting trip which by all accounts was enjoyed by all.



### Bedford Branch Battlefield Tour Kemmel Cemetery.





# Regimental Association

## The Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire Regiment Museum, Wardown Park, Luton

In the 2016 edition of the "Castle" it mentioned our gallery was being relocated. This has now taken place and we are now to be found at first floor level.

The relocation gave us the opportunity to refresh our exhibits and to include additional areas of our Regiment's history.

We had the benefit of using the main museum's design staff, which in reality turned out to be a mixed blessing. The initial design was incoherent and unacceptable. One of our team, a retired architect, worked with the design team and eventually after some eight or nine schemes, agreed a suitable layout.

The actual instillation itself was under the leadership of our chairman John Maddex very much led by Helen Close our Curatorial Advisor supported by our Trustees.

As mentioned earlier, our gallery, now at first floor level, is approached by a rather grand staircase or for the less able by a new passenger lift.

Above the entrance is a railway footplate which reads "Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment" which for us old soldiers, reminds us of our return from the Suez Canal Zone in 1955. We disembarked from the troop-ship MV Georgic and were met by the aforementioned train to take us to our new posting.

On entering our gallery, the first thing to catch one's eye is a full sized figure of an early eighteenth century soldier resplendent in his scarlet uniform of the period.

Nearby is a case of Regimental silver which is quite eye-catching if a little ostentatious.

Next is a showcase illustrating the Victorian years which includes a figure of a soldier resplendent in red, and items of the period.

Nearby, a cabinet features general memorabilia of interest including a 1704 Flintlock horse pistol, a cannon ball, officers dress epaulettes etc.

Wardown Park was used as a Nursing Home during the first world war – so the tableau of a nurse and soldier is very appropriate.

The next two cabinets feature the first and second world wars



respectively. Children are fascinated by the second world war cabinet in particular as it includes guns and swords!

A national service figure reminds a few surviving ex-serving N.S. soldiers of their service in the regiment in the 1950s.

Of particular note are two oil paintings by the well-known artist Terrence Cuneo entitled "Crossing the Indaw Chaung Burma 1944" and "The Battle for Monte Cassino Italy 1944". Children are challenged to find the hidden "mice" which was the trademark of Cuneo's painting.

The regiment is proud to have had some 5 members awarded the Victorian cross for valour and these are on display in a secure cabinet by rotation. The one presently on display is that awarded to Capt. Charles Calveley Foss VC, CB, DSO, DI.

A new cabinet of drawers featuring a selection of medals awarded to Bedfordshire on top of this cabinet are shown the array of medals awarded to the Duberly family including :- Lt Col Arthur Grey Duberly, Ida May Duberly OBE, Major Montague Richard William Duberly, Lady Eileen Duberly, Captain James Duberly, Arthur Grey Duberly, Capt. Vernon Conrad Duberly ~ quite an exceptional family.

The foregoing is but a brief outline of our gallery; a visit is very worthwhile and if you are able to visit on a Wednesday meeting 10:00am-12:00 ex-serving soldiers of the Regiment and Trustees are in attendance and will be pleased to meet you.







## The Royal Anglian Regiment Association (Leicestershire)

The first highlight of the unusually busy and memorable year for The Royal Tigers' Association (RTA) was the RTA's Cyprus Veterans' Association (CVA) branch's annual parade on 4 May 2016 at the CVA memorial tree in the National Memorial Arboretum. The roll of honour of the 17 men of the Regiment who gave their lives during the tour of duty in Cyprus 1955-58 was read out and the Regimental March was played. The 20th annual reunion of the CVA took place on 21 October in Braunstone Town, Leicester. About 70 (including the ladies) attended.

When HM The Queen distributed the Maundy Money at Leicester Cathedral on 13 April, six members of the RTA had the privilege of forming one third of a Guard of Honour, the other twelve being Old Comrades of the Grenadier and Coldstream Guards. The six Tigers were Graham Eustace, 'Alex' Alexander, Ray Cunningham MBE, Roger Jones, Robbie Allen, and David Street.

Royal Tigers' Weekend this year comprised an exceptionally busy programme, which was blessed by extremely hot weather. Activities began on the morning of Saturday 17 June outside Glen



Parva Barracks in South Wigston, the site of the Depot of The Leicestershire and Royal Leicestershire Regiments from 1881-1960. In the presence of an RTA posse, a plaque dedicated to







# Regimental Association



commemorating that part of the Regiment's history was unveiled by Major-General Anthony Pollard CB CBE DL. It was the brainchild of Mr Arthur Russell, an ex-Regular Tiger and Cyprus Veteran and who 60 years before had been the batman of the then Lieutenant Pollard.

Focus then shifted 20 miles north to Loughborough Cemetery. There the President of the RTA, Brigadier Andrew Fisher, and many of its members gathered for the dedication of the gravestone of Sergeant Thomas Marston MM\*\*. As a consequence of being gassed in the First World War, Thomas Marston died in 1922 aged just 37, and, because it was outside the time restriction imposed by the CWGC for a headstone to be erected, he was buried in an



unmarked grave in Loughborough. In 2015 Jackie Marston, his granddaughter, located his grave. Assisted by Captain Richard Lane and Mel Gould of the RTA, a plan was created which led to the creation of this gravestone (donated by a benefactor friend of the Regiment) as the memorial of one of its outstanding sons (incidentally only 129 men in the British Army were awarded the Military Medal with two Bars in the Great War, including four other Leicestershire Regiment soldiers). At the dedication on 17 June Jackie Marston proudly wore the medals of her father Tommy (RSM of 1st R Leicesters 1953-59); her grandson Thomas, aged 3, equally proudly wore his great-great-grandfather's medals.

That evening 17 June the RTA's AGM was held at Devonshire Place in Leicester, chaired by the President. The names of those Tigers who had died during the preceding year were read out, and thoughts turned to all those of the Regiment who had given their lives in 1917. The Annual Dinner followed.

The Annual Regimental Service was held in Leicester Cathedral on 18 June, led by Reverend Canon Alison Adams. This was followed by a march of the RTA. Members of the Regiment with their guests retired to Devonshire Place for a reception and lunch, at which senior guests were the Lord Lieutenant, the Lord Mayor of Leicester and Reverend Canon Alison Adams. Formal congratulations were given to the Lord Lieutenants of Leicestershire and of Rutland (who the day before had been appointed DCVO and KCVO respectively in the Queen's Birthday Honours).

A Royal Tigers' contingent of 17 (sic) travelled from Leicester to attend the Royal Anglian Regimental Gathering at Duxford in fine weather on 2 September, where they much enjoyed meeting old comrades from the various Former Regiments, and marching past the Colonel of the Regiment behind their own standard, carried by Mr Robbie Allen [Leics Pic 8: 4th (Leicestershire) Bn contingent at Duxford].

On 1 October at Ashby-de-la-Zouch members of the RTA were among a large group of dignitaries at the town's war memorial garden for the dedication of the VC commemorative paving stone of Lt Col Philip Bent VC DSO on the centenary of the action at Polygon Wood near Ypres in which he lost his life, aged 26 years, and for which he was awarded a posthumous VC. A former





Head Boy of Ashby Grammar School and having qualified as Second Mate in the Merchant Navy in 1914, in October Bent joined the Army as a Private. At the time of his death he had been in the Army for a day short of three years and had been CO of 9th Leicesters for 12 months, also being twice Mentioned in Despatches. According to his VC citation, his last words as he led a successful counter-attack were "Come on the Tigers", the title of Bent's biography written by local historian Kenneth Hillier and published that day. Bent's closest living relative,

great-nephew Keith Willis, was wearing his great-uncle's medals which the Regiment had had specially court-mounted for the occasion. Keith and his son Liam unveiled the paving stone, and the RTA Chairman, Captain Tim Wilkes, laid a Regimental wreath.

On 11 October Roger Jones completed a remarkable 30 years as a member of the General Committee of The Royal Tigers' Association (and he has been its Chairman since 2014). In his 22 years in the Army he served in 1st R Leicesters, Depot R Leicesters, 4 R Anglian, Depot R Anglian, Tiger Company, 2nd R Anglian, 17 AYT, The Bermuda Regiment, and culminated as RSM of 7th R Anglian (V) 1978-80, during which final tour of duty Colours were presented to the Battalion. He is also a Trustee of The Royal Leicestershire Regiment.







# Regimental Association



The commemoration of the Battle of Hohenzollern Redoubt of 13 October 1915 took place at the 55th Annual Dinner of the 4/5th Battalion The Royal Leicestershire Regiment Officers' Dining Club, held in Leicester on 14 October 2017, at which Captain Bob Allen MBE presided. Twenty-two were present, including three guests, shown here with the President: Major Jonny Lanham,



**Roger Jones at Duxford.**

sometime Poacher and currently OC C Company 2 PWRR at Kendrew Barracks, and the earlier-mentioned Keith and Liam Willis, the former wearing his great-uncle's miniature medals.

The final event of the year was the RTA's Christmas Reunion at Saffron Road WMC, which was held on 8 December – after this edition of Castle was put to bed!



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# Regimental Association

## Leicestershire family's Tiger pilot – a centenary

Visitors to the Royal Leicestershire Regimental Museum over the last 23 years will be familiar with the startling and most unusual exhibit of a wooden aircraft propeller cross. This is its story.

November 2017 marked the centenary of the death of Lieutenant Alexander Charles March Phillipps de Lisle. As a 19-year-old company commander in The Leicestershire Regiment he survived the Battle of the Somme in 1916 only to die the following year aged 20 serving as a pilot in the Royal Flying Corps at the end of the Battle of Passchendaele. Alexander was the youngest of five sons of Edwin Joseph Lisle March Phillipps de Lisle and Agnes Henriette Hope. The family, which also included three daughters, lived at Charnwood Lodge (near Coalville), Edwin being the MP for Mid-Leicestershire and a Deputy Lieutenant of the County.

Alexander was educated by the Jesuits at Beaumont College



The propeller cross.



As a corporal in the OTC.



Commissioning portrait.

(Old Windsor, Berkshire); he was in the cricket XI, and – more importantly from a military perspective – reached the rank of Corporal in the OTC. He was thus well placed to join the Army shortly after the outbreak of war. His mother served in the Red Cross in that conflict, as did his four brothers, one as an officer in the RN and the other three in the Army.

Deciding not to proceed with what normally would have been his final year's schooling, Alexander was commissioned into The Leicestershire Regiment on 22 September 1914, three months before his 18th birthday. He was posted to the newly-raised 9th (Service) Battalion, and trained with it at Aldershot and on Salisbury Plain before it moved to France in July 1915, where after additional officer training he rejoined it in October. On the night of 5 November he was wounded in a bombing raid at Bienvilliers au Bois (south-west of Arras): "Alexander joined another subaltern in an enlarged shell hole in No Man's Land at Bienvilliers with a primitive contraption for catapulting bombs into the German lines.



**de Lisle's RE 8.**

Although they were difficult to spot in the darkness, the enemy had a good idea where the bombs were being launched from and retaliated with artillery salvos against their tormentors. Alexander was hit in the hip and ankle which required hospital treatment, but he also received the Divisional Commander's commendation for distinguished and gallant service." For the next five months he was either in hospital, in a convalescent home or on sick leave, and returned to light duties in April 1916.

Back in the front line for the Somme offensive, Alexander commanded D Company 9th Battalion in the capture of Mametz Wood on 14 July 1916 and led his men in the final bayonet charge on Bazentin-le-Petit. There he was wounded again, this time in the neck, and had to be repatriated. Unable to return to Infantry duty due to this wound, he opted for flying duties and was attached to the Royal Flying Corps (RFC) in December 1916. He transferred to the General List of the RFC in June 1917, gaining his pilot wings the following month.

In July he collected a new RE 8 biplane direct from the factory at Coventry and flew it 250 miles to Flanders to join 21st Squadron RFC at La Lovie airfield, near Poperinge (west of Ypres). The Squadron was heavily involved in reconnaissance and artillery observation during the battle of Passchendaele, which led to 72 German artillery batteries being put out of action and many of the squadron's pilots being decorated for bravery. Alexander flew

several successful missions. By late November 1917 the front line was static, and most of the action was artillery counter-battery fire from both sides. On 20 November Alexander was flying with his Canadian co-pilot Lieutenant S M Goodeve on a low-level mission in bad weather to the north-east of Ypres when at about 9 a.m. their aircraft was hit by friendly artillery fire and crashed, killing both on impact.

Alexander's squadron commander wrote, "He is really a most awful loss to the squadron, because he was so popular with every one, and he



**de Lisle the pilot.**



**de Lisle family at graveside.**

was also so very keen and good at his work. He was altogether a most promising pilot." The two officers were buried near to each other at Dozinghem Military Cemetery near Poperinge. There the aircraft propeller cross was initially used as Alexander's grave marker. It was later replaced by a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone, the propeller cross being taken into the possession of the de Lisle family.

On loan to the Regimental Museum since 1994, the propeller cross was recently removed in preparation for it accompanying the de Lisle family visit to Dozinghem Military Cemetery for a commemoration of Alexander's death on 20 November 1917 – as it was also present at a similar family commemoration in 1994. There on 30 September 2017 a short graveside service was conducted by Father Christian de Lisle SJ, the great-great-nephew of Alexander. It is much hoped that in the near future the propeller will be loaned again to the Regimental Museum.

Alexander's war service gained for him the 1914-1915 Star, the British War Medal and the Allied Victory Medal, and they are in the possession of his family. Of other important memorials to this son of Leicestershire, there is a stained-glass window in Arundel Cathedral and his name is on the memorial to members of the Catholic Soldiers Association in St George's Chapel in Westminster Cathedral, London.

In writing this article, the author is most grateful to Squire Gerard de Lisle DL (nephew of Alexander) for access to his family archives.

**MKG**



**Alexander's medals.**





# Regimental Association

## Lord Lieutenants near retirement

### Sir Laurence Howard KCVO OBE JP



Dr Laurence Howard was appointed Lord Lieutenant of Rutland in 2003 in succession to Air Chief Marshall Sir Thomas (Jock) Kennedy.

He therefore became the second Lord Lieutenant to be appointed for Rutland since the reinstatement of Rutland as a separate County in 1997.

He will compulsorily retire as Lord Lieutenant upon reaching his 75th Birthday on 29 March 2018.

Laurence Howard's professional background is in Physiological Science, with his PhD being in neurophysiology. He

joined the staff of Leicester University in 1974 and was appointed Sub Dean to the Medical School and subsequently Sub Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Biological Sciences. He retired from the University in 2006.

He has played a leading role in the legal affairs of Leicester as Chairman of the Central Council of Magistrates' Courts Commission and served on the bench of Leicester for 25 years. He has also been a Patron of several worthy causes.

He was awarded an OBE.

Since being appointed to his post in Rutland he has fully devoted himself to the wide range of County affairs including those concerning all branches of the Armed Forces stationed in Rutland, including the Cadet Forces. It has been a changing scene involving units at RAF Cottesmore, later as Kendrew Barracks, and St George's Barracks at North Luffenham. He has also been active in supporting Service charities.

At all times, together with his charming wife Chris, he has been an excellent and popular 'friend' to the 2nd Battalion, and therefore it was with great pleasure that his role has been recognised with his being appointed a Knight Commander of The Royal Victorian Order in recognition of his services to Rutland.

Both he and Lady Howard will be remembered with great gratitude and fondness for their devotion to the people of Rutland and the Regiment.

### Jennifer, Lady Gretton DCVO JP



Lady Gretton was appointed Lord Lieutenant of Leicestershire in 2003 in succession to Sir Timothy Brooks upon his retirement. She followed his wonderful example in so actively engaging in the widest possible range of public activities in Leicester and Leicestershire.

Lady Jenny, is the widow of John Gretton, 3rd Baron Gretton who died in 1989, leaving her with two children, the Hon Sarah Gretton and John, 4th Baron Gretton.

When not in her official role, she runs the family's Stapleford Farm Estate near Melton Mowbray,

Leicestershire. An active member of the Leicestershire and Rutland Branch of the Country Landowners' Association, she is closely involved in a wide range of agricultural matters.

Amongst her many interests and activities is the ownership of the Stapleford Miniature Railway founded by the 2nd Lord Gretton in 1958, but mothballed in 1982 when the Park was closed. However, in the 1990s with a friends' supporting group, the railway was restored under the stewardship of Lady Gretton, and is active to this day.

Being President of LOROS, a charity providing hospice care in Leicestershire, is a fine example of her connection with charities, as well as a parochial role in her home village of Somerby, and as a member of the Leicester Cathedral Council.

Various honorary doctorates have been awarded to her as well as becoming a Dame of the Order of St John in 2004.

It was in the 2017 Birthday Honours that her life of dedicated public service to her City and County was so deservedly recognised by her being appointed Dame Commander of the Royal Victorian Order.

Throughout her period of office, Lady Jenny has been an active and incredible support to all branches of the Armed Forces. The Royal Tigers' Association, The Royal Leicestershire Regiment, has been greatly honoured to be a regular recipient of her support and encouragement. Additionally, during her official tenure, she has been President of the Leicestershire and Rutland Branch of ABF The Soldiers' Charity.

We shall certainly miss her close involvement but know that after compulsory retirement on her 75th birthday, 14 June 2018, that she will remain a firm and charming friend to many, including the 'Tigers' and of course her regular County regiment, The Royal Anglian Regiment.

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## The Royal Anglian Regiment Association (Cambridgeshire)

The Old Comrades Association Annual parade in Ely took place on 17th July and takes place through the centre of Ely towards the Cathedral.

The parade formed up at the Porta, where the Cambridgeshire Corps of Drums band struck up.

The parade following the cadets consisted of D (Cambridgeshire) Company, 1st Battalion followed by The Royal Anglian Regiment Association (Cambridgeshire) Old Comrades Association as well as members of the Royal British Legion including a motorcycle contingent.

The parade marched past the dias



**Cambridgeshire Army Cadet Force Corps of Drums.**



**D (Cambridgeshire) Company, The Vikings**





# Regimental Association

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## OCA Marching Contingent.

where Brigadier Seal, The Lord Lieutenant of Cambridgeshire, Mrs Julie Spence OBE QPM DL, and the Mayor of Ely Councillor Richard Hobbs.

Once the parade had passed the dias they turned onto the green

opposite the cathedral where the Drum Head Service took place.

Once the service had concluded the parade was dismissed and everyone, including families, were able to join dignitaries in the Lady Chapel where refreshments were laid on.



# The Royal Anglian Regiment Association (Essex)

## County Colonel Essex

### Essex Activities – 2017

On a bleak and cold Saturday 11th February, The Chelmsford Branch of the Association supported Vikings from C (Essex) Company at the unveiling of a new plaque to commemorate the West Ham Pals Battalion. In December 1914 the Mayor of West Ham successfully applied to the War Office to raise an infantry unit of local men to serve in the British Army, who had by then already suffered heavy losses on the Western Front. Formed as the 13th (Service) Battalion of the Essex Regiment, the West Ham Pals were born. The original plaque had "gone missing" around the time that West Ham moved to the former Olympic Stadium!

Meanwhile, in another Division entirely, (the 54th East Anglian), it was an honour to attend a Service of Commemoration of 100th Anniversary of the London Rifles, part of the 54th Division during WW1, held at St. Michaels Church, Clerkenwell on 19th April 2017. Seven out of our nine former County Regiments were in the Division, including 161 (Essex) Brigade made up of the 1/4th Battalion, the 1/5th Battalion, the 1/6th Battalion, and the 1/7th Battalion, the Essex Regiment. Branch and Regimental Standards were On Parade. This event was a nod to The First Battle of Gaza, fought on 26 March 1917. This battle has highly detailed accounts. The fog of war, both literally and metaphorically, played



**West Ham Pals Bn Memorial Plaque.**

a large part in the lack of complete success. Nonetheless, Gaza is part of the Essex Regiment's history.

The Annual Essex Reunion took place at Warley on 26 June. Originally an Essex Regiment event on the last Sunday in June to commemorate the Battle of Salamanca, given the



**Gaza Memorial Parade, Clerkenwell.**





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**The Vikings providing Burial Party for the re-burial of WW1 Essex Regiment soldiers.**

mismatch of dates, this is dedicated to an opportunity for a Regimental gathering on the site of the former Depot, The Essex Regiment. The Warrant Officers and Sergeants Mess, 3 (Essex and Hertfordshire) Company 3 R ANGLIAN held its annual Salamanca Dinner, this year actually on 22 July. Company

officers, past and present, enjoyed an excellent meal and the hospitality of the Mess.

On 28 June, a small party from the Chelmsford Branch of the Association attended an event at the Fulham War Memorial to commemorate the award of the Victoria Cross to 2Lt Frank



**2Lt Frank Wearne VC Commemoration.**





**5th Battalion 50th Anniversary Dinner - 3 Coy, Chelmsford.**

Bernard Wearne. At the outbreak of the First World War, Frank Wearne originally volunteered for service with the Public Schools Battalion. Possibly due to his older brother commissioning to the 1st Battalion the Essex Regiment, Frank Wearne Commissioned to the 3rd Battalion. He was badly wounded in July 1916 returning to the Front in May 1917. This gallant officer was killed on 28 June 1917 by a third wound following an act of utmost daring during a trench raid. Wearne's VC was the only Victoria Cross to be awarded to a member of the Essex Regiment during WW1. Chairman of the Branch, Eddie Yorston, took the Branch Standard to join a number of others in the ceremony. We were entertained to lunch by The Royal Yeomanry at the ARC a stone's throw from the Memorial.

There is a lot of industrial development taking place in Ypres, (Leper), and as a consequence more remains of soldiers in Flanders Fields are excavated. A Funeral Service took place on 28 September at New Irish Farm Cemetery for eight unknown

soldiers, four of whom were known to have served with the Essex Regiment. Accordingly, it fell to the 1st Battalion to provide a Burial Party for a symbolic interment into the burial plot already containing the other seven coffins. Unusually, the ceremony involved soldiers from English, Irish, Scottish and Welsh Regiments. This moving Service was led by The Reverend Iori Price, Chaplain to the 1st Battalion. Lieutenant Colonel Philip Cox laid a wreath on behalf of the Regiment. The County Colonel laid a wreath on behalf of the Regimental Association.

It is 50 years since the formation of the former 5th Battalion of the Regiment. The Chelmsford Company has always retained a strong lineage. On 1 April, the 3 Company Officers Dinner Club held a special annual dinner to celebrate this 50th Anniversary. On 28th October, an All Ranks Curry Lunch took place at the Chelmsford ARC, courtesy of OC Major Mark Hart. Colonel Roland Wreford TD made a short speech. There were many photos from the past to chat over a pint or two.

## **The Essex Regiment Museum Remembers Lt Col (Retd) Dennis Vincent MBE**

*Trustee of The Essex Regiment Museum*

### **Introduction**

This year has seen a significant series of First World War remembrance events, especially for the Essex Regiment. On five occasions the Essex Regiment Museum Trustees have been able to honour the fallen from the county at events in France, Belgium and Palestine. The Chairman of the Trustees, Major (Retired) Peter Williamson MBE authorised Karen Dennis, who is the Memorials Officer of the Essex Branch of the Western Front Association and her husband Steve to lay wreaths on behalf of the Museum.

Earlier in the year the Essex Branch toured the battlefields of Arras and Cambrai and laid wreaths to remember the dead of the Essex Regiment who fell in these bloody battles. The 2nd, 11th (Service) and 13th (Service) Battalions fought at the Battle of Cambrai in 1917, with the 1st and 11th (Service) Battalions fighting over the same ground during the Allied advance of 1918. The Regiment was also heavily involved in the Allied offensive of Arras in 1917. The 1st, 2nd, 9th, 10th 11th and 13th (Service) Battalions all took part in the battle. The 9th (Service) Battalion also saw action at Arras during the summer offensive of 1918.

However, this article will concentrate on the three memorial events which took place in the late autumn of 2017.

### **New Irish Farm – New Graves Honoured**

The 2nd Battle of Ypres began on 22nd April 1915, when the German Army used poisonous gas for the first time in the War. Chlorine Gas was released and the Colonial French Troops in the line opposite the German attack fled, leaving a 4 mile gap in the allied Line. It was only the robust action taken by the 1st Canadian Division on the flank of the gap and the slow reaction of the German High Command to exploit the gap that saved a major breakthrough taking place. The battle continued to rage until the 25th May.

2nd Battalion Essex Regiment were involved in heavy fighting towards the end of the battle as they held the Yser Canal around a bridge which had farm buildings, that soon became known as Essex Farm. It was at the Advanced Dressing Station to the rear of the Battalion's position that the Canadian Doctor, Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae wrote the famous poem In Flanders Field. Seven Essex men from the fighting of 1915 were known to be





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buried in New Irish Farm Cemetery.

During the War soldiers were buried at a location known as Irish Farm. After the War the bodies were moved 300 m to a new site known as New Irish Farm Cemetery. However, during recent developments 19 bodies were found in the area of the old cemetery, four of which were identified as being from the Essex Regiment. In a ceremony on the 28th September 2017, which was attended by the Vikings, these soldiers were reburied. It is not known if these new casualties were from the 1915 fighting, or from later fighting at the 3rd Battle of Ypres in 1917.

In early October 2017 Karen Dennis led a small group to visit the new burial place of the unknown Essex soldiers and laid a wreath on their graves. But the story does not stop there as the Trustees have been given some of the artefacts found with the bodies and are hoping to try and identify at least one of the dead unknown soldiers.

## Gaza Battles Commemoration

The 26th March 1917 saw four Territorial Force battalions of the Essex Regiment take part in their first major action of the First World War. The four battalions, which formed the 161st (Essex) Brigade of the 54th (East Anglian) Division were 1/4th, 1/5th, 1/6th and 1/7th Battalions

The Territorial Battalions had previously seen service at Gallipoli and Egypt before the battle. As the wider attack ground on; the 161st (Essex) Brigade were ordered to capture an objective known as Green Hill. This was accomplished, despite taking heavy casualties but during the night the Brigade was ordered to withdraw from the hill. This near victory was followed 3 weeks later by the disastrous 2nd Battle of Gaza, during which a now strongly held position was assaulted with high casualty numbers for little gain.

However on 1st November General Allenby led the British Forces in the successful 3rd Battle of Gaza. The 161st (Essex) Brigade took part in Phase 3 of this attack and captured areas known as the Rafa Redoubt, Zowaild Trench and Cricket Redoubt. This battle also included other Royal Anglian forebear regiments serving in the 54th (East Anglian Division) including Territorial Force Battalions from Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire forming 162nd (East Midland) Brigade and units from Norfolk and Suffolk forming the 163rd (Norfolk and Suffolk) Brigade.

These 1917 battles in Palestine represented the major



Mr Clive Harris at the Essex Regiment panel.



contribution of the reserve forces from Essex and they are still commemorated by the past and present Reserve Officers of Essex at an annual Gaza Dinner Night hosted by 3 (Essex) Company of the Steelbacks. The 161st (Brigade) recorded the following battle casualties during the Gaza battles: 1/4th – 463; 1/5th – 341, 1/6th – 345 and 1/7th – 228. The men of the Brigade erected a cross to mark their sacrifice, pictured left.

The CWGCemetery contains the graves of 3,685 soldiers and is meticulously maintained by local Palestinians. In early November 2017 a wreath was laid by Clive Harris (photo below) on behalf of the Essex Regiment Trustees to the memory of those who fell in the three Gaza Battles.

## Remembering Passchendaele

A final wreath was laid by Karen Dennis in October 2017 at the Essex Regiments Panel at the Tyne Cot Cemetery, in memory of those who fell in the 3rd Battle of Ypres in 1917.

The 3rd Battle of Ypres was Britain's first independent offensive which was not tied to the French. General Haig's plan was to quickly capture the Passchendaele Ridge and from there launch an advance to the North Sea ports, so that reinforcements could be landed. The battle started well when in early June the British mounted an extremely successful assault on the Messine Ridge. However it was not until late July that the main assault was commenced, by which time the Germans had been reinforced and the weather had changed; the rain turned the Ypres Salient into the quagmire that is synonymous with the Battle of Passchendaele.

The Essex Regiment had its 1st, 2nd, 9th (Service) and 10th (Service) Battalions engaged during the Battle. One of the most renowned exploits was that of the 1st Battalion on 16th August, in what became known as the Battle of Langemarck. In this action they captured the Leopard Trench, in four hours of fighting. The Battalion took 170 prisoners and captured 6 machine guns, but at a cost of 126 men killed in action. The battle was to grind on until November, when the village of Passchendaele was finally captured. As with the other major battles on the Western Front; the 3rd Battle of Ypres is a Battle Honour shared with most of the former regiments of Royal Anglian Regiment.

## Conclusion

The Essex Regiment Museum Trustees have been honoured to remember those from the County that gave their lives 100 years ago in the First World War. Yet, with a large development programmed for the Museum in 2018, the Trustees remain focused on ensuring that they are not only looking back at history, but also ensuring that the Royal Anglian Regiment is well represented in the future in Essex.

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# The Royal Anglian Regiment Association (Northamptonshire)

## An Act of Homage and The Talavera Dinner

*Richard York*

The Day, Saturday the 29th July, commenced with The Act of Homage taking place at The Church of the Holy Sepulchre. About twenty comrades paraded along with three Branch Standards under the ever eagle eye of David (Lofty) Knight for the inspection by Major (Retd) Ian Dexter. The service was conducted by The Reverend Caroline Nancarrow with Joe Heffernan laying the Branch wreath and Ian Dexter reading the lesson.

The Talavera Dinner 2017 continued on the very successful theme as in the last couple of years and was once again enjoyed by all of those who attended. It was held at The Freemason's Hall, Northampton the same superb venue as previously.

A total of 103 sat down for dinner. What was even more pleasing was that we had a number of first time attendees (long may this continue).

Presiding over the Dinner was Major Ben Hawes (Poachers), who recently relinquished command of C (Northamptonshire) Coy to move to a staff job in 1st (UK) Div in York. The toasts and his speech were very well received and enjoyed by all in attendance and confirmed that all Regimental business was in good order.

The ever-impressive Northampton Concert Band played background music, Regimental Marches and finally the Last



**Ian Dexter, Richard York, and Colin Burrridge.**



**Old Comrades on Parade.**





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**Branch Standards (Finedon, Peterborough and Northampton).**

Night of the Proms, which for another year kept everybody singing late into the evening.

Finally, very special thanks must go out again to all of the committee especially Sarah Peyton for bringing it all together and making it happen so successfully.

## **Why we were there? “The Battle of Talavera”**

It was a crucial battle in the seven year long Peninsular war for control of the Iberian Peninsula and was fought between France, under Napoleon, and the Allied Forces of the United Kingdom, Spain and Portugal.

“The centre of the British line was broken, and the fortune of the day seemed to favour the French.

Suddenly, Colonel Donnellan, with the 48th Regiment advanced through the disorderly masses, marched against the right of the pursuing columns, plied them with such a firm and regular pace that the forward movement of the French was checked. The French wavered, lost their advantage and the battle was restored.”

In the words of General Sir Arthur Wellesley, later the Duke of Wellington, “The day was saved by the advance position and steadiness of the 1st Battalion of the 48th”.



**Maj Ben Hawes (Dinner President) addresses the attendees.**

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## Going Back to Our Roots Yardley Chase June 2017

*Mr Richard York*



Following an invitation from Colonel Blomfield and Major Lee Dorey, (OC A Company LNR ACF). The Branch visited A Company LNR ACF whilst they held their Annual Pre - Camp Weekend held on Yardley Chase on what was a very hot Saturday 17th June morning.

Once all the members had safely arrived at the training facility for a start at 10am hrs and following a welcome coffee the Branch received a detailed briefing including the LNR Cadets Geographical Deployment, Aims and Ethos followed by , The Weekends and Annual Camps Aims and Objectives finishing with a Question and Answer session.

The morning then continued with the Branch Members visiting a number of Training Stands including Equipment Husbandry and Inspection, Communication Training (Radio Introduction), Weapon Cleaning and Training. During this phase, the members

were able to talk to both Cadets and Instructors on the Training Weekend including what they enjoyed most and what had motivated them to join and attend

Branch members then had a hot lunch kindly provided by LNR Cadets which was greatly appreciated. The afternoon finished with us observing the Deployment Briefing and Preparation followed by the Cadets deployment patrols on to the training area.

The afternoon came to an end at 2pm, with many Members thinking that they had revisited their Military Roots!!

We departed wishing them well and hoping that they have a great annual camp.

The Branch would like to thank Colonel Blomfield and Major Lee Dorey, (OC A Company LNR ACF) and all the Cadets for their time and effort and we wish them a great Annual Camp, as we look forward to our next visit.

## National Armed Forces Veterans Memorial Service. Towcester Road Cemetery, Northampton. June 25th 2017

*Mr Richard York*

This Remembrance Service now in its sixth year came about when the RBL Northampton Branch had wanted for some time to collate the names of those from the County who had died in service. It is a small annual service for families, friends and comrades held at the quiet Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery at Towcester Rd Cemetery in Northampton.

Aside from a few names they were aware of, there was no

central database that held all the names and despite the RBL Branch having tried a number of appeals in the local press and media, this met with little success.

However, this changed following the unveiling of the National Armed Forces Memorial by Her Majesty the Queen in 2007, and the RBL Branch wrote to the Trustees asking for a list of those registered as having Northampton as their place of birth





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**Name readers (Branch members, RBL members and Family members).**



**Mr Richard York reading the names of Poachers, Steelback and Royal Anglians.**



**Branch Standard (Tony Wade) and Wreath Bearer (Richard York).**

or town of residence.

In 2013 the new Post 45 memorial plaque listing twenty - three names from the Borough of Northampton was unveiled at Addington Square to stand alongside in both design and perpetuity with those who died during the Two World Wars . They were able to arrange for a missing name to be added to the newly carved Korean War Memorial, which was rededicated in the presence of South Korean dignitaries.

Since the inception of the Remembrance Service members of the Northampton Branch of the Regimental Association have played a key role with a number of the Branch members attending the event this year and years gone past.

Some Association Members had the honour of reading a few of the 140 names including many Steelbacks and Royal Anglians from Northamptonshire who were lost on Operations or to terrorism since 1945. We remembered those from Palestine, Egypt, Cyprus, Korea, Borneo, Malaya, Aden, Oman, Northern Ireland, The Falklands, Bosnia, Iraq, Afghanistan, UK and Germany.

Two wreaths were also laid by the Branch in remembrance of all of the Regiment's fallen Post 1945.

We will remember them.




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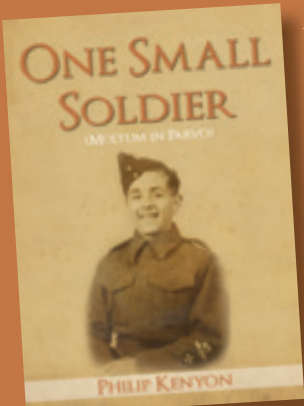
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