



# CASTLE

JOURNAL OF THE ROYAL ANGLIAN REGIMENT







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JOURNAL OF THE ROYAL ANGLIAN REGIMENT



**Editor: Major (Retd) ML Peters**

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*Front cover:* LCpl Louis Jones, 2nd Battalion, takes a moment to reflect during a tactical pause mid-patrol in Mali.

*Rear cover:* Pop Smoke! A Viking from B (Suffolk) Company deploying smoke during the rural phase of Ex VIKING STORM.

*Inside front cover:* OBUA - 3rd Battalion practising their OBUA skills in 2021.

*Inside back cover:* Veteran Velo - Ex Viking, Wayne 'H' Harrod standing proud at the Regimental Day (Photo Trigpoint Pictures).

**Regimental Internet Website**

[www.royalanglianregiment.com](http://www.royalanglianregiment.com)



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**The Colonel-in-Chief  
HRH The Duke of Gloucester KG GCVO**






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## Battle Honours

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### 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, Palastine 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, Brioux Bridgehead, Yu, Venraij, 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, Khelat, 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.



# From the Colonel of The Regiment

In this year's Castle you will read of another busy and successful year for the Regiment in which all three Battalions have performed magnificently. The 1st Battalion have successfully moved to Cyprus, their first foreign 'posting' for many years. The 2nd Battalion's commitment to the United Nations' operation in Mali has been completed, without loss and with their reputation enhanced. And the third Battalion have continued to provide sterling support to the Nation's efforts to counter the COVID pandemic, while refreshing their military competencies after far too long working remotely. There have also been plenty of external events that impact on the Regiment, of which the withdrawal from Afghanistan and the Integrated Defence Review stand out.

This year's Defence Review arrived on the back of three years of internal wrangling within the MOD as the Department tried to balance the ends, ways and means given to them after the 2015 Defence Review. It was made more complex by a shifting geo-political picture which was quite different to that which had been assumed in 2015. The spectre of state on state conflict has come into ever-sharper focus. As I write, Iran continues to push boundaries in the Middle East, Taiwan feels significantly more vulnerable than was the case a year ago, and Russia has placed 100,000 troops on her border with the Ukraine causing considerable disquiet in Kiev and a range of other capitals on both sides of the Atlantic. In addition we have seen the manifestation of new military technology. 2021 has seen Cyber warfare develop significantly, China has fired her first hypersonic missile with global reach, and Russia has recently launched a missile capable of downing satellites. Against this backdrop, the Government has tried to strike the right balance between maintaining and improving more traditional military capability, investing in those things that we don't yet have but are likely to be essential in future conflicts, and size or mass. I will leave you to judge whether the balance between these competing demands is right; there are few easy choices in Reviews such as these and from an Army perspective we have a plan that will realise a better equipped, more

agile and more relevant Army, assuming the promises made in the Review are realised.

Regimentally we have come out of the Review well. All three Battalions should enjoy roles that will see them operationally satisfied, with plenty of variety too. Both Regular Battalions will be smaller, however we have 4 years to move to our new shape and no soldier will be made redundant. We will also approach these reductions Regimentally, with both Battalions shouldering the burden. The 1st Battalion will become a Security Force Assistance Battalion. The role will see the Vikings engage persistently with other Armies around the globe, supporting them in competition, crisis and conflict against groups and nation-states which threaten UK interests. It should see the Battalion partner forces in much the same way as we have seen in Afghanistan and then in the counter-ISIS campaign in Iraq. I am confident that it will be an exciting and varied role that will see the Battalion at the vanguard of our conventional effort to counter the threats that we face around the world. They will adopt the role on departing Cyprus in 2023 and will be based in Cottesmore in Rutland alongside the 2nd Battalion, a location which sits in the middle of our recruiting area. The 2nd Battalion will remain a Light Mechanised Infantry battalion, operating at the core of the Army's new Light Mechanised Brigade Combat Team. This role will see the Poachers operating in Foxhound and Jackal vehicles, deploying to crises around the world. The 3rd Battalion will expand their responsibilities, routinely filling the Army's commitments to the resilience of the UK, continuing to furnish support to current operations around the world and having a clear role in our wartime order of battle. The Steelbacks will retain its current five Company structure and will interact closely with the Poachers in a paired relationship. The new Queen's Division will see the Mercian Regiment and the Duke of Lancaster's Regiment joining the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment, the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers and the Royal Anglian Regiment. Our soldiers will routinely move across the Division generating a broad range of career opportunities,



spanning the Ranger Regiment, Security Force Assistance, Mechanised Infantry (mounted in Boxer) and Light Mechanised Infantry roles.

Turning to Regimental activity, it has been a typically busy and interesting year. The 1st Battalion have successfully moved from Woolwich to Cyprus where they are now fully settled. While the move has demanded much attention, the Vikings have been busy in other areas too. They devised and ran an exercise in Otterburn in the run up to their move, designed to bring together those parts the All Arms battle that will be hard to find in Cyprus. Since arriving on the island, they have been operationally focussed, furnishing the on-island tasks and then being drawn on for operations further afield. In August, very shortly after they arrived, they were warned off to help with the withdrawal from Kabul Airport. While they did not deploy it was a welcome reminder of the benefits of being in Cyprus at a time of particular turbulence. They have since been 'stood to' for an operation elsewhere albeit that deployment has not yet been realised. Finally, members of the Battalion raised a considerable sum for the Regimental Benevolent Fund and Combat Stress by running, swimming, cycling and rowing their way from Woolwich to Cyprus, a fantastic effort of organisation, resilience and fitness.

The bulk of the 2nd Battalion returned from Mali in December, marking the end of their 12 month commitment to the United Nations operation. For the last 6 months the Battlegroup HQ has had A

## Lieutenant General RW Wooddisse CBE MC

(Lincolnshire) Company and a Squadron of Light Dragoons under command amongst many others, bringing security to a very unstable country. They took over from the Light Dragoons BG, which had B (Leicestershire) Coy with them. D (Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire) Company has just recovered from their deployment to Poland, providing tangible evidence of NATO's commitment to countries that sit on or near the border with Russia. So a very busy, operationally focussed Battalion this year.

The 3rd Battalion have provided the most prolonged contribution to the national Covid effort of any of our

Battalions. They have done brilliantly, showing just what can be achieved by a high quality Reserve unit full of soldiers of unusual commitment and professionalism. I am glad to say that they have also been able to return to face to face training after a prolonged period in which COVID 19 has prevented them from doing so. While there is plenty of benefits in working from home, particularly for our Reservists for whom time is in such short supply, it has not been easy to sustain the camaraderie and proficiency that comes from training and operating together. So I was particularly pleased to see the Battalion deploy to Warcop on their annual deployment

exercise in September where I know they did brilliantly. Let us hope that 2022 allows plenty more opportunity for the Steelbacks to show their worth.

The Regimental Headquarters has been busy supporting those who serve and have served, particularly the veterans and bereaved families most effected by recent events in Afghanistan. They have also been supporting those veterans involved with legacy inquests from NI tours, many years ago. There is increased awareness of the importance of the provision of support for Mental Health, both in Battalions and in our veteran Community. The Regiment is in the process of making a Cognitive





# From the Colonel of The Regiment



Behaviour Therapy app available to serving soldiers and veterans, at Regimental expense. The app has been tried and tested by others and all the reports are that it is excellent. I strongly encourage anyone in the Regimental family who feels that they might need to help to come forward and take advantage of the service, or to help others reach out should they need it.

The Regimental Council has seen a number of changes with Colonel Simon Browne retiring from his role as Deputy Colonel for the 2nd Battalion and our lead for Communications. He has done an outstanding job on both fronts and will be sorely missed. We said farewell to him at this year's Regimental Dinner in the company of his son who was given dispensation from the Platoon

Commanders Battle Course to attend and will join the Vikings thereafter. Brigadier Olly Brown will step into both roles. Finally, Bob Grenfell has departed RHQ after 52 years' service to the Regiment. He is the longest serving member of the Regiment, and we owe him a profound and heartfelt debt of gratitude for all that he has done, not least in the distribution of Regimental benevolence in his most recent role.

Sadly we have said farewell to a number of Regimental personalities this year, some of whom receive a detailed send off later in the magazine. Col Richard Wilkes passed away in June. He was the last CO of a Royal Leicestershire Regiment Battalion, having commanded the 4/5th Battalion between 1967 and 1969. Maj Ken Mayhew landed with

1st Battalion The Suffolk Regiment on D Day and served continuously with the Battalion until February 1945, apart from three weeks recovering from wounds. He was appointed a Knight of the Dutch Military William Order - the highest Dutch award for gallantry. He died in May 2021. Finally, the burial of an unknown soldier of the Suffolk Regiment took place in Sep 21 and LCpl Robert Cooke of the Essex Regiment was buried the following month. Both were properly supported by the Regiment, as they should be.

We have again featured well on the state awards and promotion front. Major Jamie Powell was made MBE in January for his contribution to the development of the 77th Brigade where he served as Chief of Staff. Brigadier Olly Brown

has been appointed ACOS Operations in the Field Army and will take over this key position from Dom Biddick in the summer of 2022.

Colonel Guy Foden will promote and take over 7 Brigade early in 2022 with both the 2nd and 3rd Battalions under command. Lt Col Paul Morris has promoted to Colonel, and Lt Col Adie Thompson has been selected to command the Vikings. Lt Col Thompson comes to us from the Mercian Regiment; he is an outstanding officer and I have no doubt that he will do an excellent job. Our current RSMs move on next year. WO1s Butterick and Rawdon have been selected for commissions on the back of a rigorous, Army wide selection process conducted at RMAS over the summer. WO1 Johnson of the 3rd Battalion has decided on a different course and will leave the Army next year. Finally I

would like to congratulate LCpl Holding on his selection as the recipient of this year's Poulter's Prize, for his excellent work as a search team commander in Mali.

So 2021 has been a year of ups and downs. We have achieved much on a collective and individual level and the future looks exciting. But the withdrawal from Afghanistan has hit us hard, particularly those who lost loved ones, those who were injured, and those who invested blood, sweat and tears to make the country a better place. I wrote in the summer to say that while the outcome is in no way what we wanted, we, as a Regiment, did our very best and should hold our heads high for having done so.

There are some things that we cannot change or hope to influence, and the eventual outcome in Afghanistan is sadly one of them. But if one draws back

a step one can see that we have played an important part in creating a very different country than that which we saw in 2001. Education, public services, communication and contact with the outside world have been embedded in Afghan society in ways that even the Taliban will struggle to reverse. And we have helped to save and build many thousands, if not millions, of lives over the last 20 years in ways that will never be forgotten.

I hope the foundations that we have helped set will allow the country to emerge from the desperate place it finds itself this winter. And so for now we should do all that we can to help those most affected by the events of this year, conscious that this is a Regiment that cares deeply for all that serve, and those who will be forever affected by the scars that service can inflict.



# The Regiment

## Colonel-in-Chief

HRH The Duke of Gloucester KG GCVO

## Colonel of the Regiment

Lieutenant General RW Wooddisse CBE MC

## President of the Regimental Association

Major General SL Porter CBE

## Honorary Chaplain to the Regiment

The Reverend Paul Whitehead

## Assistant Honorary Chaplains to the Regiment

Suffolk: The Reverend Geoff Brown

Cambridgeshire: The Reverend Alan Jesson

Bedfordshire: The Reverend Stephen Smith

## Deputy Colonels of the Regiment

1st Battalion: Brigadier DSJ Biddick MBE MC

2nd Battalion: Brigadier OCC Brown

3rd Battalion: Brigadier RFL Lyne

## Senior LE Officer

Lieutenant Colonel R Bredin MBE

## College of Colonels

**Chairman of Regimental Trustees:** Brigadier DJ Clements MBE

**Colonel MS:** Brigadier DSJ Biddick MBE MC

**Colonel Communications:** Brigadier OCC Brown

**Colonel Recruiting:** Brigadier RFL Lyne

**Colonel Heritage:** Colonel RE Harrold CVO OBE

**Colonel Benevolence:** Lieutenant Colonel PRC Dixon OBE

**Colonel Cadets:** Brigadier RFL Lyne

## Regimental Trustees

Colonel of the Regiment, Brigadier DJ Clements MBE, Lieutenant Colonel BD Weston, Major PD Connolly, Captain RWH Colgan, Captain SC Lane, Captain KP Tansley, DJ Till and Regimental Secretary.

Secretary: Assistant Regimental Secretary

## County Colonels

<b>Norfolk:</b>	Lieutenant Colonel MA Nicholas MBE DL
<b>Suffolk:</b>	Lieutenant Colonel MH Wenham
<b>Essex:</b>	Colonel CAF Thomas TD DL
<b>Cambridgeshire:</b>	Lieutenant Colonel D Denson TD
<b>Lincolnshire:</b>	Colonel GWC Newmarch
<b>Leicestershire:</b>	Captain TR Wilkes
<b>Northamptonshire:</b>	Lieutenant Colonel RHL Blomfield MBE TD
<b>Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire:</b>	Major JN Whatley DL

## Regimental Museum

Chairman of Trustees: Colonel PGR Horrell TD DL

Trustees: Colonel NH Kelsey OBE TD, Lieutenant Colonel ACE Marinos, Lieutenant Colonel A Powell MBE, Major T Dormer TD, Major PH Williamson MBE, Captain PR Randall,

JMH Naylor and Regimental Secretary. Secretary: Deputy Regimental Secretary

## 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>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 the Worshipful Company of Poulterers

The Regiment is affiliated to *HMS St Albans*

## 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, Haverhill, Havering (formally Romford), Hertford, Hinckley and Bosworth, Huntingdon, Ipswich, Kettering, King's Lynn, Leicester, Lincoln, Lowestoft, Luton, Newham (formally East Ham), Northampton, Norwich, Oadby and Wigston, Peterborough, Redbridge (formally Ilford), Stamford (honorary status), St Neots, Southend-on-Sea, 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  
Website: [www.royalanglianregiment.com](http://www.royalanglianregiment.com)  
Shop online: [www.royalangliandirect.co.uk](http://www.royalangliandirect.co.uk)

**Regimental Secretary:** Lieutenant Colonel (Retd) RCJ Goodin OBE

Email: [robert.goodin769@mod.gov.uk](mailto:robert.goodin769@mod.gov.uk)

**Deputy Regimental Secretary (Communications and Heritage):** Major (Retd) ML Peters

Email: [michael.peters112@mod.gov.uk](mailto:michael.peters112@mod.gov.uk)

**Assistant Regimental Secretary (Finance and Benevolence):** Mr M Goldsmith

Email: [mark.goldsmith101@mod.gov.uk](mailto:mark.goldsmith101@mod.gov.uk)

**Regimental Adjutant:** Captain LRG Talkington (*des Captain George Liddington*)

Email: [luke.talkington100@mod.gov.uk](mailto:luke.talkington100@mod.gov.uk)

**Chief Clerk:** Mr SR Dunning

Email: [stephen.dunning782@mod.gov.uk](mailto:stephen.dunning782@mod.gov.uk)

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

Email: [joanna.laidlaw118@mod.gov.uk](mailto:joanna.laidlaw118@mod.gov.uk)

### RHQ Area Office

**Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex and Cambridgeshire**

The Keep, Gibraltar Barracks,  
Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP33 3RN  
Tel: 01284-749317

**Regimental Area Secretary 1 (County Engagement and Veteran Support):** Captain PCH Hudson

Email: [peter.hudson104@mod.gov.uk](mailto:peter.hudson104@mod.gov.uk)

**RHQ Area Office Lincolnshire, Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire**

Kendrew Barracks, Cottesmore, Rutland LE15 7BL  
Tel: 01572-812241 Ext 7161

**Regimental Area Secretary 2 (County Engagement and Veteran Support):** Major (Retd) TJ StC Brown

Email: [timothy.brown133@mod.gov.uk](mailto:timothy.brown133@mod.gov.uk)

*Clerk:* Mrs A Godbolt

Email: [anne.godbolt100@mod.gov.uk](mailto:anne.godbolt100@mod.gov.uk)

### Regimental Museum

Royal Anglian Museum, Duxford Airfield,  
Duxford, Cambridgeshire CB22 4QR  
Tel: 01223-497298

*Curator:* Melissa Kozlenko

Email: [royalanglianmuseumcurator@outlook.com](mailto:royalanglianmuseumcurator@outlook.com)

Website: [www.royalanglianmuseum.org.uk](http://www.royalanglianmuseum.org.uk)

## Battalion Locations

### 1st Battalion

Lieutenant Colonel GJ Goodey MBE  
(*des: Lieutenant Colonel AR Thompson MBE*)  
Alexander Barracks, Dhekelia,  
British Forces Post Office 58

### 2nd Battalion

Lieutenant Colonel WJ Meddings  
(*des: Lieutenant Colonel BT Hawes MBE*)  
Kendrew Barracks, Cottesmore,  
Rutland LE15 7BL

### 3rd Battalion

Lieutenant Colonel AP Wolfe MBE  
(*des: Lieutenant Colonel DJ Haggart*)  
Army Reserves Centre, Blenheim Camp,  
Newmarket Road, Bury St Edmunds,  
Suffolk IP33 3SW

## Regimental Representatives

**Infantry Training Centre (Catterick):** Lieutenant RR Simmons

**Army Foundation College (Harrogate):** Sergeant C Lawrence

**Infantry Battle School:** Major A Mackness

**RMA Sandhurst:** Captain M Durkin

**Cambridge University OTC:** Major M Bevan

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



# Personalia

*Please note this list is based upon information provided to RHQ over the course of 2021 and includes some key appointments which are of interest to members of the Regimental Family*

## Honours and Awards

### Order of the British Empire

Lt Col KE Spiers TD VR

### Member of the British Empire

Maj JE Powell

### Meritorious Service Medal

WO2 GC Richards MBE

Capt C Holmes

### CGS Commendation

Capt D Russell

### LS & GC

CSgt C McKendrick

Maj HJ Wills

### Poulter's Prize 2021

LCpl Sam Holding

## Promotions

### Major General to Lieutenant General and Commander of the Field Army

Maj Gen RW Woodisse CBE MC

#### Colonel to Brigadier

Col OC Brown

Col GB Foden

Col RFL Lyne

#### Lieutenant Colonel to Colonel

Lt Col TPD Morris

#### Major to Lieutenant Colonel

Maj J Bennett-Madge

Maj DJ Haggart

Maj BT Hawes MBE

Maj DJ Robinson MBE

#### Captain to Major

A/Maj Blayney

Capt Buff

Capt Hale

Capt Ottaway

A/Maj Speechley

Capt M Brunson

Capt R Edwards

Capt C Miles

Capt S Payne

Capt S Graham

Capt SAC Forse

Capt JSD Pugh

Capt C Hopkin

A/Maj NS Reeder

A/Maj DA Grice

#### Lieutenant to Captain

Lt C Thompson

Lt J Wright

Lt G Liddington

Lt M Andrews

Lt L Talkington

Lt A Langley

Lt P Darby

Lt D Kitchen

Lt J Heal

Lt A Simms

#### Second Lieutenant to Lieutenant

2Lt C Boffey-Rawlings

2Lt O Bremridge

2Lt J Bamford

2Lt M Willman

2Lt W Bagnall

2Lt E Potter

2Lt R Seel

2Lt L Moore

#### Officer Cadet to Second Lieutenant

OCdt P Phillips

OCdt D Brown

OCdt D Butler

OCdt H Davies

OCdt A Moss

OCdt H Browne

OCdt J Rice

OCdt H Bussandra

OCdt B Jesse-Jennings

OCdt D Marston

#### Selection for LE Commission

WO1 WW Butterick

WO1 JL Rawdon

#### Colour Sergeant to WO2

CSgt BI Page

CSgt DB Tanner

CSgt S Bryl

CSgt DJ Smith

#### Sergeant to Colour Sergeant

A/CSgt SM Garrett

Sgt WA Ireland

Sgt TJ Power

Sgt SA Presland

Sgt AR Taylor

Sgt BL Townsend

Sgt AG Wildney

CSgt D Kimpton

### Corporal to Sergeant

Cpl AC Bone  
Cpl JJ Dunster  
Cpl K Magwaza  
Cpl LK Parker

Cpl AJ Reid  
Cpl JJ Rosser  
Cpl OP Schurch  
Cpl MW Sellors  
Cpl JP Waite

Cpl AP Walker  
Cpl TM Young  
ASgt RL Burgess  
ASgt SMJ Grant

### Conversion of Commissions

Capt SD Graham IRC (LE) to REG C (LE) (B&O)  
Capt WG Heaton SSC to IRC (B&O)  
Maj C Hopkin IRC (LE) to REG C (LE) (B&O)  
Capt TP Lister SSC to IRC (B&O)  
Capt (A/Maj) NS Reeder IRC (LE)  
Capt (A/Maj) DE Grice IRC (LE)

### Command Appointments

Brig GB Foden – to Command 7 Infantry Brigade  
Lt Col AR Thompson OBE – Commanding Officer (*des*) 1st Battalion  
Lt Col BT Hawes MBE – Commanding Officer (*des*) 2nd Battalion  
Lt Col DJ Haggar – Commanding Officer (*des*) 3rd Battalion

### Retirements

Col SJR Browne OBE  
Lt Col FJR Grounds  
Lt Col ET Wynn  
Maj WS Ottridge  
Capt JSJ Rowden





Regimental  
Matters

# Regimental Day 2021

Duxford - 5 September



For the first time in two years the Regiment was able to celebrate its Regimental Day at the Imperial War Museum, Duxford. As per tradition, the Regimental Day is always the first Sunday of the month of September, after the Regimental formation day of 1st September.

The day was a fantastic success and it was great to see all parts of

the Regimental family enjoy the glorious weather, the beer tent, the Regimental Museum, the Royal Anglian Band, and of course catching up with old comrades. As always, the event was well attended and continues to grow in popularity. This year saw the biggest turnout yet.

The Regimental Day is also a time

for many to reflect on their service and remember comrades who are no longer with us. As is traditional, the Drumhead service took place at the Regimental Memorial. Immediately after the service, the Colonel of the Regiment delivered an update to the Regimental family on what the





# Regimental Matters



**Enjoying Regimental Day.**

Regiment has done in the last twelve months. and looked ahead to what the future may hold for the Army.

A massive thank you to all those that made what was an outstanding regimental day happen, especially

our veterans, our families, our affiliated cadets and, of course, our serving soldiers that all make up our Regimental family. The day certainly had the feeling of a warm and friendly family reunion - let's all look

forward to our next gathering!

Diary Date  
Royal Anglian Regimental Day  
at Duxford  
- Sunday 4 September 2022

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## The Regiment bids a fond farewell to Major Bob Grenfell after half a century of fine service

As a Regiment we are fortunate to have many fine soldiers and veterans who give long and distinguished service. As a closely knit family we particularly value quiet professionalism, getting the job done well and looking after our soldiers, and our families.

Just occasionally in a generation, there is one who stands out, and for the many of us who have served with him, for some part of his fifty one and a half years of fine service to our Regiment, this is Bob Grenfell.

From taking the Queen's shilling in December 1969 to join as a Junior Soldier, until completing his handover as Assistant Regt Sec in September 2021, Bob has been serving his Regiment.

There are very few who have served the Regiment as selflessly, as well, and for as long as Bob Grenfell. He enjoyed the classic infantry soldier's career to RSM.

Many were surprised at Bob's speed and agility as a soldier and as an all-round sportsman, and he really excelled as good infantrymen should, at orienteering. But Bob was pretty good at everything.

He was ready to be RSM young enough to be lent to 1 QUEENS as their RSM before coming back to his beloved Battalion as RSM. In Bob's words, he was "not sure how it happened" but nobody else was surprised that he was commissioned and stormed on to be the QM of the 1st and then the 3rd Battalions.

Having completed 45 years in uniform by his 60th birthday, Bob joined RHQ. Some would have thought that leading the Regiment's financial and benevolence efforts should have been enough but typically, Bob took on many more projects including the Regimental Day and looking after our In-Pensioners at Chelsea.

Bob has been a peerless friend, confidant and quiet, wise advisor to many in the Regimental Family, and we will miss him greatly. We wish Bob and Barbara and their family a long and happy retirement.





# Regimental Matters

## Field of Remembrance



The Field of Remembrance, now in its 93rd year, has been taking place every November since 1928 when the Poppy Factory in Westminster took a group of disabled veterans, a tray of poppies and a collecting tin to the grounds of St Margaret's Church at Westminster Abbey.

Only a handful of poppies were planted around a single cross, but it began a tradition that has grown over the decades and now tens of thousands of poppies on wooden crosses and tributes are planted every year. The lawn of St Margaret's Church is marked out with numerous plots for the regimental and armed services Associations.

Traditionally, our former Regiments had their own plots but last November they merged into a single Royal Anglian plot with Badge Crosses representing each antecedent regiment. Representing the Regiment at the opening ceremony was Lt Col Simon Bacon (as plot holder) with WO1 Mark Rackham

representing the 1st Battalion and Mr Basil Hirniak the 2nd Battalion. The ceremony was as ever a moving affair, and the Regimental Plot was graced with the presence of the Duchess of Cornwall. Sadly, numbers were restricted this year due to ongoing building work to the Abbey, but it is hoped that next year's event will be "fully manned" followed by the customary post-ceremony lunch at the Farmers' Club.

Our representatives reflected the geographical diversity of the Regiment with Lt Col Simon Bacon from Lincolnshire; WO1 Mark Rackham from Suffolk where he is currently SSI Ipswich School and Basil Hirniak a long serving Committee Member of the Bedford Branch. All three representatives are actively involved with their County Regimental Associations. The representatives also had the pleasure of meeting General Sir John McColl, former Commanding Officer and Colonel of the Regiment.

## Opening of the Field of Remembrance 2021

This year, I was very fortunate to be allowed to represent the Regiment at Westminster.

On November the 11th I made my way to Westminster Abbey. On arrival, it soon became clear, how important this event is. The number of veterans and family members representing their regiments and loved ones was overwhelming.

Walking round the garden was so humbling. Seeing the cap badges of battalions no longer with us, their veterans standing proud. I met with young and old, and the one thing that stood out, was the comradeship afforded across all three services. An amazing experience and everyone should visit the garden if they are able to.

**M Rackham**  
(Ex Viking, SSI Ipswich School)



Veterans gather before parading past the Cenotaph.



# Regimental Matters

## Fundraising Rugby raises £2,000

A squad of 40 players came together on 4th September 2021 ready for war. Prior to the match, the Regiment Roll of Honour was read by Lt Colonel (Retd) Eddie Thorne MC, with Last Post and Reveille sounded.

The enforced COVID break and the chance to collocate with the Wymondham RFC annual Beer Festival saw a bumper crop of more than 100 Regimental supporters turn up to cheer the team home to victory!

The home side started strongly but it was a decisive break by former Viking and Wymondham player Aaron Hayward that allowed the ever-present Cunningham (Pompadors) to put the Regiment ahead. 5-0. Wymondham appeared to be the more organised unit, but the Regiment, led by Liam McGrath (Vikings), were resolute in defence and looked to counterattack at every opportunity.

On one of these attacks the ball was lost, and the Wymondham winger ran a try in despite the attentions of Luke Govier (Vikings) and Chris Seeley

(Pompadors). At 5-5, more pressure was exerted by the pack which was being constantly bolstered with replacements by Manager Chris Cooper (Vikings). The match reached halftime all square, despite the introduction of the 'flight of Crowes' (Anthony Crowe (Vikings) and his two sons).

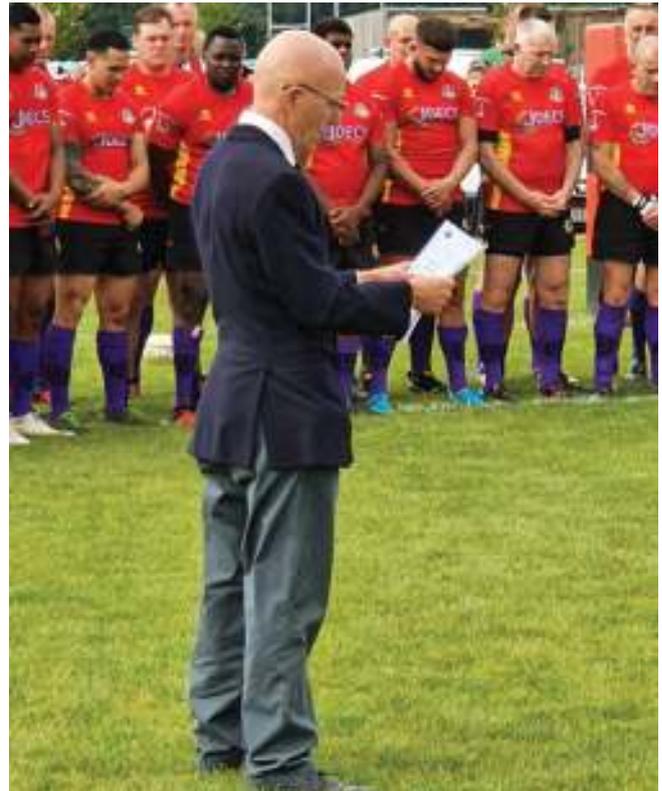
The start of the second half saw a much more determined set of attacks by the hosts, stretching to a 12-10 lead after swapping scores (Crowe for the Regiment). The play was tight, the Regiment required more beef, which was added by the arrival Shand, Rackham and Chapman (Vikings). This introduced a defensive spine that started to pressurise the Wymondham team. The clock was ticking down when Mario Wood RAPTC (former Viking) twisted over for a score to give the Regiment the lead with 3 mins left. 12-15 - final score would have been a fair reflection of the game, but a multi-phase move set up from the much bolstered front row where Martin 'Bilko' Urand (Pompadors/Poachers) and Richard Divey (6 R

Anglian) led to the MoM Lt Colonel Bevis Allen scoring between the posts! Final Score - 12-20 to the Regiment.

Post-match the President Major General Tony Pollard then made a presentation of gifts to the hosts and day committee before capping 12 players for achieving various milestones. He also capped Marie Cooke (RAMC), the long-standing club physio who had to be dragged away from her two bloodied Pompadors, Bridger and Totten to receive her award.

Finally, he and the Club Chairman presented a new match trophy named after the Club Secretary Major (Retd) Ian Wilkins AGC(SPS) for his efforts in starting and maintaining this popular fixture; engraved, 'In recognition of his determination and tireless hard work in making the Royal Anglian Regimental Rugby Matches a reality since 1990; his love of rugby and the Royal Anglian family is an inspiration to all; we salute and thank you.'

After the match a total of £2,000 was donated to the Regimental Charity.





## A gift to you, from the Regiment.



We are delighted to announce the launch of Leafyard, a web app designed to help you improve your mental fitness.

It takes the form of a journey, and has been tested, researched and piloted in the veteran community, and the Regiment is now convinced it will work to support you and your family to feel calmer, happier and more mentally resilient.

To request a gift card for you, your family or a fellow Royal Anglian please go to [www.leafyard.com/royalanglians](http://www.leafyard.com/royalanglians) or alternatively, please contact your Area Regimental Secretary.



# Regimental Matters

## Film aids Regimental veterans

As part of the Regiment's ongoing Mental Wellbeing and Mental Health Awareness programme, RHQ wanted to produce a film signposting veterans to agencies that will help those in the Regimental Family and wider veteran community struggling with mental health issues. One key aspect of this activity is communications - getting the message out to those who feel isolated.

Having seen Steve (Spud) Armon's recent film on the subject we approached Steve and commissioned him to make a film aimed directly at the Royal Anglian family. The film was launched on 1 November, you can see it on YouTube, or go via the Royal Anglian Website at [royalanglianregiment.com](http://royalanglianregiment.com)

We also asked Steve to tell us a little about how he felt about making a film specifically for the Royal Anglian Regiment, Steve kindly agreed to share his thoughts:

As a former Royal Anglian soldier who is now a photographer and film maker, I recently made a film called 'Combat - a retrospective'. This was a passionate project, and a way for me to get some more documentary style work into my portfolio. I was clearly very humbled when RHQ Royal Anglian approached me and asked me to make a film in a similar style and tone which was aimed specifically at our veteran community. Especially as it touched on the issues of mental health surrounding them.

As a former RSM of the 1st Battalion, I know just how relevant the issue of mental health and wellbeing is. Fuelled by the recent loss of a friend who was a serving soldier within the Battalion to suicide, I snapped up this opportunity. It was a great chance to do something meaningful, and to help in the best way I could with my skill set.

I had a month to produce it, this involved the writing of the script, collating footage and crafting it in a way



**Film-maker Steve Armon.**

that made sense. Ensuring that it would be heard by those that needed to hear it the most. I was very keen to ensure that all three of the current battalions were represented. I felt it was very important to not to forget the work of the old 3rd Battalion (The Pompadours), and I really enjoyed going through footage of them pounding the streets of Northern Ireland.

We are all very happy with the film, and hope that it will be helpful to those who struggle with their mental health

because of their operational service.

Since leaving the Army in 2019 I have been really taken back by those who continue to try and make a difference and do whatever they can to help the wider Royal Anglian Regiment family.

The film can be viewed on the Regimental website...

<https://www.royalanglianregiment.com/royal-anglian-film-maker-returns-to-help-fellow-veterans/>

## Malayan Emergency Campaign Veterans pay their respects



Veterans of the Malayan Emergency Campaign returned to Duxford on a sunny Sunday in May. They came to pay their respects to fallen comrades from the Regiment, and the East Anglian Regiment. The event was hosted by the Regt Museum, the Deputy Regimental Secretary laid a wreath on behalf of the Regiment.

## Regimental Council

The Regimental Council met in May in Woolwich, hosted by the 1st Battalion and in November in London. The Colonel of the Regiment chairs the Council supported by the Chairman of Trustees, our three Deputy Colonels, our three Commanding Officers, and our Senior LE Officer. Senior members of our College of Colonels are invited to advise on Regimental projects, which fall within their expertise. Much of the Council's routine business is managed out of committee through the Regimental Plan and in the Regimental Budget. The six short reports below are some examples from the council agenda this year:

- Regimental investments are well managed by our Trustees. At 30 Sep 21 they were valued at £7.3M, allowing a wide range of grants to be made for Benevolence, for Battalions, for the Association and for a range of projects that support the wellbeing of the Regimental family. The Chairman of Trustees encourages bids for grants to be made.
- Council directed that increased priority should be given to broadening benevolent support, including Mental Health. The Army's Colonel Medical Health attended Council and Council approved funding for a Cognitive Behaviour Therapy app, which was to be made available to serving soldiers and to veterans at Regimental expense. And because the quantity of benevolent cases reaching RHQ had reduced during COVID, the size of the benevolence grants being made could be increased.
- As well as grants for Association events, Council approved funding for a Regimental Big Breakfast to reinvigorate the Association in our Counties and bring together more of our veterans, many of whom do not otherwise attend Regimental events.
- Funding has also been increased to support Regimental communications, in particular to increase the quantity and quality of video and film on all platforms.
- The Regt has funded the provision of Royal Anglian Rank Slides and Soft Cloth Green Belts for all those in Battalions
- In Regimental heritage, grants were made to deliver up to date Royal Anglian items for our forebear Regiment's museums, as well as grants for the refurbishment and maintenance of our Regimental Memorial.



# Regimental Matters



## Combat2Coffee – The story so far

Combat2Coffee is a not for profit project established 3 years ago by a former Viking and prison officer Nigel Seaman. The project aims to support Armed Forces Veterans and families who may be struggling with life outside of service and has expanded its remit to include those still serving.

One of the ways it achieves this is by providing mental and physical health support to veterans and the wider community via coffee shops. These coffee shops provide a friendly face, social prescribing, a gateway to professional services and an environment for support organisations to operate in.

Combat2Coffee currently have two community coffee shops in Ipswich and one in Bury as well as other shops supporting veterans under custody in HMP Hollesley Bay and HMP Chelmsford with another due to open at HMP Highpoint. They also have modern coffee vans which can be booked to attend events and functions throughout East Anglia but have a particular focus on Suffolk and Essex. The coffee used in the shops is direct trade from Brazilian farmers and is roasted on site at Hollesley bay by veterans and others in custody.



### Customers in C2C Bury.

Following their service some veterans find it difficult to integrate back into the civilian world, the best way of overcoming that is to mix with the community. Therefore, first and foremost, the community coffee shops are a social space for all, they aim to bring local people (including veterans)

and communities together. Unlike commercial coffee shops people are encouraged to spend as much time as they would like in the shop, to socialise and spend time chatting and meeting new people. Staff are a mix of paid employees and volunteers (of all ages) and are mental health awareness



Mental Health awareness training for the staff at C2C.



**Nigel Seaman with Cllr Everitt and Springett on opening day.**

trained, if you are feeling low and just want someone to chat to you find that someone in Combat2Coffee. Informal events, such as meet up Mondays where we provide free tea, coffee and biscuits to anyone coming into the shop between 10-12 on a mon, are held to encourage local people into the shops. We also host occasional focus groups for sections of the community and the shops are available for community groups to use if they wish. As an example the local NHS veterans support group currently meet in the Bury shop once a week and veterans' breakfasts are held monthly in Ipswich and Bury shops.

The shops are a great place to meet with a few mates or hold a work meeting they sell fantastic coffee, tea, bacon rolls, sausage rolls and paninis etc in a friendly and welcoming atmosphere. In Ipswich we have a shop just off the town centre at 8 Northgate Street, Ipswich, IP1 3BZ the shop is well placed to take advantage of the good footfall in that area. The second Ipswich shop is on the top floor of Felaw Maltings, 44 Felaw Street, Ipswich, IP2 8SJ, this shop serves the offices in that area and has a large kitchen which helps on veteran's breakfast days.

The Bury shop is hosted in the Constitutional Club, 12 Guildhall Street, Bury, IP33 1PR, it's a little off the beaten track but benefits from the use of the constitutional club facilities including a lovely garden and, on a Sat afternoon, a full bar.

The shops operating within custody facilities are a joint enterprise with the Prison Service and are aimed at veterans in custody. They are used to

provide formal Barista training leading to a recognized qualification which can help those released from custody gain employment and avoid re offending. Working in the shops or the roastery helps build confidence and a sense of worth, the experience gained in customer service can prove invaluable on release when seeking to take advantage of job opportunities.

As a Community Interest Company, Combat2Coffee is always seeking to raise funds and needs the support of volunteers in a variety of roles. Both the Bury and Ipswich shops benefitted significantly from former members of the Regiment giving up their time and expertise to fit out the shops, a few pictures are attached to this article. Former members of the Regiment also raised more than £10K last year to support opening the Bury Shop and a few days after I write this former Viking and amputee Wayne Harrod will be attempting to break his track cycling world record to raise funds for Combat2Coffee. If any member of the Regimental family is completing a challenge and would like to raise funds for a worthy cause look no further than Combat2Coffee.

If you are holding an event or function and would like hot drinks and snacks why not book one of our vans to attend e mail [angela@combat2coffee.co.uk](mailto:angela@combat2coffee.co.uk) for more information. Finally if you are in Ipswich or Bury and fancy a brew or are planning a meet up please use one of our shops you are sure of a warm welcome and you never know who you might bump into.





# Regimental Benevolence & Welfare

## **Regimental Headquarters warmly welcomes our new Assistant Regimental Secretary**

Mr Mark Goldsmith took over from Major (Retd) Bob Grenfell as Assistant Regimental Secretary on 19 July 2021. He is already very much part of the Royal Anglian Regimental family.

Mark has taken on responsibility for a range of financial, and welfare related roles, his primary focus is the daily management of the regiment's Charity and Benevolence activities. Mark served twenty-three years in the Royal Engineers, leaving as a Warrant Officer Class One. His operational tours included Belize, Northern Ireland and Iraq. On leaving the Army in April 2012 he became a civil servant, working as a Job Centre Manager in Norfolk. He specialised in armed forces case work, and the delivery of specialist welfare support.

Prior to joining the RHQ Team Mark worked for five years as Manager of the Cromer Job Centre. He is now a proud honorary member of the Royal Anglian Association. Mark lives in Norwich, a keen football supporter, he supports Norwich City and is also a qualified Football Association Referee.



## **The impact of Covid-19 on Benevolence & Welfare**

**Prior to the outbreak of Covid there were more than 200 Benevolence cases submitted annually to the Regiment. There has been a steep decline in the number of Benevolence cases being submitted over the last couple of years.**

**During the last financial year which ran from 1st July 2020 to 30th June 2021, the number of cases submitted was just 121. Covid has had a direct impact on the number of benevolence cases being processed. The main reason behind this was due to the isolation restrictions imposed by Covid.**

**Case workers have been unable to engage openly within the community, so it has made the processing of cases much more difficult.**

**In the current financial year starting on the 1st July 2021, to date the Regiment has only received**

**62 cases so the trend continues into 2022. The new Delta and Omicron variants has had an impact on case worker availability, this has also contributed to a reduction in the number of cases being submitted.**

**With the decrease in the cases and the Regimental Charity's target of spending 51% of annual Regimental Income on Benevolence, the Benevolence Committee which has representation across all three of the Battalions, presented a case to the Trustees for the maximum grant allocation to be increased. The trustees were unanimous in giving their full supporting this recommendation.**

**If you know of anyone that may need financial support from the Benevolence Charity, please put them in touch with their local SSAFA or RBL branch who will assign a case worker to process their claim.**

## Case Studies

### Case Study One Veteran and his partner

The Royal Anglian Regiment veteran and his partner were desperate to purchase a new washing machine and dryer. The applicants were unable to self-fund the purchase of these white goods.

The case worker was requesting £334, for which the Regimental Charity was happy to make a grant for the full amount requested, negating the need for other agencies to assist.

The applicant wrote a “Thank you” letter to RHQ, it said they did not know where they would be without the support of the grant, and that the grant had helped make their lives a whole lot easier and was helping them both carry on with pride.

They wished the Regiment all the best for 2022 and requested we keep up the good work.

Assistance Provided  
Regimental £334

### Case Study Two Veteran

A Royal Anglian Regiment veteran who served on three tours of Afghanistan and suffering with PTSD, had been residing in a homeless refuge. The applicant was moving to a new home at the beginning of 2022 but had no household essentials

The case worker was requesting a total of £1200 to help him set up his new home, for which the Regimental Charity was happy to make a grant of £750.

With the almonised grant from the Royal Anglian Regiment Benevolence Charity and ABF The Soldiers’ Charity, the veteran was able to furnish his new home with household essentials such as a washing Machine/dryer, Microwave, Oven, Cooking utensils, bedding and household furniture.

This has provided the veteran with the ability to be much more self-sufficient and is helping live as normal life as possible.

Assistance Provided  
Regimental £750  
ABF Charity £450

### Case Study Three Veteran’s widow

A widow of Royal Anglian Regiment veteran had several underlying health conditions causing mobility issues. This meant she had become housebound and unable to socialise.

The case worker was requesting a total of £3814 to purchase an EPV and recliner chair, for which the Regimental Charity was happy to make a grant of £750. With the almonised grant from the Royal Anglian Regiment Benevolence Charity and other Charities, the widow was able to purchase an EPV and recliner chair.

The widow had been suffering from depression, but the recliner chair meant she was much more comfortable in her own home, and the EPV had allowed her to get out of the house and socialising within her own local community.

Assistance Provided:  
Regimental £750  
RBL £750  
ABF Charity £775  
Other £250

## Royal Anglian Veteran and Paralympian Steve Gill is aiming high for the future

I started archery in 2013 where I went on to compete in the first ever Invictus Games where I earned a bronze medal as an individual recurve archer.

From there I was picked up by Archery GB to be a part of their Para Academy with the aim of progressing to compete in the Paralympic Games. This is where I found my love of the sport and made my way to being ranked 4th in the country for para-recurve archers.

I narrowly missed out on competing in the 2016 Rio Paralympic Games but I went as part of the Paralympic Inspiration program which allowed me to experience the games but not as an athlete. From then I knew I wanted to compete, I wanted to be a Paralympian.

In 2017 it was suggested that I change bow styles to train as a compound archer (as pictured) which although may look similar, I had to relearn my whole shot process and essentially start from scratch. I did not let this deter me and I trained for 6 days a week in the hope of competing in the 2020 Tokyo Games.

Once the COVID pandemic hit I was unable to train at my regular outdoor range and have had to make do with a target in my garage. This, along with the deterioration of my equipment, made it much harder for me to keep up to the standard needed. However, I persevered and as soon as the training venue was allowed to reopen, I was back to training almost every day.



I missed out on the two available compound slots for Tokyo by only 1 point, but this has not dulled my passion and drive, and with the help of the Royal Anglian Benevolent Fund sponsoring some new equipment, I am confident that I will be at the standard needed to compete in the 2024 Paris Paralympic Games.



# Regimental Benevolence & Welfare

## Royal Anglian Benevolence 2020-21

### General

The delivery of Benevolence to the Royal Anglian Regiment family and its forbear Regiments who find themselves in need, hardship and distress has continued throughout the pandemic. The impact of Covid on Benevolence is covered in a separate paragraph.

### Outreach

Regimental Headquarters has no outreach capability for casework, so we rely on the caseworkers of Soldier Sailors Airmen and Families Association (SSAFA) and The Royal British Legion (RBL). Without their sterling work the Regimental family would not be so well supported. In the last Financial Year (FY) 121 cases were received in the chart below highlighting that most cases were completed by SSAFA. The 1% of 'In-Service' cases is welcomed, to date in the current FY there have been no 'In-Service' cases.

### Benevolence Statistics

#### Financial Year 2020-2021

The financial year at RHQ runs from 01 July to 30 June. The method used to through the service charities is known as 'almonisation'. This ensures the applicant has the best opportunity of meeting their needs. In the FY 2020-21 the 'almonisation' total for the delivery



of Benevolence was £132,736.54. This is broken down as follows:

#### Benevolent Fund Grants

£57,568.54

#### ABF Grants

£31,644.00

#### RBL

£37,931.00

#### Others

£5,593.00

Of the 121 cases submitted 69 cases were awarded grants which equates to £645.92. There were 48 cases that were declined. Those declined included funeral assistance, care home fees or

individual/couple capital and savings which all fall outside the scope of the charity.

The reason for the grants is varied with the highest number of grants being awarded to assist applicants with purchasing brown/white goods and support with debt payments.

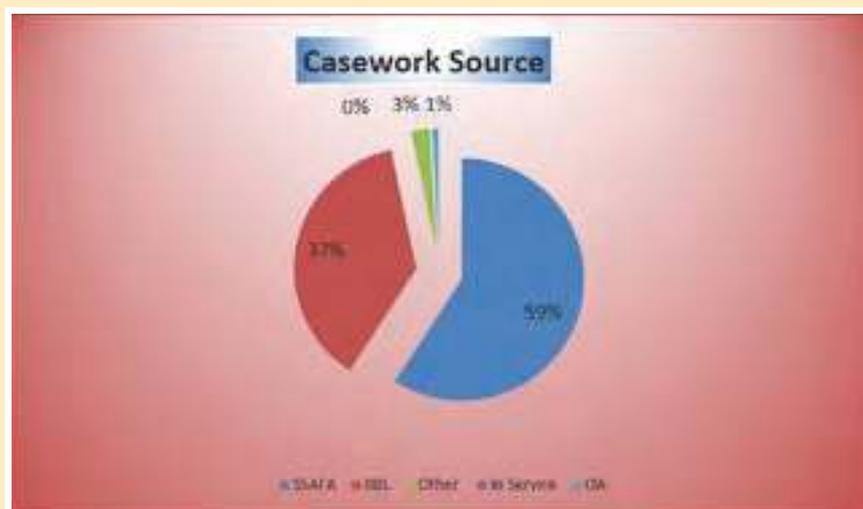
There were 4 cases rejected, this is where our Records Officer (Mrs Joanna Laidlaw) is the point of contact in RHQ, has identified that the individual has never served with the Regiment or Forbear Regiments.

### Grants by age

The graph above shows the number of grants awarded by age group. This clearly shows that many of those coming to the charity are below the age of 60. When we hear the word veteran, we tend to picture the older military generation and do not think of the younger generation who have left the service in recent years. Why do younger veterans struggle in comparison to the older veterans? Some research into this has shown that post to 9/11, 75% of veterans were deployed at least once compared to a lower figure of 58% for their peers pre 9/11.

### Fundraising

There are three main sources of fund raising to support the Regimental Charity in awarding its benevolence grant: Interest from the Regimental



Investment Portfolio, Days Pay Scheme (DPS) and Fundraising and Donations.

**Investment Portfolio**

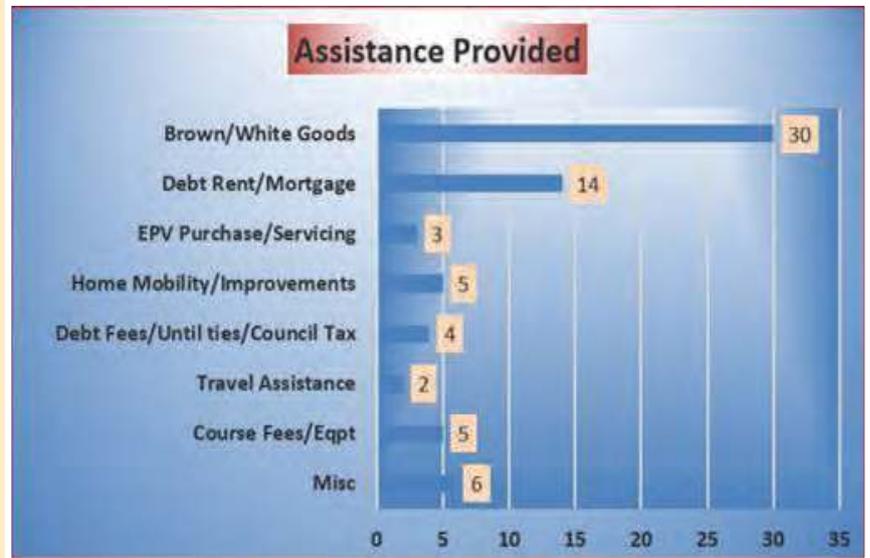
The portfolio is looked after by our Regimental Trustees who do an excellent job in ensuring this remains healthy and the Regimental family is well looked after. The income for the FY was £95,977.

**Day's Pay Scheme**

The Day's Pay Scheme brought in £119,219. The Battalions are having a drive to sweep up those who are not contributing. The income from DPS will decrease in the future with the reduction in size of the Battalions.

**Fundraising and Donations**

With the kindness of individuals and groups donating a further £26,395 was raised. This figure is down on previous years but the outbreak of Covid has restricted the amount of fundraising activity. Members of the Regimental family are doing some excellent work



in fundraising for their favourite charity, this has a special place in their heart. Please do not forget the Royal Anglian Benevolent Fund, it serves to support those from your Regiment.

Anyone wishing to contribute may

do by sending a Cheque payable to "The Royal Anglian Regiment Benevolent Charity" or via the website at...

[www.royalanglianregiment.com](http://www.royalanglianregiment.com)

...where there is an option to donate using the JustGiving link.

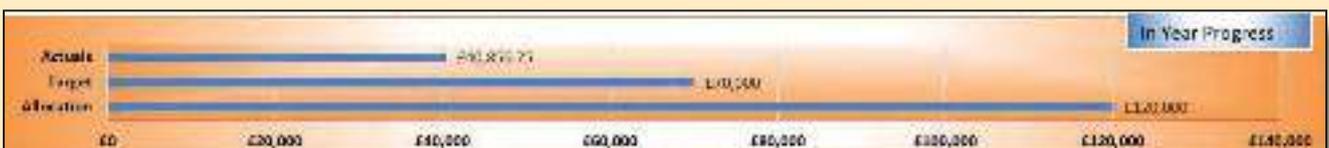
## Royal Anglian Benevolence 2021-22

The table below shows the grants awarded in the current financial year which started on the 1st July 2022.

Figures are current as at 31st January 2022. It shows that Covid is still having an impact as the actual spend

of £40,856.75 is down on the target of £70,000 up to the end of January.

Cases Presented	Total	62	Awarded:	38	Declined	23	Rejected	0	Regimental Total	£40,856.75
Benevolent Fund	Grants	£27,356.75	In Service	£500.0	Wayland	£0.00	Average	£114.28	ABF	£15,698.00
Other Grants/Funds	ABF	£13,000.00	Children's	£0.0					RBL	£25,113.29
									Others	£1,644.87
									<b>Almonred Total:</b>	<b>£40,856.75</b>





# Regimental Benevolence & Welfare

## Do You Need Assistance?

If you find yourself in need, hardship or distress, seek caseworker assistances from SSAFA or RBL



They will forward your request to the Regimental Charity.

We are here to help and can ask other assistance providers to also assist, such as the RBL and The Army Benevolent Fund (The Soldiers Charity)

## Donations

If you would like to donate to the Benevolent Fund you can do so via the Benevolence page on the Regimental Website

[royalanglianregiment.com](http://royalanglianregiment.com)

## Useful contacts

### Mental Health Support and Emergency Services

If you feel like harming or hurting yourself or other people:

Call 999 or go to your nearest Accident and Emergency (A&E)

If you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency, NHS 111 is a free number to call. They can direct you to your local crisis support centre services they also offer health 24hr, 365 days a year.

### NHS Veterans Support

#### Wales

Tel: 0800 2183 2261

Email: [Admin.vnhswc&v@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:Admin.vnhswc&v@wales.nhs.uk)

#### Cornwall

Available 09:00-18:00 hrs Mon-Thu,

Tel: 01579 373737

Referrals: 012579 335245

Email: [cpn-tr.veteranassastance@nhs.net](mailto:cpn-tr.veteranassastance@nhs.net)

Trevelis House, Lodge Road, Liskeard, Cornwall, PL14 4NE.

#### North-West

Available 09:00-17:00 hrs Mon-Fri

Tel: 0300 323 0707

Email: [mviap@enquiries.nw@nhs.net](mailto:mviap@enquiries.nw@nhs.net)

#### North of England

Tel: 0303 123 1145

Email: [vwals@nhs.net](mailto:vwals@nhs.net)

North End House, 42 North End, Durham, DH14LW

#### Midlands and East of England

Tel: 0300 323 0137

Email: [mevs@mhm.org.uk](mailto:mevs@mhm.org.uk)

### London and South East England

Tel: 0203 317 6818,

Email: [cim-tr.veteranstilservice-lse@nhs.net](mailto:cim-tr.veteranstilservice-lse@nhs.net)

Website: The Veterans' Mental Health Transition, Intervention and Liaison (TIL) Service

### South Central and South West England

Tel: 300 365 0300

Email: [awp.swveterans@nhs.net](mailto:awp.swveterans@nhs.net)

Bath NHS House, Newbridge Hill, Bath, BA1 3QE

### Other Assistance Providers

#### Samaritans

Provides emotion support 25 hrs a day 365 days of the year. They allow people to talk about feelings of distress and despair and are confidential and offer non-judgemental support.

Tel: 116 1123 (24hr Freephone)

Email: [jo@samaritians.org](mailto:jo@samaritians.org)

Website: [samaritians.org](http://samaritians.org)

#### Mind

09:00-18:00 Mon-Fri, less bank holidays.

Mind Infoline gives confidential support and information on lots of mental health related issues including where to get help, drug treatments, alternative therapies and advocacy. Mind has a network of nearly 200 local Mind associates providing local services.

Tel: 0300 123 3393

Email: [info@mind.org.uk](mailto:info@mind.org.uk)

#### SANE Health Helpline

SANE runs an out-of-hours helpline offering specialist emotional support and information to anyone affected by mental illness, including family, friends and carers.

Open every day, 16:30-22:30 hrs

Tel: 0300 304 700



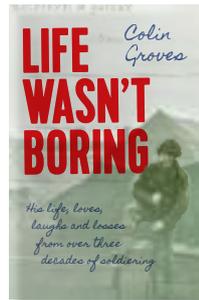
# Mainly About People



**WO2 Jimmy Jewell who is Ex Vikings and PSAO for 1 Company, received a commendation for Services to Norfolk Army Cadets and is the Training Safety Officer for The Croxton Army Cadet Training Centre and 'Britannia Company'**

## Life Wasn't Boring by Brig Colin Groves

Published by Unicorn Publishing in March 2022  
ISBN 978-1-914414-39-8 :: RRP - £20.00, Hardback



Brigadier Colin Groves has written a book – “Life Wasn’t Boring”. It was picked up quickly and is to be published commercially by the Unicorn Publishing Group. The book is his military memoir, but it does more than just record his Army exploits and experiences. It describes the effect that those had on him, on his wife, Sue and on their sons, Nick and Tim as they grew up. In recording all that he has tried to reveal “the human side of being a soldier”.

The book is to be featured on Unicorn’s stand at the London Book Fair in April 2022, but it will be available prior to that, in hardback on Amazon Books, from 1 March 2022.

Brigadier Colin's agreement with Unicorn requires him to help in advertising the book - thus this email, which he has asked me to circulate.

If you think that the book might hold any interest for you, you can order an advance copy by entering ‘Amazon Books’ on Google and then by typing ‘Life Wasn’t Boring – Colin Groves’ in the search box and that will get you to two pages that illustrate its front cover, detail the price and a give a fuller description of its content.

As a ‘taster’ the front cover is reproduced here showing the baby officer Groves aged 20!

## Burial of an Unknown Suffolk Regiment Soldier at Wancourt

The Burial Service of an unknown Suffolk Regiment soldier of the Great War was conducted at Wancourt British Cemetery on 23rd September 2021. This burial service was also for another soldier known only to God, whose Regiment was not known.

The Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (JCCC) leads on the organisation of these carefully delivered services, which are properly supported by today’s Regiments and Associations in the immaculate Commonwealth War Grave Commission cemeteries. COVID had delayed many of these services, and the team conducted sixteen this week in France.

This Suffolk Regiment soldier was almost certainly one of the 2nd Battalion’s 428 casualties from the Battle of Wancourt on 21st March 1918 during the German Spring Offensive.



**Padre Simon Talbot CF, Regimental Secretary, British Defence Staff Paris and Regimental Adjutant.**

The original painting of the battle hangs in the 1st Battalion. The artist, Ernest Smythe was an officer in the Suffolk Regiment, and prints of the painting were commonly seen in many clubs, pubs and hotels in the County.

The famous line from report of the

battle in the Times is often included as a caption beneath the painting, “ There is a story, such as painters ought to make immortal and historians ought to celebrate, of how certain Suffolks, cut off and surrounded fought back to back on the Wancourt-Tilloy Road’.



# Mainly About People

## Elizabeth Cross Presentation

Postponed from March 2020 due to the pandemic, 18 months on, RHQ was finally able to present the Pennington Family with the Elizabeth Cross in recognition of Private Frank Pennington of the Royal Leicestershire Regiment who was killed at the Battle of Maryang-San on 5 November 1951.

Five members of the Pennington family had travelled down from Yorkshire to be present, among them, two of Frank's nephews, and his niece. The presentation was made at Kendrew



Frank Pennington.



Picture courtesy Imperial War Museum.



Maj Gen Tony Pollard makes the presentation of the Elizabeth Cross to Pte Frank Pennington's nephew Steve Pennington. Maj Jamie Powell, OC B (Leicestershire) Company looking on.

Barracks on Thursday, 16 September 2021.

Following coffee in the Officers' Mess our guests were given an opportunity to meet some soldiers from the 2nd Battalion's Rear Operations Group commanded by Major Jamie Powell. A strong contingent from the Royal Tigers' Association was also present including Mr Alan Simpson himself a Korean veteran. In front of the Mess guests and Tigers alike chatted with our modern-day soldiers about their experiences in Mali, while demonstrating support weapons and both Jackal and Foxhound vehicles. After a fascinating hour the party retired into the Mess for the presentation itself.

Major-General Tony Pollard CB CBE DL, former Commanding Officer and one time Deputy Colonel of the Regiment, read the account of the Battle first setting the scene and then describing the battle itself in detail...

*The Battalion was ordered to recapture Hill 317, and the plan was to do this in two phases. Advancing astride the ridge called 'Italy' D Company on the left and A Company on the right were to capture intermediate objectives at Point 217 and United on a lower ridge line, following which B and C Companies were to press on to the Hill 317 ridge line.*

*Frank was in D Company, whose men were equipped with rifles and light machine guns. He would have been very frightened going into battle, perhaps almost numbed by the noise of rifle,*



**Maj Gen Tony Pollard with Sgt Smith.**



**Mr and Mrs Roger Jones with Sgt Smith, and Alan Simpson - a Tigers Veteran of the Korean War.**

*machine gun and tank fire, and mortar and artillery fire, which both sides were putting down; the attack was launched in the early afternoon. Somewhere between the start line and his Company's objective at Point 217 Frank was killed. That his body was never found might perhaps be – gruesome though it may sound – because he was blown to pieces by a shell. But he was fighting with a gallant group of young men, all of whom "fought like tigers" that afternoon. Both Companies suffered heavy casualties in reaching the edge of their objectives.*

Steve Pennington received the award and scroll on behalf of the family and was clearly moved by the occasion. The family were presented with a copy of Aden to Afghanistan by Major Powell. The formalities over everyone then enjoyed a reception in the Medals Room allowing everyone to relax and mingle with soldiers past and present in a truly "family" way.

Frank Pennington is remembered on the UN Memorial Wall at Pusan in Korea, on the Korean War Memorial in the Regimental Chapel in Leicester Cathedral, and on the Armed Forces Memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas, Staffordshire.

**TJStCB**



**Col and Mrs Anthony Swallow with LCpl Girard and Capt Bob Allen.**



# Mainly About People



In 1983, Lt Col Paul Long OBE, CO 5 R ANGLIAN, sent his Mortar Platoon to the UKLF Mortar Concentration. The Platoon consisted of two sections and Platoon HQ based in Chelmsford, (3 Coy), and the third section based at Wellingborough, (2 Coy).

Having had a good BAOR Camp in 1982, and a few live shoots under their belts, the Platoon set off for Redesdale Camp, Otterburn. Assisting the Small

Arms School Corps was 3 PARA. Signs of pre-Falklands training was evident on the ground. In essence the Concentration was the Falklands Mortar war. The Platoon fared well and went on to have a very good camp in BAOR the following year. WO2 Rose (RIP) is to the right of the Platoon Commander.

Sergeant Major John Wilcocks was a schoolboy in Leek, Staffordshire. His form master was... Windsor Davies, who

played Battery Sergeant Major Williams in the comedy show, "It Ain't Half Hot Mum".

In 1982 Windsor Davies, (and Melvyn Hayes), were playing at the Civic Theatre Chelmsford, a stone's throw from the old TA Centre. John got in touch with Windsor Davies, with the resulting evidence in the photo. The son of WO2 John Rose is the young cadet next to Windsor Davies.



5 R Anglian Mortars 1984.



# Diary Dates

# 2022

See also the Regimental Diary on the  
Regimental Website at [www.royalanglianregiment.com](http://www.royalanglianregiment.com)

## January

- 13 Poulterers' Prize Presentation - London
- 27 2nd Battalion Op NEWCOMBE Medals Parade - Kendrew Barracks
- 31 Cadet Engagement Meeting

## February

- 4 2nd Battalion Freedom Parade – Lincoln
- 10 Sobraon Day
- 11 Infantry Training Centre Catterick Pass Out Parade – ITC Catterick
- 24 1st Battalion Boxing Night – Cyprus
- 26 Royal Anglian Big Breakfast – Various locations

## March

- 2 Poulterers Election Day Lunch – London
- 11 Infantry Training Centre Catterick Pass Out Parade – ITC Catterick
- 16 Annual Meeting of County Councils – RHQ
- 29 RSB CC212 2nd in allocation year – Sandhurst

## April

- 1 HOTO Regimental Adjutant - RHQ
- 13 Mobbs Memorial Match – Northampton
- 14 Sovereign's Parade – Sandhurst
- 15 Infantry Training Centre Catterick Pass Out Parade – ITC Catterick
- 24 Le Paradis Memorial Service of Dedication – Norwich Cathedral
- 25 Almanza Day

## May

- 6 Regt Council Meeting – Royal Hospital Chelsea
- 13 Infantry Training Centre Catterick Pass Out Parade – ITC Catterick
- 14 2nd Memorial Rugby – Kendrew Barracks
- 16-20 Regt Battlefield Tour - Normandy

## June

- 9 Founders Day - Royal Hospital Chelsea
- 12 Platinum Jubilee Service – Bury St Edmunds
- 18 1st Bn (Vikings) Reunion Dinner – Kings Lynn
- 21 Queen's Division Council – Cambridge
- 23 Cambridge Day – Cambridge
- 29-30 Royal Norfolk Show - Norwich

## July

- 1 Annual Regt Rep Event, Norfolk – Langley School
- 22 Salamanca Day
- 26 RSB CC221 3rd in allocation year – Sandhurst
- 27 Talavera Day
- 31 Suffolk Association Minden Day - Bury St Edmunds

## August

- 1 Minden Day
- 12 Sovereigns Parade CC213 - RMAS
- 13 Blenheim Day

## September

- 3 Regt Rugby - TBC
- 4 Regimental Day - IWM Duxford
- 25 Regimental Sponsored Chapel Service - RHC

## November

- 4 Regimental Council Meetings – London
- 4 Officers' Dinner Night - London
- 10 Opening of the Field of Remembrance - Westminster Abbey
- 13 Regt Remembrance Service - IWM Duxford
- 13 Memorial Cottages Service – Norwich
- 13 Association Contingent at Cenotaph – London
- 27 Sortie Day
- 29 RSB CC222 3rd in allocation year - RMAS

## December

- 10 Regimental Carol Service - St Mary's, Bury St Edmunds
- 20 British Battalion Day



# Regimental Museum



Lincoln Cadets.



This summer saw a plethora of cadet units visiting the museum. Cadet units cap badged to the Royal Anglian Regiment receive free admission, so email if you want to get your detachment out on an interesting field trip to Duxford. We can tailor group visit programmes to include different talks. Content can be adapted to your training requirements. We can generate a bespoke cadet a quiz to satisfy their history requirements. Most of the groups this year were from Suffolk and Cambridgeshire. We were very pleased to welcome our first group from Lincolnshire to the museum in three year - pictured here.

This year has still been an odd year for the museum, mainly due to the pandemic. We were not to be defeated by the restrictions on visitors – we adapted and moved outdoors. Starting in April, we staged several outside events. Firstly, because we were not allowed to have visitors inside the museum, took our exhibits outdoors. We regularly braved the cooler weather and put a stand on



Enjoying a well earned brew after a full day of engaging with the public - our curator, Melissa Kozlenko, Deputy Regimental Secretary Mike Peters, and regular Museum volunteer Matt Gadsby.



# Regimental Museum

outside the museum hoping to engage with any visitors.

We brought out various weapons and mortars since these always seemed popular, and we did get some good engagement with the public. Although there weren't as many as we would have expected at a pre-coronavirus air show. It did allow us to spend more quality time with the visitors, and we did have and more time to explain the Regiment and its history more thoroughly. Later in the year, restrictions were eased, and the museum could open. The IWM also staged one flying day a month, which meant the museum was busier, and once again we had a day outside to showcase our collections and talk to the public. Below is a picture at the beginning of the day, as we had two former poacher volunteers, this flag along with the Royal Anglian flag somehow made it onto the table!

The one-day shows were a great success because they were less busy than the larger, two-day air shows, this allowed us a lot more time to engage with guests. These were very successful and will happen again this year. We hope to make what we can offer larger with more activities and interaction with families and children. If anyone wishes



to volunteer, please email the curator, the email is at the bottom of this article!

Another thing that has begun since covid is this Curator's professional development. I am now halfway through a master's degree for museums, so hopefully this will stimulate some new developments in some of the areas of museum work. The course has certainly

highlighted lots of potential new areas of development at the museum.

There are a couple of things to report collection-wise. The biggest news being that our reserve collection has moved from Essex onto site! As we cannot display everything in the museum, we do have another collection being preserved so we can now illustrate the regiment in its entirety. This is a big change as before it was housed by the Chelmsford Council and was over an hour's drive away, now it is a couple of hundred meters!

It took some time making sure it was all boxed, catalogued and ready to move. On the arrival, it took some time re-cataloguing positions of each box, but it is almost done. This does mean we can access it more frequently and easily. Management of the collection is more efficient, as we can spend an hour or two there whenever we want to, instead of having to plan a day trip. This also means that we can do more access days if people wish to see something, making the whole collection more accessible to the public.

We have also installed a new case in the museum for a PKM that was captured in 2007 by C Company of the 1st Battalion. This was previously



**Volunteers Chris Worsley (who was in the 1st Battalion, now Cadet Leader), Ray Jones (who served in the Pompadours and 2nd Battalion) and Gary Cushing (who served in the 2nd Battalion).**

being held together by tape and elastic, so we wanted to showcase it with a video of the Battalion talking about capturing it. Here it is pictured next to our Afghanistan case:

We are also in the process of making a new video for the introduction to the museum. The old one was produced in 1995. Although the old film was good, intend to reflect upon the history of more recent operations and conflict involving the regiment. The new film includes all ranks and voices that showcase the Regiment as the family it is. This video will hopefully be done early in the new year so look out on Museum social media for a link or a sneak preview!

That's all for this year, hopefully next year will be brighter, virus-free and less uncertain for us all.

If you wish to get in touch to volunteer or bring a Cadet group, please email me at: [royalanglianmuseumcurator@outlook.com](mailto:royalanglianmuseumcurator@outlook.com)



**Show and Tell - The opportunity to handle some of the Museum's historic artefacts attracts both the young and veterans alike.**



# Can You Remember?

**5**

YEARS AGO



Nigeria 2016 – The A (Norfolk) Company training team, with Major Dave Haggar, WO2 Thorne, and Harry the driver.



**10**

YEARS AGO

Afghanistan 2011- W02 Graham and CSgt Spray on patrol in Helmand - Op HERRICK.

**15**  
YEARS AGO



Iraq 2006 - The Colonel-in-Chief lunches with soldiers from D Company, Poachers, Op Telic .

**20**  
YEARS AGO

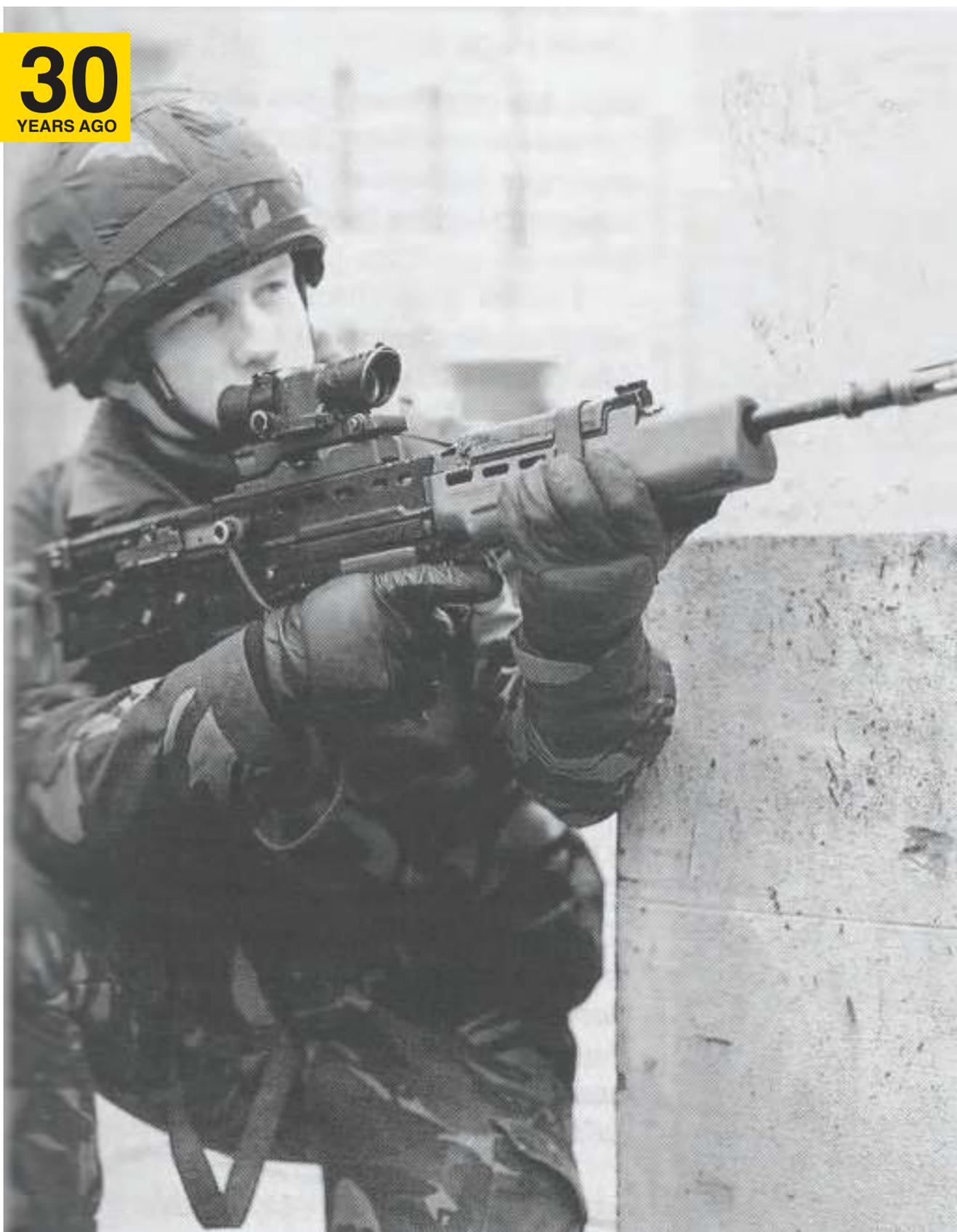


Afghanistan 2002 - LCpl Phil Stow, 1st Battalion, Kabul, Op FINGAL.



# Can You Remember?

**30**  
YEARS AGO



Northern Ireland 1991 - A Coy, 3rd Battalion, VCP on Craigavon Bridge.



Northern Ireland 1991 - A Coy, 3rd Battalion, VCP on Craigavon Bridge.



Aghnacloy, Northern Ireland 1982 - B Company, 1st Battalion after a six-day patrol.



# 1st Battalion (The Vikings)

'History in its essentials is the science of change and continuity,' wrote Marc Bloch in 1944. Reflecting on 2021, there is a temptation to focus on how much life for the 1st Battalion has changed, and how much further it will change under Future Soldier. For almost two decades we had been accustomed to living in the south of England, exercising frequently as a battlegroup and deploying every 2-3 years on a programmed operation overseas.

Through this repeated cycle the 1st Battalion became the most operationally experienced infantry battalion in the Army, with seven tours of Afghanistan and one of Iraq, plus company-level operational deployments in Mali, South Sudan and Nigeria amongst others. Whilst never forgetting the sacrifices made on operations, most professional soldiers would say we were lucky to have had such a rich series of opportunities as well as stable basing.

On the face of it, 2021 changed all this. Life in Cyprus is a departure from the norm for our soldiers and families, as is not having a major exercise or programmed operation ahead of us. Future Soldier has also put us on a new path, one that no battalion in the Regiment has experienced as we look to draw down by over half our number by March 2025 in transitioning to the new SFA role. The challenges these changes have brought, and will continue to bring, are significant, but this is not

## From the CO

*Lt Col GJ Goodey MBE*



**CO and RSM in Dover to meet the OLYMPUS VIKING runners**

a lament to changing times. Far from it, through all this change there is remarkable continuity that the Viking community, both serving and retired, will recognise.

First and foremost, the 1st Battalion has continued to privilege its core warfighting capability - the Vikings are nothing if not proud combat soldiers. Indeed, Exercise Viking Storm in



**Commanding Officer enjoying swimming a leg of OLYMPUS VIKING.**



**Visiting the Sniper Cadre as No 2 to LCpl Rowan Tomlinson.**

May 21, with its prior build-up and subsequent CPX on Ex WESSEX STORM, was the most challenging combat training for the Battalion since 2017, determinedly self-generated during a gap in the Covid clouds. And being self-generated, it offered the chance to push ourselves harder

than even CTG would, as many of the following articles testify. As a result, the Battalion's combat edge remains sharp.

This combat edge is now the foundation of our readiness as the Regional Standby Battalion in Cyprus. But far more importantly it underpins

the Battalion's professional culture - a second important area of continuity. Reassuringly, 2021 has seen plenty of examples of this professional culture in action.

Through January to March at the height of the Covid pandemic, 1 R ANGLIAN was at the forefront of



# 1st Battalion (The Vikings)

fighting Covid in London, transforming itself into Medical Support Force (London) and becoming the first military unit to provide direct patient-facing support in hospitals. Junior soldiers found themselves in the most alien of environments, entrusted to do whatever they could to assist: screening, portering, cleaning, delivering, coordinating, and often

simply reassuring those in need. As CO, this brought some of my most humbling moments, seeing first-hand and hearing of the troops' humility, professionalism and commitment to the service of others, and the admiration they drew from NHS staff and patients - a reminder that our soldiers are good people, eager to do their bit to help in whatever

circumstances.

The same goes for the platoon that concurrently deployed to Oman for six months on a relatively unglamorous but important task facilitating the drawdown of vehicles from Kabul, earning high praise from 104 Log Bde who oversaw the operation. Likewise, for the company supporting Op PITTING, the evacuation from Kabul, which saw 1 R ANGLIAN providing the bulk of the workforce in Dubai, the staging point through which some 15,000 evacuees from Kabul were processed. Most Vikings deployed on this only days after arriving in Cyprus and did much the same job as counterparts in Kabul, with a calming, compassionate and professional manner. The limelight fell on 16

Brigade, but the troops quietly making things happen in

the background were Royal Anglians and our Cyprus-based companions in 2 YORKS.

On a lighter note but equally demonstrative of the healthy professional culture in the Battalion was Olympus Viking.

Telling people in January amidst the Covid lockdowns that we intended to run, swim, cycle and row the

Battalion's flag 3500km from London to Dhekelia drew some interesting responses. It certainly wasn't easy, and the stories of physical and mental endurance that it spawned are truly impressive. But the abiding takeaway is that together the team made it happen in traditional Royal Anglian style. Despite all the hurdles they did it, and raised £15,000 for charity in the process.

The final area of continuity worthy of mention is the Battalion's adaptability. The first half of 2021 featured an ever-changing programme. Almost

A Company Tac surveying the scene mid CALFEX on Exercise VIKING STORM.



# 1st Battalion (The Vikings)

all of the activities mentioned above came about at short notice, not through any fault but simply because the unique nature of 2021 required it. The Battalion's enablers were especially under pressure, but they delivered. The work they did on yesterday's problem was often shelved as they set about solving a new problem today.

The same cheerful adaptability and acceptance of change has seen the Battalion thrive in its early days in Cyprus. Living overseas is not without its challenges, but an overwhelming majority of troops and their families are taking full advantage of the opportunities it brings. Sports clubs have restarted; the ranges and local training areas are busy; the water sports centre and beach bar are a hive of activity; and the AT centre is fully-booked. Even some of those soldiers most reluctant to leave London are



## **Vikings helping in London hospitals.**

enjoying a different life.

This adaptability is a constant for the Vikings, so whilst there is inevitably sadness at the prospect of reducing in size, we look forward to the new challenges that SFA will bring and the opportunity to co-locate with the 2nd Battalion. Like moving to Cyprus,

it too will offer new opportunities, a chance to remain relevant to 21st Century soldiering, working more closely as a regiment, and giving our soldiers the chance to do their bit, humbly, with pride and professionalism.

Finally, to those who have left the Battalion this year we say a fond farewell. To Maj Bennett-Madge as Bn 2IC, to Maj Granfield as OC HQ Coy, the longest-serving Viking at the time of his retirement, Majs Crosbie and Mackness as OCs A and C Coys, to Cpts Brunson and Johnston as Adjutant and Ops Officer, and to the RSM, WO1 Butterick, who has commissioned and moved to be the UWO, thank you for all you did to make 2021 the year it was. Notwithstanding the significant changes, your efforts, and those of all Vikings, have maintained the best traditions of a proud battalion.



**Pte Kojo Rockson prepares to assault into a building in Cellini Village.**



LCpl Nathan Davies closes to engage with the bayonet at close quarters.

# From the RSM

*WO1 (RSM) Wayne Butterick*

Eighteen months ago, I had the absolute honour of being appointed Regimental Sergeant Major (RSM) of the Vikings. It has been, without doubt, one of the highlights of my 22-year career and it has been my privilege to see how much the Vikings have achieved in such a short space of time.

The Battalion has just completed its move from Woolwich to Alexander Barracks in Cyprus and, having not been posted overseas in over two decades, we are embracing the myriad opportunities presented by life on island. As ever, the Battalion met the challenge of the unit move and the task of settling into our new home with trademark professionalism.

The future is full on; maintaining readiness, delivering company and battalion level training and remaining focussed on potential operations. In preparation for these events, the Battalion is the fittest it has ever been. I'm sure any fitness test or combat challenge would be met with enthusiasm by our young soldiers!

Due to the pandemic, the Warrant Officers' & Sergeants' Mess has still not been able to conduct a function in my time as RSM. However, we are planning on a regimental dinner night in mid-November where we can celebrate our new home in Cyprus and pay tribute to



our partners and wives who do so much to support us. The President of the Mess Committee (PMC), WO2 Fish, ably supported by WO2 Willan, have done an amazing job getting the Mess to look fantastic in a short period of time. I thank them both for their efforts and

support to the Mess.

The Corporals' Mess likewise has also not been able to conduct a large-scale mess event. They, too, have some great functions planned while we are in Cyprus. With Cpl Hedderick at the helm as PMC, the Corporals' Mess has had an injection of drive and imagination. His hard work has turned the Corporals' Mess into an exciting place with a special atmosphere, as well as its own bar and Mess staff. I commend him for his achievements. Well done!

As I come to the end of my time as RSM, my focus will be on the leadership, retention and empowerment of all NCOs and soldiers in the Battalion. This is a critical function; we need to get this right in the modern Army and will enable the Vikings to continue to grow and become as strong as we can be in preparation for our next battle.

In summary, after yet another busy and fulfilling year, we eagerly await what the next year has in store for us. We will always be ready to get into the fight no matter what the next challenge. Finally, I would just like to express my genuine gratitude to all the partners and families that stand by us in hard and testing times over the years. You are our rock that holds us firm.

**Thank you. "Stabilis"**



# 1st Battalion (The Vikings)



A (Norfolk) Company at ENDEX of Exercise VIKING STORM.

## A (Norfolk) Company

### OC's Introduction

*Maj James Walters*

I had the privilege to take command of A (Norfolk) Company at the start of an exceptionally busy year. Christmas leave was cut short for some in the company as they returned to Woolwich for Op RESCRIPT, the military operation supporting the national coronavirus response. Soldiers from the company worked alongside D (Cambridgeshire) Company to deliver assistance to schools preparing to deliver mass testing to their students.

These soldiers quickly changed roles to work in hospitals supporting the NHS during the peak of the coronavirus pandemic. Simultaneously to this the remainder of the company worked alongside C (Essex) Company to deliver forces at readiness under Op RELOCK.

A Company reformed in March and immediately had the chance to prove themselves on Ex VIKING SHIELD, a demanding public order exercise. Facing

off against C (Essex) Company, the soldiers of A (Norfolk) Company held their nerve and were awarded the highest level of assurance from the Mission Ready Training Centre validators. This was followed by a section and platoon level exercise to prepare the company for Ex VIKING STORM.

Ex VIKING STORM was the pinnacle of the training year. It opened with a baptism of fire...or should that be a deluge of water. The first day saw an unrelenting downpour of heavy rain which had the potential to set the tone for the rest of the exercise. Fortunately the rain eased off and A (Norfolk) Company delivered an excellent performance on home turf in Thetford. The exercise culminated in a superb live firing package in Otterburn. This was the last significant event for A Company before we stood down for some well earned leave ahead of the unit move.

The company arrived in Cyprus as the evacuation of Kabul got underway. A Company were asked to reinforce elements of B (Suffolk) Company who had deployed forward to Dubai in support of Op PITTING. Despite having only been on island for a couple of days far more soldiers stepped forward than were needed, testament to the enduring sense of duty in the Company. As I write this A (Norfolk) Company are providing the force protection at Ayios Nikolaos, a job they have done with their usual professionalism. All have now had the opportunity to enjoy island life and are looking forward to next summer.

It has been a busy year, and not just in our work. The Company has said farewell to WO2 (CSM) Kerin after an outstanding two years in appointment and we have welcomed WO2 (CSM) Green back to his parent company as its Company Sergeant Major. We have

Maj James Walters, OC A (Norfolk) Company



LCpl Dominic Wood scans the ground before continuing the advance.



# 1st Battalion (The Vikings)



**Sgt Liam Whitehouse crosses a street under cover of smoke.**

welcomed three babies into the Company and had seven weddings. We also said our farewells to Pte Walters (formerly 2 R ANGLIAN) after an impressive and

varied 22 year career.

Ahead of us is the opportunity to train as a company in Cyprus for the first time and we look forward to getting back

into the field. The company will assume very high readiness over the Christmas period and stand ready to deploy across the region in times of crises.

## **Army Rugby 7s – Ptes Ratu Senibuli and Lemeki Tulele**

Just 13 of the 22 soldiers, handpicked from throughout the Army, were selected to play in the 2021 Rugby 7s season after a week of trials held in July. Two of those soldiers, Privates Ratu Senibuli and Lemeki Tulele, came from A (Norfolk) Company.

They went on to compete in 5 tournaments between them; the Aldershot, Nottingham, Bury St Edmonds, Richmond and Bournemouth 7s – winning three and reaching the final in two of them. At 32, Pte Tulele is the older of the rugby playing pair. He

started playing in school and progressed within the Fijian rugby club system until he was selected to play for the country's national 7s team in the 2017/8 season. This was however to be the final season of his professional rugby career, as he took the decision to move to the UK. "My favourite moment of the tournament was our first game at the Aldershot 7s. I had seen the Army 7s team playing since I first moved to the UK and to be playing for them felt like such an honour".

Private Senibuli also started playing rugby in his home country, Fiji. He

played in the under 15, 16, 17,18 and 19s teams, including by representing the under 18s Fijian 15 aside team in New Zealand as a fall back and winger. He was picked to progress to the under 20s team but decided to join the British Army instead. Asked how he came to that life changing decision, he said "I wanted to change my life and I wanted the structure and discipline. I wasn't expecting to play rugby for the Army but I saw Tulele was doing it and I wanted to get involved". Scoring the final try and securing the win of the Nottingham

7s tournament in the final against the Samurai Barracudas saw Senibuli win man of the match. “It was a really proud moment for me as it was my first time playing with the Army 7s”.

The duo certainly present a strong front, which is unsurprising given that they stood shoulder to shoulder on a very different playing field before the rugby season. In January the pair had been in the same shield team on a weeks’ long public order exercise in Longmoor, Ex VIKING SHIELD. Senibuli had picked up a CO’s coin for his performance with the shield and hickory stick. However, there were also some low points for the A company duo as they ran, dodged and scrummaged through the season.

Senibuli explains that “when good friends didn’t make the team or get played for some games, it’s really hard as you all become very close...Everyone is very supportive of each other and the whole team still speak all the time”. For Tulele, a literal low point was being knocked unconscious after taking an elbow to the jaw. Asked what motivated them to keep pushing themselves, Tulele replied “we were proud to represent the Royal Anglian Regiment, we were the two representatives. Regimental pride gives you a push on match day. Some



**Private Lemeki Tulele races towards the tri line during the Aldershot 7s where he was nominated by management as the best player of the tournament.**



**Private Ratu Senibuli scores a try against Speranza 22 in the Nottingham 7s tournament.**



# 1st Battalion (The Vikings)



**Ptes Ratu Senibuli (fifth from left, rear) and Lemeki Tulele (third from left, rear) celebrate with the team having been awarded man of the match and player of the tournament trophies (respectively) for the Nottingham 7s.**

of the Corporals here [in Battalion] are rugby players and they told us to do the Battalion proud before we left – I had that in my mind on match day”.

The two players return to their battalion and company with their heads held high and the experience has clearly

left them with friendships which will last a lifetime. Asked about their famous older/younger brother dynamic, Tulele laughs and agrees – “even around camp I always call him ‘my boy’”. Asked if they thought that the skills developed in rugby translated well to their jobs in

their new home in Cyprus, both agreed that having the discipline to get up early for rugby training and stay fit translated well to their performance at work. A strong performance from these two Vikings, well done!



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# Operation CATTALO

## Supporting the Drawdown of Afghanistan

*Lieutenant Dan Kitchen*

As the Battalion returned from summer leave in August 2020, it became clear that the reduction of the Op TORAL 11 commitment to Kabul would impact on B Company's deployment. At the same point, the Company was asked to prepare a Force Protection platoon to deploy to Oman in support of the in-load and out-load of equipment and vehicles from Kabul back to the UK.

A flurry of volunteers followed, and a pan-B Company platoon was deployed as an attachment to 9 Regt RLC to Duqm, Oman. The platoon was led by Lt Daniele Kitchen and Sgt Jamie Du Maurier.

Upon landing and completing

isolation, the platoon immediately stepped into the day-to-day tasks consisting of camp security and the driving and escorting of vehicles and equipment landing in Duqm as part of the drawdown of troops from Kabul. The vehicle convoy tasks included Foxhounds, Civilian Armoured Vehicles and Ridgebacks. This gave the soldiers a great opportunity to test their driving skills in the desert and put their training to use. The role in Oman enabled the platoon to work in partnership with units they would not usually work with and required liaison with the Royal Omani Police Force.

In the margins, the platoon enjoyed

the adventure and training opportunities available in the Duqm area. The terrain in Oman was physically challenging and provided an excellent environment to train in. In October the platoon competed in the Para 10 Miler challenge, which was particularly testing in the heat and across desert. Positions first to fourth were all held by Vikings, testament to the hard work put in by the soldiers who both prepared for and competed in the event.

Alongside supporting the RAF, the Platoon worked in partnership with the Navy. Much of the equipment was brought into theatre left Oman by ship. Outside of work this provided training



Duqm Airbase.



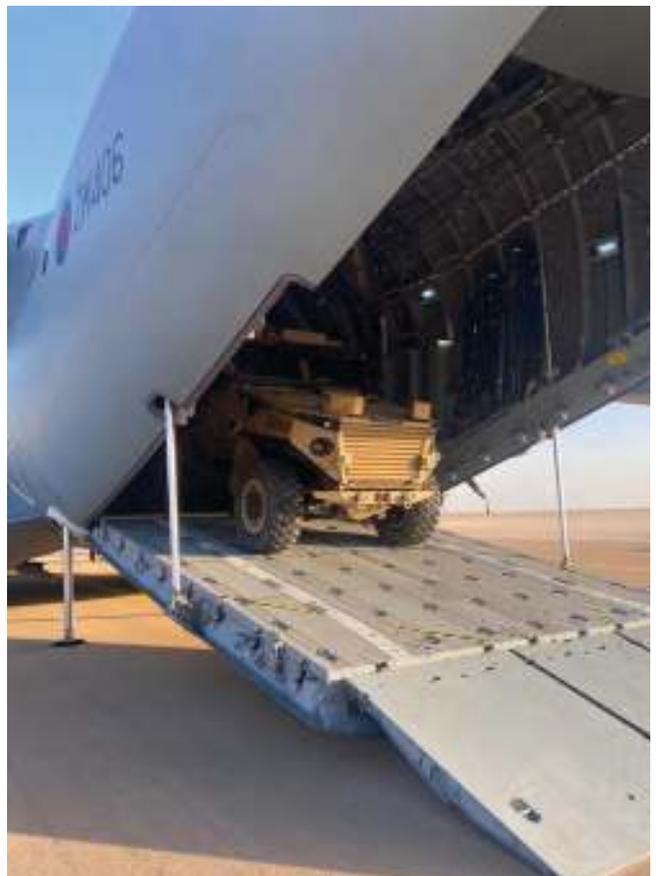
# 1st Battalion (The Vikings)



Lt Dan Kitchen and Sgt Jamie Du Maurier represent the Vikings at a Remembrance service aboard *HMS Montrose*.



Pte Sam Barton lays a wreath on behalf of the Regiment.



Foxhound delivery from Kabul.

opportunities with the Royal Marines aboard, and a competitive Army vs Navy Football Match. Additionally, representatives from the platoon had the privilege of attending the Remembrance Sunday Service aboard the HMS Montrose.

Dedicated to making the most out of the experience, and led by Cpl Jonathan Finch, B Company's enthusiastic PTI, the members of the Platoon enjoyed an excellent training programme, including circuit sessions, desert runs and night navigation exercises.

PT aside, the platoon focussed on night and day tactical rehearsals and lessons, in order to prepare for upcoming exercise and promotional courses upon return to the UK.

As Christmas approached and the outflow of equipment from Kabul began to slow, the need arose to reduce the manpower in country. Sgt Du Maurier and 8 volunteers commendably remained in Oman for the Christmas period, before returning to the UK in early January. For 5 Platoon, Op CATTALO provided a different but interesting alternative to a deployment to Kabul.



**LCpl Michael Smith competes in the Para 10 Miler.**



**Climbing in the Omani Desert.**



# 1st Battalion (The Vikings)

## B (Suffolk) Company

### OC's Introduction

*Maj Tim Hearne*

Almost exactly a year ago, B Coy were told that they definitely would not be going to Kabul on Op TORAL 11 and the shift should be a return to warfighting and the move to Cyprus. What replaced a planned and well-defined year was a period of activity which reshaped the Coy and transported them to the Lead Company Group (LCG) based in Cyprus.

Exactly as the news about Op TORAL 11 arrived, was the news that a platoon would deploy to Oman in support of Op CATTALO – the logistical extraction from Afghanistan. The commitment was based on 5 Platoon (Fighting Five) working under 104 Log Bde based in Duqm and, led by Lt Dan Kitchen, lasted for three months before D Coy took over. During this time, the Coy was able to support the Sp Weapons cadres and the first VASEC Platoon while re-orientating to core role training.

Over Christmas leave the Coy was stood up to support COVID testing in London schools as part of Op RESCRIPT but then also took the lead on delivering the Battalion Public Order exercise, Ex VIKING SHIELD 1 and 2. This saw the majority of the Company conduct the immersive and challenging event lead by the Coy 2IC and CQMS, Capt Tom Hardiman and CSgt Adam Barclay.



**B Company insert for a mission.**

After this, the Coy was able to deploy on a BCS exercise in SENTA, Wales which also prepared a number of candidates for the Bn JNCO cadre. This saw eight successful soldiers complete the course from the Coy, while the remainder conducted ranges and preparation for Ex VIKING STORM.

Ex VIKING STORM was the Battalion's major activity of 2021 and most significant for B Coy as it had not conducted any collective training

since 2019. It was an excellent and challenging experience, topped off by the latest VASIEC soldiers joining at for the LFTT phase in Otterburn.

All this activity has now delivered B Coy into Cyprus and the LCG role well. Initially the Cyprus Ops QRF under 1 PWRR and stood up for Op PITTING within the first three weeks, B Coy has also already contributed the PI lead to support the operation from Dubai. First on island, on readiness and to deploy, we are also making the most of the travel, training and adventure.

### Readiness and training in Cyprus

*Capt Andy Simms*

After returning from Ex VIKING STORM in late May, the Battalion finished its final preparations for the move to Cyprus and the assumption of the RSB role. As part of this preparation, all officers took part in a two-day study program looking into Non-combatant Evacuation Operations (NEO) and Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Relief (HADR). This was supported by Joint Force Headquarters (JFHQ) and other elements from across Defence. Soldiers received the global RSOI package which focused on deployment briefs for anywhere in the region.

Upon arriving in Cyprus, the Lead Company Group (LCG) were stood up in preparation to deploy to the Middle East as part of OP PITTING and with 2 YORKS quick to deploy under 16 Air Assault Brigade, B Coy was next on the readiness list. A platoon commanded by Lt Rob Smith and Sgt Jason Pritchard, deployed to the Middle East in support of the Afghanistan evacuation at a "Temporary Safe Location" to help process those who had escaped Kabul and were bound elsewhere. The readiness for the operation continued



**Soldiers from B (Suffolk) Company deploy on Op PITTING.**



**CGS chats to LCpl Lewis Ashton and LCpl Rowan Tomlinson.**

for a number of weeks and also included preparations to support from Cyprus and RAK Akrotiri.

After this, B Coy maintained the LCG for another two months, which meant they could also maintain a high level of training alongside readiness. One of the many positives of the Unit's relocation to Cyprus has been the abundance of training areas available in close proximity, something that was not previously available in Woolwich. This has improved the Vikings' ability to maintain its warfighting capability.

The access to static ranges and live firing areas has already been tested and B Coy took a starring role when CGS visited Pyla ranges and observed 5Pl conducting contact drills on a live



**Soldiers from B Company train in compound clearance.**



# 1st Battalion (The Vikings)

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**B (Suffolk) Company conduct live firing training with the GPMG on Dhekelia Ranges.**



**B (Suffolk) Company enjoying the swimming pool during a military swim test.**

compound clearance range.

B Coy prepare now to handover the LCG role to C Coy but also prepare to support the first readiness test, Exercise TURBULENT, which simulates an operational activation and deployment. Maintaining readiness has been a new challenge, but one that has been made easy by the Battalion's location and training appetite.



**Pte Oliver Read and Pte Cameron Hay clear a compound.**



# 1st Battalion (The Vikings)

## C (Essex) Company

### OC's Introduction

*Maj Tom Green, OC C (Essex) Company*



**C Company during the rural phase of the public order exercise, VIKING STORM.**

Keen readers of *Castle* will note this is my first article as OC C (Essex) Company in the Vikings. I took over command of the Company from Maj Dave Crosbie, who will be sorely missed but was required in the rarefied air of MOD Main Building.

C (Essex) Company has had a busy, but thoroughly rewarding, 2021. The Company's return from Op TORAL and a brief but deserved R&R period then saw the Company move into a programme aligned to Op RELOCK, forces held at readiness to move back into Afghanistan if required. The importance of this task,

once handed over to 3 PARA, became readily apparent mere months later...

2021 so far has been characterised by the public order exercise, Ex VIKING STORM and then the unit move to Cyprus. C Company was the final company to deploy to the island, having had summer leave in the UK and jumped straight into commitments in the Mediterranean. Indeed, eleven soldiers of C Company deployed to the Middle East on Op PITTING 24hrs after landing at RAF Akrotiri.

A testament to the hard work of the officers and SNCOs of the company,

they deployed without hesitation, fully prepared for the task in hand. This was a stark reminder of the demands of life at readiness whilst part of British Forces Cyprus, which the Company had seen previously during Op RELOCK only months before. Here, we have continued to maintain readiness as a mindset, with bergans and body armour packed and visible in rooms and offices alike.

Due to the rotations, C Company's first few weeks on island were relatively gentle and were planned to give the soldiers time and space to adjust to their new life in the Eastern Med. The

Company have reacted brilliantly to their new surroundings and have been very active members of the excellent Dhekelia Watersports Club and making full use of the Adventure Training available to all on island. The target of every soldier completing a week of organised AT by Christmas is within reach.

Whilst much of our training has been to maintain a state of readiness, we have also taken opportunities to train with other units on the island. 539 Assault Sqn Royal Marines, from 47 Commando, deployed to Cyprus on an annual exercise. Here, C Company had a chance to train with the sqn on littoral operations.

First, the company had to achieve a swim test pass and complete a capsized drill, all under the watchful eye of the Royal Marines team. Thankfully, all passed and could continue to beach landing drills of various types before heading out on exercise to the Western Sovereign Base Area training areas in Cyprus. It proved to be a very enjoyable training serial (made more so by the warm sea temperatures of the Med) and a shakeout exercise which has already



**Cpl James Macree's section conduct landing drills with 539 Squadron Royal Marines.**

demonstrated its worth.

The Company will shortly move into high readiness and complete a number of

other exercises before Christmas. Half the company will remain on island over the Christmas period on essential duties.

## **Ex OLYMPUS SAIL**

*Lt Will Bagnall*

Readers of this edition of Castle Magazine will already be aware of Exercise OLYMPUS VIKING, the epic challenge that the Vikings undertook this summer.

Like all great athletes and sporting endeavours there was of course a string of supporting activities running in conjunction to the individual legs of the challenge. One of these was Exercise OLYMPUS SAIL, a sailing expedition whose mission was to support the rowing team during their crossing from Greece to Cyprus.

The crew comprised of two external skippers sourced from across the armed forces and crew from the Vikings; Lt Will Bagnall, Capt Ben Hopkin, LCpl Nathan Flaxbeard and Pte Harry Richardson. Not only was there the challenge of supporting the rowing team but also the need to bring on novice sailors ready for what had the potential to be a dangerous



**Resupplying the rowers with fresh water in Donusa.**



# 1st Battalion (The Vikings)



Pte Harry Richardson at the helm.



Capt Ben Hopkin at the helm.



and arduous voyage.

The expedition was broken down into three phases. First the crossing from Cyprus to Rhodes, which was our entry point to the Greek Islands. Second moving Northwest through the Islands to rendezvous with the rowing team and then threading our way back to Rhodes. Finally, Rhodes back to Cyprus. A total distance of around 1,000 nautical miles. We were to encounter high winds, no wind, rough seas and shipwrecks all set to the magnificent backdrop of the Mediterranean Ocean.

Having assembled the crew at RAF Akrotiri, our start point, we provisioned the boat, familiarised ourselves with all the roles and responsibilities on board, and once we had practised some man overboard drills, we were ready.

The 300-mile crossing from Cyprus

to Rhodes was a trial by fire for the inexperienced crew. Heading into the wind for the duration, conditions onboard were grim. Learning to deal with the pitch and roll of the yacht, sleepless nights and seasickness became the norm.

That said when we arrived in Rhodes our sea legs were set and after refuelling the boat we headed into the ancient walled city to refuel ourselves in preparation for the push Northwest to meet the rowers.

The first island we reached following Rhodes was Astipalaia. We had favourable conditions during the sail allowing everyone a chance on the helm with the boat heeled over. When we arrived we were greeted by a small marina, set on the steep sides of a cove with traditional white buildings

surrounding, a welcome reward after another overnight passage. Small traditional fishing ports characterised most of our overnight halts during the island phase of the expedition.

We met the rowers on the small island of Donousa, a popular backpacking destination with great sailing and awesome beaches, with lots to look at such as a huge wreck just off the beach. When the rowers arrived at the marina our crew set to work replenishing all their supplies while they fed and got some rest.

This was the best system for the rowers as it alleviated their admin burden, allowing them to focus on their next leg in terms of route plans and speeds they were required to achieve to stay on schedule. Moving from Donousa we had identified a large shipwreck



Astipalia marina.



# 1st Battalion (The Vikings)



**Sailing yacht *Meltemi II* in Rhodes marina.**

that was on our route. We stopped and snorkelled over the 150m ship that ran aground in the 80s during bad weather, an eerie experience.

Another highlight was also the island of Nisyros, home to an active volcano. After checking in with the rowers and ensuring they were good we made the stop and made the trek up the mountain to see the crater.

On the way back we cleared out of customs from Greece in Rhodes. Before leaving we ensured the rowers were set for the long crossing back across from

Rhodes, they were taking the time to get a well-deserved rest in before their final leg. The crossing back to Cyprus couldn't have been more different to the way out, we had the wind behind us to start before it tailed away, this made for smooth sailing and we made good time.

Upon our return we cleaned and handed the boat back, happy to be back on dry land. The rowers arrived 24hours later having made great time. The expedition had been a success and the two novices onboard were both awarded their competent crew qualification.

LCpl Flaxbeard summed up his experience...“I had an amazing experience on the sailing expedition. I had wanted to try sailing for a long time because it seemed like it would be an excellent adventure.

The beginning of the trip was the hardest part for me due to the unrelenting sea sickness although this did improve. The high point was certainly the shipwreck and exploring it, a new experience for me. I will return to sailing again in future and hope to make it a regular occurrence.”

## Burial of LCpl Robert Cook

27 October 2021

*Maj Peter Williamson*

A team of 16 soldiers from C 'Essex' Company recently travelled to Belgium to conduct the burial of WW1 soldier LCpl Robert Cook, who served in 2nd Bn The Essex Regiment.

He enlisted in November 1914 and arrived on the Western Front on 14 March 1915. The War Diaries of 2nd Battalion The Essex Regiment show that they moved into the frontline near Ypres on 30 April 1915. At 1700hrs on 2 May 1915 they were attacked with gas, they were shelled, and then attacked by the enemy. By the end of the day casualties had amounted to 23 killed, 72 wounded and 175 missing. Lance Corporal Cook was killed during this action.

Between 2014 and 2015 twenty-four sets of remains were discovered during construction work on what is believed to have once been the site of Irish Farm Cemetery, a Regimental Aid Post, just outside of Ypres. LCpl Cook was the only soldier to be identified out of this group. This was due to 3 South Africa medal ribbons, gained during previous service, and his Essex Regt shoulder badges. The remains were subsequently DNA tested with one of LCpl Cook's surviving relatives and the identity was confirmed.

The burial took place in New Irish Farm Cemetery, a stone's throw away from where the remains were discovered. The soldiers from C Company were split into coffin bearers and a firing party with Sgt Toby Granfield in command of the coffin and Cpl Dave Leadley in command of the firing party.

The overall ceremony was coordinated by a team from JCCC



**LCpl Cook's  
badges which  
were used to  
help identify him.**



# 1st Battalion (The Vikings)



**Pte Cyrus Guiver and LCpl Josh Coe carrying the coffin.**



**Sgt Toby Granfield and the bearer party as the flag is folded.**



# 1st Battalion (The Vikings)

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and the Commonwealth War Graves Committee. This was to be the first public burial with full military honours for a WW1 soldier in nearly 2 years as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. In attendance were local dignitaries, representatives from RHQ and the Essex Regiment Museum, LCpl Cook's family

and local media.

After practice in Cyprus, and further rehearsals in the cemetery, the burial went off perfectly. The C Company soldiers were praised by JCCC and the family for the professional and respectful way they conducted themselves during the service. This gave LCpl Cook and



The Burial Party and Battalion Chaplain Gary Birch after the Reburial Service at the Australian 5th Division Memorial, The Butte, Polygon Wood CWGC.

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his family the dignity and closure he deserved.

It was an incredible experience and immensely reassuring for the soldiers to see the level of respect and care afforded to all fallen soldiers, even 106 years after their death. The burial party finished the day off with a tour around Essex Farm

cemetery. Here we were able to lay a wreath for an Essex Regiment soldier and reflect on the sacrifice made by so many in conflict and war, both past and present.

A full explanation appears in the Regimental Heritage section towards the back of this journal.





# 1st Battalion (The Vikings)

## D (Cambridgeshire) Company

### OC's Introduction

*Maj Phil Lenthall, OC D (Cambridgeshire) Company*

2021 has been and continues to be a remarkable year for D (Cambridgeshire) Company. It has been stretched across a broad spectrum of activity and I am proud to say has delivered on every occasion.

Within the first six months of the year the Company deployed on two UK operations, excelled on a Bn level exercise 'VIKING STORM', supported Public Order validation and Ex ASKARI STORM as well as saw success on a deployed CAST alongside 7 Infantry Brigade "The Desert Rats" on Ex WESSEX STORM.

At the start of the year the Company



**Pte Lemeki Tulele receiving recognition for his support.**



**Vikings and their counterparts at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital.**



**D Company OPFOR engaging rifle companies.**

took the lead role, at short notice, within the Battalion on Operation RESCRIPT; first as Local Resilience Teams in support of COVID Testing in London Schools and secondly, and considerably more significantly, as Medical Support Force London (MSF(L)). Through an impressive 48hrs effort D Coy were

augmented with 200 CMTs from across Defence as well as receiving support from the Bn's rifle companies. The 350 strong Medical Support Force London was formed on a Sunday evening ready to deploy into 7 hospitals across London. This was as part of the UK Government's plan to support NHS

London in its declared emergency state in the fight against the COVID pandemic. The bespoke force worked from Jan through to Mar in a variety of roles in each of the London hospitals helping seriously ill COVID patients directly through medical care and indirectly with general duties support.



**Anti-Tank Platoon firing NLAW in support of Live Fire Company Group attack.**



# 1st Battalion (The Vikings)



**Above and below: MG Platoon provide fire support to a Live Fire Company Group.**

The military reinforcement to NHS Staff was greatly received in an emotionally testing time. All members of the MSF(L) gave a fully professional performance, with humility in a testing situation and with a sense of service to nation in its battle with the pandemic.

With a relatively quick turnaround the Company rebalanced with a number of the team returning from ASKARI STORM and formed up ready for Ex VIKING STORM. A Bn level exercise including live firing up to Company Group Attack. The Company's pedigree shone throughout the exercise, having recently swapped COVID PPE to CEFO, the soldiers of D Company showed their tactical acumen was still as sharp as ever. In a highly demanding exercise, they resoundingly defeated each Rifle Coy in turn as OPFOR during the Urban phase through a high level of personnel skill, an agile approach, and the will to win. This all culminated in Otterburn with Sniper & Machine Gun Pl rounds as well as Mortar bombs and Anti-Tank NLAWS all hitting the targets simultaneously on H for three Coy Gp attacks.

With only time for a short breath CIS Platoon deployed again following VIKING STORM but this time to



Salisbury Plain on CAST. Executed alongside 7 Brigade on WESSEX STORM, the platoon deployed into the field and provided data and VHF/ HF throughout whilst BGHQ were put through their paces. The platoon's efforts no doubt contributed to a Green

CAST report.

Like the rest of 1 R Anglian, D Coy conducted a unit move to Cyprus taking on their role as part of the Regional Standby Battalion. The move marks a new chapter for the Company with plenty of opportunity in the sun ahead.

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## Combined Arms Staff Training

*Capt Ben Hopkin*



**CIS Platoon and Battlegroup Headquarters staff in front of BGHQ on Exend.**

In June this year the Viking's Battalion Headquarters (BHQ) staff and CIS platoon deployed on Ex WESSEX STORM to conduct Combined Arms Staff Training (CAST). CAST is normally conducted in Warminster camp but in order to enhance the realism and training value, and to build on the valuable experience gained on Ex VIKING STORM, we elected to conduct CAST deployed in the field under tactical conditions.

Conducting CAST in this manner has not been done by any other Battalion previously and therefore was unfamiliar territory. The BHQ staff and CIS platoon worked hard throughout the exercise to ensure that not only were we capable of conducting the set planning cycles to the highest of standards but also to demonstrate we could do this in a tactical environment in the field suffering a greater degree of sleep deprivation and added frictions than would have been the case in the CAST building.

CIS Platoon deployed to Sailsbury

Plain on 5th June to prepare and conducted a PACEX on Battlesbury Hill in advance of the arrival of the BHQ staff. During these first two days minor issues with comms equipment and vehicles were ironed out and by the arrival of the staff Battlegroup Headquarters (BGHQ) was set and ready for the coming tests.

The arrival of the staff saw a hectic two days of establishing the headquarters, familiarising new members with their roles and responsibilities in a deployed BGHQ, and conducting a practice planning cycle. This was a valuable use of time and allowed the team to hit the ground running at the start of the exercise able to start performing immediately.

On commencement of the exercise BGHQ deployed to West Hill Field Barn where we established BGHQ taking advantage of the barn as a building of opportunity. After a long night of fighting for comms BGHQ was set in readiness for the receipt of the first set of OSW from Brigade.

Mission 1 saw BGHQ plan a

conventional attack on an enemy held village before the Forward Headquarters then deployed to execute the mission. Mission 1 was a success and the staff had performed well under the watchful eye of the Chief of Staff, Major Jeff Bennet-Madge. With a few short hours sleep the staff prepared to begin Mission 2. This mission saw the staff bolstered by the arrival of Capt Dan Russell as the Brigade Liaison Officer/Media Officer/Aviation officer.

This was just in time for our first mission involving aviation so he had work to do. The second mission saw steady improvement from Mission 1 and the staff were pleased, and suitably tired from the efforts of the last few days.

After some time deployed in the field we relocated to the CAST building in Warminster camp where we established BGHQ. The Battalion was required to conduct stabilisation operations and a Non-combatant evacuation operation. This was a significant change of both pace and focus after the previous



# 1st Battalion (The Vikings)



conventional operations, but the BGHQ staff quickly adjusted to the new scenario and were responding to the changing scenario on the ground whilst making maximum use of the facilities on offer in the CAST building.

The final mission saw BGHQ deploy one last time to Parsonage Field Barn to conduct a final four-hour planning cycle. The weather was hot, the HQ tentage even hotter, but the staff got to work establishing the headquarters and once more conducting a planning cycle for a complex Helicopter Assault Force on an enemy held village. This final Planning cycle ran smoothly and saw the best set of orders and OSW yet delivered to the companies. Forward HQ, now increasingly tired and envious of their counter- parts in Main, deployed one last time to execute the plan and manage the battle.

Overall CAST was a huge success with the Bn performing very well and obtaining excellent results across the



**BGHQ established for CAST in the field.**

board. This was despite increasing the challenge of the event by conducting the entire exercise in the field under increased pressure and in a tactical environment conducting a total of

seven“CHOCs”. Our performance was hugely reassuring as the staff walked away from the exercise knowing they were above the standard, even under tough conditions.

## **OLYMPUS VIKING**

### **The 1st Battalion’s Ultra-Quadrathlon from Woolwich to Cyprus**

*Capt Toby Reid*

Nine countries, 26 Vikings and 4,898km – the aim? To get the 1st Battalion’s flag from Woolwich to Cyprus using human power alone. Running, swimming, cycling, rowing – that’s it. Why? Well, why not. Because it, the challenge, was there.

That said, ask me to list the things that might be impossible to pull off in the midst of a global pandemic and an ultra-quadrathlon across Europe would probably be quite high up on the list. When our initial planning began late in 2020, the luxury of travelling between countries was but a fond memory for most of us.

Credit in our achievement must firstly go to the team captains; their efforts in planning routes, organising the training sessions and pulling off their respective legs with little incident is testament to their leadership and tenacity. Beyond

**The teams**

**Run:** Maj Jeff Bennett-Madge, Capt Howard Johnston, Capt Tom Hardiman, Lt Robert Smith, WO2 Gavin Watts (TC), WO2 Min Sunuwar, WO2 Phil Green, CSgt Chris Scott, SSgt Blessing Mafaindi, Cpl Simon Richardson

**Swim:** Lt Col Graham Goodey, Capt Jim Tracey, Capt Mike Andrews, Lt Jake Bamford (TC), LCpl Ollie Cheal, Pte Cameron Crawford, Pte Michael Walker, Pte Daniel White

**Cycle:** Capt Dan Russell, Lt Ross Simmons (TC), Lt Howard Gurney, Cpl Simon Richardson (again!)

**Row:** Capt Ed Williams (TC), Cpl Jake Harraway, Cpl Byron Kenway, Pte Mitch Carruthers

the captains, each and every member of the Olympus Viking teams deserves all the praise and recognition that they have rightly attracted.

Each leg presented challenges along the way and the teams can be proud to have been part of a fantastic endeavour. As well as proving that the



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spirit of adventure of lives proudly on in the battalion, Olympus Viking helped raise £15,000 for four very deserving charities: Combat Stress, The Royal Anglian Benevolent Fund, One Dream One Wish and Little Heroes.

Thank you to all who donated, it means a lot to those that endured hardship and your kind words and support were keenly felt throughout. The 1st Battalion's flag, the 'baton' that was carried each step of the way and passed from team to team, now flies proudly above the parade square in Cyprus.

## The Run

*Capt Tom Hardiman*

The Battalion running team had the honour of kicking off the relay with a 70+ mile run from Woolwich to Dover. In Dover, we would link up with the Swimming team and present the Battalion flag.

The team was made up of 10 members of the Battalion, all with a keen interest in running. Incredibly training began just a few months before race day. The team was led by WO2 Gavin Watts, the most experienced runner in the Battalion. WO2 Watts, presented the team with a running program which involved team runs and individual runs, designed to steadily increase mileage. The team runs also doubled up as



The runners in high spirits at the half-way point.

reconnaissance for the overall route. The first training run was 23 miles from Woolwich to Rochester. This route led out the team out of London along the A2. The second training run 18 miles from Rochester to Canterbury happened to be on the hottest day of the year. Two further runs saw us cover 30 and 18 miles respectively to complete the reconnaissance ahead of attempting the challenge.

Race day began at 0200hrs and saw us leave the Royal Artillery Barracks with the Battalion's flag. The team were in high spirits as we ran past students enjoying night life. The first leg took the team up toward Rochester. We had a short break to refuel 18 miles in and continued. Around 0600 the sun was rising, and the team experienced a picturesque countryside scene. After 30 miles, we reached Gillingham Golf



WO2 Gav Watts, Capt Tom Hardiman and Cpl Simon Richardson in high spirits.



Arriving into Dover – one last push!

Course the start of 2nd Leg. From this point onwards the run began a game of mental grit and determination.

As we ran through Gillingham down to Canterbury the team, we really beginning to feel the effects of the previous miles, this inevitably slowed the pace. As the miles were ticked off each runner was dealing with their own ailments. To make matters worse the heat increased hour on hour. As we crossed the 50-mile mark, we entered the realm of the Ultra Marathon as purists say you must cover 50 miles to call yourself an ultra-runner.

The pain was real and evident as each repetitive step put additional stress on your body. The lactic acid build up was to a level I had not experienced before. Spirits were raised as we saw the sea and Dover. We proceeded to run down a route to the bottom of the white cliffs of Dover. After so many miles the downhill strain caused a lot of leg muscles to ache! As we reached the bottom of the hill, we had our final mile across the shingle of the beach to meet the swimmers. The relief and sense of achievement was phenomenal. None of us had ever run that far before. 75 Miles in 15 hours and 45mins!

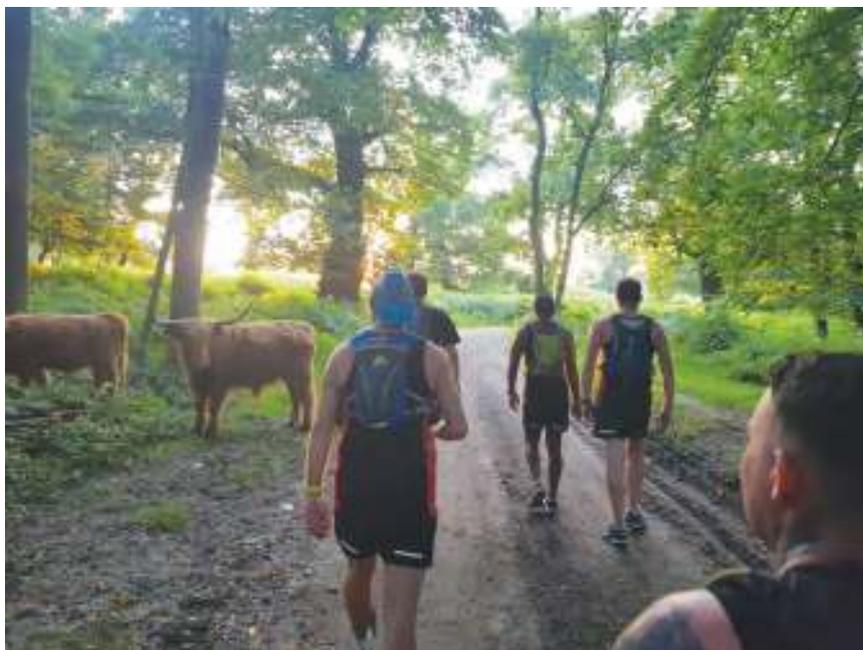
## The Swim

*Lt Jake Bamford*

The Channel swim was an exciting prospect for me, it's something I've always wanted to do, I naively thought to myself... I must admit that once planning started, I was daunted by what I'd signed up for.

One moment I remember in particular was whilst speaking to an open water swimming coach who, once I'd explained what the team were about to do, casually asked how many of the team had attempted the Channel before and how many had competed in other open water events. Once I had given her my answer for both (which was pretty much none of us, and pretty much never), there was an awkward silence before she said, "and you're doing this in six weeks' time?!"

The swim itself is from Samphire Hoe beach in Dover to somewhere between Calais and Cap De Griz-Nez



An admiring glance from a fan on the route.



75 miles later and on the beach! Successfully delivering the flag to Samphire Hoe Beach and ready for the swimming team to take over. From left: Lt Bobby Smith, Maj Jeff Bennett-Madge, Cpl Simon Richardson, WO2 Gav Watts, WO2 Phil Green, Capt Howard Johnston, Capt Tom Hardiman, Sgt Chris Scott, SSgt Blessing Mafaindi, WO2 Minkumar Sunuwar.

in France (the exact place you arrive depends on the tides and how fast you swim). All channel swim attempts must be done in line with the regulations from one of two recognised associations. The Channel Swimming Association was the regulating body for the Olympus Viking team. Under their rules swimmers in a relay team take turns swimming as far as they can in one hour before swapping with the next team member who is waiting in a safety boat travelling beside the swimmer. Swimmers are not

permitted to use wetsuits – in fact, only speedos are allowed – chilly! Without a doubt, the biggest challenge of the more than 21-mile swim is the cold, which can be between 14-16 degrees at times. The exact distance of the swim can vary widely as the tidal patterns of the channel mean the route taken takes a 'z' shape. The slower the swim, the more the coastal tide of France pulls swimmers to the Northeast into the bay below Calais, which can dramatically increase the overall distance which



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**The team after just completing their two-hour 'inoculation swim' - the final hurdle to being allowed to attempt the crossing.**

needs to be covered.

In between a busy calendar of courses and exercises, the team trained in a local outdoor pool as well as at

the London Docks outdoor swimming area, where there is a 700m swim route. One of the prerequisites for attempting the Channel crossing was a two-hour

swim in temperatures below 16 degrees to prove that we were ready to attempt the crossing. The team completed this together at the harbour in Dover where



**Quietly confident: the team are ready to set off on the challenge of swimming across the Channel. From left: Lt Col Graham Goodey MBE, Pte Cameron Crawford, Pte Dan White, Lt Jake Bamford, Pte Michael Walker, LCpl Ollie Cheal, Capt Jim Tracey, Capt Mike Andrews.**



**The sun rises over the Channel as the team head toward France.**

it was 15.3 degrees in the water. When asked what the best part of the swim had been, Captain Jim Tracey, the Adjutant replied, “getting out”.

Taking the first plunge into the icy water on the night of the event was Captain Mike Andrews, OC Recce Platoon. “It’s difficult to get your heart rate under control at first. After about 15 minutes I had managed to slow my breathing down which made things easier”. Along the way, the team were joined by dolphins, seals and of course, the dreaded jellyfish. LCpl Ollie Cheal, B Coy’s assistant RSDC remembers; “the worst part was swimming through a jelly fish field in the early hours of the morning. You couldn’t see them, but you felt them brush past you and then you felt the stinging”.

In the end, the team completed the event in 12 hours 54 minutes, beating the battalions last attempt of 13 hours 12 minutes set in 2004 and possibly even setting a new military record (a claim yet to be disproven...). Throughout the swim we’d carried the Battalion’s flag in a tightly packed drybag, keeping it safe and dry. Out came the flag and I handed it over to Lt Ross Simmons of the cycling team, ready for it to continue its journey.



**Lt Bamford and LCpl Cheal are dressed to impress and save lives as they meet up with the cycling team.**

## **The Cycle**

*Capt Dan Russell*

It turns out that it’s actually quite difficult to find two soldiers in speedos along 20km of French beach. This is exactly what the Olympus Viking Cycling team found out when meeting the swimmers near Cap Gris-Nez. When the swimmers were eventually found and the handover of the flag complete it was over to the four cyclists; Capt Dan Russell, Lt Howard Gurney, Lt Ross Simmons and Cpl

Richardson, to start their approximately 3500km route to Marathon, Greece.

Cycling through the Eastern part of France, shadowing the Belgium border, the team were making good time, averaging 150km a day, day-on-day-off in pairs. Despite the undulating French roads and harsh wind the team began to settle in to routine and living on the open road in their ‘deluxe’ motorhome.

Lt Gurney and Cpl Richardson rode across the Rhine and headed into Germany with the difficulties that they were expecting to face due to the Covid-19 crisis. In Germany the team experienced less-than friendly motorists and even less friendly weather! The wet weather continued in Austria as the team skirted through the foothills of the Alps. Austria was as hilly as expected with the team experiencing several 1 hour plus climbs, making the four of them very excited for the flat roads of Hungary.

Riding across the Hungarian plain, the fatigue had really started to kick in after 2 weeks on the road and the strains of maintaining an average of over 140km a day. The temperature had also started to pick up and was making the motorhome almost unbearable until early evening. Water stops had to be



taken more frequently with the riders drinking roughly 5 litres a ride and much needed calories getting harder to consume due to the heat.

Romanian and Bulgaria were up next and presented new challenges; roads that could be classed as 'B roads' reduced into sandy tracks, meaning that the team had to slow-go it or risk the unruly traffic of the busier roads. Another problem that became apparent (and would remain the key problem until we reached our destination) were the dogs. When I say dogs, I mean ferocious flea ridden wild dogs that lurk in packs on the outskirts of towns and villages. They chased and attacked the riders at every opportunity. Luckily when Capt Russell and Lt Simmons went up the Petrohan Pass (a 25km climb averaging a 6.5% gradient the whole way) there weren't any of our canine friends there. Otherwise, the two of them would have been in even more trouble than they already were in the 35 degree heat.

The four team members were very relieved when they crossed into Greece, remaining unbiten, though at this point extremely fatigued. The ever-



**Naïve bliss: Capt Dan Russell and Lt Ross Simmons before starting their second ride in France.**



**Lt Howard Gurney and Cpl Simon Richardson tackling one of the many climbs in Austria.**



**Don't let the smiles fool you. Lt Howard Gurney and Cpl Simon Richardson, happy to have made it to the end of a wet day in Austria.**

increasing temperature meant that the team adapted a new routine in starting as soon as the sun came up, in order to cover as much distance before the highs of 40+ degrees kicked in. Still maintaining an average of 130km per day, the pleasant Greek roads and stunning coastal scenery made the cyclists a little perkier and helped take the attention away from the sore legs. Arriving into Marathon Capt Russell and Lt Simmons then carried the flag onto Marathon Beach and ready for the rowers to take over for the final journey.

## The Row

*Sgt Jake Harraway*

It was a very normal day for me when I was approached by Captain Reid. After an initial thought of “what have I done now”, he calmly asked if I had any previous rowing experience. I thought

this was an odd question however I proceeded to tell him that I didn't. Fast-forward a few weeks; Capt Ed Williams, Cpl Kenway, Pte Caruthers, and myself are in the North Sea at the dead of the night stuck in what can only be described as a horrendous thunderstorm wondering why we had all just agreed to the challenge of rowing over 1000km across the Mediterranean Sea!

The training was all planned and executed by the company Rannoch who build ocean rowing boats capable of crossing the Atlantic. The plan would see us conduct our training in 3 stages: A week of learning how to row and becoming comfortable as well as safe living in the boat; a few days completing the licenses in how to use HF radios, navigate using charts and compass'; and finally two separate 24-hour rows to confirm we were ready. The last of which

would see us row from Greenwich down the Thames, into the North Sea and finish back in Essex on the day of Euros match of England against the Germans!

Fast-forward again to the 23rd of August and we are all stood in a rather dusty car park in Greece about to meet the cyclists.

Day one started off very well, we had roughly 45 nautical miles to cover before we could drop anchor and rest before day 2 (that is if you were able to sleep in a rocking rowing boat and 30+ degrees heat). The wind was on our side allowing us to average 4-5 knots, so spirits were high. At this rate we would be able to complete day one in roughly 20 hours on a rotation of 2 hours rowing, one hour navigating, and one hour rest. The calculations were thankfully correct, we managed to find a sheltered space to drop anchor just off the coast of



Shore-based training and the team gets to grips with navigating using charts.



# 1st Battalion (The Vikings)



**The team ready to set off from Greece on their epic voyage. From left: Capt Edward Williams, Pte Mitch Carruthers, Cpl Jake Harraway, Cpl Byron Kenway.**

Amorgos.

After very little sleep (1-2 hours) we woke up while it was still dark to begin taping our fingers and heels, putting nappy cream anywhere that might chafe and quickly getting some rations to eat before setting off towards the party island for the rich and famous – Mykonos. Days 3-5 were also long days; We averaged 40-50 nautical miles a day. We passed islands such as Amorgos, Nisos, Tilos, and finally Rhodes. However, we were also greeted with swells of 2-3 meters and conditions that were almost impossible to row in for the taller members of the team. Every time a wave would catch one of our oars it was either slammed into our shin, knee or particularly painfully, our hip!

After spending 24 hours in Rhodes hoping to recover a little, we woke up nice and early for our 4-day open water row to Cyprus and attempted to leave our mooring. This turned out to be quite the task as the wind was already blowing straight into the harbour and it was impossible to row out. Luckily, Pte Carruthers came to the rescue and ended

up jumping in the sea, literally dragging us out of the mooring, which was not the ideal start. We were very aware that for most of the trip the wind would be blowing us in the right direction towards Cyprus so, as long as we kept on a bearing we could cover a good distance in a 24-hour period! The first 24 hours we covered 72 nautical miles followed by another 24 hours covering 77 nautical miles. But things were about to go spectacularly wrong.

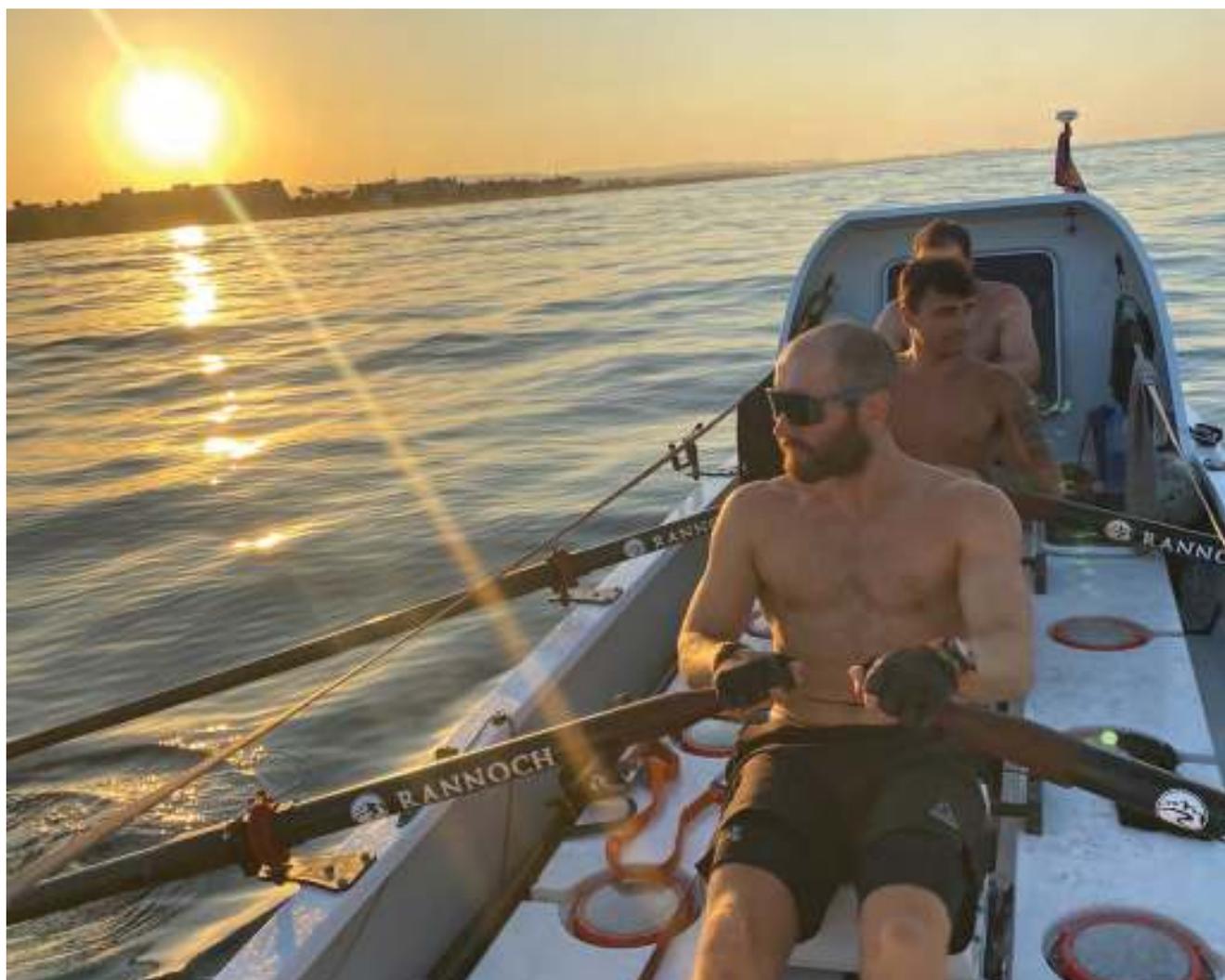
On the morning of the third day, we had noticed that the huge 3 metre waves that had been throwing us towards Cyprus, sometimes even hitting 12 knots surfing down the front of the boat, had stopped! Not only had they stopped but the wind was also starting to change direction and blow from north to south right across the side of the boat. This was not good! And soon our worst weather fears had come true, the 3 to 4 meter waves were now hitting us side on in conditions that were almost impossible to row in. We were now averaging 1 to 2 knots and basically

moving nowhere. This lasted a full day and most of the night. That day we only covered 30 miles, less than half of what we had covered in each of the previous two days.

Finally, the wind relented and on the 4th day we had a good breeze pushing us all the way into Paphos! As the sun was rising on the 4th morning it illuminated the mountains of Cyprus on the horizon, providing the team with a much-needed morale boost.

After an evening eating copious amounts of pizza and a good night's sleep, we set off on the 11th day towards Larnaca. Passing Akrotiri we had our first and only visit from the coast guard asking what we had done and where we were going. After explaining what we were doing I think they believed us to be mad or lying so, they just left us to it. Eventually on the morning of day 12 we arrived at Larnaca marina at 0830 greeted with beers and bakery goods (what a combo!) whilst we sat and awaited permission from customs and immigration to leave the marina to eat.

The final day saw us rise at 0330 and set off from Larnaca to our home beach in Alexander Barracks. As we were now very efficient and experienced rowers, we arrived early and decided to have an early morning swim about a mile away from the beach. The idea was that the battalion would be paraded on the beach and turn to see us row in and wade up the beach with the battalion flag, however after almost 2 weeks of continuous rowing we were somewhat impatient. We ended up storming the beach while the CO was still addressing the battalion! Handing the battalion flag over to the Commander British Forces, Maj Gen Thompson marked the end of our leg of the relay.



**Admiring the view: the sun rises on the final morning as the rowers pass Larnaca and head for their final destination – Dhekelia Beach!.**



# 1st Battalion (The Vikings)

## Ex VIKING SHIELD

*CSgt Adam Barclay*

The Battalion needed to conduct Public Order training to ensure that it was ready for operations once it arrived in Cyprus. B (Suffolk) Company was tasked with running and delivering the training for each of the rifle companies across Exercise VIKING SHIELD 1 & 2. To achieve validation each of the coys would need to undergo an intense day of activity all under the watchful gaze of the Mission Ready Training Centre.

Longmoor Training Camp was booked so we could use the Urban Training Facility, one of the best places to run a Public Order exercise! The companies were split down into platoons and put through a series of stands in and around Longmoor camp before seeing the main exercise area so the soldiers could not start remembering every street and corner that the Civilian population (CIVPOP) could hide.

The Public Order instructors started with the basics, from wearing the PPE correctly, rules of engagement and holding the baton and shield correctly. Once the instructors were happy that this had been achieved, the platoons progressed onto moving on foot and adding junction drills, barricades, advancing and withdrawing. This was a chance for the platoon commanders, platoon sergeants and shield team commanders to refine the command and control. This is an important step in training as being in a public order situation is confusing, chaotic and disorientating.

The fourth day of the package was what everyone one who knows about public order was excited for, petrol bomb inoculation! This needs to be completed to give personnel the confidence that their drills will work if they are ever

targeted by a petrol bomb. This was a good chance for them to warm up as it was a cold crisp morning in winter and see their respective OC and CSM be set on fire! Concurrently to this a baton gun range was being run, allowing the soldiers to fire and get to grips with this battle winning weapon.

Each platoon started off with a scenario of minor aggravation. The intensity grew quickly and platoons had to take ground, hold ground and disperse the civpop for up to 2 hours, also including the use of petrol bombs, smoke grenades and car fires to simulate what it was like for real. The civpop were given plenty of potatoes and baton rounds to use as projectiles which added extra pressure.

The Final day was the Validation from MTMC, this was at Company level and would allow the Company



Soldiers from B (Suffolk) Company hold a cordon.



**Soldiers from A (Norfolk) Company advance through a hail of snowballs.**

Commander to control his Platoons on the ground, but before that it was all hands on deck as it had snowed heavily over night and the gritter couldn't get to the village to clear it. So, it back to it best manual labour of clearing the roads with shovels and brooms to allow the company to continue training.

The CT2 exercise started off low level, as the exercising troops worked out of a FOB and where tested on states

of readiness. Here the Company was tested in all of the tactical activities across a number of battle exercises. As the night closed in, the Civpop moved to the front gate of the FOB and poured petrol on the MEP to simulate the FOB being set on fire. This triggered the Company to push out of the confines of their safe location and push the CIVPOP back, it was an extremely tough fight for both. The instructors had plenty of petrol

bombs to use to make it as realistic as possible.

The final act of the exercise was for the company to withdraw. This is probably the most complicated and dangerous action and it was conducted at night. Every soldier and CIVIPOP was sore and tired but each Viking gave everything they had. This was without doubt one of the best Public Order exercises I have seen!

## **Ex VIKING STORM**

*Lt Jake Bamford*

Ex VIKING STORM was a challenging Battlegroup Exercise conducted by 1st Battalion the Royal Anglian Regiment in May 2021. The exercise took place in the Thetford and Otterburn training areas over one of the wettest months in UK history.

Uniquely, the exercise was self-generated, meaning that opposing forces, real life support, observer mentors and

exercise & LFTT conductors were all resourced from within regimental family. As the unit prepared to be based overseas for the first time in more than 20 years to assume the role of Regional Standby Battalion for the Middle East in Cyprus, Ex VIKING STORM was designed to test soldiers and commanders at all levels to their limits.

The first stage of the exercise saw the

rifle companies take on three gruelling phases: Rural, Woodland Warfare and Urban. OCs, platoon and section commanders were not faced with simple problems with obvious 'DS solutions', but with complex, fast-moving situations where there were no right answers. "It was definitely more complex to deal with than Brecon" said 2Lt Rob Seel, who had recently joined the battalion.



# 1st Battalion (The Vikings)

“...Platoon Commanders Battle Course prepared you well physically, but in terms of tactical thinking Ex VIKING STORM was a different ball game. The battle lanes gave you a lot of freedom as a commander, there were genuine options at every stage, but that also meant getting contacted from two or three positions at the same time and having to consider in which order you would fix and assault each one”.

## Rural Phase

The mission started with an 8km TAB over open plains and wooded terrain. “We wanted to test dispersed movement

at the company level,” explains WO2 Paul Kennedy, training wing Warrant Officer and the Ex-lead for the phase. For the insertion, the threat was provided by CSgt Murray’s Sniper Platoon. The threat of snipers emphasised one of the questions which junior commanders must answer when moving separately to the rest of the company - how do we react to contact? CSgt Murray recounts how the infiltration played out; “It was interesting to see how the different sections handled the vulnerable area. The A company sections hugged the tree line and extracted once contacted whereas the C company sections attempted to

clear through likely sniper positions”.

Once the first positions had been found, the attack, which would take companies over 5km of terrain, began. “We needed to give commanders and soldiers really difficult decisions to make under intense pressure” explains WO2 Kennedy. A (Norfolk) Company were attacking during one of the worst downpours of the exercise. It was an emotional experience for some of the newest Vikings, some of whom hadn’t exercised since training. Pete Howell, 3 Platoon’s Sergeant remembers; “I was standing in the rain just before the next attack on a building and realising we were only halfway to our LOE. We’d been going for 12 hours before the attack even started so I was thinking about how I was going to enforce battlefield



A GPMG moves forward to suppress the enemy position.



discipline and keep the troops focussed. It was one of the most testing attacks I've done, but the troops who made it to the end had a real sense of achievement and there's a survivor's mentality which has really bonded them together".

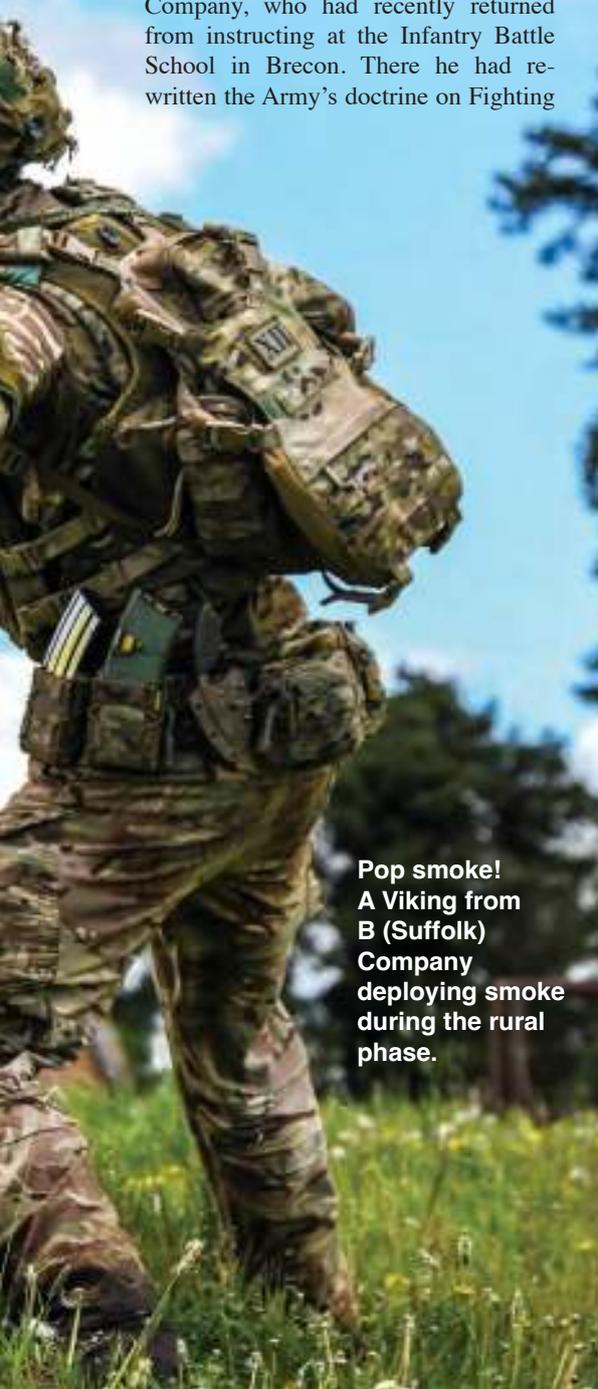
### Woodland Warfare

The Woodland Warfare phase took place in a large, wooded area, up to 2km in depth at its widest point. The ground was particularly challenging, with large parts covered in swamp, rivers and reeds. The exercise lead for this phase was WO2 Ben Page, CSM D (Cambridgeshire) Company, who had recently returned from instructing at the Infantry Battle School in Brecon. There he had re-written the Army's doctrine on Fighting

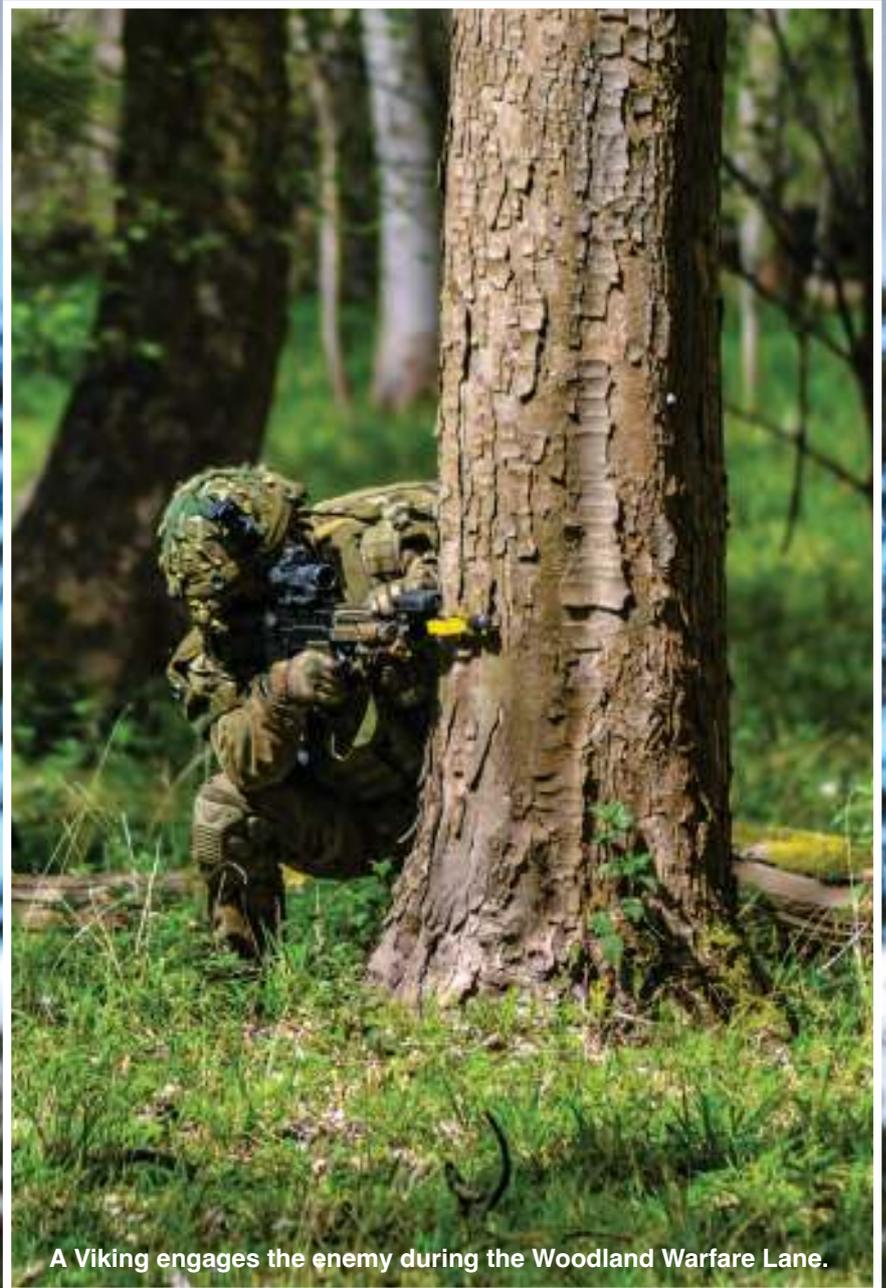
in Woods and Forests, receiving a 3\* commendation for doing so. This phase was therefore a chance for the Battalion to incorporate some of the most recent tactical thinking into its training. "We wanted to get our people used to fighting in an all-encompassing wooded

environment, where flanks are exposed, navigation and casualty evacuation are hard and resupply is slow, not attacking woodblocks which are perfectly sized for the Company to sweep through".

Leading a section in 3 Platoon, LCpl Nathan Davies was having to deal with



**Pop smoke!**  
A Viking from B (Suffolk) Company deploying smoke during the rural phase.



A Viking engages the enemy during the Woodland Warfare Lane.



# 1st Battalion (The Vikings)

the challenges of such complex terrain. “We were the company reserve but had been told to move to relieve 1 Platoon on the front left sweep as they were taking a battering, but half of our platoon was back with the CSM dealing with a contact from the flank and couldn’t make it up by the time we linked up with 1 Platoon.

Once we got up there, we had to make up a new section with some of the 1 Platoon troops. Me and the boss got eyes on the next bunker and set up fire support with two of the guns, but on the approach, we got contacted by a hidden second position. Luckily our fire support could see both of them and we just rolled them both - by the time the rest of the platoon had got up to us it was all over”.

WO2 Page had one important piece of advice for training in forest environments. “Overall, I think the most important takeaway was the importance of getting people into the ‘hunter-killer’ mentality in woods and forests. If you focus on the drills, the formations, the movement, you miss out on the small details. The drills have to be in the background, but if you’re worrying about getting into line with your sweep, you’re going to miss the enemy”.

## Urban

Recent urban conflicts, particularly in Marawi, have highlighted the fact that the sheer size of modern cities mean that the systematic, house-by-house type of urban clearance often practiced

in UK training villages might not be realistic in future conflicts. Leading the development of the phase was WO1 Alan Johnson, former Viking and current RSM of the 3rd Battalion. “Everyone needed to be tested, from private soldier



Urban casevac.



Soldiers enter a compound during the urban phase.



**Airmobility was provided by 18 Squadron Royal Air Force.**

to OC.

The biggest difference between this and other urban exercises I've seen was the decision to use the entire [Eastmere] village instead of a single street. We wanted to see if companies could think outside the box". Attacking the village with 9 Platoon from C Company was 2Lt Will Bagnall. "My platoon attacked from the north while 11 Platoon came from the south. Having multiple break-in points had several pros and cons; It made coordination and Fire Support

Control Measures difficult and meant that we didn't have the manpower to hold every building which we cleared... However, it also confused the enemy who didn't know where we were coming from or where their escape routes were". "That's probably the big takeaway from the phase" says WO1 Johnson. "...As an Army we need to get more confident bypassing buildings. Going into every building loud gives your position away. The systematic, total clearance procedure probably comes from Afghan,

but in a future conflict we'll need to take more risk". "Overall, it was a really interesting phase and it was great to see the Vikings getting straight back to proper soldiering after Op RESCRIPT".

Having battled through the company actions, the Vikings were now ready to progress through the rest of the exercise together as a Battlegroup, before moving to finish with a Combined Arms Live Fire Exercise. The exercise had been testing and being run internally had allowed the battalion to do things differently.



# 1st Battalion (The Vikings)

## HQ Company

### Overview

*Maj Adey Penn, OC HQ Company.*

I have recently had the privilege of returning to serve with 1st Battalion The Royal Anglian Regiment 'The Vikings' for my second appointment with the Battalion as OC HQ Company after I took over the duties from Major Dave Granfield who has moved onto work with the Cadets in Norfolk and the interim OC Major Tom Green.

My previous period was when I was first commissioned in April 2009 and was posted to the Vikings in Elizabeth Barracks, Pirbright to become the Battalion's Regimental Career Management Officer (RCMO). I stayed with the Vikings until March 2011 when I re-joined the Poachers in Dhekelia, Cyprus as their Motor transport Officer (MTO).

This is now my third posting to a Unit in Dhekelia, Cyprus and I have had the privilege of being on island since Aug 2017 when the Poachers moved here to take over from the then Resident Infantry Battalion, 2 PWRR. I will remain with the Vikings until I start my final resettlement period from Dec 2022 next year which will see me leave the Army after 39 years' service most of which has been spent at Regimental Duties in the Royal Anglian Regiment.

Anyway, enough of me and let's look through some of the key events the Vikings have had and the support which HQ Company have given them to achieve and enable most of the activities they have been involved with over the last year. This year, and most of last year, has been focused around the worldwide COVID pandemic which has greatly curtailed a lot of key activities and has switched the focus of many Viking soldiers and HQ Company in supporting their efforts to stem and control this awful virus. The Battalion and its soldiers have been heavily involved with the support to the Ministry of Defence



**Major Adey Penn, OC HQ Company.**

and the wider Government in its support to dealing with the COVID Pandemic under Op RESCRIPT.

Other significant events which warrant mention is the support and preparation carried out by members of the Battalion and in particular the Quartermasters Dept along with C Company who were held at readiness as part of the Over the Horizon Coy (OTH) which was the United Kingdom's response to Afghanistan in the event of an emergency within the country. 12 Foxhound protected patrol vehicles were taken on and managed by the Quartermasters Dept and C Company.

On top of these major commitments the Company was also keeping a very keen eye on the planned unit move in the Summer from its home in the Royal Artillery Barracks in Woolwich, South London to its new future home in Dhekelia, Cyprus which is part of the Eastern Sovereign Base Area (ESBA)

on the island. This would see the Vikings posted overseas (apart from operations) for the first time since 1986 when the Battalion last served overseas outside the United Kingdom in Gibraltar. The move which took place in the Summer was creeping up very quickly so whilst the Company was supporting the wider Battalion's operational and exercise commitments it was heavily involved in preparing to move the Battalion and a lot of its equipment two and half thousand miles away.

In May of this year as some families had actually started to move to Cyprus the Company's departments were heavily committed to supporting Exercise VIKING STORM. This period saw the Vikings' training reach a pinnacle and saw many tired and weary soldiers return to London to start preparing for some well-earned leave and for them to prepare to leave the UK.

The last event I will mention is



**Viking chefs cook up a storm in a field kitchen.**

the unit move, which started in May but was complete by the beginning of September with a flag change date of the 16th August 2021. Even though preparation for this started well over a year ago with the first planned recce of Dhekelia, a lot of key events and timelines had to be met to ensure we handed over Woolwich in good order, and were able to take over the guarding of the secure sites in Ayia Nikolaos and in Troodos and to take over the Regional Standby Battalion commitment. This was when the enablers really came into their own and whilst the other coys were having some well-earned final leave in the United Kingdom the Headquarter Company departments started their final preparations to move the Battalion and its equipment to Cyprus over the months of July and August.

The Quartermaster and his team started issuing the MFO boxes for the move and started to pack the 40+ ISO containers which had arrived during Ex Viking Storm.

Concurrently to this they were consolidating demands in preparation to handover the Battalion's UK accounts to the 1 PWRR team who started to arrive from early July. On top of this they were preparing to handover the infrastructure to the incoming Unit.

The Regimental Administrative Officer and his team were also preparing the financial packages and advance of pay requirements for the soldiers and their families as this was also coinciding with a pretty fundamental change to the Local overseas allowance scheme which the Battalion would adopt on arrival on the island. The other Company

Departments such as the welfare team (read the separate article on the welfare teams key involvement in the Unit move by Capt Jason Thomas, UWO) the regimental Duty staff, the PTI's and Battalion Headquarters staff where all busy preparing to leave the RAB and take up their place of duty in Dhekelia, Cyprus. Finally this was also the time to say thank you and farewell to the elements of the Company who would be staying on in the RAB, London when 1 PWRR arrive namely our chefs and Light Aid detachment.

That concludes my run through of the key events in which HQ Company have been involved since the last Castle Magazine and I wish all the soldiers and their families a very enjoyable time as part of British Forces Cyprus for the next 18+ months.



# 1st Battalion (The Vikings)

## Establishing the Viking Training Wing in Cyprus

*WO2 Kennedy*

The lead elements of our team arrived in Cyprus in July. Within the first week we were out conducting training area reces and meeting with our Counterparts in the Yorks- the other infantry Battalion out here, as well as meeting the British forces Cyprus (BFC) J7 (training) team to explore opportunities for training in Cyprus.

Our team has somewhat restructured over the past months with CSgt McKendrick posting to CUOTC, CSgt Taylor and Sgt Ferguson moving on to CQMS jobs. Cpl Harraway has promoted to Sgt and moved across to assume his new role within A Coy. To strengthen the training wing we have welcomed in Sgt Dixon from B Coy and Cpls Bellingham and Cpl Osborne from D and HQ coy respectively; these three previously worked together in the Reconnaissance Platoon for many years so the foundations of a strong team are already in place.

Cyprus offers a battalion that hasn't had a residential tour outside of the UK in over 30 years tremendous opportunities. Foremost amongst them in my mind is the access to training areas, resources, and environments that in Woolwich were far beyond our reach.

We have a large static range complex next door to camp for which we are the primary user, a field firing area a 15-minute drive from camp and back door local training areas that our platoons, companies and section can utilise.

In Cyprus section commanders

should have the same freedom to plan and deliver training that hasn't been available since my peers and I were section commanders based in Pirbright. To maximise and support this we recognise that one of our challenges is to assist our JNCOs, SNCOs and young Officers in managing the ever-evolving bureaucracy to enable them to train safely with all the appropriate systems and paperwork in place.

Having hit the ground running in Cyprus thanks to the drive and dedication of the new team and primarily under the guidance of CSgt Gibbs. We are already four weeks into the delivery of our first course which is the six-week Viking Advanced Infantry skills Expansion course (VAISEC). This course was described in full by then Sgt Taylor in a previous edition of this publication but I will attempt to sum it up below.

As a Battalion in 2020 we recognised a number of issues and in turn created the VAISEC process to help counter, manage and mitigate the effects on our soldiers of a number factors:

**Training levels.** Due to the effects of COVID and adjustments in the recruiting and training systems over recent years soldiers were arriving with training deficiencies. We recognise that whilst soldiers can be taught at ITC there is little time to add depth and repetition to the skills learnt by our soldiers. This is compounded with a need for soldiers to be ready for imminent operations when arriving to their Companies.

**Social cohesion.** Soldiers no longer

train in regimental or even divisional cohorts. When they did the effect was the development of strong, lifelong friendships and bonds forged through hardship that serve you through life in Battalion and beyond. In modern day speak this system robs soldiers of the support network that we and our peers have inadvertently relied upon over the years.

**Talent management.** Although we get reports on our soldiers from Basic training these often arrive late, and our soldiers arrive as individuals not in groups. Under the previous system soldiers would be placed in companies based on need at that time, not considering current ability and sharing talent. Our new system allows us to assess them and spread talent levels accordingly ensuring each Company gets its share of those that arrive at a high skill level.

This also ensures those that need more time to grow are spread around and a more considered development plan can be made for each. This should in time mean all newly arriving Vikings have better opportunity to reach their potential.

Although some of these areas could be addressed in the companies on arrival the unfortunate reality is that in a busy working Battalion each Company experience is different based on task and available mentors. So, to recognise this we began the VAISEC to assist both the Companies and our soldiers in giving them the best foundation.

## Unit Move

*Capt Jason Thomas, Unit Welfare Officer*

2021 saw The Vikings move from Woolwich to Dhekelia, Cyprus. Viking soldiers, officers and families left mainland UK for the first time since 2001 and the Battalion was last based in Cyprus 1972-1974.

Excitement was met with an equal measure of apprehension. Whilst the thought of spending two years on the

beautiful Mediterranean Island of Cyprus is exciting it was countered by the thought of leaving family and friends who had been part of the stable 'home base', particularly as the Covid-19 pandemic gripped the nation.

In true Viking spirit, the battalion grasped the positives that the move would bring and began to prepare

accordingly by exporting vehicles, packing up houses, many spouses handing in work notices and much more. In May the battalion undertook Exercise VIKING STORM, in preparation for the operational commitments that lay ahead.

Fast forward to August 2021 and with the move of 843 People, including 162 Viking families, the Battalion found

itself set in Dhekelia. As the dust settles and all take stock of the effort required to move an infantry battalion, it would be fair to recognise that adjusting to the new setting/role has not been without challenges.

The spirit and willingness to accept the change and overcome the intense summer heat, insects that are forever trying to invade the home, and other

challenges has not waivered, and the community 'vibe' is only seen to become more positive with each passing week.

Within the new home, Dhekelia Station, there is a vast array of supporting agencies, charities, clubs and alike who support Station residents. Be it HomeStart for the young children, HIVE, WRVS, RBL, BFSWS or other, all support workers/volunteers

who make up the welfare network are passionate and driven to make Dhekelia Station the best it can be. For the Station to succeed in its goals there needs to be 'buy-in' from the community.

In just a few short weeks the attendance in social clubs and activities has skyrocketed, such is the want of the Vikings to get all they can from this wonderful destination.



## Army Motorcycle Racing Team

WO2 (CSM) Gav Watts

### WO2 Gav Watts entering turn 1 at Anglesey race circuit.

2021 saw me compete in my first year of motorcycle racing with the Army Motorcycle Racing Team (AMRT). I entered in both the Endurance and Newcomer 1000 championship with No Limits Racing (NLR). A sprint race will normally consist of 35-40 riders and a 10 lap race; the Endurance is a 3 hour race with each rider in the team riding for two 30min stints. I had the pleasure of racing alongside my 2 teammates for the year in Team #25: Lt Simon King from 23 Para Engr Reg and Veteran racer Michael Huey formerly of 4/6 RIR.

Round 1 at Donnington Park was

my first race weekend and a very eventful one, I came away with some very respectable finishes with a 9th, 3rd and 2nd place, and taking home my first pieces of silverware. To top off a great first race meeting Team #25 took home 1st place rookies in the 3-hour Endurance adding to the trophy cabinet. I didn't race at Round 2 but Round 3 was held at Cadwell park and a track I had previous knowledge of. Here I suffered my first crash of the year, crashing out of the Endurance Race on my second stint due to cold rear tyre and incorrect pressure, however with a quick run

around the track to get the transponder back Team #25 put in a solid ride to finish 9th in class. After fixing the bike on Saturday evening I went on to finish on the podium twice more on Sunday, with a 3rd and 2nd position.

Round 4 at Croft, a circuit I had no previous experience of would go on to become the highlight of my year. I won my first ever race in Race 1 and the feeling and atmosphere coming back into the pits to the team after that win is a feeling I will never forget. However, in Race 2 I crashed out on the final lap. Despite being in first place riding



# 1st Battalion (The Vikings)

defensively to hold off the championship leader would end up costing me another race win! With the bike and me OK, I went on to win twice more that weekend and finish my strongest race weekend of the year.

Round 5 was held at the beautiful coastal circuit in Anglesey North Wales. I suffered a high-speed crash during the Friday practice that left me and the AMRT pit crew working hard all day and night to get the bike ready for Saturday; all credit to them for getting me back out on the track. Team #25 eventually finished 3rd in the endurance race and I went on to take two 2nd places and a 3rd place finish s. Unfortunately I was taken out by another rider as he crashed behind me on the final lap of race 4.

Due to the unit move to Cyprus I couldn't attend Round 6 but I was back on UK soil to compete at Round 7. This was back at Cadwell Park, which seemed to be a mirror image of my last visit, I suffered another crash in the Endurance Race due to a technical fault on the bike. With myself feeling a little battered



**WO2 Gav Watts at Croft racetrack.**

and bruised we got the bike fixed up and I finished 4th, 5th and 4th to close out the season. With 10 races missed

throughout the year I finished the season in a very creditable 5th place in the NLR Newcomer 1000 Championship.



**WO2 Gav Watts in the pits after his first race win.**



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Lieutenant General R W Wooddissie CBE MC

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# 1st Battalion (The Vikings)

## Life in Cyprus

*2Lt Rob Seel*

The Battalion has hit the ground running in Cyprus. Arriving in the midst of a Mediterranean heat wave at the end of July, the Companies assumed readiness quickly after arrival, first as the Cyprus Ops Coy and then as Lead Company Group (LCG) and taking over Strategic Communications Asset (SCAs) sites in Ayia Nikolaos and Troodos. Almost, at the point of handover the Coy was stood up alongside 2 YORKS for possible deployment to Kabul, subsequently a platoon, with soldiers from across the Battalion deployed to the Middle East in a supporting role to the evacuation. This was a tangible demonstration to all the soldiers about the importance of readiness for operations.

Alongside this, the Battalion has continued to train. Every day now starts, early, with PT or sports. The variety in Cyprus has increased with the availability of swimming and beach sessions. Battalion Sports parades are run every week and a variety of sports



### Cyprus.

are on offer. The Battalion has had recent sporting success, winning the recent BFC Swimming gala and fielding teams for Cross country, Football and Rugby. It is also looking forward to Boxing in early 2022. Military training has offered

great opportunity too, and Companies have been able to conduct live firing on both the Dhekelia static ranges and the local field firing areas. The first VAISEC course is nearing completion. The local "Bondu" training area has also allowed



JNCOs team building at the DWSC.



Live fire training.



Soldiers of B (Suffolk) Company on successful completion of their parachuting course.



# 1st Battalion (The Vikings)



**The victorious Swimmers at the British Forces Cyprus Swimming Gala.**

tactical training on the doorstep – a very different experience to Woolwich.

Cyprus has not been all work, and the Battalion has enjoyed the summer, albeit on readiness and with other commitments. One of the challenges of living in Cyprus is having to leave friends and family back in the UK. However, there is enough adventure on island and lots of soldiers are exploring what the island has to offer. Adventurous Training and Sport has been re-invigorated weekly. Lt Chris Flynn built on the success of the last leg of Ex OLYMPUS VIKING and led another sailing Exped round the coast of Cyprus. Also, Alexander Barracks' main attraction is its own private beach and watersports' centre which has been extremely popular. Outside of camp, there are countless activities to get involved in. Ayia Napa is also an inevitable favourite during the tourist season and for those needing more adventure, scuba diving courses are on offer, one of the best diving wrecks in the world is just offshore.

Life in Cyprus has offered a great opportunity and challenge to everyone. The Battalion has fast settled and is looking forward to the next Ops rotation having really lived the early experience in Cyprus.



**Vikings enjoying Ex VIKING SAIL.**

## Op PITTING

*Lt Bobby Smith*



**LCpl Charlie Maryon and Pte Harley Mead prepare to greet evacuees at the Temporary Safe Location.**

Having just arrived on Cyprus, members of B (Suffolk) Company were deployed within a matter of weeks to establish a Temporary Safe Location (TSL) within the Middle East. Having completed their acclimatisation and RSOI packages B (Suffolk) Company was perfectly positioned to assist the evacuation of Kabul and initially deployed a group of 12. This group were integral to the establishment of the TSL and were in disposable to the wider Brigade to which they were working.

As numbers of evacuees grew, a further 20 Viking soldiers, drawn from across the Battalion flew out to reinforce the TSL. This resulted in a significant increase in the capacity of the TSL and facilitated much greater numbers rescued from Afghanistan.

Despite the rapid deployment the Viking team quickly got to grasp with the task at hand demonstrating their



**LCpl Charlie Maryon shows off his artistic skills to a group of Afghan children.**



# 1st Battalion (The Vikings)



**Pte Harley Mead distributes colouring books to Afghan children.**

versatility in a role very different to which they are accustomed. Vikings worked intimately with host nation state forces to maintain the security of the TSL as well as taking care of those evacuees. Vikings fed, protected, and cared for those transiting from Afghanistan, conducting themselves with the customary humility of soldiers from the Battalion.

Throughout the operation the Vikings maintained the highest level of professionalism as they worked long hours under significant pressure as it

was vital for the TSL to operate 24 hours a day to evacuate as many families as possible. Ultimately this proved worthwhile as the soldiers from 1 R ANGLIAN were able to facilitate the evacuation of over 15,000 men, women, and children from Kabul.

All members of the team worked hard throughout the deployment and deserved recognition however it was LCpl Charlie Maryon, Pte Harley Mead and Pte Charlie Dunbar who received a commendation from Lt Col Windsor, commander of the TSL.

As a Battalion with much history in Afghanistan, it was fitting that Vikings should be involved in conclusion of operations in that theatre. Whilst for many it was their first overseas operational deployment, for some it was the most recent of many, and this blend of experience proved pivotal to the operation's success. Moreover, whilst soldiers from B (Suffolk) Company were the first to deploy, the team complete consisted of soldiers from every Company demonstrating the close family bond within battalion.



## Op RESCRIPT



**Cpl Harry Ryan, LCpl George Barley and LCpl Jack Elgood meet the Prime Minister, The Rt Hon Boris Johnson.**

Whilst on Christmas leave it became evident that 1 Royal Anglian would be used to support the reopening of schools within the greater London area.

This would be achieved with the formation of platoon-sized groups split into four-man local response teams. Their role would be to provide guidance in the use of the lateral flow device and set up of a safe and efficient testing area before students returned to lessons.

To ensure all troops involved were prepared, a bespoke package was provided by the training wing which showed best practice in the setup of a Testing Centre and use of the LFD. The culmination of this training resulted in the running of a testing centre within Royal Artillery Barracks.

Subsequently, the teams were tasked with supporting London schools by implementing Local Response Teams. At short notice the commanders received a warning order from OC support Company that we would soon receive 200 CMTs from across the





# 1st Battalion (The Vikings)



**West Middlesex University Hospital formally thank the CO and soldiers from 1 R ANGLIAN for their support**

Army, RAF and Royal Navy who would come under our command as part of the newly formed Medical Support Force (London). Furthermore 1 Royal Anglian was tasked with the delivery and conduct of an RSOI package. In addition to these taskings, 150 soldiers from 1 Royal

Anglian would form 30-strong general duties Platoons.

On 17 January 2021 the C2 of the GD platoons made up of Anti Tanks, Snipers and Mortar Platoon HQs, move forward to receive the seven hospitals across London that CMT and GD soldiers

would work in and established working relationships with the key stakeholders within each hospital. Concurrently to this, the CMTs conducted RSOI before moving forward to hotels in vicinity of their respective hospitals.

On 18 January all CMTs start



**The Prime Minister thanks NHS staff and Vikings for their hard work after receiving a COVID vaccination.**

their inductions at their respective hospitals with GD platoons following the same process 24hrs Later. During this induction CMTs were trained in their role supporting clinical duties on COVID wards and GD troops receiving training in non – clinical facing task such as portering, logistical and vaccination support.

Anti-Tank Platoon was tasked with providing general duties support to two central London hospitals; Guys and St Thomas's, with the CMT element providing support to Kings College Hospital. The GD PI was split into vaccination support teams working

at both Guys and St Thomas's and a portering team assisting at St Thomas's. Those supporting the vaccination programme were responsible for patient screening, assisting health care professionals and training new vaccination centre staff.

The portering team assisted in the vital role of moving patients with a range of severe medical conditions to various departments and operation theatres. Additionally, these teams were engaged in the moving of essential stores such as oxygen and medicines throughout the hospital.

On reflection this was a demanding

three months for the soldiers of 1 Royal Anglian. However, it was also a highly rewarding task that provided real value to the public and enabled the soldiers to have a real effect in their role. Vikings achieved some impressive milestones, such as assisting in the administering of over 100,000 COVID vaccinations to members of the public. The soldiers also met both current and former prime ministers who expressed their appreciation of the soldiers' efforts. Throughout the deployment, the PI enjoyed wide support and gratitude from both the NHS Staff and the patients they cared for.



**Pte Jonathan Hartley and LCpl Aaron Priestley helps replenish COVID wards whilst deployed on Op RESCRIPT.**



## 2nd Battalion (The Poachers)

# From the CO

*Lt Col Will Meddings  
Commanding Officer*

As I look back over the last year, it is hard to believe just what a year the Poachers have had. While COVID has dominated most of the Army, this Battalion has been spread across the world on what has been an exceptional year of operations – the Poachers have been, without doubt, the most widely deployed infantry battalion in the British Army in 2021.

2020 ended with Machine Gun Platoon returning from Op TORAL 11 and rejoining C (Northamptonshire) Company after a successful, if short-lived tour helping to close down British operations in Afghanistan. The platoon deployed on Foxhounds as an advisor force protection platoon and their contribution to a 1 R ANGLIAN-

led tour again demonstrated just how effective our two Battalions can be when they work together. Their work closing down the Op TORAL vehicle fleet was widely lauded. But Machine Gun Platoon's deployment was not the end of our operational contribution – it was just the start.

As they had returned to the UK, B (Leicestershire) Company were stepping onto the plane to Mali after almost nine months of mission-specific training. They were the first infantry company deployed on Op NEWCOMBE, the UK's contribution to MINUSMA, the UN's most dangerous peacekeeping mission. B Company were trailblazers; Op NEWCOMBE 1 was the first time Foxhounds had been used in such harsh

terrain and high temperatures, driving hundreds of kilometres and living from the vehicles for weeks at a time. Although they will cover it in their articles, B Company's drive, determination and proactive approach to the mission led to a find of six AK47s, the first weapons uncovered in MINUSMA's history and an event that was discussed at the UN Security Council and changed the way MINUSMA approached search operations. They truly had an impressive tour and set the ground for the rest of the Battalion to follow.

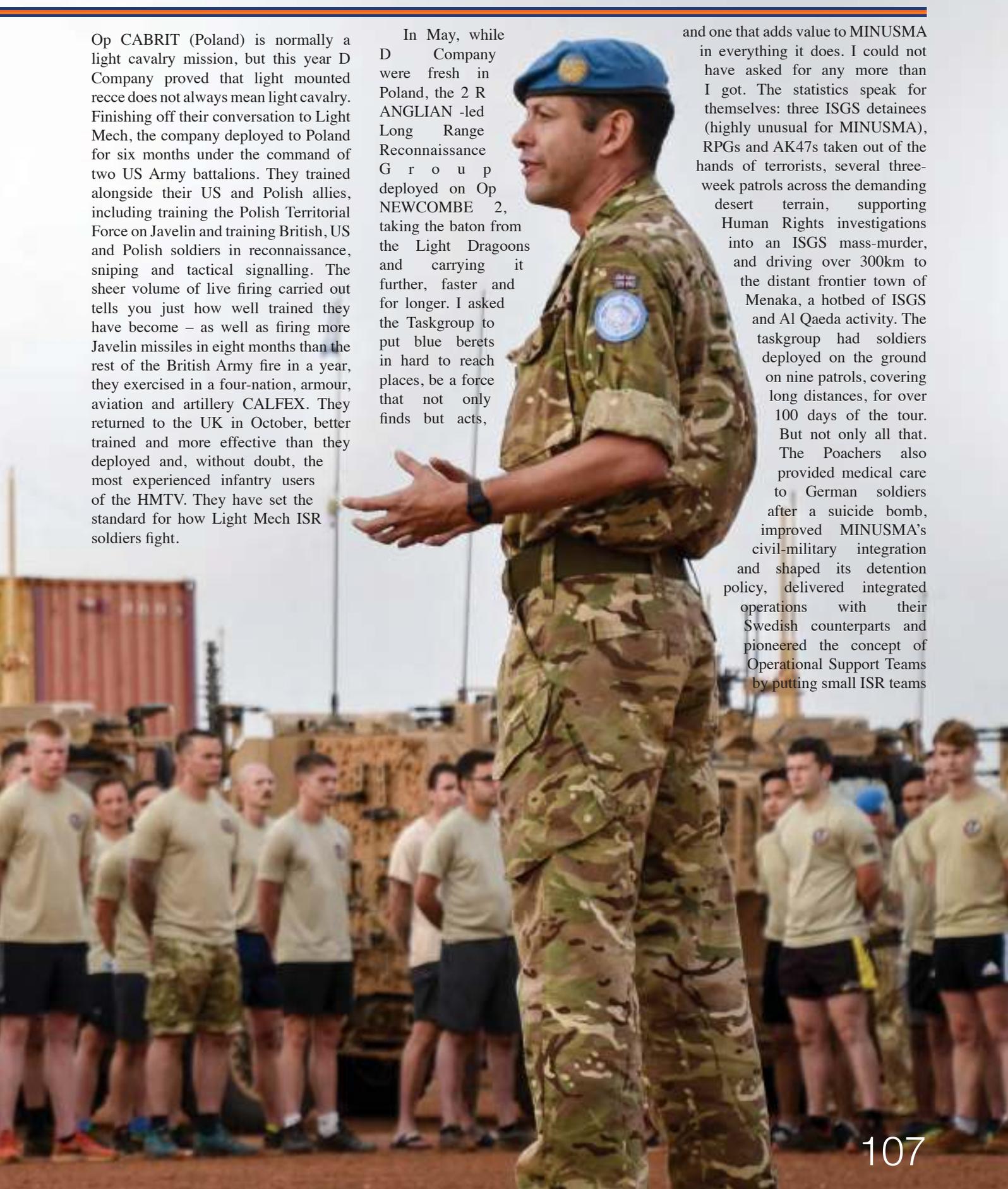
While Mali may have been the focus of most of the unit, D (Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire) Company have spent the year delivering excellence of a different kind in the European theatre.



Op CABRIT (Poland) is normally a light cavalry mission, but this year D Company proved that light mounted recce does not always mean light cavalry. Finishing off their conversation to Light Mech, the company deployed to Poland for six months under the command of two US Army battalions. They trained alongside their US and Polish allies, including training the Polish Territorial Force on Javelin and training British, US and Polish soldiers in reconnaissance, sniping and tactical signalling. The sheer volume of live firing carried out tells you just how well trained they have become – as well as firing more Javelin missiles in eight months than the rest of the British Army fire in a year, they exercised in a four-nation, armour, aviation and artillery CALFEX. They returned to the UK in October, better trained and more effective than they deployed and, without doubt, the most experienced infantry users of the HMTV. They have set the standard for how Light Mech ISR soldiers fight.

In May, while D Company were fresh in Poland, the 2 R ANGLIAN -led Long Range Reconnaissance Group deployed on Op NEWCOMBE 2, taking the baton from the Light Dragoons and carrying it further, faster and for longer. I asked the Taskgroup to put blue berets in hard to reach places, be a force that not only finds but acts,

and one that adds value to MINUSMA in everything it does. I could not have asked for any more than I got. The statistics speak for themselves: three ISGS detainees (highly unusual for MINUSMA), RPGs and AK47s taken out of the hands of terrorists, several three-week patrols across the demanding desert terrain, supporting Human Rights investigations into an ISGS mass-murder, and driving over 300km to the distant frontier town of Menaka, a hotbed of ISGS and Al Qaeda activity. The taskgroup had soldiers deployed on the ground on nine patrols, covering long distances, for over 100 days of the tour. But not only all that. The Poachers also provided medical care to German soldiers after a suicide bomb, improved MINUSMA's civil-military integration and shaped its detention policy, delivered integrated operations with their Swedish counterparts and pioneered the concept of Operational Support Teams by putting small ISR teams





## 2nd Battalion (The Poachers)

in remote MINUSMA FOBs to share the UK's unique capabilities. As always, the often-unsung heroes of the LAD and QM's Department kept the Taskgroup on the road over the harshest terrain I have ever experienced.

As the first UK deployment during Mali's fierce wet season, the Poachers broke new ground for the UK – and given how wet the ground was, you might even say we ploughed a new furrow for the Army too.

But this hasn't just been a year of exceptional operations. The undeployed parts of 2 R ANGLIAN have played a full part in Army and Desert Rat activity and I could not be prouder of what they have achieved.

On exercise, the Poachers have been paired with the Steelbacks on their annual deployment exercise,

developing capabilities on the Army Warfighter Experiment, supporting the Platoon Commanders Battle Course and the Recce Commanders Course and sharing our experiences with the Queen's Dragoon Guards as they prepare for Op NEWCOMBE. Most impressively, the Poachers supported two large exercises - VIKING STORM and WESSEX STORM - helping to train the Scots Dragoon Guards ahead of their first deployment to Mali and the Vikings ahead of their first-ever unit move to Cyprus.

In the sporting arena, we have won the desert Rats' rugby and football tournaments, reached the finals of the Army rugby tournament and won medals at the Army athletics finals. Individually, we have had soldiers playing Infantry football, Army U23 rugby and CSgt

Steel won the Army Brazilian Jujitsu championship. And in ones and twos, we have had soldiers with the Gibraltar Regiment, joining the new Ranger Regiment, deployed on Op TOSCA, running training in Kenya and delivering a Short Term Training Team in Gambia.

As I look back on the last year, I can see that the Poachers have done exactly what you would expect of such an exceptional battalion: come together as a cohesive team to deliver excellence on operations and build the Regiment's reputation.

As I finish my time as Commanding Officer, I thank every single Poacher in the battalion. It has been an astonishing period of training and operations. Everyone has had a part in our successes, and I wish the Poachers many more in the future.

## FROM THE RSM

*WO1 (RSM) John Rawdon  
Regimental Sergeant Major*

I am writing this on the eve of the final Long Range Reconnaissance Group (LRRG) patrol of rotation two. Last time I wrote a piece for Castle Mag it was as the Battalion was about to embark on an extremely busy period of operations, where the Battalion was going to be split to the four winds.

B Company, A Company, and Battalion Headquarters have spent the last year on Op NEWCOMBE between them, whilst D Company have been on OP CABRIT for the last six months. C Company along with HQ Company has provided the firm base that has facilitated operational success in Mali and Poland as well as dealing with all the commitments and training the unit would normally conduct.

With around six months left in post as Regimental Sergeant Major, I can look back over the last year with immense pride. The Battalion has absolutely delivered on all fronts. The Poachers never fail to deliver on operations and



RSM on his Jackal.

have proved that over three separate tours this year.

The soldiers, a lot of which were operationally inexperienced, have showed real soldiering ability and robustness whilst operating in Mali. I have to say Op NEWCOMBE is the harshest environment I have personally ever operated in. The patrols are 21 days at a time in the sub Saharan desert which tests all aspects of infantry soldiering. The measure of success has been how the LRRG have enhanced the MINUSMA mission and increased the MFT's (Mobile Task Force) capability. At the tactical level the amount of ISGS fighters and equipment the task group

were able capture has allowed the troops on the ground to see the effect they are having, as the political and strategical achievements aren't always felt at the grassroots level.

With this historic period for the Battalion coming to an end it will culminate with a medals parade. The Battalion will then exercise the freedom of the city of Lincoln. The parade through Lincoln will signify the unit coming together after a fractured couple of years, which I am immensely looking forward to. As Regimental Sergeant Major it will be a great honour to march the whole Battalion through my hometown.

As the Army is changing and modernising, D Company have been leading the way testing and proving how a light mechanised ISR company should operate in the future. This will help keep the Poachers at the forefront of future operations. The New Year will also see C Company; now a support weapons company conduct their reinforcement cadres. This will allow the Machine Gun, Assault Pioneer and Mortar platoons to re-establish ready for future operations. The tempo of life won't really slow down as the Battalion will be tested again on EX WESSEX STORM in summer 2022, which I have no doubt the Battalion will smash.



Fire mission illum.



## 2nd Battalion (The Poachers)

# A (Lincolnshire) Company

### Op NEWCOMBE:

### Agile in ambiguity

*OC A (Lincolnshire) Company*

The last year has been nothing short of extraordinary. Although rapidly approaching the end of Op NEWCOMBE 2, the first to experience the wonders of the Malian 'wet season,' it is well worth reflecting on where we started and, therefore, how far we have come.

August saw the Company get set for a rigorous, and in terms of COVID, perilous journey through preparation for Mission Specific Training (MST) for Mali. Individual MST saw all personnel from A (Lincolnshire) Company on courses to provide

foundational competency, then depth and redundancy on key qualifications. First among these were the Foxhound driving qualifications, an area where we had to heavily invest in, and an area vital to our future efforts in Mali. The instructors within the Company worked tirelessly and I'll forever be thankful for the efforts of Sgt Wallis, Cpl Wall, and LCpl Fleming. Next was the investment in search qualifications which would end up critical to our dismounted movement. Again, soldiers and NCOs unfamiliar with the skillset threw themselves wholeheartedly into it quickly becoming

proud of what they could accomplish.

Throughout MST were the near constant range packages which were flawlessly executed by the platoon commanders and NCOs. The ranges, including the vehicle based packages, were some of the finest I have experienced in 15 years of service. The soldiers, NCOs, and officers of A Company remained committed to the deployment throughout which took no small amount of grit and determination in the face of routine COVID friction and disruption. At this time, Mali experienced its first military Coup which



Lt Bremridge.



#### **FHD.**

reminded us of the deeply complicated environment which we would soon be operating in. Our MST ended with the Mission Rehearsal Exercise, a three-week period of intense assessment and mentoring. The teams did an incredible job in leaning in to a repeated cycle of the ‘worst day in Mali.’ Although not the most enjoyable experience, it is telling how many references we have made to it when on patrol.

Op NEWCOMBE 2 has been a deployment with utterly unique experiences and challenges. We were helped by a comprehensive handover with B (Leicestershire) Company but the problem solving was soon down to us. There have been stand-out moments on patrol including; the curious awe in which we stood and observed our first ‘haboob’ (aggressive end-of-the-world sandstorm with mud rain) before it engulfed and smothered us; the heart-in-the-mouth scan of the horizon as electrical storms approached before rain completely transformed the landscape from beautiful arid desert, to a mud

bath in a matter of minutes; then the accompanying heart in the mouth feeling when you still pushed on despite the rain and mud and got bogged in 20 times on a clandestine insertion to a known terrorist stronghold. There have been so many learning opportunities!

Although the ground and weather have been important factors throughout the deployment, our defining purpose has been to help people. We have been assertive in moving to areas and villages completely dominated by Islamic State of the Greater Sahel (ISGS). The point commanders of Cpl Jones, Cpl Limb, and Cpl Sarjeant (ATks) have perfectly delivered the Company onto targets through terrain ranging from volcanic moonscape to jungle. Their decisions have generated tempo which invariably caught the terrorists napping, giving the Company the initiative to invest in an area. Once invested we have been able to deter and disrupt the terrorists while simultaneously protecting and reassuring the local residents as we try to understand the complicated security situation. We

helped protect the population of Tin Hama, a notorious terrorist stronghold, with agility, adaptability, and the core infantry skills of dismounted night patrols, deception, and depth. We responded to the horrific massacre of 57 people in Ouattagouna commune with patience and compassion. We demonstrated aggressive peacekeeping through ‘hunting’ terrorists through targeted effect to isolate them from the local population. However, at all times our main effort has been the protection of civilians and primarily we have done this by immersing ourselves in the local population. The deep understanding we’ve gained has invariably been of immense value to the Civil Pillars, and other international forces, also working to resolve the conflict in Mali.

Our tour is not yet complete and our biggest challenges may lie ahead of us; however, we will continue to reflect, learn, and improve. The A Company team, both on tour and remaining at home, have been incredible and it is a privilege to work alongside them.



## 2nd Battalion (The Poachers)

### A Platoon Commander's Perspective

*Lt O Bremridge, OC 1 Platoon*

It has been a busy yet rewarding period for A Company over the last twelve months preparing for, and then deploying on, Op NEWCOMBE 2. Preparations began in earnest in January as the Poachers Taskgroup entered Mission Specific Training. Now our minds were firmly set to the task of preparing for peacekeeping in Mali rather than a generic conflict.

Between January and March the weeks flew by as we were engaged in non-stop activity learning about the country to which we would soon become so accustomed. Soldiers in A Company spent one week learning about the details of the Songhai and Tuareg tribes and the next honing their abilities to search for Improvised Explosive Devices. There was still time to hone some of our key skills as infantrymen though as A Company spent a good deal of time on the range in both Warcop and Castlemartin. In doing so we mastered not only our dismounted but mounted soldiering, perfecting our ability to fire from our Foxhound vehicles. On one particular Section attack, Pte 'Bayonet' Behan was a touch overzealous in the



**Lt Bremridge leading a night patrol.**



**Sgt Watts checks on the health of a local chicken.**

assault, leading to a stab wound in the foot. Thanks in part to the CASEVAC from Pte Winters, Behan made a full recovery in time to deploy to Mali.

All this frenetic activity was to prepare for the Mission Rehearsal Exercise, the event which would test A Company to the limit. The Mission Rehearsal Exercise sought to prepare A Company to face the events of the worst day possible in Mali. As such A Company spent three weeks responding to Road Traffic Incidents, IED Strikes and dealing with civilian mass casualties. Most of all though, the Mission Rehearsal will be remembered for the bitterly cold 4am reveille – quite a world apart from the experience of sleeping in the sweltering Malian bush!

Thankfully the majority of the skills that we rehearsed in the UK have not had to be used out here in Mali. A Company, as part of the Long Range Reconnaissance Group, took the baton from our colleagues in B (Leicestershire) Company in June who set the standard



**FHD overwatching the A1 echelon at dawn.**

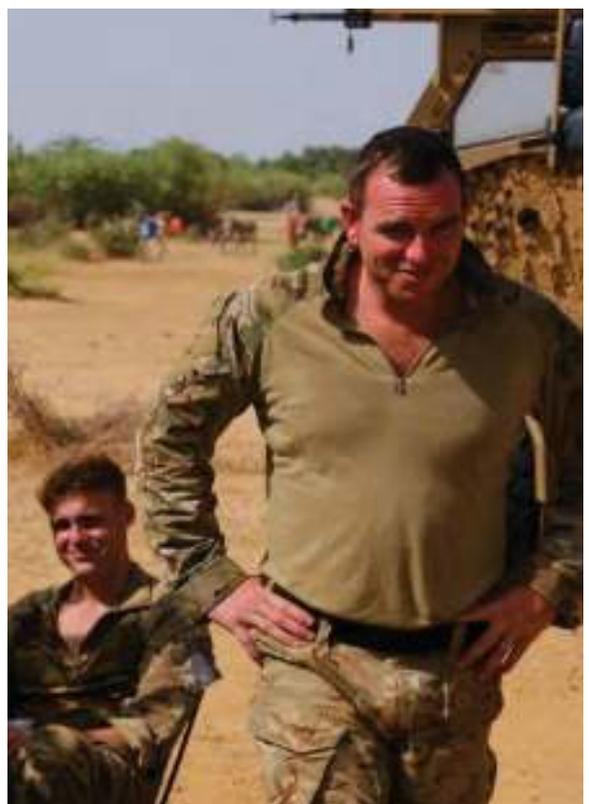
for the infantry company's contribution to an all-arms Taskgroup. Our experience out here so far has been dominated by the Mobile Task Force's (the LRRG's higher headquarters) intent to stabilise the South Eastern part of Mali – between

the towns of Labbazanga, Ansongo and Menaka. Soldiers used to the woodblocks of training areas in the UK now had to contend with camel spiders in their boots on our first mission to Tin Hama, a market settlement 40km away

from the nearest metalled road. Drivers were put to the test as we made our way across sand dunes to reassure and protect the local population of Tin Hama who usually lived under the influence of the Islamic State in the Greater Sahel (ISGS).



**Bayonet Behan mid CASEVAC.**



**CSM trying to avoid the camera.**



## 2nd Battalion (The Poachers)

Our second operation was defined by the tragic massacre of 57 civilians by ISGS in the Ouattagouna commune, where we subsequently devoted several weeks to patrol the area to prevent any further reprisals against the local population. Perhaps a professional highlight for many soldiers was being able to enable a human rights investigation team to visit Ouattagouna and collect evidence, hopefully to enable the prosecution of the perpetrators in future.

As I write, the soldiers of A Company are now involved in making preparations for our final patrol. As we all pack our kit for the last time to spend several weeks cut off from friends and family, travelling hundreds of kilometres to aid the people of Mali, no doubt our thoughts will be on our imminent return home and the reunions this will entail.



Local flora and fauna.



Working with our UNPOL partners.

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# B (Leicestershire) Company

## B Company Group on Op NEWCOMBE

*Maj JE Powell, OC B Company*

B Company Group deployed on Op NEWCOMBE 1 in Mali as part of the first deployment of the Long Range Reconnaissance Group, working to the Light Dragoons.

Our mission focused on protecting civilians, understanding the threats to them from violent extremist organisations, reassuring the local population that the UN is assisting the Malian Government in providing security, disrupting violent extremist groups and deterring them from conducting any hostile acts.

This unique deployment saw a step change in the way the Company operated as a Light Mechanised Infantry force and we learnt lessons that will benefit the entire Army in the future, experimenting and innovating with new tactics and equipment. This was the first time the Field Army has deployed the KESTREL NVD, which allowed us to own the night, in addition to new communications equipment, drones,



**B Company owning the night.**



**Football with the locals.**



## 2nd Battalion (The Poachers)



**B Company Group.**

situational awareness tools and vehicle modifications.

We conducted patrols up to 28 days in duration, carrying with us everything that we needed to sustain and fight. We travelled over 3200km, cross-country, by day and night, in some of the most inhospitable terrain in the world and visited hundreds of towns and settlements, engaging with local leaders and the Malian Armed Forces, as well as interacting with locals and building rapport with them. B Company deterred bandit attacks against towns with our mere presence, with violent extremist organisations fleeing as we arrived and the security bubble that our presence projected allowed the local population to enjoy freedom, safe from the threat of being robbed, raped or murdered.

We were able to directly disrupt the activities of an Islamic State cell by finding and confiscating their cache of weapons, ammunition and equipment as part of an operation that integrated electronic warfare and drone capabilities with dismounted patrolling and rummage searches. This was a very satisfying operation that has led to changes in the way the UN operates around the world, with B Company conducting the first building search that MINUSMA has ever conducted.



**ISGS cache find.**



### Fire mission illum!

It was a UN Peacekeeping tour, but Mali is a dangerous operating environment and we had to remain able and ready to respond to any threats directed at us, or at innocent civilians

whom we were there to protect. We were under constant observation by adversaries who sought to target us or emplace IEDs in our path and we used 81mm mortar illum by night to

demonstrate our capabilities and deter our adversaries when we were static in leaguers. By far the greatest threat encountered was the environment. The heat was stifling and there was no escape,



## 2nd Battalion (The Poachers)



**Driving into the sunset.**

with temperatures regularly reaching 50 degrees. The terrain was punishing for the vehicles, but our Fitter Section worked tirelessly to keep us on the road and the Foxhounds proved themselves more than capable of meeting the challenges of the operating environment. It was both an extremely challenging and rewarding tour and everyone will take something away from it. It should not be underestimated how big an impact we had within MINUSMA, with our actions being highlighted as demonstrating best practice in everything we did. B Company left Mali rightly proud of a job well done, handing over a strong reputation to the second iteration of the Long Range Reconnaissance Group, led by the Poachers. Not every member of B Company deployed, with a platoon of Battlefield Casualty Replacements in the UK maintaining their readiness



**Maj Powell speaks with locals.**

and demonstrating inter-operability with the rest of the Regiment, taking part in Exercise VIKING STORM with the 1st Battalion and Exercise WESSEX

STORM with the 3rd Battalion. Overall, this has been a very busy, challenging, but extremely satisfying year for all of B Company.



**Pre patrol briefing.**

# C (Northamptonshire) Company



**Machine Gun Platoon Op TORAL 2.**

C (Northamptonshire) Company's year has been characterised by providing wide-ranging operational and training support whilst also commanding the Poachers' Rear Operations Group (ROG). This uniquely frenetic period has seen the Company deploy troops onto Op NEWCOMBE 1 and 2, Op CABRIT, Op TORAL 11 and Exercise WESSEX STORM. In typical C Company fashion, the troops have serviced the Battalion's requirement for specialist capability with their usual professionalism and enthusiasm.

Deploying their unique capabilities is satisfying to the Company who, as I write this, remain deployed in Mali, are redeploying from Poland and continue to operate the ROG. Supporting Op TORAL 11 further reinforces the strong links between the Poachers and Vikings, the bond between the Battalions clearly as strong now as ever. The year ahead looks challenging, with re-building and re-forging the C Company team the



**WESSEX STORM.**



## 2nd Battalion (The Poachers)

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priority. The operational experience gained over the last 12 months, in challenging environments, will set the conditions for the Company to confidently re-establish itself as the Poachers' Fire Support element.

### Ex WESSEX STORM

Concurrent to several operational commitments, C Company were presented with a real challenge when tasked with supporting the delivery of Exercise WESSEX STORM. A combined B and C Company group deployed onto the exercise as 'Task Force HANNIBAL', a live and free-thinking enemy designed to genuinely test the exercising troops.

This unique opportunity allowed the Poachers contingent to operate in a variety of enemy roles while testing their initiative, adventurousness, and guile. Acting as the enemy force for the Royal Irish and Royal Scots Dragoon Guards proved an excellent training opportunity. Task Force HANNIBAL operated as irregular forces, reconnaissance troops and heavy conventional forces mandated to defeat the exercising Battle Group.

The overall experience was positive and allowed the Company to test their field skills in arduous conditions. Most satisfying was offering a meaningful and challenging test to enhance the training experience of the Royal Irish ahead their own deployment onto Op NEWCOMBE



3 and 4. Given the operational focus of the Poachers over the last 12 months this task held added significance that was not lost on the Company.

#### Op TORAL 11

C Company's focus has been broad, and its tentacles far reaching since December 2020. The year began with the Company's Machine Gun Platoon deployed in Kabul, Afghanistan, as part of the 1st Battalion's final Op TORAL deployment. Whilst very few, at this time, could foresee the looming breakdown of Afghanistan's security situation and resurgence of Taliban rule, the Vikings' Op TORAL deployment genuinely contributed to a sense of security in the capital which many will nostalgically reflect upon now.

Upon learning of the deployment, the Platoon swiftly re-qualified in Foxhound light mechanised vehicles, moving away from the familiar RWMIK. By the time of Op TORAL 11 the Foxhound had proven itself as the vehicle of choice for Kabul's bustling, ancient and symbolic streets. The Foxhound is designed to provide increased mobility and enhanced manoeuvre on Kabul's tight streets. The vehicle's state of the art sensory suite allows for second-to-none situational awareness; simultaneously, the Foxhound is built to protect against the range of potential physical and environmental threats emanating from Kabul's streets. Re-rolling to the Foxhound was apt given that it forms the basis of the Poacher's Task Group deployed on Op NEWCOMBE in Mali.

The Machine Gun Platoon immediately developed a close bond with



C (Essex) Company who commanded them during the tour. The Platoon trained as the intermediate search team and developed Op CARDEL procedures to provide enhanced force protection, before deploying into Afghanistan.

Once in theatre, the Platoon operated as the Quick Reaction Force as well as conducting day-long patrols to provide a much-needed security presence in Kabul. Clearly, the wider strategic context was dominated by the US and coalition draw-down and peace talks with the Taliban. Whilst few would

predict the looming crisis, and the collapse of the Afghan Security Forces, Op TORAL delivered a real sense of protection, stability, and insulation from Taliban influence at a critical time. The value of the deployment has since been reinforced by the rapid collapse of the country's security pillar. That said, whilst operating in this fraught tinder-box environment, the Machine Gun Platoon remained safe and able to deliver on their mission as part of C (Essex) Company and our sister Battalion.



**Machine Gun Platoon Op TORAL.**



# 2nd Battalion (The Poachers)

## D (Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire) Company

### Overview

*OC D Company*

Writing this introduction to D (Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire) Coy one month into my command, my first impressions of the Coy couldn't be better. Thanks to the excellent work of my predecessor, Maj Sam Thomas, and the D Coy team writ large, I have the good fortune to inherit an incredibly close knit and swept up sub-unit.

2021 has been a busy and rewarding year for D Coy, dominated by a six-month deployment to Poland for Op CABRIT 09. CABRIT was an

interesting deployment; not only did it require the Coy to deploy as part of a US-led multinational Battlegroup (inclusive of the technical, cultural, and human interoperability challenges this presents) but it also required the Coy to detach some of its personnel to Op NEWCOMBE in Mali, whilst at the same time receive attachments from across the Army to fulfil its CABRIT outputs. CABRIT itself is all about presence; physically being there to show solidarity alongside our NATO allies

whilst at the same time deterring, and being prepared to guard against, any Russian incursion. Its day-to-day output is, primarily, strategic and political in nature, and the connection with the tactical is difficult to discern.

Therefore, the operational art of Op CABRIT is how to balance the tensions between different parts of the mission, whilst making the most of the multitude of opportunities the operation presents.

With limited experience operating on High Mobility Tactical Vehicles



Lads on tour!



**Cpl Bent during an anti-armour RAID, a DANA Howitzer in the background.**

(HMTV) – open architecture Jackal and Coyotes predominantly – January saw a concentrated period of driving courses and preparatory ranges. This enabled complex mounted Live Fire Exercises to be conducted in February, followed by a Mission Rehearsal Exercise in March; the culminating event which allowed the Coy to demonstrate both its operational readiness and competency to perform its assigned role.

Deploying to Poland in April, the Coy spent the next six months making the most of the training and cultural opportunities Poland offers. Working alongside US, Romanian, Croatian and Polish counterparts, the Coy has single-handedly flown the flag for the British Army throughout. Be it demonstrating the firepower and tactical employability of HMTV during a multinational CALFEX, or contemplating the defensive challenges of eastern Poland through the prism of a WWII focussed Battlefield Study, and everything in between, the Coy never failed to impress. Ultimately, Op CABRIT allowed the Coy to master its ISR role and do things



**Cpl Evans conducting health check on Slingshot beyond line of sight manpack radio.**



**Cpl Sergeant takes gold in the Men's 100m. Proudly supporting the D "ISR" Coy Stag.**



## 2nd Battalion (The Poachers)

it would not get to do in the UK. Tactics have been refined, lifelong friendships forged, NATO collective security assured and the Russians deterred.

With Op CABRIT now in the

background, we must be careful not to rest on our laurels. The experiences of CABRIT must act as our springboard into 2022 and enable us to meet the challenges, and inevitable frictions, it

will bring. We must reengage with our own Battalion, reconnect with the people that support us day-to-day, and continue to strive for excellence in everything that we do.



### LRRTG- A Sniper's Perspective Mali December 2020- June 2021

*LCpl Hayes*

When we first got word that five of us were to be going to Mali, we were sat in the rain, on Brecon training area over watching LRCC candidates carrying out a close targeted recce on one of the many farm buildings. This was the beginning of our build up to deploy to one of the hottest countries on the planet! During the build up we were sent on driving courses for platforms we would be using in country.

The vehicle we ended up with throughout the PDT and MRX was the coyote. A six- wheel monster of a vehicle and as subtle as a brick through your front window; handy for snipers! Just before we deployed to Mali the .338 got a complete ban on usage and with that our long- range strike capability was gone. However, we attached the Schmidt and Bender optics onto the



**Sniper Close Up**



### Snipers on top cover.

sharpshooter and after a day of range time and bedding in were achieving first- round hits up to 900m. We were joined by two badged snipers from the Light Dragoons who helped no end with recommendations on stowage of kit and weapons within the Coyote.

When we arrived out in Mali the mission from the UN was pretty clear and we knew it was going to be a reconnaissance- led tour. For the first patrol we were in the fire support group, four snipers in a single Coyote which was to be our home for the next month. We were led by CSgt Mander not only our platoon commander but also vehicle commander. Pte Kemp driving, myself and LCpl Girard being the .50 cal gunners.

We were mainly out to a flank of the company group securing areas for the

rest to move through and then providing over watch on their dismounted patrols. This was an interesting part of the job as the history of Mali has led to a colourful populace of many ethnicities and tribal groups, all of which have their own dress code, mannerisms and behaviors. A people watcher's paradise! Everywhere that we went the intelligence was picking up that we were being "dicked". Considering there were hardly any paved roads and that the houses were mainly made of a manure and straw mix, every person seemed to have an iPhone. This led to a few challenging situations in trying to identify certain people within the villages and towns. During our first 28- day patrol, a few of us were able to join the rifle platoons dismounted on foot providing close overwatch and guardian angels for the KLEs in the towns and

villages. Our first patrol ended after 28 days in the desert; we'd been supplied with the same menu ration pack daily for the whole time so everyone was hyped to get back into camp and enjoying something other than chicken curry.

During our next patrol we were attached to the Light Dragoon Squadron. They welcomed us in as one of their own and with their vehicles both coyote and jackals we were able to cover the ground a lot quicker. This made for some epic but exhausting days.

We'd been picking up some chatter from a little town called Dori whilst on their market day the Light Dragoons carried out a mounted patrol and dropped our sniper callsign near a high feature; the only one in the area. Our task was pretty simple for the day, climb up without being seen, set up



## 2nd Battalion (The Poachers)



comms and log and report all activity coming into the town. The high feature was a scattered rock field with minimal cover and with no prospect of putting any cover to stop the sun's midday heat which was hitting 45+, we were set and already drenched through. It was a long six hours up there in conditions none of us had experienced before but our task was complete and we were picked back up.

Our next patrol was another epic push down the country. We were to go and support and give reassurance to the Malian Army who had just been

ambushed the week before and lost a lot of men. Within the area again we were picking up a lot of chatter saying we were being watched. And how they'd hit us. The insurgents even complained that none of the British ever seemed to sleep.

We ended up in an area which had a pretty prolific group in, they were intimidating and robbing the locals around their market days. We were sent to the area as a complete show of force. We surrounded the whole town and through a series of KLEs and off the cuff encounters with locals where they pointed towards an area to search.

The Poachers' intermediate search teams put in a shift in austere conditions (a sandstorm hit us as we arrived) and located arms caches. With this intelligence and the finds it then led to the UN's first searches of buildings and compounds, which were conducted by the Poachers. The tour itself was never tipped to be punchy, it was always going to be a reconnaissance tour. The platoon adapted really well and we brought our find and fix capability into the mix. It was our first time the vehicle platform and with that our recommendations to the second tour are paying off for them.



## NATO VELO 21 (16 – 24 JUN 21) – Estonia

WO2 (CSM) D Tanner

### Overview



**NATO VELO Riders alongside the Estonian President.**

NATO VELO 21 was a challenging cycling event, which took place during 16-23 Jun 21 across Enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) Estonia. NV21 was launched following the previous success of NATO VELO 20, during which 30 NATO soldiers and officers cycled across Estonia. The original route was due to run from Poland to Estonia, crossing through Lithuania and Latvia to encompass all eFP territories, however, COVID levels prevented this COA.

During NV21, over 50 serving military personnel from eFP Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland, including UK forces from Estonia and Poland, took part in a show of unity between NATO eFPs and participating nationalities. NV21 also acted as a public outreach event which presented serving personnel the opportunity to deliver NATO's and eFPs' messages about unity



**Military meet and greet event, vent Parnu.**



## 2nd Battalion (The Poachers)

and cohesion, and by their physical presence, remind local audiences of NATO's presence, thus reassuring them of NATO's commitment to collective defence.

As part of the eFP Poland commitment to this event, nine personnel travelled to Estonia to take part in NV21 including; WO2 Dan Tanner (2 R ANGLIAN), Sgt Matt Dawson (INT CORPS), Cpl Stephen Boot (2 R ANGLIAN), Cpl Josh Hall (REME), Cpl Marcus Bent (2 R ANGLIAN), LCpl Davy Watts (R SIGNALS), LCpl Azoni Providence (REME), SFC Matthew Andreski (US Military) and Sgt Seth Marshall (US Military). This team was assembled from the US BG and ROTO 9 personnel committed to Op CABRIT (P).

### Pre-Event

Upon arriving to Tallinn, Estonia, the team were greeted by the RLS team from eFP CABRIT (E), who would be acting as the primary support during the event around Estonia. The team were given the NATO cycling equipment and a brief highlighting the SoM around the country and how support would be delivered on the ground. The anticipation was high amongst the riders and teams as we were split into four different cycling teams for the event, including a mix of nationalities and eFP locations. Following this our eFP Poland contingent embarked on a final meal and admin preparations, prior to first day of riding.

### Stage 1 Tallinn to Rakvere (146km - 570m elevation)

On the morning of the first day, local Estonian media teams turned up in preparation for the beginning of NV21 outside of our hotel in Tallinn. Following a few interviews and team photos, we were able to depart and begin our journey across Estonia, however, the hardest part would be the first few miles; trying to escape the morning traffic commute in Tallinn. Following the escape from Tallinn, the remainder of the first day was a fairly relaxing experience, minus a few teething issues with the bicycles which materialised. These were easily resolved however and were mostly due to NV cyclists getting accustomed to the



Paide Victory Day Parade Preparation.



eFP Poland Riders During Local Thunderstorm.



**NATO VELO cyclists - start line.**

Estonian road conditions.

**Stage 2 – Rakvere to Tartu  
(169km - 430m elevation)**

The second day was the longest day of NV21, covering over 100 miles for the first time, a personal best from the majority of riders in the event. Over the course of the day, the NV riders were joined by the Estonian President, Kersti Kaljulaid, who was helping to promote the event and support inter-operability between eFP partners. The day was a gruelling ride into a strong head wind and an average temperature of 30 degrees, which affected the majority of the cyclists. The final 10km into Tartu was particularly challenging due to the previous 95 miles and never ending inclines!

**Stage 3 – Tartu to Viljandi  
(141km - 830m elevation)**

Waking up, the aches and pains, which became a constant companion

throughout the remainder of the event, started to take place on the morning of the third day. Also, the mood was sombre, due to the fact that the majority on the morning was going to be a slow steady incline, building up to lunch time; earning day three the ‘hill day’ tag. Day three was a tale of two halves as a result, with the first being an intense slog, whilst the second half was a gradual decline; giving respite to tired legs.

**Stage 4 – Viljandi to Parnu  
(100km - 320m elevation)**

On day four, the original route was changed due to concerns over incoming thunderstorms; which had been scheduled to materialise towards the end of the event. Given that every day of the event encompassed 30+ degree temperatures, a change in weather would have been welcome. In the end, there was no change during day four. The shortened route allowed the NV riders to actively take part in an organised

military event in Parnu. In Parnu, the cyclists hosted ‘meet the soldiers’ events, where members of the public had the opportunity to meet NATO personnel, see their equipment and learn more about NATO and its enhanced forward presence in the eastern part of the Alliance).

**Stage 5 – Parnu to Haapsalu  
(135km - 270m elevation)**

Day 5 was a relatively quiet day compared to the previous military events in Parnu and potential concerns regarding the thunderstorms. For the first time across the event, we experience a tail wind, which supported one of the quickest days cycling across Estonia. The temperatures again were in the 30s, however, the quick Estonian road conditions and rolling farming fields helped the riders progress easily. Upon arriving in Haapsalu, the NV team were treated to a finish line in one of the old Estonian Fortresses in the region



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prior to enjoying a relaxing swim in the Baltic Sea.

### **Stage 6 – Haapsalu to Paide (155km - 460m elevation)**

The anticipation for day six was similar to that of day two, due to the similar length and given that we were expecting to be cycling into a strong head wind and 30-degree heat. Whilst the first 50km were exactly that, the terrain slowly began to turn into our favour as we passed through wood blocks, swapping the wind to support our progress.

However, just prior to the first food stop a miscommunication in the pack resulted in a significant bicycle crash that forced one of the UK riders to withdraw due to injury. In spite of this, the eFP Poland team continued aiming to finish the remainder of the race for the injured team member. Upon reaching Paide, the NATO VELO riders were invited to view the preparations for the

Victory Day parade as well as engaging in the local Estonian celebrations in the evening. This was a cultural event used to support the NATO VELO riders as well as celebrate Estonian Victory Day.

### **Stage 7 – Paide to Tallinn (104km - 300m elevation)**

At the beginning of the final day, morale was high knowing that the finish line was in sight and only one final push was required to get us across it. There was a delayed start to the day due to all the NATO VELO riders receiving a speech from the Estonian Minister of Defence prior to the Victory Day parade taking place in Paide; which eFP CABRIT soldiers were taking part in (Mercians).

Whilst the first 70km were no different than any other day so far during the event (hot temperatures, rolling fields and surrounding wood blocks), the final stretch was an emotional roller coaster. During the last 30km thunderstorms

struck the riders, resulting in the event nearly being cancelled as the wind was so strong that riders were nearly thrown from their seats and rain was so heavy that visibility was less than 5 metres. Whilst the team pulled over, lightning was striking the surrounding woodblocks.

After a couple of stops and a nerval 30 minutes, the event was allowed to continue, however, the rain and water on the road significantly slowed progression. Despite this, we all successfully made the final push over the finish line in Tallinn, greeted by hundreds of locals who had turned out to support Victory Day and NATO forces. Overall, the experience across Estonia was amazing and truly showed both the individual physical prowess of NV riders and unity amongst NATO forces. The final photo was taken overlooking Tallinn harbour showing the strength of the NV team.

## **Javelin Operators Cadre, during OP CABRIT**

Whilst on Op CABRIT Javelin Platoon ran a cadre to teach new members of the platoon the trade of the job role whilst the more seasoned soldiers had a remind and revise.

Due to the two-week isolation period at the beginning of the tour we used our time wisely to ensure the skill- at- arms phase of the cadre was completed. This meant when we had time in the FOE to conduct our cadre, we could jump straight into the exercise phase.

The cadre was conducted in Torun, Poland, the home of the Polish Territorial Defence Force (TDF) as previously Javelin Platoon had conducted several training events with them. Torun is a picturesque city in Northwest Poland and has a lot of history and culture. The exercise area was a location where up to 20,000 British troops were held as POW during the Second World War. The training area was far from the ideal conditions that we were used to with Salisbury Plain and its vast training area, rolling hills and armoured units nearby to assist with the role playing. Instead, we had a relatively flat, sandy, heavily



**Capt George Liddington awarding patches to members of the TDF.**

wooded area to train in. However, Torun had the benefit of local Polish armoured artillery units nearby and was away from the monotony of Bemowo Piskie Camp (where D Coy had been staying for the preceding four months). The Polish had six TDF members on the course and they brought three artillery pieces with them. The US contingent had three exercising troops and an OPFOR of three Strykers and sixteen dismounts.

The Platoon Commander decided that the cadre would be split down into two phases, the light role phase and then LMI phase, mounted in Jackals, which was a relatively new idea as all previous cadres had been conducted in light role format only. During the exercise every exercising soldier stepped up. Qualified gunners became controller observers, controller observers became DCs and DCs became SCs. This meant every soldier was learning a new skill or job role instead of coasting in their current role as they already knew it. This was made harder with the attachment of American and Polish troops, who both used the Javelin weapon system but didn't employ it the same way we did or



**The Javelin CFT being conducted with all partner nations.**

didn't speak English as a first language. The cadre began with an arduous tactical advance to battle over eight miles, carrying a 16kg missile on top of your 20kg of kit and personal weapon. The event was unfamiliar to many of the overseas soldiers we had on the cadre. However, some of them managed to

achieve the pass mark and were therefore kept on course. At this point in the cadre, I realised how professional our force was, and that all the build-up training in Bemowo Piskie really helped the troops.

The course was arduous at times, and the DS expected the troops to cover long distances with heavy weight.



**The combined US and British 2 Sect, commanded by Cpl Parker, at the end of the cadre.**



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The troops soon began to understand how robust a Javelin soldier needs to be due to the weight and distance we cover. Furthermore, they also learnt the low-level tactics needed such as OP construction, ambushing and vectoring (where a Javelin callsign talks on a friendly callsign to an enemy position). This was a good opportunity to teach the Americans how we employ our javelin for sustained actions and not “shoot and scoot” like they do; they only employ the weapon in a reactive role and carry it as a platoon weapon in the back of a vehicle. The new members had a steep learning curve but managed to perform well despite the weather conditions. The heat in Poland at the time was excruciating, it was a humid heat ranging from 30 – 35 in the day and around 20 – 25 at night. The weather meant the course was limited to conducting the actions to the night-time and remaining in OPs or conducting admin during the day. Finally, the troops also had to contend with the enemy armour which was soviet style Polish artillery pieces and the free play American Strykers.

The second phase quickly took over once all basic understanding of the Javelin role was grasped. The troops by this point had conducted five days



**A TDF Soldier doing familiarisation training on the Stryker and .50 cal HMG.**

of arduous tabbing with heavy weight during the light role phase, often carrying upwards of 45kg, which meant they gained a new appreciation for their vehicles. The tempo picked up and the enemy Strykers were relentless. The enemy commander was given an area to

work in and an objective and set loose, essentially making the enemy free play within an AO. This tested the Section and Det commanders as they couldn't predict the enemies' tactics and became very aware of their superior sighting systems which meant camouflage and concealment had to be of the highest standard.

The final mission started as a block from a platoon defensive trench location on a hill in the middle of the training area, which then became a delay as the enemy started to overrun the platoon's positions.

With kit quickly being packed away, as best as possible under enemy HMG fire, they extracted and began to delay the enemy from midnight all the way to first light, where the exercise finished with a course photo.

Despite the constraints of working in a foreign country, on a training estate designed primarily for artillery, it was one of the best cadres that has been run in recent memory and the soldiers that passed the cadre have well and truly earned their Javelin patches. For those that were unfortunate not to pass there's always the next cadre in February in Salisbury Plain to show their ability along with the brand-new members.



**Op CABRIT - D (Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire) Coy, 2nd Battalion lurking in the woods in Poland.**

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## ITC to Recce Tree

*Pte Jock Whitehead, 2 R ANGLIAN Recce Platoon*

Going straight from ITC to Recce Platoon and earning the coveted Recce tree patch – a Private soldier’s perspective.

In the autumn of 2019, I left South Africa and started my training at the ITC Catterick, during which COVID 19 hit in March 20. Due to this we learnt new ways to continue physical training and trained through apps and video calls which was exceedingly beneficial.

When we passed out of ITC Catterick, some of us who had exceeded expectations were recognized. Thus, we were given the unique opportunity to join specialist Platoons, and so for nine of us our journey as new inductees within Recce Platoon began. Due to the pandemic and necessary Pre-Deployment Training for the upcoming Op CABRIT, it was decided that we would do the Light Close Reconnaissance Patrolman Cadre (LCRPC) whilst deployed in Poland.

The platoon’s physical training was more frequent and difficult than what we

had experienced in ITC Catterick and on exercises, the level expected of us was exceptionally high. Here we found the challenge that we had all come to Recce in search of. Time flew by and before we knew it, it was time to begin the LCRPC to badge and obtain the right to wear the esteemed Recce Tree.

We began the cadre with a week of LFTT in Warcop where we learnt how Recce Pl operates in contact situations, with immediate actions drills and various shoots. This was all fast paced but and required significant attention to detail. Thus, we were given a taste of the life that left us with an unfathomable sense of drive for the rest of the upcoming cadre.

As well as preparing physically for LCRPC, we had to conduct our PDT, including getting to grips with heavy weapons and conducting mounted ranges on our new Jackals in Castle Martin. Before we knew it, we were in Bemowo Piskie Training Area (BPTA) Poland, ready for the next six months.

For the first three months we worked alongside our allies, doing various readiness training exercises which showed us how our allies conduct drills and work in the grand scheme of the operation. This was an eye-opener and an exceptional pleasure to be a part of. After the first three months of learning our Jackal platforms, we had to shift our mentality for the Recce Cadre, as it would all be dismounted. In addition, Poland and America sent some of their chaps to join us on our cadre.

The first stage of the cadre in Poland saw us completing PT events and tough navigation exercises. Navigation proved to be a challenge for most as we hadn’t worked on it since ITC. Thus, catching on quickly was paramount for your survival in Recce Platoon as all events were timed and cover close to 10km. Therefore, skill adaptation and endurance, both mentally and physically, were the aim of the game.

The next two weeks began with the lessons and assessments of all equipment,



Do you see what I see?



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**Sharpshooting.**

skills and drills that Recce Platoon use to get the job done successfully. This ranged from patrol skills to Close Target Reconnaissance missions, constructing Observation Posts to contact drill lanes. This week proved challenging in terms of the amount of knowledge one had to absorb and employ efficiently. However, we caught on fast despite the rapid pace delivery.

Once we'd proven we knew these new skills it was time for the final showdown, Ex SAPLING STAG, to conquer the beast and earn the Recce Tree. This final rx consisted of a two-week programme that was conducted at a new training area close to the border of Germany. We knew that Recce PI wanted soldiers who possess both skill and a work ethic beyond the call of duty, not just survive the cadre, so there could be no slacking.

The first week felt like a 'hell week', with the insertion tab on full Recce PI packing weight and tasks including sub-surface or bush hide OPs, patrols, raids, CTRs and tracking passing targets.



**Providing overwatch for a dismounted patrol.**



### The survivors.

We started in stifling heat, and after a few days were hit by torrential rain and thunderstorms. This unpredictable weather and the heavy loads proved too much for some, as more than half of the Polish and Americans and even a couple of Brits had to be pulled off the exercise. Those times proved challenging as the men that dropped out of the programme had to leave their kit behind, which was equally distributed amongst the remaining soldiers in the patrol to depict the realism in battle. The heaviness of the kit became testing for many, however we embraced the “suck” and suffered in silence as our goal came closer and closer. For the second week, we were left with a few hard grafters, and the enemy (US Recon) was given free rein to hunt us, while we conducted various missions and vice versa, to locate the enemy for our American callsign to be

led into position and attack them.

During this game of cat and mouse we conducted various ambushes and skirmishes to harass the enemy. Once we had a plan, we presented the incoming Friendly Forces (also US Recon) a brief on the best way to attack the enemy position. This allowed us to step out of our comfort zone, obtain the ability to inform “higher ups” on what the situation on the ground is like, and suggest what course of action we think would be best. The Americans loved the plan, and so under cover of darkness we lead our American friends into position to annihilate the enemy. Our patrol was used as rear protection for the main attacking force and to clear enemy depth positions. Our other Recce patrol, along with US Snipers, were used as a feint to attract attention and to “discombobulate” the enemy when we

would actually attack from the side.

The attack commenced in an uproar of gunfire and as planned the main force hit the enemy hard from the side creating mass confusion amongst the enemy. Within minutes, the shock and awe tactic resulted in immeasurable success with close to no casualties. “End Ex” was then screamed from all corners of the battlefield. Cigars and celebration were in abundance as morale skyrocketed, knowing that it was finally over and that we had made it.

After photos and congratulations, we made our way back to base for post-exercise administration. We met outside with all DS and the boss, who informed us that the survivors had all passed and that we had earned the right to join the ranks of the brave and few, and to walk proudly having the right to wear the Recce Tree.



Javelin Firing Posts from the 2nd Battalion firing in Poland during the summer.



# 2nd Battalion (The Poachers)

## HQ Company

### Introduction

#### *OC HQ Company*

It is with some satisfaction that I write for this edition of Castle Magazine as OC HQ Company, my second appointment in post after covering for a 6-month period as Acting Major in 2013. Firstly, I would like to extend the thanks and gratitude of the Company to Maj Ned Miller and WO2 Gaz Dixon in their tenures as OC & CSM; both have moved onto pastures new with Maj Ned Miller assuming the role of OC Dhekelia Station, and a useful ally for the Vikings as they assume Dhekelia Residential Battalion.

WO2 Dixon assumes a G7 role at 2 ITB. Both will be sorely missed as an effective and compassionate double act guiding the Company during its hectic transition from Cyprus in 2019, through Light Mechanised Infantry (LMI) conversion and subsequent operational deployments in 2020 & 21. Further, I would like to extend a warm welcome from the Company to WO2 Lewis Arthey who joins us from 2 PWRR and assumes the appointment of HQ Company CSM; a soldier of some pedigree with a strong family heritage and service within the Regiment along with three brothers, father and two uncles before them; just think of the Rawdon brothers but with cockney accents. Anyway, welcome and a fantastic advert in the strength and depth of talent within the Queen's Division.

I write this article remotely from the confines of my office in Gao, Mali having conducted a remote handover in Jul 21. As I reflect on my own hectic schedule since re-joining the Battalion in Cottesmore as QM(M) in Aug 19, I can only but admire the way HQ Company has embraced change and met and held up to the very highest standards as the Battalion enablers. Since the last edition in December 2020 the Battalion's tempo, like all large organisations, has been disrupted by COVID and constrained by the stringent Force Protection measures placed upon us. However, even with the constraints of COVID in

the background, the Company has been busy supporting routine and operational outputs, including amongst others Op RESCRIPT (COVID Response Force), Op NEWCOMBE (Mali) and Op CABRIT (Poland).

Since the New Year, HQ Company has been focused on Op NEWCOMBE, preparing for their deployment to Mali. Some 41 individuals from HQ Company conducted Mission Specific Training (MST) as part of the Long-Range Reconnaissance Group (LRRG) Task Group (TG) HQ and deployed in early May 21 following a period of quarantine. Along with A (Lincolnshire) Company, TGHQ forms around a third of the total of 310 personnel that forms the LRRG TG with the focus of the TGHQ being the planning and execution of operations.

No doubt other articles within this edition will articulate the challenges and rewards of the deployment but for HQ Company this has been nothing but an opportunity to showcase what individuals and departments can contribute to UK Defence's premier operation. Alongside key individuals from Battalion HQ, the outputs of the Quartermaster's Department, MT Platoon, AGC (SPS) Det Comd and Clerks, the Regimental Aid Post (RAP) & Light Aid Detachment (LAD) have been vital in supporting operational deployments by the TG whilst concurrently managing routine tasks at Camp Bagnold, the home of the LRRG TG in Gao.

As well as Op NEWCOMBE, HQ Company has supported Op CABRIT, which saw D (Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire) Company deploy to Poland as part of the NATO Enhanced Forward Presence Battle Group. Embedded within a US Army Battle Group in the heart of Poland, again this has presented significant challenges and opportunities to HQ Company with the Catering Platoon, AGC (SPS) Clerks & the LAD supporting the sub-unit. A rare

operational deployment opportunity, the D Company group are the first Infantry sub-unit to conduct the commitment (normally a Light Cavalry Squadron commitment), and I know those HQ Company individuals that deployed will come back more operationally experienced, which will be invaluable as we face the challenges of 2022.

With two concurrent operational deployments, the necessity to stand up and form a Rear Operations Group (ROG) has been essential to ensure those left behind in Cottesmore are managed and looked after. Based around C (Northamptonshire) Company, HQ Company elements have been consumed into the ROG with the CSM becoming the focus for HQ Company. As well as routine Station tasks and Support to Experimentation & Training (SET) trawls, the company's continued support to both Theatres has been essential in ensuring Battle Casualty Replacements (BCRs), equipment, stores and mail gets forward in a timely manner. HQ Company departments have been vital elements in sustaining operations and ensuring ROG output.

At the time of writing, the challenges of 2022 are just becoming clearer but none more so than reforming HQ Company in the New Year post some well-deserved leave. Bringing together a sub-unit that has been fragmented and dispersed effectively for the last 12 months will be one of the most demanding tasks faced by HQ Company since 2008, when the Battalion returned from Op TELIC 12. Planning is already afoot on medals and homecoming parades, an important element to bringing closure and allowing a wider audience the opportunity to recognise the significant contributions individuals have made over the last year.

The LAD and ROG have articulated some of these contributions post this introduction, which I hope will give you a flavour of the pace and challenges faced over the last year. Two special articles

from HQ Company appear later in the edition with the QM(M) highlighting what the LRRG role is within the wider UN construct, and Sgt Douglas RAMC giving a summary of the Medical Groups contribution to a Suicide Borne Vehicle

Improvised Explosive Device (SVIED) attack on German UN comrades in Jun 21. I hope you very much enjoy these articles and I look forward myself to catching up on the wider Regimental news within this edition. Just leaves

me to say thank you to all within HQ Company for your extraordinary contributions that you have made over last 12 months regardless of whether you served on the ROG, Op NEWCOMBE, or Op CABRIT.

## Op NEWCOMBE Light Aid Detachment

*Capt A Walker EME*

The Long Range Reconnaissance Group (LRRG) Light Aid Detachment (LAD) is made of soldiers from no less than seven different Units. In total the LAD numbers 28 REME soldiers. The trades include Vehicle Mechanics, Armourers, Technicians and Recovery Mechanics. The LAD is responsible for the maintenance, repair and inspection of over 100 platforms which include FOXHOUND, JACKAL, COYOTE, MASTIFF, RIDGEBACK and MAN SV.

When not deployed, the LAD operates as an engineering troop and provides Equipment Support (ES) to all sub-units. When deployed, the LAD operates as several fitter sections, providing in-mission effect to the TG, which also includes a National Support Element (NSE) that remains in Camp BAGNOLD.

From an ES perspective, Op NEWCOMBE can best be explained in two big handfuls, providing ES forward to fighting troops and conducting in-depth rehabilitation of equipment in preparation for future operations,



**LAD working on vehicles within a Leaguer in the Mali desert.**

When deployed, the fitter sections will operate within their sub-units (A Coy, C Sqn and A1 Ech), each of which operates with different equipment types

which brings a whole host of challenges when deployed. A Coy, operating largely out of FOXHOUND tend to be quite a labour-intensive beast. The operating temperatures in Mali are extreme and



**Op NEWCOMBE LRRG LAD formed up.**



## 2nd Battalion (The Poachers)



**LAD working in the Mali during the wet season.**

this is felt by the vehicles. C Sqn, operating largely out of JACKAL and COYOTE is the recce element of the TG and often operate at reach. The terrain and distances covered can cause significant issues with suspension systems; these are time consuming repairs which require hard work and patience by the vehicle mechanics. Lastly, A1 Echelon has a mixed fleet of all the above as well as MAN SV, MASTIFF and RIDGEBACK, these bring additional complexities to the team deployed forward.

However, it is during the rehab periods back in Camp BAGNOLD that the ES troop really earns their keep. During post-op rehabs, each vehicle will

generally receive around 10-15 hours of inspections, repair and maintenance. This is time consuming and at times conducted in temperatures which exceed 40 degrees Celsius. The variety of vehicle types, complexity of repairs and at times lack of spares all play a part in presenting an extremely challenging working environment. The challenges faced have been overcome by some impressive technical knowledge, a sheer commitment by all LAD soldiers to achieve engineering excellence and the tightness of a team that just wants to do the best for the TG. The rehab periods have become more and more efficient which has also allowed for some entertaining down time in the margins.

In summary, Op NEWCOMBE has highlighted the best bits of what an effective LAD can provide on operations. Sub-unit fitter sections worked tirelessly when deployed to ensure vehicles remain on the ground and in the hands of users. The team left at Camp BAGNOLD, worked hard to turn-around the vehicles left behind with tricky problems and were also instrumental in pushing both spares and ES capability forward which undoubtedly maximised vehicle availability throughout. When not deployed, the LAD has re-focused its efforts to ensure all areas of the TG are fully supported and nothing but the best from an equipment perspective deploys on operations.

## Rear Operations Group

*Capt W Heaton ROG Ops Offr*



With elements of 2 R ANGLIAN deployed on operations in 2021, by June 2021 what remained in the UK was a 400-person strong Rear Operations Group (ROG), which delivered multiple competing outputs.

The UK component of 2 R ANGLIAN was faced with several challenges as it supported two operations concurrently as well as delivering routine outputs to 7 Infantry Brigade, The Royal Anglian Regiment, the Queen's Division and many more. 2021 has been a testing period for all members of 2 R ANGLIAN, and I include those not deployed on operations in this. There were many instances and events which tested members of the battalion in the UK. Many personnel had to assume additional responsibilities and people found themselves sometimes acting one- or even two- up. For example, the recently appointed Company Sergeant Major of C Company was also covering off the role and responsibilities of the Officer Commanding and the Second In Command, as well as his duties as CSM; for a company which at a time numbered over two hundred people. The UK component of 2 R ANGLIAN has had to fulfil normal ROG functions supporting those deployed, as well as look forward, planning for exercises and operations in the future.

Largely battalion life carried on as normal. However, there were several challenges which the 2 R ANGLIAN

ROG faced. One such challenge was the force preparation and force generation of the BCRs which were sent out to the relevant operational theatres. Each company had its own pool of suitably qualified and experienced people to fulfil this BCR requirement and many were activated and sent out, for a number of reasons. Despite the BCRs being mobilised and deployed, luckily the casualty notification process was not tested.

Insert Pic 1: OC ROG Maj J Powell MBE briefing ROG

A challenge has certainly been to ensure that our soldiers remain motivated, fit and well trained. A varied and demanding training program is key to maintaining the morale of junior soldiers who did not deploy. Platoons ran low- level training, the gym staff delivered varied and challenging PT and sport continued to be played once Covid-19 restrictions eased. The UK element of 2 R ANGLIAN had enough people to ensure business continuity, but its chain of command was stretched more thinly than would otherwise be the case for a workforce of 400 people. The ability to operate over half of the battalion's workforce with less than 25% of its warrant officer, senior non-commissioned officer (NCO) and officer cohort was particularly challenging considering the high tempo that those in the UK were operating at. This was particularly difficult when certain key

personalities were either posted or selected for trawls. To try and mitigate this, certain departments were combined to provide resilience. The Poachers were lucky to have two non-deploying subalterns, the rotation one and two battlefield casualty replacements (BCRs) platoon commanders, who were able to deliver rewarding and effective training for the soldiers, supported by the senior and junior NCOs which remained.

A fantastic training opportunity was when elements of A, B & C Coy deployed on Ex WESSEX STORM in June as Task Force HANNIBAL. This saw them fulfilling a demanding role as the enemy for the Royal Irish and Scots DG who were being tested. The plan was that they would provide a sub-unit into the 1 RIFLES BG who were down to play enemy, unfortunately 1 RIFLES had to isolate due to Covid-19 and therefore The Poachers were all that remained to fulfil this vital role.

The ROG is an essential component to the success of any operation and its contribution should not be underestimated. Despite the myriad of challenges it faced, 2 R ANGLIAN in the UK managed to continue business as usual and deliver the output of a complete battalion. At no stage did the support to Op NEWCOMBE or Op CABRIT falter and routine activities continued. This was only achieved, however, because of the hard work of those in key positions within 2 R ANGLIAN ROG.



# 2nd Battalion (The Poachers)

## Support to German SVIED Casualties

*Sgt Douglas RAMC – RAP Sgt*



**Medical Group briefed by the OC prior to casualties arriving at the German Role 1 facility.**



**Joint Medics prepare and triage casualties.**

On 25 Jun 21, the LRRG RAP were informed at 0730hrs that a UN patrol had been struck by a Suicide Vehicle Borne Improvised explosive device (SVBIED). The RAP and Ground Manoeuvre Surgical Group (GMSG) assembled kit and equipment, loaded vehicles with support from the TG and efficiently deployed to the German Role 1 medical facility. The Med Gp was ready to receive casualties within 30 minutes, an impressive achievement considering our kit was in storage after a recent patrol.

As a Med Gp we took a tactical pause to be briefed by Med Gp OC and GMSG's Clinical Director on the situation and incoming casualty states. There were 13 casualties, twelve German and one Belgium soldier, nine of which were directed to us. Initial reports indicated six T3 casualties, four T2's three T1's. The T1 casualties and one T2 casualty were triaged to the French and Chinese Role 2 facilities.

A mixture of RAP and GMSG quickly established a front of house reception area with triage bays ready to



**Members of the LRRG Medical Group assisting with lifesaving treatment of casualties.**

prepare casualties for admission to the Role 1 facility. The 2 R ANGLIAN RAP stood up its two Ridgeback Ambulances with paramedic capability ready to respond to requests for movement of casualties where required. The RBKs were commanded by the 2 R ANGLIAN CMTs: Cpl James and Cpl Franks.

As casualties arrived, they were received, reassessed, sanitised of weapons and ammunition then filtered into triage bays depending on injuries sustained and the evolving clinical picture. In the T2 bay I assigned LCpl Riley (2 R ANGLIAN) and LCpl Brown (QDG); I assigned Cpl Dougall of 34 Field Hospital to T3 bay. I oversaw both triage bays and assigned 2 R ANGLIAN

team medics (Sgt Leahy, Sgt Watts and Cpl Brown) to support initial treatment and movement of casualties.

Inside the German Role 1 medical facility, four resuscitation bays and a surgical theatre were established. The LRRG Senior Medical Officer (SMO) Major Shirley-Mansell, General Duties Medical Officer (GDMO) Capt Tim Lomas and RAP Nurse Capt Gemma Probert integrated into resuscitation teams, working alongside German and Swedish Clinicians, to stabilise, treat and prepare for strategic evacuation back to home nation medical facilities.

Despite the RAP medics being relatively junior and having limited operational experience, they performed well above expectations and worked tirelessly in the heat to deliver an outstanding level of clinical care to partner- nation casualties.

The LRRG RAP received high praise and a personal thanks from the German Defence Secretary and multiple UN partners for their professional management of this complex major medical incident.

## Long Range Reconnaissance Group role

*Maj M Ielden QM(M)*

Created by the UN Security Council, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) came into force in 2013 and was part of a broader attempt to stabilise the Sahel region and nullify threats to regional and international

security, by supporting political processes in Mali in favour of a shift towards democracy.

The aim of the mission is to support Mali's transitioning roadmap and to identify and reduce security threats to that transition. The UK's Long Range

Reconnaissance Group (LRRG) has an important role to play in achieving these aims, and its specialist role of reconnaissance to not only pre-empt and preclude attacks, but also to better understand the needs of the population represents the most effective contribution

it can make to the MINUSMA missions' success.

The UK's LRRG have been deployed to Mali as peacekeepers, a force for safety and one that can act to diffuse conflict and protect civilians. The UN mission is concerned with supporting existing political actors and empowering the local population against security threats. Whilst the LRRG can work within a horizontal, non-combat, peacekeeping structure, there is an added dimension of being able to identify and report on specific threats in a tangible way, on the ground, rather than at a purely strategic level.

Traditionally, reconnaissance would entail forces seeking to mobilise and penetrate enemy territory. The LRRG's role in Mali has been to contain existing threats, rather than attack and risk creating further instability, thereby shifting the definition of a reconnaissance group towards a more modern approach to tackling non-conventional threats from target armed groups and violent extremist organisations (VEOs). The LRRG have been able to reorient their role, recognising that the threat faced is from VEOs against a government that had previously been considered a potential leader for democratisation. Asserting and promoting democracy in the region is tactically important to work towards undermining the ideologies of these VEOs but must be allowed



**LRRG formed up for Talavera Day 27 July 2021.**

to develop organically by providing a context in which democracy can thrive, rather than something enforced by the West.

LRRG Pic 2: CVEOs with significant financial resource have been able to buy the favour of local criminal networks and goodwill of communities, increasing the number of Malians turning to these groups for economic reasons. If the LRRG can identify these cases, they may be able to influence them directly, or feedback intelligence to the UN on vulnerable communities that require additional support, offering them an alternative and undermining the physical ability of the VEOs. The LRRG can be involved with tangible, direct distribution of resource that contributes to the needs of civilians by allowing government forces to distribute

aid of its own accord and providing support to disseminate information and material goods that weaken the control of VEOs over the population. The long-term goal would be to allow for economic development that creates jobs and opportunities for young people to ensure they are not forced to turn to these groups.

The LRRG must consider being an external actor imposing measures upon the local population, and thus playing into the rhetoric of certain VEOs. It is important that they flank Mali's official forces to protect them from succumbing to enemy forces inhibitory tactics, rather than moving in and risk overpowering the Malians' role. The importance of empowering women cannot be overemphasised in achieving this. Hence utilising female personnel is a vital component of the LRRG's reconnaissance tactics, gaining information that males may not, and allowing a better understanding of community concerns and how the UN could help.

The LRRG have and will continue to make a crucial contribution to the MINUSMA mission by shadowing existing and future operations and ensuring that Mali's own forces are the face of these successes by enabling traditionally vulnerable or oppressed groups and engaging with communities to empower them to come forward to work with the UN to drive change, disable corruption and prevent the exploitation of resources and people, ultimately resulting in a more stable, conflict-free Mali.



**CO saluting the colours on Talavera Day.**



## 3rd Battalion (The Steelbacks)

# From the CO

*Lt Col Adam Wolfe MBE*

As I write this short article, the excellent men and women of the Steelbacks continue to set the highest bar high for what an Army Reserve Light Role Infantry Battalion is and does. The breadth of activity and their collective achievements over the last year tells the story of what our outstanding soldiers do.

We look back on an extraordinarily high level of commitment to UK Operations in 2020 and 2021, resetting warfighting training and the Battalion has continuously had troops deployed on Operations or overseas commitments to Cyprus, Kenya, Oman, the US and Gibraltar. No other Army Reserve Battalion can say the they have done as much this year.

On top of this, the Steelbacks' performance throughout our collective training has been brilliant despite the recent challenges and that we have needed to completely reset following a period of curtailed activity as a result of the pandemic.

Our Annual Deployment Exercise this year saw the Steelbacks conducting platoon level live firing – this is the level that a high quality Army Reserve Infantry Battalion like ours must maintain as our basic competence. Troops from the Poachers joined us on this exercise as our Paired Battalion in 7 Infantry Brigade. Pairing at the Section level really helped mutual understanding and sets us all up for the next stage of mutual support.

The Steelbacks Permanent Military and Civilian Staff have continued to make all of this possible. Whether that is on the personnel administration, training, welfare or sustaining fronts,



**Commanding Officer bayonet training.**

the Bn continues to be well served by these hard working and stretched teams. It must be noted that the pandemic has made all of their jobs just that bit more demanding and their successes all the more remarkable.

We look ahead to an excellent plan for next year. We start this programme in a very strong position and the hard work of our recruiters and mentors must be recognised. The 3rd Battalion will be at full workforce by early 2022. This baseline puts us in a terrific situation to meet the demands of the Integrated Review, Reserve Forces 30 and match the future Army Reserve contribution to Defence.

The unit plan includes operations in the Falklands with 4PWRR, training with the Poachers, an overseas deployment to Spain, readiness for UK Operations and exploiting every opportunity to contribute to Defence missions – including support to the Vikings in Cyprus. Planning to make the

most of these opportunities starts now! Get ready Steelbacks.

Finally, this will be my last opportunity in *Castle* magazine to publicly thank all the men and women of the 3rd Battalion for everything they have done whilst I have been in command. So, from me to all Steelbacks reading this: your commitment, professionalism and integrity inspires me every day. I have learnt so much from you and, when the time comes to handover, I will leave a better officer than I started because of what you have taught me. And, I will take with me an enormous sense of pride because I had the opportunity to serve with you all.

Lieutenant Colonel Dave Haggart will be pick up the baton as CO in April 2022 and I wish him and the Steelbacks all the very best for the future; I am extremely confident that the Battalion will continue to thrive.

**Steadfast,  
CO Steelbacks**

# From the RSM

*WO1 Alan Johnson*



2021 has been another challenging year in which the Steelbacks have excelled.

The Steelbacks have had a constant involvement in the BATUK force protection throughout 2021 and on top of this we had 5 soldiers deployed on Op CATTALO in Oman, 1 on Op TOSCA in Cyprus. We also still have 4 members mobilised on Op RESCRIPT supporting UK Ops on an enduring basis.

In September we conducted our Annual Deployment Exercise (ADX). This year took us to Catterick, the home of the Infantry, for the green phase moving on to Warcop for live firing which culminated in platoon live attacks. At this time, 175 Steelbacks were either on Operations, Courses or took part in the ADX which was an incredible achievement by all considering the challenges we all face as a result of

the pandemic. We were also joined by 3 sections of excellent Poachers who integrated within the Steelback platoons effortlessly.

As well as working closely with our sister battalions, we have worked closer with Cambridge and East Midlands UOTCs providing instructors for their ADXs. The Companies have also done a great job renewing their close support to ACFs and CCFs as they also returned to live activity.

The battalion shooting team came an impressive 2nd place, with standout shots coming from LCpl Carter with a 2nd place overall out of 43 firers, CSgt Jones winning the Advanced fleeting encounter and Lt Musker coming first on the fleeting encounter.

We have reinvested in sport and adventure training again this year with

great results. The rugby and football teams both came a respectable 2nd place in the 7 Brigade competitions. Cpl Keay won the top novice at the Army's fly-fishing spring match. We have also been able to conduct Adventure training this year which took place in the beautiful Peak District.

10 Steelbacks promoted to Lance Corporal and 7 have promoted to Corporal. 2 Steelbacks have been awarded Lord Lieutenants' awards: Sgt Grant of 4 company and Cpl Fuller of 1 company. LCpl McKenzie of 4 company was awarded Junior Leader of the Year in the 1 (UK)Div's Team Rhino awards.

I would also like to thank all the SPSIs and PSIs for the hard work they have put in while being posted to the Battalion and it has been excellent to see Sgt Harding's hard work be recognised



# 3rd Battalion (The Steelbacks)

with his promotion to CSgt as he moved on from No 2 Company.

We should now look forward to 2022 which will see me hand over to RSM Des . I hand over RSM with the battalion in an excellent place. The last two years

have been some of the proudest of my career and for that I am truly grateful. The battalion has a busy year coming up with opportunities both home and abroad. These include Ex Wessex storm working alongside the Poachers,

working within the Queens division with 4 PWRR deploying on Operation FIRIC in the Falklands and the Steelbacks will have a long overdue Overseas Training Exercise in Spain.

## 1 (Norfolk & Suffolk) Company

*Major Matt Blayney, OC 1 (Norfolk and Suffolk) Company, 3 R ANGLIAN*

In last year's article, I was hugely privileged to have recounted the work conducted by No. 1 (Norfolk and Suffolk) Company in the very early response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including committing a significant number of our soldiers to Operation Rescript and the provision of Mobile Testing Units (MTUs) on top of the success of Exercise Wessex Storm. You might be forgiven for expecting to read an article with a little less activity this year, however, 2020/21 has been anything but quiet for our soldiers from Norfolk and Suffolk.

As the new training year began, we were forced to adapt our traditional training into a virtual package. Notwithstanding the constant "You're on mute" that all of us have become far too accustomed to, the creation of a meaningful virtual training package was a huge success. As we continue to focus on developing leadership at a platoon level, this was driven in the most part

by our platoon commanders and junior NCOs. It was the latter of this group, in particular, who were the decisive element in keeping our soldiers engaged and supported during the periods of lockdown where virtual training was such a necessity. The success of this package meant that once face-to-face training re-started, No. 1 Company was in position to exploit the gains of the previous months. The success of this package was also supported by our recent use of 'Green Teams', effectively splitting the Company down into Fire Team groups administered by a JNCO or Senior Private – this has supported an element of consistency and mission command that no doubt contributed to the good attendance throughout the lockdowns and beyond.

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the fact that as reservists we are simply an email or phone call away from a short-notice mobilisation ranging

from conventional operations through to UK resilience in times of need. Therefore, throughout the year, soldiers within No. 1 Company have been incredibly busy undertaking deployments and courses to ensure that we remain effective for whatever task may come next. Such examples of the broad range of commitments from our soldiers during 2020/21 include Private Baker's deployment with the Queen's Dragoon Guards to undertake Force Protection tasks in Kenya with further deployments of LCpl Sutton, Privates Fordham, Bryan, Storey, and Vermonden. On top of a mobilisation to Kenya, Private Jakubowski and Leighwood mobilised for Operation Cattalo in Oman, once again, broadening the experience of our soldiers within the Company.

Success on courses has also been a highlight of this training year with Private Jakubowski's completion of the IBRU course, Private Duffield's





### LCpl Postance directs the attack.

completion of the Viking Mortar Cadre where he achieved top student alongside his regular counterparts, Private McConnell and Duffield's completion of the 81mm Mortar Cadre making them qualified Mortarmen, Private Cannon and Kelloway's strong passes on the PJNCO cadre, LCpl Stevenson's distinction on the Skill at Arms course, Private Cooke's completion of the PTI course. LCpls Stevenson and Mason completed their Section Commander's Battle Course (SCBC) in Brecon in September, once again increasing the experience and knowledge of our junior commanders within No. 1 Company.

On top of the incredibly busy commitment to courses and deployments, the usual drumbeat of exercises continues with very good attendance from the soldiers of No. 1 Company including Exercise Steelback Dagger, Exercise Britannia Marksman, Exercise Gibraltar Study, and Exercise Steelback Challenge. Alongside this work, we are also seeing a return to more social aspects of Company life with a Fireworks night and Christmas event planned.

In tandem with this training, No. 1 Company has also taken a strong lead

within the Battalion Shooting Team. Led by Captain Chambers the achievements at the recent Operational Shooting Competition (OSC) include; 2nd plan behind 6 RIFLES, LCpl Carter 2nd place for individual shot out of 43 firers,

CSgt Jones won the Advanced Fleeting Encounter shoot, LCpl Carter 1st place in Attack and Re-Org shoot, Lt Musker joint 1st in the Fleeting Encounter shoot, and three firers from No. 1 Company placed within the top eight firers of the

## Post C-19 OC's Range Day

Members of 1 and 5 Companies took part in an OC's Range Day at Thetford Ranges in May to hone rifle and machine gun shooting skills.

26 soldiers deployed to conduct back-to-back rifle shooting skills starting from zeroing theory, practical application of fire from various positions and distances. The aim was to create an instructional environment which allowed soldiers to focus on improving their marksmanship in readiness for assessments without launching straight into the assessment.

Soldiers commented on how useful they found this and the progression throughout the weekend was evident. Concurrently the familiarisation on the General Purpose Machine Gun



(GPMG) saw many new soldiers firing the Infantry's finest section level support weapon for the first time.



## 3rd Battalion (The Steelbacks)

competition; Lt. Musker, CSgt, Nash, and LCpl Carter.

This year has also brought some great news for the Company in the guise of a commission for Captain Karl Chambers. Karl has deliberately avoided promoting for many years in order to ensure that he continues to play an active role within the Army reserve. With no option left for Karl but to commission, we are incredibly lucky that Karl will continue to serve the soldiers within No. 1 Company as an officer with the huge amounts of experience that he has amassed over many years.

In summary, No. 1 Company have had an incredibly busy two years and continue to grow in experience and strength. We continue to have a strong bond with our local counties of Norfolk and Suffolk and the coming year shows no sign of slowing down with deployments to the Falklands and other operational commitments on the horizon. As ever, No. 1 Company and our soldiers from Norfolk and Suffolk will rise to the challenge.



**Cpl Fernando briefs before the approach.**



**Pte Crathern overwatches the enemy.**



LCpl Rolph briefs his Fire Team.





## 3rd Battalion (The Steelbacks)



Members of 1 Company took part in the Battalion's Fire-team Patrols Competition on Leek Training Area in the Staffordshire part of the Peak District National Park.

The weekend tested core infantry skills including CPERS, Fire Team Attacks and Navigation in a competitive environment. Alongside the Competition, Reservists also provided real time medical cover, a field kitchen, and most importantly monitored the safety net VHF communications.

In addition, recruits attended to participate in Op Shepherd, experiencing quality instruction of Basic Infantry skills, delivered by the Recruit Training Team.

Soldiers enjoyed being back patrolling in an arduous environment, operating as formed fire teams. With the additional element of the Observer/Mentors delivering real time constructive feedback.

# Ex Steelback



# Challenge



# 3rd Battalion (The Steelbacks)

## Flood Barrier Training – December 20



No 1 Company with an attachment from No 5 Company including their OC, the Suffolk MLO, Maj Robinson, conducted a successful joint training event with the Water Management Alliance (WMA) on behalf of the East Suffolk Council.

After an initial brief to explain the tasking process to the commanders and why the defences are sited where there are the troops deployed to the quayside to conduct a practical session, which concluded with an assessment. The result was positive, with the

water specialist staff confident of the Steelbacks ability to work with limited supervision, which has the potential to change their current TTPs, to allow them to divert their limited manpower elsewhere should the situation require it.

The Steelbacks who attended, after a short introduction and demonstration from the civilian agencies proved their ability to apply military teamwork to a new task under the supervision of their JNCOs. Whilst the Command Team could relate the estimate process and

G4 demands and constraints to decision points lead by specific information or events employed by the WMA and Council mirrored the process required in executing military operations.

There was lots of passing interest from the general public, who, were rightly proud that the soldiers were from their locality and had found the time to assist and extremely happy to learn it was a training exercise and not the sign of an impending Tsunami.







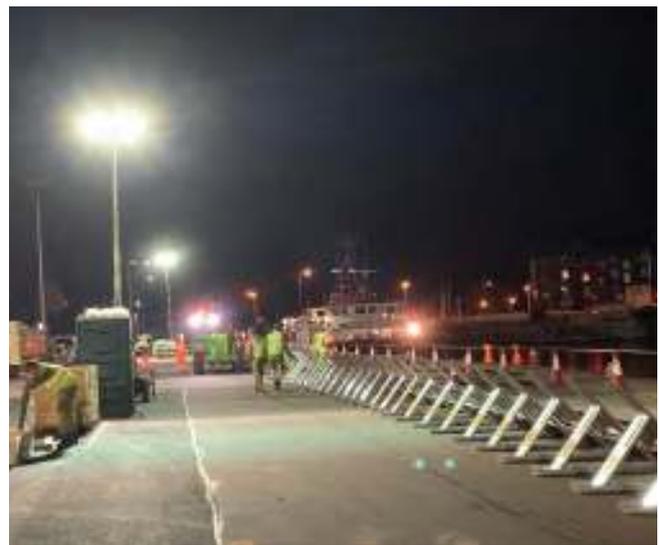
# 3rd Battalion (The Steelbacks)

## Flood Barrier Training Instalment 2 October 2021

Members of 1 Company, 3 Royal Anglian joined East Suffolk Council for Training in the Deployment of Flood Barriers at Lowestoft Harbour this week.

The East Coast is particularly vulnerable to Tidal Surge Flooding and the barriers are erected when a threat is Forecast by the Met Office and Environment Agency.

The training was organised by Major Ian Robinson MBE who is currently the Military Liaison for Suffolk, with the aim of potentially using Local Reserve Soldiers to support and assist thus reducing risk to life and property.



## Lord Lieutenant's Commendation for Tyrone

In November Cpl Tyrone Fuller, 1 Company, was presented with a Lord Lieutenant of Norfolk's, Certificate of Commendation by the Lord Lieutenant, Lady Philippa Dannatt MBE at a Ceremony in Dereham. Cpl Fuller was mobilised for Operation RESCRIPT (Covid Response) during 2020 and was the most Junior Ranked Mobile Testing Unit Commander deploying across East Anglia.

At the time of the presentation Cpl Fuller was in his last week working for AVIVA before commencing Police Constable Training with Norfolk Constabulary.



## 2 (Leicestershire & Northamptonshire) Company

*Captain Philip Weatherall, PSAO 2 (Northamptonshire & Leicestershire) Company 3 R ANGLIAN*

2021 has been a year of continuing to build for 2 Company. The majority of the Company are young and still in training, but they are extremely keen to get involved and have blossomed with the reintroduction of Face-to-Face training. Company numbers continue to improve, especially at Corby where numbers have grown from 10 in 2017 to 47 at present. 22 new soldiers have been attested so far this year, so the future is looking bright.

Personnel have taken part in a variety of activities this year. Highlights included ADX in Warcop, AT in the Derbyshire Peak District and the Remembrance Parade in Victoria Park, Leicester. We are looking forward to a full and busy 2022 with personnel taking part in Ex WESSEX STORM and Ex IBERIAN STAR as well as Battalion and Company training.

Infrastructure at both Corby and

Leicester ARCs has continued to improve, with facilities for our personnel now in place to support welfare and enhance training. Our thanks to East Midlands RFCA for their continued support.

We have said goodbye to the previous Company Commander, Maj Ian Ginns, who moves to a post with HQ 7 Brigade. The SPSI, CSgt Herring and PSI, CSgt Harding have also moved on to pastures new. I would like to thank all of them for their support and hard work during their tenures.

We welcome Maj Andy Speechley as the new Company Commander as well as CSgt Power and Sgt Howes from the Poachers who take up their posts as SPSI and PSI respectively. In addition, 2Lt Rob Blackman has joined us as a Platoon Commander at Leicester, having commissioned from RMAS in the summer.

We continue to feed the Regular Army with LCpl Sammonds going to 2 Battalion R ANGLIAN, Pte Wilson to ITC Catterick followed by the R ANGLIAN Regiment and Pte Betts to the Royal Lancers this year so far.

One of our soldiers in particular, Pte Singh who is a chef at Leicester, has had a very successful year. In his JNCO Cadre he achieved Top Student. He joined the Poachers Catering Platoon for a four-week period during which he helped them to 2nd place in a British Army Catering Competition. He has also spent time with RMAS supporting their final exercise in Germany and completed his class 2 catering course with his class 1 catering course next month.

A special mention also to Pte Totty who has been selected to represent the Army Reserve Women's Football Team.



# 3rd Battalion (The Steelbacks)

## Olympic Weightlifting in the Reserves

*Cpl Shane Caswell, Army Weightlifting Reserve Coach*

After serving 10 years with the 1st Battalion the Royal Anglian Regiment I transferred to 3 Royal Anglian the day following my official release. My final two years as a regular soldier were spent as an athlete on the Army Weightlifting Team which I have been fortunate enough to carry on into my reserve service.

It all started with a beginner's workshop in Middle Wallop, ran by one of the Army Coaches, Craig Spicer. I completely fell in love with weightlifting and decided to continue it in my own time. I followed my own programme initially, nothing too serious but enough for me to start lifting more and more. After some time, I was asked to attend the first ever Army Championships being held to select the team for the first Inter-Services Weightlifting Competition. It was brilliant to be selected for the team of 6 Male and 6 Female lifters that would represent the Army. I attended as many of the training days that I could and was able to fit it around my normal day to day duties.

The Inter-Services Tournament took place in August 2019, with the Army Team victorious over the Navy and RAF Teams. This was the first time I had represented the Army and I could not wait to do it again, fortunately since then I have been lucky enough to do it on many occasions.

During my resettlement I concentrated on my Coaching Qualifications. This would help in my career post regular service when I opened my own gym. After being awarded my British Weightlifting Level 2 Qualification I was approached by the Army Weightlifting Head of Performance and my now personal Coach, WO2 Chris Williams RAPTC, who asked if I would take the lead on weightlifting within the reserves. Without hesitation my answer was yes! Now, not only do I get to represent the Army as an athlete, I now have a role in the development of future athletes,



**Cpl Caswell - weight lifting.**



and this is all possible because of the reserves.

My first year in this role has obviously been affected by COVID-19. A lot of what I wanted to achieve has been put on hold, but with things now on the up, I will be looking to make a big push for the sport within the reserve community.

I encourage anyone interested, complete beginner or highly experienced, to take that first step and to get in contact with either myself or your units RAPTCI for more information. Weightlifting has opened numerous doors for me in the past 2 years. I have just taken part in my first national championships and I am currently undertaking selection to represent Team England at the 2022 Commonwealth Games, all this possible because of Army Weightlifting and attending that beginners workshop a few years ago.

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## 3 (Essex & Hertfordshire) Company

*Major Rhys Little*

Through the ongoing issues of COVID and the force health protection measure have made it another odd year, the dedication of the Company's soldiers has continued to face into these challenges. With soldiers putting in extra time to make the most of the training that they can attend.

We've had soldiers take extra time away from work to complete their promotional courses with the additional time requirements added. With Pte's Corrie and Fox attending FTCC, LCpl's England, Rolph and Cpl Fernando completing their Battle courses in Brecon, and Cpl Cox down to attend his later in the year. Alongside these promotional courses the Company has seen a steady run of soldiers completing their phase 2 Infantry course and instructional courses.

With the cancellation of public Remembrance parades the Company got together to complete some much-needed MATTs training and hold a private, COVID compliant, parade within the Army Reserve Centre. With 2m between each soldier the Company stood for a local padre to lead a small service of remembrance before marking the 2 minutes silence. Whilst not the same as parading through Chelmsford and Hitchin it was great for the Company to form up and mark the date correctly. With any luck we will get back to public parades soon.

As the new year began and things started to get back to a level of normal, the Company ran a range weekend in March reduce some skills fade from the last 18 months. The critical element here was getting everyone through their ACMT before the close of the training year. It was great to see everyone getting back into training, with junior commanders getting amongst their soldiers developing them and getting them back to their required level of competency. To build on this, as the year progressed the Company run follow on range packages to allow soldiers the time to properly develop their



shooting in a contained environment where they could coach and be coached, culminating with an ACMT on the last day where all passed first time and most achieved marksman. The level of health competition grew as the package moved on, with all the junior NCOs pushing to prove their skill, with Cpl Barker just edging out Cpl Fernando with his final round. With more range time planned for the end of this training year I am looking forward to seeing the rematch.

Battalion run training kicked off with Ex STEELBACK CHALLENGE in May, a patrols competition across the wonderful countryside of Leek. 3 Company deploying the most team to the ground and LCpl's Brocklesby, Cybulski, England and Rolph lead their patrols off through their series of stands. For once the weather in Leek was amazing, and with everyone planning for "Romeo" we were greeted amazing and unrelenting sunshine. LCpl Cybulski putting his PTI skills to good use coming top of the 3 Coy teams and dominating the "Resupply" stand. With lots of new soldiers within the Company and COVID reducing the training that we had been able to do it was important to bush out the cobwebs and get some kilometres under the legs.

As the training year moved into offensive operations the Company prepared for Ex STEELBACK

DAGGER, here was 2Lt Braithwaite first chance to lead his soldiers in the field. Focusing on Section Attacked the Company's JNCOs and potential JNCOs were able to build their confidence and develop their low level Infantry skills with attack after attack. Although a challenging exercise it built a strong foundation for the following Battalion exercise which would see a Company advance to contact culminating with a deliberate attack on Eastmere Village. Here, as the OC, it was wonderful to see the young commanders getting amongst their soldiers preparing them for the deliberate action. There was an excited buzz and activity as soldiers cut about planning, rehearsing, and administrating themselves before being unleashed on the enemy. Although a training exercise it was amazing to see everyone taking seriously and enthusiastic to perform at their best. Again, the junior commanders of the Company stepped up to the plate with Cpl's Fernando and Keay pushing their sections hard throughout, with the safe and reliable hands of Capt Murphy leading the platoon, setting an excellent example to the Company's new platoon commanders.

Alongside the Infantry training Capt Murphy and Cpl Evans have been building the skills of the MG platoon, fantastically support by CSgt Hunt and Sgt Hodges. This has been made all the



# 3rd Battalion (The Steelbacks)

more complicated by having to bring in new gunners, with no experience, as well as growing the skills of the older more practised platoon members. This also included Sgt Hodges and Cpl Evans briefing the wider Battalion commanders on the aspects, limitations, and capabilities of the GPMG in the sustain fire role as part of the GIBRALTAR Study weekend.

Despite the ongoing COVID complications and challenges, both running training, and soldiers time away from their civilian employers, balancing being back at work in a more challenging and pressured experience, the Company has been busy as ever trying to catch up on the loss of 18 months, and the knock on impact it will have on their Army Reserve careers.

We have welcomed a new 2Lt Rob

Blackman (though he will be leaving us to join 2 Company), he as quickly settled into the Company striving to improve what can be improved and simplifying what needs to be. The Company has also found time to support local Cadet units, where LCpl Valchera and Pte Woodruff provided an introduction to the infantry soldier to cadets from 8 local detachments, letting them get to grips with weapon systems, and night viewing devices, as always the GPMG attracted lots of attention.

It has been a busy year for the Company, and with a number of soldiers gunning for their next career course, and 2 young officers off to Brecon for Platoon Commanders Battle Course, there is no shortage of people prepared to step up, challenge themselves and lead the Company.



## Exercise STEELBACK DAGGER

### An OC's Perspective

*Major Rhys Little*

With 3 Royal Anglian preparing for its annual training exercise the Bn deployed to STANTA to blow out to cobwebs and practice platoon level skills. With a late evening arrival there was time for battle prep and a quick heads down before the first platoon stepped off on the Platoon advanced to contact lane.

With the sun barely up the lead section was contacted and everyone broke into their processes, commanders issuing orders, and soldiers cutting around the battlefield. With the first serial complete there was time for a hot debrief before the platoon was stepping off for the next serial, as the next platoon began their advance. With the distance complete and temperature rising all platoons had made it to their RV point and the harbour was being set up in preparation for further deliberate operations.

At 0100hrs the first of the platoon set out to secure the FUP for the Company assault on Eastmere. The shift from rural operations to OIBUA required plenty of rehearsals, and section commanders had spent the evening practicing their sections ready for the assault, and were all eager for the attack to begin. Just





before H hour the GPMG's opened up allowing the initial assault platoon to break in, and so it began. Here it became a junior commanders battle and the months of the RSMs training and Company exercises to develop these individuals paid dividends. The rooms and buildings were cleared methodically and systematically with information passing up and down, and before 2 hours where up the area was clear and the Company was "re-orging" on the position and preparing for further tasks.

It was a tough and challenging exercise which was greatly enjoyed by all, a chance to get back to infantry skills and drills and morale was very high throughout. With the look forward to ADX building on this the Battalion is in high spirits.





# 3rd Battalion (The Steelbacks)

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## ADX

*2Lt Andrew Braithwaite*

*OC 6Platoon (Herts)*



On the evening of Friday 17th September 2021, across the east of England, from Chelmsford to Bury St. Edmunds, from Peterborough to Lincoln and beyond, residents of East Anglia were heading home from work to commence their weekend plans.

No doubt, for many their weekends would consist of food, drink, socialising and relaxing. For some however, approximately 130 people, instead of heading home they were driving to their ARCs to report for duty. As Churchill said, twice the citizen, and no truer has this been than on a Friday night when a Reservist drives into a weekend, or in this case two weeks, of service to their unit, and their country. And so, 130 Royal Anglians headed to their local ARCs to prep their kit, sign out weapons and get their heads down before some of the most intense training the 3rd Battalion has conducted in years.

This year's ADX was held across the north of England, with a 4-day field package in Catterick and a 9 day live-fire package at Warcop Ranges. Troops were





## 3rd Battalion (The Steelbacks)

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put through their paces in almost every aspect of being an infantry soldier from remembering the basics of conducting oneself in the field for an extended period of time, to the controlled aggression of the bayonet range, all the way to the CO's Main Effort of conducting Pl Live Fire Attacks. In all, ADX was the culmination of the CO's intent for our training over the past two years, which has severely been hampered by the pandemic, but nonetheless was able to be executed to a high standard.

From talking amongst the Exercising troops it seems that there were several key highlights from over the 16 days. The first is the blank-firing engagements of the night ambush and closely followed, Company dawn Attack in the field package. Working up to company strength is something that more junior soldiers have had very little experience of so far, and the increased fire-power during the ambush as well as the more complicated mechanics of the dawn assault on a farm complex,

were both enjoyable and strong learning experiences. In the second phase of ADX the notable highlights were both the bayonet range and the Pl Live Fire Attack. Bayonet training brings us back to what it means to be an Infanteer at its most fundamental, through practicing a drill that would only be enacted at the most serious of occasions.

The training took its toll physically, quite literally with 8 soldiers withdrawing through injury, but the result was a poignant reminder of our most fundamental role: to close with and kill the enemy. Finally, both chronologically and in terms of importance, the Pl Live Fire Attacks

were the culmination of two weeks of build-up training and the final test for the platoons, as well as our interoperability with the Poachers, who supported us throughout ADX. Both attacks were a success, both tactically and in terms of safety, and all those involved were able to commend themselves for completing the CO's main effort with conviction.

ADX 2021 will be remembered for: strangely good weather; working alongside the Poachers, replacing a Nav Ex with a day-trip to Leeds, an awesome live-fire package, high-quality training and direction from the Permanent Staff and for it's late, late night briefs!



# 3rd Battalion (The Steelbacks)

## 4 (Lincolnshire) Company

Well, it has been another year with lots to forget but also much to remember. Ending 2020 and starting 2021 with more virtual training and cancelled weekends was exasperating and the frustration continued as Armed Forces Day was a Covid washout due to increased cases. As I type this, the number of cases is increasing again but the glimmer of light that is the Covid vaccine program appears to be doing its job.

With that positive in mind (rather than a positive test result) it reminds me of what No 4 Company has achieved over the past 12 months.

Training attendance has returned to pre-pandemic levels and, although we have experienced some scares, there have been no outbreak within the training locations of Grimsby or Lincoln. Testament to the annoying but required force protection measures that we have in place – and, I suspect, some luck too.

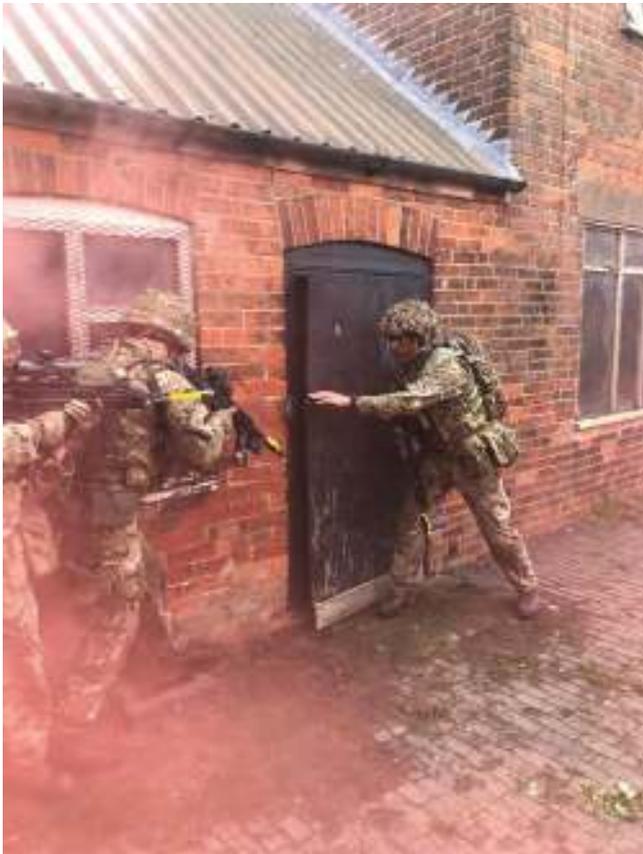
Our recruitment has continued and the back-log of applicants has now been cleared. Good, in so far that they are now on their training pathways



4 Company FIWAF training at Beckingham.



4 Company Brigg 10k Team led by Sgt Mat Hardy.



**4 Company OBUA Training at Beckingham.**



**Lia Nici - MP for Great Grimsby Inspects troops.**

(although attestations through a clear poly-screen had challenges) but it leaves the Company with a challenge to find new applicants and Sgt Hardy, our 'Recruiting Sergeant', reflects on this with his personal views in a nearby article.

The first 'proper' Company training weekend of the year at Beckingham went extremely well and was an excellent way to shake-out and revise both urban and field fighting skills. Had this been the order that they were carried out, we may not have had to stop the exercise slightly early – waiting for an ambulance that never came. Field to Urban brings sheep 'material' on boots onto slippery floors; the casualty made a realistic scream as he was 'shot' and fell to the floor. Except he had not been 'shot' and was now suffering from a broken tibia and fibula – but only he knew this! It took a while for others to register the fact that this was a real casualty. Glad to report that Private Chris Butler is well on the mend now.



**Pte Chris Wood - Top Shot on Mod 3 Course.**



## 3rd Battalion (The Steelbacks)

The Company was pleased to be able to host the County Colonel, Colonel Geoff Newmarch, on a range day at Beckingham. This was the first opportunity for a while for Colonel Geoff to see the County Company under training outside of a barracks environment and he had the opportunity to speak to the troops and to witness the high standards of shooting.

In late spring, several members of the Company went to Wathgill Camp to support East Midlands University Officer Training Corps with their annual exercise. This will hopefully become a regular feature of the calendar and enable the Officer Cadets to consider a future Reserve Army career within the wider Battalion.

Covid put a stop to the eagerly anticipated Armed Forces Day parade in Cleethorpes where the weekend forms an excellent backdrop to a well-supported recruitment stand in the town.



**Pte Ross McKenzie in Kenya.**



**Pte Katie Tourlmain - rock climbing in Cyprus - Op TOSCA AT.**

Hopefully, the event will be back on in 2022 with crowds and displays to rival recent years.

The main training event of the year was the Annual Deployment Exercise that took place in both Catterick and Warcop. A short field exercise followed by a build-up to live firing was a first experience for many members of 4 Company and all those who took part performed well. A full report on the 2-week period is included in this Castle edition.

Individually, four members of the Company were mobilised across the year: Private Katie Tourlmain is currently supporting 1 RIFLES in Cyprus on Op TOSCA where she is operating as a chef in the United Nations operating in the Ledra Palace area of Nicosia; Lance Corporal Steve Wall and Private Ross McKenzie who deployed to Kenya in a force protection role; Major Mitch Pegg who continues to support Op RESCRIPT as the Military Liaison Officer for Lincolnshire.

Numerous engagements have taken place; from hosting the Member of Parliament for Great Grimsby to taking part in the Brigg 10k Military run.

Everyone in the Company is looking forward to the challenges and opportunities that 2022 will bring..

# 5 (Suffolk & Cambridgeshire) Company

## OC's introduction

After a 2020 disrupted by COVID-19, 2021 arrived with much the same feel and proved to be another challenging year for the whole company. The focus for 5 Coy remained working on the basics at individual and fire team level whilst ensuring soldiers were well placed to take up operational or training opportunities in the UK and overseas. During the first part of the year, we received a steady drum beat of force sensing trawls from Div & Bde to test how many personnel we could provide for a variety of potential tasks. These tasks ranged from supporting Op RESCRIPT to deploying on Op TORAL or supporting other units exercise activity, some of these ended in deployments but the majority disappointingly came to nothing which proved frustrating for Regular and Reservist alike. Throughout this period permanent staff and Reservists continued to prepare and train as best they could given the restrictions on activity.

With the easing of restrictions on training the company started off with a range day on Thetford which was hugely popular and allowed us to get used to seeing each other again whilst concentrating on a core skill. The familiar routine of Bn led training events and Coy weekends soon kicked in again with the Coy completing range days, and training weekends focussed on patrolling and section attack lanes (more of this later).

Operationally the Coy continue to provide personnel at home and abroad. Four members of the company deployed to Oman this year on Op CATTALO, after some challenges with the mobilisation process Cpl Dean, LCpl Burrell, Pte Bartlett and Pte Johnson flew out in Jul and at the time of writing in Oct 2 personnel remain on task. The OC and CSM both remain mobilised on Op RESCRIPT and are likely to remain on task into 2022 along with Bn 2ic and Ops

Offr from BHQ. Pte Maythan completed his deployment on Op TOSCA earlier on this year and LCpl Morgan has recently returned from a Force Protection tour in Kenya something which is likely to feature heavily in future years.

The company deployed 15 personnel onto ADX this year and at the end of what had been an extremely challenging training year saw 75% of the company awarded their certificate of efficiency and bounty payment. With mobilisations, courses, attendance at ADX and other training events we would hope to see

a similar percentage of the company receive their certificate of efficiency in March 22.

The Coy continues to engage in sporting activity with the CSM WO2 Waters again representing the Army Cyclocross team, you can read more about it in this edition of Castle. Other members of the Coy have represented the battalion and above in football, golf and fishing competitions and the PSAO Capt Steve Finch continues to officiate at high level in the football league.

From a heritage point of view 5



**5 Company's Schwaben Platoon had their weekly drill night at a Reserve Centre on Wednesday, rehearsing drills in preparation for forthcoming training. In this training session the Reservists had a particular focus on Operations in built-up areas, practising drills and Standard Operating Procedures.**



# 3rd Battalion (The Steelbacks)

Coy soldiers from Bury supported this year's Minden Day reunion in Bury St Edmunds and the Peterborough PI held Schwaben day for the first time this year which proved a huge success. As a Coy we will continue to seek opportunities to engage with the wider community and in particular local veterans.

Recruiting has proved quite challenging with COVID restrictions having some impact on activity and 5 Coy losing its RSUSO to Army reorganisation. That said the Coy have attested a total of 16 recruits so far in this training year and are working hard with

Bn and wider Army initiatives to recruit more. As I write we await detailed direction following the Integrated Review however it seems clear that for Reservists there will be the expectation of a higher degree of readiness, we are already seeing the first element of this with the role out of Agile Stance. As a company we will continue to take opportunities to train alongside the Vikings and Poachers as well as other regular units and when possible, the civil authorities.

This year has seen changes in some key personnel within the company with

the SPSI WO2 Shropshire completing his Regular service and moving on to the Cadet Training Team. He has been joined there by the former RSUSO CSgt James following the closure of his FTRS post and a stalwart of the Peterborough PI CSgt Jones who moves into an FTRS post within the team.

We thank all of them for their outstanding service to this Bn and the wider Regiment and look forward to sharing a beer with them in the future. Good luck to the new SPSI WOII Phil Wright who has made a great start in his new role.

## Range Weekend



Lance Corporal Burrell in the prone position practising grouping and zeroing.

On the first training weekend of 5 Company since the UK Lockdown, 32 soldiers (excluding those leading the training) joined together at Thetford Ranges for a Range weekend. Weather conditions were ideal for the range.

Going back to basics, the weekend began with time focussing on understanding the marksmanship principles, building up the fire positions, and the principles of grouping and zeroing, with how to apply these principles with their personal weapon. Extra time was taken when coaching through this process, with feedback from the soldiers demonstrating



Colour Sergeant Butcher (right) briefing soldiers of 5 Company on aspects of the shoot.

that the morning session was very beneficial. This was a time to remind and revise, as those participating were a mixture of both junior and experienced soldiers, some of whom had joined 5 Company during lockdown, making this their first training exercise with the Company.

This training package was designed to give confidence with their personal weapon and putting the marksman principles into effect. Those running the training emphasised and explained what happens when these principles are put into effect, resulting in a consistent, tight grouping on the target. The soldiers then

put this teaching into practice, undertaking the shoots, ranging from 100m to 400m. It was clear the morning's training had been useful, as many achieved high scores in the confirmatory shoot. 5 Company also said goodbye to Warrant Officer II Shropshire, the outgoing Senior Permanent Staff Instructor, who left the army after a long and distinguished career. The Company wished him well and presented him with a picture collage showing his entire army career. 5 Company also welcomed Warrant Officer II Phil Wright, who is looking forward to getting to know 5 Company and getting involved in further training.

## Op TOSCA



### Overview

It has been a busy year for 5 Company, with soldiers deployed on three Operations; RESCRIPT, CATTALO, and TOSCA 33.

On Saturday 16 Oct the company marked Schwaben day. A families event was held in honour of the capture of Schwaben Redoubt by the Cambridgeshire Regiment in 1916. Retired Lieutenant Colonel Tony Slater spoke and presented 5 Company with a copy of 'The Cambridgeshires 1914-1919', part of the Company's

history. Retired Lieutenant Colonel David Denson the County Colonel also presented Private Wells with his Volunteer Reserves Service Medal.

Schwaben day was a family day, and saw many families come together to commemorate the day.

On the first exercise weekend of the year, and the first since the UK lockdown, over 100 members of the 3rd Battalion Royal Anglian Regiment took part in Exercise Steelback Challenge in the Peak District National Park. Leek Training Area provided the ideal

environment for this Exercise, as the arduous terrain was the perfect setting for junior commanders to operate and develop their skills in a complex environment, whilst also providing navigational challenges.

This exercise also allowed for the involvement of HQ elements for the first time since lockdown. Three teams from 5 Company took part, with the goal of improving their ability to operate as a section and testing the section leadership. Working in Fire Teams, they performed battle drills on a variety of



## 3rd Battalion (The Steelbacks)

different stands, including Fire Team Attack, Casualty Extraction, Kit Check, CPERS, RECCE,

Re-supply, Model Making and Target Indication. These drills were designed as an all-round test to show the importance of Command and Control and were observed and scored to demonstrate areas of strength and weakness. Teams from 5 Company placed 2nd, 4th and 9th overall, demonstrating their ability to operate successfully as a section, whilst also giving valuable insight the skills and leadership of the Junior Commanders. Prizes were presented by Brigadier Tim Seal TD DL, Deputy Commander (Reserves), 1 (UK) Division.

Three members of 5 Company were among Reservists who have recently taken part in pre-deployment training in preparation for their 9-month deployment to Oman for Operation CATTALO. Here, they can be seen training on their pistols, one of many training drills which will give them the necessary skills for the operation.

Four Army Reservists in 5 Company were recently deployed to Oman on OP CATTALO. They are tasked with providing Force Protection to Service

Personnel in multiple locations. The team are also overseeing the safe movement of the final pieces of equipment returning from Afghanistan back to the UK, ensuring the security of the kit being transported.

Private Marlon Huseyin of 5 Company recently completed his Combat Infantry Course, which develops and enhances the skills of soldiers both on and off the field in a four-day Exercise. This involves completing many different tasks and objectives including platoon attacks, night reconnaissance and casualty evacuations under a simulated assault. These casualty evacuations were the task that Private Huseyin found most challenging, as not only does it test your body physically, but also tests your mind when trying to accomplish the task in the correct way. They also spent time on live ranges, with lessons on adapting the point of aim according to weather conditions and the distance of the targets. The course also furthers their knowledge through field craft skills like camouflage and concealment, building fortified sentries, and navigation and range cards. Private Huseyin was also given the added responsibility of being



**Pte Marlon Huseyin.**



Four of the Army Reservists in 5 Company were recently deployed to Oman on OP CATTALO, to provide force protection throughout the mission for multiple locations. The team are also overseeing the safe movement of the final pieces of equipment returning from Afghanistan back to the UK, ensuring the security of the kit being transported.

second in command for the first half of the Exercise, which included ammo checks, water consumption checks, timings, sentries and rotas. At the end of the course, he was awarded Top Recruit. Private Huseyin has been part of the Reserves since 2018, and in his everyday life works as a Telecoms Fibre Cabler as a subcontractor on behalf of Open Reach.

5 Company Platoons spend many of their weekly drill nights, rehearsing drills in preparation for forthcoming training. In this training session the Reservists had a particular focus on Operations in built-up areas, practicing drills and Standard Operating Procedures.

Army Reservists in 5 Company recently participated in an inter-section competition in their weekly training. The aim of the competition was to teach and test their existing knowledge, whilst increasing their overall core military knowledge. The competition also included aspects of physical training, as they moved between stands focussing on Personal Training, Weapons, Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear materials or weapons (CBRN), and Navigation.

Private Abigail Dowding, who joined the Army Reserves in June 2020, has recently completed her Reservist Basic Training, consisting of 16 jam-packed days at Army Training Centre Pirbright. She finished at the top of the troops winning Best Recruit and being in the winning section. There were forty



**Whilst completing his PNCO Cadre, LCpl Ryan Harry Burrell, 28, partakes in a training drill. In completing his PNCO cadre, LCpl Burrell gained valuable experience, including in Field craft and combat exercise, reconnaissance patrol training, and subordinate development training.**

recruits in her troop, 10 of whom were females.

The training began with weapons handling and fitness tests, which when passed allowed the recruits to continue further into their training. They undertook a wide range of activities,

including Range days, First Aid, Battlefield drills and Bayonet training. During the Range days, the Reservists fired rifles on the 25m, 100m and 200m ranges, learning how to zero their weapons, and putting the marksmanship principles into practice.

There was also a focus on the theory and drills behind Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) materials or weapons, First Aid and casualty Battlefield drills, Bayonet training, and camouflage and concealment. The sections also practiced map reading and navigation, undertaking exercises to put the training into practice. The Reservists then undertook a four-day exercise which included tabbing, patrolling, hand signals, sentry duties, fire and manoeuvre, coming under contact, casualty evacuation, and finished with a section attack. Private Dowding consistently performed to a very high standard throughout the 16 days of training, and it became apparent very quickly that she is a fast learner, who was putting all of her effort into each element of the training, with a positive, yet serious attitude. She particularly enjoyed the four-day exercise and the bayonet training.

Though the exercise itself was very challenging due to a lack of sleep and the intensity of the various aspects, Private Dowding enjoyed pushing herself and developing her skills. In her day to day life, Private Dowding works for Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service, having recently been promoted from a Firefighter to a Crew Manager in the Training Department. She has a particular focus on training in breathing apparatus, recruits, transports and technical rescue. Within the Army, she aspires to be a Combat Medical Technician. This will be the focus of her next training, and it is an area which she is very passionate about.

Serving under the United Nations cap badge, Private Giles Maythan was deployed in Cyprus on OPERATION TOSCA 33 for 8 months as a peacekeeper in order to maintain peace between the Cypriot and Turkish sides of the country. His role involved patrolling the buffer zone looking for violations of the peace



**Pte Abigail Dowding.**



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treaty such as weapons and building violations, and civilian and military incursions into the green zone.

Approaching the Opposing Forces to inform they were in violation of a particular rule was an interaction Private Maythan found particularly challenging. The same is true of approaching the civilian population who entered the buffer zone, many of whom were armed hunters in the middle of the night. While in Cyprus he also participated in fire safety, quick reaction force (QRF), guard duties, media and press duties, and riot control, as well as liaising with the United Nations police (UNPOL) and Cypriot police (CYPOL) during joint patrols, and when called to deal with intrusions and drug smuggling between the two sides.

This was a challenging operation,



**Pte Tasha Sampson.**

as Private Maythan was unarmed, yet surrounded by two armies who both were ready and willing to fight, despite it being over 50 years since the fighting officially stopped. However, he felt that in the hearts and minds of both sides, the conflict is still as fresh today as it was then. He also knew before leaving for Cyprus that being away from his son would be particularly difficult but hadn't realised the extent to which he would be missing so much. His son was 3 when he left, and 4 when he returned, so the guilt of leaving him weighed heavily on his mind.

Private Maythan is an Infanteer and has been serving in the Army Reserves for 4 years, enjoying all aspects of being a soldier, from the fitness and mindset required to complete tasks, to the skills he has been taught. He also enjoys working with the other Reserves in his section, and particularly likes being on exercise. In his day to day life he works in security, but he feels that being in the Reserves has given him a purpose, and a sense of being part of something far bigger than himself, knowing he is making a difference, which is something he is always proud of.

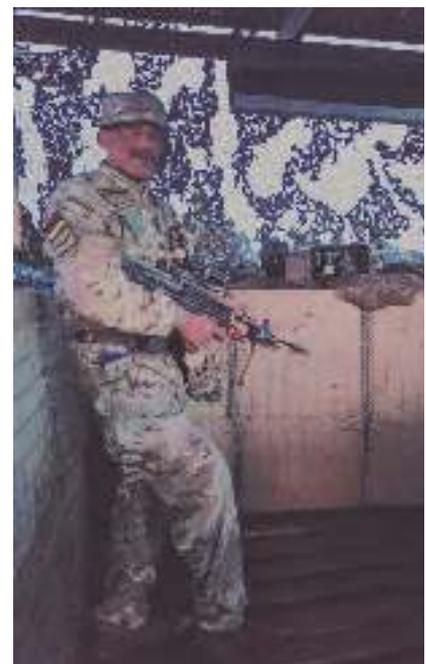
Exercise Dagger was designed to focus on developing section level Standard Operation Procedures, to enable more efficient patrolling and section attacks. On Saturday morning the troops engaged in a Permanent Staff Instructor lead tutorial on the correct method of performing a section attack, utilising the 6 section battle drills. The rest of the day was devoted to Section Commander lead practices, developing Standard Operation Procedures for section attacks, patrolling, and reacting to enemy contact.

This continued into Saturday evening, allowing sections to patrol and communicate at night. On Sunday morning, troops put these learnt procedures to the test in a range of attack lanes set out by the directing staff, allowing productive reflection and discussion of weaknesses after each lane. Overall, it was a successful training period enjoyed by the troops, with positive outcomes, and a good level to build on in later training.

5 Company welcomes Private Tasha Sampson to Schwaben Platoon, who was officially sworn into the Royal Anglian Regiment at Battalion HQ in Bury St Edmunds. Private Sampson is a Civil Servant, currently posted to the Department of International Trade working as a Portfolio Analyst. She hopes to commission into the Army as soon as she is able.

On the first training weekend of 5 Company since the UK Lockdown, 32 soldiers joined together at Thetford Ranges for a Range weekend. Going back to basics, this was a time to remind and revise, as those participating were a mixture of both junior and experienced soldiers, some of whom had joined 5 Company during lockdown, making this their first training exercise with the Company.

Lance Corporal Darren Morgan has recently returned from Kenya where he deployed as part of British Army Training Unit Kenya Force Protection Platoon. The Force Protection Platoon based at Nayati Barracks provides guard and a Quick Reaction Force, ensuring the safety of all British troops who are on training exercise Askari Spear. Lance Corporal Morgan is a team medic for his section and returned from Kenya in July.



**LCpl Darren Morgan.**

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## Exercise STEELBACK CHALLENGE



**Cpl Dean.**

On the first exercise weekend of the year, and the first since the UK lockdown, over 100 members of the 3rd Battalion Royal Anglian Regiment took part in Exercise Steelback Challenge in the Peak District National Park. Leek Training Area provided the ideal environment for this Exercise, as the arduous terrain was the perfect setting for junior commanders to operate and develop their skills in a complex environment, whilst



**LCpl Sherridan and Cpl Dean.**

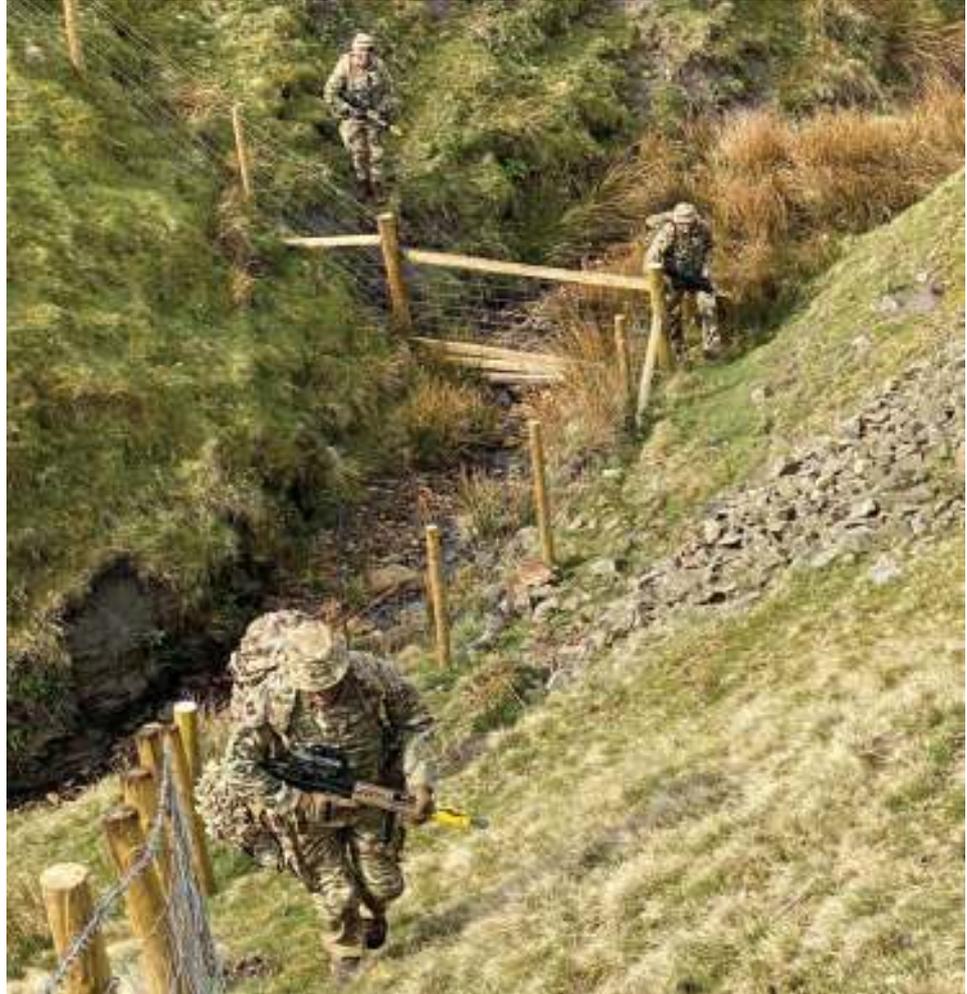


## 3rd Battalion (The Steelbacks)

also providing navigational challenges.

This exercise also allowed for the involvement of HQ elements for the first time since lockdown. Three teams from 5 Company took part, with the goal of improving their ability to operate as a section, and testing the section leadership. Working in Fire Teams, they performed battle drills on a variety of different stands, including Fire Team Attack, Casualty Extraction, Kit Check, CPERS, RECCE, Re-supply, Model Making and Target Indication.

These drills were designed as an all-round test to show the importance of Command and Control and were observed and scored to demonstrate areas of strength and weakness. Teams from 5 Company placed 2nd, 4th and 9th overall, demonstrating their ability to operate successfully as a section, whilst also giving valuable insight the skills and leadership of the Junior Commanders. Prizes were presented by Brigadier Tim Seal TD DL, Deputy Commander (Reserves), 1 (UK) Division



### Hurricane Relief – UK Response

Lt Col Adam Wolf MBE, Commanding Officer of 3 Royal Anglian is currently on a Recce in the Caribbean Islands along with Commander 7th Infantry Brigade. They are looking at the UK Support during the Caribbean Hurricane season.

Col Adam is pictured with Lieutenant Colonel Carlos Lovell, Commanding Officer of the Barbados Regiment. The Barbados Regiment have a long standing affiliation with the Royal Anglian Regiment.

Topics discussed were the lessons learnt on cross-Caribbean Hurricane response and how 7th Infantry Brigade will play a part this year - if needed, their experience in Covid-19 response, and links between our Regiments past and future.



Lt Col Carlos AR Lovell and Lt Col Adam Wolfe MBE.

## Inter Section Competition



The Army Reservists in 5 Company Schwaben Platoon recently participated in an inter-section competition in their weekly training. The aim of the competition was to teach and test their existing knowledge, whilst increasing their overall core military knowledge. The competition also included aspects of physical training, as they moved between stands focussing on Personal Training, Weapons, Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear materials or weapons (CBRN), and Navigation.



5 Coy Inter Section competition.

## Presentations



Lt Col David Denson presents Pte Wells with his VRSM.



WO2 Butcher and Lt Col Tony Slater on Schwaben Day.



WO2 Butcher presents CSgt Jones with his leaving present.



# 3rd Battalion (The Steelbacks)

## Gibraltar Study Weekend



With activities returning to a semi-normal stance. 3 Royal Anglian combined the Officers, Seniors and Juniors ranks during Gibraltar Study weekend. With the initial study period looking at Battlegroup Structures and Supporting Roles including Engineering, Support Weapons and Echelon formations.

The highlights of the evening were an inspirational talk by Captain Steve 'Lenny' Henry on Diversity and Inclusion, followed by the Burkett Dinner with the Guest of Honour Vanessa Burkett addressing to gathering and Toasting 'The Steelbacks'.







## 3rd Battalion (The Steelbacks)

### Shooting stars



7X Shooting Team.



LCpl Carter, second place top firer.

Well done to the 3 R ANGLIAN Shooting Team who came second in the 7 Brigade Operational Shooting Competition, held at Hythe Ranges. The team consisted of Lt Musker, WO2 Chambers, CSgt Jones, CSgt Nash, LCpl Carter, Pte Lawson, Pte Bray and Pte Wilson

*Other achievements were:*

- LCpl Carter was second place top firer and joint first in Attack and Reorg.
- CSgt Jones won Advanced Fleeting Encounter.
- Mike Musker came joint first in Fleeting Encounter.
- Second place overall team.
- Three firers in the top eight.

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## Exercise STEELBACK DAGGER

Ex STEELBACK DAGGER marked the end of a quarterly training cycle in the build up to the Bns annual training culmination, which will be a two-week live fire tactical training range package in September.

On a scorching hot weekend in Norfolk, a Company group of Steelbacks stepped off at first light to complete a number of advance to contact serials each building in difficulty. This was an opportunity for the young officers of the Bn to play with their trainset and develop their command and control and leadership skills in the field at Pl level.

The basic mechanics of “assault, surprises, reserve” became more refined with each iteration the help of the Bns training team. The low-level skills and drills of individual soldiers were also tested as the heat built, but the good





## 3rd Battalion (The Steelbacks)

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work put in over the previous months paid off and hard, fast and aggressive attacks at section level went in over and over again.

The A2C lanes brought the troops to a Coy assembly area south of the Eastmere village urban operations complex. From

there the Coy broke into the south of the village and fought through a street within a BG context. Urban operations can be some of the most professionally rewarding training for infantry soldiers, because if nothing else, kicking doors in is cool! The Coy HQ were put through

their paces with added complexity of cas evac and CPers serials on top of the difficulties of command and control in an urban environment. The Bn is now in a great place for some well deserved summer leave before going on to the LFTT package.







## 3rd Battalion (The Steelbacks)

### Exercise STEELBACK PEAKS and ENDURE

By chance, whilst most of East England endured rain, 3 R ANGLIAN conducted 9 days of Adventure Training in a mostly dry and sunny Peak District. Based out of Topley Camp near Sheffield, activities included Canoeing, Hill Walking, Rock Climbing, Mountain Biking and Caving.

The first week brought together our Permanent Staff from across the Battalion and the second week our Reservists.

Some activities presented more of a challenge than other with the Mountain Bike topping the list for endurance and most scrapes/ scratches. Whilst the Rock Climbing and Caving tested individuals' aptitude for heights and confined spaces.

On the Paddle Boards sense of balance proved troublesome with most failing to avoid the inevitable cold dip into Tittesworth Reservoir.

An enjoyable two weeks with all participants meeting all challenges.





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# 3rd Battalion (The Steelbacks)

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# 3rd Battalion (The Steelbacks)

## STEELBACK CHALLENGE

Over the weekend of the 23 to 25 April 2021, 100 members of 3 Royal Anglian took part in STEELBACK CHALLENGE, a Patrols Competition based in the Peak District National Park.

This was the Battalion's first training event since ADX in September 2020.

12 teams rotated through eight stands which included Kit Check, Fire Team Attack, Casualty Extraction, CPERS, Recce, Model Making, Re-supply and Target Indication.

The winning Fire Team was 4:2 (4 Company, Team 2), led by LCpl Wells. Prizes were presented by Brigadier Tim Seal, Deputy Commander (Reserves), 1

Division. Points from the weekend will go forward to the 21/ 22 Champion Company competition.

Brig Tim Seal, Deputy Commander, 1st UK Division presented the following medals to members of 3 Royal Anglian at the conclusion of the STEELBACK CHALLENGE weekend.



### 3 Royal Anglian congratulate the following on their awards:

Maj Mitch Pegg (4 Company) – Volunteer Reserve Service Medal (10 years).

Major Rhys Little (3 Company) - 1st Bar to Volunteer Reserve Service Medal (15 years).

WO2 (CSM) Pugh (3 Company) – 2nd Bar to Reserve Service Medal (20 years).

Sgt Richards – 4th Bar to Volunteer Reserve Service Medal (30 years).



From left: Brig Seal, Maj Rhys Little, WO2 Pugh, Maj Mitch Pegg, Lt Col Adam Wolfe. (Sgt Richards – camera shy!).



Back row from left: Pte Cutts, LCpl Wells (Fire Team Commander), Pte Grant. Front row from left: Pte Vickers and Pte Horstwood.

## Congratulations



Congratulations to Maj Peter Witkowski on being awarded a Bar to his Long Service and Good Conduct Medal. Maj Witkowski started his military career with the 1st Royal Regiment of Fusiliers and is currently serving as the Quartermaster to the 3rd Battalion, The Royal Anglian Regiment. The award was presented by Lt Col Adam Wolfe MBE, Commanding Officer of 3 Royal Anglian.



# Regimental Band

At the end of last year's article, the band were looking forward to undertaking our usual autumn engagements, such as Remembrance at Duxford and the regimental carol service in Bury St Edmunds. Alas, this was not to be as the November lockdown followed by the January – May lockdown ensured that all engagements were once again cancelled. The band did record music for the Commanding Officer's review and seasonal message during December when we were again, briefly permitted to rehearse.

During lockdowns the band revert to virtual training. Each week Musicians were tasked to upload a short video or picture of their individual practice as they continue to tackle the challenges that remote working posed for many of us.

As things eased, the band performed our first engagement since December 2019. The event was the RAF Henlow family's day. RAF Henlow hosted us for our week's ADX and it was good to do something in return.

The band were pleased to be training again and spent the first part of the week regaining and refreshing our skills. We were looking forward to a busy summer which included another visit to Henlow in July. We were also pleased to welcome Nathaniel McHale playing trumpet on work experience for the week. He is auditioning to join the Royal Corps of Army Music later this year.

During the ADX, the band said a fond farewell to Staff Sergeant Dave Thompson who retired after 21 years service. Before enlisting into the band, Dave served for 24 years in the Royal Air Force Music Services and has been invaluable to the saxophone section as well as the smooth running of the band. We were also pleased to receive a visit from our Commanding Officer and Regimental Sergeant Major, who both congratulated Dave on his service.

As one veteran retires another young



**The Christmas Carol Service.**





# Regimental Band

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Our Regimental Band, led by Director of Music Capt Peter Hudson, the heartbeat of the Regimental Day.



The Regimental Band on Remembrance Sunday.



**LCpl Jason Hobson at Norwich Cathedral.**

recruit embarks on a career in military music. The Commanding Officer took time to pass on some words of advice to Nathaniel during his visit.

In July, the band was pleased to welcome our newest recruit, Musician Maisie Lee, who was attested by the Director of Music. Musician Lee brings a wealth of experience to our cornet section, having previously served for ten years in the Band of the Parachute Regiment.

Lance Corporal Jason Hobson represented the band by playing the Last Post at Le Paradis memorial at Norwich Cathedral on Tuesday 13th July. The memorial remembers the 97 members of the Royal Norfolk Regiment massacred by the Nazi SS on the 27th May 1940. The event was attended by the Princess Royal. The band is pleased to be able provide musical support to remembering an infamous event in our regimental history.

At the end of July, the band undertook our second week's Annual Deployment Exercise (ADX) at RAF Henlow. We spent the week building on the training we undertook during our last visit in June which ensured we were ready for the remaining engagements of the year. We undertook our second engagement of the year, supporting the RAF Henlow



**Musician Maisie Lee, brought her husband, Lance Sergeant Matt Lee (Scots Guards) along to help out on Regimental Day.**

families day on the 28th July. The band was pleased to congratulate Sergeant Martin Auffret as he celebrated his 60th birthday during the ADX. On our first week's ADX in June, we said a fond farewell to Staff Sergeant Dave Thompson after 21 years service with the band. During this ADX, we invited Dave and his wife Chris back to thank him formally for his service. The Director of Music made the presentations. Happy retirement Dave, from Captain Hudson

and all the band.

Once again, we were joined on our ADX by Royal Corps of Army Music recruit Nathaniel. RCAM has tasked the band with preparing him for his audition later in the year. Nathaniel has passed British Army selection so is just waiting for a successful audition to start his Army Music career. As well as rehearsing with the band he also received individual training from Sergeant Carey and Captain Hudson.



**Cornet section with new recruit Nathaniel McHale, pictured inset talking with the CO.**



# Regimental Band

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Dave Thompson and CO.



Band ADX Henlow.

The band provided musical support to the Royal Anglian Gathering at the Imperial War Museum, Duxford at the start of September. This was our first engagement in home service uniform since December 2019, so there was some anxiety about red tunics fitting! All was well and we played for the drumhead service, march past, provided music during lunch and the sunset service. As last year's gathering was cancelled, it was a pleasure to provide music for so many veterans of the Royal Anglian Regiment as well as some veterans from our founding county regiments. Our newest member, Musician Maisie Lee, brought her husband, Lance Sergeant Matt Lee (Scots Guards) along! Matt kindly helped us by playing drums and percussion for the day. Matt started his Army career in the Royal Anglian Regiment, so was able to catch up with some old friends.

This year's Regimental Day was also the last for our Director of Music Captain Pete Hudson. Captain Hudson is retiring from the Army at 2359hrs on the 8th June 2022 after 47 years service regular and reserve with the regiment. However, he will still be carrying on at RHQ as Area Secretary.

September also allowed the Director of Music and members of the band to congratulate our Band Sergeant Major, Bob Gough, on his promotion to WO1. The promotion is richly deserved. WO1 Gough joined the band five years ago after a long career in the Regular Army, culminating in many years' service as the Blues and Royals Band Corporal Major. Congratulations sir.

The band is in good order and is looking forward to Remembrance at IWM Duxford and the Regimental Carol Service in December in Bury St Edmunds. Engagements are planned for 2022, where we hope to resume normal service.

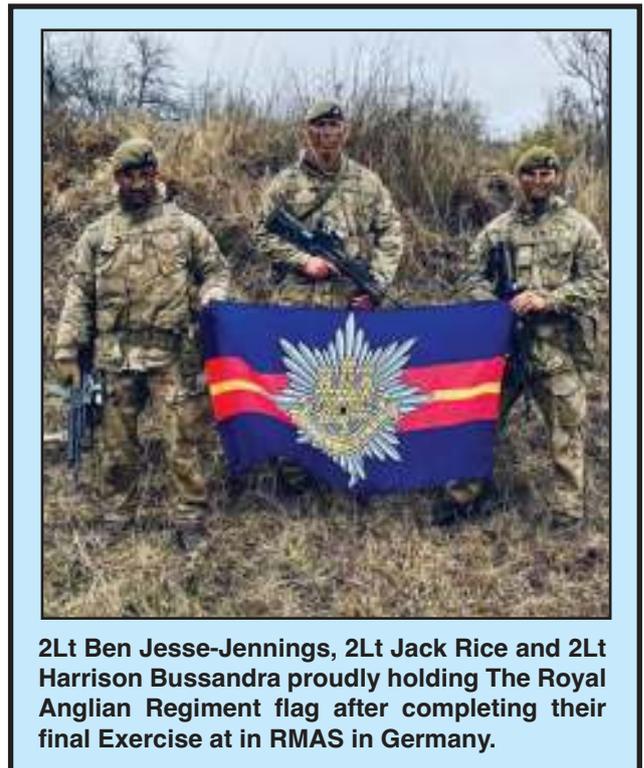




# RMAS



**Congratulations to 2Lt Robert Blackman who passed out of the Army Reserve Commissioning Course in July. Robert has joined 3 Company, 3 Royal Anglian based in Chelmsford. Brigadier Richard Lyne, Deputy Colonel welcomed him to the Regiment.**



**2Lt Ben Jesse-Jennings, 2Lt Jack Rice and 2Lt Harrison Bussandra proudly holding The Royal Anglian Regiment flag after completing their final Exercise at in RMAS in Germany.**



**The Regiment's summer graduates from RMAS.**

Last August, the Regiment warmly welcomed four new officers to our ranks. 2Lts Adam Moss and Harry Browne commissioned into the 1st Battalion, and

2Lts Huw Davies and Dave Butler were commissioned into the 2nd Battalion. Co Simon Browne, Deputy Regimental Colonel welcomed the new officers

including his son Harry, on his last day in uniform. Also pictured are our RMAS staff, Capt Matt Durkin and CSgt Dave Craycraft.



**New Platoon Commanders - 2Lt David Butler, 2Lt Huw Davies, Maj Adam Mackness (OC PCD), 2Lt Adam Moss and 2Lt Harry Brown after successfully completing their final Exercise of the Platoon Commander Battle Course. They have now joined their Platoons.**



# Special Features



## Commemorations for the Battle Te Ruapekapeka, NZ A noble foe remembering in reverence and reconciliation

The rhythmic chants of the tattooed and painted warriors could be clearly heard on the site of the British Camp, as they made their way in formation up the steep slope, tapping out time on their wooden weapons.

The sudden sound of a cannonade reverberated across the ravine, and its white smoke hung lazily above the canon, dancing in slow motion as the breath of the breeze changed its shape.

On this day, 3 February 2021, over 300 people had gathered on the site of the British Camp to remember and commemorate those who died some 175 years ago in the Battle of Te Ruapekapeka, the final battle of the New Zealand Northern Wars. The theme for the commemorations was Kawea a puriri mai – in reverence, remembrance and reconciliation.

The visiting dignitaries waited on the western end of the ridge of the

site as the warriors slowly advanced in formation towards them, preparing to issue the challenge (if you've seen the All Blacks haka, you'll have a good idea of what this is). The re-enactors in 58th Regiment uniforms made especially for the day raised their muskets in presentation. Leading the visitors onto the site was Dame Patsy Reddy GNZM QSO DStJ Governor General of NZ, Rt Hon Jacinda Arden Prime Minister of NZ, and Her Excellency Laura Clarke British High Commissioner to NZ.

The challenge was accepted and a Tika was taken up by Kaumatua Joe Harawira on behalf of the Governor General, Cpl Willie Apiata VC NZSAS on behalf of the Prime Minister, and Wg Cdr Andy Bryant Defence Adviser for the British High Commissioner.

The event was organised by the Te Ruapekapeka Trust in its quest to create a commemoration of the battle and the

fallen from both sides. The highlight was the unveiling of a memorial to the British who died, two of whom were serving with the 58th Regiment, a predecessor of the Royal Anglian Regiment: Private James Edmondson from Borough, Lancashire (aged 22) and Private Thomas Lyons from Cashel, Tipperary (aged 24). The memorial is a traditional obelisk of black marble engraved with the names of the 12 British service personnel who are laid to rest directly under it. The New Zealand Army Band provided music and a combined services firing party gave the three volley salute. The commemorations were completed with the laying of wreaths, and were followed with a traditional Maori lunch in marquees.

Te Ruapekapeka was the final battle in New Zealand's Northern War of 1845-1846, and was the first major conflict between iwi (Maori tribes) and

the British Crown following the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840. The Crown and iwi interpreted the Treaty differently, and iwi considered that Crown policies not only damaged the Northland economy, but also were a defilement of chiefly authority. However, the iwi leaders were not united, and several Ngpuhi chiefs, motivated by old rivalries and fears about the balance of power within the region, either tried to remain neutral or sided with the Crown. There were more iwi fighting for the British than against them.

Te Ruki Kawiti (of the Ngāti Hine tribe) constructed the pā at Te Ruapekapeka over several months and it was the strongest pā built during the Northern Wars. Defended by a double pallisade of heavy logs, the pā's extensive network of trenches, underground tunnels and deep, bomb proof shelters made the defenders almost artillery proof. By siting the pā deep inland on an inaccessible hilltop, Kawiti also ensured that the pā would be difficult for the British to reach and that assaulting troops would have to cross a narrow field swept by interlocking musket fire.

Governor Robert Fitzroy warned the troops "You will never surprise the New Zealanders, but they may frequently surprise you, unless a vigilance hardly known in European warfare be always, and at all hours, unremittingly exercised."

It took a month for 1300 British troops commanded by Col Henry Despard and 400 Māori led by Tāmāti Wāka Nene to drag heavy artillery over 20Km of rugged country to reach Te Ruapekapeka. After weeks of harassing fire against the pā, Despard ordered a massive bombardment on 10 January 1846, which breached the walls of the pā in two places. The British launched the attack and after prolonged and heavy fighting, Kawiti withdrew into the nearby bush and an intense firefight broke out amongst the trees. Twelve of the British and an unknown number of Māori were killed before the firing eventually fizzled out.

Peace between the iwi leaders, and between iwi and the Crown, soon



**Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern, NZ Prime Minister, laying a wreath.**



**The British High Commissioner lays a wreath.**



**The Firing Party.**



**Blessing of the memorial by Chaplain Class 4 Glen Popata RNZN, with Lt D White RN AND wing Commander Andy Bryant looking on.**



# Special Features



**A canon showing the dominant ground on which the Pa (fort) was sited..**



**One of the entrenchments.**

followed, and the Wars came to an end.

Capt Robert Marlow RE surveyed and drew the fortifications after the battle and the RSME at Chatham built some replicas for practice, anticipating further Maori conflict. Whilst it may be disputed whether Ngāpuhi invented trench warfare, their expertise certainly came as a nasty surprise at Ohaewhai earlier in the War, when Col Despard managed to incur 90 casualties in 60 mins with a very ill-judged frontal attack. Chief Tāmami Wāka Nene, who had expressly warned against it, to describe him as "a very stupid man".

Prior to the event, the Colonel of the Regimental, Major General RW Wooddisse CBE MC sent a message to Te Ruapekapeka Trust which was exceptionally well received, with copies being framed and displayed in a number of marae (Māori meeting places).

On the day, the Regiment was represented by Nick Gordge, formerly

of 5 (V) Bn Royal Anglian Regiment, who in conversation passed on the Regiment's best wishes to the Trustees.

Should you ever be fortunate enough to come to New Zealand, you are highly recommended to visit this impressive unique battlefield, untouched from the time of the Battle and pay your respects at this new memorial.

**Further information is available at:**

- The Northern Wars <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/war/northern-war/ruapekapeka>
- Te Ruapekapeka <https://www.ruapekapeka.co.nz/the-battle-of-te-ruapekapeka>
- Te Ruapekapeka 175 on Facebook



**Nick Gordge, the Regimental representative, flanked by two members of the 58th!**



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- Royal Anglian Clothing
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- Webbing & Carriage



The official e-commerce website of The Royal Anglian Regiment. All items selected and contained within the site have been formally approved and signed off by the Regiment. The operation is run by a joint Royal Anglian and AMMO Management Committee who will ensure that the stock meets the needs of soldiers and veterans. A profit share of sales is passed to the Royal Anglian Regimental Benevolent Charity, and is used to support the welfare and benevolence activities of the Regiment.

Lieutenant General R W Wooddisse CBE MC

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# Affiliated Cadets



Last year began with our affiliated Army and Combined Cadet Forces facing the unfortunate challenges of Covid. As always, the adult volunteers and the cadets themselves rose to this challenge utilising virtual ways of conducting training. Initiatives like this have resulted in areas with strong cadet organisations being much more resilient to the negative impacts of lockdown and restrictions upon local communities.

2021 saw the publishing of the Institute for Social Innovation and Impact report, at the University of Northampton, authorised by the MOD. The University undertook a four-year study designed to help understand the social impact of the spending on cadets and the Cadet Expansion Programme. The results were incredibly positive and are as follows:

‘Participation in the Cadet Forces has significant positive impacts on young people, increasing their performance at school and improving their employment and career prospects. Cadets Forces also bring benefits the adult volunteers that support them through access to



**Cadet Sgt Bugg and fellow cadets from 3 Coy Cambridgeshire Army Cadet Force wait to begin an inter-company drill competition at Annual Camp, Stanford Training Area, 1st August 21. Pictures: Cambridgeshire ACF.**

vocational qualifications, whilst schools that participate in the Cadet Expansion Programme experience improved attendance and Ofsted relevant

outcomes.

Specifically, participation in UK Cadet Forces:

- Enhances young people’s communication skills, confidence, resilience, leadership, and respect for diversity.
- Improves the health and wellbeing of cadets, producing an annual return on investment in the region of £95 million.
- Increases young people’s educational performance through increased attendance and improved behaviour.
- The highest improvements here are for males, those for whom English is an additional language, and those who are economically disadvantaged.

All of which demonstrates the fantastic work the Cadets do.

With collective success, there has also been individual Cadet organisations and cadets that have achieved great things for charity. Suffolk ACF have raised over £10,000 for NHS Charities, Suffolk Community Foundation and St John Ambulance. The Cadets took part in a series of challenges, inspired by VE and VJ days, with an aim to run, swim or cycle 75km over the course of a month. Individual charity fundraising has also been conducted by Cdt Buddery, from



**Lodge Park Academy CCF conduct a Beret Parade as they increase their numbers from 9 to 55. Pictures: Cambridgeshire ACF.**

Cambridgeshire ACF, who raised money for Great Ormond Street Hospital by completing 500,000 steps in November by running and walking.

With the return of 'normality' last summer members of the Royal Anglian Regiment were able to offer their support and help facilitate Cadet summer camps. For our soldiers it was an opportunity to explain what life is like in the Army as well offer some key tips on how to improve low level fieldcraft skills. Our affiliated Cadets were also able to attend in large numbers to our Regimental Day at the Imperial War Museum Duxford. They played an important role in the running of the day and took part in the march past the Regimental memorial, connecting the youngest part of our family to our oldest veterans.



**Cadet Buddery in uniform and running for her 500,000 steps for Great Ormond Street. Pictures: Doug Stuart C.**



**Cadet Cpl Revelo tries on Army issue Equipment at a Royal Anglian Recruiting stand, Cambridgeshire Army Cadet Force Annual Camp, Stanford Training Area, 1st August 21. Pictures: Cambridgeshire ACF.**



# Affiliated Cadets



**Pte George Myess formerly of Essex ACF on his passing out parade at ITC before joining the 1st Battalion.**



**Cadets taking part in the antecedent Regiment flag lowering ceremony at the Regimental Day at IWM Duxford.**



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# Book Reviews

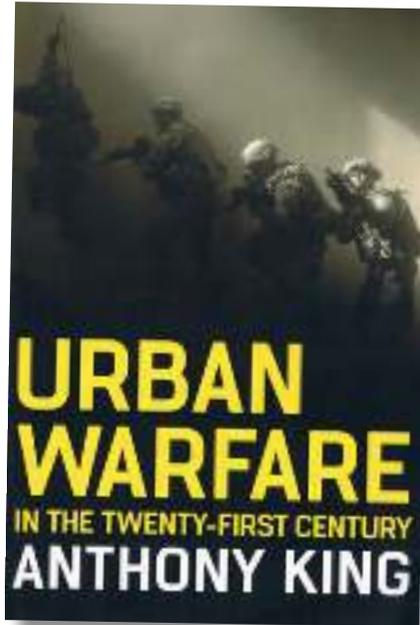
## Urban Warfare in the Twenty-First Century

by Anthony King

Published by Polity Books, 2021, in both hardback and paperback  
Paperback ISBN 13:978-1-5095-4366-3

This new work on contemporary and future urban warfare it is a belter. It only actually took me a week to read, almost could not put it down so compared to some of his earlier books it is a much easier read, so it seems to be better written.

The author's basic hypothesis is very interesting, following an impeccable logic. He starts by pointing out that armies are now much smaller than in WW2 to Vietnam so they cannot take whole cities as they did at Stalingrad, Berlin, Manila, Seoul and Hue etc. Nor do they have enough troops to fight around cities in Fronts as in WW2. Then cities are much larger, more common and more complicated than they used to be, which following from above means armies will increasingly fight within cities in neighbourhoods and even individual buildings, rather than around them. Rapid manoeuvre in cities is rare now, unless the enemy are unprepared, surprised or very few in number. Any serious fighting and attempts at rapid manoeuvre can thus just result in higher casualties. The smaller modern armies

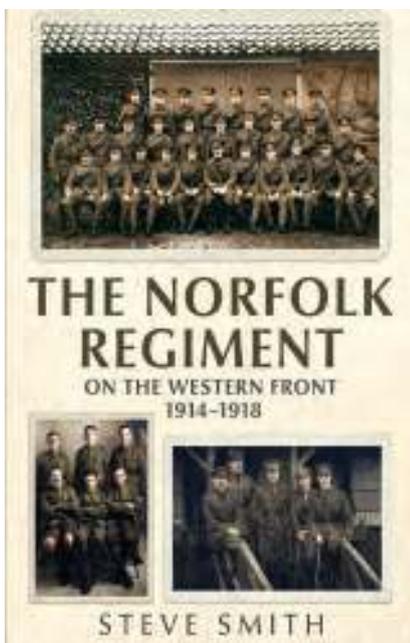


command much greater firepower than before, from squad, armour, artillery support and air power, which makes even small fights intense and high casualty events. Because of more firepower and smaller armies, concrete

and steel barriers and Main Battle Tanks have taken on an increased importance in city fighting.

Small armies also mean that partners, co-operators, friendly militias and even the civilian population are much more important now, which consumes a great deal of command effort in diplomacy, liaison, translation and so on, all of which slows the tempo of operations. The claims that information warfare and winning the narrative are central to urban conflicts, although more important now than they used to be, might be exaggerated, but the information aspects will remain important in the future.

The author finishes off with predictions that future urban warfare might take place in Megacities but it is much more likely to take place in smaller cities. The only possible candidate megacity that could be fought over being Seoul in S Korea. Future urban warfare will be slow, like siege warfare, complicated and costly in casualties, but needs to be prepared for by today's military. A very well thought through book, a real tour de force.



## The Norfolk Regiment On the Western Front 1914-1918

Published by Fonthill Media Ltd  
Hardback, pp383, RRP £35.00

Steve Smith's work on the Norfolk Regiment is of the highest quality.

Often the best way to navigate the complex narrative of the Great War is to follow a specific regiment. This makes the history much more accessible, and therefore less intimidating. This latest contribution is a great example of accessible and engaging history.

Steve Smith's research is exhaustive, almost forensic, this is the complete story of the Norfolk's experiences on the

Western Front.

The author is also an accredited Battlefield Guide, he therefore knows the ground intimately. This knowledge combined with excellent maps, useful photographs, and advice on walking the ground, make this an all encompassing volume.

At first glance this appears to be an expensive book, it is however well worth investing in if you are interested in the Norfolks - Recommended!

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## Dhofar Voices

by Stewart Wilson

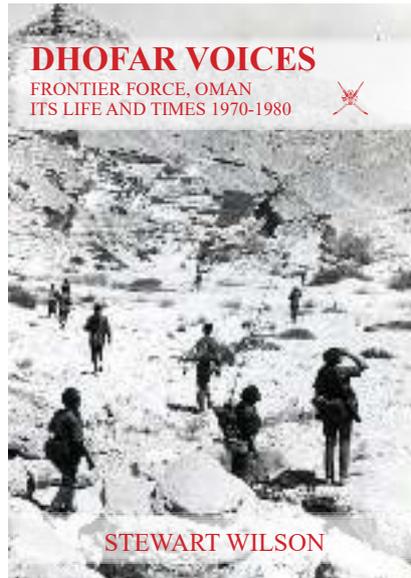
Published by Baskerville Press at £35  
E-mail [dhofarvoices@gmail.com](mailto:dhofarvoices@gmail.com) to order

Dhofar Voices is the story of the Frontier Force, a Baluch battalion in the Sultan of Oman's Armed Forces during the war in Dhofar in the mid-70s. It is written by Stewart Wilson who was Operations Officer in the Battalion in the final stages of the conflict.

As the title of the book implies the story is largely told through personal accounts of the British officers involved, some seconded from the British Army and some from contract service. Their stories depict the thrill, danger and confusion of battle and, although probably not easy for a non-military reader to follow, are compelling to those interested in counter-insurgency operations.

The book starts with the often chaotic attempts to recruit soldiers from Baluchistan, which had an historical link with Oman, through the training regime and then into the tentative start of operations on the jebel.

Accounts do not shirk from telling



of mistakes, some leading to multiple casualties, and the book seems unusual in that respect, particularly at the tactical level. Although the author does not

attempt to draw together the lessons learned they can be clearly discerned. None are new and include the need for clear communication, good intelligence (which was sometimes non-existent) and the importance of excellent fire support, including air. The difficulties of operating in a mountainous area with poor mapping in extreme weather conditions are also brought out.

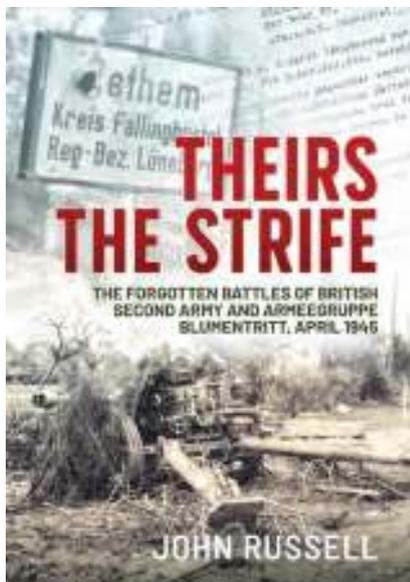
The Royal Anglian Regiment provided many participants in the tale of the Frontier Force including Tim Creasey, John Akehurst, Neil Crumbie, Patrick Shervington and Mike Shipley and readers of the journal may want to read of the part they played.

As always with these types of books they provide a tribute to the soldiers, Baluch and British, who fought in the Dhofar War. Stewart Wilson's account does that well. It is a good read and if British soldiers ever operate in similar circumstances again it would be worth revisiting.

## Theirs the Strife

by John Russell

Published by Casemate,  
Hardback, pp502. RRP - £25.00



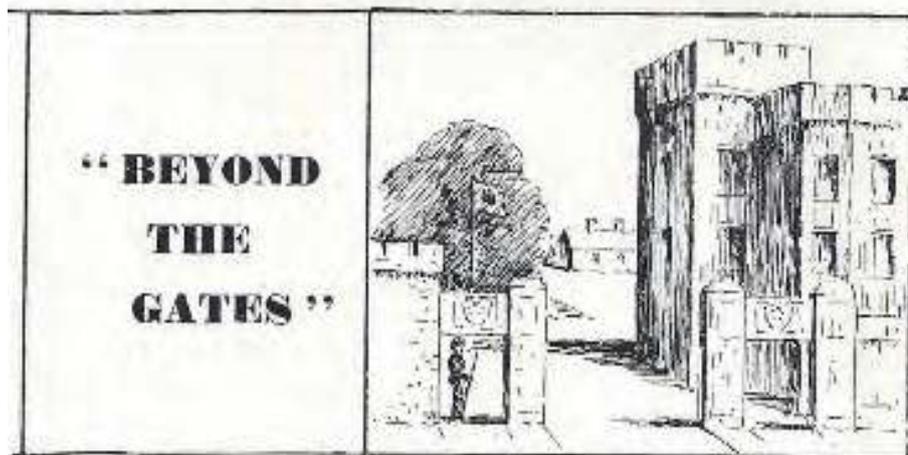
The final months of the Second World War in NW Europe are often hastily glossed over by military historians in their summary of the events leading up to the German surrender in May 1945. This is a crying shame, and does great dis-service to the British Army campaign, and the men and women that fought their way into fiercely defended Germany.

This latest release goes a long way toward recognising the effectiveness of the British Second Army, and elevating the campaign to a more deserved place of prominence. It is an outstanding history that challenges

many of the myths that surround the performance of both British and German units at the time.

The historical narrative is well crafted, engaging, and critically, supported with excellent maps, and a generous array of photographs. Interestingly, the author has also included links to video footage of the various battlefields and actions referred to in the book.

If you are thinking about visiting NW Europe and following the campaign, this excellent book would certainly be worth a few hours of your time before setting off for the Netherlands and Germany.



# The Royal Anglian Regiment Regimental Association



## President of the Regimental Association

Major General SL Porter CBE

## County Colonels

**Norfolk:** Lieutenant Colonel MA Nicholas MBE DL

**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:** Lieutenant Colonel RHL Blomfield MBE TD

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



# Regimental Association



Norfolk

*Lt Col Mark Nicholas MBE DL writes*  
2021 has been another year of constrained activity for the Association. Although our larger gatherings have not taken place, we have continued with the important business of meeting, branch gatherings, supporting veterans and those serving, and chapel services.

We maintain close links with A (Norfolk) Company 1 R ANGLIAN and No1 Company 3 R ANGLIAN and we take great pleasure in making the Best Soldier award to each company. In 2021, we were delighted that Pte Bye (1 R ANGLIAN) and LCpl Carr (3 R ANGLIAN) were the recipients of the awards. More widely, we have been pleased, albeit from a distance, to support the project to erect a memorial to those soldiers massacred at Le Paradis

in 1940. The memorial stands outside the Regimental chapel at Norwich Cathedral.

The Regimental museum in Norwich continues to be in excellent shape thanks to our curator Kate Thaxton. Kate and her team of volunteers have worked tirelessly to manage the collection and during periods of closure have improved the museum's capacity for storing artefacts. We have benefited so much from being part of Norfolk Museum Service and it is an important relationship to retain.

Who's who in the Regimental Association in Norfolk:

**Regimental Secretary** – Ms Helen Bibby - [helenbibby@royalnorfolk.plus.com](mailto:helenbibby@royalnorfolk.plus.com)

**County Committee** – Lt Col Mark Nicholas, Col Tony Taylor, Major William Heal, Lt Col Tony Powell, Col David Hedges (Norwich Branch), Maj Stan King (Gt Yarmouth Branch), Capt Mike Cadge, WOII Dale Curtis (Dereham Branch), Capt Tim Jones, and OCs A (Norfolk) Company and No1 Company. Brig James Woodham from April 2022.

**Finance Committee** – Lt Col Mark Nicholas, Lt Col Eddie Thorne, Maj Tim Power, Maj Frank Froud, Capt Mike Cadge, Lt Col Tony Powell.

**Museum Trustees** – Lt Col Mark Nicholas, Lt Col Tony Powell, Lt Col Eddie Thorne, Lt Col Ian Lonsdale, Lt Col Tony Slater, Mr Nigel Back, Mr Peter Black.



The Combat2Coffee Team includes many familiar faces from the Royal Anglian Veteran Community.



# Regimental Association



Suffolk

## Bury St Edmunds & District Branch Remembrance Sunday

As we all know Remembrance is intensely personal, for some an everyday event painful and all-consuming for others the focus is very firmly on 11 Nov or Remembrance Sunday and they follow their own private traditions or routines. This year in Bury we were determined to provide opportunities for the Regimental family to remember in the way they felt most comfortable.

The day started at the Viking Family Support Group memorial located in the Rose Garden in the Abbey Gardens where we held a short non-religious service which remembered all who

lost their lives in the service of our country but (given the events of 2021) focussed specifically on those we lost in Afghanistan.

The names of those killed in Afghanistan were read out and each was remembered individually by the placing of a named cross of remembrance at the base of the memorial. We then toasted the fallen with a glass of port before dispersing, some to form up for the town parade and service, some to watch the parade from the Angel Hill and others to head home and remember in their own way.

The parade formed up inside the Abbey Gardens with contingents from Royal Navy, Army, RAF, Cadets, and a host of civilian organisations. As always, the veteran contingent (with reps from all 3 services) marched on at the rear behind the Glen Moriston pipe band, for many it was the first time marching behind the pipes and it certainly stirred the blood.

Following the traditional service of remembrance, we marched to the front of St Marys church where we fell out, some chose to attend the church service in St Marys some decided to go to the



Viking FSG memorial 14 November 2021.



**Captain of HMS Vengeance presents picture to C2C.**

Constitutional club/Combat2Coffee for a drink and others to head home and remember in their own way.

Following the church service many (including some who had attended services in the villages around Bury) assembled in the Constitutional club/ Combat2Coffee for drinks and were entertained by the Glen Moriston pipe

band playing in the bar. The afternoon was spent chatting with old friends and a contingent from HMS Vengeance who were in Bury to collect for the poppy appeal and represent the Royal Navy on parade.

As mentioned at the start of this article remembrance is a personal event. For those of you who may be looking for

your own way of remembering, know that there is always a place for you in Bury.

It is certainly not all or nothing you are welcome to attend any or all parts of Bury Remembrance Day and free to change your mind at any time, we hope that next year some of you will decide to join us.

**Minden Day Reunion - Sunday 1 August 2021**

This year we celebrated Minden Day in traditional fashion at the former Gibraltar Barracks site, adjacent to RHQ in Bury St Edmunds. Having missed 2020 due to COVID there was some concern that the 2021 event would also be cancelled but with support from the local council and West Suffolk College (who own the site) it was agreed to go ahead.

Weather in the week leading up to Minden Day was unsettled and kept the set-up team on their toes. Unfortunately, Sun 1 Aug also dawned grey and overcast but the disappointing conditions did little to dampen everyone's enthusiasm to catch up with old comrades, remember those we have lost and generally have an

enjoyable day out.

Over recent years we have attempted to make the event more family friendly whilst retaining the traditional feel and activities that are so important to veterans of the Suffolk Regiment and their families. The day started with a church service for which the City of Ely Band kindly provided the music. This was followed by a march past of veterans led by the Veterans Corps of Drums and including a Colour Party from the 3rd battalion. The Deputy Mayor of Bury St Edmunds Cllr Patrick Chung along with Brigadier Calder took the salute before the veterans fell out to an afternoon of chatting and the occasional beer.

Throughout the afternoon we were entertained with further musical displays from both the Glen Moriston Pipe Band and the Corps of Drums who were brought together from around the country to perform at Minden Day. For the younger people attending we also had face painting, a bouncy castle and historical vehicles and weapons displays. We were well supplied with food and drink by a variety of local vendors selling hog roast, burgers and homemade sausages, unsurprisingly the bar did a particularly brisk trade ensuring more and more storytelling as the day went on.

We were also joined this year by



# Regimental Association



Suffolk



Combat2Coffee a local not for profit which seeks to support Armed Forces Veterans who may be struggling with life after service. The Suffolk Regiment museum was open throughout the day with around 250 people taking the opportunity to visit and both the Royal Anglian Regiment and Suffolk Regiment museums had display stands.

The day finished with a flag lowering ceremony including a piper's lament and last post and reveille played from the roof of the keep. After a last drink from the beer tent some took the same walk thousands of Suffolk Regiment soldiers have taken previously, along Risbygate Street into the town for a few more beers and stories.

Minden Day was well attended with a good mix of veterans, serving soldiers, families and members of the wider community. Everyone agreed it was an enjoyable day but following feedback from those who attended the aim is to expand the available activities further over the coming years to encourage more attendance from both the Regimental family and the wider community.



**Bob Walker, youngest, and last surviving Walker brother enters into the Minden Day spirit. Bob's brother Humphrey was KIA in Malaya.**



**Corps of Drums accompanied by children.**



**Martin Melia briefing Shroppy on the walk into town from the Keep.**



**Ipswich school connection. Luke Talkington former pupil, Jimmy Rackham School SSI.**



**Nige Rix and Ben Shropshire enjoy Minden Day.**

Minden Day always takes place on the closest Sunday to 1 August, please put next year's date (Sun 31 July) into your diaries and make every effort to attend in whatever capacity you can. We will include information on what activities to expect in next year's pre-

Minden Day communications.

It would be great to have more Royal Anglian veterans on the march past but equally if you want to bring the children or grandchildren along and have a pleasant day looking at the stalls or catching up with friends over a beer

or coffee that would be great too. It is only by supporting this event that we can guarantee its future. A final thanks must go to all those who volunteer their help to ensure a successful day, you know who you are, I will be in touch again soon.



# Regimental Association



Essex

## News from Colchester Branch

It's been a little while since news from Colchester has graced the pages of Castle Magazine, so it is with alacrity that the pen (or rather digital finger) is taken up once more.

First thing to say is that we are still here and functioning, despite the assault of Covid which has impacted on so many lives in the last two years. After a second 'virtual' AGM in April we were finally able to meet properly for a Summer Lunch at the Officers

Club in July. A good attendance, and everyone was very pleased to meet up again for a nice meal and a few drinks.

Next, was a minibus load to the Regimental Day - again good to see old friends and catch up. Because there had been a long interval between the lunch and earlier functions, it was decided to add a new date to the planned schedule, in the form of an Autumn Lunch at the end of October. After that it was Remembrance, and

then in January, the New Year Dinner. Everything will then have come full cycle with the 21st AGM in April.

Membership remains healthy - new members include Gordon Brown and Jon Trigg, finances are good, and the Committee of Chris Wright Chairman, Brian Davenport (Secretary), Alan Swaep (Treasurer), Geordie Pattison (Member) and Dave Newman (Standard Bearer) remains resolutely in place.'

## Notes from the County Colonel Essex

Lock-down denied us all of a number of activities that would otherwise speed us on our way through time. Nonetheless, some activity was possible, with unusual origins.

In October 2020, a progress report from Gordon Brown, on his charity walk along the Essex Way, identified a Grave in poor condition. The Grave was in St. Mary's Fairstead, one of the Team Churches managed by St. Nicolas Church in Witham, where I live. The Grave was that of a Cpl Bearman, Essex Regiment, who died of his wounds in 1919. His wife was also buried in the Grave.

I put myself in touch with the Church Warden of St. Mary's, a fellow Essex DL, to see what could be done to "do something" with the Grave. I also got in touch with the Memorials Officer of the Essex Branch of the Western Front Association, (WFA), with whom I have had other dealings around the Essex Regiment of WW1, to find out what assistance from the WFA might be possible.

Fast-forwarding several months, on the ecclesiastical side, a faculty is required to reset the Grave. With the assistance of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, (and an additional stone), donations from the WFA, RHQ and a local benefactor, Gordon's eye for an Essex Regiment soldier's Grave in a poor state will be put in order, hopefully by the end of the year.

With lock-down opening up a bit,

the opportunity was taken in June 2021 to take a few days off in Gibraltar. How timely was the arrival that after we settled into our room, we sauntered into the town centre to find the Square cordoned off. Upon asking a very English policeman, (they can bid for a posting), what was occurring, it transpired that the Queen's Official Birthday was to be celebrated. This included a Parade by the Gibraltar Regiment. Suffice to say it was very well executed, with Colours flying and Slow and Quick marches past accompanied by the Band, and a Colour Sergeant taking the keys to the Castle from the Governor. A couple of Vikings were spotted, that is to say an Officer and a SNCO with Viking flashes were seen. Watching the Parade OC running through his moves on a sixpence in the Square was interesting.

### The Regimental Chapel

The Regimental Chapel has been quiet, of course, although we recommenced Services on 5th September 2021. Chapel Services traditionally take place on the first Sunday in the month, save for January which may occur on the second Sunday due to Christmas, etc. The conflict in September with the Regimental Day at Duxford will be avoided from 2022 when the September Service will move to the second Sunday in that month. We have, sadly, lost some of our congregation, and former Essex Regiment members, to the Final RV over the lock-down period.

The Chapel Service on 3rd October

saw The Reverend Tony Rose conduct a Harvest Thanksgiving Service with a difference. The Service ended with an Interment of Ashes. Paddy McGowan, born Andrew Devine, had an unhappy childhood, eventually adopting his stepfather's surname. Andrew enlisted in the Royal Anglian Regiment, known by his adopted name.

On completion of his Service, he reverted to his birth name. On his death at the age of 53, Andrew had no known relatives. Former comrades stepped in to avoid a Paupers Funeral and burial. Certain other charges were covered by the Funeral Director, himself a former Royal Anglian. The funeral was supported by collection via his local pub, Andrew having worked in management within the hospitality sector. In addition, the Ipswich Branch of the Royal British Legion also assisted. Andrew, (Paddy), considered the Regiment his family, especially those he served with and maintained contact with as his family.

Alistair Duncan, brother of my RSM Chico Duncan, brought a cohort of Vikings to the Service. Field Marshal The Lord Walker attended. Sadly, although invited, Major General John Southerall could not attend. Tony Rose read out the following words from General John. Melissa Kozlenko, Curator of the Regimental Museum also attended.

"Whilst I would have wished to be with you today unfortunately current health does not permit.

I remember Paddy as an excellent



**At the service of interment for the ashes of Paddy McGowan.**

committed soldier who for various personal reasons made the Army, and especially those he served closest with, his family. A family with whom it is evident have remained very close even beyond Service life in many ways and right to the very end. You all have my admiration and I wish you all well.”

Paddy was a Viking from 1983 to 1993, serving in 5 Platoon B Company, Support Company and the Mortar Platoon. Paddy saw active service in N. Ireland.

The Standard of the Chelmsford Branch of the Regimental Association accompanied the County and Brentwood Branch Standards of the Royal British Legion.

*Stabilis*

The Chairman and Heritage Consultant of the Shorncliffe Trust “Make History - Save History”, Christopher Shaw, made

contact with my Regimental Chapel Warden, Mick Chapman, about producing a programme to tell the narrative of the first Afghan War accurately, especially following the recent events in Afghanistan. Readers will recall that a remnant of the Gundamuck Colour is installed in the Regimental Chapel.

As we understand it, the production design is going to be along the lines of a documentary and dramatised scenes. Christopher Shaw worked for the King of Jordan’s heritage group advising on their Lawrence of Arabia heritage experience in Wadi Rum. The “Last Stand” and other scenes are being planned to be filmed in Jordan (with their support).

The main character focus is Lady Sale and her diaries & letters as for the first time. This tells the story from the perspective of someone inside the senior military bubble and she had a better

grasp on the situation than the head of this doomed expedition.

We have made it clear that not only should the story of the 44th be told; we want this linked to the Vikings operational tours in a positive way.

In September and on holiday in Malta, the opportunity was taken to visit The Reverend Canon Simon Godfrey, Chancellor of St Paul’s Pro-Cathedral in Valletta. Back in the day, Simon was Padre to the 5th Battalion, (Steelbacks), during my time as Bn 2IC.

As we head towards the deadline for copy of the 2022 Castle Magazine, I think the following is worthy of highlighting:

The Essex and Kent Scottish Regiment of Canada is having new Colours Presented in May 2022. I hope to be there. I hosted a visit by the Honorary Colonel the Essex and Kent in 2015. About time a reciprocal visit took place!



# Regimental Association



Essex

## Summer Lunch 25 July



Brian Davenport, Paul Bishop, Jon Trigg, Mick Henson, Alan Swaep, Bob Grenfell, Chris Wright, Pete Brooke, Dave Cussons, Mick Hamilton, Geordie Pattison.



The ladies after lunch.



Chairman Chris Wright and Standard Bearer Dave Newman.

## Autumn Lunch 31 October



Geordie Pattison, Debbie Pattison, Chris Wright, Roz Wright, Dave Newman, Sharon Newman.



Some of the members present.



John Clark, Dave Cussons, Tom Carr, Pauline Carr, Brian Davenport, Gordon Brown.



# Regimental Association



Cambridgeshire

## The 'Cambs 876 Remembered' Project A Seven Year Journey

The Royal Anglian Regiment Association (Cambridgeshire) would like to formally recognise and thank all members of the Cambs 876 Remembered project for their dedication and commitment to both honour and remember all the 876 men of the Cambridgeshire Regiment who died as a result of the First World War. The following summary of the project is taken from articles by Christine Green (Committee member Cambs 876 and Douglas Stuart (County Public Relations Officer, Cambridgeshire Army Cadet Force)

**Lt Col David Denson TD,  
County Colonel,  
The Royal Anglian Regiment  
Association (Cambridgeshire)**

The Cambs 876 Remembered Project by members of the Royal British Legion (RBL) Riders to commemorate every man from the Cambridgeshire Regiment killed in the First World War was concluded in May 2021 with a small ceremony at Guyhirn, near Wisbech. The first service was held in memory of Corporal Arthur Rawson died in August 1914. He is buried in Whittlesey Cemetery.

In 2014, a group of RBL motorcycle enthusiasts decided that they would hold a service to mark the centenary of the death of all 876 men of The Cambridgeshire Regiment killed in action or accidents, or who died of illness or of wounds inflicted during the war, up until 1921. They visited the graveside of every soldier and held ceremonies of remembrance, with the exception of two who died in Africa; these were remembered at services at Ely Cathedral. Between them, they clocked up 196,779 miles, as they travelled around the country and onto the continent to pay their respects to soldiers in France, Belgium, Holland and Germany.

The Royal Anglian Regiment Association (Cambridgeshire) together

with the Cambridgeshire Army Cadet Force have supported the project throughout the seven-year period, with Association Members and Cadets, most of whom were badged to The Royal Anglian Regiment, joining each service held in the county of Cambridgeshire and notably also in France, to commemorate the taking of the Schwaben Redoubt, a German fortress on the Somme, by the men of the Cambridgeshire Regt in Oct 1916. During the battle, 36 gallantry awards were won by men of the Regiment. In 2016 members of the Association and some 40 Cadets and Adults undertook a four day journey to France and Belgium to take part in a day's service of remembrance along with the Cambs 876 Remembered Team.

On 24th May 2021, a small crowd

gathered at the Guyhirn village cemetery to honour the last of 876 fallen soldiers. This service marked 100 years since Private John Payne died from wounds he sustained in a gas attack in 1917.

Unfortunately Covid 19 restrictions limited the number of attendees to 30, with Cambridgeshire ACF being represented by Colour Sgt Charlie Rice of Whittlesey Detachment. CSgt Rice is one of the Lord Lieutenant's Cadets and was accompanying the Lord Lieutenant, Mrs Julie Spence OBE QPM. Also paying their respects were Cambs 876 Committee Members, representatives of the Royal Anglian Regt Association (Cambridgeshire) and the Royal British Legion.

Christine Green, who researched the lives of every soldier, said: "It has



**Guyhirn May 2021 at the grave of Pte John Payne** (pic courtesy of DouglasStuart).

been an incredible project to work on. In 2014, when we first started, there were massive commemorations to mark the centenary since the start of the First World War, and the Royal British Legion encouraged branches to research the lives of 10 soldiers from their area. My late husband Glenn initially researched the backgrounds of 13 men, but that number seemed inadequate when the Commonwealth War Graves states 876 from the Cambridgeshire Regiment lost their lives. So, we formed a committee, and set about honouring them all. Sadly, Glenn passed away in June 2018, but everyone agreed the project should still be completed in his name. If he was here today, I know he'd be so proud. We thank Cambridgeshire ACF for their tremendous support on the project journey. All have made new friends, met the ancestors of soldiers, and most importantly visited the graves and memorials of these incredibly brave men. Their lives needed to be remembered."

In 2015, the committee was awarded the Freedom of Wisbech for their

dedication and commitment to the project. Each soldier's story is now featured on the Royal British Legion's 'Every One

Remembered' website. <http://www.cambs876remembered.com/Roll%20of%20Honour%201.html>



**Committee Members** (pic courtesy of DS Denson).



**Ely Cathedral, November 2019** (pic courtesy of DouglasStuart).



# Regimental Association



Cambridgeshire

## Review of 2021

Unfortunately the activities of the Association and its Branches have been greatly curtailed during 2021 due to the ongoing "coronavirus" pandemic

During this last year we continued to support the Royal British Legion Riders in their final year of the Cambridgeshire Regiment 876 Project. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) records show that 876 Officers and Soldiers of The Cambridgeshire Regiment, who were killed during WW1, have memorials at home and abroad. The first man fell in 1914 and the last man died in 1921 and the intention of the Riders is to honour all 876, as a part of the National WW1 centenary commemorations. On the 24th May 2021 the Secretary (Col Colin Elsdon DL), the Treasurer (Col Mark Knight MBE) and myself joined a small number (due to Covid19 restrictions) of the 876 team for the last service of their 7 year project. This service remembered Private John Payne who died from wounds he sustained as a result of a gas attack in 1917. This has been an outstanding achievement by the Riders (see separate article).

Whilst the Ely Reunion, in July, continues to be the highlight of the year for our Association this last year attendance was restricted to 30. The service was very much a regimental family affair being held in front of our Regimental Chapel with the Lord Lieutenant of Cambridgeshire being represented Col Roger Herriot OBE DL. Notwithstanding the restrictions this worked well with all Branches being represented and laying wreaths; for the Service we were very much supported by the Dean and Chapter and our Association padre Maj Alan Jesson. Our thanks to our Secretary for all his behind the scenes support and hard work to help make it happen.

The Association President (Lt Col Retd Tony Slater OBE) and myself were honoured and delighted to be invited by C/Sgt Butcher and All Ranks



**Schwaben Platoon, 3rd Battalion 16 October 2021.**

of the Schwaben Platoon, 5 Coy 3rd Bn The Royal Anglian Regiment to their Schwaben Day at London Road Peterborough on the 16th October 2021. Col Slater gave a presentation to members of the Platoon on the taking of the Schwaben Redoubt by the Cambridgeshire Regiment in October 1916 and I was pleased to present a copy of the book "The Cambridgeshires 1914 - 1919" by Riddell and Clayton.

It is also pleasing to report that the Association and the Cambridgeshire Army Cadet Force continue to work closely together. In August 2021 Colonel Lesley Deacon was appointed as County Commandant with her Deputy Commandants appointed as follows: - Lt Col John Seaman being responsible for adults and Lt Col Sandy Grogan being responsible for Cadets. We wish them all success in their new appointments.

I would like to take this opportunity to formerly thank the Commandant and her team and in particular the Cadets for their continued support at our Ely Reunion.

Members of the Association attended the annual Royal Anglian gathering at Duxford in September. In addition Association Members attended

Remembrance Day Services at Wisbech, Whittlesey, March, Ely, Cambridge and Duxford. Unfortunately we were unable to attend the field of Remembrance at Westminster.

For next year our major objective will be our Annual Reunion at Ely on the 17th July 2022. This is likely to consist of a parade, a service in the Cathedral and light tea in the Lady Chapel. Timings etc. will be advised in due course but in the meantime please note the date in your diaries now and pass on the "word".

The Cambridge, Whittlesey and Wisbech Branches are proposing to commence meetings in 2022 having tentatively started small gatherings during the latter quarter of 2021. Cambridge in the evening on the last Friday of each month at Histon RBL premises. Whittlesey currently meeting for lunch once a month. Wisbech hopes to start soon. Contacts for each branch can be found on the Royal Anglian webpage under "Associations and Branches".

Finally I would take this opportunity to wish you all a Happy New Year.

**Lt Col David Denson TD  
County Colonel Cambridgeshire**

# Regimental Battlefield Tour Normandy 1944 – 16-20 May 2022

*Maj Tim Brown*

*[timothy.brown133@mod.gov.uk](mailto:timothy.brown133@mod.gov.uk)*

The Regimental Battlefield tour will return to Normandy this year. We will concentrate on the battles of our former Regiments in June, July and early August 1944 as the Allies fought to expand the Normandy bridgehead and prepare for the breakout. We will also look at Op GOODWOOD, the largest tank battle the British army fought in the Second World War.

The plan is to stay in a hotel in Bayeux. The detailed programme will be confirmed after a recce in February/March but will include the 1 Suffolk battles for Hillman and Chateau de La Londe, The 2 Lincolns battle for either Black Orchard (Op GOODWOOD) or Pont-de-Vaudry, the 7 R Norfolk crossing of the river Orne and battle for Grimbosq where Major David Jamieson won his VC, the 2 Essex battle for Essex Wood and exploitation from the River Orne to “Place de Pat Barass” near Thury Harcourt.

The group will be made up of serving and retired members of the Regiment, with a mix of all ranks. Cost with travel and accommodation will be in the region of £400 per person, but a generous grant from the Regiment heavily subsidises those serving. Expressions of interest by email to Regimental Area Sec 2 at *[timothy.brown133@mod.gov.uk](mailto:timothy.brown133@mod.gov.uk)*





# Regimental Association



Lincolnshire

## Great Grimsby Branch

The Great Grimsby Branch of the Royal Anglian and Royal Lincolnshire Regiment Association are now holding meetings again after the Lockdown. Membership has increased at the Branch despite the effects of the Covid epidemic. Meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of the month at the Cartergate Club, Friargate House, Cartergate, Grimsby DN31 1QZ.

The 2021 Christmas Party held at The Humber Royal Hotel, Grimsby, where the members and guests were treated to a three-course meal with wine, port, a raffle and entertainment on the day. For the Pompadours who are members of the Branch it was great to see old Comrades such as Monty and Fred Beaumont, and many more who decided to venture up North to Grimsby to attend the party.

Following the Christmas party, the organisation of the Sobraon Lunch has now begun in earnest. This will take

place on Saturday 30th April 2022 at The Humber Royal Hotel.

A collection at the Christmas Lunch was made to help with the upkeep of the memorial bench to the Grimsby Chums at Lochnagar Crater it raised £310.

The Branch had been approached by Mr Murdoch Macinnes who has looked after the bench since 1998 when it was first put in place. He has made many trips over to France to make sure that the Bench is well cared for. Now due to his age he has asked the Branch to take over the responsibility for the upkeep of The Memorial Bench for years to come.

At the November 2021 Branch meeting, it was agreed unanimously that the Branch should take on the responsibility for the maintenance and to preserve The Memorial Bench and the memory of the Chums for years to come.

The Grimsby Chums (the only one of Lord Kitchener's Service battalions to be called Chums and not Pals) were deployed to France on the 9th January

1916 and first saw action in the Battle of the Somme. As part of the first wave attacking the village of La Boisselle, they were in the line where a large mine was exploded beneath the German position (or so they had expected) at 7.28am. The massive Lochnagar Crater was created when the mine was exploded and the Chums advanced, unknowing that the mine had fallen short of the German position and the 2min gap before they advanced, had provided the German's with the time to man their machine guns. Many men fell, only a few reaching the German trench before having to retreat due to their small number. Out of a battalion of 1,000 men, 15 Officers and 487 men were killed, missing or wounded at Lochnagar Crater. The Bench in memory of the Chums is at the side of the Lochnagar Crater in France which has been preserved as a memorial to the lives lost there by the Chums - a service is held at the Crater every year on the 1st July. The Great Grimsby



The Pompadours. 3rd Regular Battalion the Royal Anglian Regiment.



**B Company 7th Battalion the Royal Anglian Regiment.**



**A Company 7th Battalion the Royal Anglian Regiment.**



# Regimental Association



Lincolnshire



Mr Macinnes receiving a cheque from Branch Chairman Wayne Okopskyj to help with the repair and maintenance costs of the Bench that have taken place this year 2021. Also pictured back row left to right Committee Members J Kitchen, A McCurdy, Branch Standard Bearer C Long, M Ireland.

Branch is proud to have the opportunity to be involved in preserving the memory of The Grimsby Chums.

The Branch were represented at both Cleethorpes and Grimsby Remembrance Day Services. With Mr Joe Fitzgerald laying a wreath on behalf of the Branch at Cleethorpes and Mr Andrew McCurdy laying wreath on behalf of the Branch at Grimsby.

Absent friends sadly missed those who have passed in the last two years:  
Major (Retd) Alan Hemmings, Royal Anglian Regiment;  
Jimmy Glover, Royal Anglian Regiment;  
Brian Hall MBE, Royal Lincolnshire and Royal Anglian Regiment;  
John Hopkinson Royal Lincolnshire Regiment;  
Mick Horry, Royal Anglian Regiment;  
Andrew Muir, Royal Anglian Regiment;  
William Page (Bill), Merchant Navy and Royal Anglian Regiment;  
Melvyn Reynolds, Royal Anglian Regiment;  
Leslie James (Joe) Robinson, Royal Lincolnshire Regiment.

WM (Ski) Okopskyj, Branch Chairman



Members and guests enjoying the Christmas lunch

## Lincoln Branch

For the Lincoln Branch the pandemic closed all meetings. However, Maj Freeman kept in touch with as many of the members as possible with a monthly phone call.

We had hardly begun lockdown when we had our first casualty, Mr Bernard Bunny Barratt, late of the 2nd Battalion, The Royal Lincolnshire Regiment. Bunny had served in Egypt and later as store man with 4/6th Royal Lincolnshire Regiment (TA). Despite the Lockdown and restricted numbers at the funeral, a Standard Party stood at the gates of Lincoln crematorium to see this old soldier to his final resting place (Photo 1).

As VE Day was cancelled various members did their bit locally. The Avenue in Lincoln where Major Freeman resides was blessed with a rendition of the Lincolnshire poacher and Rule Britannia. The now famous Branch wheelbarrow and Regimental flag were also on parade (Photo 2).

VJ Day sadly also had to be cancelled but Mr Mick Reams paraded the Royal Lincolnshire standard in his locality as did various other standard bearers (Photo 3).

The year continued to take its toll on the Association with the death of the Chairman, Mr Derek Hocking, late of the 2nd. Battalion. Once again restrictions made attendance at the funeral impossible. However, Poacher ingenuity got round the problem with a large number of people just happening to be in the cemetery with standards etc when the interment took place. Social distancing was observed at all times.

Remembrance Day brought about some confused messages regarding attendance. The Association led their remembrance at the Royal Lincolnshire Regiment Memorial at Sobraon Barracks, A party of six conducted a short service with Colonel Newmarch laying a wreath and the last post being played. Mr Mick Reams paraded the Standard. A toast was raised to the fallen.

There were no Christmas or Sobraon Day celebrations probably for the first time ever.



**Lt Col Ray Ogg (left) and Capt Ray Phillips (centre) co-executors of Eric Sharpe's estate, present Eric Sharpe's medals to the Regimental Museum. Also pictured is Michael Williams (Mayor of Lincoln's Husband).**

The New Year continued with its toll. In June, the treasurer Mr John Gooding, a talented Military musician died unexpectedly. Once again covid regulations restricted numbers. However, a gathering took place at the Royal Lincolnshire Regiment Memorial for an impromptu wake.

The Last Post was sounded, a eulogy given, and the laying of wreaths took place with hymns being played musically only, Standards paraded and a feeling that we had done our best in the circumstances.

In the last month the Association has had its first meeting, elected new officers and is holding a memorial service for

those we have lost but been unable to mourn properly during the pandemic.

There was a strong turnout for the Regimental Gathering at Duxford on Sunday 5th September with the Association led by Colonel Newmarch hosting dignitaries from Lincolnshire. The Right Worshipful, The Mayor of Lincoln, Cllr Jackie Kirk and Consort Mr Michael Williams, Col Francis Dymoke, Hon Col Lincolnshire Army Cadet Force, Col Jeremy Field MBE, Comdt Lincolnshire Army Cadet Force, Lt Col Nick Foster, Chair of the Lincolnshire Committee of EMRFCA and Lt Col Ray Ogg, CO of The Kings School Grantham CCF.



### Award of the Legion d'Honneur

On 6 August 2021, several members of the Royal Tigers' Association attended a splendid ceremony, hosted by The Mayor of Hinckley and Age UK, when Mr Gordon Bennett, who served in the 1st Battalion The Leicestershire Regiment during the Second World War, was presented with the Légion d'Honneur.

Everyone attending much appreciated that Captain Alex Langley and Sergeant Foley of B (Leicestershire) Company The 2nd Battalion The Royal Anglian Regiment broke their well-earned leave after their six month deployment to Mali.

Mr Bennett was born in Hinckley, and was an apprentice in the hosiery industry when war broke out. After his 18th birthday, he was called up, trained at Budbrooke Barracks in Warwick and joined the 1st Battalion in Normandy. In Belgium he was wounded by a German sniper, the bullet striking his mess tin and ricocheting across his chest. He described the blow as being hit with a 50 lb hammer. After his recovery, he also survived strafing by a lone Messerschmitt 109 near Nijmegen. As he could drive, a relatively rare skill in those days, he moved onto transport, driving munitions and supplies to the front. After the War he was posted to Palestine until his discharge in 1947, when he returned to Hinckley.

The presentation to Gordon was made by M Jean-Claude Lafontaine, the French Honorary Consul in Nottingham,



**Capt Alex Langley, Mr Gordon Bennett and Sgt Nick Foley.**

who made a very gracious speech in excellent English before, in accordance with the custom set by Napoleon, announcing the award in French, pinning the medal on Gordon's chest and making *la bise* (giving a kiss on both cheeks). Mr Owen Jones from Age UK, then proposed the Loyal Toast. After

refreshments, Lorrie Brown, a most talented singer, gave a 40 minute tribute to Vera Lynn with some wartime songs, with the assembled company joining in and waving Union Jacks. The sprightly Mr Bennett, now aged 95 and wearing his award, was dancing merrily. It was all a very happy occasion.

### Presentation of Elizabeth Cross

On 16 September 2021 five members of the family of Pte Frank Pennington, who was killed on 5 November 1951 with the 1st Battalion The Royal Leicestershire Regiment in the Battle of Maryang-San in Korea, were presented with the Elizabeth Cross by Major General AJG Pollard CB CBE DL in Kendrew Barracks. Several members of B Company 2 R ANGLIAN and the Royal Tigers' Association attended, including a Korean veteran Tiger Alan Simpson.

Before making the presentation, General Pollard explained about the battle and Frank's part in it, using a map of the Korean battlefield. In his late teens Frank started his National Service in his county regiment. After recruit training he was posted to the 1st Battalion in Hong Kong and, after a few



**Mr Pennington is presented with the Elizabeth Cross.**



**The presentation.**

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months there, he went with the Battalion to Korea, landing on 13 October 1951. Their first taste of combat was to come on the afternoon of 5 November 1951.

The Chinese were attacking a key mountain ridge and forcing the 1st Battalion The King's Own Scottish Borderers to withdraw. This dominating hill feature was Maryang-San, also known as Hill 317. The Leicesters were ordered to recapture Hill 317. The two leading companies fought gallantly to

the edge of their objectives, suffering almost 50% casualties, including Frank Pennington.

The Headquarters of the Commonwealth Division concluded that only an attack by three infantry battalions and a tank regiment, supported by an artillery regiment could possibly succeed in retaking Hill 317 and such an attack was never subsequently undertaken. Hill 317 remained in Chinese hands until the end of the Korean War in 1953, and to

this day it is in the Demilitarised Zone between North Korea and South Korea.

After his speech, General Pollard presented the Elizabeth Cross to the members of Frank Pennington's family, together with a scroll signed by Her Majesty. Major Tim Brown, Area Regimental Secretary The Royal Anglian Regiment, also gave the family a copy of the history of The Royal Anglian Regiment 1964 –2014 "Aden to Afghanistan".

---



**COMBAT  
2COFFEE**

**Roasted, Toasted and Poured by Veterans**

## **VETERANS AND FAMILIES**

*If there is anything you would like to talk about  
or you just want to chat - please ask.*

**FOR FURTHER INFO CONTACT NIGEL ON**

**07429 439 766**

**nigel@combat2coffee.co.uk**

**www.combat2coffee.co.uk**



# Regimental Association



Northamptonshire

## Northamptonshire Branches Remember

Following on from the last couple of years when restrictions prevented us from formally meeting and gathering in public, The Northampton and Finedon Branches spread far and wide to ensure that our Fallen were Remembered and represented in as many locations as possible. This effort in many cases was supported by a contingent of serving Poachers or by serving individuals, and included:

- The Remembrance Service and March Past at the Cenotaph (London).
- The Remembrance Service and Wreath Laying at Franklins Gardens prior to the Saints Vs London Irish Match (Franklin Gardens, Northampton).
- Northampton Remembrance Service.
- Rothwell Remembrance Service.
- Kettering Remembrance Service.
- Desborough Remembrance Service.
- Daventry Remembrance Service.
- Great Brington Remembrance Service.
- Daventry Remembrance Service.
- Finedon Remembrance Service

Our thanks go out to all those who attended to remember The Fallen within our great County.



Caption to read Northants Veterans gather to march down Whitehall on Remembrance Sunday





Members Carl Mundin and Larry Mann laying wreaths at Northampton.



Poachers Vets Northampton Remembrance Sunday 2021.

## Street Fighting Steelbacks





# Regimental Association



# Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire

Like most Regimental Association Branches, the Bedford Branch has also been unable to meet since March 2020 at our regular venue, the Keep in Kempston, Bedford, the old Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire Regiment Depot. This has not however, stopped regular news and updates being delivered to the membership, by the wonders of the internet to keep our Branch members informed. This also included operational news from our Regular Battalions.

## **D Coy [Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire] 2nd Battalion, the Royal Anglian Regiment**

The Bedford Branch has an affinity with D Coy [B&H] 2 Royal Anglian and when we learned that the Company was to deploy to Poland in 2021 and that they wished to strike a commemorative coin to present to all who took part in the deployment, the Branch made a donation in order to assist with the intention. It was noted that the coins were produced and have been presented to all Soldiers on that deployment.

We have, sadly, had to say goodbye

to OC, Maj Samuel Thomas and CSM Davidson but the Branch is now looking forward to meeting with the new OC, Maj Nick Barron and CSM Daniel Tanner, sometime in 2022.

## **Colours pole holders: St Paul's Church, Bedford**

At the beginning of the year, St Paul's

Church in Bedford informed the Branch that some of the pole holders that support the many Regimental Colours laid up in the Church were coming loose from the wall and were in danger of falling. Whilst the Church were happy to organise a contractor and scaffolding for the repairs, they were unhappy in handling the fragile Colours.



The County Colonel, Maj John Whatley DL, the Branch secretary, Basil Hirniak, and the Branch Treasurer, Vince Hislop agreed to carry out this delicate operation together with Nigel Lutt, ex county archivist and member of the Beds & Herts Museum Trust. Also, in attendance to assist was Branch Member, David Morley and his wife.

Upon the successful completion of this delicate operation, St Paul's asked if the Association could help in offsetting the cost of the work and staffing through the Area Regimental Secretary resulted in the Regiment agreeing to offset the whole cost in line with our policy on Regimental Heritage much to the delight of the Church.

In July 2021, Maj Whatley presented the cheque to the Vicar of St Paul's Church.

**Medal donated to the Royal Anglian Regiment Museum**

The Branch Secretary, Basil Hirniak, noticed some exchanges on Facebook regarding a Northern Ireland General Service Medal being offered for sale on Ebay that had been issued to a Royal Anglian Regiment Soldier.

The Secretary successfully won the bidding and purchased the item



**Maj John Whatley presents the cheque to the Vicar of St Paul's Church.**





Regimental  
Association



Bedfordshire  
& Hertfordshire



#### **Blenheim Day service in the Garden of Remembrance.**

to ensure that it would be retained by the Regiment, and in July 2021, the medal ownership was transferred to the Regimental Museum.

#### **Blenheim Day 2021**

In August we were again unable to hold our usual Blenheim day Lunch in the Keep, however this did not stop us holding a short service in the Garden of Remembrance opposite the Keep, led by our Branch Padre and Regimental Assistant Honorary Chaplain, the Reverend Stephen Smith.

This was followed by a Buffet lunch

at a local Pub where our host, Branch member Vince Hislop and his staff, provided an excellent lunch.

#### **Regimental Gathering at Duxford**

On Sunday 5th September 2021 some 20 branch Members and their families attended the Regimental Gathering at Duxford.

It was good to see and meet everyone from the regimental family for the first time since 2019. It was also an opportunity to join one of our Branch members, Gordon Kinns, to celebrate his 92nd birthday on the very day.

#### **Re-commencement of Meetings**

Finally, some good news, the Branch have been given the go ahead to restart meetings in the Keep again after 19 months. So, any serving, retired or family members of the Regiment who would like to join us at our regular monthly meetings, on the first Friday of every month starting from 5th November 2021, are welcome to join us at the bar in the old Depot Officers' Mess.

All details can be obtained from our Branch Secretary, Basil Hirniak by email: [royalanglianassociationbedford@aol.com](mailto:royalanglianassociationbedford@aol.com) or phone: 07950 341340

# Big Breakfast 22



## CALLING ALL ROYAL ANGLIANS

Join us for a FREE, informal, relaxed breakfast and re-connect with members of your Regimental Family!

# Sat 26<sup>th</sup> February

## LOCATIONS ALL OVER THE UK

Email RHQ The Royal Anglian Regiment @

[INFHQ-QUEENS-RANG-groupmailbox@mod.gov.uk](mailto:INFHQ-QUEENS-RANG-groupmailbox@mod.gov.uk)



# Regimental Association

## Association subscription rates - and how to become a member

All retired members of the Regiment are automatically members of the Regimental Association and are therefore entitled to benevolence if required. All are encouraged to become subscribing members of the Regimental Association. The cost of subscription is:

- Officers - £25
- Soldiers - £20

Benefits in doing so are:

Benefits	Officers	Soldiers	Remarks
An association Membership Card	√	√	Entry to all Regt Events.
Copy of the Castle Magazine	√	√	Posted to your home. (optional)
Receive Monthly Newsletter.	√	√	By email. (Optional)
Receive Regimental Bulletins	√	√	By email. (Optional)
Small donation to Benevolence	√	√	
Membership of the Officers Club	√		

### Regimental Association

I wish to subscribe to the Regimental Association with all benefits above. In doing so you agree to your information being held, which will not be passed on to a third party without your permission, and will only be used for Regimental matters. Please:

- **Complete and return the membership information form to Joanna Laidlaw at the above address or email to: [INFHQ-QUEENS-RANG-groupmailbox@mod.gov.uk](mailto:INFHQ-QUEENS-RANG-groupmailbox@mod.gov.uk)**
- **Please instruct your bank to provide a Standing Order for the required amount payable on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of next month and thereon each year after. *On receipt of your first payment your association card will be dispatched.***

**Association Bank details:** Name: **Royal Anglian Regiment Association**

Bank: **Barclays**. Account No: **30657336**. Sort Code: **20 16 12**.

Please use the **Reference** as follows: **Last four of Regt No, Surname, Ints.,** (i.e. **1234 Bonnalack KR**)

**Regimental Bulletins.** Gives information on Regimental matters, announcements, newsletters, notification of deaths, job opportunities and significant Regimental business.

I wish to receive Regimental Bulletins by email.

**Yes / No**

I wish to receive Castle Magazine by post.

**Yes / No**

Please treat as a Gift Aid donations all qualifying gifts of money made today, in the past 4 years and in the future I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities or Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for that tax year. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify. I understand the charity will reclaim will reclaim 25p of tax on every £.

**Yes / No**





# Regimental Heritage

## Who was James Osborne?

**Brave man from Wigginton who won Victoria Cross 140 years ago on 22 February 1881 in the Forgotten First Boer War**

James Osborne was born on 13 April 1857 in a small cottage in Wigginton later demolished by Lord Rothschild and replaced with a new Huckvale design in 1912. He was a volunteer soldier before joining the Regular Army in early 1877 and later that year served as a Private with the Northamptonshire Regiment (58th Foot) until 1883.

In 1878 he left England and fought in Zululand and Natal for two years before serving until 1883 in Natal, Transvaal and South Africa then returned to England and left the army on 27 February.

So far nothing exceptional. When he joined, he signed the papers with a cross, when he left, he signed his name.

His pay records show he earned an extra penny a day (most of the time) for good conduct. He was never promoted from Private.

He returned to Wigginton where he worked as a farm labourer for the first Lord Rothschild until he suffered a stroke in 1913. He died in 1928. His cottage is called Majuba after the military disaster in the First Boer War when the Boers defeated the British.

Why a VC and military funeral in 1928?

Read below the description of daring and bravery. There is no doubt of his raw courage. These words hang in St Bartholomew's Church, Wigginton Hertfordshire HP23 6DZ

*On 22nd February 1881 a skirmish commenced through an attempt made by a party of Boers to cut off some natives returning to their Kraals near the town.*



*Captain Saunders, seeing the danger, sent a party of Volunteers to cover their retreat, but the Boers were reinforced, and Captain Saunders therefore sent a sergeant and fifteen men of the 58th and five mounted men to assist the Volunteers.*

*In the course of the skirmish one party of the enemy retired along a valley and were followed by the mounted infantry. The latter soon discovered that another party of about forty Boers were working their way round the rear. The soldiers mounted their horses and attempted to re-join their comrades, but two of their horses were wounded and another killed. P*

*Private Mayes, one of those*

*dismounted, was also shot in the leg and fell on his face in the long grass. Private Wm Bennett was pursued by seven or eight Boers, who fired at but missed him. Having his own rifle loaded and one of them coming up and galloping alongside him he fired over-arm and shot him. Another Boer now came up and striking him between the shoulders with his rifle, knocked him off his horse. The Boer then dismounted and deliberately fired at him at fifteen paces, the bullet shattering his leg. He lay hidden in the grass for nearly two hours and would probably have remained longer had not one of the Boers waved a white cloth and planted it by him to mark the spot where he wanted to show he required help. As soon as*



*the enemy had withdrawn, a stretcher party was sent out to bring him in, but amputation of the leg was necessary, and he died that evening.*

*On seeing Private Mayes fall, Private James Osborne watched the spot, and seeing Mayes rise, attempt to run but fall again, he determined to go to his help and bring him in. He appealed to a Volunteer to let him have his horse to lead to the assistance of his comrade, but without effect, the Volunteer urging that no one could reach the wounded man under such fire. Osborne therefore rode straight from the cover he was under to the spot where he had seen Mayes fall, between two and three hundred yards in line of some two score Boers. Having come up to Mayes, he managed to drag him up behind him on his horse and, slinging Mayes rifle over his shoulder remarked that 'the Boers should not even get that'. Meanwhile,*

*the other men had kept up an accurate and rapid fire on the Boers. Both men and the horse escaped, though bullets were striking all round them, one hitting Osborne's rifle close to where he held it.*

For the gallant deed Private Osborne was awarded the Victoria Cross which was notified in the London Gazette of 14 March 1882 as follows: -

*James Osborne, for his gallant conduct at Wakkerstroom on 22nd February 1881, in riding under heavy fire towards a party of forty-two Boers, picking up Private Mayes who was lying wounded and carrying him safely into camp.*

This is a brave man doing a brave deed and much publicity was gained for the British Army. Five days later the Battle of Majuba Hill (near Volksrust,

South Africa) on 27 February 1881 was the final and decisive battle of the First Boer War. It was a resounding victory for the Boers and the battle is considered to have been one of the most humiliating defeats of British arms in history. It forced the British to come to terms with the Boers to end the First Boer War by armistice.

So, we remember the brave. He died on 1 February 1928. Full military honours were given at his funeral at St Bartholomew's in Wigginton.

Every year a wreath is laid on his grave as part of the Remembrance Day Service in St Bartholomew's Churchyard, Wigginton HP23 6DF.

Richard Tregoning Wigginton History Society 89 Fox Road Wigginton Tring HP23 6EE [rbtregoning@btopenworld.com](mailto:rbtregoning@btopenworld.com)



# Regimental Heritage

## What really happened to the 267 men of 1/5 Norfolk Battalion who chased the enemy into a forest and never came back

There is a particular story involving a Territorial Battalion of the Norfolk Regiment, relating to an action on 12th August 1915 during their advance towards Kuchuck Anafarta Ova at Gallipoli, that got reported like this,

But the Colonel, with 16 officers and 250 men, still kept pushing on, driving the enemy before them. ... Nothing more was ever seen or heard of any of them. They charged into the forest and were lost to sight or sound. Not one of them ever came back.

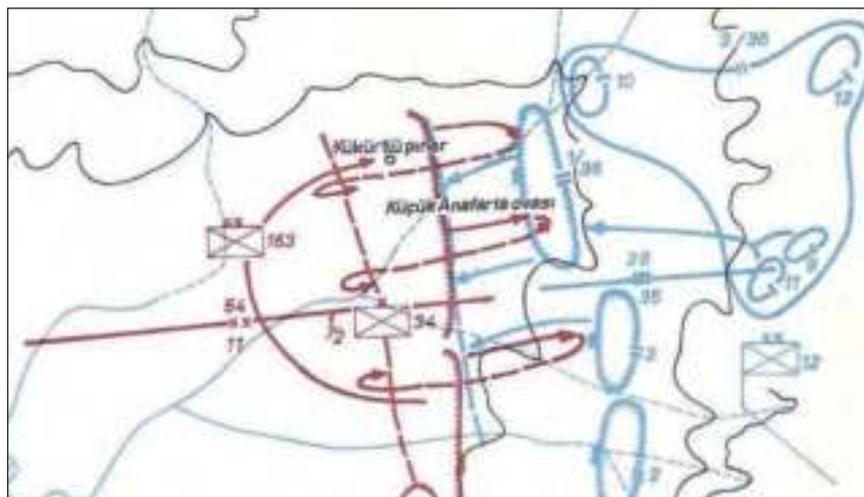
Based on this report, it has been the subject of two books, one of which was made into a TV adaption, but none have told the proper story.

People still call the 1/5th Battalion Norfolk Regiment the Sandringham Battalion or Company, but this is not correct. This is because it recruited from all over North Norfolk with companies being raised by towns as far as Great Yarmouth and Dereham. In fact, what was known as 'E' Company (The Sandringham Company) ceased to exist on 8th February 1915 during a major reform where they merged with 'C' Company becoming 'King's Company'.

But it's the disappearance myth that needs careful investigation, especially the one that suggests that the missing men were all shot in cold blood.

Due to a number of counter orders and mistakes, we know that a number of the 5th Norfolks managed to advance 1400 yards to a sunken road before stopping and waiting for the rest of the battalion. 2Lt William Fawkes commanded this small group and he was ordered to press on by the Commanding Officer, Col Horace Proctor-Beauchamp, virtually all of them were taken down when they bunched up in a gap covered by a machine gun.

A small element of the Norfolks managed to reach a small vineyard and another element managed to get to a group of small cottages where they were joined by Col Proctor-Beauchamp and the Adjutant. But because they had



The advance made by the 163rd Brigade on 12th August 1915.

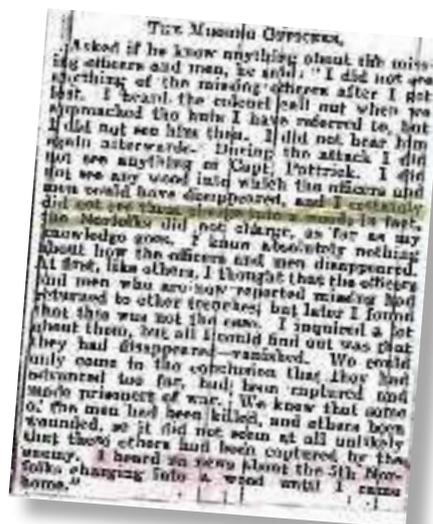
over extended, other officers managed to take stock of what had happened and Maj Walter Barton and Lt Evelyn Beck managed to lead the survivors back to friendly lines when it became dark.

Local papers initially reported the loss of 5th Norfolk officers on 28 August 1915. In September 1915, due to the loss of his estates manager, Capt Frank Beck, The King enquired about the fate of the 5th Battalion men. But the despatch written by Hamilton wasn't published until 6 January 1916.

On 7 January 1916 the Eastern Daily Press reported, 'SANDRINGHAM MEN DISAPPEAR.' The article went on to state that 16 officers and 250 men pushed deep into enemy lines and '... were lost from sight and sound. None of them ever came back.' Directly quoting Hamilton's after-action report.

But, on 15 February 1916, the Lynn News reported that one officer was now recovering from wounds in a hospital as a prisoner of the Turks in Constantinople and further investigation by the press worked out that the official casualty total for the men was 177, with 137 still unaccounted for.

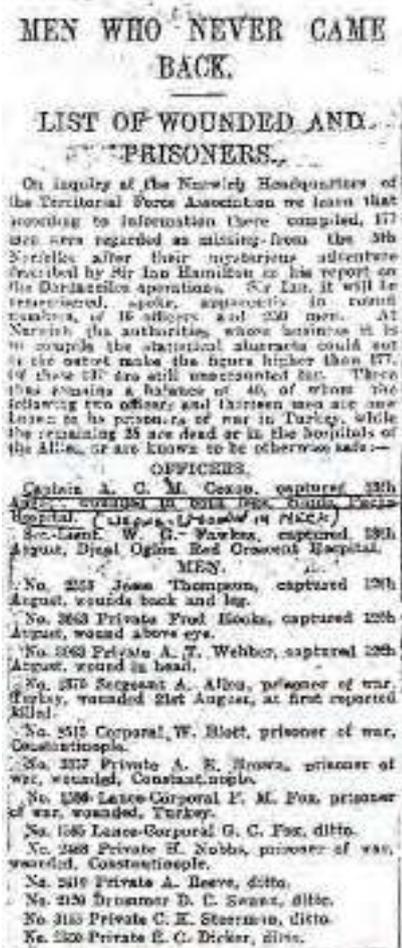
But this total was further reduced when it was ascertained that 15 men



Part of an interview from Private Sidney Pooley refuting original claims made by Sir Ian Hamilton.

had been captured and a further 25 were confirmed dead or in hospitals. Therefore, the real total of missing men at that time was in fact 97. Accounts from men who were there were published early in 1916, all pretty much refuted the battalion disappearing into a wood.

What also gets ignored are the interviews made to the Turks who spoke



An article that appeared in the Eastern Daily Press on 19th January 1916 listing POWs from the 5th Norfolks

to those that were captured. For instance, this is what 2Lt Fawkes said: ‘When I came around the stars were twinkling in the sky; the Turks, who thought I was dead, placed their guns on my body and started to shoot. Were I to move, it would have been my end. I passed out again. When I came around the next time, I found myself in the Turkish trenches, which I was trying to seize, full of Turkish sons compassionate faces. They gave me water and food; and took me to a first aid station on their shoulders’.

What is also missed are the records made by the Turkish battalions defending who carried out immediate counter-attacks which pushed the survivors back before two companies



Men of the 5th Norfolks on a route march prior to going overseas.

of the 3/36th Regiment, held in tactical reserve, pushed forward in what was described as a slashing bayonet pursuit this is said to have accounted for 15 officers and 250 men. (Isn't that weird that those numbers virtually mirror the Norfolk losses!)

Maj Munib Bey, the Commanding Officer of the 36th Regiment, wrote of an intense struggle all along the Turkish front, noting that one bayonet attack was stopped and a renewed attack was repulsed and that later the enemy was defeated. Munib notes the British were pushed back 500-600 metres, the position restored and around 300 enemy dead were recovered at a cost of one officer and 61 men killed and more than 160 officers and men wounded. Munib also reported that 35 men were taken prisoner.

As with countless engagements in the Great War the bodies of the men who fell that day did not have the luxury of a burial detail. In fact, they lay where they fell until 1919 when the battalion's Chaplain, the Rev Pierrepont Edwards, found them and reported at the time: ‘We have found the 5th Norfolks – there were 180 in all; 122 Norfolk and a few Hants and Suffolks with 2/4th Cheshires. We could only identify two – Ptes Barnaby



The Rev Pierrepont Edwards who located most of the missing men in 1919.

and Carter. They were scattered over an area of about one square mile, at a distance of at least 800 yards behind the Turkish front line.

And the actual casualty list, recorded between 12 and 31 August 1915, is 116 officers and men killed. Of that total, only one officer and 16 men were recruited from the Sandringham estate.

This is the reality and not the myth.

Further reading on this can be found at: <https://stevesmith1944.wordpress.com>



# Regimental Heritage

## The Big Clean-up



Before...



Steve Ankin of Herringbone Ltd surveys the memorial site with the Deputy Regt Secretary.

One of the many responsibilities of Regimental Headquarters is the maintenance of our Regimental Memorial at Duxford. The pandemic hindered our routine inspection and cleaning programme, and consequently, the memorial required some extra attention in 2021.

As you can see from the pictures in this article, the elements certainly took their toll during the extended lockdown period. Finally, in the Spring of 2021 we managed to carry out a full inspection and set out a detailed scheme of works that would get the memorial back to its traditional well-kept state.

Herringbone Ltd, the Regiment's approved stonemasons arrived in early June to carry out the required maintenance identified during RHQ's annual inspection earlier in the year. The work included the cleaning of the paved floor of the viewing area, and the replacement of frost damaged blocks in the surrounding wall. The Regimental flag, and the flag of the East Anglian Regiment were also replaced with new flags.

Many members of the Regimental family that have visited the memorial for the Regimental Day, and on Remembrance Sunday have commented on the improved state of the memorial. RHQ will be managing further works in the Spring. Readers are reminded that access to the memorial at Duxford is free and can be arranged through the Deputy Regimental Secretary, Major Mike Peters.



...after



# Regimental Heritage

## A World War One Pompadour is finally laid to rest

*by Major Peter Williamson,  
Chairman of the Trustees  
of the Essex Regiment Museum*

On Wednesday 27 October 2021 the remains of 15812 Lance Corporal Robert Cook, killed in action on 2 May 1915 while serving with 2nd Battalion The Essex Regiment (The Pompadours), were laid to rest with full military honours in New Irish Farm Cemetery, near Ypres in Belgium, by a party from C (Essex) Company of the Vikings. A simple statement of fact - but how did this come to happen?

Most readers will be familiar with the work of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) in commemorating some 1.7 million individuals who died in the two world wars and in maintaining, in immaculate condition, around 23,000 cemeteries and memorials. But many may not realise that the remains of Commonwealth servicemen are still being found today, turned up during construction work, by deep ploughing, or simply by the natural churn of the soil.

### **Preserved**

Most (about 50 per year) are World War 1 casualties found in that part of Belgium and France which we now call the Western Front. The CWGC has a well organised system to ensure that all such finds are treated with care and respect, that any evidence which might possibly help with identification is meticulously preserved, and that the remains are reburied and commemorated appropriately. They are assisted in this task by part of the MOD's Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (JCCC), based at Imjin Barracks near Gloucester.

Usually, and sadly, there is little left to help in the identification of the soldier. Identity discs were issued in World War 1 but they were made of compressed



**Peter Williamson.**

vulcanised rubber which quickly rots away, as do documents and photographs. Cap badges do survive, likewise the brass shoulder titles which nearly all other ranks wore during World War 1, so in a lot of cases the soldier's regiment can be ascertained. A comparison of the exact find location with war diaries and trench maps may then help to

identify the battalion concerned and give a rough date of death. A check of the record of those with no known grave, who are all commemorated on a CWGC memorial somewhere, will then produce a list of possible candidates. If this is very small JCCC will attempt to trace living relatives and compare their DNA with DNA samples taken from the

remains in the hope of a match. All too often, though, the number of possible candidates is just too great to make such an exercise practical, unless some other clue can be found to help narrow the field.

In 2014 and 2015 a larger than normal find was made: 24 sets of remains were uncovered during building work on the northern edge of Ypres. From the location, CWGC deduced that they had probably been buried in the original Irish Farm Cemetery, where there had been a regimental aid post during 1915. It had been thought that all burials in Irish Farm had been moved, after the war, to the New Irish Farm site a few hundred metres away, but this was obviously not the case - quite understandable given that the devastation of the ground had largely obscured all markings and features.

Not even the regiment could be identified for 12 of these soldiers, but 6 were Essex Regiment and 6 were from other regiments. In only one case, 'Casualty 19', was there any clue which might result in identification of the man: a medal ribbon bar, as worn on his tunic, was found with him.

### **Impossible**

JCCC originally asked the National Army Museum for help, but they got nowhere. So in August 2017 assistance was requested from the Essex Regiment Museum, and we received a very poor, unscaled, photograph of the medal ribbon bar - it wasn't even clear whether there were two medals or three.

Knowing the dates during which the original Irish Farm Cemetery had been in use, May to September 1915, we were able to say that the casualty had almost certainly been serving with 2nd Essex. Unfortunately our records showed that no fewer than 144 members of the Battalion had been killed during that time and had no known grave. It seemed that the identification task that we had been set was an impossible one.

However, we had to persevere! So we next obtained from JCCC a much better photograph of the medal ribbon bar. With the help of a mock-up to confirm our deductions we could





# Regimental Heritage



then see that there were 3 medal ribbons: those of the Queen's South Africa Medal and the King's South Africa Medal of the Boer War 1899-1902, and the earlier British South Africa Company (BSA Coy) Medal of 1890-97.

The British South Africa Company had been formed in 1889 to exploit trading opportunities in Mashonaland and Matabeleland, which in 1895 together became Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), and was authorised to raise local armed forces. We worked out from the qualifying dates for the BSA Coy Medal that our soldier must have been born absolutely no later than 1883 to have received it, and would have been at least 32 when he died in 1915. Accordingly we were able to eliminate all those known to be under 32 from the 'no known grave' list. CWGC records

were useful here as they often give the casualty's age, but in some cases we had to use family history websites. At the same time we eliminated 2 officers, because of the presence of shoulder titles (officers wore collar dogs on their tunics) and one man killed after 2nd Essex had moved from the Ypres Salient in late July 1915. This left us with a 'short list' of 47 names.

## Identify

Inspection of the CWGC records, however, also alerted us to a stand-out candidate among those names in 15812 Lance Corporal Robert Cook who was killed on 2 May 1915, because they included a note that he 'Served in Matabeleland (1896) and the South African Campaign'. That note was made in the early 1920s so was very

likely to be accurate.

Our next step was to track down, at the Society of Genealogists, a book by Colin R Owen which not only gives the complete roll of those entitled to the BSA Coy Medal but also some details of their units and their service. We could then eliminate many more from our 'short list', simply because nobody of that surname appeared in that roll. We could identify 'our' Robert Cook there, without a doubt, but question marks remained over 10 others. These we researched in detail, and our staunch volunteer Karen Dennis helped a great deal here, until we could eliminate them.

To give an example, 18361 Private Arthur William Brown killed on 2 May 1915 age 34 could conceivably have been the Trooper Brown, no initial, on the BSA Coy roll, but we found



documents showing that he had enlisted into the KRRC on 13 August 1898 at the age of 18, declaring no previous military service other than then being in the 4th (Militia) Battalion of the Essex Regiment and stating that he had not lived away from home for the previous 3 years. He simply could not have been awarded the BSA Coy Medal (though he did qualify for both the Boer War medals with 1st Battalion KRRC).

Readers may know that some 60% of the personal records of those who served in World War 1 were destroyed in an air raid in World War 2, so as can be imagined this final step in the elimination process was time confusing and tedious. Eventually, however, we were able to state categorically that our research showed that the remains found with the medal ribbon bar could only be those of Lance Corporal Robert Cook.

JCCC now built up a family tree for Robert Cook and using their considerable

experience quickly tracked down descendants: a great-nephew living on Orkney and a great-niece living in Yorkshire. A DNA sample was obtained and compared with a sample taken from the remains. The latter was not of the best quality, because of contamination over time, and the match was declared 'probable'. Coupled with our research, though, that was sufficient for the identification to be officially accepted. 'Casualty 19' at last had a number, rank and name!

It transpired that Arthur Cook, the great-nephew living on Orkney, had carried out quite a lot of family history research so we were able to build up a picture of Robert Cook. He was born at Cliff Farm, Bishop Wilton, Yorkshire, on 6 June 1876 (so he was 38 when he died, not 35 as shown in the original CWGC record). His father was a farmer with 145 acres, so even if only a tenant a man of some substance. Robert's

mother died of typhoid 2 years later. Shortly afterwards his father emigrated to South Africa with 5 of his sons, leaving the youngest son (an infant) and his daughter (age 6) behind - Robert was 3 years and 6 months old when they arrived in Cape Town. Some 18 months later his father died. It appears that the destitute children were looked after by the township of Knysna where they had settled.

On 3 September 1895 Robert Cook joined the Mashonaland Mounted Police, part of the BSA Coy's forces, and at the end of that year took part in the infamous Jameson Raid, an unofficial, and unsuccessful, foray into the independent Boer state of Transvaal in an attempt to persuade the many foreign settlers there to overthrow the government. He was captured and briefly repatriated to England, but was soon back in the employment of the BSA Coy where, while with the



# Regimental Heritage

Matabeleland Relief Force, he qualified for the BSA Coy Medal with 'Rhodesia 1896' reverse.

During the Boer War Robert served with various locally raised units, being slightly wounded and mentioned in despatches (although that was not recognised in the way it is now). Interestingly, at least 3 of his 4 brothers in South Africa also served in that war. He seems then to have become a prospector or miner.

## Enlisted

Given Robert Cook's heritage and Boer War service it is not surprising that he, like so many expatriates, was keen to join up and 'do his bit' in World War 1. But where, when, and why the Essex Regiment? The 1920s official publication 'Soldiers Died in the Great War' shows that he enlisted in Cape Town. When war broke out half of 1st Essex was in Mauritius and the other half in Durban.

Although Cook's personal documents have not survived it is clear, from available records for soldiers with very similar regimental numbers (they were 'regimental' not 'army' numbers in those days) that there was a Detachment of the Battalion in Cape Town which enlisted 34 local men on or about 12 September 1914. It seems that most of them were sent home on the SS 'Dover Castle', arriving in late October for training at the Depot at Warley.

We can then see, from his medal index card, that he landed in France on 24 March 1915. After a few days at one of the infantry base depots he would have been sent up to the 2nd Battalion, at that time in and out of the trenches at Le Bizet, some 12 km south of Ypres. On 25 April the Battalion, with the rest of their brigade, moved up to reinforce Ypres, going into the front line on the night of 30 April. The war diary then reports that at 1700 hrs on 2 May there was a devastating gas attack - gas was a very new weapon at that time, against which there was little defence - and this was followed up by an artillery bombardment and attempts by the Germans to take the front-line trenches. Gallant defence and swift reinforcement

by the reserve companies meant that the line held, but the Battalion suffered heavily: 23 killed, 72 wounded and 175 missing. Lance Corporal Cook was one of those to lose his life during the course of this action, only 40 days after he arrived in France. Just 2 weeks later his brother James died, of sickness, while serving with South African forces fighting the Germans in South West Africa (now Namibia); he is buried in the CWGC cemetery at Swakopmund.

After Robert's identification had been accepted the coronavirus pandemic held things up, but on 25 October 2021 a party from C (Essex) Company under Lieutenant Will Bagnall and Sergeant Toby Granfield arrived in Ypres from Cyprus to bury him with full military honours. Even then Covid-19 made itself felt: the Reverend Paul Whitehead, Regimental Chaplain, who was scheduled to conduct the service, tested positive a few days previously so the 1st Battalion's Padre, the Reverend Gary Birch, had to be flown in from Cyprus to officiate. The Battalion bugler was likewise affected, while passing through UK, so members of the Last Post Association, who play at the renowned Menin Gate ceremony in Ypres every evening, kindly stood in - and of course did a magnificent job.

## Overwhelmed

On a sunny afternoon, in an impressive and moving ceremony, Lance Corporal Robert Cook was finally laid to rest in the presence of many local dignitaries and members of the public, who never forget the sacrifices made by the British Army in the Great War. Present, too, were his great-nephew and great-niece, with their families, who confessed to being overwhelmed by the efforts which had been made to honour their forebear in such a fitting manner and in such an impeccable way.

So the task was completed. But even now investigations are under way which will hopefully lead to the identification of a further set of remains found in France, and to names being given to the graves of 2 soldiers currently listed as unknown - our duty of Remembrance is never-ending ....

## Regimental Library open to all Royal Anglians

One of the many services offered by Regimental Headquarters at The Keep in Bury St Edmunds is access to our Regimental Library. Located within RHQ, the library is available to any Royal Anglian, past or present. Access is normally during office hours by pre-booking.

The library is contained within very pleasant and historical surroundings, it is an ideal for setting for studying all aspects of our regimental history. The regiment's books are catalogued, and broadly divided into sections beginning with the Royal Anglian Regiment, and then proceeding to the Forebear Regiments. Further to these main sections, the library also has a large section devoted to more general military history. Among other items there are volumes devoted to the Great War and the Second World War, the Boer War, the Crimean and Peninsula Wars as well as items of more general military history. There is also a good selection of volumes of the Army List.

Having had a chance to browse the library myself I have found many interesting books including histories of all of our antecedent regiments, a thirteen volume history of The Great War by The Amalgamated Press published from 1914 - 1918, The Invasion of the Crimea in eight volumes from 1876, a history of Sandhurst, a Who's Who in Military History, and a Companion to the British Army.

In order to share the library with the regtl family, RHQ are intending to regularly review books in the Royal Anglian News, The Castle Magazine, and on our website. In the meantime, if anyone wishes to use the library for research, whether personal or unit sponsored, please feel free once COVID restrictions are finally lifted, to contact RHQ and arrange a visit.

**Stephen Dunning - Chief Clerk**

**Tel 01284 752394**

**Email: INFHQ-QUEENS-RANG-  
groupmailbox@mod.gov.uk**

## Survey of Regimental Silver



As a Regiment we have a rich and diverse history. Our story reaches back hundreds of years to the roots of the forbearer Regiments from which we are directly descended. We are rightly proud of our heritage and the achievements of those that went before us. One of the most tangible links to our past is our regimental silver. The story of the Regiment and all of its antecedent incarnations can be traced through our impressive collection of silver.

The Regiment's silver is shared across a number of locations, principally, the battalions, RHQ, our Museum, and our many affiliated units. Over the winter months the RHQ team began an exhaustive survey of all of our holdings of silver. Ultimately this will enable us to update or records, photograph all of every item, and then make those images available to the wider Royal Anglian family. This is part of the drive to make our regimental history more accessible.



# Deaths and Obituaries

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## Deaths

*RHQ has been informed of the following deaths in 2021.*

Major Dennis Pryce (Taff)	05.01.2021
Colonel Mark Adkin	06.01.2021
Kenneth Clarke	06.01.2021
Second Lieutenant Michael Bland	18.01.2021
Bob Brown	26.01.2021
Captain John Lincoln MC	05.02.2021
Kyle Burns	09.02.2021
Colonel Terry Holloway	14.02.2021
Dennis Abrey	16.02.2021
Ernie Brett	March 2021
Major William (Bill) Byham	27.02.2021
Captain Rory Milligan	14.03.2021
Derek Thorne (Titch)	22.03.2021
Major John Raybould	27.04.2021
Sergeant Matthew Slater	04.05.2021
Major Ken Mayhew	13.05.2021
John Gooding	22.05.2021
Colin Wilmott	28.05.2021
Colin Appleton	31.05.2021
Tom Fairweather	18.06.2021
Colonel Richard Wilkes	21.06.2021
David Mason	June 2021
Major John Hutchings	10.07.2021
Lieutenant Colonel Mike Randall	13.07.2021
Terry Smith	04.08.2021
Sikele Qalica	September 2021
Robin Keatley	02.09.2021
Richard Starbuck	September 2021
Lieutenant Colonel John Fletcher	04.10.2021
Major Patrick Barrass	October 2021
Dave Evans	October 2021
Colonel John Wooddisse	18.10.2021
Lieutenant Colonel John Garnett	October 2021
Kevin Stanton	November 2021
William Simpson	November 2021
Geoff Keeling	25.11.2021
William Simmons	05.12.2021
Bill Smith	December 2021
John Galey	December 2021
Bob Gibbons	14.12.2021
Simon Johnson	16.12.2021
Captain Raymond Savage	05.01.2022

## Dennis Pryce (Taff)

*A personal tribute by  
Dave Whitehead.*



What, you may ask, was a Welshman doing in a very English Battalion?

It is a long story, which few of his comrades know.

He was brought up by his mother. A tough Cardiff boy.

He enlisted in the REME as an Apprentice Air Technician. Clearly, he was above the educational baseline demanded by the Infantry like what I was!

His initial training did not go according to plan, and he was sent on a six-month course at the MCTC.

During a successful completion of the course Taff realised, that the Infantry offered him a greater opportunity, to utilise his natural ability, than the REME.

It was suggested to him that the Poachers, who were in Osnabruck, and scheduled to move to Cyprus might be what he was looking for, as he wanted a posting somewhere warm, he chose the Poachers.

And so it was that a Cardiff boy ended up in an East Anglian Battalion, that had quite a few Irishmen and “Corby” Jocks, but until then no Welshmen.

Taff’s soldiering expertise led him to a platoon commanded by Ray Hazan, and fellow section commanders Nigel Whitfield and Dave Whitehead. It is worth noting that all three attained the rank of Major before retiring. Clearly Ray Hazan was a leader of unquestionable ability and foresight!

It is also worth recording that the OC at the time was Bill Poole, the CSM “Dog End” Dixon and the CQMS Ron “Busty” Leatherland.

It was during this time that infantry assault tactics changed. The fairly risky practice of infantry assaulted in line, bayonets fixed, following an assumed “Successful” Arty/mortar bombardment, with the occasional shouted order “Bullets”, was confined to history. It was replaced by “Pepperpotting” then “Leapfrogging” and finally “Fire and manoeuvre”. In our platoon he was first to create permutations in order that the enemy could not predict who would be firing and who would be moving. Whereas most would accept the tactical doctrine prescribed, his innate ability made him question and assess the advantages and disadvantages applied to all scenarios.

Whilst serving at the Depot as a Corporal he was “Poached” by the CO of the 1st Battalion. As it turned out it was a good move.

In the Vikings he rose to the rank of WO2 before being posted to the TA as RSM.

On commissioning he re-joined the Poachers, which, after all, had honed his infantry skills. His first appointment was Training Officer, then MTO, then Families Officer. His final appointment was as OC HQ Coy.

Those close to him often wondered how someone, who had never applied for the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal, could sit in judgement of erring soldiers under his command! Having said that he was always fair, and it is due perhaps to the fact that he never forgot the early days when he was learning to be a battle-winner.

Taff left the Battalion to take a post as OC Cadet Training Team in Norfolk. His final service days were spent as Schools Liaison Officer.

I remember him as a talented Infantryman, generous, a formidable backgammon player, who did the Telegraph crossword in under an hour and who swam the 8 miles from Dhekelia to Larnaca for charity. We were great friends, and I am immensely proud to have known him.

He was an example of someone

from a tough background, who achieve greatness, in an army that recognised ability.

Those who new Taff will agree that he was a unique character, who served the Regiment and the Army well. It is extremely unlikely that we will ever see a Welshman of his ability in the Regiment again!

## Col Terence Holloway



Colonel Terence Holloway (1928-2021) suffered a stroke on February 5th having been bed bound for the last couple of years. He had been living with dementia for some time, an affliction he bore with his customary cheerfulness and good humour.

Educated at Henry Mellish School (Nottingham), where he became Head Boy and at RMA Sandhurst, he spoke with great pleasure of his time there, where he proved to be an excellent linguist and won the Russian Prize. He would occasionally regale his family with verses of Russian poetry and always retained his love of language, in later years learning Serbo-Croat for a diplomatic posting in Belgrade.

Terry was commissioned into The Royal Leicestershire Regiment in July 1949, and posted to 1st Battalion in Hong Kong. He was in the Battalion in the Korean War, during which he was OC 8 Platoon C Company and then Intelligence Officer. After serving in Korea his first overseas posting with his new wife Bronwen, whom he married in 1954, was to Khartoum in the Sudan,



# Obituaries

after which the Battalion was posted to Cyprus where two of his children were born.

After Staff College in 1960 he was Brigade Major of HQ 160 (SW) Inf Bde (TA), then had a stint as a Training Officer in Cardiff, before he re-joined the battalion in Watchet to command A Company. A year's unaccompanied tour in Hong Kong and Borneo followed, where he was Mentioned in Dispatches. He then had a six month tour in Aden as Battalion 2IC, wearing the then new Royal Anglian cap badge, before moving with the battalion to Malta. His family recall this as a wonderful posting for his four children, one which they remember with great affection. Remarkably, during his career at regimental duty in the 1st Battalion Terry served as a Platoon Commander, Company 2IC, IO, Signals Officer, Assistant Adjutant, Adjutant, Company Commander, Bn 2IC and CO. He is the only officer to have served in all four of the operational tours of The Tigers' Regular Battalion (1st R Leicesters/4th R Anglian) in the years following the Second World War.

In 1968 he became the last Commanding Officer of the Regular battalion of The Tigers, 4th R Anglian, in Gillingham. He spent an enjoyable nine months on the unaccompanied tour of Bahrain, where he was occasionally able to indulge his passion for horse riding in the desert. One of his son's proudest memories of this time is of watching his father lead the Freedom parade through the City of Leicester and which made a lasting impression on his twelve year old mind.

Among subsequent staff roles he was AMS in MS5 MOD, GSO1 (DS) National Defence College and Defence Attaché Belgrade from 1975-78. Subsequently he was Chief Org & Trg HQ LANDSOUTHEAST (Turkey) and his last role before retirement was as Defence Adviser Caribbean from 1980-83. These were postings which he and Bronwen thoroughly enjoyed.

He then served as RO2 (Int & Sy) HQ North West District in Preston until 1993. He and Bronwen bought a smallholding and spent a happy ten years surrounded by an improbable collection

of almost human sheep, pigs, chickens and ducks, who would occasionally wander in and out of the house. They bought a 1947 Ferguson TE20 tractor, which the family still own, and built pig sties, sheds and a productive vegetable and fruit garden. Terry was completely in his element.

It seemed that Terry and Bronwen were unable to give up the habit of a lifetime, having moved house thirty two times and they moved to Hook Norton and finally to Henfield in West Sussex, to be nearer to children and grandchildren.

He is survived by Bronwen and their children Elizabeth, Matthew and Catherine, eight grandchildren and two great grandchildren. Terence and Bronwen's third-born child Rosemary died of cancer in 1973, a time of great sadness for the family. He was a devoted family man, full of fun and cheerfulness and immensely proud of his association with the Tigers. Emphasising the family nature of the Regiment, he was the son-in-law of Lt Col T B Jones, brother-in-law of Lt A T B Jones, and a cousin-in-law of Colonel R G Wilkes CBE TD DL and Lt Col J R A Wilkes, all of the Royal Leicestershire Regiment.

## Sergeant Matthew Slater



Matthew Slater enlisted into the British Army on 8th September 2004 aged 17, arriving at the 1st Battalion the Royal Anglian Regiment – the Vikings – on 18th April 2005. He spent his entire

career as a Viking. It is a testament to his personality that everyone knew 'Slats'.

He started his career with A (Norfolk) Company, deploying on Op HERRICK 6 as a Private soldier. It was to mark the beginning of a professional career that would see him return to Afghanistan for a further four deployments over the following thirteen years.

Having completed the Junior Non-Commissioned Officers' course and promoted to Lance Corporal, he returned to Afghanistan in 2009-10 on Op HERRICK 11, stepping up to the role of Section Commander.

In 2010 then Lance-Corporal Slater joined the Sniper Platoon for what would become a decade of service. Whilst in D (Cambridgeshire) Company he completed both the arduous Section Commanders' Battle Course – earning promotion to Corporal – and the Sniper Section Commanders' Course. He deployed again to Afghanistan on Op HERRICK 16 in 2012. After a serious motorbike accident and a lengthy period of rehabilitation he fought back to fitness to attend and pass the challenging Platoon Sergeants' Battle Course in 2018.

He returned to Afghanistan again on Op TORAL 7 in 2015, attached this time to B (Suffolk) Company. His fourth deployment to the country, he found himself in the comparatively benign capital city of Kabul. After returning to the UK, Sergeant Slater finally left the Sniper Platoon – now as the Platoon Sergeant – to take up post as a Rifle Platoon Sergeant in C (Essex) Company in Summer 2020. At the end of that year he would return to Afghanistan for the final time. He spent Op TORAL 11 in Kabul, watching the beginning of the end of a campaign that had been central to his professional career.

Sgt Slater was the epitome of a professional soldier renowned for his fitness, attention to detail and professional excellence. On multiple tours of Afghanistan he demonstrated his warrior ethos and his true Viking spirit. Sgt Slater will be sorely missed by The Regiment and in particular those Vikings past and present who served with him.

Stabilis

## Major Ken Mayhew



Major Ken Mayhew died peacefully at home on the 13 May 2021 aged 104. He was born on 18 January 1917 in Helmingham, Suffolk, and educated at Framlingham College. A keen sportsman he played cricket, hockey and squash representing his school, the Suffolk Regiment and County. At the age of 70 he took up golf, continuing to play into his nineties, at the age of 97 still carrying his clubs.

He joined the Territorial Army in April 1939 and was commissioned into The Suffolk Regiment in May 1940, reporting to the Depot in Bury St Edmunds. There he was ordered to collect 150 recruits from Warley and take them to the 1st Battalion in Somerset to join the remnants of the battalion who had just escaped from France at Dunkirk.

Once the threat of German invasion had passed the battalion started training as one of the assault divisions for the eventual liberation of France. Three and a half years later Ken landed with 1 Suffolk in Normandy on D Day. By then he was a Captain commanding the carrier platoon. He served continuously with the battalion until February 1945 apart from three weeks recovering from wounds.

In Normandy he took part in the battles for Hillman on D Day, Chateau

de La Londe and the Tinchebray crossroads, the battalion suffering heavy casualties in the latter two. On 16th August commanding three sections of his carrier platoon "Ken Force" he was part of the vanguard to liberate the town of Flers, subsequently receiving the Freedom of Flers from a grateful town.

Following the airborne and ground operation to capture Arnhem, Market Garden, in September, Ken with his carrier platoon was continuously forward of the allied front line gathering intelligence on new German positions, often accompanied by members of the Dutch Resistance. In the battle to liberate Weert he courageously and deliberately drew enemy fire on several occasions to locate enemy positions on the far side of the Wessem-Nederweert canal so that they could be neutralised by allied fire. This included firing on a German position guarding a railway bridge over the canal. Accurate and sustained machine gun and mortar fire forced them to retire through a hail of bullets and shrapnel.

He was then at the forefront of the heavy fighting to liberate Overloon and Venray in October 1944 when he was wounded in the face. His Commanding Officer wrote:

"He distinguished himself particularly in the attacks on Overloon and Venray. Just before these two battles, in which the battalion suffered heavy casualties, Major Mayhew took over a rifle company. He proved himself a magnificent and courageous company commander, showing a contempt for his own safety which shortly was to win for him the admiration of every man under his command.

When the infantry crossed the Molenbeek on the way to Venray the tanks in support of the operation were not able to cross the stream owing to the treacherous nature of its banks. Without hesitation Major Mayhew decided to continue the advance, which was by this time becoming increasingly difficult, owing to enemy small arms, mortar, and shell fire.

He pressed forward, encouraging his men, doubling from platoon to platoon to give out orders rather than send for his

platoon commanders, for the enemy was contesting every yard of the way.

At this point Major Mayhew was wounded. In less than three weeks however, he was back with the battalion, before he was fully recovered. He remained a constant source of comfort and inspiration to his officers, NCO's and men during the long winter months spent on the banks of the river Maas.

His tall figure, proceeding unconcernedly from man to man under most dangerous conditions in action have won for him a place of admiration and respect achieved by few in North West Europe."

He was wounded a second time approaching the river Rhine in February 1945 and evacuated to England.

On the 24th of April 1946, by Dutch Royal Decree, Major Ken Mayhew was appointed Knight (4th class) of the Dutch Military William Order. This is the highest award for gallantry in Holland and equivalent to the Victoria Cross. The award states "By distinguishing himself during the battles leading to the liberation of the occupied territory of the Netherlands through the exercising of excellent deeds of valour, conduct and allegiance. Through all this having repeatedly shown an extraordinary devotion to duty and great perseverance, and in all aspects having been a laudable example, an inspiration for everybody in those glorious days".

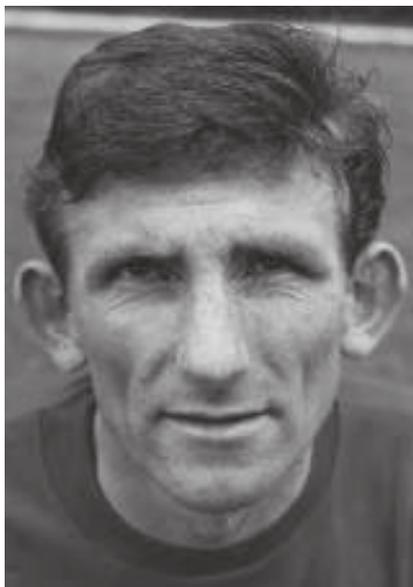
After the war Ken returned to civilian life and built-up successful grain and transport businesses. He maintained close contact with his Suffolk Regiment comrades, but lost contact with the Dutch authorities over the years. He was not a man to seek the limelight, and spoke little of his exploits, preferring to emphasise the role of others. Then on 18th September 2011 whilst attending the annual Commemoration Service in Venray, his Dutch medal for gallantry was recognised by a local historian. Since then, the close bonds and friendship have been restored between Major Mayhew and the Dutch Military William Order in honour.

He is survived by his wife "Trish", his mainstay and support for 40 years, and family.



# Obituaries

## Colin Appleton



Colin Appleton, who has died aged 85, completed two years' National Service in The Royal Leicestershire Regiment 1957-59. He was based at Glen Parva Barracks, so he could play for Leicester City on Saturdays. He also played for the Army, and represented the Depot at soccer and cricket.

He was born in Scarborough and signed for Scarborough FC, then in the Midland League, but his talent was soon spotted by Leicester City, which he joined soon after his 18th birthday. His career blossomed under the manager, Matt Gillies, and he became first choice No 6 in a strong half-back line with Frank McLintock and Ian King.

He helped Leicester City win the Second Division title 1956-57 and reach the FA Cup Final in 1961. He was appointed captain shortly afterwards, when they chased the double in the 1962-63 season, sadly achieving neither, collapsing towards the end of the League season and losing 3-1 to Manchester United in the FA Cup Final.

However he captained the team when they won their first ever major trophy, winning the 1964 League Cup. He was awarded a testimonial in 1964 in recognition of his services. After 323 appearances for the Club in 12 years, he moved on to Charlton Athletic in 1966. In 1967 he started a 14-year second career as a player/manager and later

manager.

He lived in his home town in later years with his wife Sheila; he had latterly suffered from dementia.

## Tom Fairweather



Tom Fairweather, who served in the Essex Regiment in World War 2 and was captured when 2/5th Essex was completely overrun at Deir-el-Shein, died on 18 June 2021 at the age of 100.

Thomas Arnold Fairweather was born on 25 March 1921 at Great Bentley in Essex. He attended the local school, becoming School Captain as his brother had been before him. Leaving at the age of 14, Tom had various jobs - electrician, shed-maker, bell boy on a cross-channel steamer, gardener - before being employed on the construction of the Great Bromley radar station.

Like many of those who saw the war clouds approaching Tom joined the Territorial Army, A Company of 5th Battalion The Essex Regiment, on 26 April 1939. Shortly afterwards the Battalion, recruiting hard, was split into 1/5th and 2/5th, Tom's company being in the latter.

Following mobilisation on 1 September the Battalion spent some months on local coast defence duties - Tom remembered guarding the Walton-on-the-Naze tower on Christmas Day 1939 - then moved to Northumberland in April 1940 for serious training. Later, Tom volunteered to join No 3 Independent Company, which had been

formed from Essex Regiment volunteers and was commanded by Major Charles Newman ('a nice chap', Tom recalls). That unit went on to win fame at St Nazaire in 1942, for which exploit Newman was awarded the VC, but Tom felt that it was not for him and returned to 2/5th Essex shortly before they were despatched to Sierra Leone in December 1940.

There the Battalion was involved in training and the preparation of defences, but they suffered heavily from malaria against which there was little defence at the time. They were not sorry to leave after 6 months, sailing via the Cape to Egypt where they spent 5 months on base and lines-of-communication duties.

December 1941 saw Tom and the Battalion set off through what was then Palestine into Iraq. They arrived in Mosul 'on Christmas Day and in the rain'. The next 5 months were spent preparing defensive positions and training hard. In early June 1942, however, Rommel began a very successful advance causing the 8th Army to withdraw, and 18th Indian Infantry Brigade, of which 2/5th Essex was part, were very hastily redeployed back via Palestine to Egypt.

On the morning of 27 June the 3 infantry battalions of the Brigade found themselves in trains at El Alamein station, with no transport, carriers, anti-tank weapons, artillery, or brigade HQ. As Tom said 'The troops didn't know what was happening'. CO 2/5th Essex assumed command and was quickly tasked to set up a hasty defensive position at Deir-el-Shein, a mere depression in the desert.

Gradually matters began to be organised, but digging in was very difficult - 'Just enough to squat down in', Tom remembered - because of the underlying rock. The position was fiercely attacked on 1 July and by the end of the day the Battalion had been completely overrun by the German armour. It was not re-formed afterwards, and disappeared from the order of battle. Although this was a heavy defeat, sufficient delay had been imposed on Rommel's forces to allow better defences to be prepared to the east, and his advance into Egypt was

finally halted.

Like many others Tom was taken into captivity and marched west. The Germans shortly handed their prisoners over to Italian control. They arrived in Benghazi on 9 July, and waited there, with little to do and in very poor conditions, until 14 October. Then they were shipped to Brindisi and moved north, arriving in a permanent POW camp, PG 70, at Monteurano, north east of Rome.

There Tom remembered the boredom, and also the lack of food until Red Cross parcels started to arrive - it was six months after he was posted missing that notification that he was a POW reached his family.

There was little accurate news, and at the time of the Italian Armistice in September 1943 the prisoners assumed that liberation would follow quickly. Sadly it was the Germans who arrived, and all those in the camp were taken out of Italy. Tom ended up in Stalag IVA near Dresden.

Some time later a group of prisoners including Tom was moved to live and work at a brickworks near Radeburg. Here Tom found the life hard, but bearable. By now the Germans realised that they were losing the war, and were scared of being overrun by Russian troops, so treated British POWs with a degree of compassion and respect.

In mid-April 1945 the prisoners left the brickworks and were marched west. This was part of a plan by Hitler to hold large numbers of POWs as hostages. But it was far too late - by then there was chaos on the roads as people fled from the advancing Russians, the guards eventually disappeared, and the party was fragmented. On 9 May, the day after VE-Day, Tom and 3 others found themselves in Kommern, Czechoslovakia, overrun by Russian troops. Here they holed up, waiting for an opportunity to move west to American lines. That came a few days later, and Tom was eventually flown back to England in a Lancaster bomber, arriving on 24 May.

Although he had a great welcome home, and lots of leave, Tom had to wait a year before being demobilised.

During that time he met and married Cicely Tapley, sister of a fellow POW. The couple settled in Pinhoe, on the outskirts of Exeter, Tom working for a local builder and undertaker, and then with a business making fitted kitchens until retiring in 1986.

Although his wife had died in 1981 Tom enjoyed his newly found spare time, travelling and writing his memoirs, but eventually entered a care home because of increasing infirmity. It was there that he celebrated his 100th Birthday on 25 March 2021, proudly wearing his Essex Regiment tie and his medals. Sadly he passed away, after a short illness, on 18 June - 'a peaceful end for a great man' to quote his son-in-law.

**PHW**

*(with much help from Tom's detailed and interesting memoirs)*

## **Col Richard Wilkes CBE TD DL**



Colonel Richard Wilkes died on 21 June 2021, aged 93. The son of a Leicestershire boot and shoe manufacturer, he was educated at Nevill Holt and Repton. He did his National Service in BAOR as a Gun Position Officer with J (Sidi Rezegh) Battery, 3 Royal Horse Artillery, having been commissioned in 1947.

On his return to Leicester as a chartered accountant, he joined the TA and served with 579 (The Royal Leicestershire Regiment) Light Anti Aircraft Regiment RA (TA), which in 1955 became Q (The Royal Leicestershire Regiment) Battery, 438

LAA Regiment RA (TA), both equipped with the 40mm Bofors gun. In 1957 he assumed command of the Battery, with his younger brother Michael as Battery Captain. On disbandment in 1961 the Battery became HQ Company 4/5th Battalion The Royal Leicestershire Regiment with Richard Wilkes as OC. There was a memorable farewell parade through Victoria Park and the City that March, at which the writer, then aged six, recalls attempting his first salute!

By 1964 Richard Wilkes was the Second in Command of the 4/5th Battalion under the CO, Lt Col Pat Creagh, heralding the formation of The Royal Anglian Regiment, when 1st Battalion The Royal Leicestershire Regiment became 4th (Leicestershire) Battalion of the new Regiment. Following the announcement by the Government of the formation of the Territorial & Army Volunteer Reserve (TAVR) in late 1965, Richard Wilkes became the last CO of a Royal Leicestershire Regiment Battalion, with Captain Tony Pollard as his Adjutant.

Richard Wilkes had a marvellous time in the TA. He not only had the privilege of commanding a Battalion of his county Regiment, but more especially he made very many lifelong friends, enjoyed a wide and varied social life, supported by his wife Wendy and contributed greatly to the City of Leicester and the wider county. He was made a Deputy Lieutenant of Leicestershire in 1967, an honour that remained until his death, thus making him the longest serving DL in the county by some twenty years.

During this period Richard Wilkes became Treasurer, and later Chairman, of SSAFA Leicestershire, an interest he maintained for over thirty years. On relinquishing command in 1969 he was awarded the OBE (Military), promoted and appointed Territorial Colonel for East Midlands District. During 1971 he became a Trustee and later Chairman of CARE, a national charity started by his friend and ex-Tiger Jack Townsend, which provided homes and jobs for adults with learning difficulties.

In 1972 he was made ADC (TAVR) to HM The Queen and in the same



# Obituaries

year he was appointed Commandant of Leicestershire Special Constabulary. In 1981 he was made Deputy Honorary Colonel The Royal Anglian Regiment (Leicestershire) and in 1990 he became Chairman of the East Midlands Employers Liaison Committee. For many years he was a Trustee of the Royal Leicestershire Regiment Funds, serving as Chairman for two decades.

Like all TA members, Richard Wilkes soldiered when his civilian role allowed him to. Typically, in his case, this was alongside building a formidable professional reputation as a chartered accountant. He joined, and rapidly became a partner, in the Leicester firm of Bolton Bullivant, at the time a normal provincial city firm providing a service to many of the county's manufacturing companies. He made many contacts through his membership of the Leicestershire Club, being a committee member of the Leicester Junior Chamber of Commerce, as well as through playing hockey, cricket and squash. On becoming senior partner in 1969 and seeing the way the profession was moving forward, he sold the firm to Price Waterhouse as that firm expanded nationally. He led the Leicester office for several years before, unusually, he was asked to join the firm in London on elevation to a senior partner role, necessitating having a home in both Leicestershire and London.

For many years he had been an active member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants (ICAEW) and in 1980 he served as President. In 1983 he was appointed by No 10 Downing Street an adviser on self-regulation to the Chief Executive of Lloyds Insurance market. In 1987 he served as President of the International Federation of Accountants, necessitating travelling the world over a six-year period, often accompanied by Wendy.

After he retired from Price Waterhouse in 1988 he served as a non-executive director and then as chairman of Cassidy Davis Insurance Group for ten years. In 1990 he was appointed CBE (Civil) for his services to the accounting profession and given the ICAEW International Award. The following

year he was Master of the Chartered Accountants Livery Company.

Richard Wilkes was an immensely patient man. He was acknowledged to be approachable and diplomatic, thoughtful and a source of inspiration and leadership. He was a respected ambassador for his profession, always interested in the next generation and full of wise counsel. He had a good sense of humour, a twinkle in his eye and enjoyed taking his friends and family out for a good meal.

Throughout his whole career, Wendy was a constant support. Their shared love of gardening gave them much joy and satisfaction. He was at his most relaxed on the annual family holidays in West Sussex, where they enjoyed messing about in sailing boats and having sandy picnics. His abiding passion was shooting and he shot at Rushton Park for more than 60 years and was still shooting in his ninetieth year. He was a keen supporter of Leicester Tigers and would watch the rugby on television throughout the season. After 68 years of being happily married, Wendy died in April 2021, ten weeks before Richard. He is survived by his son Tim, who served in 4th and 1st Battalions The Royal Anglian Regiment, by three daughters, six grand-children and nine great grand-children.

TRW

## Terry Smith



Terence Keith Smith was born 15 August 1946 in the small town of Pocklington

in Yorkshire. The family moved to Saxmundham in Suffolk and at the age of 15 he joined the Army as a boy soldier and completed Junior Service in Bury St Edmunds at Blenheim Camp in 1964.

After training he joined The 1st Battalion The East Anglian Regiment who at that time was deployed on an Operational tour in Aden and the Radfan.

He was known as Terry by the majority of us, however as is normal in the military he picked up several nicknames; Smudge comes naturally to the Smiths of the world, and as there is normally an abundance of Smith's he was also known on Boy's Service by the last two numbers of his Army number, 55. Terry had a great sense of humour and when the Regiment were posted to Celle in Germany as a mechanised Infantry Battalion he quickly translated 55 to 'funf funf'.

Army life suited Terry and the travel and postings meant that he saw a great deal of the world. After leaving the military he was always one for mentioning the Countries and places he had been to; and anybody else who dared to mention a visit anywhere was quickly put down with the phrase, "I've been there!" delivered in typical Terry Smith fashion.

In 1967 he met Jean and they got married in 1969. Suzanne was born in 1970 and eventually met her father after a three-month absence. His daughter Natalie was born in Cyprus in '73.

With the usual Covid restrictions Natalie who now lives in New Zealand was unable to attend her father's funeral; however with the wonder of modern day technology she was with us on the internet throughout the service and the wake. I was also very impressed that she managed to arrange somebody to play 'Last Post' at the Crematorium from across the sea.

Terry was a keen sportsman and approached any competitions with enthusiasm. He was a qualified canoe instructor and he was an efficient skier and competed in the Army Championships. Whilst serving in Northern Ireland he assisted in taking a group of the local youngsters on a Mountaineering trip to the Mourn Mountains. He will also be

remembered by many when he ran the Battalion Snow Queen hut in 1979.

In the later years he returned to Bassingbourne and was responsible for the store supplies. Due to the size, privacy and secure nature of the barracks, visitors included the band AC/DC. They used it for rehearsing prior to a major tour. They later thanked Terry for his assistance during their stay, by signing a drum skin from the whole band and presenting it to him. He felt overwhelmed by the gift and proceeded to give it away to the catering team as he felt that they deserved it more. Much to his family's upset who eventually forgave him! An occasion after the Sergeants Mess Ball was another that was a family joke. Terry asked Jean to accompany him to the hanger to meet his new friend that was also rehearsing nearby. Jean was unfortunately too tired and actually turned down meeting Eric Clapton, something that she later learned and again that had to be later forgiven!

After 25 years and having settled in Godmanchester he retired from the Army as a Colour Sergeant. He went on to run his own warehousing business and later joined a local company Insulpak.

As we know Terry was fond of a pint. It was whilst he was at The Exhibition public house in Godmanchester that he would meet his second wife Linda for the first time. Never known for his quietness either, Linda is known to have asked "Who's the arsehole in the Red jacket?!" They got married on Red Nose day 12th March 1999 and saw 22 years together.

On retirement they would love to travel overseas and frequented Malta and other European Countries. When Terry's health was wavering, they bought a caravan and camping life was the new pleasure and form of holidaying.

Throughout his service Terry was a team player, he was respected by his peers and subordinates alike. He attended all functions when serving and continued this on after leaving the military. He attended all re unions and would always attend the Minden Day reunions in Bury St Edmunds on the 1st Sunday of August each year for a chance to catch up with many of his

fellow soldiers. Terry was a one off, and for those of us that had the privilege of having Terry as a comrade and friend; it is fair to say that the world will be a quieter place for his passing, but he will be very sadly missed and the world is a better place for knowing him.

The Regimental Ethos states that: 'We are a county based Regiment bound together by a closely-knit family spirit. Our approach is classless, based on mutual respect and trust, where developing and believing in our soldiers is paramount. We are a forward looking, self-starting and welcoming team for whom the mission remains key'.

Along with many Vikings Terry fitted that ethos to the letter. Terry was a proud, brave, happy, generous man. A great drinking partner, an amazing story teller and a great friend. You would know what he thought about you and he didn't hold back.

However it isn't just about the military, our thoughts are very much with his Wife Linda, his daughters Suzanne and Natalie and he was also a proud Grandfather to Robert and even prouder Great Grandad to Isla & Poppy. As well as step father to Marie and to her daughters Danielle and Morgan, along with Morgan's daughter Maya.

Terry was a Viking, Husband, Dad, Father in law, Grandfather, Brother, Great Grandad, Uncle, and great friend. He will be very much missed.

KCJ

## Maj Pat Barrass



Major Pat Barrass, Essex Regiment veteran of both Dunkirk and D-Day, died on 4 October 2021 at the age of 102.

Patrick Rae Barrass was born on 16 August 1919 in New Southgate, East London, where his father was Curate of the local parish church. He was educated at Forest School, Walthamstow, where he excelled at sport, captained the school's shooting team, and became Company Sergeant Major in its Officers' Training Corps (the forerunner of the Combined Cadet Force).

His school experiences steered him towards the Army, and although he passed the examination for Sandhurst in 1937 cuts in numbers deprived him of a place there. He accordingly took a commission in the Essex Regiment Supplementary Reserve of Officers in September 1938, hoping to convert to a Regular Army commission later on.

His initial Reserve training commitment was 2 months full-time. After basic training at the Depot at Warley he was posted to the 2nd Battalion, the Pompadours, also at Warley, as a platoon commander, continuing at his own expense when his initial commitment was completed. On the outbreak of World War 2 the Battalion was mobilised and moved to France on 16 September 1939 as part of the British Expeditionary Force.

During the retreat to Dunkirk he became separated from the Battalion when he went back to help one of his soldiers who had fallen out. He had to make his way across country to the coast alone. The roads were teeming with refugees and they were being constantly strafed by enemy aircraft. At Dunkirk, not having rested for days, he slept in an abandoned ambulance before being taken off the beach by the Royal Navy and evacuated to England.

As the Battalion re-formed, Pat became the Intelligence Officer, then an instructor at a tactical school, then Intelligence Officer of HQ 25 Infantry Brigade. In early 1944 he returned to the Pompadours as OC C Company and led them onto Gold Beach on D-Day before taking part in the liberation of Bayeux on 7 June 1944. Further action swiftly followed in what became known as Essex Wood when his company and A Company found themselves up against German tanks and flame throwers with



# Obituaries

negligible support. They suffered heavy losses but successfully took and held the area west of the village of Verrières.

Later, on 10 August, his company's dawn raid to liberate the occupied strategic town of Croisilles, capturing more than 120 Germans in the process, earned him the freedom of the town; its main square is now named Place du Major Barrass.

His organisational abilities had been noted and he was selected to attend the Staff College in Haifa in November 1944. His unflappable and stalwart service in North-West Europe was marked by a much-deserved Mention in Despatches.

While at Haifa his Regular Army commission came through, and a few days after VJ-Day he was posted to Burma, initially to HQ 19 Indian Infantry Division as GSO 2 (Intelligence), then to HQ Burma Command.

In mid-1947 he moved to HQ Rhine Army, as part of the movements staff, which had, for its own use, Göring's private railway coach, complete with kitchen, dining room, sitting room, bedrooms, and staff.

After 2 years in Germany came a posting to 1st Battalion The Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment in Salonika, where he was soon appointed Adjutant. Regimental exchanges were then less common, but Pat made the effort to fit in and viewed his time with the Bedfords with great affection.

1951 saw a posting to HQ Caribbean Area in Jamaica as GSO2. He found that there was plenty to do: investigating and pre-empting Guatemalan designs on British Honduras (now Belize); taking precautionary measures against a possible communist takeover in British Guiana (now Guyana); investigating gun-running from Brazil; and organising the Queen's visit to Jamaica.

While on the island he met and married Ann Bertram. Her father ran Barclays Bank's operations in the West Indies so the couple were invited by Ian Fleming to honeymoon at his cottage 'Goldeneye'.

Returning to England in 1954 Pat briefly became OC Training Company at the Essex Regiment Depot then in early 1955 joined 1st Essex in Hong Kong,

first as a company commander but then again as Adjutant, his organisational skills being much in demand. After the Battalion returned to the UK, in 1956 by troopship round the Cape to avoid the newly 'nationalised' Suez Canal, he was posted to the Movements Directorate of the War Office where he developed reinforcement plans for use had general war broken out in Europe.

In May 1959, with the Army reducing considerably in size, he took advantage of an early retirement scheme and went to work for the Midland Red Bus Company in Birmingham. He moved to Channel Air Bridge in 1962. His responsibility was to open Southend Airport for commercial air traffic. He subsequently became sales manager with the parent company British United Airways, founded by Freddie Laker. Later he was promoted to senior manager, a position he held when the airline was taken over by British Caledonian.

While negotiating agreements with other airlines to enable seamless travel for people booking long haul flights, Pat came up with the concept of the Round the World Air Ticket. This gave travellers considerable flexibility. It proved a great success and was soon copied by others. He left British Caledonian in 1984 to join Philippine Airlines as general sales manager, based in London, and retired the next year.

In retirement he worked with the Imperial War Museum and the National Army Museum. He supplied many artefacts, including maps and binoculars, for their displays commemorating key events like Dunkirk and D-Day.

He regularly attended Regimental reunions and, aged nearly 93, took part in the last March Past of the Essex Regiment Association at Warley in 2012. Three years later, during the 70th anniversary celebrations of VE-Day, he marched unaided down the Mall and into St James's Park. For the part he played in D-Day he was awarded the Légion d'Honneur. His last few years were spent in a care home where he was well looked after, maintaining his calm and cheerful disposition despite the uncertainties of the coronavirus pandemic. His funeral took place at the Church of St Peter and St

Paul, West Clandon, on 25 October 2021. Colonel Charles Thomas represented the Regiment, and the Standard of the Chelmsford Branch of the Regimental Association was present.

Pat's wife Ann died in 2017. He leaves two sons, Christopher and Timothy.

His comprehensive and enjoyable spoken memoirs can be found on the Imperial War Museum website at <https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/80027153>

**PHW**

*(With help from several articles written by Pat for the Essex Regiment Association journal and from his son Christopher)*

## Col John Wooddisse



John Wooddisse was born in Derbyshire in 1933. He joined the Army under National Service in 1952 and undertook officer training at Eaton Hall before joining the 1st Battalion The Sherwood Foresters.

They were based in Derna on the Libyan coast, 100 miles west of Tobruk. The Battalion was equipped with half tracks but were not especially busy. Much of his time seems to have been spent riding, trekking through the mountains and hunting. Indeed, he was a prominent member of the Derna Djebel Hunt. There is no record of the Derna Djebel Hunt catching a fox but there is plenty of evidence to suggest that they

had a very good time.

He self-evidently enjoyed his National Service and in 1956 applied for and received a Regular commission in the Royal Lincolnshire Regiment. The 1st Battalion was in Malaya, part of the response to the Malayan Emergency. He was appointed the Mortar Platoon Commander, operating in Negri Sembilan, Peri and East Johore as part of a hard, gritty campaign that involved plenty of small scale actions deep in the jungle.

Ambushes, based on good intelligence, were the modus operandi of choice. The Mortar platoon played a full part, with a series of successful operations conducted both as an infantry platoon and in the provision of fire support to battalion or company operations.

After a period at 12 Bde in Minden, and by now a Royal Anglian, in 1964 he volunteered for 18 months service with the Sultan's Armed Forces in Oman. He commanded A Company of the Northern Frontier Regiment then based in the remote and precipitous Jebel Akhdar in the northern part of the country. The operational intensity at that stage in the campaign was relatively low, but the challenge of living high in the jebel with minimal support for an extended period was high.

Food and accommodation were rudimentary; mod cons were limited to whisky and the occasional bottle of gin. The photo above shows John with Sheik Nasser bin Abdulla al Awani, premier Sheik on the Jebel Akhdar at Saiq. Leading an infantry Company (85% of whom hailed from Baluchistan in Pakistan) demanded a special type of officer. Mutiny was not uncommon; survival was an achievement in itself. John Wooddisse thrived, retaining an affection for Oman and its people for the rest of his life.

After two years as Adjutant of 4/6th LINCOLNS he took command of A Company of the 2nd Battalion. The Battalion was based in Felixstowe and then Gibraltar, While on exercise in



Singapore he had the good fortune to meet his future wife, Ann. Two years in Cyprus as a staff officer followed, and then a return to Regimental Duty, this time to the Pompadours as OC HQ Company in Paderborn. Two emergency tours to Northern Ireland dominated the posting, the first to Belfast and the second to Londonderry. Neither were easy, and while his role as community relations officer was not the most demanding from an operational perspective, it suited his warm and engaging personality. It was not without risk either. He frequently attended community meetings in the Divis flats in Belfast and the Creggan in Londonderry, usually alone and without support.

After a short period in the MOD, his last posting in the Army was with 5 R ANGLIAN in Peterborough where he served as the Training Major. He enjoyed the role but while there decided that he should leave the Army and try his hand at a civilian career. He and the family returned to Derbyshire where many years before he had bought a run down but pretty house near Dovedale. After a short flirtation with politics he became Director of the Derbyshire Rural Community Council, a charitable body designed to improve rural life across the county. It was an ideal landing ground for him and he loved it.

It reconnected him with the county of his birth and gave him a platform to help people and communities most in need. In

1987 he was asked to take up the role of Commandant of the Derbyshire ACF and later became Honorary Colonel, a responsibility which he embraced. He was deeply popular and respected; his enthusiasm, sense of fun and genuine warmth worked wonderfully well and impacted on a generation of cadets and adult volunteers. In 1989 he was appointed Deputy Lord Lieutenant for Derbyshire.

A wanderer at heart, the bulk of his retirement was spent with Ann in the northern Lake District in a remote but stunning part of the country. He liked its wildness, its beauty and its elevation; it seems that his time in the Jebel Akhdar never really left him. Retirement allowed him to indulge in his passion for history. He became a much-loved guide in the local stately home and a regular and prominent supporter of the Matteredale Archaeological Society.

He was chairman of the Army Benevolent Fund in Cumbria, where he helped to raise many thousands of pounds over many years. He also wrote a series of booklets on his military career which successfully capture the deeds and spirit of a generation of soldiers who fought small wars in difficult places, often out of sight and mind, but always with compassion, resilience and healthy degree of humour.

John Wooddisse will be remembered for many things. He was unfailingly optimistic and his enthusiasm knew no bounds. He was generous with all that he had and immeasurably kind; he would drop anything and everything to help a friend (or more commonly one of his children) when they needed help.

He was slightly mischievous and great fun, successfully balancing his professional achievements with a lightness of touch, generosity of spirit and ever-present humour that left all that he touched better for the experience. But he was first and foremost an amazing and hugely loved husband, father and grandfather whose gentle influence and undying love leave his family forever enriched.



## Obituaries

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### Capt Tim Simmons DL



Captain Tim Simmons, who served in the Essex Regiment in the early 1950s, died on 5 December 2021 at the age of 91.

William Lyle Simmons was born in Wanstead, then part of Essex, on 10 March 1930. He acquired the nickname Tim when a very young boy - he used to career around the family garden in his pedal car at high speed, reminding his parents of the famous racing driver Tim Burkin. The name stayed with him for the rest of his life!

He grew up in Essex, attending Brentwood School, and then gained a place at Sandhurst. From there he was commissioned into the Essex Regiment on 9 February 1951, joining the 1st Battalion in Minden as a Platoon Commander in B Company. The Battalion subsequently moved to Luneburg, and Tim joined the Mortar

Platoon (then armed with 3-inch mortars). 1st Essex returned to Warley briefly in May 1953 before embarking for Korea in a troopship in July. During that interlude a detachment of the Battalion participated in the Queen's Coronation. Tim was selected to carry the Regimental Colour, it rained pretty well all day, and he forever remembered the Colour getting heavier and heavier!

Before the Battalion arrived in Korea the Armistice had been agreed. Tim and his Mortar Platoon had therefore to contend with a long period of boredom, ready for anything yet with nothing happening, throughout the harsh Korean winter. Things looked up when he was seconded to the Infantry Base Depot in Japan, where his responsibilities involved the provision of 'R and R' facilities for the troops. He learnt to sail, fell in love with the sport, and maintained a deep interest in it for most of the rest of his life, later owning a 40-foot yacht which he sailed in English and continental waters.

1st Essex moved to Hong Kong in August 1954, remaining there until late 1956 when they returned to UK by troopship round the Cape to avoid the newly 'nationalised' Suez Canal. Very quickly they moved on to Dortmund. Tim spent part of his time in Hong Kong as GSO3 at Brigade HQ.

He had been very much an athlete while serving with the Battalion, but sadly badly damaged his Achilles tendon while hurdling. This meant that he spent quite some time 'desk bound' as Assistant Adjutant, which was not entirely to his taste. Accordingly, he decided to retire on 3 June 1957.

Tim then joined the family business of Harmer & Simmons, which had been

founded in 1927 and provided power supplies to the telecomms industry and other users. He worked there until the business was sold in the 1990s.

In addition to his sailing activities, Tim loved shooting, only giving up in his late 80s, and horse racing. He owned a number of horses in partnership with friends; while they may not have been the fastest, they gave him great pleasure. He remained an avid supporter of West Ham football club until the end.

Tim never forgot his Essex roots and his service in the Essex Regiment. He was made a Deputy Lieutenant of the county in 1992, serving 3 Lord Lieutenants, and was Secretary of the prestigious Essex Club for many years. When the Essex Regiment Museum was formally established as a charity, in 1994, he became Chairman of the Trustees and wisely guided matters until handing over at the age of 80 in 2010.

Tim died peacefully from a chest infection, after a very short illness, with his wife of 56 years, Jytte, and their daughters Anne-Marie and Camilla, at his side. His funeral took place in St Nicholas' Church, Elmdon (where he and Jytte had settled a few years ago) on 21 December 2021.

Brigadier Peter Sincock represented the Regiment, and Major Peter Williamson represented the Essex Regiment Museum. The dominant theme was one of a gentleman, a family man, someone quiet and undemonstrative who was nevertheless always there to give sage advice. As his successor as Mortar Platoon Commander said 'He was small of stature but he had the personality of a giant'. We would do well to emulate him.

PHW



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As a serving soldier you often come across the Chelsea Pensioners. They get invited to the mess. Although they were in the Army 20 or 30 years before you, they’ve done the same things. It doesn’t change. You’re singing off the same hymn sheet. When you’ve been soldiers, you have this bond.

When my wife died, I thought, “What am I doing knocking around in a three-bedroomed house? I don’t like this. I’ll apply to be a Chelsea Pensioner”. I came down on a small recce first, because I knew someone who was living there. That first night I went with him to the Pensioners’ club for a beer and as soon as I walked in the door I thought, “This is the place for me”. It took me back 30 years to the sergeants’ mess. In my berth at night, I sometimes think of how many generations of Chelsea Pensioners have been here in these buildings before me.

My four-day trial stay was brilliant. Everyone stops and talks to you. During my interview they said, “Aren’t you a bit young to come in here?”. I said, “I can live independently, I’m not married and I’m in receipt of a state pension, so I meet your criteria. And you need people like me to cheer up those old ones!”

For me, the best part is going out and representing the Royal Hospital. There’s nothing else to worry about. The hardest thing is choosing what to have for lunch!

For anyone even thinking of joining, don’t hesitate – it’s one of the best decisions I’ve made.



To: RHQ, The Royal Anglian Regiment  
The Keep  
Gibraltar Barracks  
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# **Sat 26<sup>th</sup> February**

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IN MEMORY  
OF THOSE MEMBERS OF  
THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN REGIMENT

THE EASTERN REGIMENTS  
WHO DIED IN THE LINE OF DUTY



