



8/10

ROYAL ANGLIAN NEWS

AUG 10

## **BATTALION ACTIVITIES**

### 1. **1<sup>st</sup> Battalion**

August was a quiet month for the Battalion and was mostly taken up with summer leave. It marked the finish of the Battalion post deployment activities and a rest before starting training for a series of exercises next year.

1 August was Minden Day and a contingent from B (Suffolk) Coy accompanied the Colour Party to the Parade in Bury St Edmunds where Vikings past and present took the opportunity to meet up and 'pull up a sandbag'.

On 3 Aug the annual Officers' Mess verses Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess cricket match was held at Pirbright Cricket Club. Once again the Officers' Mess won the Bunny Nye trophy, thanks largely to 2Lt George Waterfield who was commanding with both bat and ball. As ever the Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess swore that revenge would be sought in the football match later this year.

The Battalion main effort was Minden Day on 4 August. As usual the Drums Platoon woke the CO and soldiers with spirited playing and the Officers and Senior NCOs distributed gunfire to the soldiers to prepare them for the annual Minden Day cart race. This being the second year it has been run, some time and effort had gone into the design and presentation of the carts, some of which were more successful than others. The eventual winners were 3 Platoon, whilst the Drums Platoon won the best dressed team and cart. After this excitement the officers and soldiers retired to their respective messes for breakfast prior to the Presentation of Roses parade.

The parade was held on the Army Training Centre (Pirbright) parade square in front of many of the families of the soldiers in the Battalion. Roses were presented to the soldiers and Long Service and Good Conduct Medals were presented to WO2 Clark, CSgt Hill and Cpl Gray. The salute was taken by the Colonel of the Regiment, General Sir John McColl. The Battalion marched off to the rousing notes of Rule Britannia and Speed the Plough and then moved to the Elizabeth Barracks square for a family fete with fairground rides, stalls, barbeques and ice cream. The weather was undecided, switching between sunshine and torrential rain, the latter making the Inter Company Tug of War a particular challenge. The Drums Platoon performed Beating Retreat and were outstanding. Under the command of Drum Major Phair they performed flawlessly and their hard work over the last 6 weeks was clear to see. The families departed at 1800 hrs and then from 1900 hrs an all ranks party was held with live music and a concerted effort from the Battalion to drink the bar dry. It was another memorable Minden Day and after the morning clear up next day, the Battalion departed on leave.

### 2. **2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion**

The Battalion has completed its unit move to Dhekelia, Cyprus, and are now preparing to assume the Theatre Reserve Battalion (TRB) role in October 2010. A Coy was the first to move to Cyprus as they had to take over the Cyprus Operations commitment from 2 PWRR. Whilst the UN conducts patrols along the Green Line Buffer Zone, various other sites around the country require a conventional British military presence. They must provide a guard force up in the mountains

near Mount Troodos and also at Salt Lake in Akrotiri. Both platoon commanders (2 Lts Barron and Weston) have been using the down time to conduct soldier development and sweep up on mandatory training. Prior to assuming their task all troops were given Public Order training by the Sovereign Base Area police, allowing the lads to vent some 'constructive' anger on each other.

B and C companies arrived later having enjoyed a full complement of 2 weeks summer leave and 2 weeks relocation leave. Single soldiers were able to spend it in the UK, whilst married families spent it out in Cyprus, enjoying the 40+°C temperatures and settling into their houses. Both companies have since focussed on ensuring that their shooting is up to standard and are due to conduct Public Order training in order to take over the Cyprus ops commitment from A Company.

D Coy has re-structured permanently, now having 3 dedicated FSG platoons in preparation for TRB. In addition to their preparation for the TRB, they have taken advantage of the Garrison Water Sports Centre and Cyprus Adventure Training Centre courses to provide some light relief. Tactical training was conducted at the island's premier paint-balling facility!

The QM's department has been working hard to facilitate handovers and takeovers between Germany and Cyprus. The freight is now complete in the Garrison and many of the men have sore arms and sweaty t-shirts due to the large amount of MFO boxes that have been shifted. Lance Corporal Otty has been a busy man, as his pioneer experience means he is the ideal man for sign changing and painting the camp black and yellow after a 10 year gap. But the focus is now on equipping the companies for Afghanistan.

All soldiers are finding time to explore and discover Cyprus at the weekends, minus of course the out-of-bounds Ayia Napa, which is a seductive 15 minutes' drive away by taxi. However, many of the lads frequent the in-bounds Nissi Beach bar, with some of them staying the whole weekend, armed only with their wallet and a pair of shorts. Other favoured activities include Diving, Mountain Biking and Climbing. Although working hours are long and the days are hot, all are enjoying it out here and using their time wisely in the run up to the TRB commitment.

### 3. **3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion**

Congratulations go to SSgt Cooke RAMC for the award of a GOC's Commendation and to the LAD on winning the top prize in the 5<sup>th</sup> Division Inter-Unit Best Detachment competition.

Steelback soldiers deployed to Afghanistan on OP HERRICK 12 (12 Mechanised Brigade) will return soon following a most challenging but successful tour; so welcome back and medal presentation events at parent companies are now being planned. The deployment of the Battalion to lead the UN Roulement Regiment (OP TOSCA) in Nicosia, Cyprus, has been confirmed and the Steelbacks will now join the Poachers on the 'Island of Aphrodite' from April to October next year. Looking forward to 2012 and OP HERRICK 16, the Battalion continues to force generate against a requirement of around 70 soldiers, some of whom will, after a short break from UN operations in Cyprus, move their bergans further east for an altogether different challenge.

The key event next month is the Battalion deployment on EX POLAR PROGRESS - the 49 Brigade Annual Deployment Exercise. For the Steelbacks, this translates into live fire tactical training at Sennybridge, followed by a field training exercise at Caerwent, near the Poachers' old haunt of Chepstow. The live fire exercise will practice soldiers in core Infantry skills with firers going from check zero and ACMT to Stage 5 Coy Group attacks in 5 days. Elements from other brigade units will take part, with battle simulation provided by 73 Regt RE, offensive fire from the Light Guns of 100 Regt RA and Log Sp from 158 Regt RLC. The focus for the field training will be on low level skills for soldiers and commanders up to Coy level. Integrated with other brigade units, soldiers will operate from All Arms Forward Operating Bases and encounter a wide range of classic and contemporary problems. Aside from the Field Firing and Training, the Battalion will use this opportunity to conduct recruit and potential NCO cadres along with Cambrian Patrol team training.