



01/12

ROYAL ANGLIAN NEWS

JAN 12

COLONEL OF THE REGIMENT

1. General Sir John McColl, will now handover as Colonel of the Regiment to Maj Gen Phil Jones on 7 Sep 12 and not in May 12 as had been previously promulgated.

SELECTED FOR PROMOTION TO LT COL

2. The Regiment congratulates the following officers on being selected for promotion to Lt Col:

- Lt Col CD Davies MBE
- Maj PS Leslie

3. **1ST BATTALION**

The Vikings returned from Christmas leave to embark on the final lap, if not quite the final straight, of Mission Specific Training (MST). Within the MST programme January marks the transition from a previously individual skills based focus to collective training exercises incorporating all elements of the Combined Force. Our run in to operations has been slightly squeezed at each end with the Unit Move in December and Combined Force Nad-e-Ali being the first to deploy in mid March. This month has therefore seen a rapid progression from the OPTAG Confirmatory Exercise (CFX) to the Combined Arms Live Fire Exercise (CALFEX) and then onwards next month to the final field training exercise on Salisbury Plain. Although no doubt busy and demanding, this compressed progression has been extremely valuable in maintaining the training momentum and focussing the Battalion firmly on the task in hand.

The OPTAG CFX in Thetford Forest involved a very welcome if short lived return to our Home Counties. The irony of training for operations in a fully kitted out Afghan village complete with well over a hundred role playing Afghans and yet, for many, being merely a stone's throw from home, was not lost. The week's training went exceptionally well and the companies all learnt some very useful lessons which will be applied to our subsequent training. It was also very nice to see the Regimental Secretary back in the field escorting Mr Nick Lyle on a short visit.

With only a week's interval the Battalion next deployed to a wind swept Castlemartin for the CALFEX package. This would see the companies progressing over four days from section level live firing exercises up to a full company live firing battle run within a counter-insurgency context, complete with indirect fire, air support and live firing attack helicopters. Notwithstanding some of the frictions in the exercise scenario, this was an excellent opportunity to practise live skills before deployment. We were fortunate during this period to host a visit from our Colonel-in-Chief, who, despite the reliably inclement weather on the ranges, enjoyed the opportunity to meet many young Vikings and fire the array of weapon systems on offer.

As we look forward February and early March will be split between the final preparatory exercise (FTX) on Salisbury Plain and two weeks of pre-tour leave. The Battalion is in good shape and, though some final ironing out will be required, we are well placed for the mission ahead.

4. 2ND BATTALION

The Poachers returned to full manning after a very welcome Christmas and New Year break with the last company returning from leave in the second week of January. Although B and D companies have not had as much opportunity to get their soldiers away due to Cyprus Security Duties, the slower pace of life has been overwhelmingly appreciated by the whole Battalion.

Headquarter Company led the way in keeping the recreational opportunities alive, with a week long scuba-diving expedition to the Red Sea organised by the QM Tech. A diving vessel was hired and used to advance a number of Battalion divers onto the next level of their proficiency.

A Company is now on Public Order Readiness Duty and was called out to assist the SBA Police deal with a protest outside RAF Akrotiri. Although the event turned out to be peaceful and contained by the civilian police, it nevertheless gave A Company a productive run out to rehearse their ability to react to public order emergencies.

B Company have gratefully handed over their security duties at Troodos and Akrotiri to D Company and are now enjoying a period of well deserved leave to make up for their work over Christmas. They will return to duty next month, but their time away has also been used by some enthusiastic officers and soldiers to represent the Battalion in the Army's Orienteering Championships, held in the UK this month.

C Company have welcomed their new OC, Major Ben Hawes, and started the New Year with a comprehensive training package. The training started at the lowest level and will set the foundations for their build up towards Kenya over the coming months.

D Company has finished the majority of their support weapons cadres and has welcomed a number of new soldiers to their ranks as a result. They are now providing the guard at a number of sites around the Island. The snow and ice at the top of Mount Olympus will provide them with a taste of what can be expected on their deployment to the Falkland Islands in March.

Finally, Battalion sporting enthusiasm has been given a big boost when players from Bourne Rugby Club arrived for a weekend to play for the annual Joseva Lewaicei & Adam Morris Memorial Trophy. This trophy, named after the two Poachers who were killed in Iraq in 2006, is played for every year between the Battalion and Bourne Rugby Club. This year it was won by the Poachers.

5. 3RD BATTALION

Well rested, after a festive season full of cheer, the 3rd Battalion returned to work at least a week before the remainder of the Army on the 3rd of January.

The unseasonably early start reflected the new level of tempo and commitments that 2012 has presented the Bn. We can now lay claim to supplying in excess of a Company to Op TOSCA, a Platoon to HERRICK 16 and have been tasked to provide large numbers of troops for both one and three month mobilisations in support of the Olympics. There are few Bns, Regular or Reserve, who can claim to have provided such a high level of support to so many diverse tasks. All of this, of course, while still conducting normal unit business.

In order to support our growing role and in line with the future structure of the Army Reserve, the Bn has undertaken an invigorated recruiting campaign with the endstate being recruited to 130% by the end of the next financial year. Hand in glove with this we have seen an increase in the allotted recruiting target by 100% for 2012/13 and will exceed our 2011/12 target with ease.

The New Year has also bought a number of changes to the face of BHQ, most notably the departure of Maj Richard Pattison after 29 years of loyal service to The Regiment and Army. I am sure I speak for all when I thank him for his unstinting commitment and wish him all the very best

for the future. Linking neatly to this I would like to welcome Maj Phil Birch to the Bn, having recently returned from secondment with the Bermuda Regiment.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate RSM Main on his performance in the Infantry Orienteering Championships; his 'cunning running' saw him win the M40 category with a combined time that many of the younger competitors would be very jealous of.

Training Update: As a Battalion the Steelbacks are currently enjoying something of a purple patch with regard to our ability to generate both quality training and high calibre recruits. We have seen a steady improvement in the pass rate and position of our nominations on the Combat Infantryman's Course (CIC); the majority of our soldiers are 'top third' and, on the most recent course, Pte Shaw won the coveted 'best recruit' slot. This level of performance is directly attributed to the hard work of the companies in ensuring that each and every man who attends the course is as well prepared as possible.

Bn level training continues apace with the preparation for both the ADX (Ex Leopard Star in Sennelager, Germany) and the first major training event of the year, Ex Steelback Horizon. Our collective training has been tailored to provide a construct in which each rank and role will be trained, revised and tested in the job they should fulfil; and as I write this coy comds are busy revising / learning their estimate process.....

HERRICK 16 Update: While the majority of the world was sleeping off the excesses of New Year, the Bn was still busy mobilising its second cohort of troops through RTMC Chilwell. A 0845 hrs PFT on the 2nd Jan was the reward for the final volunteers for HERRICK 16, who due to the high level of pre-training they have received, were able to condense the normal two week course into five days. Having impressed all at the Mobilisation Centre, the group then moved to join the 1st Bn on their CFX, via Bulford.