



Royal Anglian *News*

April 2020

Regimental Matters

Promotions

The Regiment warmly congratulates Brigadier Rich Lyne on his recent promotion to Brigadier and on his selection as the Senior Military Adviser (SMA) to the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), which is 12 month appointment based in Kabul. As 'Expert on Mission' and working with Afghan authorities, the SMA provides Afghan-specific and Regional military advice to the Special Representative of the Secretary General and supports Afghan Government departmental-level strategic planning and liaises with NATO and Coalition Forces and supports the delivery of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals for Afghanistan.



London Gazette Mar 20

Captain J.A. MATTIN Royal Anglian Regiment 30075355 from Short Service Commission 7 November 2019 to be Captain with seniority 12 December 2018.



The Regiment Welcomes Three New Officers

The Royal Anglian Regiment warmly welcomes 2Lts Bamford, Bembridge and Boffey-Rawlings into the Regimental family following their commissioning on 3 Apr 20 under a radically different parade than the usual Sovereigns Parade due to Coronavirus restrictions and no representative of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, being present.

The parade was conducted in MTP rather than the usual "blues" and close drill was replaced with the OCdts stood two metres apart to abide with social distancing policy. Luckily they had managed to complete Ex DYNAMIC VICTORY to the usual high standards and flew the Royal Anglian flag after another famous victory in Germany.

The Queen's Medal: Junior Under Officer Oliver Bremridge,

OCdt Bremridge, known as Oli, was educated at Kenilworth School and Kings College London before arriving at the RMAS.

Whilst at university, OCdt Bremridge was a member of the University Officer Training Corps, during which he undertook an Adventurous Training expedition, sailing around Denmark. Well-traveled outside of the military, he has also cycled 1000 miles around New Zealand and has driven from Botswana to Zimbabwe. In order to learn French, he spent 3 months, living solo in Montpellier.

1st Battalion (The Vikings)

The Vikings Find Themselves at the Centre of the UK COVID-19 Response

April has seen the Vikings deploy at the forefront of the government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, with soldiers from each company contributing to the effort.

The Vikings' home in Woolwich put them in the ideal position to support the effort in London, most notably at NHS Nightingale, just across the river from their barracks. Soldiers from A (Norfolk) Company were amongst the first on the ground at the site in the Excel Centre, conducting essential support to the construction teams as they transformed the exhibition centre into a 500 bed "field hospital" with room for a further 3500 beds. In nine days, the 80 wards took shape, a monumental effort by all involved. As the hospital neared completion, it was B (Suffolk) Company's turn to take the lead, supporting the continued logistical effort on site as patient numbers grew. As at the time of writing they remain involved.



C (Essex) Company joined in the effort as the focus of the Battalion switched to the coronavirus testing sites in mid-April. After receiving training from both the NHS and Boots, soldiers have conducted testing at sites throughout London on NHS staff from the region, allowing them to return to the frontline if clear.

It has been a quite a change in just one month for the Battalion, swiftly adapting their role from the warfighting battlegroup preparing to conduct Ex WESSEX STORM to the COVID Support Force deployed in London today.



2nd Battalion (The Poachers)

Poachers conduct COVID 19 Testing in support of NHS

With the Army experiencing the full effects of life under lockdown, April has presented us with a unique challenge to remain resilient, whilst maintaining our operational readiness with support to the NHS.

Battalion life as we all know it has changed drastically, with only a skeleton team of key Battalion and Company personnel physically at work, the remainder of our force is being held dispersed at high readiness to support the NHS. Although initially this was an unfamiliar situation to find ourselves in, we are treating this as an opportunity to experiment to modernise our ways of working.

The has seen virtual Orders Groups being held over webcam, online lessons being delivered by Platoon Commanders and the Commanding Officer and newly promoted WO I (RSM) Rawdon briefing the Battalion over video. This has all been enabled by the “Defence Connect App”, which gives units across the army a platform to share content and communicate online.



The adaption to the situation we find ourselves in has enabled our ongoing preparedness and support to the NHS. So far, this has seen a small number of our SNCOs deploy as Military Liaison Officers in Local Resilience Forums, supporting local councils and other government departments combat the effect of COVID. We also deployed one hundred and ten soldiers as part of specially trained Mobile Testing Teams. This task saw the teams conduct a day's training at Prince William of Gloucester Barracks in Grantham and deploy to areas from Hertfordshire through to Lincolnshire, as part of the government scheme to conduct mass testing in a “drive through” facility.



Despite the current COVID challenge, B (Leicestershire) Company have continued to be operationally focused with a deployment later in the year to Mali, as part of a Light Dragoons Battle Group. The deployment, under the banner of the United Nations is in support of the mission to stabilise Mali and will see the company conduct multiple day reconnaissance tasks in an austere environment where there is a very real threat. This has seen a continuation in much of the individual training that is required, but there have been changes to the planned collective training and mission specific training.

3rd Battalion (The Steelbacks)

The Army Reserve Mobilises

152 Members of the 3rd Battalion have recently been mobilised to support the Government's efforts to defeat the Covid-19 virus.

Due to a temporary restriction on collective training, troops are continuing to maintain their knowledge and skills by undertaking virtual training from home where they are maintaining effectiveness for future tasks by reducing their contact with others. A visit to RAF Cranwell for vaccinations and other medical tests for 4 (Lincolnshire) Company was therefore a welcome occasion to see each other and to have a 'social distancing' photograph. The opportunity was also used to make a short clip of the Company applauding the NHS.



The 4 Company Commander, Major Mitch Pegg, said "As Army Reservists, we are honoured to be called upon to support national and local efforts in defeating this deadly virus. We are ready to do anything to lessen the tragic impact on our communities and to assist the NHS and key workers. We could have mobilised more, but we also have soldiers that are Police Officers, civilian police staff, NHS staff, supermarket workers, teachers and essential utility workers that could not be spared from their civilian employment. It has also been an opportunity to bring soldiers in for socially distanced admin tasks, such as Weapons Cleaning.

Mobilisation for UK Resilience is a great opportunity to promote the Army Reserve doing good in the public space.

We send all serving Royal Anglian's and our veterans best wishes in these difficult times.



Association News

Sobraon Battlefield Tour - Lt Col (Retd) David Baylis OBE

My late father (Lt Col (QM) Ron Baylis MBE) and myself have spent 78 years celebrating Sobraon Day during our years of service (50 and 28 respectively) with the R Lincolns/R Anglians and it has always been an ambition of mine to visit the actual battlefield. I wanted to see the ground over which it was fought and the Sutlej river (then the Punjabi/East India Company border) which played such a vital role in the conduct of the encounter.

This March 5 keen military enthusiasts landed in Delhi just 15 minutes before the Covid19 ban on flights into India came into operation. It was a close call and we were always aware of the 'noose' of travel restrictions closing round us as we moved up country. We met up with our Sikh guide and an eminent historian (Patrick Mercer) to tour the Punjab and visit the battlefield sites of the 1st Anglo-Sikh war (1845/6) at Mukdi, Aliwal and Ferozashah, culminating the tour at Sobraon and views of the Sutlej river.



Each day was devoted to a particular battlefield interspersed with visits to museums, places of cultural interest, cemeteries and a considerable amount of travel through the very flat, hot and incredibly fertile Punjabi landscape. Punjab means 'land of 5 rivers' and huge rivers (including the Sutlej) flow down from the Himalayas into the Indus and out to sea. Careful use of this resource has reduced the size of the rivers but provide wonderful irrigation for crops.

Each battlefield is marked by a 40-foot brick memorial erected 20 years after the campaign and from that memorial, with the help of the Sikh guide and Patrick Mercer, we were able to identify villages, nullahs and tracks that were relevant to each stage of the battle. We then walked the ground with sketch maps, binoculars and compasses having the unfolding tempo of the battle explained to us in detail. Mudki was a vicious encounter battle followed hard by Ferozashah, a full scale battle where the outcome was so much in the balance that Lord Hardinge (the Governor General) ordered all papers and official documents to be destroyed for fear they would fall into Sikh hands. Aliwal was a brilliant tactical success for General Smith known as 'The Battle without a Mistake' which pushed a large part of the Sikh Army back over the border of the Sutlej River.

Sobraon was the final battle and the only one in which the 10th Foot was involved. It was brutal - with huge casualties and much bravery on both sides. The Sutlej river at that point is 100 to 150 metres wide and was in full flow. We could make out remains of the Sikh ramparts and could identify where they had tried to escape over the Sutlej on a bridge of boats once the earthworks had been breached by the 10th and other British and Native Bengali regiments. It was a close run affair and there is no doubt that the duplicitous Sikh leadership let down their wonderful soldiers at key moments.



Patrick Mercer had registered my personal interest so took us to the exact spot of the 10th Foot advance. I was able to read aloud the special 'Order of the Day' that describes the action of the 10th Foot to the others of the group. It was a surprisingly emotional moment.

At this stage we were due to go further north for 6 days to visit the Hill Stations of the Raj in Simla and Deyrah Dhoon in the foothills of the Himalayas. Listening to the news it was clear that international travel restrictions were about to come into effect so we made the group decision to get out of India early. We took off from Mumbai 24 hours before India banned all International flights. Very exciting!

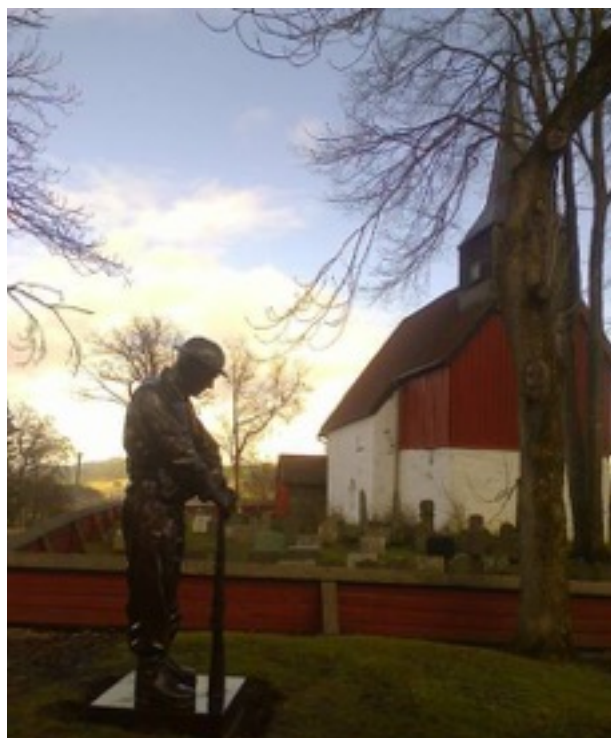


Hustad Statue Unveiling in Norway

On Saturday 18th April the small village of Hustad in Norway was the scene where a statue was unveiled commemorating 75 years since the 1st Battalion of the Lincolnshire Regiment liberated the locals from the Germans as the Second World War came to an end. The statue itself was modelled on a well known former member of the Regiment, Tom Fowler who in 2016 received the Legion d'Honneur from the French Government for services rendered in that country also!

Ken Willows, former Chairman of the Spalding Branch of the Association, who knew Tom well had planned to attend the ceremony on Saturday with his wife Audrey, along with 2nd Lt Rory Smith from A (Lincolnshire) Coy of the Poachers as guests of the villagers of Hustad, but sadly of course due to the restrictions imposed by the Coronavirus this was not possible.

However, our kind hosts have sent some photographs below of the splendid statue and extend an open invitation to anyone from the Regimental Family to visit once overseas travel is permitted again.



EASTER EGGS FROM THE WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF POULTERS

As many of the Regimental family will know the Regiment hugely appreciates the support we receive in many forms during the year from the Worshipful Company of Poulters.

The Poulters started giving Easter Eggs for the children of our soldiers when we first had Battalions deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan.

This year it was not possible to have Easter Egg hunts for our children, but Capt Jona Jones, the 1st Battalion's resourceful Welfare Officer told the families on the 1st Battalion's patch in Woolwich, that if their children would like to paint an Easter poster or picture, and display it in the window of their home, then Easter Eggs would be delivered to them from our friends, the Poulters.

There was a super response, and much excitement. The Poulters, on behalf of the manufacturers also offered Easter Eggs for the NHS and supporting staff at the Nightingale Hospital, and the 1st Battalion kindly arranged for Easter Eggs to be made available to them from the reception at the Hospital.



Regimental Bulletins

RHQ circulated eleven Regimental Bulletins in March which are also on the Regimental Website:

- Bulletin 18-20 Team Rubicon Appeal
- Bulletin 19-20 Team Rubicon Update
- Bulletin 20-20 Special Order of the Day - Alamanza Day
- *Bulletin 21-20 Death Of James (Bomber) Brown*
- Bulletin 22-20 Death of Raymond Yates (Waff)
- Bulletin 23-20 Death of Michael Goldschmidt
- Bulletin 24-20 Death of Major John Millward MBE
- Bulletin 25-20 Royal Hospital Chelsea Update
- Bulletin 26-20 Notice of Contact with RHQ
- Bulletin 27-20 Royal Hospital Chelsea Update
- Bulletin 28-20 Fast Track Re-Enlistment

Diary Dates

With the current unprecedented disruption due to COVID-19 the The Royal Anglian Regiment has cancelled or postponed all upcoming events throughout May please look out for the next edition of Royal Anglian News where updates and new dates for all events will be posted.

COVER PHOTO

Cpl's Call and Danvers, of the 2nd Battalion D (Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire) Company, directing members of the public at Stansted COVID 19 testing station.