



# Royal Anglian *News*



February 2021

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# Regimental Matters

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## Te Ruapekapeka Commemoration NZ

For some months now RHQ has been working closely with the British High Commission in New Zealand and the Trustees of the Te Ruapekapeka Memorial Trust. On Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> February an event will take place in Northland, NZ, to unveil and dedicate a memorial to those killed on both sides at the Battle of Te Ruapekapeka exactly 175 years ago to the day. This symbolic gesture not only pays reverence to those who paid the ultimate sacrifice, but also will help to heal rifts within the Maori community and the white settlers who colonised the area after the Northern Wars, which continue to surface as Maoris fought on both sides and afterwards those who fought for the Crown were rewarded with gifts of land.



Nick Gorge flanked by two members of the 58th in New Zealand

The 58<sup>th</sup> Rutlandshire Regiment fought at the Battle of Ruapekapeka, later merging with the 48<sup>th</sup> Northamptonshire Regiment. The Colonel of the Regiment sent a Message to the Trustees, and RHQ and certain others have made a donation to the Trust. The highlight was the unveiling of a memorial to the British soldiers 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). Ex-Royal Anglian, Nick Gorge, attended the ceremony. A more detailed report of the ceremony is available from the Deputy Regtl Secretary on request. The event will also feature in next year's Castle Magazine.



## London Gazette 63229- 4 Jan 21

The Regiment warmly congratulates the following on the award of the first **Clasp to the LSCG**:

25212680 Sgt B L Townsend

25212015 CSgt D Vanhinsbergh

25211733 Cpl A P Walker

**Selection for Promotion to Lieutenant Colonel.** The Regiment warmly congratulates Major Jeff Bennett-Madge on his selection for promotion to Lieutenant Colonel in this year's Pink List. Major Bennet-Madge is currently Second-in-Command of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion.



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# 1st Battalion (The Vikings)

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## The Vikings - Rescript to Support NHS Hospitals in London

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As well as being a short month in its own right, February was also a shorter month in work for many Vikings, with the ability to take the February Half-Term leave a welcome chance to spend time with families. However, duty came first for some Vikings. As trailed last month, the majority of D (Cambridgeshire) Company have been busy supporting a number of NHS hospitals across London as part of the ongoing response to COVID-19. Although the Company were well-prepared to support Op RESCRIPT (having trained to deliver support to schools if required), a degree of hasty re-organisation was required to reset for this new task. As well as his own troops, OC D Company had to quickly take almost 200 Army medics under command as the combined team deployed to various hospitals around London. Whereas the Army medics delivered support in a more clinical setting, the Vikings fulfilled more generalist



roles from replenishing medical stores, to assisting with the daily running of wards and other departments. Readers will not have seen much coverage of these events as the Vikings on the ground have quietly got on with their jobs with typical Royal Anglian humility and professionalism. As ever, keen not to eclipse the sterling work their NHS colleagues are delivering on a daily basis. Nonetheless, it has been a privilege for the Vikings to assist hospitals within the London area, and local to our barracks.

Conducting COVID-safe activity that had been planned for many months, B (Suffolk) Company also deployed over the Half-Term period, this time to the sunny, but bitterly cold SENTA training area in Wales. This exercise focused on honing the infantry basics, utilising the framework of the Battle-craft Syllabus to ensure Suffolk Company keeps its war-fighting flame burning bright. The other Rifle Companies will conduct similar exercises next month as part of a Battalion-wide effort to re-focus on our war-fighting fundamentals in earnest, before the Unit Move to Cyprus focuses attention elsewhere later this year.

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## 2nd Battalion (The Poachers)

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### Poachers, Jackals & Foxhounds Roaming the Ranges

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February has been a busy month for the battalion with the focus remaining the preparation of A (Lincolnshire) Company and BHQ for Op NEWCOMBE and D (Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire) Company for Op CABRIT.

This revolved mainly around Ex PRIMED POACHER, a firing camp in Castlemartin Ranges which ran for the first three weeks of the month. The exercise involved A (Lincolnshire) Company conducting a series of mounted live firing shoots from their Foxhound vehicles. The training was all conducted with the long-range patrolling that they will be required to undertake in Mali in mind. A Company will be tasked to provide security for peace restoration activities. Ultimately, working to protect civilian lives from the threat of violent extremist organisations in support of the UN peacekeeping mission.

At the same time to Ex PRIMED POACHER, D (Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire) Company conducted Ex STAGS GUNNER 2, also at Castlemartin ranges. This saw them conduct a series of shoots on their Jackal vehicles ranging from basic static shoots, all the way up to vehicle borne fire & movement.



This training was further enhanced by the firing of NLAW and Javelin missiles, which was certainly an adrenaline rush for those who hadn't fired them previously!

Meanwhile, in C (Northamptonshire) Company, the Machine Gun platoon commenced the live firing element of their training cadre. Concurrently to this, the BCR platoon along with the Assault Pioneers headed down to Lydd & Hythe ranges to develop their Rifle and Pistol skills on Ex CHINDIT MARKSMAN.

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## 3rd Battalion (The Steelbacks)

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### Op Rose - Covid testing HGVs and LGVs at the Sevington International Border Force (SIBF) - Report from Sgt Kevin Webster, 4 Platoon.

The soldiers that volunteered for this essential Military Aid to Civilian Authorities (MACA) task, were deployed from Army Reserve Centres (ARC) stretching from Grimsby in North East Lincolnshire, to Chelmsford in Essex. Troops were subsequently deployed to Folkestone in Kent to assist in the transition from a military Covid testing team, to a civilian Wincanton Testing Team. This was delivered through shadowing, mentoring and coaching. These highly professional soldiers included Infanteers, RAMC Combat Medical Technicians and Royal Signals personnel. The teams worked on a twelve-hour day and night shift pattern.

Each shift comprised, eight Junior Non Commissioned Officers (JNCO), overseen by four Senior Non Commissioned Officers (SCNO) and an Officer. The JNCOs took the helm with the shift roster and commanded their team of four, each controlling four lanes of HGVs.



The day shift commenced with reveille at 0600hrs, starting the day with a personal Lateral Flow Covid Test (LFT). Then at 0730hrs, we moved to SIBF to start Covid testing and recording information of HGV drivers from all over the world. We tested a cosmopolitan mix of nationalities, processing, Romanians, Poles, Latvians, Brazilians, French, Italian, and Spanish drivers. The Steelbacks and attached Arms, had to adapt and improvise to communicate. Each of us rapidly developing an array of hand signals to demonstrate how to use the Covid tests. We also had to ask if the drivers were going on the Eurotunnel, or the Dover Ferry. Drivers were asked for passport details and soldiers checked the results of the Covid Lateral Flow tests. Once each individual was cleared, we set about issuing a Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) certificate. This enabled drivers to safely move their cargo across the border to France and further on into Europe.

The age of the deployed Reservists ranged from 19 - 53+. We had a great sense of purpose, and an equally great sense of humour to keep everyone in high spirits, (a few Tik Tok dances may have been performed by our younger medical contingent). The Driver Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA), generously subsidised free



food and drink at the burger van for the military. The combat Chefs back in the transit camp provided exceptionally good food throughout the deployment. There were no complaints about our breakfast, packed lunch and we enjoyed a welcome dinner on return from the day shift at 2030hrs.

Our personal admin was tested by Storm Darcy, and the “Beast from the East 2”. Our shifts were split into 2-3 hour rosters, and we were thankful for our issue of cold weather kit as the weather became more severe, wind chill was certainly a daily factor. We kept a close eye out for cold weather injuries on ourselves and our fellow team members.



During our busy seven days on Op Rose we processed 3999 HGVs, issuing 4312 certificates to drivers and co-drivers. Our testing identified four HGV drivers with Covid 19. Those testing positive were quarantined and stayed in an allocated hotel for two weeks. Operation Rose was a rewarding short deployment that meant the British Army Reservists were able to contribute to our return to normality after this debilitating pandemic.

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# The Royal Anglian Regiment Museum

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## Back in the Day...Riot Shields by Melissa Kozlenko, our Museum Curator

One of the things that always seems to astonish is the change of kit through the decades, and Riot Shields were no exception. Without a doubt the conflict in Northern Ireland had a lot to do with this transformation. With over 30 years of conflict and the longest one the Royal Anglian's have been involved in, there were many creative changes to help make our soldiers safer and more effective in Internal Security situations.



### A Saxon Shield Wall 1996 - B (Suffolk) Coy Holding the Line

Archive pictures in our archives show Royal Anglians operating in riot situations without much protection at all, to the heavy, clunky metal shields carried in the 60's 70's that offered a lot of protection but, were most certainly not light and offered little visibility. We then see the rise of the shield that most resembles what we know today, giving way to something that can really help the army do its job. As we go forward in time it will be interesting what comes next, and will we look back on the shields of today thinking that they look archaic in another 50 years?

If you would like to know more about Riot Gear and its use by the regiment, please do contact me at the Museum. - **[royalanglianmuseumcurator@outlook.com](mailto:royalanglianmuseumcurator@outlook.com)**

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# Our Heritage

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## Boer War VC - 22nd February 1881

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### Who was Private James Osborne?

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Born 13<sup>th</sup> April 1857 in a small cottage in Wigginton, Hertfordshire, he was a volunteer soldier before joining the Regular Army in 1877. James served as a Private with the Northamptonshire Regiment (58<sup>th</sup> Foot) until 1883. In 1878 he embarked from England, to fight in Zulu land, and Natal. He served for two years in Natal, Transvaal, and South Africa before returning to England for discharge from the Army on 27<sup>th</sup> February 1883.

Interestingly, when he enlisted, Osborne signed the papers with a cross, when he left, he could sign his full name. His pay records show he earned an extra penny a day (most of the time) for good conduct. He is never promoted from Private.

After leaving the Army he returns to Wigginton where he works as a farm labourer for the First Lord Rothschild, until he suffers a stroke in 1913, and dies in 1928. His cottage was called Majuba after the military disaster in the First Boer War. Read below the description of daring and bravery. There is no doubt of his raw courage. These words hang in St Bartholomew's Church in Wigginton:

"On 22<sup>nd</sup> 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 58<sup>th</sup> 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. Private Mayes, one of those, dismounted, was also shot in the leg and fell on his face in the long grass. Private William 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 was and 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's 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<sup>th</sup> March 1882 as follows:

"James Osborne, for his gallant conduct at Wakkerstroom on 22<sup>nd</sup> 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.

James Osbourne died on 1<sup>st</sup> 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 the Wigginton Churchyard. Author -Richard Tregoning Wigginton History Society 89 Fox Road Wigginton Tring HP23 6EE [rbtregoning@btopenworld.com](mailto:rbtregoning@btopenworld.com)



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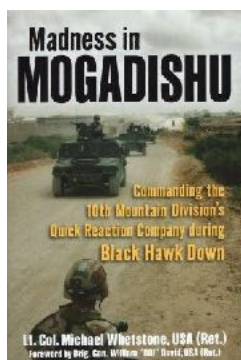
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# Regtl Library

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## MADNESS IN MOGADISHU

Light Role Infantry in East Africa

By Lt Col (Retd) Michael Whetstone

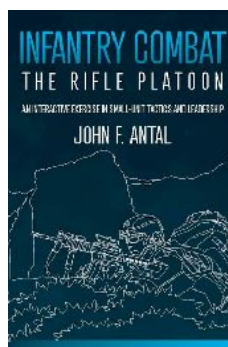
The battle that took place between US & UN forces,

and the heavily armed militia of the Somali warlord, Mohammed Aidid on the streets of Mogadishu is well documented. Commonly referred to as, 'Black Hawk Down'. The film and book of the same name focus predominantly on the events surrounding the actions of the US Army Rangers, Delta Force, and their support Aviation. The role played by 2nd Bn, 14th Infantry, and the author's C Coy is often overlooked.

This book goes a long way toward redressing the balance, and also gives a wider perspective of events in Mogadishu. The author's unit deployed to Somalia before the Rangers and Delta arrived to capture Aidid. His account provides informed insight into the nature of operations before the battle on 3 Oct 93.

A Company Commander's narrative of pre-deployment training, the execution of a peace keeping mission in an overtly hostile environment are both fascinating, and topical. His account of the decision-making during the battle, and the fighting itself, make for an absorbing read. Surprisingly lacking in maps, but a worthwhile read.

Published by Casemate, Hard-back, pp240, RRP £22.95



## INFANTRY COMBAT

The Rifle Platoon - An Interactive Exercise in Small-Unit Tactics & Leadership

By John F. Antal

The impact of the pandemic on military training and PME remains significant, the demand

for both remains constant. Distance learning in its various formats has been at the fore of many unit training programmes, particularly Reserve units, who by nature are physically scattered, and unable to form a training bubble.

This book is simple in its concept, offering the reader a scenario with multiple outcomes driven by reader's decision and the occasional use of two D6 dice.

Initially sceptical, I gave it a go. The scenario is focused on newly arrived Platoon Commander in a US Light Role Infantry Battalion, and his seasoned Platoon Sergeant. Deployed to the Middle East at short notice. The narrative follows the deployment into an isolated defensive position, siting of the platoon, leadership challenges, and subsequent decisions in combat.

The narrative is almost docu-drama in its style, making it readable. The maps are good and the dilemmas and outcomes are thought-provoking. All in all, a good low-cost training exercise that is easy to follow. I was Pleasantly surprised.

Published by Casemate, Soft-back, pp276, RRP - £17.99