



December 2025









December 2025

# CASTLE

JOURNAL OF THE ROYAL ANGLIAN REGIMENT



Editor: WO1 (Retd) S Armon

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Front cover: A soldier from C (Northamptonshire) Company training with a SUAS (Small Unmanned Aircraft System) on Exercise WESSEX STORM.

Rear cover: Vikings trench clearing at the trench fighting facility, Kendrew Barracks.

Inside front cover: Clearing the corners. 1st Battalion CQB (Close Quarter Battle) training.

Inside back cover: The Princess Royal - Le Paradis Memorial unveiling 100.

Regimental Internet Website  
www.royalanglianregiment.com



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







## Battle Honours

### 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, Palestine 1917-1918, Cassino I-II, Shaiba, Gothic Line, Mesopotamia 1914-1918, Italy 1943-1945, St Omer-La Bassée, Crete, Dunkirk 1940, Singapore Island, Normandy Landing, Malaya 1941-1942, Brioux Bridgehead, Yu, Venrai, 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, Kelat, Cabool 1842, 1879, Moodkee, Ferozeshah, Sohraon, New Zealand, Goojerat, Punjab, 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

2025 has been another very successful year for our Regiment, with all three Battalions executing vital missions in Defence of our Nation, and our renewed 'Regimental Family' now launched and increasing the support we provide to our veterans.

## Context

The global context in which our serving men and women are operating remains turbulent. In the last year we have witnessed conflict between Israel and Iran dragging the Middle East perilously close to the brink and armed conflict between India and Pakistan, with both firing at each other's nuclear sites. The full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine continues to be the dominant European security crisis and edges towards a fourth year.

We are undeniably dealing with a new era of threats. The MOD has responded through this year's Strategic Defence Review. The Army is now receiving significant investment and modernising to increase its contribution to conventional deterrence. The Defence Review places 'NATO first' and aims to deliver a key priority for NATO – a Strategic Reserve Corps, led by HQ ARRC. Only the British and French have been charged with the vital Strategic Reserve Corps roles. They have a proactive purview that enable NATO's military commander to mitigate risk, manage escalation, create strategic dilemmas and, if required, restore territory.

The British Army's leaders recognise that we must think and fight differently. Rapid and extensive modernisation is underway to reimagine how we will fight with a focus on long range reconnaissance and strike at the speed that AI-assisted targeting can deliver, and a return to the Corps-level of warfare after an era of counterinsurgency. This is the context and intent that in which our warfighters serve and prepare to fight.

## The Battalions

All three of our Battalions are charging ahead with the pursuit of their missions. The Vikings continue on their exciting journey as part of 11 Brigade which is modernising at pace to become the Land



Special Operations Force's fighting formation. In the last year they have completed a full Battle Group validation in the crucible of Kenya and tested new concepts, unit structures and equipment focused on the near-surface fight. In the next year they are due to train for and deploy to Iraq and serve as the UK Standby Battalion for national crises. They will also deploy on Ex VIKING STRIKE to develop their 'Find and Strike' tactics as part of 11 Brigade's role as a formation-level covering force.

The Poachers remain front and centre as a Light Mech combat unit in 7 Brigade within the 1st Division. Over the past year they have executed Ex WESSEX STORM, a Battle Group collective training event, testing new equipment and concepts. They have moved through their live fire training progression at Castlemartin, Brecon and beyond, honing their lethality in both mounted and dismounted roles. Over the next year D Coy will operate as part of NATO's eastern flank deterrence on Op CABRIT in Poland, embedded within a US Battle Group. The Battalion will also complete a six month deployment on Op INTERFLEX enabling the delivery of training to the Ukrainian Armed Forces.

The Steelbacks' role as part of the Army Reserve is critical as we re-focus on warfighting at scale. 88 Steelbacks deployed to Germany on Ex RHINO

HEART in October as part of 19 Brigade's combined-arms training with Estonian and NATO forces. They formed part of the largest deployment of Army Reserve personnel in a generation, drawn from over 30 units in a Battlegroup-against-Battlegroup force-on-force construct. Their shooting team also achieved remarkable success, winning the 1st Division's Reserve Operational Shooting Competition for the fourth consecutive year. Over the next 12 months they will be supporting ongoing operations including Op INTERFLEX, Op TOSCA in Cyprus, and exercises in Belize and Kenya.

## The Regimental Family

Work continues to broaden and deepen our connections with our veterans through both face-to-face and digital means. Dialogue and activity are healthy with our older family members, but we need to do more to connect with our younger veterans. We are now supporting a wide range of social and sporting events to help our veterans connect and will expand the range further next year.

We experimented by moving the Regimental Gathering to our Battalion centre of gravity in Cottesmore this year, not least to give more serving soldiers and veterans the opportunity to mix. The after-action review highlighted the benefits of keeping the gathering in Cottesmore, as well as scope for improvement. Next year's gathering will be on Saturday 12th September in Cottesmore. It will start a little later than previous years and the format will include a drumhead service followed by speeches, presentations and a march past. There will be more entertainment, activities and stands for visitors during the day. The day will continue into the evening with music and a bar. Please do make the effort to come and be part of it.

On the communications side of the house 'Royal Anglian Connect' now has nearly 2,500 members and climbing, and it is a quick and easy way of keeping in touch with Regimental Family news and events. Remember, family, friends and supporters can also sign up.

Increased activity across all social media and local news outlets is providing



## Major General DSJ Biddick MBE MC

publicity for operational and training activity as well as our fundraising and social events. Our new Podcasts are giving soldiers and veterans a chance to tell their stories and impart their experiences to our people. All credit to Steve Armon for coming up with the idea. The output is so good it has been used by the Centre for Army Leadership.

Clearly, our intent to do more for more veterans means we need to raise more money. We're approaching fundraising with more energy and in a much more deliberate way than we have done in the past, taking a layered approach including direct donations by soldiers and veterans, fundraising challenges initiated by Regimental Family members, and building links with business and corporates through dinners and high profile events like shooting days and the Regimental boxing. If you or a business you know would like to be involved, contact Ian Robinson at RHQ. We are raising more to spend more

on benevolence. We have changed our internal rules to allow the expansion of support we provide to those in hardship, need or distress. This year we have doubled the value of the direct grants we gave last year – we are at well over £100,000 and counting. To evidence our progress we will issue an impact report for the first time in the new year which will be available to all digitally.

### Announcements

There have been a lot of promotions to celebrate, including Phil Moxey's promotion to Brigadier and appointment as ACOS G3 in Army HQ and Ben Hawes' promotion to Colonel and appointment as COS of the 1st Division. The Regiment's officers have also performed extraordinarily well on this year's Pink List, with the following officers all being selected for Lieutenant Colonel: David Crosbie, Mark Garner, Tim Hearne, Charles Monk, Jamie Mowforth-Powell, Sam Thomas, Chris

Winterman, Dave Broomfield, Andy Faupel and Rhys Little.

The next commanding officers of the 2nd and 3rd battalions have also been selected. Congratulations to Lt Col Luke Rowbottom who has been selected to command the 2nd Battalion, and to Chris Jose who has been selected to command the 3rd Battalion.

In Regimental appointments we owe a debt of thanks to Lt Col Robert Blomfield who is retiring as County Colonel for Northamptonshire after seven years, and Brig Richard Lyne who is moving on after an epic shift as Deputy Colonel for the 3rd Battalion and our Council lead for recruiting and Cadets.

I would like to wish you all the best for 2026. Look after yourselves, and please make that extra effort to connect and look after one another.

Strength from Within!

## The Royal Anglian Regiment Website

After a lot of hard work and some serious thought about its layout and design, we have a new Regimental Website at [royalanglianregiment.com](http://royalanglianregiment.com).

The website retains the well-proven features of the earlier version, it gives members of the regimental family access to a regularly updated news feed, our Diary of Events, and the Regimental Shop. We have further enhanced [royalanglianregiment.com](http://royalanglianregiment.com)

by incorporating the Royal Anglian Regiment Museum within the site, thereby allowing visitors digital access to the Museum and its archives.

In addition, website users will be able to access a steadily expanding archive of Regimental publications. The website now holds digital back copies of Royal Anglian News (RAN), back issues of our Annual Journal (Castle), and it will eventually include all past Regt Bulletins. This will create an unrivalled archive of our Regt history for future generations.

This new digital community has been named the Royal Anglian Digital Muster, it will be open to all Royal Anglians past and present. An additional feature of the Muster will be a facility for any Association Member to upload a personal biography of their service as a Royal Anglian. These biographies will be located within the Digital Muster. Access to the DM will be granted on registration with RHQ and subsequent verification.

The idea being to capture our collective and personal histories of our time within the Regiment. In this our 60th year, the creation of the Royal Anglian Digital Muster offers us all a unique and precious opportunity. Few Regiment's have the opportunity to capture and collate their history while it is all still within living memory. Please visit [royalanglianregiment.com](http://royalanglianregiment.com) and take the opportunity to contribute to the



Royal Anglian story. If you have not visited [royalanglianregiment.com](http://royalanglianregiment.com), please take the time to register and connect with the Royal Anglian Family.





# Regimental Communications

ColCommsColonelWJMeddings OBE

I've always been intensely proud of what we, as Royal Anglians, achieve day in, day out. I'm also proud of the humble excellence we deliver in barracks, on exercise and on operations. And while we don't always shout about what we achieve we should never be shy about sharing what we do, how well we do it and what we deliver for our country and our counties.

Over the last year that effort has been led by the media teams in the three battalions and I want to thank them for their work. Without them we would not be able to share what we do. They gather the stunning images we use on our social media. If you are a serving soldier or a veteran with an interest in photography, videography and social media then get in touch with your battalion's or the Regiment's communication team. They will help you contribute to sharing our message.

This year we've gone from strength to strength. The Regiment has over 50,000 social media followers and that only grows as we share more about what



we do. Our channels share stories of deployments, images from exercises, our fundraising challenges and events

for serving and veteran Royal Anglians.

If you are running an event, get in touch and we will see if we can support it. And if you've got an inspiring story to celebrate, or photos from an exercise or deployment then let us know. Many of you will have heard the Strength from Within podcast, where current and former members of the Regiment share their lessons in leadership and determination. If you haven't, search for it online and share it around. As a sign of its success, it's being used by officer cadets at Sandhurst and UOTCs as a way of learning about leadership at the coalface. Thank you for your support of the Royal Anglian Connect app. The Regiment leads the way in its use. It's giving our soldiers, veterans and families a great way to communicate and stay in touch. We will carry on using it for event management and if you know someone who would benefit from knowing more about what we are doing then tell them about it. If you have feedback, please let the team know.

## Royal Anglian Instagram

Our Instagram Account ([royalanglianregiment](https://www.instagram.com/royalanglianregiment)) is a dynamic comms channel that is fed directly from the Comms Officers in the battalions, and the Regt Adjutant at RHQ.

The content is generally aimed at a younger viewer and tends to be varied and fast paced. Our Instagram plenty of

video footage from exercises, range days and other eye-catching activity. We have a steadily growing audience of over 26.4k followers who are all interested in the Royal Anglian Regiment. This is an area where we are boxing well above our weight. If you are on Instagram and you aren't following us, take a look at: [royalanglianregiment](https://www.instagram.com/royalanglianregiment)



Royal Anglian Regiment Online  
Our Digital Channels



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



[www.facebook.com/TheRoyalAnglianRegiment](https://www.facebook.com/TheRoyalAnglianRegiment)



[@RAnglians](https://www.instagram.com/RAnglians)



[@royalanglianregiment](https://twitter.com/royalanglianregiment)



[www.linkedin.com/in/royal-anglian-regt/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/royal-anglian-regt/)



[www.youtube.com/@royalanglianregiment](https://www.youtube.com/@royalanglianregiment)



## Connect with the Royal Anglian Regiment

The Royal Anglian connect App is now live and it gives the Regimental family a lot of new tools to allow them to keep up to date with local events and information about what is taking place in their areas. We are all aware of the positives and negatives of social media and there has been some large success with people creating groups and trying to share Regimental information.

### So why should we download the ConnectApp?

Royal Anglian Connect is a free service that can be downloaded for your phone via the App store or Android Shop, and it can also be used on a desktop computer. It is safe and secure and can be customised to you the user.

The App offers you a news pinboard which is an area where news articles and up and coming events will be posted. It also informs you when friends past and present have invited you to connect.

It highlights the great events that goes on in our Regimental areas by listing the local groups and associations that can be joined and followed to ensure you do not miss an event that specific area.

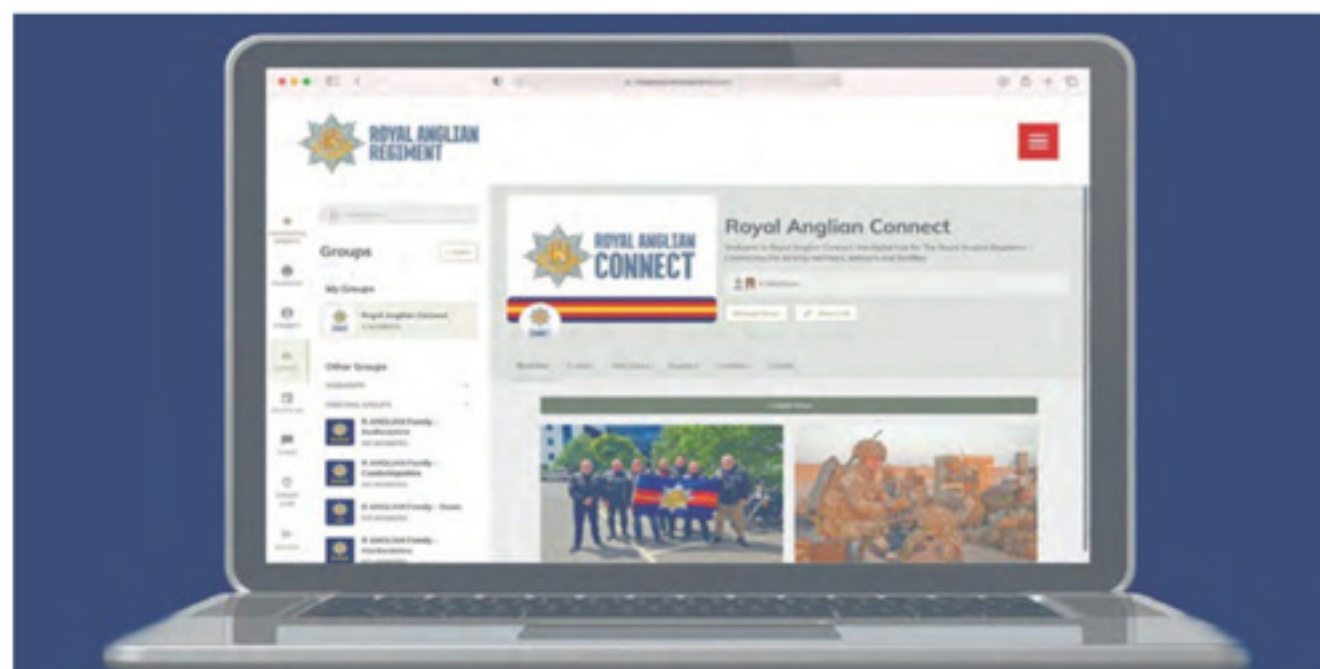
The 'what's on' page of the app is a calendar showing you what events are

taking place throughout the year. This can be filtered to just your local area. The ability to chat directly to friend's past and present is fantastic. You can also get involved with chat within the groups you have joined within the app.

The App is as good as those using it, and you have the complete freedom to create groups and post updates of local events anything that may be relevant to the Royal Anglian family.

There is a support page for anyone suffering with most issues and it assists in signposting you or others in the right direction towards any advice that might be needed.

For those keen to get even more involved, there is the opportunity to become an admin for the groups that are created. You will be able to drive content being uploaded and making sure events get listed.







# Personalia

## Notable Appointments

### Promotions

Colonel to Brigadier

Colonel PC Moxey MBE

Lieutenant Colonel to Colonel

Lieutenant Colonel GJ Goodey

Lieutenant Colonel BT Hawes MBE

Lieutenant Colonel BD Weston

Major to Lieutenant Colonel

Major F Atkins

Major D Broomfield

Major D Crosbie

Major A Faupel MBE

Major M Garner

Major T Hearne

Major R Little

Major C Monk

Major J Mowforth-Powell

Major L Rowbottom

Major S Thomas

Major H Willis

Major C Winterman

Captain to Major

Captain J Ellen

Captain W Heaton

Captain S King

Captain A Langley

Captain J Raschen

Captain M Andrews

Captain L Talkington

Captain D Coyle

Captain K Forsyth

Captain J Howvath

Captain D Parker

Captain E Williams

Captain B Humphreys

Captain J Greenhill

Captain D Spray

Lieutenant to Captain

Lieutenant H Browne

Lieutenant DJ Butler

Lieutenant H Davies

Lieutenant A Moss

Lieutenant BTS Jooste-Jennings

Lieutenant JFG Rice

Lieutenant AP Stratton

Lieutenant O White

Lieutenant H Bussandra

Lieutenant J Peel

Lieutenant S Barke

Lieutenant E Ashwell

Lieutenant C Mithcell

SNCO to Captain on LE Commission

WO1 SP Thomas

WO1 P Kennedy

WO2 L Bobsin

Second Lieutenant to Lieutenant

Second Lieutenant AJ Bevan

Second Lieutenant JAP Freemantle

Second Lieutenant CP Morgan

Second Lieutenant OA Goldsack

Second Lieutenant MME Emmett

Second Lieutenant SS Irvine

Second Lieutenant G Chapman

Second Lieutenant J Bagnall

Second Lieutenant D Bradnam

Second Lieutenant H Astill

Second Lieutenant H Young

Second Lieutenant J Davies

Second Lieutenant C Solon

Second Lieutenant E Needham

Officer Cadet to Second Lieutenant

Officer Cadet CB Allen

Officer Cadet D Brookman

Officer Cadet B Sporton

Officer Cadet A Lloyd-Davis

Officer Cadet SJ Frost

Officer Cadet A Jack



Please note this list is based upon information provided to RHQ over the course of 2012 and includes some key appointments which are of interest to members of the Regimental Family

#### On Retirement

Major NTB Watkins (Belated entry)

#### WO1 to WO1

WO1 (RSM) Kerin

WO1 (RSM) Watts

#### Colour Sergeant to WO1

WO2 CHarrison

WO2 Warburton

WO2 Wildney

WO2 Kimpton

WO2 Roffe

WO2 Harrison

#### Sergeant to Colour Sergeant

CSgt Walker

CSgt Boot

CSgt Parker

CSgt Garrod

CSgt Rosser

CSgt Burgess

CSgt Leahy

CSgt Reeve

CSgt Sharman

CSgt Dunster

CSgt Fines CSgt

Harraway CSgt

Pritchard CSgt

Rouse CSgt

Rowland

#### Corporal to Sergeant

Sgt Wiles

Sgt Storrie From PWRR

Sgt Wall

Sgt Ward-Mansfield

Sgt Baker

Sgt Limb

Sgt Lingley

Sgt Wormall

Sgt White

Sgt Meehan

Sgt Molyneux to PWRR

Sgt Smith

Sgt Steer

Sgt Strong

Sgt Bellingham

Sgt Wells

Sgt Muse

Sgt Thompson

Sgt Leadley

## Honours and Awards

### Long Service and Good Conduct

Cpl JL Dyer

Cpl L Fisher

Sgt PL Hodge

Sgt AJ Reid

Cpl RD Wolfe

CSgt JE Baker

Sgt JS Eggleton

CSgt GS Farrell

Cpl AC Lea

Pte PA Mitchell

Cpl ARR Sloan

Cpl C Thompson

Maj CM Winterman MBE

Sgt J Cobbold

Sgt G Foley

Cpl A Sewell

WO1 SP Thomas

CSgt L Whitehouse

Sgt JM Pritchard

#### 1st Clasp

WO1 GC George

WO2 R McCaughey

Capt SA Seaton-Norton

CSgt S Warnes

WO2 PD Childs

Sgt GC Joy

#### 2nd Clasp

Lt Gen RW Wooddisse

KCB CBE MC Staff

Capt AJ Rainey MC

Lt Col AG Grinonneau

WO2 RT Perry

WO2 PS Culshaw

Sgt D Eaton

Capt N Vazquez





# The Regiment

Colonel-in-Chief

HRH The Duke of Gloucester KG GCVO  
Colonel of the Regiment

Major General Dominic S J Biddick MBE MC  
Regimental Counsellor

Major General SL Porter CBE

Honorary Chaplain to the Regiment

The Reverend Paul Whitehead

Assistant Honorary Chaplains to the Regiment

Cambridgeshire: The Reverend Alan Jesson  
Bedfordshire: The Reverend Stephen Smith

Deputy Colonels of the Regiment

1st Battalion: Brigadier GB Foden  
2nd Battalion: Colonel WJ Meddings OBE  
3rd Battalion: Lieutenant Colonel K Splers MBE TD

Senior LE Officer

Major K Main  
College of Colonels

Chairman of Regimental Trustees : Mr DJ Till

Colonel MS : Brigadier GB Foden  
Colonel Communications : Colonel WJ Meddings OBE  
Colonel Recruiting : Colonel BT Hawes MBE  
Colonel Heritage : Major S Card  
Colonel Cadets : Colonel BT Hawes MBE  
Colonel Veterans : Major General OCC Brown CBE

Regimental Trustees

Colonel of the Regiment, Mr DJ Till, Lieutenant Colonel BD Weston, Major PD Connolly, Captain RWH Colgan,  
Captain SC Lane, Lieutenant Colonel R Bredin MBE, Captain T Newton and Regimental Secretary.  
Secretary: Assistant Regimental Secretary

County Colonels

|                                 |                                         |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Norfolk:                        | Major D Gregory                         |
| Suffolk:                        | Lieutenant Colonel MH Wenham            |
| Essex:                          | Colonel CAF Thomas TD DL                |
| Cambridgeshire:                 | Lieutenant Colonel D Denson TD          |
| Lincolnshire:                   | Lieutenant Colonel SJ Bacon             |
| Leicestershire:                 | Captain TR Wilkes                       |
| Northamptonshire:               | Lieutenant Colonel RHL Blomfield MBE TD |
| Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire: | Major JN Whatley DL                     |

Regimental Museum

Chairman of Trustees: Major S Card  
Trustees: Colonel NH Kelsey OBE TD, Lieutenant Colonel ACE Marinos,  
Lieutenant Colonel ADW McArdle OBE TD, Lieutenant Colonel A Powell MBE, Major T Dormer TD,  
Captain PR Randall, JMH Naylor, M Latter, Deputy Regimental Secretary and Regimental Secretary.

Alliances

|              |                                                                                                                              |
|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Australia    | The Royal Tasmania Regiment                                                                                                  |
| Barbados     | The Barbados Regiment                                                                                                        |
| Belize       | The Belize Defence Force                                                                                                     |
| Bermuda      | The Royal Bermuda Regiment                                                                                                   |
| Canada       | Sherbrooke Hussars<br>The Lincoln and Welland Regiment<br>The Essex and Kent Scottish<br>The Lake Superior Scottish Regiment |
| Gibraltar    | The Royal Gibraltar Regiment                                                                                                 |
| Malaysia     | 1st Battalion Royal Malay Regiment                                                                                           |
| New Zealand  | 3rd Battalion (Auckland (Countess of Ranfurly's Own) and Northland) Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment                      |
| Pakistan     | 5th Battalion The Frontier Force Regiment                                                                                    |
| South Africa | First City Regiment<br>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 (formerly Romford), Hertford, Hinckley and Bosworth, Huntingdon, Ipswich, Kettering, King's Lynn, Leicester, Lincoln, Lowestoft, Luton, Newham (formerly East Ham), Northampton, Norwich, Oadby and Wigston, Peterborough, Redbridge (formerly 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) JCJ Wright  
 Email: [john.wright335@mod.gov.uk](mailto:john.wright335@mod.gov.uk)  
 MD for Charity and Veterans: Major I Robinson MBE  
 Email: [ian.robinson@royalanglianregiment.com](mailto:ian.robinson@royalanglianregiment.com)

Deputy Regimental Secretary (Communications and Heritage) : WO1 (Retd) S Armon  
 Email: [steve.armon.rhq@gmail.com](mailto:steve.armon.rhq@gmail.com)

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

Email: [mark.goldsmith101@mod.gov.uk](mailto:mark.goldsmith101@mod.gov.uk)  
 Regimental Adjutant: Captain GS Chapman  
 Email: [george.chapman110@mod.gov.uk](mailto:george.chapman110@mod.gov.uk)  
 Chief Clerk: Mr SRDunning

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)

Regimental Area Secretary (County Engagement  
 and Veteran Support): Captain (Retd) G Good  
 Email: [gavin.good103@mod.gov.uk](mailto:gavin.good103@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 (County Engagement  
 and Veteran Support): Major (Retd) TJ StC Brown  
 Email: [timothy.brown133@mod.gov.uk](mailto:timothy.brown133@mod.gov.uk)  
 Tel: 07970 050163  
 Clerk: Mrs A Godbolt. Email: [anne.godbolt100@mod.gov.uk](mailto:anne.godbolt100@mod.gov.uk)

RHQ Area Office Lincolnshire, Leicestershire,  
 Northamptonshire, Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire  
 Kendrew Barracks, Cottesmore, Rutland LE15 7BL  
 Tel: 01572-812241 Ext 7161

**Battalion Locations**

**1st Battalion**

Lieutenant Colonel INP McGinley  
 Kendrew Barracks, Cottesmore, Rutland, LE15 7BL

**2nd Battalion**

Lieutenant Colonel JW Bennett-Madge  
 Kendrew Barracks, Cottesmore, Rutland LE15 7BL

**3rd Battalion**

Lieutenant Colonel E Matts  
 Army Reserves Centre, Blenheim Camp,  
 Newmarket Road, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP33 3SW

**Regimental Representatives**

Infantry Training Centre (Catterick): Major H Deed  
 Infantry Battle School : WO2 A Barclay  
 Land Command and Staff College : Major D Mackness  
 RMA Sandhurst: Major W Hoy  
 Cambridge University OTC: WO2 FTRS C Marsh  
 Birmingham University OTC: Lieutenant Colonel GJR Hudson

**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)





# Regimental Matters

## Regimental Battlefield Study Gallipoli 10-19 September 2020

Thanks to a generous grant from the Regimental Trustees this year saw the Regimental Battlefield Study (BFS) flex its wings and travel to Asia Minor from where we conducted a three-day pilgrimage to the battlefields of the Gallipoli Campaign of 1915.

Representing all three battalions met a small group of veterans at Heathrow Terminal 5 on Monday morning to board the flight to Istanbul, the city where East meets West. A four-hour coach journey took us along the north shore of the Sea of Marmara (Europe) before crossing the Dardanelles over the longest two pier suspension bridge in the world. We were delighted to be joined in theatre by the British Defence Attaché to Jordan, Col Bruce Weston, former Commanding Officer of the Poachers. Our hotel for the duration was in the vibrant seaside town of Canakkale.

On each of the three study days we looked at one of the three principal landing sites used by the Allies starting with Cape Helles where 29 Division



**The Helles Memorial.**



**Looking towards Cape Helles from Achi Baba.**



**Overlooking V Beach where 29 Div landed.**

of the MEF landed on 25 April 1915. After crossing the Dardanelles by ferry each morning we travelled on to view in detail the landing sites. Gallipoli saw the first major amphibious landings for which there was little or no doctrine, so it was pretty much a case of "make it up as we go along". The carnage much was learnt from the slaughter on the beaches, resulting in the incredible advance in planning and preparation for amphibious landings 3 decades later at Salerno and of course Normandy in 1944.

Despite heroic fighting and resilience, the units of 29 Div never achieved their D+1 objective of reaching the village of Krithia. We were very fortunate to have a local Turkish guide who was able, most eloquently, to explain the battles from the enemy's perspective. No one on the British side had expected the Turks to fight so gallantly in the defence of their homeland, nor to be led by the outstanding Commander, Mustafa Kemal, later dubbed "Ataturk" the father of Turkey following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire.

Crossing the Straits each morning on the commuter ferry allowed us to see the



**Approaching ANAZA Cove by boat.**





# Regimental Matters

strategic importance of the Dardanelles. The quantity of commercial shipping en-route to Istanbul and the Black Sea was evident and with regular Naval patrol ships keeping a close overwatch the proximity of the Crimea and its strategic value to Russia was lost on no one. The only difference being that in 1915 Russia was on our side! Day 2 allowed us to visit the ANZAC landing site, and what better than to approach ANZAC Cove by boat.

Gallipoli has become synonymous with the identity of both Australia and New Zealand, indeed their National Day of Remembrance is 25th April each year. On this day in 1915 these two great countries experienced their baptism of fire on the rugged slopes of Gaba Tepe slogging their way up Walker's Ridge to Plugge's Plateau. After swimming in the Cove and diving over an actual wreck from the battle laying on the seabed, we climbed up the Gully ravine to the Nek and Lone Pine battlefields.

We looked in detail at the trench systems of both sides which are well preserved as there is little farming activity in the hills, and recent bush fires reveal new sites of interest and much battlefield debris. The proximity of the trenches and the detailed accounts of the fighting allowed us to break into



**Lone Pine Cemetery.**



**The rugged terrain that faced the ANZAC on 25 April 1915.**





Sulva Bay seen from the Nek.



The senior officers taking a moment.





# Regimental Matters



**The ruins of Troy.**

syndicates to discuss how in modern warfare stalemate such as this could be avoided, with reference to the situation in eastern Ukraine.

The final day led us to Suvla Bay where in August 1915 the Allies launched a third front in the hope of diverting Turkish troops and reinforcements. This offensive by IX Corps included in its ORBAT 54 (East Anglian) Div made up of many of our former regiments. Kemal as he was, commanding a Corps-sized force held off the landings at Suvla Bay and helped end the Allied hopes of a successful end to the Campaign.

A parched Green Hill Cemetery overlooking the Bay is home to many of our fallen comrades from our former County Regiments, and so it was here that we held a Service of Remembrance. Lt Sam Irvine's great grandfather lies in this cemetery and so it was he who laid the Regimental Wreath on behalf of the Colonel of the Regiment and all ranks.

This BFS really focussed the mind on lost opportunities, poor leadership,



**Service of Remembrance.**



a failure to grasp the initiative and to understand the senior Commander's intent. It taught those present many excellent lessons, especially in the rank range JNCO to Captain which formed the bulk of the party, and so we are

immensely grateful for the opportunity this afforded us all.

With the ancient City of Troy just 30 minutes' drive south of Canakkale the opportunity to pay a fleeting visit was not lost, and it did not disappoint.

Seeing the well-preserved ruins dating back to almost 3000BC was the icing on the cake of this most memorable and productive Battlefield Study and Pilgrimage.

TJStCB

## Exercise ANGLIAN DARDONELLES Regimental Battlefield Study of the Gallipoli Campaign

... a participant's perspective

Between 15 and 19 September 2025, 31 soldiers and veterans from across the Royal Anglian Regiment deployed to Turkey to conduct a Battlefield Study (BFS) of the Gallipoli Campaign, one of the most significant operations of the First World War. The study included visits to the key battlefields of Cape Helles, ANZAC Cove, and Suvla Bay, where our regimental forebears from Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire, Lincolnshire fought with distinction.

The first day saw the group fly into Istanbul with our guides from Battle Honours tours, Julian Whippy and Steve Chambers. We then moved down to the Gallipoli peninsula, with a stop at Tekirdag which is famous for it's Kofte (a theme for the trip), before arriving at our hotel in Cannakale.

The second day saw an early start for the group to catch a rather pleasant ferry over the Dardanelles to Kilitbahir on our way to study the Helles landings. We were given the chance to walk the battlegrounds of V and W beach on the southern tip of the peninsula, which with hindsight are somewhat exposed for daylight littoral operations in wooden boats. A/ Capt Chapman also treated the group with his insights on the differences between a boat and a ship.

The group then moved to the imposing obelisk of the Helles monument, a fitting tribute to the brave sacrifices made by the British forces that were killed throughout the campaign, the remains of whom are largely lost. Lt Irvine had a true Who Do You Think You Are moment when

he found a relative of his inscribed on the monument. The group returned to the hotel after a rather sombre day of walking around these battlegrounds to have some well-earned Kofte for dinner.

The third day dawned, and the group used the ferry once more to cross the Dardanelles and visit the ANZAC sector. This began with a study on the Gaba Tepe landings conducted from a dive boat and a quick swim in the Aegean in order the ANZAC forces would have faced the conditions of their landings. Once ashore, the group enjoyed a Kofte-based lunch before travelling up into the mountainous terrain around The Nek and the Battle of Lone Pine. The memorials here showed the brave sacrifices made by the soldiers, where many of the trenches can still be seen very prominently. The ANZAC and Ottoman forces were within grenade range of each other for the majority of the 9 month campaign, which opened the groups eyes to the reality of warfare in the early 20th Century. The group again returned to the hotel before going out for a Kofte dinner in a local restaurant, where Lt Irvine also managed to show off his DJ skills to the group.

On the fourth day, the group spent the morning visiting the headquarters of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, the commander of the Ottoman forces.

Our local guide, Adem, showed us the campaign from the opposing perspective and how important this campaign was for the 'sick man of Europe' to evolve into modern day

Turkey. Adem also went in to great detail about the current situation in modern Turkey and similarities between the political landscape in 1915 and now. We then moved to Suvla bay, where many soldiers of our forebear regiments bravely fought and died.

Our guides took us to the site where the myth says the 1/5th Battalion Norfolk Regiment 'The Sandringham Pals' disappeared into a cloud of smoke or were abducted by aliens. This myth has since been disproved and the battalion was likely overextended from the rest of the brigade and behind the Ottoman front line, where they marched into machine gun fire and were mostly decimated, except a few survivors. We visited the Green Hill war grave cemetery, which is dedicated to many of our forebears and conducted a ceremony of remembrance in their honour.

The group then returned to the Asiatic side of the Dardanelles and took a quick trip up the coast to see the remains of the city of Troy as a final stop before the end of the study. This included a guided tour from Adem, who showed us the city from its first inception, right through to when the Romans took over.

Gallipoli remains one of the most demanding and instructive campaigns of the First World War. It speaks not only to our regimental history but also to the realities of expeditionary warfare, joint operations, and leadership in adversity. This Battlefield Study ensured our soldiers returned with a stronger sense of heritage and sharper professional insight.





# Regimental Matters

## Memorial Service for a Charismatic Leader, Tony Jones

Anthony Jones (Tony) sadly died on Monday 21 January 2025 in Thailand, where he owned a holiday home.

Tony joined the Army in 1969 and trained at Sutton Coldfield, prior to joining the 1st Battalion, The Vikings in Catterick and served in B Company. He would continue to serve the Regiment for 47 years in uniform and later as an Area Secretary at Regimental Headquarters.

Tony was an outstanding character, soldier and superb sportsman who had the ability to command the respect of all those he came in to contact with. His unique style and personality have influenced many soldiers and officers alike. Many will have been educated in the errors of their ways, guided by him and mentored by him. He was considered by all to be the greatest of leaders who led by example. His unique style and charisma set him aside from his peers. After Catterick, Tony moved to

Londonderry with the 1st Battalion which was considered to have been a demanding tour. In that time he was awarded a Royal Humane Society Award for a combined effort in saving a man from drowning in the River Foyle. He



moved with the Vikings to Cyprus in 1972 and Tidworth 1974. In 1978 as a Platoon Sergeant in the mechanised role

he moved to Celle, and on to be the Anti-Tank Platoon as 2IC.

In 1982 he moved to Oakington and was posted as PSI to 6 R Anglian in Cambridge. On completion he moved back to the Vikings as CSM B Company and embarked on another residential tour of Londonderry, after which he moved to Gibraltar as RQMS(M) and the RSM. In 1990 he moved to Colchester and was commissioned in 1991 as the MTO, he went on to be QM(T), QM and OC HQ Coy. It was whilst OC HQ coy that his leadership shone through when they became the Champion Company much to the disgust of the rifle and support companies at that time. He also completed a tour as QM for 3 R Anglian.

Tony deployed on multiple operational tours in Northern Ireland as well as Croatia and Afghanistan. After finishing his uniformed career Tony went on to be an Area Secretary at Regimental Headquarters working out of Warley, where amongst his responsibilities was looking after the Regimental Chapel, a role he cherished. He assisted in the organisation of several freedom parades and funerals of the fallen from our





Afghan tours. His ability to get local councils and organisations to come together to produce an excellent event, spoke volumes of his communication and personal skills.

was Tony's sporting prowess legendary. He played football for many years at Battalion level, for the Vikings and eventually became OIC football. As an accomplished sprinter he was part of the team that won the Army Championships in the early 1970s, he played cricket for the Vikings and enjoyed rugby. Many young officers took him on at squash only to find themselves at the end of a thrashing. Later in his career he even ran in the Battalion cross country team. In his off-duty time, he enjoyed golf.

Tony met his wife Rhonda whilst on his first tour of Londonderry and they have two sons Anthony and Stephen. Rhonda fought a protracted battle with cancer, Tony's strength and compassion was much in evidence as he continued to nurse Rhonda whilst juggling his career. She eventually passed away in 2014. Tony met his second wife Bobbi whilst holidaying in Thailand, they married in 2021, Tony moving to set up home with Bobbi in her native Canada.

A memorial service was held for Tony at the Regimental Chaple in Warley.







# Regimental Matters

## Officers' Dinner moves to the Cavalry and Guards Club

After many years at the Army and Navy Club in St James' the Officers' Dinner Club had to find a new location this year. The RAG had looked after us very well indeed but in recent years, and with both regular battalions serving in the UK, popularity of the Regimental Dinner has grown considerably. In 2024 several would-be diners had to be turned away due to capacity and therefore the search began for a new location that could seat well in excess of 100 officers.

A number of clubs, including the Naval and Military (The In and Out) were considered but at the end of the day I suppose it was inevitable that with a Cavalryman in charge there was really only one option. Fortunately, the Cavalry and Guards Club could cater for up to 140 Officers and guests at a very reasonable rate, thanks it has to be said to the fact that Major Tim Brown, the Area 2 Regimental Secretary, is a Member.

Thus it was that on Friday 7th November the Regimental Council conducted their first ever meeting at 127 Piccadilly, followed in the evening by the Officers' Dinner. Champagne was







served in the Field Marshals' Room where we greeted our three guests from the Worshipful Company of Poulterers. Dinner was served in the Coffee Room, followed by port and cheese during which Toasts were made to HM The

King and our Colonel-in-Chief. Finally, The Colonel of the Regiment made a speech in which he thanked our two other Regimental guests who were being dined out, Brigadier Rich Lyne and Colonel Robert Blomfield. He

concluded with a Toast to the Regiment. Next year's Officers' Dinner will take place on Friday 6th November at the Cavalry and Guards Club, which will be advertised on CONNECT so don't forget to keep in touch on the App!

## Regimental Representative Event – Regimental Cocktail Party Rockingham Castle 10 July 2020

On a balmy summer's evening in July the 2nd Battalion hosted over a hundred guests at the spectacular home of His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant for Northamptonshire, James Saunders-Watson, for what proved to be a most enjoyable and memorable evening.

Guests had been invited from the county of Northamptonshire principally with a few from Rutland and farther afield. In addition to Lord Lieutenants we were honoured to host many "Friends" from the wider Regimental Family in order to show our appreciation for their continued support in so many different ways, and this included the MP for Kettering, the Rt Hon Rosie Wrighting, where a month earlier the Regiment had

exercised its Freedom with a parade through the town centre. With a Jackal and a Foxhound flanking the ancient, fortified entrance to Rockingham Castle guests had an opportunity to speak to the crew members who had recently returned from a gruelling two months exercising on Salisbury Plain along with other Poachers manning various weapon stands. Drinks and canapes were served on the Castle lawn from where beautiful views of the Welland Valley extended as far as the eye could see. Brigadier Richard Lyne welcomed our guests formally and gave a brief strategic overview of where the

military is currently poised and how the Regiment sits within that context. Lt- Col Jeff Bennett-Madge, Commanding the Poachers, then gave a summary of recent activity and what the near future holds for the Battalion. Having repulsed a large-scale frontal assault by a determined body of flying ants our guests moved to the Castle Quadrangle for the Beating Retreat. First, our very own Corps of Drums performed to an extraordinary standard resplendent in their new scarlet tunics. We were equally blessed as the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas then performed a stunning musical arrangement before both bands came together to play Sunset followed by the National Anthem.





# Regimental Charity & Welfare

## General

The welfare of our serving soldiers, veterans of the Regiment/Forebear Regiments and their families, remains the highest priority of the Regiment. The Managing Director Charity and Fundraising has been working closely with RHQ to look at ways of increasing our income, so the Regimental Charity is able to provide more financial support to the Regimental Family through benevolence grants.

The Regiment continues to generate income of around £120,000 from our soldiers and officers' contributions into the Day's Pay Scheme. The aspiration of the Regimental Charity is to spend 100% of the income received from the Day's Pay Scheme on grant applications.

A big thank you on behalf of the Colonel of Regiment and the Regimental family to all those currently contributing into the Day's Pay Scheme. If you are not paying into the Day's Pay Scheme, we strongly encourage you to go and speak with your RAO to sign up. This allows the Regimental Charity to continue to provide financial support to our Regimental Family through benevolence grants and other activities such as Minden & Talavera Day, Adventurous Training, Sports Tours, and Battlefield Studies.

## Grants

The Regiment continues to award grants to those in times of hardship, need or distress and supporting Battalion type activities. In 2025, the Regimental Charity has paid out almost £105,000 in benevolence grants, this is compared to £82,000 throughout the whole of 2024. By the end of 2025, our aim is to have spent 100% of the income from the Day's Pay Scheme on benevolence grants. The number of cases in 2025 are broken down as follows:

Total Cases received - 93; Grants Declined - 63; Declined - 30 applications received by RHQ are reviewed by the Benevolence Committee to ensure each request meets the charities' criteria for payment. Whilst the Regiment makes every effort to award a grant wherever the criteria does allow, the 30 cases



by Assistant Regimental Secretary  
Mark Goldsmith

declined were for reasons such as no verification of service is provided, or no hardship, need or distress can be identified.

## Outreach

Whilst we do have two Regimental Area Secretaries supporting our serving soldiers and veteran community, the Regimental Headquarters has no direct outreach capability to undertake casework. Therefore, a grant is made to the ABF each year, who in turn fund caseworkers from other charitable organisations to assist RHQ with the application process. RHQ would like to thank all caseworkers for their invaluable support to our Regimental Family, particularly to SSAFA and RBL who have supported RHQ in 93% of the applications received.

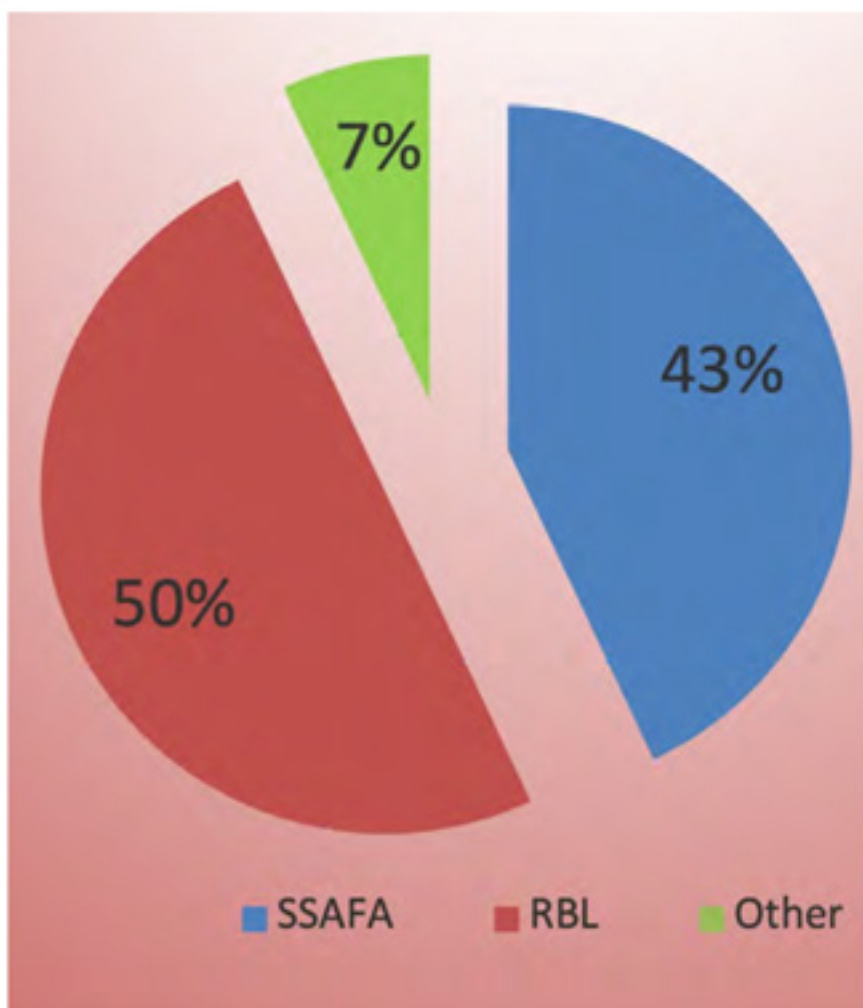
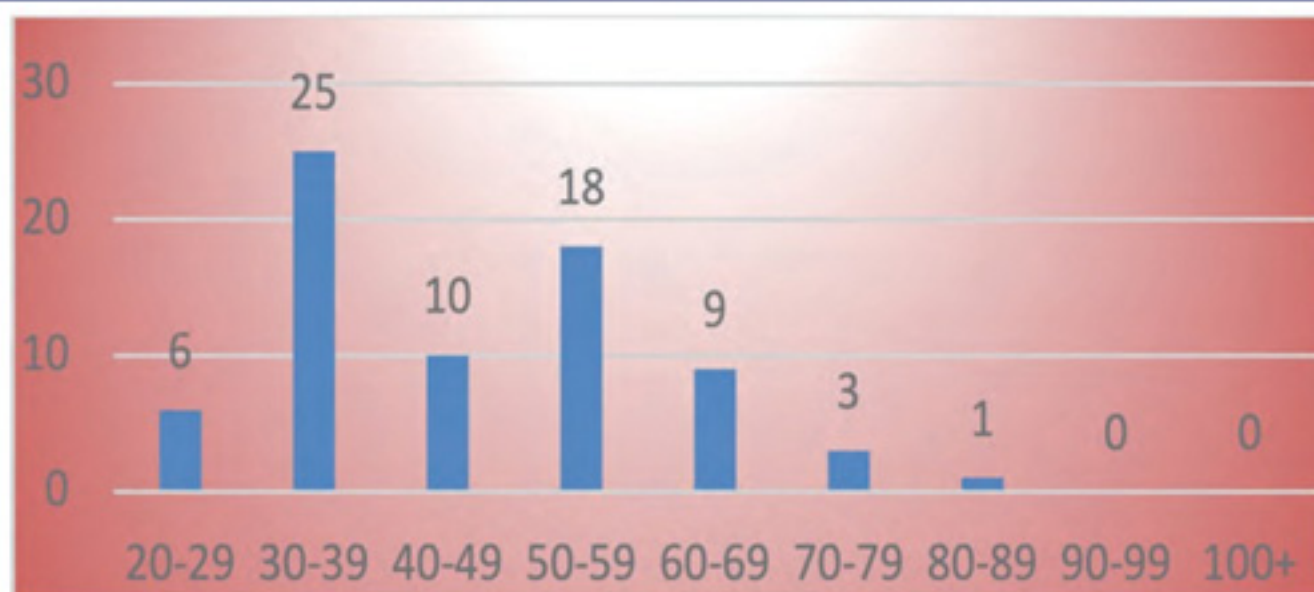


Figure 1 - Casework source.



**Figure 2 - Age groups (grant awarded).**

If you know of a veteran who you believe may be in hardship, need or distress please contact RHQ who will be able to identify where support can best be offered.

#### Trends

The two main factors in most grants being awarded to those under the age of sixty are the decline in numbers serving as part of their National Service and those who served in the more recent Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts. The graph above shows a breakdown of age group where a grant has been awarded.

#### Dispersal

The main purposes for grant applications continue to be the same as in previous years, these being:

- Purchase of brown and white goods;
- Debts;
- Support with mobility issues;
- Travel assistance (In-Service requests).

#### Fundraising

The Managing Director for Charity and Fundraising continues identify new

fundraising opportunities to generate additional income for the Royal Anglian Regiment Charity.

A key focus has been hosting events such as Charity Dinners and sporting events - eg Boxing Night, Shooting Competition. If you are planning to run a fundraising event in 2026, please consider The Royal Anglian Regiment Charity when deciding where to donate the proceeds. You will be directly supporting those from your Regiment that fall in times of need, hardship, or distress.

#### Donation Methods

If you wish to donate you can do so via one of the following methods:

##### BACS payment.

The Royal Anglian Regiment Charity  
16-19-26  
20233435

Just Giving: Follow the link via the website

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

where there is a link to Just Giving to make a donation.

#### Enthuse

Donation page on the Regimental website follow the link to the website where you can make a one off or regular donation <https://royalanglianregiment.enthuse.com/donate>

#### Cheque

Send a cheque made payable to The Royal Anglian Regiment Charity.

#### The Wayland Fund

The Wayland Fund is a specific purpose fund established to support amputees. The fund was donated by an organisation that intended to set up its own establishment in support of amputees.

They realised it was not required and so donated their funds to us. The use of this fund allows the Regimental to contribute larger amounts in support of benevolence applications.

Full details of the Regimental Charity's account are available on the Charities Commission website.

The Royal Anglian Regiment Charity (No: 1200816).

**JustGiving™**





# Regimental Charity & Welfare

## Case 1

Nobby served 13 years in the Regiment including 2 tours of Northern Ireland and has a diagnosis of PTSD linked to those tours. In 2024 he had a major stroke, was placed on life support and diagnosed with locked in syndrome.

He lost the use of both legs, his right arm and reduced function in the left, just enough to use a spelling board which he uses to communicate as he's unable to speak. Nobby retains full capacity and memory of who he is but had lost his identity and self-worth. He was in an old people's care home where the physical progress he made in hospital started to regress and he spent every day in his room, with just the TV for company.

To support his continued physical recovery and stop his mental health deteriorating further, the Regimental Charity working with a local business, who have been long term supporters of the Regiment, made a major grant to



towards the home adaptations required to his house, these adaptations have

now been completed, and he is living at home.



### Case r

MS lives an alternative lifestyle on his own on a boat. Due to outstanding repairs required on the boat he was at risk of homelessness. The Regimental Charity was able to make an immediate grant which enabled repair work to the boat ensuring MS could remain living on it and did not require rehousing.



### Case r

SG is a former Poacher who was severely wounded by an IED explosion whilst on active service in West Belfast, Northern Ireland. The incident left him with life changing injuries that impact every aspect of his life. The Regimental Charity has made a grant for the purchase of fishing equipment. Spending time fishing boosts

SG's mental and physical health by reducing stress, improving focus, and providing gentle outdoor exercise. It fosters patience, self-esteem, and connection with nature and also offers a peaceful escape or a social activity.



### Case t

A veteran of the Regiment, who had been recently released from prison contacted RHQ through a service charity for £450. This was to go towards tools to restart their painting and decorating business and was granted.

Approximately 12 weeks later, RHQ were contacted again by the same service charity as the veteran had completed and passed their probation. The ask was to assist with furniture costs for his new home.

Normally, RHQ will grant funds to beneficiaries once per financial year unless there are extenuating circumstances.

The veteran's business with appointments/jobs being run on a digital calendar and proving that the veteran had been rehabilitated post their sentence.

In this case, there was universal agreement that this veteran should receive a second grant and an additional £1000 was made available from the Regimental Charity to furnish their new home.



## 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.vnhs.wc&v@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:Admin.vnhs.wc&v@wales.nhs.uk)

### Cornwall

Available 09:00-18:00 hrs Mon-Thu,  
Tel: 01579 373737  
Referrals: 012579 335245  
Email: [cpg-tr.veteranassistance@nhs.net](mailto:cpg-tr.veteranassistance@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 1231145  
Email: [vwals@nhs.net](mailto:vwals@nhs.net)  
North End House, 42 North End, Durham, DH14 4LW

### Midlands and East of England

Tel: 0300 323 0137  
Email: [mevs@mhms.org.uk](mailto:mevs@mhms.org.uk)

### London and South East England

Tel: 0203 317 6818,  
Email: [cim-tr.veteranstillservice-lse@nhs.net](mailto:cim-tr.veteranstillservice-lse@nhs.net)  
Website: The Veterans' Mental Health Transition,  
Intervention and Liaison (TIL) Service

### South Central and South West England

Tel: 300 3650300  
Email: [awp.swveterans@nhs.net](mailto:awp.swveterans@nhs.net)  
Bath NHS House, Newbridge Hill, Bath, BA1 3QE

### Other Assistance Providers

# SAMARITANS

### 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@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)  
Website: [samaritans.org](http://samaritans.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

## Do You Need Assistance?

If you find yourself in need, hardship or distress,  
seek caseworker assistance 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)



## ROYAL ANGLIAN REGIMENT WITH THANKS

Here are a few useful organisations to assist you with transision out of the Regiment and into Civilian life.It does not stop here. Below are only a few of the programs available to you outside of the usual social media platforms. For any assistance or guidance please feel free to reach out to the Regimental Headquarters wich is based in Burt St Edmunds on this number: 01284 752394

The Royal Anglian CONNECT App is free for serving personnel, veterans,partners and family members. The App has Groups, Messaging, Chat Notifications, Search and Connect Functions for you to engage with other members of our Regimental family. There is a calander for you to host and track upcoming events. Available on desktop or both Apple and Android using the QR codes to the left



Science has proven that there are many things we can do to improve our mental fitness: good habits, diet, sleep, exercise, relationships, and changing your thought patterns. The problem is, we don't take action when we feel down. We don't actually "do" the things that make us feel better. This app is free for you and funded by the Regiment. For more information visit:  
<https://www.royalanglianregiment.com/veterans/well-being/>

Op ASCEND connects employers with veterans and their family members, supporting their recruitment, retention and progression throughout their civilian careers. It's a free service run by the Forces Employment Charity, with funding from the UK government. For more information head to:  
<https://careersafterservice.campaign.gov.uk/>



Here for you 24/7, we are the first point of contact for veterans and their loved ones. They can directly refer you to a verified, expert partners including Combat Stress, SSAFA, Poppy Scotland and more. For more informaon visit:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/find-support-for-veterans-and-their-families>

# STRENGTH FROM WITHIN





# Mainly About People

Nijmegen 2020



The Nijmegen Marches are a four-day annual walking event held in the Netherlands in July.

Teams walk 106 miles in loops around the city. Training began during a busy period with both Cyclone and Exercise WESSEX STORM affecting how much group training could be conducted, but the team managed to deploy in good order.

Arriving on Heumensoord Camp for the safety briefs, the team had a day and a half to explore the city before a 3am awakening to the blaring siren alarm to

begin the first day of walking.

Each day is named after the largest town that the walkers pass through and has a colour theme. The inhabitants of the town line the streets and pass out cold drinks and snacks, with music playing and bands giving live performances to spur people on. With each day clocking in at 40+ km, and with the country being so flat, the feet feel the repetition of 70,000 steps on the tarmac. On the last day, the team collected their medals at Charlemagne field and marched down into the town for the finish.

It was a very strong performance from the Poachers team, winning the Best Team Leader award out of the 1,000 participants of the British Military Contingent and putting in good times every single day.

With a wonderful week concluded, the team stopped in for a final meal at a Dutch McDonald's and headed back to the UK.

Hopefully the Battalion can enter a team in the coming years as it is a real highlight of the year and a great event to participate in.

## Into the Furnace

### My 107km battle in the Sahara

Lt Sam Irvine, OC 1st Anti Tank Platoon

I landed in Tunisia with a single goal, to take on a 107km ultra marathon through the Sahara Desert. My first ever ultra. I wasn't acclimatised, hadn't slept properly and was about to face 300 other runners under a 42 degree sun. I reached the race hotel, it was chaos. Medical brief, kit check, no time to eat properly. I grabbed a couple of hours' sleep but when my alarm went off, I felt like I'd barely blinked.

#### Day 1: Baptism by Sand

Standing on that start line, staring into the endless desert, I honestly didn't know if I belonged there.





The heat was already building and the horizon just shimmered. Miles and miles of nothing. I could feel my heart hammering in my chest.

I made a bold call early on, when the others stopped at the first water point, I didn't. I kept running. I figured if I could put some distance between me and the pack, I'd have a mental edge. Big mistake! The Sahara doesn't care about your plans.

A few hours later, I was violently sick and couldn't keep water down. My body temperature was climbing, my vision was going and my head felt like it was being cooked from the inside out. Still, I forced myself on. Another 30km to go before the end of day one.

When I finally stumbled over the line, I collapsed straight into the arms of the medical team. They were incredible. Moved me into the shade, cooled me down and pumped me full of fluids. But inside, I was wrecked. My legs cramped through the night, I kept vomiting and I genuinely didn't know how I was going to do it all again the next day.

#### Day 1: All or Nothing

At 0500, I crawled out of the tent. Ten of us inside, everyone broken in their own way. I opened the flap and saw camels just wandering around camp like it was the most normal thing in the world.

I was terrified, honestly. My body was battered, my stomach was in bits, and I had 56km ahead of me. But I also had a 13-minute lead. The thought hit me, what if I could actually win this thing? What if I could be the first British



soldier to take a Sahara ultra?

I decided to go all out from the start. No pacing, no saving energy. Just empty the tank. My plan was to cover as much ground as I could before the heat hit full blast.

Every kilometre felt like a battle. The sun was relentless, my legs were screaming and the dizziness came in waves. I was choking down 20 gels, salt tablets, electrolytes, anything to keep going. I told myself, 'One more kilometre, just one more'...over and over.

And somehow, it worked. When I

crossed that finish line, it didn't feel real. I'd done it. Won by 32 minutes! The first ever British soldier to win a Sahara ultra marathon.

We raised over £227,000 for four incredible military charities and I couldn't have been prouder.

Now, two weeks later, I'm still recovering. Lost eight toenails, dropped nearly four kilos and I still feel like my body's been through a blender. But I wouldn't change a thing. Because out there, in the middle of that desert, I learned something I'll never forget. Pain ends, pride doesn't.







# Mainly About People

## 1 (Suffolk) Company, 5 (V) Royal Anglian Regiment Annual Reunion

Our annual reunion of 2025 was held again this year at the Hotel Victoria in Lowestoft. Sixty members were in attendance to enjoy a buffet lunch, followed by loyal toasts to His Majesty The King, the Regiment and absent friends.

Our reunion was started in 2010. Our first reunion attracted around twenty-five ex Company members to a very successful occasion. This was followed at different venues annually in the Lowestoft area, before alighting on our permanent location, the Hotel Victoria.

Membership stands at 109 members. But, we are always looking new members, who served with 1 Company, 5 Royal Anglian.

Our 2026 reunion at the Hotel Victoria in Lowestoft, will be held on Thursday, 17th September.

Contact details are....

Dave Gurney [gurney.dave@talktalk.net](mailto:gurney.dave@talktalk.net)

Terry Thacker [terrythacker@btinternet.com](mailto:terrythacker@btinternet.com)



## A Sporting Thank-you to Major General Pollard



The Regiment paid tribute to Maj Gen Tony Pollard and thanked him for his sterling service as the Regimental Rugby President for the past 35 years. A presentation of a Leicester Tigers shirt with his name on there and signed by the current squad was well received and is now proudly on display in his

study. Ian Wilkins, Adrian Anema and Ian Robinson gave thanks for his contributions before the General responded saying that he was looking forward to being 'just another bloke' watching the rugger at next year's match at Shelford RFC on Saturday 5th September 2026.



## Prestigious Royal Award for Volunteers



Our volunteers have been awarded The King's Award for Voluntary Service for 2025. This is the highest award a local voluntary group can receive in the UK and is equivalent to an MBE.

We are one of 232 local charities, social enterprises and voluntary groups to receive the prestigious award this year.

Recipients are announced annually on 14 November, The King's Birthday.

The Founder and CEO, Nigel said: 'It's such an honour to receive the King's Award for Voluntary Service. This recognition means so much because it reflects everything, we've worked so hard for over the last five years. A huge thank you to all our amazing volunteers. We're proud to be a volunteer-led organisation, they play a vital role in helping us to reach more people, support more communities, and grow the services we offer.'

'What really makes our work special is how much of our outreach

and support initiatives is shaped by the personal stories and experiences of our veteran, ex-uniformed, and ex-offender volunteers.

'For some, volunteering is the first step towards re-entering the workforce. And in some cases, volunteers transition to paid employment with us, providing them with a supportive environment to build confidence before re-entering the mainstream job market.

'Receiving the King's Award is a powerful reminder of what a shared commitment to making a difference can achieve. Our volunteers assist with a range of tasks, including running events, roasting coffee, making deliveries and supporting day-to-day operations.

'We have seen firsthand the incredible impact that volunteering has on both individuals and communities. Not only does it offer a sense of purpose, but it also helps volunteers develop new skills, build confidence, and form connections with others who share

similar experiences.'

Matt, one of our volunteers said: 'I joined Combat2Coffee after being medically discharged from the police after 22 years of service.

'I cannot thank Combat2Coffee enough for the opportunity to be part of a team once more.

'I now have a reason to get up and go to work, feeling needed and surrounded by like-minded people, some of which have their own struggles.

'The King's Award for Voluntary Service aims to recognise outstanding work by local volunteer groups to support their communities.

'We will receive the award crystal and certificate from Lady Clare, Lord-Lieutenant of Suffolk, in the coming months.

'In addition, two of our volunteers will attend a Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace in May and June 2026, along with other recipients of this year's award.'





# Mainly About People

The Opening of the Field of Remembrance  
Thursday 6 November 2020



Tradition dictates that the start of the official period of Remembrance is marked at Westminster Abbey on the Thursday preceding Remembrance Sunday and this year was no different. On an unusually balmy November

morning veterans and a smattering of serving personnel gathered in the garden of the Abbey to represent those who had gone before them in the service of our country.

A small contingent of highly polished

Royal Anglians took their place around our plot as Big Ben struck 1100hrs. Sadly, the traffic in Parliament Square no longer pauses to mark this moment in time when We Remember our fallen comrades. However, Her Majesty The





Queen graced us with her presence, dressed in her own styled uniform as Colonel-in-Chief of the Royal Lancers (her Father having himself served in the 12th Lancers), and having marked the Two Minutes' Silence a brief service was held, after which Her Majesty toured the many regimental plots.

Former Colour Sergeant, Ray Jones, who served both in the Pompadours and the Poachers had the honour this year of acting as our Plot Guardian, which afforded him the opportunity to speak with The Queen when she viewed our Plot. Fortunately, this year some extra tickets were obtained allowing a few more to attend, and so it was that led by the Area Secretary, Tim Brown, the regimental party of Ray Jones, Tim Beighton, Robin Cope, Andrew Wiles and Phil Tilley made for the nearest watering hole to quench that thirst. A great time was had by all, many lanterns were swung, sandbags pulled up, and old friendships re-kindled on a special day.

LEST WE FORGET.







# Mainly About People

## Operation REMEMBRANCE

In November 2025, a team of Army Reserve soldiers from 3 Company, 3rd Battalion, The Royal Anglian Regiment will take on a challenge of physical and mental resilience, endurance, and robustness – all in support of the Royal Anglian Regiment Charity.

Across Friday 7th, Saturday 8th, and Sunday 9th November, the team will run three consecutive marathons. The first in Chelmsford, the second in Colchester, both in standard physical training kit. The third and final marathon will be back in Chelmsford, completing a loaded march, carrying patrol order and military equipment, including helmet and scalable tactical vest (combat body armour). We will finish on Remembrance Sunday, form up with the Chelmsford Parade, march through the streets and stand to attention for the Two Minutes' Silence at 1100 hours – shoulder-to-shoulder with all who gather to honour the fallen. Remembering the courage, sacrifice, and service of all who defended our nation.

The Royal Anglian Regiment Charity provides vital support to serving and veterans of the Regiment, and their dependents during times of need or hardship. They do incredible work on



behalf of the whole Regimental family, and that is why we are raising funds – so they can continue their outstanding mission.

WO2 Michael Ransley, served for over twenty-five years in the Regular

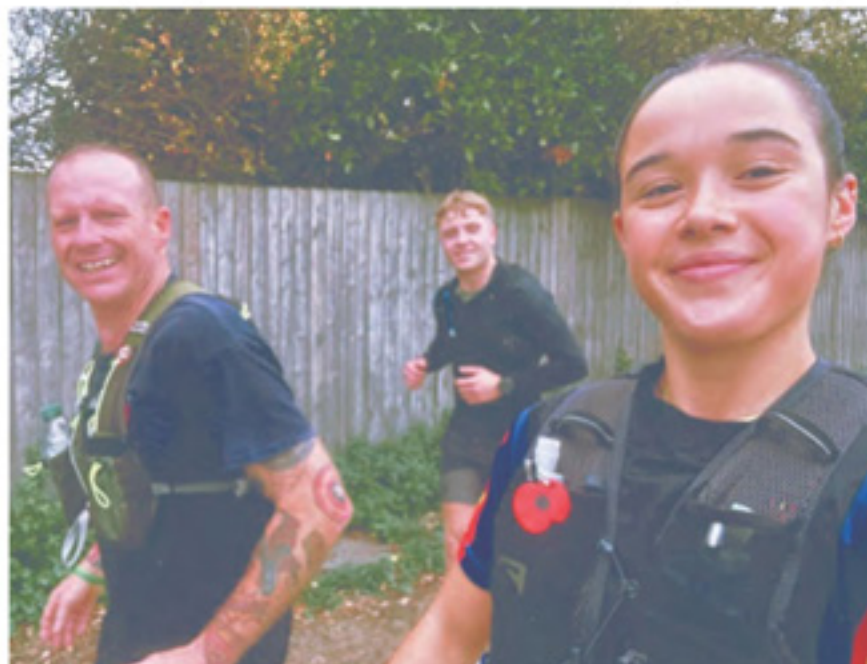
Army and now two years with the Army Reserve. He has deployed on operations and exercises all over the world, including multiple operational deployments to Afghanistan, Iraq, Northern Ireland, and Kosovo. Michael has raised vital funds for charities previously, in 2020 and 2021.

Private Katie Brazier has served in the Army Reserve for over a year and has recently graduated with a degree in Tourism. Katie has exercised in Germany and is set to begin her career in the Regular Army in January 2026.

Private Joe Ransom has served in the Army Reserve for over two years and recently returned from Operation INTERFLEX, delivering training to the Ukrainian Armed Forces. Joe has exercised in America and Germany and is keen to build on his experience.

day 31. One mission with an exceptional test of endurance and robustness – done to honour those killed or wounded in action, and those who paid the ultimate sacrifice for our nation.

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old.





## 2020 Christmas Carol Concert



On Sunday 7 December, Regimental Headquarters facilitated the annual Carol Service. This was held in the Regimental Chapel in Warley, Essex as part of their monthly services.

The event was attended by the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Essex, along with other dignitaries from the local area, Brigadier G Foden (Deputy Colonel of 1st Battalion), Officer Commanding and Company Sergeant Major of C (Essex) Company The 1st Battalion.

The gathered audience enjoyed various carols and readings, in keeping with the theme of the Christmas period, and an entertaining address by the Bishop of Bradwell which incorporated a brief tale from his Army service.

The event also gave RHQ the opportunity to display the restored Gandamack Colour, work that was lovingly undertaken by Steve Armon, and the congregation were given a brief account of the massacre along with Captain Souttar's actions on that day.

We were also able to present Mr Michael Chapman with The Colonel of The Regiment's commendation for his work as the Warden for the Regimental Chapel and his sterling efforts over a period of nearly 60 years.

The commendation was presented by Brigadier G Foden on behalf of the Colonel of the Regiment..



**Brig Guy Foden presents Mick Chapman with his Colonel of the Regiment's Commendation**

the





# Mainly About People

DuxfordMemorialService



Dalton Davey from the village of Burwell lays a wreath on behalf of friends and family of the fallen







# Mainly About People

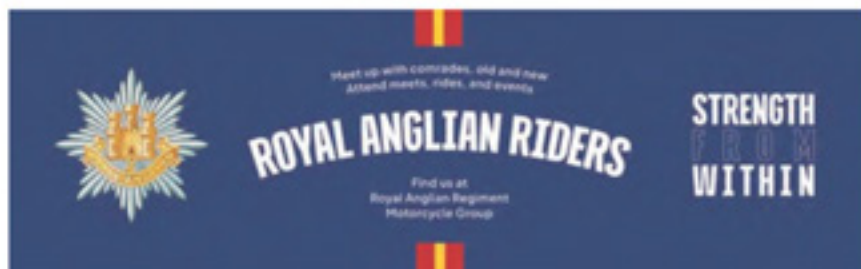
## Royal Anglian Association Riders

2025 has been a hectic year, with thousands of miles covered.

We started the year off by joining 400 veterans on the Rolling Thunder Ride to London, where we parked up on the Mall with Buckingham Palace behind us. We then headed off on a route that saw us ride around Trafalgar Square and past the Cenotaph with hundreds of tourists lining the streets. A fantastic experience for all riders

For the second year we rode to Lincoln for the Regimental Big Breakfast where we were led in by a lone drummer. It's always nice to see so many old friends and show them around the bikes while chatting over good old times.

In May Mark Dalton, Graham Hawkes and Tim Heal went to the British Super Bikes at Donnington



Park to present a cheque for £1,000 to the True Heroes Racing Team. This was money raised from our Christmas raffle. We also had a Regimental flag autographed by famous racing drivers auctioned along with a donation from the Regiment.

We were invited to take part at the Shuttleworth Air Show where we set up a stand that gave us the opportunity

to interact with visitors. Also allowing them to sit on the bikes and have photos taken.

In June we took part in the Cleethorpes Armed Forces Parade. This event is the biggest of its kind in the country. We were given permission from the police to wear our berets as we rode in the parade with thousands of people cheering us on. We also did our





annual visit to the bench on Cleethorpes seafront on our Skegvegas ride out.

Stu Addison, Dave Horsley and Adam Freund took part in the gruelling 24-hour 1,000-mile Iron Butt Challenge.

Thankfully they completed the course safely in 21hours 52minutes. A brilliant achievement in unexpectedly cold weather. This is a charity event with each man raising money for their respective charities.

Minden Day was a big occasion for the Riders as the Mayoress of Bury St Edmunds unveiled our memorial bench, which can now be seen outside the entrance to the museum at Gibraltar Barracks. We have the Anglia Motel, Spalding to thank for stepping in and paying for the bench after seeing our design.

A group of our riders took part in a tour of Wales. It was over four days during the August bank holiday. Starting in Bangor and ending in Cardiff, it took in breathtaking views while riding through Llandudno, Llanberis pass, Portmeirion, Devils bridge and of course the Brecon Beacon. This ride was enjoyed so much, it was decided that it should be an annual event.

Duxford was cancelled this year. So instead, we rode to Kendrew Barracks, home to both battalions. After parking







# Mainly About People



our motorcycles, we spent time mixing with old comrades reminiscing about our experiences together.

We arranged a ride of thanks to the Anglia Motel. This turned into a very special day, as they organised a de-turfing service for the new monument they were putting in their memorial garden. If you ever stop for a meal there, please take a short walk to the memorial garden.

The first weekend in October is when 7,000+, mostly veterans, ride their motorcycles on a pilgrimage to the Arboretum in Lichfield. Although storm Amy did her best to stop us, she was no match for our determination to pay our respects to the fallen.

A few riders braved the cold, to join others from the Regiment, at the service of remembrance at the Duxford memorial. This is a free event to serving

personnel and veterans. Walking around the museum and watching the poppy drop makes for a great experience.

The Riders' second annual Christmas Party took place in December. This is when wives and girlfriends are thanked for allowing us to spend time away, indulging in a passion of riding our motorcycles. We also had a wonderful raffle, with all money raised going to the Anglia Motel's charity fund.

## Regimental Golf Society

The Regimental Golf Society holds three events a year in April, July, and September, and we welcome all serving personnel, veterans, and reservists of all golfing abilities. Here's a look back at our successful 2025 season.

### Spring Event Commenced at Brett Vale Golf Club

The golf society kicked off its 2025 season with a fantastic turnout at Brett Vale Golf Club on 25 April. A total of 40 serving personnel, veterans and reservists gathered for the event, which was open to golfers of all abilities.

Members started the day with a warm welcome of tea, coffee, and a bacon roll before heading out for 27 holes of golf. The morning session featured a 9-hole Texas scramble, followed by lunch and an 18-hole pairs better ball competition in the afternoon. The afternoon also included competitions for the longest drive and nearest the pin.

Texas Scramble Winners: R Dennis, A. Franklin, J Ratten, and P Bygrave. Runners-up: R Barnes, P Goodchild, P Howlett, and H Howlett.

Pairs Stableford Better Ball Winners: C Foster and B Short (44 points). Runners-up: S Stephens and G Brown (42 points).



**Texas Scramble winners R Dennis, A Franklin, J Ratten, and P Bygrave.**





**Pairs Stableford better ball winners Carl Foster and Ben Short.**

#### Major Annual Event at Cambridge Meridian Golf Club

The Regimental Golf Society held its major annual event at Cambridge Meridian Golf Club on 25 July, drawing a field of 31 attendees. Unfortunately, several serving members were unable to attend due to other commitments.

This event is the highlight of the society's calendar, as members compete for three prestigious trophies: The Pompadour Cup, presented by the Essex Regiment Golf Society in July 1935; The Challenge Cup, presented by The Woodbridge Golf Club in 1913 and The Isham Challenge Salver, presented by Capt VAR Isham to the Suffolk Regiment Golf Society 1930.

The day began with a warm welcome of tea or coffee and a bacon roll before members headed out for 27 holes of golf. The morning session featured a challenging 9-hole multiplier competition, followed by lunch and

an 18-hole competition that included medal, scratch, and stableford scoring. Morning's Group Multiplier Winners: M

Morris, K Brown, D Huddleston, and R Pegrum.

Main Competition Winners  
Challenge Cup (Stableford): A Franklin

won with a score of 38, followed by runner-up K Brown with 36. Pompadour Cup (Medal): R. Dyson took

the trophy on countback with a score of 73, with Brian Welton as the runner-up, also scoring 73.

The Isham Challenge Salver (Scratch): R

Pegrum won on countback with a score of 83, followed by Brian Welton, who also scored 83.

The final event of the season saw the Regimental Golf Society travel to Burghley Park Golf Club on 12 September 2025 with 30 attending this event.

Major thanks to Biscocks a great deal using those well-developed negotiating skills. It was great to see some of the younger members of the Battalions attend this event. We hope to see them again in the future.

Members were welcomed by the Golf Club, serving tea/coffee before breakfast. This event was only 18 holes, playing for the converted Regimental Golf Championship Cup (George Boss) pairs better ball.

The winners of this event were: First: S Catton and B Welton (48 points).



**Steve Catton and Brian Welton winners of the pair Stableford better ball presented with the Regimental Golf Championship Cup (George Boss).**

Second: H D'L and L Strong (45 points). Third: J Johnson and P Hodges (44 points).

#### A Message of thanks

On behalf of the Regimental Golf Society, I want to extend our heartfelt thanks to Regimental Headquarters for your exceptional support throughout the past year. Your assistance has been invaluable in ensuring the smooth running of our events, and your encouragement has been a major factor in our success.

We truly appreciate the time and effort you have dedicated to helping us, and we look forward to your continued support in the years to come.

We must not forget all of the Society Members who attended through the year; without their support, these events would not take place.



**A Franklin, winner of the Challenge Cup (Stableford).**



**R Dyson winner, of the Pompadour Cup (Medal), presented by Jordan Harper.**



**R Pegrum winner of the Isham Challenge Salver (Scratch), presented by Jordan Harper.**





# Mainly About People

Talavera Dinner 2025



An enjoyable evening was had by all at the Talavera Dinner held in The Freemasons Hall, Northampton on Saturday 26th July 2025. The event was organised by Major (Retd) Les Carr and members of Finedon Branch The Royal Anglian Regiment Association.

Colonel Robert Blomfield MBE, TD the County Colonel Northampton presided over the Dinner which included 85 diners.

Guests included Mr James Saunders Watson Esq, HM Lord Lieutenant of Northamptonshire, WO2 (CSM)

Christopher Roffe C Coy 2 R ANGLIAN and Major Jordan Peplow OC 'A' Coy Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland ACF and his CSM, WO2 Simon Hollis. It was also good to see a number of both SNCO's, JNCO's and Private soldiers from 2 R ANGLIAN at the





dinner, all who seemed to be enjoying themselves throughout.

The dinner was preceded by a display from the Corps of Drums of 'A' Coy Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland ACF and musical entertainment was provided by The Rushden Town Band.

Tributes were paid to three notable individuals. John Behan spoke and presented Ray Ogle with an RHQ

Certificate for his years of dedication as the Chairman, and latterly the Secretary, of the Finedon Branch. Les Carr presented RSM "Lofty" Knight with a Northamptonshire Regiment hand-painted plaque for his 50 plus years of support to the Regiment and the Talavera Dinner in particular. Finally, Major Tim Brown paid a special tribute to our retiring County Colonel, Robert Blomfield, and his wife Helene.

The next Talavera Dinner will be held at the same venue on 25 July 2026 and is open to both serving and retired members of the Regiment. If you would like to attend next year's dinner further details can be obtained from Major (Retd) Les Carr at the following email address:

[talaveradinner@btinternet.com](mailto:talaveradinner@btinternet.com)







# Mainly About People

His Majesty The King meets a Tiger Veteran Chindit



15 August 1945 saw the end of World War II – Victory over Japan (VJ) Day, after atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki on 6 and 9 August. The Far East campaign was one of the longest fought by the British during the Second World War.

The Leicestershire Regiment was the only British regiment to provide two battalions in the Chindits, under Major General Orde Wingate. The Chindits fought in Burma penetrating deep







behind enemy lines, with each battalion split into two columns. They fought a highly successful guerrilla war in the hostile jungle environment against the ferocious Japanese enemy, and they were regarded as one of the most famous fighting formations in the War.

The 2nd Battalion made an epic march over the Naga hills to the River Chindwin, entirely supplied by air (a totally new concept) for five months. The 7th Battalion was the only Territorial Chindit battalion, and was flown deep into the jungle by Dakota aircraft. Serving in that battalion was Pte

CH Richards (Charlie).

On 15 August 2025 a remembrance service was organised by the Royal British Legion in the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas to mark the 80th anniversary (VJ80). Charlie Richards is believed to be the oldest Chindit still alive and, with 101-year old Sid Machin, was invited to attend the service. They were the oldest two of the (believed to be) only eight survivors of that campaign. After the service, Charlie laid wreaths at the Royal Leicestershire Regiment and the Chindit Memorials, and later said that laying those two wreaths were his

proudest moments. Afterwards he had the honour of meeting His Majesty.

The Chindit campaign was extremely gruelling, from fighting, malnutrition and disease. When Charlie returned home, his family hardly recognised him; his father exclaimed "Bugger me; What's happened here?"

Afternote: On the formation of the 7th Battalion in 1940, one of its company commanders was Major D A Kendrew (later Major General Sir Douglas Kendrew KCMG CB CBE DSO\*\*) before he was posted to a staff appointment.





# Regimental Heritage

## Royal Anglian Regiment – Heritage

It is nearly 12 months ago that I was appointed Colonel Heritage for the Regiment. The role of Colonel Heritage is one that is not necessarily well understood outside those sitting on the Regimental Council so I would like to give you a taste of what the job encompasses.

The main function is to provide advice to the Colonel of the Regiment and the Regimental Council. In a slight departure from this role, the decision taken in 2024 was to link the position with that of Chairman of the Regimental Museum. This seems to make perfect sense as both roles are clearly heritage based, and this suggestion was adopted by the Regiment.

The past year has been one of intense activity for Regimental Heritage. The long-heralded reorganisation of the Imperial War Museums Duxford site has now commenced and the Land Warfare Hall, where your Regimental Museum was located has now been emptied in anticipation of its demolition over the next few months. This is reported in more detail in the Regimental Museum report elsewhere in this issue.

### The Gundamack Colour

The Chapel of the Royal Anglian and Essex Regiments is located at Warley, near Brentwood in Essex. The chapel holds many interesting artefacts but of special importance is the Gundamack Colour.

This is one of the most prized possessions of the Essex regiment and is a remnant of the colour carried by the 44th East Essex Regiment during the retreat from Kabul in 1842. During the battle, the last few survivors of the retreat, 20 officers and 45 Soldiers were killed.

Captain Thomas Souter had wrapped the regimental colour around his body and, because the Afghans saw the yellow of the colour, believed he was a general and he was taken into captivity along with one sergeant and seven privates. When Captain Souter was eventually released, he took the remains of the colour with him, and it is this remnant that is on show in the chapel.



Maj (Retd) Stephen Card.

Unfortunately, the ravages of time have taken a toll on this wonderful item. The colour has now been removed from the chapel and is currently undergoing conservation at a specialist company in Bristol and will return in due course, inside a new purpose-built frame, which should allow the colour to continue to be exhibited for many years to come.

### Regimental History

We are a young regiment at only 60 years old, but we cannot forget that we were created from the amalgamation of various county regiments with long and proud histories of their own.

The Royal Anglian Regiment holds these regimental forbears in great esteem, and the majority of these





regiments have their own museums with trustees managing their collections, often in conjunction with local authority museums.

It is apparent though that the march of time is having an impact on these trusts and the financial pressure that many local authorities face is also having an impact on the ability of these collections to be retained on exhibition.

It is the Regiment's view that these

collections should be supported as far as possible to ensure the continuity of the regimental history and presence in each of our constituent counties. To this end, the Regimental Heritage Committee has been in discussion with a number of these trusts to see where the Royal Anglian Regiment can be of assistance in this aim.

We are currently undergoing an information gathering exercise so that

we are fully informed about the size, scope and storage of these collections, to undertake a consultation and prepare a long-term plan if the Regiment is called upon to assist in future.

The future, while uncertain, will be busy and the work of the Regimental Heritage Committee, will continue to maintain and promote the rich history of the Regiment and its predecessor regiments into the future.

## Royal Anglian Regiment Museum Castle 2020 New Office and Reserve Space

In April and May this year, we moved the office and reserve collection to the north side of site. The office on the south side will be missed but we have made our new space fit for purpose with a lot of planning and help.

We moved the reserve space in one day but moving all the boxes, taking down the racking and drive it over to be put back up and all boxes put back on their original shelf. We really could not have done this without help and had about 10 trustees and volunteers for the day. We were all a bit sore the next day!

The office now sits across from the reserve space and for this we used a combination of movers for heavy furniture and volunteers. It is starting to feel more like home as pictures continue to go up on the walls and we work through a backlog of archival material.

(L to R) Our Chair of trustees Stephen Card, and volunteers Wayne Clay, Matt Gadsby and Gary Cushing after we moved the reserve collection, we couldn't have done it without them!

### Temporary display

In airspace, we have a temporary display while we wait to build a new museum. This currently has three cases; the 'personalities', 'Conflicts', and 'Object of the month' cases. We plan to rotate these three to four times a year so that there is regularly a different offer for visitors. We also plan to rotate decade and Battalion to try to be as inclusive as we can.

We have also put up an impressive wall and floor vinyl to make our presence known, and we have received a grant to add an interactive that will







# Regimental Heritage



feature collection objects not on display, chosen by various people and changed regularly to give different perspectives on our rich regimental history.

## Veterans, Serving Soldiers and Cadets

This year we had a few veterans' visits, including the annual East Anglian Reunion which falls on the Sunday as close to the end of the Malayan emergency as possible.

We have also had some visits from JNCO courses, as well as cadet visits which we usually do. It has been a learning curve to offer more while having such a small space, but we have managed to set up a 'pop up museum' outside in the summer and inside in the winter to continue to showcase the Regimental history.

For serving soldiers, we also try to get out some of our deactivated weapons, as well as allowing them collections access to our spaces on the non-public access side of site. We will also offer a bespoke display of objects tailored to the needs of visiting soldiers and veterans so long as we have enough time to prepare and have the capacity. If this is something



**Elliott helping out at one of the event days.**

veterans or serving soldiers are interested in, please contact the curator by email: [royalanglianmuseumcurator@outlook.com](mailto:royalanglianmuseumcurator@outlook.com)

#### Work Placement and Duke of Edinburgh students

This year we have had an enjoyable time with students. All that have asked to volunteer here in any capacity have



**JNCO cadre on a museum tour with Charlie Tapp (who served in the 2nd Bn) talking about his service in Northern Ireland.**

been cadets.

It may be bias but we think this is why they have thus far all been exemplary. We had Thomas and Elliott who did their Duke of Edinburgh award. Elliott helped with various events and Thomas helped with events as well as excelling at doing some temporary displays for the museum.

We also had Frankie as a workplace student who helped with events, but was great at our social media presence. We also had the opportunity to team up with the IWM and provide some experience for their students as well as joined in to some of their work place activities.



**Frankie who did a work placement with us.**



**The JNCO course with the Curator.**





# Diar y Dates

## 2026

### January

7th Regimental selection board RMAS

### February

10th Sobraon Day

21st Big Breakfast

### March

11th County Colonels annual meeting

21st Reserve commissioning parade

### April

10th Sovereign's parade RMAS

23rd Spring golf meeting

25th Almanza Day

### May

1st Regimental Council meeting RHC

2nd Army vs Navy Rugby Twickenham

6th Regimental selection board RMAS

8th VE Day

23rd Spring carol concert St Mary's Church  
Hemel Hempstead

### June

2nd Governors Day RHC

4th Founders Day RHC

13th Vikings all ranks function Ashlar House BSE

25th Hindoostan Day

### July

10th Summer golf meeting

10th Charity clay shoot Grimsthorpe estate

18th Reserve commissioning parade

18th Big 3 miler

22nd Salamanca Day

23rd Regimental Cocktail Party

27th Talavera Day

### August

1st Minden Day

1st Minden Day Bury St Edmunds event

7th Sovereign's parade RMAS

13th Blenheim Day

15th VJ Day

### September

5th Regimental Rugby Great Shelford

9th Regimental selection board RMAS

12th Regimental Gathering Kendrew Barracks

h (Week Commencing) Battlefield study Normandy

14th Autumn golf meeting Stoke Rockford

h RHC Chapel service

18th

### October

27th

h Nil

### November

6th Regimental council meeting

6th Officers Dinner Club

8th Regimental Remembrance Service IWM Duxford

13th Castle journal deadline

21st Reserve commissioning parade

23rd RHC Visit

### December

5th Christmas carol service Cambridge - location TBC

11th Sovereign's parade RMAS

h British Battalion Day

20th

h



### The Royal Anglian Regiment Charity

The Royal Anglian Regiment charity provides assistance to members and former members of the Regiment and their dependants who are in need, hardship or distress. It makes grants to individuals, units, veteran's groups and families to promote military efficiency, maintain cohesion, sense of belonging and esprit de corps. It supports the upkeep of Regimental memorials and chapels and maintains the Regimental chattels. It provides support and assistance to service leavers, veterans and families as they transition into civilian life. In practical terms we help with the following:

- Grants to serving soldiers, veterans and their families during times of crisis, illness or family emergencies. These grants include support towards unexpected expenses, travel costs or around homelessness.
- Grants towards mobility aids and equipment. Including those required for work, health and wellbeing and social activities.

Enabling individuals to maintain their independence, contribute to society and live as full a life as possible.

- Grants to assist with household adaptations that enable individuals to live safely at home, in the best possible environment for them and their family.
- We promote well-being, improved work performance and mental resilience by providing free access to the mental wellbeing App leafyard for all serving soldiers and veterans of the Regiment.
- We provide activities and equipment for a serving families to help combat the loneliness and isolation that many service families' experience.
- We provide opportunities for rest and recreational activities for our serving soldiers particularly during overseas deployments.
- We support sport and social activities for our serving soldiers, veterans and families all designed to maintain health, wellbeing and a sense of belonging.
- As a registered charity and member of COBSEO we always try to work in partnership with the other service charities but maintain the ability to act independently and at pace when required.

To donate please follow the QR code or BACS details below and follow the web link to see the great work the charity is doing.

<https://www.royalanglianregiment.com/veterans/>



Sort: 16 - 19 - 26  
Account: 28233435





# Can You Remember?

1980s



Vikingwivesandhusbands on exercise in Minden 1986.

1990s



ThePompadours in Londonderry 1992.



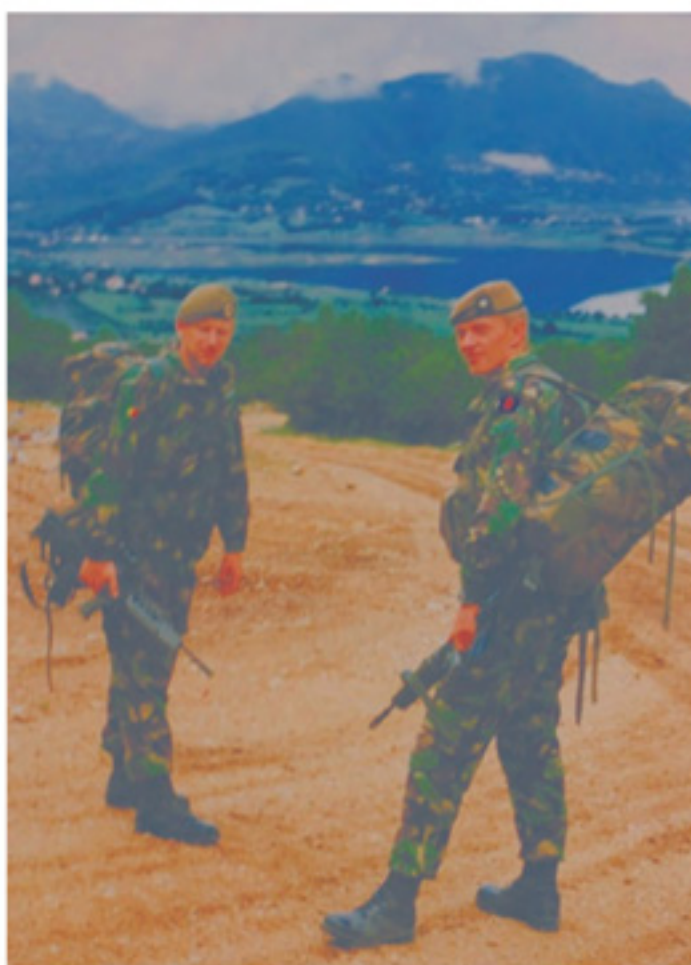


**Assault Pioneer course 1996.**



**Sgt Sharp 2nd Battalion,  
STRIKE, Falklands 1999.**

**Exercise PURPLE**



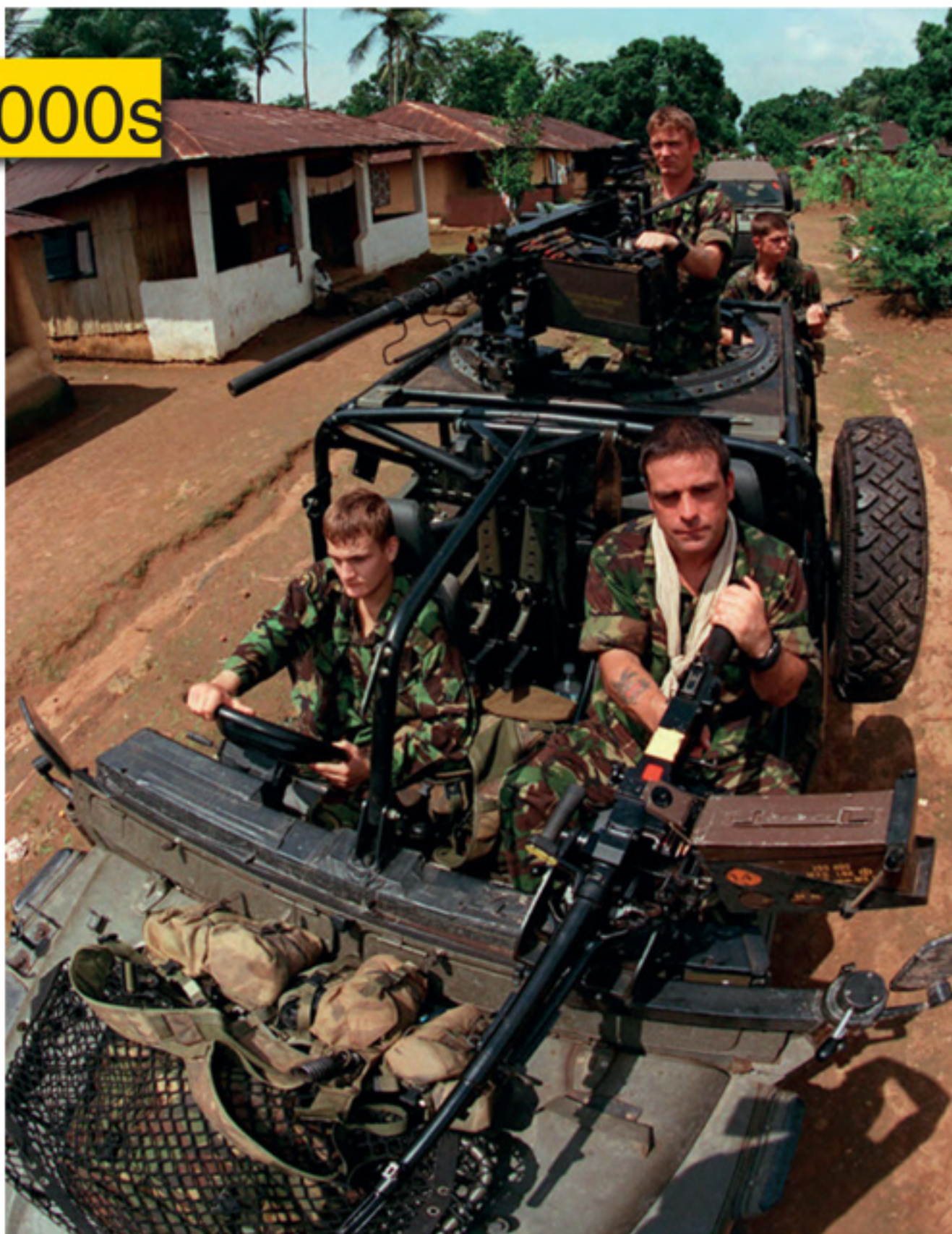
**Poachers in Bosnia, Maj Burrell and Capt Williams 1994.**





# Can You Remember?

2000s



Poachers in Sierra Leone 2000.





# ROYAL ANGLIAN

## BIG BREAKFAST 2026

THIS YEARS BIG BREAKFAST WILL TAKE PLACE ACROSS THE COUNTRY ON THE

**21st FEBRUARY 2026**

FOR MORE DETAILS PLEASE FOLLOW ROYAL ANGLIAN CONNECT IN THE NEW YEAR AND  
KEEP IN TOUCH WITH YOUR AREA ASSOCIATIONS







# 1st Battalion

## From the CO

As I reflect on my first few months in command, I wish to extend my gratitude to my predecessor, Lt Col Adrian Thompson, for his leadership during a significant period of adjustment. Since establishing their new home in Kendrew Barracks the Battalion has adopted a new role, reduced in size, and come to new working arrangements with the 2nd Battalion. We were barely dry on the transition to a Security Force Assistance Battalion before the need arose to further evolve into a Tactical Recce Strike capability. This is a welcome change as it better defines the Battalion's combat role and brings with it the opportunity to be at the forefront of how the British Army fights on a modern battlefield. It is worth taking a moment to outline what we are being asked to do.

The 1st Battalion is a Tactical Recce Strike Battalion in 11 Brigade whose combat role focusses on defence and delay operations, forming a divisional covering force for UK or NATO partners. The Tactical Recce Strike element in simple terms means to find and strike enemy forces at greater distances than ever before, right across the battlespace. To do this, the 1st Battalion are due to be equipped with Robotics and Autonomous Systems which will help fight the enemy with technology before the need arises to put soldiers in harm's way. This is not a replacement for the fundamentals of light role soldiering but rather a complement to existing capabilities. 11 Brigade's role as a covering force draws historical similarities with 24 Airmobile Brigade's cold war purpose as a counter-desant and counter penetration force, of which, the 1st Battalion was part during the 1995 UK Response in Yugoslavia. As with the rest of the British Army, the Brigade are only in the foothills of this modernisation process. In the next year I hope to put new kit and equipment in the hands of the soldiers as we evolve into a modernised force that can meet the challenges of 21st Century warfare.

The key training event linked to this change was Ex BULL STORM. The Battalion deployed to the British Army Training Unit Kenya (BATUK) in a brigade context working alongside 3



SCOTS, the 2 YORKS Experimentation Trials Group and enablers. The exercise continued to have all the memorable features of training in Africa – plenty of wildlife, hot and humid weather, and arduous soldiering in Kenyan bush. However unlike other exercises, there were two battlegroups in the field with scenarios focussed on our role as a covering force. It was designed to prove the brigade concept and help understand how it should fight. This was the first time The 1st Battalion had deployed on an Army directed Battlegroup exercise since 2017. The soldiers and officers adapted brilliantly under testing circumstances and we achieved

battlegroup validation. This was a significant achievement and is testament to the hard work and preparation of all elements of the 1st Battalion.

Over the next year the Battalion effort will split. A and B Company will deploy on an operational commitment overseas for 6 months. C, D and HQ Company will focus on UK operational commitments for a large part of the year but will also use the time to train – in particular, Recce, Mortars and Machine Gun Cadres. In the summer, those not overseas will take part in VIKING STRIKE, a battalion level exercise focussing on 'Find and Strike' tactics set within a defensive battle context – hopefully using a new vehicle fleet, drones, and a technologically enhanced HQ. By Autumn 2026 the Battalion should be back together and training towards commitments in 2027.

Beyond training, the 1st Battalion have managed to find time to keep regimental traditions alive and support antecedent links. Before Summer leave both the 1st and 2nd Battalion held a joint Minden/Talavera Day event. This was a first, with a joint parade respecting both battalions' traditions followed by a party in Kendrew Barracks. Other notable highlights include A (Norfolk) Company's support to the unveiling of the Le Paradis Memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum; B (Suffolk) Company's support to WW1 reburials and parading for the Bury St Edmunds Minden Day. These are just a few of the activities amongst many others. The esprit de corps founded on these events is essential and we continue to nurture the links with our forebear regiments and traditions.

In summary, an important year from both a force development and regimental perspective. As ever, much has been done, but more to do. I would like to extend my thanks to the soldiers, officers, and families whose dedication and support make our successes possible.



## The Vikings

It is an immense privilege and honour to have been appointed as the Regimental Sergeant Major of the 1st Battalion, The Royal Anglian Regiment (The Vikings), as of July 2025. I would like to take this opportunity to extend my gratitude to WO1 Paul Kennedy for his significant contributions during his tenure. Under his leadership, the Battalion has gone from strength to strength, and it is my commitment to ensure that I leave it in an even stronger position for my successor.

Over the past year, the Battalion has undergone a significant transformation, shifting from its role as a Security Force Assistance Battalion (SFAB) to becoming a Tactical Recce Strike Battalion. While we remain part of 11 Brigade, this new role places us within the Advance Force under Field Army Troops, as part of the Land Special Operations Forces. What does this mean?

To be clear, it does not mean we are "special" – but it does mean we have regained our Light Role Infantry "teeth," something that has been eagerly anticipated by all ranks. With this new role, we will leverage our specialised

# From the RSM



platoons (akin to the former Support Company) to meet the challenges of modern conflict. As noted in last year's Castle magazine, our structure remains unchanged.

As the Commanding Officer highlighted, the first half of the year was dedicated to the preparation,

deployment, and recovery from Exercise BULLSTORM in Kenya. This provided an invaluable opportunity for our soldiers and officers to rehearse and begin mastering our new role. Successfully passing validation demonstrated that the Battalion continues to uphold its outstanding reputation within the Field Army. This achievement is a testament to the hard work, resilience, and determination of our soldiers and officers.

The support we've received from RHQ and the wider Regimental family has been exceptional. I would particularly like to address our veterans, who remain an integral part of our community. The first step in strengthening this connection was the Regimental Day held at Kendrew Barracks. It was a fantastic event, and I commend the efforts of RHQ and everyone involved in its organisation.

The day reinforced the sense that Kendrew Barracks is truly the home



Past, present and future Vikings at the RSM's dinner evening - April 2025.





# 1st Battalion

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of the two regular Battalions within the Regiment. For those who attended, I hope you enjoyed it as much as we did. For those who couldn't make it, I strongly encourage you to join us for the next Regimental Day in September 2026. Planning is already underway, and RHQ has taken on board feedback from both serving personnel and the veteran community to ensure it will be another memorable occasion, bringing

us together as one.

Finally, I have a request for the wider Regimental community. Whether in person or through social media, I encourage you to continue engaging positively with our soldiers. The Vikings remain a war-fighting Battalion, guided by the values and standards of the British Army in every decision we make. Positive engagement from the Regimental family means a great deal to

our soldiers. While soldiers themselves have not changed over time, the nature of war has evolved – particularly with the introduction of autonomous and robotic systems. As such, the demands on our soldiers are evolving too. Nevertheless, The Vikings will continue to lead from the front, ready to face whatever challenges this unpredictable world may present. That is simply what The Vikings do.

## A (Norfolk) Company

### Overview

Maj James Pugh, OCA (Norfolk) Company

## Forging the Fighting Ninth: A (Norfolk) Company in 2025



2025 has been a defining year for A (Norfolk) Company - one marked by transformation, grit, and professionalism. As the 'Fighting Ninth', our soldiers have embraced every challenge with determination, honing their craft as infantrymen in preparation for future operations.

From the snow-covered valleys of Otterburn to the rugged terrain of Kenya, and the solemn grounds of the National Memorial Arboretum, the Company has demonstrated what it means to be part of a modern, adaptable, and resilient force.

Our year began with a focused Live Fire Tactical Training package in Otterburn. This rare opportunity allowed us to dedicate two full weeks to marksmanship and tactical excellence. The Norfolk soldiers trained intensively with all platoon weapon systems, taking them beyond the ranges and into the field to test our endurance and cohesion. Our junior commanders really stepped



**HRH The Princess Royal, OC Maj James Pugh and WO2 (CSM) Chris Steel.**

up, refining our tactics and training in small-team operations. This phase was more than training; it was a crucible that forged confidence and camaraderie, laying the foundation for our deployment to Kenya.

In May, the 'Fighting Ninth' deployed on Exercise BULL STORM—a brigade-level test of the new Recce-Strike concept. This was no ordinary training serial. From the outset, our soldiers demonstrated tactical finesse and operational agility. Testing new tactics and the employment of new technologies is how the modern soldier achieves greater lethality on the battlefield.

Amidst this operational focus, the Company also fulfilled a solemn duty.

On 25 September, we provided the guard of honour at the unveiling of the Le Paradis Memorial. Held at the National Memorial Arboretum, we honoured the 99 men of the 2nd Battalion, Royal Norfolk Regiment who were massacred at Le Paradis. Joined by Her Royal Highness, The Princess Royal, it was a moment of reflection and connection to our Regimental heritage.

As Officer Commanding A (Norfolk) Company, I am immensely proud of what the men have achieved this year. The Fighting Ninth has proven its mettle—through hard work, professionalism, and an unwavering commitment to excellence. We stand ready for the challenges ahead, confident in our skills and united in purpose.





# 1st Battalion

## Exercise BULLSTORM: Forging the Combat Team

In May 2025, A (Norfolk) Company deployed to Kenya to put the new Recce Strike concept through its paces. Exercise BULL STORM was no ordinary training serial: it was a gritty, full-spectrum test of our ability to fight, adapt, and dominate in austere conditions.

Objective opening salvo kicked off the brigade-level exercise. The Fighting Ninth, alongside Assault Pioneers, formed the Combat Team tasked with seizing a high feature defended by trench systems. At 0400, after a coordinated barrage of mortars, snipers, and anti-tank assets, we patrolled 4km on foot to maintain a low signature before launching a textbook break-in and clearance. Recce Strike came alive—observe, strike, and overwhelm with precision.

The tempo shifted into a prolonged defensive phase, where surveillance, target and acquisition became second nature. Operating in small teams, we honed our ability to predict enemy avenues of approach and dig in with



On the lookout.

A (Norfolk) Company in Kenya.





# The Vikings



## Operating Skydio UAS (Unmanned Aerial Systems).

purpose. It was a test of endurance and tactical acumen, sharpening individual skills under pressure.

Objective Silver brought the most kinetic action. A simulated airfield,

it demanded stealth, aggression, and innovation. We tabbed 8km in four-man sections under a comms-dark plan, infiltrated silently, and unleashed One Way Effectors—drones that neutralised

half the opposition forces prior to a decisive engagement. These assets proved game-changing, allowing us to clear urban terrain with minimal exposure and maximum effect.







# 1st Battalion



**Maj Dave Crosbie, as acting CO, conducts a bonnet brief.**

The final serial pushed us into unfamiliar territory: the mass capture of personnel. With just 80 soldiers from A (Norfolk), B (Suffolk), and C (Essex) Companies, we processed over 180 surrendered enemy. It was a logistical and procedural challenge that few had faced

before. The experience was invaluable highlighting the complexities of large-scale surrender and the importance of clear command and control. Exercise BULL STORM was a challenging yet rewarding experience for the 1st Battalion. It demanded adaptability,

resilience, and innovation. We leave Kenya with sharpened skills, a deeper understanding of small-team operations, and a clear vision of how a modernised battlegroup can extend our reach and impact. The future fight is changing, and we're ready to meet it head-on.



**CombatTeam in Kenya.**



## The Vikings



A planning conference for the Company lanes.







# 1st Battalion

## Live Fire Tactical Training

LtC Morgan-McDermott and Cpl LHickin, 1st (Almanza) Platoon, A (Norfolk) Company

Earlier this year, the Battalion deployed to Otterburn for a two-week Live Fire Tactical Training (LFTT) package, aimed at sharpening marksmanship skills ahead of the Kenya deployment.

This rare opportunity allowed A (Norfolk) Company to focus on developing individual and collective capabilities.

The training began with qualifying and build-up shoots, covering rifle handling, GPMG, and Sharpshooter skills, with expert coaching from Sniper and Machine Gun teams.

Soldiers practised night ranges with Light Laser Modules (LLMs) and Close Quarters Battle (CQB) drills,

before progressing to live-fire fireteam and section attacks in both day and night conditions. These exercises tested teamwork and SOPs under the pressures of live fire, providing many soldiers with their first experience of such realistic training.

The training culminated in live-fire platoon attacks under extreme conditions, with sub-zero temperatures and heavy snowfall. Platoons advanced through a valley to secure objectives, followed by a challenging withdrawal while managing simulated casualties.

The exercise demonstrated the soldiers' resilience, composure, and ability to operate effectively in austere

environments.

After the live-fire phase, A (Norfolk) Company prepared for a three-day patrol designed to test green soldiering skills and refine SOPs. Junior commanders took on additional responsibilities, and the patrol provided valuable lessons in small-team operations and mission command.

The LFTT package proved to be a transformative experience for A (Norfolk) Company, fostering teamwork, resilience, and confidence.

The skills and lessons learned will be instrumental in ensuring the company's success during their deployment to Kenya.

## Le Paradis Memorial: Honouring the Fallen

On 25 September 2025, a long-awaited moment of remembrance unfolded at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire. The Le Paradis Memorial

was officially unveiled - marking a solemn tribute to one of the darkest chapters in the history of the Royal Norfolk Regiment.

The massacre at Le Paradis occurred on 27 May 1940, during the final, desperate days of the Battle of France. Soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, Royal



HRH The Princess Royal lays a wreath with LCpl Donald, 3 (Corunna) Platoon, to her flank.

## The Vikings

Norfolk Regiment, surrounded near the village of Le Paradis, fought with extraordinary resolve. Under relentless fire from the SS Division Totenkopf, they held their ground to protect the retreat to Dunkirk. With ammunition spent and no hope of reinforcement, 99 men surrendered - expecting the rights of prisoners of war. Instead, they were herded into a barn and gunned down. The wounded were bayoneted or shot at close range. Only two survived: Privates William O'Callaghan and Albert Pooley, who later bore witness to the horror and helped bring SS officer Fritz Knöchlein to justice.

The new memorial stands as a powerful reminder of that sacrifice.

Organised by the Le Paradis Memorial Appeal, the dedication ceremony featured speeches, wreath-laying, and a service of thanksgiving. Among the dignitaries was Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal, whose presence lent gravity and honour to the occasion.

A (Norfolk) Company was invited to provide the guard of honour. Their turnout was immaculate - every detail of dress and drill reflecting the pride they felt in representing their forebears. Veterans and members of the Royal Norfolk Association expressed heartfelt thanks for their professionalism and presence.

For the soldiers of A (Norfolk) Company, this was more than ceremonial duty. It was a deeply personal moment—connecting them to the legacy of the Royal Norfolk Regiment. After the service, the Company gathered at the Royal Norfolk memorial for a final act of respect and a photograph with the battalion colours, capturing a moment that will live long in regimental memory.

The Le Paradis Memorial now joins over 400 others across the Arboretum's 150 acres. It offers a quiet space for reflection and ensures that the courage and suffering of those men will never fade from the national conscience. Their story - of duty, sacrifice, and unbreakable spirit - continues to inspire those who wear the uniform today.



**Pte Hales, 2 (Kohima) Platoon, gives Royal Salute.**





# 1st Battalion

## B (Suffolk) Company

OC's Overview  
Maj Paul Machnicki



CSM WO2 Hilton and OC Maj Machnicki in Otterburn during LFTT.

B (Suffolk) Company's 2025 has been characterised by good infantry training. The year started with a focus on the basics: Combative training was a solid, if rough, way to return to work after Christmas leave.

The company then conducted a week of navigation in Leek training area (a bleak, unforgiving little hole of a training area, nestled in the Peak District), before Live Fire Tactical

Training in Otterburn Training Area (also bleak and unforgiving) in March.

B (Suffolk) Company is now the home to Anti Tanks and Assault Pioneer platoons, and so it was important to maintain our specialist weapons skills.

In April, Anti Tanks platoon visited the Tank Museum in Bovington, and Assault Pioneers visited the National Army Museum in London. If two museums weren't enough, the company

also visited the Suffolk Regiment Museum and Memorial Chapel in Bury St Edmunds. This was a great insight into our history and it meant a lot to learn about those soldiers who had gone before.

Thoroughly damp from the winter's training, B (Suffolk) Company was ready to deploy to Kenya on Exercise BULL STORM in May. The two months in the field in Central Laikipia



B Company visit to Suffolk Regiment Museum in Bury St Edmunds April 2025.





**B Company inspect Suffolk Regiment colours at St Mary's Church Bury St Edmunds.**

and Lolldaiga training areas was an old-fashioned slog. Assault Pioneers were attached to A (Norfolk) Company where they trialled new 3D printed mines, and dug plenty of trenches. Anti Tanks were tasked with setting up observation posts and bush hides whilst evading curious wildlife. Company Sergeant Major Hilton narrowly evaded being trampled by a herd of frightened buffalo in a scene that bore more than a passing resemblance to the Lion King.

The last half of the year has been spent preparing for operations in

2026, and modernising in line with 11 Brigade's objectives. B (Suffolk) Company soldiers have been learning to drive civilian armoured vehicles and will be practising to shoot in confined spaces. Alongside this, B Coy has been experimenting with 3D printing, operating with Uncrewed Aerial Systems (drones), and in September, we attended the Defence and Security Equipment International exhibition in the Excel Centre, London, where soldiers had a chance to get hands on with some of the kit and equipment of the future.

Finally, it has been a good year for engagement with the local and veterans' community. In August the company paraded on Minden Day, in Bury St Edmunds, which was a highlight for many soldiers. In September, the company was pleased to attend the opening of a road, 'Suffolk Regiment Way' near Haverhill, which was named in honour of our forebear regiment. The author notes that A (Norfolk) Company are yet to receive their road. Maybe next year chaps!



**Regimental Drums Platoon perform on Minden Day celebrations at Bury St Edmunds.**





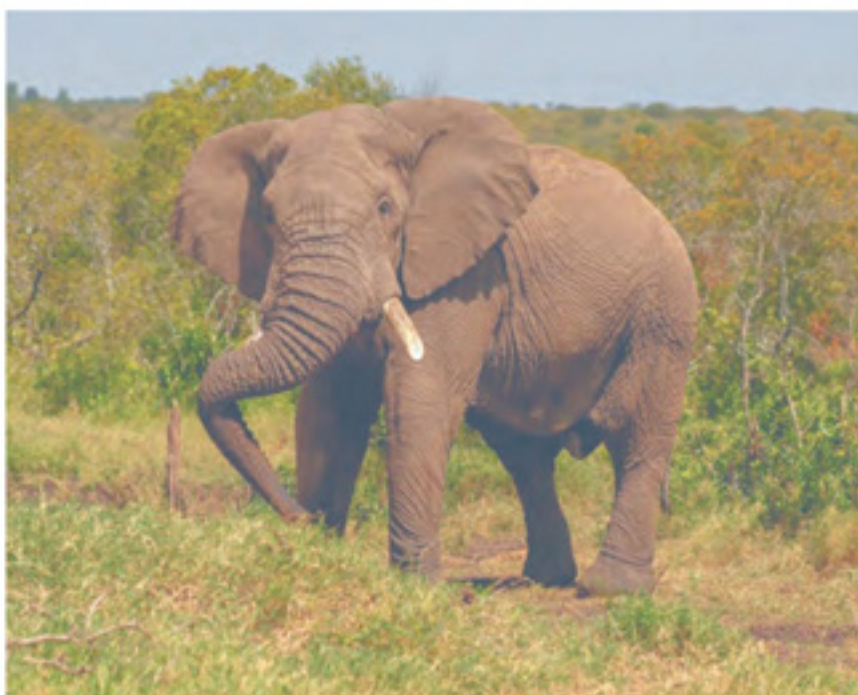
# 1st Battalion

## Anti-Tanks and Assault Pioneers in Kenya

In early May this year, B (Suffolk) Company deployed to Kenya alongside the rest of the Battalion for Exercise BULL STORM. The Company played a vital role in providing the Anti-Tank and Assault Pioneer capabilities to the Battlegroup.

After a 10-day acclimatisation period in Nanyuki, the Company moved into the bush for a month of demanding training. The hot, arid conditions were frequently interrupted by torrential downpours, while daily encounters with lions, buffalo, elephants, and giraffes added a unique, safari-like element to the experience.

The Anti-Tank Platoon began by focusing on low-level skills and drills, including operating the Command Launch Unit (CLU) and Javelin, tabbing with the Anti-Tank kit, and conducting Sighting Reports and Battle Damage Assessments. The introduction of eight Land Rovers significantly



A close encounter with an elephant during Ex BULL STORM 25.



Anti-Tanks Platoons at MPALA farm during Ex BULL STORM in June 2025.



## The Vikings



**Assault Pioneer Platoon at MPALA farm during Ex BULL STORM in June 2025.**

enhanced mobility but also brought new challenges, such as flat batteries, blown tyres, and faulty brakes—issues that felt far more adventurous in the Kenyan bush than on the A1.

During the final training exercise, the Anti-Tank Platoon proved itself as a critical battle-winning asset. The CLU's capability to detect vehicles up to 7km, identify targets at 4km, and strike at 2.5km allowed the Platoon to establish Observation Posts in the Lolldaiga Mountains. From these positions, they effectively located and engaged enemy forces at significant depth, enabling the Battlegroup to manoeuvre freely and dominate the battlefield. The Platoon also played a key role in deliberate strike operations, integrating into layered fire plans to neutralise enemy positions. This paved the way for A (Norfolk) Company and the Assault Pioneers to clear remaining enemy strongholds.

The Assault Pioneer Platoon also began their training with a focus on low-level skills and drills, including setting up razor wire, deploying infantry assault bridges, and laying anti-vehicle mines. They then partnered with 22 Engineer Regiment for a live demolition package, Explosive Method of Entry (EMOE), and reserve demolitions.



**B Company 2IC Lt Bradnam shares a joke during Ex BULL STORM in June 25.**





# 1st Battalion

soldiers gained valuable experience in constructing simple initiation circuits, enabling them to detonate large quantities of explosives to deny enemy access to critical infrastructure such as roads, buildings, and bridges.

During the exercise, the Assault Pioneers were attached to A (Norfolk) Company, where they provided

essential support to dismounted infantry operations. Their tasks included digging trenches, constructing defensive positions, and assisting engineers with live demolitions. The Platoon adopted a dual role, often embedding within A (Norfolk) Company during both offensive and defensive actions, highlighting their versatility and value

to the Battlegroup.

The exercise proved to be a valuable opportunity for B (Suffolk) Coy to refine its specialist capabilities while operating in a challenging and unfamiliar environment. The lessons learnt will strengthen the company's contribution to future training and operations.

## Live Fire Tactical Training, Otterburn



Cpl Newton withdraws during B Company LFTT in Otterburn in October 2025.



Pte Leleavono withdraws during B Company LFTT in Otterburn in October 2025.



## The Vikings



A B Company soldier conducts individual close quarter battle drills during LFTT in Otterburn March 2025.



Pte Musk enthusiastically engages the enemy during an individual close quarters battle lane during B Company LFTT in Otterburn in March.





# 1st Battalion

## BCompanySport



**LCpl Gichui spots LCpl McKenna during a strength session in B Company phys.**

It's been a year of record-breakers and steely determination in sport for B Coy as we juggle ever busy taskings. As we push on from Ex BULL STORM, through hard work and dedication the men of B Coy still make time for

sporting achievement.

For Cpl Richardson this meant going from the fastest storeman in the Army to the fastest person in the Army, breaking the half-marathon record by a huge 38 seconds. In February 2025 in Fleet,

Cpl Richardson averaged 3 minutes 33 seconds per kilometre across the distance, coming in at a remarkable 1hr 15min 12sec and breaking a record that had stood for seven years. Around his role, Cpl Richardson engaged in a 16-



**Pte Warren-Goode at the World Superbike Championship Donington Park.**



# The Vikings

week training block, in which he also broke the Army 5km 'Masters' record with a time of 16min 2sec.

From the fastest man on two legs to the fastest man on two wheels, Pte Warren-Goode became the first soldier ever to place 2nd in the British Super Bike paddock. In a World Super Bikes round held at Donington Park, Pte Warren-Goode battled 30-degree heat in full kit, showing true mental and physical resilience. Having only been in the sport for a year, it is incredibly rare to see such acclaim in the world's highest level of domestic super bikes so early.

If the Anti-Tank Platoon ever find themselves crossing deep waters, Lt Irvine has proved that he can certainly lead from the front. Following a week training camp in Aldershot, 6 Pl Comd represented the Infantry in the Army Swimming Championships, bringing home several gold medals, including 50m freestyle, 100m freestyle, and 4x50m freestyle relay swimming alongside Pte White.

Additionally, Pte White also brought home silverware in the individual competitions, placing second in 200m freestyle and fourth in 50m. The event led Lt Irvine to be selected for the Army swimming team, where he competed



**Pte Warren-Goode at the Eord Superbike Championship Donington Park.**

in the Inter-Services Championships, winning again in 100m freestyle. This was even more impressive given his training routine, which consisted of two days in a hotel pool whilst deployed in Kenya.

Combat sport continues to echo key characteristics of infantry soldiering. On the boxing night LCpl Meacher and Pte Cowan demonstrated this through humility and chivalry as their hard work

paid off, beating OC C and OC A Coy respectively. Brazilian Jui-Jitsu (BJJ) is also going from strength to strength, led from within by Pte Musk, who this year travelled to compete in the British National Championships. The notable grit of sporting routine, combined with the excellent facilities available at Kendrew Barracks, allowed all three soldiers to train effectively alongside their regular role.



**Lt Irvine third from right on front row and Pte White third from right in back row at the Army Swimming Championships.**





# 1st Battalion

## Sahara Ultra Marathon

Lt Sam Irvine, OC 1 (Anti Tank) Platoon, with input from Cpl Simon Richardson, B (Suffolk) Coy Stores & IC

At the end of October Cpl Richardson of B (Suffolk) Coy, attempted to run a 100km ultra marathon across the Sahara Desert in Tunisia. He was one of 300 runners who were invited from around the world to compete in this gruelling endurance race.

The event was called Ultra4Charity, organised by ex-United Kingdom Special Forces members and is one of four biennial races. The events are all held in challenging environments, the other three are in the Rainforest, Arctic, and the Albanian Alps. Currently the team has raised over £225,000 which will be split amongst four military charities:

HEADS UP, REORG, TEAM FORCES, and THE NOT FORGOTTEN. Each charity plays a vital role in looking after our soldiers' mental health and wellbeing.

During the event, daytime temperatures reached upwards of 40 degrees Celsius, while nighttime temperatures dropped to single figures.

The route covered several significant inclines and was mainly on soft sand. Cpl Richardson had to carry two days' worth of kit and equipment and navigate the route himself. Each runner also carried a GPS so they can be tracked as well as an emergency SOS beacon they could activate if they got into serious trouble.



Once the team arrived in country, they travelled to Tozeur in the West of Tunisia. Race preparation then began, with various kit checks and medical tests. There was a world leading medical

team supporting the event, consisting of Doctors, Medics, and Physios from the UK. Day one started at five am with a brief on the start line. Each runner then had to navigate 50km throughout the day to the finish point. The first night was then spent in the desert, in their sleeping bags under the stars. Day 2 was the real test with hundreds of metres of elevation gain accumulated throughout the day from climbing the dunes.

Cpl Richardson had put in over 2500km of training over the last six months in preparation for the event, and to stand himself in best stead to make it across the finish line. With an average completion rate of just 20%, this was certainly a challenge worthy of a Viking. Not only did Cpl Richardson manage to complete the event but came first on both the first and second day, winning the brutal race by a strong margin. This achievement is even more notable given that Cpl Richardson ate only rations for the duration of the race. This was a huge accomplishment by Cpl Richardson who demonstrated all the qualities of a Viking soldier.

## WW1 Reburials

Sixteen members of B (Suffolk) Company, led by Lt Astill, Sgt Maslen, and Sgt Petrecz, recently travelled to France and Belgium to attend several burials and rededication ceremonies for servicemen who fell during the First World War.

Among those laid to rest were LCpl Ramsbottom of the Suffolk Regiment, who lost his life at Loos in 1916; Privates Cook, Callum, London, and Fraser of the Lincolnshire Regiment, who fell at Lens in 1917; and 2Lt Hopkins and 2Lt Kellie, officers of the Bedfordshire Regiment, who died during the Battle of Hill 60 in 1915.

Members of B (Suffolk) Company were divided into a firing party, led

by Sgt Petrecz, and a burial party, led by Sgt Maslen. Prior to deployment, the soldiers spent a week at Catterick training under instructors from the Drill Wing and rehearsing every detail of the ceremonies to ensure each service would be a dignified and fitting tribute to those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

The burials took place at Loos British Cemetery and Railway Dugouts Burial Ground, with services conducted by Padre Roberts, who delivered moving tributes to the fallen. Each ceremony was attended by many mourners, including family members of those being honoured.

The week concluded with Lt Astill, Sgt Maslen, and Padre Roberts taking

part in the Menin Gate ceremony—a tradition dating back to the First World War, where visitors from around the globe gather to pay their respects and lay wreaths. This solemn occasion offered an opportunity for reflection and remembrance of all who served and sacrificed, underscoring the Company's enduring commitment to honouring the memory of those who came before us. The privilege of being invited to France and Belgium meant a great deal to the men of B (Suffolk) Company, giving us all a poignant week to reflect on our forebears. With this legacy reaffirmed B (Suffolk) Company looks forward to the future proud to be representing those who came before



## C (Essex) Company

Maj Lloyd, Officer Commanding, C (Essex) Company

Since assuming command of C (Essex) Company in August, I have been struck by how much the Company has achieved over the past year. From intense training exercises to professional development, community engagement, and adventurous training, the past 12 months have been both challenging and rewarding for all. ~~The year~~ ended with a strong focus on core skills, including the Recce Cadre and Sniper Operators Course. Both were demanding, and those who passed should be proud of their achievements. The Company capped off 2024 by taking first and second place in the Captain Driver's Challenge, a testament to their professionalism and determination.

After a well-earned Christmas leave, the Company returned to prepare for Exercise BULL STORM, the Battlegroup's validation exercise in Kenya. January and February were dedicated to conceptual development and refining the Company's role in the Tactical Recce Strike concept.

Whether rehearsing standard operating procedures, conducting individual training, or running conceptual development sessions for the Battalion, the soldiers embraced the challenge with enthusiasm and commitment.

It wasn't all work, however. A highlight of the year was the history and dinner night in February, where the Officers hosted the soldiers and NCOs in the Officers' Mess. The evening



included talks on regimental history, followed by a formal dinner and drinks, fostering camaraderie and pride in the Company's heritage.

By May, the Company was well-prepared for Ex BULL STORM. The exercise in Kenya proved as challenging as ever, with the rugged terrain, wildlife,

and the opposing forces of Task Force Hannibal testing the Battalion's mettle. The Company performed admirably, excelling in mounted recce and sniper roles, developing small team tactics, and even enjoying a few safaris and trips to the Kenyan coast.

Returning from Kenya in July, the Company bid farewell to several key individuals, including Major Hamilton (OC), Capt Bagnall (OC Recce), CSgt Vine (CQMS), and Sgt Granfield (Recce). Their contributions to the Company were invaluable, and we wish them the very best for the future.

The year continued with a navigation exercise at RAF Spadeadam in October (despite some very wet conditions) and an urban skills exercise in Norwich to sharpen the Company's abilities in key environments.

Looking ahead, the Company is preparing for another busy year. Plans include further core skills training, a focus on modernising capabilities such as uncrewed aerial systems and first-person view drones, and continuing to refine the tactical recce strike concept ahead of Exercise VIKING STRIKE, a battlegroup Find and Strike exercise.

The past year has been a true testament to the dedication, resilience, and professionalism of every member of C (Essex) Company. I have no doubt that, whatever challenges lie ahead, the Company will continue to uphold its reputation and live up to its ethos.





# 1st Battalion

## Sniper Operators Course 2024

CSgt Murray, OCSniper Platoon, C (Essex) Company

This year, C (Essex) Company's Sniper Platoon successfully delivered the challenging eight-week Sniper Operator Cadre (SOC) on behalf of 11 Brigade.

Participants included soldiers from 3 SCOTS, 3 RIFLES, 3 RANGER, the Poachers, and three snipers from the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, following a partner-force sniper package conducted in their country last autumn.

The SOC is renowned as one of the most demanding courses in the British Army, testing not only technical skills but also physical endurance, resilience, and mental toughness. Candidates trained and competed to earn the coveted sniper badge, reflecting the high standards required to operate in small, self-reliant teams with precision, stealth, and independence.





## The Vikings

The cadre was divided into distinct phases, focusing on seven key sniper skills: shooting, observation, judging distance, camouflage and concealment, navigation, stalking, and sniper knowledge.

The first week focused on mastering the fundamentals of precision shooting, including trigger control, breathing, and sight alignment. Every shot mattered, as even small errors could mean failure in real-world scenarios.

Week two took place on Salisbury Plain, where candidates refined their ability to navigate across challenging terrain in adverse conditions, ensuring they could move undetected in hostile environments.

Weeks three and four in the Brecon

Beacons tested shooting skills under operational conditions. The rugged terrain and unpredictable weather created a realistic and demanding environment for live-fire drills, long-range engagements, and stress shooting.

In weeks five and six at Catterick Training Area, students honed their observation, distance judging, camouflage, and map-reading skills. The diverse terrain provided new challenges, pushing candidates to adapt and refine their techniques.

The penultimate week was the most demanding, as students were assessed on all seven sniper skills. The pressure was immense, with one mistake potentially disqualifying a candidate. Only those who met the highest standards

earned the prestigious sniper badge. The cadre concluded with an intense exercise testing the students' abilities

to operate under high-stress, high-stakes conditions. This ultimate test of endurance and skill ensured candidates were prepared to function effectively as snipers within a battle group.

The 2024 Sniper Operators Course was a resounding success, showcasing the dedication, resilience, and professionalism of all involved.

The course not only enhanced technical and physical capabilities but also demanded unparalleled mental robustness, ensuring those who attended are ready to serve in one of the most challenging and vital roles in the British Army.

## Uncrewed Aerial Systems and First Person View in the Recce Group

C (Essex) Company has been at the forefront of enhancing its capabilities in Uncrewed Aerial Systems (UAS) and First-Person View (FPV) drones. These small, unmanned aerial platforms, controlled remotely by pilots, are transforming modern warfare by providing advanced reconnaissance and strike capabilities.

For the Recce Strike role, the Company is focusing on 8" and 10" rotary platforms due to their compact manoeuvrability. These add new layers of robust intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities when equipped with high-quality cameras or thermal imagers. Additionally, their ability to carry payloads and deliver munitions makes them a potent tool for precision strike operations.

Platforms like the Skydio and Parrot Anafi, equipped with high-resolution cameras and thermal imaging, significantly enhance capabilities. These systems enable stand-off missions with reduced signatures, allowing the Company to gather intelligence while minimising exposure. Training courses for these platforms are



### UAS FPV Suite.

already available, and qualified pilots are returning to their units to bolster capability across the Field Army.

FPV drones are increasingly

prominent in modern conflicts due to their low cost, manoeuvrability, and ability to deliver rapid, devastating effects on targets. Recognising their





# 1st Battalion



## UAS FPV Suite.

potential, C (Essex) Company has prioritised developing its FPV drone capability. Soldiers have been attending the intensive four-week FPV One-Way Attack workshop, enabling them to qualify as instructors and train additional pilots within the Company.

While awaiting formal qualifications, soldiers are honing their skills in the FPV suite, a digital flight simulator.

This platform allows them to build the "stick time" needed to master the more challenging FPV systems. Once

confident in the simulator, trainees progress to indoor practice drones before advancing to the five-, eight-, and ten-inch platforms. Competent operators

will eventually conduct precision strikes with payload-equipped FPV drones, enhancing the lethality and effectiveness of recce groups.

In Kenya, C (Essex) Company demonstrated the potential of integrating UAS and FPV drones into the Recce Strike role. Drone pilots were embedded within recce patrols or operated as part of a dedicated UAS team behind the recce screen. This provided a flexible and rapidly deployable UAS capability, allowing for intelligence gathering, target identification, and precision strikes.

UAS also proved invaluable for route clearance, serving as an 'eye in

the sky' to identify vulnerable areas and ensure safer movement through the battlespace, particularly during mounted operations. This capability significantly enhances operational effectiveness and survivability in complex environments.

The integration of UAS and FPV drones into the Company's training pipeline is an ongoing process. As the battlefield evolves, so must our tactics and technologies. By investing time and resources into these capabilities, C (Essex) Company is ensuring it remains a critical asset to the Battalion and the wider Brigade, ready to meet the challenges of modern warfare head-on.

## Victory in Japan 80th Anniversary Day Parade at St Mary's Church, Bury St Edmunds



**The colour party in St Mary's Church, Bury St Edmunds.**

On an extremely hot day, the town of Bury St Edmunds came alive with pride and remembrance as the community gathered to commemorate the 80th anniversary of Victory in Japan (VJ) Day. The event, held at the magnificent St Mary's Church, was a poignant tribute to the sacrifices and triumphs of those who served during the Second World War.

The parade was attended by a Colour Party from the 1st Battalion whose presence highlighted the strong county links that are so important to all the members of the battalion. The Colour Party, comprising Lieutenant Morgan-McDermott, Lieutenant Irvine, Warrant Officer (Class 2) Murphy, Colour Sergeant Murray, and Colour Sergeant Vanhinsbergh, had the honour of parading the King's Colours in front of the Colonel of the Regiment and the people of Bury St Edmunds.

The event was graced by the presence of His Royal Highness, the Duke of Gloucester, who attended as the Royal representative. His attendance

underscored the significance of the day, as he joined veterans, their families, and members of the local community in paying tribute to those who fought in the Pacific theatre of the Second World War. Over 20 families of veterans were in attendance, many of whom brought photographs, medals, and mementoes of their loved ones who served during the war. Their attendance served as a powerful reminder of the personal stories behind the history, as they shared memories of courage, resilience, and loss.

The service at St Mary's Church was well conducted, with hymns, prayers, and readings that reflected on the sacrifices made by so many. The church and Suffolk regimental chapel are filled with rich history that provided a fitting backdrop for the solemn occasion. A highlight of the service was the laying of wreaths at the church's altar, a moment of quiet reflection as attendees honoured the memory of those who never returned home.

In his address, the vicar paid tribute

to the veterans and their families, acknowledging the immense debt of gratitude owed to the people who served during the war. He spoke of the importance of remembering the lessons of history and ensuring that the sacrifices of the past are never forgotten.

The parade concluded with a march-past outside the church, where the Colour Party led a procession of veterans and serving personnel. The streets of Bury St Edmunds were lined with members of the public, who applauded in a heartfelt display of appreciation and respect. Any day was a deeply emotional experience. "It's so important to keep these memories alive," said one attendee, whose grandfather served in the Pacific theatre during the war. "Today is about honouring their bravery and ensuring future generations understand the cost of the freedoms we enjoy." The VJ80 Day parade at St Mary's Church was a powerful reminder of the resilience and unity that defined the wartime generation.





# 1st Battalion

## D (Cambridgeshire) Company

### Overview

Bas (Cambridgeshire) Company has the opportunity to understand and develop its role within 11X. Over the past year, the Company has worked tirelessly to refine its core skills and adapt to the evolving requirements of the Battalion, achieving significant milestones along the way.

Following the conclusion of the Security Force Assistance (SFA) role and the deployment to Bosnia and Herzegovina on Operation FELAGI, the Company began the year with a strong showing in the annual Captain Driver's Challenge. D Company teams performed admirably, with the Machine Gun (MG) Platoon delivering an outstanding performance.

Early 2025 saw the Mortar Platoon running a cadre that developed a core of mortar numbers and JNCOs capable of supporting the Battalion. This effort was part of an 11X initiative, with 3 SCOTS joining the live-fire training across Kendrew, Leek, and Otterburn. The cadre not only enhanced the Battalion's indirect fire capability but also contributed to 11X's overall operational readiness for Exercise BULL STORM.

Key training activities included Live Fire Tactical Training at Otterburn, which improved personal weapon handling and marksmanship, while the MG Platoon honed its GPMG SF capability. Navigation training at Leek and a low-level tactics week hosted by the Training Wing at Kendrew further reinforced that all ranks are capable of meeting the challenges, regardless of advancements in autonomous technologies.

In Kenya, the platoons were tasked with supporting the Battlegroup at the platoon level as BG assets. The CSM



supported the RSM and Battle Echelon, while the OC assumed the role of BG Logistics Officer.

Throughout the deployment, the Company made significant strides in developing Standard Operating Procedures and Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures within a smaller, more agile force structure. MG Platoon conducted live firing and integration drills, and UAS platforms were employed for route

clearance and reconnaissance missions, enhancing the Company's operational capabilities.

Despite the challenges posed by Kenya's terrain, wildlife, and aging vehicle fleet, the Company performed admirably, showing resilience and adaptability.

The return from Kenya saw a notable change in the Company's leadership and structure. Key departures included: WO2 Stearne, CSgt Wildney, CSgt Dunster, Sgt Monks and Sgt Harris. The Company also welcomed: WO2 (CSM) Walsh, CSgt Hughes, Sgt Forbes, and Sgt McConkey.

Since Kenya, the Company has remained focused on training. A joint MG Cadre with the 2nd Battalion saw soldiers recertify and gain qualifications on HMG and GMG, while the 2nd Battalion's Mortar Cadre provided further live-fire opportunities, enhancing the Battalion's overall capability.

to Dma Company its Skills and Arms Proficiency and preparing the next generation of leaders. A new cohort of potential JNCOs is ready for promotion in November, and the Company is also prioritising the development of its FPV and sUAS capability. This will play a key role in the Battalion's evolution and 11X's future operations.

The coming year holds exciting opportunities for refinement and growth, culminating in Exercise VIKING STRIKE in mid-2026. D (Cambridgeshire) Company is well-prepared to meet these challenges, continuing to uphold its reputation for professionalism, resilience, and innovation in support of the Battalion and the wider Brigade.

## Mortar Platoon: Rising to the Challenge



The challenges for the Mortar Platoon began in December 2023, when the Battalion underwent a significant restructuring. This reorganisation resulted in a reduction in the Platoon's size and the loss of several experienced soldiers.

In preparation for Exercise BULL STORM 25, the Platoon conducted an intensive Mortar Cadre to train its soldiers on the use of kit and equipment, ensuring they were ready for the tasks ahead.

With the decision made for the Battlegroup to operate from a vehicle platform, a considerable effort was undertaken by Capt Simms, Lt Barke,

Sgt Dunster, Sgt Monks, and the soldiers to establish robust procedures and ensure the capability was fully prepared to support the Battlegroup. The modern battlefield has rendered the traditional static mortar line almost obsolete, necessitating a shift towards a more dynamic approach. The Platoon quickly adapted to the concept of "shoot and scoot" tactics, prioritising mobility to enhance survivability.

As the exercise progressed, the Platoon's tactics evolved, and the effectiveness of its indirect fire support significantly improved. The use of the simulated mortar training kit, with its CO2 launch system, provided realistic

and valuable training during the blank exercise phase. This allowed the Platoon to refine its skills in a controlled yet challenging environment.

Exercise BULL STORM 25 marked the first opportunity for the restructured Platoon to operate together as a cohesive unit. Throughout the exercise, the soldiers demonstrated resilience and adaptability, rising to every challenge they encountered. Each member of the Platoon contributed their insights and perspectives, fostering a collaborative environment that drove innovation and improved operational effectiveness.

The exercise concluded with a well-deserved period of adventure training





# 1st Battalion

at Rift Valley Adventures, where the Platoon engaged in activities such as mountain biking and canyoneering (see photo 2). This provided an excellent opportunity for team bonding and personal development.

Overall, Exercise BULL STORM 25 proved to be a highly valuable experience for the Mortar Platoon. From enhancing the speed and accuracy of targeting at the Battlegroup Headquarters level to placing private soldiers in positions of responsibility, development was evident at every level. The lessons learned during the exercise have provided a solid foundation for the Platoon to continue refining its role within the Tactical Recce Strike framework. The team is eager to build on this progress and looks forward to the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.



**Pte Senibuli enjoys pushing his mountain bike to its very limits on Rift Valley Adventures.**



**LCplsMumford and Bayfield practice on the Elbit system TES Mortar kit within OB SWARA.**



## Tactical Recce-Strike Machine Gun employment in Kenya

The Machine Gun platoon deployed to Kenya as part of 11 Brigade's Exercise BULL STORM from May to July 2025. Our part saw us training to modernise our Tactics, Techniques and Procedures using existing equipment.

For the Machine Gun Platoon, the exercise began with live fire ranges to complete the GPMG Sustained Fire (SF) marksmanship test, firing out to 1800m by direct fire. The platoon then moved onto further shoots using Map Predicted Fire by day and night out to 2500m. The platoon used our integral UAS pilots to adjust the fire of the gun line as tracer rounds burn out within 1100m; at further ranges UAS was the only reliable way to see the strike and swirl of the beaten zone. This fusion of UAS and traditional GPMG SF tactics enhanced our ability to bring accurate direct and indirect fire onto target, dramatically speeding up our ability to kill the enemy.

After live firing, the Machine Gun Platoon moved to join A (Norfolk) Company and form the core of the Combat Team element of the battlegroup. During this phase, the use of the rifle platoons as forwards sensors, along with a good amount UAS, allowed us to practice enabling actions from the high ground.

This led us to the Final Training Exercise phase of the deployment.

These actions saw the platoon take part in offensive, defensive and enabling



**GPMG SF being fired on OL MAISOR training area, Kenya.**

operations, providing intimate fires to the Combat Team to destroy dismounted troops. This worked particularly well when enemy sniper and recce Observation Posts were spotted by UAS operators and provided the 10-figure grid to the Gun Line which allowed all three GPMG SF's to provide up to 4 minutes of 7.62mm at 200rds per/min each onto the target, destroying anything within the beaten zone.

The GPMG SF proved to be

extremely effective in the Tactical Recce Strike role as a highly adaptable weapon system to provide both intimate fire support and harassing fire at further ranges. With a new vehicle fleet coming to 11 Brigade this will give the MG Platoon greater mobility. This will allow our GPMG SF to provide accurate fires and move the Gun Line quickly to avoid any counter-fires in both a delaying/defensive role, or within an offensive action.



**Machine Guns Platoon near MPALA FARM in Kenya**





# 1st Battalion

## HQ Company

Maj Steve Mitchinson

As we reflect on the past year, Headquarter Company stands proud of its contributions across a wide spectrum of operational, training, and community engagement activities. With an average strength of 110 personnel distributed across 14 departments, HQ Coy has been the backbone of support to both the Battalion and wider Defence outputs. From deployments abroad to events at home, the Company has demonstrated versatility, resilience, and a steadfast commitment to excellence.

A significant undertaking this year was the Battalion's deployment on Exercise Bull Storm in Kenya, running from May to July 2025. HQ Company played a pivotal role in enabling this deployment, ensuring that personnel, equipment, and logistics were coordinated seamlessly. While the main body operated overseas, the Rear Operations Group (ROG) remained active at Kendrew Barracks, comprising approximately 80 service personnel. The ROG maintained essential functions including guard duties, training, and support to trawls, ensuring continuity and readiness back in the UK.

Training has remained a cornerstone of HQ Coy's output. The Company facilitated a wide range of activities including Live Firing Tactical Training (LFTT), pre-deployment training, and familiarisation packages. Specialist cadres such as General Service (GS) Cadres, Category C and C+E driving courses, and a surge in Communications and Information Systems (CIS) courses have ensured that our personnel remain technically proficient and operationally ready.

Medical support has been robust, with Combat Medical Technicians (CMTs) deployed across various exercises, ensuring health and welfare standards are upheld. Likewise, our Royal Logistic Corps (RLC) Chefs have been instrumental in maintaining morale and sustenance, supporting both training and ceremonial events.

HQ Coy has continued to foster strong ties with the local community.



A notable highlight was the support provided to the Rutland Cadet Investiture in September 2025, reinforcing our commitment to youth development and Defence engagement.

Also celebrated prominently, Minden Day, celebrated jointly with 2 Royal Anglian's Talavera Day on 30 July 2025, was a proud moment for all involved. Held at Kendrew Barracks, the event showcased regimental heritage and camaraderie, with HQ Coy playing a leading role in its organisation and execution.

Additionally, the Regimental Day held at Kendrew Barracks was another opportunity to honour our traditions and recognise the contributions of our veteran and Royal Anglian Community.

HQ Company has been at the forefront of improving the Lived Experience for service personnel within Kendrew Barracks. This has included supporting a number of infrastructure projects aimed at enhancing accommodation, facilities, and overall welfare. These efforts reflect our ongoing commitment to ensuring that our people are well-supported both

professionally and personally.

In April 2025, HQ Coy hosted a highly successful boxing event in Hangar C, featuring nine competitive bouts. The event drew an audience of approximately 450 spectators, including VIPs, and served as a powerful morale booster. It highlighted the physical prowess and fighting spirit of our personnel, while also fostering esprit de corps.

Recognition and development have been central to HQ Coy's ethos. The Company has taken a proactive role in supporting and leading the Army Servicewomen's Engagement and Mentoring Support Association (ASEMSA) within Kendrew Barracks, promoting inclusivity and professional growth.

Throughout the year, numerous HQ Coy personnel have been formally recognised for their outstanding contributions. Commendations and awards have been presented across various departments, reflecting the high standards and dedication of our team.

As we move into the next operational cycle, HQ Company remains committed to delivering excellence across all domains. Whether supporting deployments, enabling training, or engaging with the community, our personnel continue to embody the values of professionalism, adaptability, and teamwork.

A farewell to WO2 (CSM) Ray McCaughey and his family, who was successful in securing a SSCP role in London District. Mr McCaughey moved on in June 25 and handed the reigns to WO2 (CSM) Jay Haldenby - former B Coy CSM.

We extend our sincere thanks to every member of HQ Coy for their hard work and dedication over the past year. Your efforts have not only sustained the Company's outputs but have also strengthened the fabric of our Battalion. Let us carry this momentum forward into the coming year, with pride in our achievements and a shared commitment to future success.



## Captain Driver's Challenge

Cpl Hubbard

Captain Martin Driver was a dedicated officer of the 1st Battalion. Hailing from Barnsley, he was commissioned into the battalion in 2006.

In October 2009, he deployed to Afghanistan, where he was critically injured by an improvised explosive device. He tragically succumbed to his injuries at Selly Oak Hospital.

The Captain Driver's Challenge is an annual competition that honours the qualities Captain Driver exemplified: fitness, knowledge, resilience, and teamwork. It provides a structured, demanding environment for sections and platoons to compete across multiple domains, including fitness, casualty care, communications, and military knowledge. The challenge not only reflects the demands of modern operations but also ensures that Captain Driver's legacy endures through the pursuit of excellence.

This year's challenge took place



**Basic radio drills.**



**A Company Medical serial.**





# 1st Battalion

over a full day, with teams rotating through a series of stands designed to test their capabilities. Key events included: kit checks, casualty treatment and extraction, military knowledge, communications, trench clearance and physical fitness.

To replicate the unpredictability of real operations, 'stress injects' such as surprise tasks and simulated casualties were added between stands. C (Essex) Company's Recce Platoon emerged victorious in this year's challenge, excelling across all stands. Their success demonstrated the exceptional soldiering ability and rigorous training within the battalion's specialist platoons.

Future iterations of the Captain Driver's Challenge may incorporate new elements such as drone operations or cyber tasks, but its core values will remain unchanged: precision, fitness, knowledge, calm under pressure, and teamwork. These are the principles Captain Driver exemplified, and through this challenge, we honour his memory by striving to embody them ourselves.



Calculating shooting scores.



Capt Driver's Challenge stretcher race.

## Minden and Talavera Day

As a new member of the unit, my first experience of Minden Day was far more than just a ceremonial date on the calendar, it connected me to a legacy of service, sacrifice, and pride. Having served in the military for some time, I have encountered traditions and commemorations before, but nothing quite like this. This was my first joint celebration with both the 1st and 2nd Battalions, and it was a day that brought history to life in a way I had not expected.

The day began with a bang - literally.

In the early hours of the morning, we were woken to 'gunfire.' It was not hostile, of course, but it was a reminder that this was no ordinary day. The mood was a blend of formality and quiet pride. Senior ranks moved through the accommodation blocks, dressed for the occasion in Viking attire and offering drinks to junior soldiers;

a gesture that spoke volumes about camaraderie and tradition. It was a moment of connection, bridging ranks and roles, and reinforcing the shared experience that binds us together.

One of the most powerful symbols of the day was the Minden Rose. Worn proudly by many, it is a small flower with deep meaning. The tradition dates to the Battle of Minden in 1759, when British soldiers picked roses from the hedgerows as they advanced into battle. The rose today is more than a nod to history; it is a statement of identity, a connection to those who came before us. Seeing it worn with pride reminded me that I am part of something much larger than myself.

Throughout the day, the sense of history was ever-present. The joint parade was conducted with precision and respect, honouring not just the battles of Minden and Talavera, but the

values they represent, courage, duty, and resilience. For those receiving promotions, the day held added significance.

What made this year's commemoration truly memorable was how real it felt. It was not just a reenactment or a formal observance; it was a shared experience. From the early morning gunfire to the historical reflections and the interactions among soldiers and families, the day brought our heritage to life.

It stirred something in me that I had not expected, a deeper understanding of why we do what we do, and a renewed sense of purpose.

It is a reminder of the sacrifices made by those who came before us, and a celebration of the values that continue to guide us today. This day brought that legacy to life, and I am proud to be part of it.

## Viking Boxing

CSgt Mark Anderson (HQ Coy CQMS)



### Viking Night of Boxing team

On 2 April 2025, the Viking Boxing team delivered a spectacular evening of grit, discipline, and sportsmanship, where over 450 spectators, including VIPs and service personnel, gathered to witness nine thrilling bouts across various weight categories.

The Viking Boxing program is spearheaded by CSgt Mark Anderson, a Level 2 coach. The coaching team includes Pte Mayhew, a Level 2 coach, and Pte Diggins, a Level 1 coach. Together, they have cultivated a culture of discipline, mutual respect, and continuous improvement, training weekly and ensuring all boxers meet the necessary medical and dental requirements ahead of competition. The team is overseen by Maj Danny Spray, the Boxing Officer. In the lead-up to the event, the Viking Boxing team maintained a rigorous training schedule. Weekly sessions focused on conditioning, technique, and mental resilience, with coaches tailoring their approach to suit individual boxers' strengths and areas for development.

The atmosphere on the night was

electric as the crowd settled in for an evening of high-octane boxing. With nine bouts scheduled, spectators were treated to a diverse display of fighting styles, weight classes, and tactical matchups. Each contest was fiercely fought, with boxers demonstrating not only technical skill but also the heart and determination emblematic of the Viking spirit.

Among the standout performances was the bout between Pte Prime (A Coy) and Pte Murphy (HQ Coy), which was awarded Best Bout of the Night. Their clash was a masterclass in endurance and strategy, with both fighters pushing each other to the limit in a display that had the crowd on its feet.

Pte Cowan emerged as the Best Boxer of the Night, impressing judges and spectators alike with his composure, precision, and tactical execution. His performance was a testament to the hours of training and the guidance of his coaches, and he now stands as a role model for aspiring boxers within the battalion. Equally inspiring was Cpl Kenny-Davis, who received the

Most Gallant Boxer award. His courage in the ring, refusal to back down, and unwavering commitment to the fight embodied the warrior ethos that Viking Boxing seeks to cultivate. His bout was a reminder that boxing is as much about character as it is about skill.

Behind the scenes, a dedicated corner staff who provide critical support before, during, and after each bout. On the night, Pte Diggins coached the red corner, while Pte Mayhew led the blue corner. Their roles were pivotal, offering tactical advice, motivation, and rapid adjustments between rounds.

Viking Boxing is more than just a sport - it reflects the battalion's spirit, discipline, and commitment to excellence. The event displayed the absolute best of what military boxing can offer: fierce competition, mutual respect, and the celebration of individual and collective achievement. As the team continues to train and grow, it will remain a cornerstone of the battalion's identity and a source of pride for all who wear the Viking badge.





# 1st Battalion

## Wakeboarding and Waterskiing in the Regiment: A Season of Resilience and Growth



### Sgt Fines in action.

As the 2025 wakeboarding season ends, it's time to reflect on a year marked by resilience, camaraderie, and the steady growth of this exciting sport within the Royal Anglian Regiment and the wider Infantry.

This season presented unique challenges. With both battalions deployed, the Regimental Wakeboarding and Waterskiing team ran with a smaller lineup, as many experienced riders were on operations. Despite this, the team's determination and commitment ensured the sport continued to thrive.

A highlight of the year was

introducing wakeboarding to new service personnel across the Regiment. For many, it was their first time on a board and watching them progress with enthusiasm and grit was a testament to the spirit of discovery and growth that defines this sport.

These newcomers brought fresh energy to the team, and we hope they will continue to develop their skills in the seasons ahead. Moments like these—when someone steps out of their comfort zone and discovers a new passion—are what growing the sport is all about.

While the team did not secure

gearpodiuminfantryish Wakeboarding and Waterski Championships, their performance was commendable given the reduced squad and limited preparation time. Their resilience and professionalism laid a solid foundation for the future. We look forward to welcoming back experienced riders and integrating new talent into the team for the 2026 season.

Special recognition goes to Capt Estwick and Sgt Fines who represented the Regiment/Infantry at the Army Championships. Their hard work and skill earned them a place on this

## The Vikings



### Royal Anglian Regiment Wakeboard Team.

prestigious stage, and their achievements are a source of pride for the Regiment and inspiration for others.

Looking ahead, we aim to expand participation and visibility for wakeboarding and waterskiing across the Regiment and the Infantry.

Whether you are a regular or reserve, an experienced rider, or simply curious, we encourage you to get involved. Wakeboarding is open to all skill levels, and there is always a place for anyone willing to give it a try.

As the 2025 season ends, we are proud of what we have achieved and excited for the future. Wakeboarding and waterskiing are more than sports—they are opportunities for growth, camaraderie, and resilience. Let us build on this year's successes, support each other, and make even bigger waves in 2026.

We want to grow the sport, build our community, and ensure that more Royal Anglians are making waves in seasons to come.



Capt Lee Estwick and Sgt Fines at the Army Championships.





# 1st Battalion

## The Royal Anglian Regiment Cycling Club: A Year of Success

WO1 (RQMS) Dan Tanner

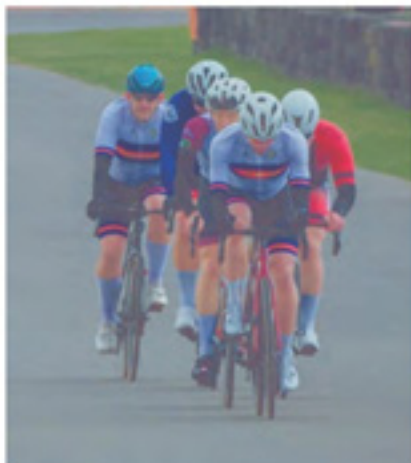


### The finishers.

The Royal Anglian Regiment Cycling Club has gone from strength to strength over the past year, showing not only exceptional physical endurance and competitive spirit but also a steadfast commitment to charity, teamwork, and regimental pride.

From gruelling long-distance rides to outstanding results in national-level races, the Regiment's cyclists have proudly represented the R ANGLIAN colours across the UK.

The highlight of the year was undoubtedly the motoring and endurance celebrity Guy Martin joining R ANGLIAN Ride 2025, a remarkable charity event that saw riders cover an incredible 550 miles over just five days, traversing the Regiment's historic



recruiting areas.

Facing fierce winds, relentless rain, and challenging terrain, the team

embodied the very essence of what it means to be a Royal Anglian Regiment soldier—resilience, determination, and a sense of humour in the face of adversity.

Their efforts raised an impressive £1,314 for the Royal Anglian Benevolent Fund, directly supporting soldiers, veterans, and their families. This ride was a testament to the Regiment's enduring commitment to service, both on and off the battlefield. Guy Martin a local Grimsby chum provided

Following their charity success, the Club turned its attention to competitive racing, making waves in the military cycling scene. At the Infantry Cycling Championships at Darley Moor Racetrack in April 2025, five Royal Anglian riders competed against some of



# The Vikings



the best cyclists in the Infantry. Among them, Capt Matt Wilman delivered a standout performance, securing an impressive 6th place finish in a highly competitive field. His tactical prowess and consistency throughout the season marked him as a rising star in Army cycling.

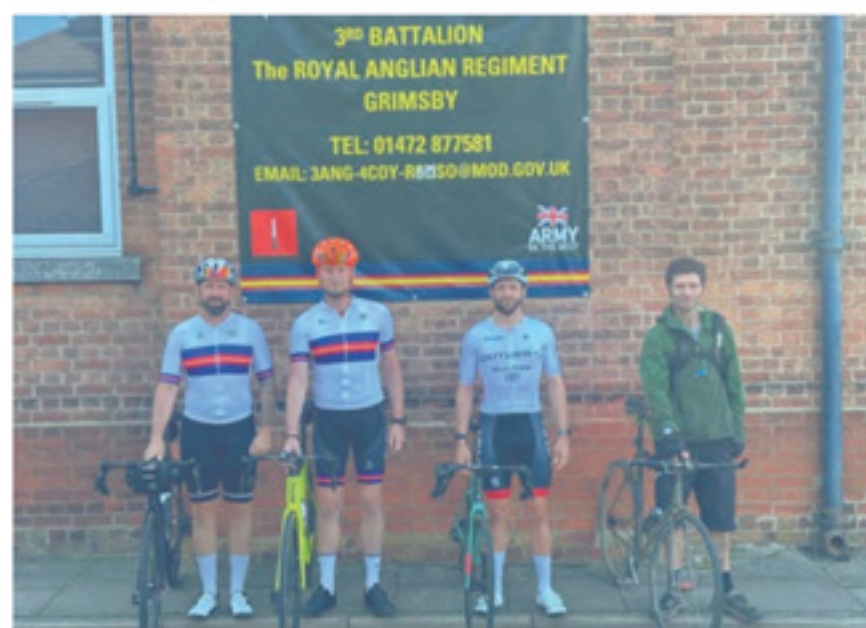
Capt Wilman's impressive form culminated in a stellar performance at the Army Road Racing Championships, where he claimed victory in the B Category, earning a well-deserved promotion to the elite A Category. Undeterred, he went on to compete in six of the seven championship rounds, finishing 4th overall in the series—a remarkable achievement that highlights his talent and determination.

The Regiment's achievements extended beyond road racing. In the challenging discipline of cyclocross, WO2 Tanner earned a prestigious place on the Army Cyclocross Development Team, showcasing his technical skill and aggressive racing style. Meanwhile, in the rapidly growing arena of eSports racing, Ray McCaughey was appointed Vice Chairman of the Army eRacing Series, where he has been instrumental in advancing virtual racing across Defence. Despite a packed schedule, Royal

Anglian riders continued to compete in club events, local leagues, and national competitions throughout the year. Whether raising funds for charity, donning Corps colours in prestigious races, or tackling muddy cyclocross courses in the rain, the Regiment's cyclists consistently displayed the grit, discipline, and camaraderie that define

both soldiering and cycling.

The Royal Anglian Regiment Cycling Club has built a strong foundation over the past year, proving that the values of soldiering align perfectly with those of competitive cycling. With momentum high and morale soaring, the Club is already gearing up for an even bigger and better season in 2026. Watch this space.



Guy Martin attends the Royal Anglian Ride.





## 2nd Battalion

The last 12 months have seen the 2nd Battalion conduct a full range of activity which has cut across every aspect of Regimental life. The Poachers' long-term focus on Light Mechanised excellence has paid dividends as we've delivered as a battlegroup with the NATO Allied Reaction Force.

The highlight of 2025 was the battlegroup validating on Ex WESSEX STORM in June. Augmented by a French Coy from the 1er Régiment d'Infanterie, the Poachers fought toe-to-toe with the 1st Battalion, Scots Guards who performed the OPFOR role aka Taskforce HANNIBAL. In replicating the contemporary operating environment in Eastern Europe the Battalion was exposed to an incredibly challenging collective training experience. Drones, electronic warfare, one way attack drones human wave attacks were all the order of the day, every day! The exercise was long and hard, but I'm pleased to say that the Poachers performed brilliantly, pushing our capabilities further than ever before. We were well supported by 7 Brigade and consequently learned a great deal: a strong foundation to build upon.

Away from the important business of training for operations, the Battalion has planned and executed some brilliant and fulfilling training out of uniform. Aside from developing individual qualifications, several adventurous training expeditions have been successfully executed, led most notably by Lts Matt Emmett, Ollie Goldsack and Adam Bevan. They have taken young soldiers diving in Malta, climbing Klettersteig in Germany and Austria, and mountaineering in Switzerland to name just some of their trips. Another key AT exercise that must be mentioned is the brilliant ski trip led by CSgt Ferguson which he organised for 20 soldiers, including 4 from the 3rd Battalion, to attend in November. He planned and delivered a weeklong concentration in Val Thorens that was hugely successful.

On the sporting front, following the hugely successful Iner-Coy Boxing tournament run in Nov 24, the Battalion's boxing team reached the final of the Army Boxing Cup held in

# From the CO

Lt Col Jeff Bennett-Madge



Aldershot. Shortly thereafter, LCpl George Sheldon fought bravely in the individual championship missing out on a place in the Army development squad. Elsewhere, this year has been an incredibly successful one for our members of the Regiment's Brazilian Jiu Jitsu squad, with the team achieving significant medallic success (3 Gold, 2 Silver, 6 Bronze) at the Army BJJ Championships in Aldershot and LCpl Dickinson being selected to compete for the Army in the Inter-Services Championships in which he subsequently won all his matches. All of this was underpinned by Maj Josh Sanders' efforts in leading a BJJ sports tour to the USA in October that saw eight members of the Regiment train in some of the world's best gyms before competing in an international competition, winning several medals each and taking the overall Team Gold. The Battalion's fighting credentials continue to be built upon. In football, battalion members of the Regimental football team enjoyed success by reaching the semi-finals of the RAF football league in which we now compete having combined our regular battalion teams. Shining a light on these successes reminds us how much talent exists within the Battalion, and we look forward to being able to develop and nurture continued success in 2026 and beyond.

The charitable events that have

been delivered by Companies in the Battalion are especially worthy of note. A (Lincolnshire) Company completed a gruelling 45 mile loaded march from Cottesmore to Lincoln; B (Leicestershire) Company put themselves in the hurt locker for 24 hours with a series of disgusting event which began with a 17 mile run around Rutland Water, followed by a myriad of events on the hour throughout the day; and finally C (Northamptonshire) Company tabbed 48 miles carrying 48 lbs for the 48th of Foot, journeying from Northampton to Cottesmore. To date, over £10k has been raised through sponsorship which will support our Regimental charity, more events will follow.

Congratulations go out to all those who have been selected for promotion and to those whose efforts have been recognised at the highest levels of the Army. Notably, WO2 (RQMS) Chapman was awarded a Chief of the General Staff's commendation in January 25, and most recently, WO2 (RQMS) Bobsin was selected for Late Entry commissioning in 2026. Brilliant news for both which reflects upon their remarkable abilities and contribution to the Battalion.

I must bid a sad farewell to WO1 (RSM) Miller who retired from the Army in Nov 25. Beginning his Army life in the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, he served in both of their regular battalions before being assigned to the Poachers as a CSgt in 2016. Since then, he has contributed to every aspect of battalion life and undertaken key appointments in the Battalion which have included deploying to Mali as the Company Sergeant Major of A (Lincolnshire) Company in 2021. Most recently he has been a simply brilliant RSM whilst we've been a battlegroup assigned to NATO's Allied Reaction Force, held at high readiness throughout. We wish him the warmest thanks and the very best



## Poachers

fortune in his future endeavours.

Finally, a look forward. 2026 sees members of the Battalion deployed on three different operations, two of them in eastern Europe where the mettle, discipline and determination of every

Poacher will be tested to the limit. We have trained hard and look forward to delivering on operations. Throughout we will continue to build our capabilities as we will return to a comprehensive and thorough training pathway toward

validation again in 2027. I'm pleased to report that the Fighting Spirit of the Poachers remains as strong as ever, and importantly the Regimental family which is fundamental to our success continues to support us brilliantly.

# From the RSM

As I write this, one of my final duties as the Regimental Sergeant Major of the Poachers, I do so with immense pride. It has been both a privilege and a pleasure to serve in such a prestigious role within the Battalion, an experience I will always hold in the highest regard.

Over the last 12 months, the Poachers have remained exceptionally busy. We have worked tirelessly to maintain and enhance our soldiering skills, physical fitness, and operational readiness, becoming more lethal than ever before, ensuring we are prepared and ready to deploy anywhere in the world at a moment's notice. This has of demanding company level exercises, a Battle Group Validation, and Pre-Deployment training for three separate operations.

A particular highlight was our performance on Ex WESSEX STORM, where the Battlegroup once again demonstrated why we are regarded as the British Army's leading Light Mechanised Infantry Battalion. The exercise tested us in new and evolving ways, reflecting the ever-changing nature of modern warfare, from countering drone threats to mastering the art of camouflage and concealment; I can assure you is no mean feat trying to hide over 300 vehicles on Salisbury Plain Training Area! Our soldiers rose to every challenge head on with professionalism, adaptability, and determination. Their efforts ensured we remained fully validated and firmly at the forefront of the Army's rapidly evolving Light Mechanised capability.

Sport and Adventurous Training continue to be a cornerstone of life within the Battalion, with this year bringing continued success across a wide range of disciplines, as well as expeditions across Europe, including France, Italy,



and Malta. Most notably, on the back of our success in the Inter Company Boxing Competition at the back end of last year, a Battalion team was selected, and they delivered another outstanding season, reaching the finals of the Army Major Unit Boxing Championships, where they were narrowly edged out by the Parachute Regiment in a hard-fought contest.

In Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu (BJJ), the team has gone from strength to strength. At the Army Judo Championships in January, they brought home an impressive five gold and one silver medal. Their momentum continued into the Army BJJ Championships in March, where they secured a further four gold medals, three silver, and five bronze. In May, at the Front Line Services Championships, the team added another six medals to their tally, two gold, two silver, and two bronze, rounding off an exceptional competitive season. A special mention must go to LCpl Dixon, whose individual performance stood out. Selected to represent the Army BJJ team in August, he went on to win two gold medals, an outstanding achievement and a testament to his dedication and skill.

In football, the Regimental team reached the final of the RAF

Lincolnshire Services League Cup in May, a commendable achievement, though they were narrowly defeated.

Across all sports, our teams have consistently demonstrated grit, determination, and an unyielding fighting spirit. A sincere thank you and well-earned congratulations go to the coaches and every team member for their outstanding commitment and performance throughout the year.

In summary, it has been another demanding yet deeply rewarding year for the Poachers. I've been consistently impressed by the unwavering professionalism shown by all ranks across the Battalion. Whether responding to short notice taskings or delivering under extreme pressure, our soldiers have continually demonstrated resilience, adaptability, and excellence.

As I prepare to hand over and gracefully bow-out, I do so with absolute confidence in the future of the Battalion. It has been both an honour and an absolute privilege to serve alongside such dedicated, professional, and capable people. I leave knowing that the Poachers remain in exceptional hands and will continue to uphold the highest standards in everything they do. I wish the Battalion continued success in all its endeavours and, above all, a safe return from operations.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone I've had the pleasure of working with over the years. Your support, commitment and effort have been nothing short of exceptional, and I am truly grateful.

Finally, a heartfelt thank you to the partners and families who stand firmly behind us through every challenge. Your strength, patience, and unwavering support are the foundation that keeps us grounded and without question, you are the bedrock of our success.





# 2nd Battalion

## A (Lincolnshire) Company

### Overview

Maj Josh Sanders, Officer Commanding A (Lincolnshire) Company

A (Lincolnshire) Company has had another busy and productive year. The breadth and variety in the following articles are testament to the hard work and dedication of the officers and soldiers that have worked tirelessly over the last twelve months putting together demanding and rewarding training for our people.

has First successful validation cycle from CYCLONE to STORM in line with the Army's Land Training System. CYCLONE began in January with live fire progression on the Welsh shores of Castlemartin and concluded in March with a demanding exercise phase on the rolling countryside of Salisbury Plain.

Overall, an important opportunity to hone our collective and individual Warfighting skills with a focus on the mastery of the basics designed to ensure we were ready to be put through the crucible of Ex WESSEX STORM. Sgt Dave Storrie's article gives an alternative view on the experience from the SNCO's perspective.

Soldiering remains at the heart of what we are about, and this year saw the Battalion's first entry for some time into Ex CAMBRIAN PATROL with a team drawn from A (Lincolnshire) Company's finest. Under the leadership of Lt Charlie Solon and the stewardship of previous Silver Medal winner CSgt Paddy Tivey, the team underwent a gruelling four-week training package that ultimately produced an outstanding result. Their article paints a vivid picture of what dedication and extreme ownership was needed to get there.

Away from Warfighting,



Adventurous Training has remained a key component of our training cycle. Designed to push soldiers outside of their comfort zone, A (Lincolnshire) Company soldiers have been tested to their limits in the Welsh mountains, the Lake District, Switzerland, Germany, Austria, and the open water (Pte Sasmaz becoming 'the first man from Hackney to sail the High Seas'). Lt Ollie Goldsack's article describes how AT teaches resilience in adversity and highlights the excellent work being done to provide our soldiers with exciting opportunities.

History and tradition remain deeply ingrained in the culture of A (Lincolnshire) Company. We are proud to retain the traditions of our forebears and antecedent Regiments. The Company holds true to our Imp Ethos and recognises the sacrifice made by those that came before. The excellent visit to the National Memorial

Arboretum, organised and recounted here by Lt Adam Bevan, was a poignant reminder that we are only the custodians of the positions we currently hold and that we stand on the shoulders of giants.

The year has seen plenty of individual success to complement the collective. Ptes Morgan, Smith, Middleton, Blackman, and Brampton were all promoted to LCpl. Nine further Ptes passed their Fire Team Commanders Course (Ptes Chiwanda, Disha, Evans, Gbeze, Jeffers, King, Merritt, Percival, and Rhodes) to qualify them to promote to LCpl. We bid farewell to familiar faces as they departed the Company to take the next step in their careers (Lt Woolhouse to D Company, Sgt Rosser on promotion to CSgt, Cpls Jones, Peacock, and Finnigan to external instructor postings) and we welcomed new ones into the A (Lincolnshire) Company fold (Lt Charlie Solon, Sgt Morris, Cpls Hawkins, Humphrys, Perry, and Tate, and Ptes Hewitt-White, Cost, Claydon-Smith, Gee, and Rust).

Finally, A (Lincolnshire) Company has celebrated the personal milestones of three of our people. Ptes Bean and Miller both became fathers this year and we wish them the very best. Lastly, my wife and I welcomed our baby daughter into the world just a short time ago.

As A (Lincolnshire) Company looks forward to a very different next twelve months, I remain immensely proud to find myself in this privileged position of commanding the Men of the Tenth. I commend the following articles to you as proof that we remain a Light Mechanised Infantry Company of excellence, focussed on our people, and with an unrelenting will to win.

## Cambrian Patrol Training Exercise IMPS ENDURANCE

The Cambrian Patrol entered competition amongst a busy period preparing to deploy on operations. The team started training in the first week of September. EX IMPS' ENDURANCE consisted of an intensive four-week training package delivered by CSgt Tivey and members of A Company. Training was broken down into four phases, designed to test and refine core soldiering skills.

Week one focused on the basic skills package, supported by SMEs from 3 RMP and the CMTs. Week two was the patrol phase, which involved a demanding 40km patrol across SENTA to test the team's fundamental infantry skills under harsh conditions, including 24 hours of continuous rain that pushed endurance and morale to the limit. Weeks three and four were dedicated to continuation training, consolidating everything they had learned.

The team honed their skills, practicing river crossing lesson in North Luffenham pool deliver by Sgt Storrie and deploying to Thirsk for Joint



**Back from left: Pte Alfie Nelson, Pte Max Cost, Pte Safford Hewitt-White, Pte Ben Alvy. Front: Pte Jacob Rhodes, Cpl Charlie Hawkins, Lt Charlie Solon, Pte Michael Allington.**



**Pte Safford Hewitt-White and Pte Ben Alvy at 4 RA.**

Fires training with 4 RA. This period was demanding, adding to the already intense workload for the troops.

The Cambrian Patrol began with the team departing from Kendrew Barracks at 1800 hrs on Sunday evening. They drove to Cardiff, where they set up cot beds in a car park to grab a few hours of rest before their 0345 hrs report time. Arriving with minutes to spare, the team applied cam cream in the vans and prepared their equipment for inspection. After the kit check, they were immediately moved to a drop-off point in the Brecon Beacons, ready to begin the patrol. The team consisted of Lt Charlie Solon, Cpl Charlie Hawkins, Pte Jacob Rhodes, Pte Micahel Allington, Pte Ben Alvy, Pte Alfie Nelson, Pte Safford Hewitt-White, and Pte Max Cost. The first day was done with full kit, moving cross country and on tracks through the CBRN stand, a medical and C-EO serial





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involving a mine strike and several casualties before arriving at the Usk reservoir and hitting the river crossing in the pitch black. The team entered the water at 0300 and emerged on the other side before catching a well-earned 2 hours of sleep in the layup. Stripping down to fighting order, the next day covered around 40km, with the recce serials, artillery call for fire and AFV recognition in Cellieni village and lastly onto the section attack on the Russian trench system. The patrol competition ended with a debrief in a warm room at Farm 3, with everyone fighting to stay awake before the results ceremony, where the team came away with a well-earned silver medal. Special thanks go to CSgt Tivey for his exceptional training package and to the team for their effort and determination.



**Pte Safford Hewitt-White, Pte Jacob Rhodes, Lt Charlie Solon and Pte Alfie Nelson Conducting river crossing practice at North Luffenham.**

### Ex IMPS PILGRIMAGE: A 48-hour Pilgrimage to find the Lincoln Imp

On a Tuesday morning in November, Officers and Soldiers of A (Lincolnshire) Company tightened their boots and stretched off their legs ahead of approximately 48 miles of demanding roads, tracks, and footpaths that lay ahead.

Organised by CSgt Patrick Tivey and Sgt David Storrie, each person carried 15 kilograms of kit and the goal was simple: to march from Kendrew Barracks to Lincoln Cathedral within 24 hours, raise funds for the Royal British Legion, and complete what was proudly dubbed the "Imps Pilgrimage" – a symbolic journey to find the legendary Lincoln Imp.

The route meandered through the sweeping beauty of the Lincolnshire countryside, where quiet villages offered curious glances from local residents. Spirits were high, though the weight of the kit quickly reminded everyone that this was no casual ramble. As miles accumulated, silence would occasionally settle between the group, broken only by good-natured banter and the crunch of autumnal leaves along the Viking Way. The Company moved as one unit,



**A (Lincolnshire) Company stepping off from Kendrew Barracks. From left: LCpl Ryan Blackman, Lt Adam Bevan, Pte Jake King.**

always checking on one another and adjusting pace where needed to ensure as many people as possible completed the pilgrimage.

As the light faded, and darkness set in, it was becoming increasingly

important to maintain morale amongst the troops. After a well-earned rest stop at Carlton Scroop community hall, the Company set off again into the night with strong wind and rain, joined by veteran Poacher Mr Ben Ground, providing an



## The Poachers



**A (Lincolnshire) Company setting off into the darkness after a well-earned 'scoff' stop in Carlton Scroop. Pte Jacob Rhodes, Lt Oliver Goldsack, Lt Charles Solon.**

important link to the veteran community. By the early hours of the morning, as the rain eased, the goal of reaching Lincoln was materialising. As the sun rose on the Wednesday morning, A (Lincolnshire) Company marched into the city, weary but proud.

Lincoln Cathedral dominated the skyline as the Company crossed Pelham bridge, heading towards the last big effort up Steep Hill. Greeted by the CO, RSM, Royal Anglian Regiment standard bearers, veterans, and the Mayor and Sherriff of the City of Lincoln, troops made their final steps under the arches of Lincoln Cathedral. It felt like crossing a finish line not just of distance, but of meaning. Inside, beneath the mischievous gaze of the famous Lincoln Imp carved into the cathedral's stonework, troops gathered for a quiet service of reflection delivered by the Dean of Lincoln, The Very Reverend Dr Simon Jones.

Under that watchful Imp, an icon



**Maj Joshua Sanders (Officer Commanding) and WO2 Kieran Hunt (Company Sergeant Major) leading the Company up the last effort of Steep Hill to Lincoln Cathedral.**





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Pilgrimage complete. A (Lincolnshire) Company with veterans, the Mayor and Sheriff of the City of Lincoln.



Aggruelling 48-mile pilgrimage to find the Lincoln Imp.



A moment of quiet reflection in Lincoln Cathedral for Pte Heder Disha of A (Lincolnshire) Company.

# The Poachers

woven into the city's and the Company's identity, the pilgrimage earned its name.

Stories tell of the little stone figure causing havoc before being turned to rock, frozen forever with a cheeky grin. The Poachers, however, found peace beneath it. The service honoured the fallen, the wounded, and those still serving, tying their modern endurance to centuries of tradition, sacrifice, and remembrance.

After the solemn calm of the cathedral, it was time to celebrate. The Company shuffled, limped, and laughed their way to the Magna Carta pub, only a short walk (mercifully) from the cathedral grounds.

There, waiting like a prize at the end of a marathon, were refreshments

and hearty plates of sausage and chips. Boots were unlaced, kit was dropped, and the room filled with stories retold, miles exaggerated, hills steeper than before, and near-supernatural blister descriptions shared over well-earned drinks.

The event was more than a test of endurance. It strengthened bonds within the Company and with the community that supported. Donations closed in excess of £3,500 for the Royal British Legion, a reminder that this physically gruelling adventure had real-world impact for veterans and their families.

The march also highlighted the importance of remembrance outside traditional ceremonies. By walking through the night, pushing tired legs

further than they wanted to go, the Company mirrored, in a small way, the perseverance of those whose sacrifices they honoured.

By the time the last plate was cleared, and the cathedral bells chimed, it was clear that the Imps Pilgrimage was a success, not just because it was completed in under 24 hours, but because of what it represented. It blended challenge, history, charity, and camaraderie into something both deeply personal and proudly public. A (Lincolnshire) Company is grateful to everyone that supported and donated to ensure Imps Pilgrimage was a success. Credit to LCpl Phoebe Mercer and Mr Chris and Mrs Angela Headland for the photographs in this article.

## Forging the Company: A Platoon Sergeant's Perspective on a Six-Week Build-Up

Six weeks. On paper it sounds generous—plenty of time to sharpen skills, reinforce basics, and develop cohesion before a company-level validation exercise. In reality, it feels like six minutes.

As a platoon sergeant, I see the countdown in every inspection, every after-action review, and every missed opportunity. The stakes are simple: succeed, and we prove the company is ready. Fail, and we answer for every gap we didn't close.

The training areas we were awarded were castle martin for range packages. These were ranging from ICQB to Platoon attack by day live firing. The exercise phase was then conducted on SPTA. On SPTA we used the rural areas and Copehill Down urban facility.

The first week is always about re-establishing fundamentals. Soldiers return from leave, courses, or duties with varied levels of sharpness. My job is to level the playing field. Weapon handling, medical refreshers, radio procedures—we grind through it all. Basic soldiering skills sound dull until you watch a section stall because someone forgot a simple report format. Nothing erodes tempo faster. We conduct small assessments,



**Soldiers from A (Lincolnshire) Company hone their marksmanship on live ranges at Castlemartin.**

quietly identifying who's rusty and who can step up. The pressure is subtle, but it's there.

Night training is where the platoon's character emerges. People can bluff confidence in daylight; darkness exposes the truth. When depth perception changes and exhaustion creeps in, discipline is either present or not. Rehearsals until the troops mutter them in their sleep: silent

movement drills, casualty recovery, and route discipline. Younger soldiers are often excited at first—green-eyed flashes of night vision goggles, whispered orders—but by 0300 the glamour fades. That's when leadership matters. We talk often about "confidence in chaos." Night operations teach it better than any PowerPoint.

A major feature of this cycle has





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been mounted drills in the Foxhound. The vehicle has matured from novelty to backbone in our toolbox. Troops enjoy the comfort and protection, but I hammer home the importance of speed: load drills, dismount coordination, comms checks, and emergency evacuation. The Foxhound gives us mobility, not immunity. We then run convoy rehearsals. I'll admit, seeing a young private master the vehicle's idiosyncrasies is oddly satisfying. Training with the Foxhound also forces inter-platoon cooperation; you can't simulate convoy discipline without multiple elements. It's a perfect arena to teach trust in other units' timings and spacing. When friction happened—inevitably—it became a teachable moment rather than a catastrophe.

Week five has nothing to do with tactics. Team building is the glue that keeps the machine together when the plan falls apart. During week three, we faced a noticeable dip in morale. Fatigue, cold weather, and constant critique can erode even strong spirits.

Week four was our synthesis week: mounted to dismounted transitions at night, complex objectives, and live-feed battle tracking. My role shifted from hands-on instructor to overseer. Good platoon sergeants know when to step back. Watching my section commanders brief their teams with confidence was proof the grind was working. We stumbled, of course. Timings drifted, a patrol missed a checkpoint, and someone forgot batteries—always batteries - but by now, the platoon solved problems with minimal prompting. That's growth.

As we approached the final two weeks, I became the bad guy about standards. I inspected vehicle stowage like a surgeon, enforced sleep discipline, and quizzed soldiers on contingencies.

It's not pleasant, but soldiers secretly welcome someone raising the bar.



Soldiers of 'The Fighting Third' pose for a picture upon successful completion of Ex CYCLONE POACHER, clockwise from top Pte Alex Johnson, Pte Morgan Tipper, Pte Nelson Adu, Pte Joe Mead, LCpl Will Cameron, Lt Charlie Solon, Sgt Dave Storrie, LCpl George Dernley, Pte Anthony Starkey, Cpl Jack Finnigan, Pte Matt Merritt.

Complacency is the enemy of readiness, and I refuse to shake its hand. Standing at the final debrief, I realised something: a six-week build-up isn't just about producing a competent company. It's about forging character under pressure. Soldiers learned to fight fatigue, navigate darkness, and operate complex vehicles with coordination and control. They discovered their limits, then pushed past them. And I, as the platoon sergeant, rediscovered the quiet satisfaction of watching a team become better than the sum of its parts.

If given another six weeks, would we use them? Absolutely. There's always

more to refine. But we don't train for perfection—we train for resilience. The Foxhound drills sharpened our mobility, night training tempered our discipline, and team building hardened our trust. When validation called, the company answered.

And as we rolled off that final objective, tired but proud, I felt the same thing I feel at the end of every successful cycle: relief, admiration, and the quiet knowledge that this is exactly why we train the way we do. In six weeks, we didn't just prepare for an exercise—we proved we're ready for whatever comes next.

## Ex SILENT TRIBUTE A (Lincolnshire) Company Pay Tribute at the National Memorial Arboretum

Lt. A. J. Bevan, OC 1 Platoon

In July, soldiers of A (Lincolnshire) Company travelled to the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire to spend a day reflecting, learning and honouring those who have served before them. The visit offered an important pause from the training programme and an opportunity to connect with the legacy and sacrifice that binds us to our forebears.

On arrival, the Company completed a short Act of Remembrance in the chapel. Troops stood in solemn silence as readings and blessings were given from Arboretum volunteers. For many of the junior soldiers, this was a defining moment, an introduction to the living heritage they now take their place in. For others, with friends' names inscribed on the memorials in the grounds, it was a moment of quiet reflection and remembrance to begin the day.

Following the ceremony, the Company undertook a guided tour led by a knowledgeable volunteer from the Arboretum. The tour highlighted memorials from across the UK's military history, from the courage of the Special Forces to the enduring legacy of regiments long since amalgamated. The guide spoke not only of battles and dates, but of the people behind the stories: acts of courage, endurance, camaraderie, and sacrifice.

One of the most meaningful moments of the day came at the Basra Memorial Wall, where the names of those who lost their lives during operations in Iraq are commemorated. Among these are two Poachers – Pte A P Morris (19 years old) and Pte J Lewaicei (25 years old) – whose service remains deeply respected within the Battalion and the Regiment.

In an act led by the junior soldiers of A (Lincolnshire) Company, the plaques bearing their names were carefully cleaned and polished. For the younger soldiers, some early in their careers, it was a tangible connection to the Regiment's



### Memorial Wall.

history and the responsibilities that come with wearing our cap badge. For the Company as a whole, it reinforced a shared identity and an enduring promise: we remember.

Pte Safford Hewitt-White polishing the memorial to Pte Morris at the Basra

The tour finished at the central Armed Forces Memorial. Surrounded

by sweeping walls of Portland stone engraved with the names of the fallen, the group took time to consider the generations of service members who had given their lives in conflict or while on duty since the end of the Second World War.

The National Memorial Arboretum itself played an important role in shaping





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**A (Lincolnshire) Company at the Armed Forces Memorial. Front row: LCpl Toby Bench, LCpl William Cameron, LCpl Obinna Morgan, Maj Joshua Sanders, Pte Morgan Tipper, Lt Adam Bevan, Pte Benjamin Watkin, Pte Harry Marshall, LCpl Jordan Brampton.**

the day. Set across 150 acres and home to more than 400 memorials, it is a place designed not only for remembrance but for reflection and renewal; a space where stories are held and passed on. The sense of peace and dignity found amongst its trees and pathways allowed soldiers to step away from the pace of training and immerse themselves in a different kind

of learning.

By the end of the visit, conversations were quieter, thoughts more grounded. The Company returned to its routine with a deeper appreciation of the Regiment's past and the legacy entrusted to them for the future. It was a day that emphasised tradition, respect and the bond between all who have served.

For A (Lincolnshire) Company, the experience will remain a meaningful chapter in its year and a reminder that behind every march, every field exercise, every operational task, there stands a history built by those who have served with courage and loyalty. And it is now their turn to carry it forward.

## Exercise DRAGON POACHER ASCENT

In May 2025, Exercise DRAGON POACHER ASCENT took 12 soldiers from the Poachers to Germany and Austria for a two-weeks of adventure training.

The exercise was primarily based in Austria and focused on a challenging Klettersteig package.

For those unfamiliar, Klettersteig - also known as via ferrata - involves climbing exposed rock faces in otherwise inaccessible locations, using fixed steel cables, pins, and steps embedded into the rock.

While these features make the

activity safer, it remains both mentally and physically demanding. Imagine a high-adrenaline version of 'Go Ape,' but on the side of a mountain.

The soldiers quickly adapted to Klettersteig, which allowed fast progression to longer and more challenging routes early in the exercise.

Their rapid development culminated in an impressive achievement: soldiers with no prior climbing experience successfully tackled one of the hardest Klettersteig routes in Austria.

The sense of accomplishment at the end of each climb was palpable. Soldiers

who had started the exercise as novices were now confidently navigating exposed rock faces, pushing themselves far beyond their comfort zones. The physical and mental demands of Klettersteig fostered personal growth, teamwork, and resilience, all of which are invaluable qualities for soldiers.

The exercise also highlighted the importance of controlled exposure to risk, providing a safe yet challenging environment for participants to develop their skills and confidence.

Exercise DRAGON POACHER ASCENT offered a unique blend of



## The Poachers



Team members raise the Regimental flag in Fallbach, Austria. From left: Pte Max Winfield, Pte George Cassidy, Pte Leo Lightbown, Cpl Leo Bean, LCpl Ryan Blackman, Lt Ollie Goldsack, Pte Jacob Rhodes. (bottom right) Maj Chris Wright (Royal Irish - Instructor).



Poachers climbing up the base of the "Klostertaler Klettersteig" in Austria, which is adjacent to an 800m waterfall.



LCpl Ryan Blackman, A Company, 2 R Anglian taking a moment to look around (and below) as he rests near the top of 650m of vertical climbing.





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physical challenge, skill development, and cultural exploration. It demonstrated the value of adventure training in fostering resilience, teamwork, and

personal growth, while also providing soldiers with an unforgettable experience.

The hope is that this exercise will

inspire more soldiers to embrace similar opportunities in the future, building on the skills and confidence gained during their two-week journey.

### Exercise SWISS ENDEAVOUR

This July, I was fortunate to secure a spot on Exercise SWISS ENDEAVOUR, an Alpine Mountaineering exercise held in Switzerland. This focused on technical alpine mountaineering in the Sass region, encompassing glaciers, alpine ridges, and high altitude peaks.

It was a joint exercise involving the Army Mountaineering Association alongside the Navy, Royal Marines, and RAF. The group comprised 12 Army participants and nearly 30 tri-

service attendees, creating a broad range of experience levels. This allowed significant skill-sharing and provided alpine mountaineering foundation training (AMF) to many participants with little or no prior experience.

Over the course of the exercise, the Army groups successfully summited four 4000m peaks: Weissmies (4023m), Alphubel (4206m), Allalinhorn (4028m), and Lagginhorn (4010m). In preparation and as acclimatisation for these climbs, an additional seven peaks exceeding 3000m were also conquered. The effects of altitude were evident, with some participants, including instructors, experiencing reduced physical and cognitive performance, particularly above 4000m. A strong level of cardiovascular fitness proved invaluable in mitigating these challenges.

Alpine mountaineering is one of the most demanding adventure training disciplines, requiring prior experience in summer and winter mountaineering in the UK, as well as some rock-climbing skills. The terrain is highly varied, ranging from wet and dry glaciers to rocky ridges, technical rock-climbing sections, and icy or snowy ridges. This necessitates constant transitions, such as putting on and removing crampons, as you navigate different altitudes and conditions.

Early 'alpine starts', often as early



**The final approach to the summit of Alphubel via its 'Ice Nose'. Lt Ollie Goldsack waiting as ice screws are fixed ahead into the ice to protect the rest of the ascent.**

as 0300, are common to ensure progress along longer routes before the sun causes glaciers or seracs (vertical ice formations) to melt. Melting can lead to rock or icefalls, potentially blocking planned routes and forcing climbers to retreat or downclimb entire mountains.

Alpine mountaineering outings can range from simple day trips to multi-day expeditions. One of the highlights of Exercise Swiss Endeavour was the use of alpine huts, which are a hallmark of mountaineering in the Alps. Unlike in

the UK, where high-altitude camping is common, camping in the Alps (at altitude) is discouraged. Instead, climbers rely on these well-maintained huts, which are bookable and provide a civilised base for expeditions.

The huts offer simple hot meals, bed spaces with mattresses and blankets, and even amenities like crocs and hot drinks. The only personal items required are a sleeping bag liner and a toothbrush. This system ensures a clean and pristine environment.



# The Poachers

Exercise SWISS ENDEAVOUR was an eye-opener for what AT can and should be like. - offering a blend of physical challenge, technical skill development, and teamwork. The opportunity to train in such a stunning and demanding environment was invaluable, and the lessons learned will undoubtedly benefit any future participants across their job role.

As a result, efforts are now underway to ensure that young Poachers can gain the winter mountaineering foundation and climbing skills needed to participate in the next iteration of this exercise. This approach offers a far more engaging and retention-positive method of controlled exposure to significant risk compared to the standard summer mountaineering, which many soldiers often view with reluctance.



**Raising the colours on the summit of Switzerland**

**the Lagginhorn (4010m) –**



**Panoramic views on the way up the summit ridge of Pigne de la Lé (3396m) looking north across Switzerland.**





# 2nd Battalion

## B (Leicestershire) Company

### Overview

Maj Steve Forse, Officer Commanding B (Leicestershire) Company

I write this introduction in November on our last day working in Kendrew Barracks before we deploy on operations. It is a good day to reflect on who we are, what we have done, and what comes next.

People come first. We have experienced a large churn in personalities over the last 12 months, with soldiers moving to specialised weapons platoons, soldiers promoting, soldiers moving to new opportunities, and some finishing their careers. All in, we finish 2025 with less than half of the soldiers we started with.

At the top, WO2 Herring has moved on to HQ Allied Rapid Reaction Corps, CSgt Power has deployed on operations, Sgt Mayne has returned to the PWRR, Sgt Teasdale has rejoined the Fusiliers on promotion to CSgt, A/Sgt Limb has promoted substantively and joined ITC, and Sgt Dom Ward-Mansfield left the Army in the summer to start a civilian career.

Amongst the junior ranks, we have seen great success on promotion courses,



with 13 soldiers completing either the Fire Team or Section Commanders battle courses, with many being rewarded with promotion. Outside of work, Cpl Wolmarans, Pte Holness and Pte Veasy all became fathers for the first time. Second is what we have done. With such change in personnel, we have been incredibly lucky with the excellent

training opportunities we have enjoyed, which have allowed us to rebuild some of the collective competency we have lost. It started with a fortnight of ranges on the windy west coast of Wales in January and culminated with an excellent performance on Ex WESSEX STORM in the summer. There are plenty of articles in this magazine that cover the detail of this, so our articles cover some of extra things that make being in a Company fun: Adventurous Training in Malta, exercises in Germany & Devon and our charity fundraiser, 17 for the 17th.

Last is what comes next. Next weekend we deploy on operations that will keep us busy until next Autumn, and so it is timely that this week we paused to mark Remembrance across Leicestershire. Remembrance reminds us not only of the seriousness of our profession, but also of our duty to ensure that our Regiment continues to be held in the high regard it has always been. We owe that to all who have come before, and all who will come in the future.

### Charity Event – 17 for 17th

As the clock struck midnight on 17th March 2025, members of B (Leicestershire) Company embarked on a charity fitness event, aiming to raise money for The Royal Anglian Regiment Charity.

For the challenge, we wanted to focus on our connections to the Regiment's history. With B Company tracing our heritage to the 17th Regiment of Foot, this provided the perfect marker for our undertaking.

Though we would not be able to replicate our valiant forebears at the

Battle of Princeton (1777) with any bayonet charges, we sought to channel aggression at various points during the upcoming day.

The event commenced with a 17-mile run around Rutland Water with favourable weather in the early hours of the morning ensuring morale remained high.

Maj Forse and WO2 Herring led from the front, as did Capt Brown before his speaker ran out of battery at mile six.

After the first of the 17 events had been completed, we loaded onto the

coach and headed back to Kendrew Barracks where we would next tackle a series of gym-based challenges continuing to revolve around the number 17. Highlights included the 170-burpee box jump serial and a host of other exercises which were made more challenging off the back of the midnight run.

Nonetheless, B Company continued, and with the morning sun now rising we showed our versatility by each swimming 17 lengths of the pool at St. George Barracks, North Luffenham.



## The Poachers



**B Company before stepping off for the first event – 17-mile run.**

Using the breaks between each event to take on some additional calories and energy gels, we were now really hitting our stride. The final series of challenges revolved around casualty drags, leopard crawls and a log run.

We were supporting each other as a team, applying blister plasters and looking forward to the BBQ that was fast approaching. However, with the evening light now fading, and after almost 18 hours of exercise, we still had to conquer one final run. This involved 17 laps of the infamous 1km loop which proved as much a mental battle as it was a physical one. With the support of those not undertaking the challenge helping distract us from the dizziness of running in a circle for 2 hours we crossed the line, stopped the Garmin's and finished the event. In all, we raised £2,600 for The Royal Anglian Regiment Charity and are already looking forward to our next charity challenge in 2026.



**B Company continuing with the challenge.**





# 2nd Battalion

## ExDRAGONMALTA DIVE

Lt Matthew Emmett, OC • Platoon, B (Leicestershire) Company



On Sunday 09 March 2025, one officer and six soldiers from across the 2nd Battalion deployed to Malta to participate in Ex DRAGON MALTA DIVE, a scuba diving expedition on which they would gain their BSAC Ocean Diver qualifications. Flying from London Gatwick, the troops settled into their accommodation in St. Paul's Bay before an early start to the diving course on the Monday morning.

The first introductory dive took place a short distance along the coast at the Sirens Quay dive site. The divers descended to a depth of 4m and included skills such as equalising pressure in the ears, recovering a lost mask or breathing apparatus, and rescuing an unconscious fellow diver. These skills would continue to be practiced at the end of each of the week's dives.

The second dive saw a return to Sirens but a greater depth of 7m, allowing the divers to reach a beautiful section of seabed with plenty of fish, as well as a sunken statue – nobody knew of who – resting on the bottom. Dives three and four were conducted at Cirkewwa, in the north-west of the island, to depths of 12m and 14m respectively. Here

there was a huge variety of marine life, from exotic fish to crustaceans, as well as rock and coral formations to swim through. Throughout, divers took it in turns to record the details of

each dive (e.g., safety cover provided, duration, depth reached, gas expended), further contributing to the Ocean Diver qualification.

The fifth and final dive involved



Entering the water at Cirkewwa



## The Poachers

exploration of the X127 wreck in Valletta. This was a water lighter that served in both World Wars and was sunk by Luftwaffe warplanes in 1942. Descending to a maximum depth of 20m, the divers surveyed the wreck from stern to bow, ensuring to stop to rub the lone still-shiny spot on the roof of the bridge for good luck.

The evenings and particularly the required decompression day prior to the return flights allowed plenty of time for exploration of the island and its fascinating history. This ranged from the stretch of coastline around Mistra Bay, to Fort St. Elmo overlooking the Grand Harbour, and naturally to the bright lights of St. Julian's. A particular highlight included the war rooms in Valletta from which the 1943 Allied invasion of Sicily was planned.

A very early start saw a flight back to Gatwick and a successful recovery to Kendrew Barracks. All participants agreed that they had thoroughly enjoyed the expedition, and many expressed interest in undertaking further dive training in the future.



**The divers upon completion of the Ocean Diver course Back from left: Pte Robert West, Pte Harry Marshall. Middle: Pte Mason Gibson, Lt Matthew Emmett. Front: Pte Om White, Pte Daniel Cummings, Pte Alexander Bowes.**



**The underwater statue at Sirens Quay – unfortunately, the GoPro was compromised on this divesowas unusable for the rest of the expedition**



# 2nd Battalion

## Ex DYNAMIC VICTORY

Lt Matthew Emmett  
OC Platoon, B (Leicestershire) Company



**The Poachers Platoon after the final attack.**

On Monday 11 November 2024, a composite platoon from B (Leicestershire) Company deployed to Germany to provide SET troops for Ex DYNAMIC VICTORY, the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst final exercise. RMAS has been integrating a Field Army section into each of their platoons on this Exercise for several years to increase the exposure of Officer Cadets to soldiers on the Commissioning Course, and to demonstrate the differences in leadership versus commanding their own peers.

The troops were excited to see 'how the sausage gets made', while the platoon commander was looking forward to his second Ex DV of the year, having conducted the Exercise as a trainee only eight months earlier.

A very long coach journey took the Poachers from Kendrew Barracks, via RMAS, across the Channel and all the way down to the Joint Multinational Readiness Centre in Bavaria. After a brief stop at the US Army PX (Postal Exchange – essentially an enormous NAAFI), the troops arrived at Inkerman Company's location and integrated with their new platoons.



**The Poachers lead the way through the trench system.**



# The Poachers

Receiving orders that night for the first action, the Company deployed on a long road move to Hohenfels Training Area and went into a series of rural attack lanes against the US Army OPFOR, provided by Blackfoot Company, 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment. This initial operation saw the Sandhurst trainees discovering the aggression and momentum that qualified Infantry Section Commanders can bring to the fight. Much of the relationship between the two over the course of the Exercise would involve the Officer Cadets navigating the benefits this has for maintaining momentum, as well as the potential pitfalls if sufficient control is not imposed to prevent overextension.

The next few days would see a variety of Platoon- and Company-level offensive actions in a rural environment, including at night. The Poachers had brought thermal optics and superior night-vision sights that are available in the Field Army but not usually in training establishments. This allowed them to add significant value, not only by performing more complex manoeuvres under cover of darkness, but also by allowing Officer Cadets in command appointments to consider the employment of different equipment



**The beret parade,** types with which they had no previous familiarity.

Following this, Inkerman Company went into a force-on-force action, facing their fellow Officer Cadets in Blenheim Company and their SET troops from 5 RIFLES. An attack on KITTENSEE saw one of the Poachers sections at the

forefront of the action, leading the way through the clearance of much of the village. This prompted the beginning of the primarily urban phase of the Exercise, in which the greater FIBUA experience of the Infantry soldiers compared to the Officer Cadets paid dividends. Particularly useful was the fact that B Company had undertaken training on the Army's latest trench clearance tactics only the week before deploying. When faced with an extensive Eastern European-style trench network outside the village of SCHWEND, the Poachers both instructed the Officer Cadets in the techniques that would be most effective, and took the lead on the clearance of the position.

The final attack saw maximum effort from the Poachers, including then 2Lt Matt Emmett putting his Real-Life Support role on hold to act as a GPMG gunner. Inkerman and Blenheim Companies now joined forces to assault the town of UBERSDORF. A 10km nighttime approach tab through the snow led into a dawn attack, against objectives consisting of houses up to five storeys and complete with internal fortifications. The Americans were eventually wrested from their positions, and the Brits won the day. The Poachers joined in the



**The author, 2Lt Matt Emmett, after clearing UBERSDORF for the second time that year.**





## 2nd Battalion

Officer Cadets' ceremonial breakfast, and watched the beret parade in which the soon-to-be 2LTs don their regimental headdress for the first time.

After a welcome opportunity to get warm and dry, and a full night's rest,

the Poachers and the Officer Cadets both recovered back to Britain. The long coach journey enabled more much-welcomed sleep, and an early arrival at Kendrew Barracks bought the Poachers back half a weekend they had expected

to lose. All the troops who deployed reported that they had thoroughly enjoyed their experience, and that it had opened their eyes to the type of training that officers go through in order to earn their commissions.

### EX TIGER'S STALK

Capt Ashwell, VC, B (Leicestershire) Company

On Monday 10 March 2025, B (Leicestershire) Company deployed to Braunton Burrows Training Area (BBTA) in North Devon to conduct Exercise TIGERS STALK. A long road move saw the Company take multiple Foxhound vehicles down to carry out both mounted and dismounted training. Each morning was spent driving the Foxhounds on the beach and the sand dunes. This varied terrain proved an excellent training ground, particularly for the less experienced drivers who had less familiarity with challenging off-road manoeuvre. Inevitably and quite deliberately, this led to many a recovery serial, with Foxhounds sinking into the sand and having to be dragged out by the others. This provided plentiful up to the mark training, using sand channels to enable stricken vehicles to be extracted. Concurrently, the newer members of the Company received an introduction to the Foxhounds, gaining their crew training qualifications to allow them to operate from the platform and learning the specific roles of a light mechanised soldier. This also enabled low-level vehicle SOPs regarding stowage of equipment to be perfected, and lessons on the communications equipment in the back of the Foxhounds to be delivered.



A junior commander delivers his brief.



Foxhounds by the dunes



## Poachers

evenings were devoted to tactical training. The Company worked up from last bound drills into full section attacks with the involvement of vehicles; for example, using the top cover GPMGs on a Foxhound as the fire support, while the dismounts assaulted the enemy positions. Multiple Private soldiers were given the opportunity to act in Junior NCO roles so as to develop their leadership abilities and tactical knowledge. Additionally, the soldiers who had recently conducted JNCO cadres to qualify for promotion delivered lessons, allowing them to demonstrate and practice what they had learned.

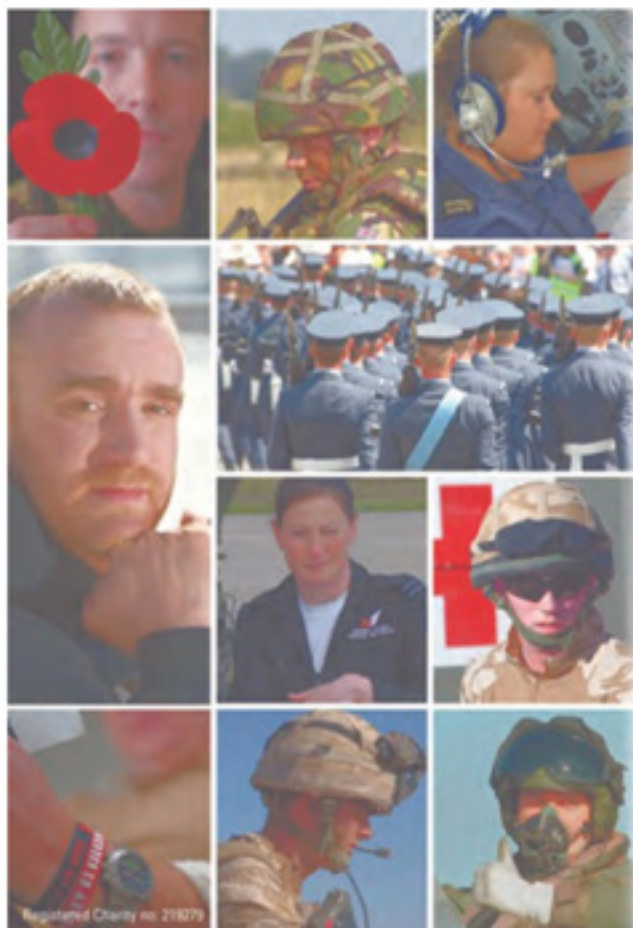
Of particular note was the use of BBTA's unusually sparse woodblocks for training in Woodland Warfare (formerly known as FIWAF). This terrain proved useful for testing different



A driver's-eye view of the beach.

tactics that had been taught to various recent graduates of the Infantry Battle School, and allowed the Company to assess the utility of these techniques in different types of forest. The hours of darkness were used to conduct training with night vision and thermal optics. This included a demonstration of how obvious different light sources are under image intensifiers – such as red torches and lit cigarettes – in order to illustrate the importance of solid light discipline in the field.

A Friday morning of arduous PT was followed by a recovery to Kendrew Barracks. B Company returned to camp better-prepared for the upcoming Battlegroup validation on Exercise WESSEX STORM, and with the light mechanised soldiering of the newer soldiers in particular significantly enhanced.



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# 2nd Battalion

## C(Northamptonshire) Company

### Overview

Maj Rhodri Edwards, OC C Company

To me, over this last year, the soldiers of C Company have exemplified what it means to be a member of the Royal Anglian Regiment. Over the last 12

months the members of the company have been laser focussed first on their own and the wider Bn's validation pathway and then with pre-deployment training for some of the most sensitive and rewarding operations that the Field Army are conducting in late November 2025. Throughout this the professionalism, performance and adaptability of our soldiers and young officers has been humbling.

First with validation, where the company's performance has excelled throughout. What started in late 2024 with good, hard individual training in a cold and snowy Brecon led inexorably to success on Ex WESSEX STORM. Individual military skills are the bedrock of any collective achievement, and it was really good to see Platoon Commanders and Platoon Sergeants in 7, 8 and Assault Pioneer Platoon put together a demanding and imaginative package in the form of Ex MOBBS MALICE.

This set the conditions for the company and battlegroup collective validation, which is where the soldiers really got to show case their adaptability by getting to grips with sUAS. The

company itself validated strongly, showing that the hard work the JNCOs and Pl HQs put into individual training reaped dividends, and meant that the company had the ability to spend several weeks experimenting with sUAS in support of the Bn.

This was an excellent opportunity for C Company soldiers to experiment and employ drones in novel ways and they did so to phenomenal effect, being responsible for over two thirds of the simulated enemy casualties inflicted by the Poachers. To me it really shows



what high quality and motivated junior commanders can adapt to when needed. This successful validation has laid the groundwork for what looks now to be an exciting 24 months of operational activity starting in November 2025. Some of this will involve only elements of the company, other parts may involve the whole company but after a period of validation and training the company has proved that it will be ready to do whatever is required as part of the wider battalion.

Despite this the company has found time for more enjoyable activity and

supporting our wider regimental family. Earlier in the year the company planned and ran the "48 for the 48th" event which was a 48-mile weighted march, the number chosen in recognition of our forebear the 48th (Northamptonshire) Regiment of Foot. This was a fantastic effort from all involved and raised a magnificent £4,500, making the news with coverage from both ITV and the BBC.

This has been a fantastic year for some truly exceptional soldiers and junior officers. It is an immense honour to be part of that.



# The Poachers

## Ex WESSEX STORM

In May, this year the Poachers Battlegroup — reinforced by assets from across the Army and international partners — deployed to Salisbury Plain to validate on Ex WESSEX STORM. This exercise capped a year-long cyclone training programme conducted by the battalion and forms part of the biannual validation designed to prepare soldiers for future operations and to test their ability to live and fight for extended periods.

Despite the demanding nature of this year's exercise — widely regarded as one of the most challenging iterations to date — the Poachers Battlegroup successfully validated across all mission areas. This achievement once again demonstrates why the Poachers are the Light Mechanised Infantry battalion of choice, and stands as a testament to the professionalism, resilience and



**C (Northamptonshire) Company Strike node. Using simulated FPV drones to strike targets.**



**Anti-Tanks OPs during the FTX phase.**





## 2nd Battalion

adaptability of every soldier within the Battlegroup.

was conducted in three STORM phases. The first was a work-up period in which individual sub-units and attachments completed mission-specific training and integrated with our French counterparts. As is customary, the period also afforded time for mutual equipment familiarisation – and, inevitably, a swap of rations – with the Griffon fighting vehicles attracting particular interest for their size, armament and manoeuvrability.

The second phase was the Combined Arms Live Fire Exercise (CALFEX).

Delivered by the Combat Readiness Training Centre, the CALFEX saw companies conduct multiple battle lanes including mounted contact drills from Foxhound and Jackal platforms, defensive engagement serials from set positions including battle inoculation, and a series of advance-to-contact missions conducted at both day and night.



Mortar Platoon readying to fire in support of an advance during the FTX phase.



Casualties are examined and triaged. During the FTX a full casualty processing chain was in action, this provided challenging and realistic training for our medics and attached RAMS personnel.



# The Poachers



**Under the gaze of the OMs the vehicles are camouflaged. At the front a barracuda net can be seen.**

The 3-day live fire package was demanding, but it enabled the Battlegroup to showcase its core strength — superior soldiering.

Assessors and CRTC staff highlighted the sharpness of our low-level skills and drills, particularly the marksmanship that underpins the Poachers' reputation as a lethal and highly capable battlegroup. Throughout, D Company and attachments including 4th Regiment Royal Artillery delivered effective supporting fires and gained valuable experience in live environments.

The final phase was a decisive 12-day FTX against a robust and well-resourced enemy — Task Force Hannibal, led by the Scots Guards with support from elements including 40 Commando.

This phase provided the opportunity to not only test ourselves in challenging conditions but also test innovative concepts and technology influenced by contemporary lessons from the war in

Ukraine.

At Battlegroup level, dispersed command nodes and alternative communication architectures were implemented to enhance survivability, resilience, and command continuity. At company level, C (Northamptonshire) Company transitioned into a dedicated Find and Strike role, employing small unmanned aerial systems (sUAS) to identify, track, and prosecute enemy targets.

Across the Battlegroup, technology played an increasingly decisive role in shaping operations. Larger UAS and electronic warfare capabilities were employed at higher levels to detect, disrupt, and target elements of Task Force Hannibal, while at the tactical edge, commanders used digital situational awareness (DSA) tools to improve communication and battlespace understanding. These developments underscore both the Battlegroup's

and the wider Army's commitment to remaining at the forefront of modern, technology-enabled warfare.

The Battlegroup validated across a series of complex and demanding scenarios — each reflecting challenge likely to be faced in a modern, conventional conflict.

These included deliberate obstacle crossings, coordinated attacks on both urban and rural objectives, the clearance of fortified positions in restrictive terrain such as woodlands and forests, and the establishment and defence of a Battlegroup Main Defensive Area.

Despite the significant challenges faced throughout, the Battlegroup rose to every task through innovation, determination, and professional excellence at all levels. Once again, the Poachers demonstrated what they do best — exceptional soldiering. The Poachers stand ready and more than capable to deliver.





# 2nd Battalion

for the 48th  
26-27 February 2025

Back in 2024, the 2nd Battalion, The Royal Anglian, to plan a 48-mile march carrying 48 pounds of kit honouring our predecessor regiment the 48th of Foot (Northamptonshire regiment), with the aim of raising money for the regimental charity.

Planning started and we discovered we would be able to conduct the route between Northampton and our home In Kendrew barracks, strengthening the connection of the event with our predecessors who would have left Northampton for famous battles such as Talavera and Sobraon. January 2025 sharply came around and fundraising began as members of the company shared the event poster between families and friends, this was assisted by media interest and the confirmation that BBC



Navigating the streets of Northampton.



Two miles from the finish line.



# The Poachers

Look East and ITV News Anglia would be following the event.

On the Morning of the 26th of February 2025, we conducted our final kit checks in the Company Offices and boarded the coaches ready for what was looking to be an interesting yet rewarding 24-28 hrs, in the back of everyone's mind however was the charitable reason we were conducting the event.

On arrival in Northampton town centre we conducted last minute administration and members of the team were selected to provide interviews for the various media outlets as all around us trepidation built.

At 1000 hours on 26th February we set off from All Saints Church in the centre of Northampton, for the first 4 miles or so we had to navigate the streets of Northampton with spirits high and feet very fresh before breaking onto the Brampton Valley Way, which would take us through 3 counties and north towards our end goal of Kendrew Barracks.

As the first few hours ticked by and we hit the 16-mile point feet were beginning to get sore as restarting after each break got harder, however the media attention had seen the charity page get fuller as we reached the £3,800 mark, surpassing our goal.

Regardless of how uncomfortable they felt the men of C Company pushed



## Sunrise in Rutland

On to hit the halfway point just past Market Harborough at roughly 11:30, as we prepared to push back onto footpaths for what was looking to be a very long night. As we pushed on through the night everyone's attempts at walking became increasingly interesting, so we

increased the breaks to every 2.5 miles to allow for ample rest.

As day light broke, we were approaching Braunston-In-Rutland and nearing our finish point, with some greatly appreciated support from Poachers old and new we cracked on with a new sense



Very tired and very proud.





# 2nd Battalion

of pride. I think relief was shown by us all as we made a right onto the right and approached the co-op just outside of Oakham for our penultimate rest stop, however the caveat being we then had to welcome in the rain. As we pushed on up Burley-on-the-Hill we began our approach to Kendrew Barracks and the applause of the Battalion, our chest as full as our charity fund which now sat at £4,500.... Oh so close to being £4,800 as we marched through the gates at 1035 am. Everyone that took part in the march should feel an overwhelming sense of pride for not only being able to give back to the battalion but for pushing through such a challenging event and taking themselves out of their comfort zone.



C Company on the Brampton-Valley-Way

## Doing the Basics Right – Consistent High Quality, Low Level Training

«Lt Joshua Freemantle, OC v Platoon

The bedrock of infantry soldiering is basic skills and drills done to the highest standards in any conditions. It's easy at times, with the pace of commitments, not to invest in high quality training focussed on the lowest levels.

We have fought hard to carve out protected time to conduct local exercises that are dedicated to investing in these fundamental skills. One example was Pl level training in the Brecon Beacons on Ex Mobbs Malice, which provides an essential foundation for soldiers. C 'Northamptonshire' Coy faced the demanding terrain and unpredictable weather conditions that Brecon offers, proving a realistic and challenging environment for developing core infantry skills at the section level.

Basic soldiering—such as patrolling, fire and manoeuvre, camouflage and concealment, and section attacks—is reinforced through repetition and exposure to stressors that simulate war. This weather soldiers were exposed to, highlighting the necessity for physical resilience and mental robustness.

Section level training also strengthens cohesion and communication at the lowest level.

Operating effectively in small teams under pressure builds trust and reinforces the importance of discipline, leadership, and mutual support. This was critical for new soldiers having only recently arrived at the Coy.

Brecon is synonymous with hardship across the Infantry; the environment cultivates self-reliance and decision-making at the lowest level. Soldiers learn to navigate, plan routes, and execute tasks with minimal supervision—skills that are directly transferable to deployed operations. Ex Mobbs Malice provided the platform for combat readiness, ensuring the Coy moved into the Bn validation phase having set aside the time to focus on individual skills.

Similarly, navigation is a fundamental soldiering skill that underpins operational effectiveness across all environments. Too often navigation ends up the responsibility for JNCOs and not private soldiers.

For private soldiers in the 'Poachers', mastering navigation is not only essential for individual competence but also critical to the success of the platoon and wider objectives. In both conventional and asymmetric warfare, soldiers are frequently required to operate in unfamiliar terrain, often under

limited visibility or adverse weather conditions. Accurate navigation ensures that soldiers can move tactically, avoid or engage potential threats effectively, and arrive at designated locations efficiently and on time.

A private soldier who can interpret a map, use a compass, and apply GPS technology effectively is better equipped to operate independently if separated from their unit. This has become even more prevalent due to the threats posed in modern warfare and the necessity to stay dispersed.

This capability reduces risk and enhances survivability in complex operational scenarios. Mobility and adaptability are key, navigation proficiency supports rapid deployment and flexible response which is integral to a warfighting light mechanised battalion.

It also contributes to mission planning, route selection, and contingency management, enabling junior soldiers to contribute meaningfully to tactical decision-making.

We have pushed hard for navigation training in the local area around Rutland and Lincolnshire. This aim to be regular, LCpl and Pte soldier led navigation exercises that focus on the basic skills in an environment conducive for learning.



## D (Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire) Support Company Overview

Maj Alexander Langley, OCD (Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire) Support Company

Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire Company has continued to produce excellence throughout this year, training, validating, force preparing and subsequently deploying to multiple operational theatres.

The Company has bid farewell to Major Neil Reeder, moving to be Second in Command of the Army Foundation College, Harrogate and WO2 Mick Freeman as the Operations Warrant Officer at 1 R ANGLIAN, handing over the proud mantle of Company Sergeant Major to WO2 Dave Craycraft.

The opening of the year has seen the Company strip back to the fundamentals of its craft and rebuild sharper and faster than before. In January this saw the delivery of all the necessary Support Weapon Cadres, deploying to all corners of the UK with the Reconnaissance Platoon enduring the demands of Garelochhead and Sennybridge, the Machine Gun and Mortar Platoons conducting live firing in Warcop and a significant amount of time of Salisbury Plain for the Sniper and Anti-Tank Platoons to earn their Support Weapon qualification badges.

Organisational change has seen the Sniper and Reconnaissance Platoons merge to form Patrols Platoon, under command of Capt Ant Stratton. This change increases their capacity to deliver ground based reconnaissance



but also their lethality as they continue their pursuit of unmatched precision marksmanship, led by CSgt Max Mander. The Regimental Corps of Drums have also been resubordinated to the Machine Gun Platoon under the command of Capt Jake Peel. Dual qualification for these talented soldiers sees the Platoon uplifted to be able to deliver unmatched mounted and dismounted direct fire

effect with a harassing indirect fire capability.

Further significant training events detailed in the subsequent articles express the dedication and hunger for excellence that our team has displayed over the past 12 months. Their efforts have delivered opportunities to deploy the Company across multiple operational theatres; the command teams of the Mortar and Machine Gun Platoons seconded to the Rifle Companies, with the Patrols and Anti-Tank Platoons under the Company Headquarters assuming the role of the Forward Land Forces ISR Grouping, demonstrating the broad and coveted opportunities available to the senior manoeuvre company.

Further individual successes have been achieved with promotions to Corporal for LCpls Elmer, Kemp, Rook and Essex, to Sergeant for Cpls Wormald and Barnes, to Colour Sergeant for Sgt Parker and selection for promotion to Warrant Officer for CSgt Stanley. Supported by a number of our soldiers achieving qualification for promotion subsequent to their deployed roles over the coming months.

I am immensely proud of the dedication and professionalism displayed by the Company to meet all demands that have been laid before it, our team stands ready to meet them head on.



# 2nd Battalion

## Deployment to Operation CABRIT, Poland



The ISR Group alongside the wider FLF Battlegroup capabilities during the visit of the Lord Speaker and His Majesty's Ambassador to Poland.

The contribution to the British Army's commitment to NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) in Eastern Europe since 2020. Deployments to Poland on Op CABRIT(P)16 in 2021 and Ex STEADFAST DEFENDER in 2024 highlight the battalion's capability and importance in this commitment.

As part of Operation CABRIT(P)18, the battalion will play a vital role in deterring aggression and reassuring Polish and NATO partners in the wider Baltic region of the UK's obligations to the alliance. Operation CABRIT is the UK's contribution to NATO's Forward Land Forces (FLF), established in 2017 in response to increased tensions in Eastern Europe following Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014.

The operation involves the deployment of multinational battlegroups to Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland, demonstrating NATO's collective defence commitment under Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty. The UK leads the battlegroup in Estonia and contributes to the US-led battlegroup in Poland, where the ISR Group will be deployed.

D Company, renowned for their adaptability and professionalism, qualities they will demonstrate during this deployment. Their presence in Poland will see them working alongside



Cpl Reuben Wolfe talks through the Immediate Action drill with members of the 3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry, Scout Platoon.



# The Poachers



**Members of the Patrols Platoon conducting IA drills in preparation for Live Fire Tactical Training and further deployment to Estonia.**

NATO allies, including the United States, Croatia, and Romania, to enhance interoperability and readiness. This multinational collaboration is essential for ensuring a unified response to any potential threats in the region. A key aspect of NATO's FLF, and this deployment in particular, is the emphasis on deterrence.

By maintaining a visible and credible presence in Poland, the FLF SU and their NATO allies send a clear message of solidarity and resolve. This presence not only reassures NATO member states in the region but also serves as a reminder of the alliance's commitment to collective defence during a politically turbulent time.

During their deployment, D Company will participate in a range of training exercises designed to enhance combat readiness and strengthen ties with NATO partners. These exercises include the Cold Weather Operators Course (CWOC), which prepares soldiers to operate effectively in extreme winter conditions, as well as live-fire

drills, urban warfare training, and large-scale manoeuvres.

All of these will be conducted in the challenging environments associated with winter in Central and Eastern Europe. Soldiers will also have the opportunity to share tactics, techniques, and procedures with their counterparts, fostering mutual understanding and cohesion. The skills gained during these exercises will not only enhance their operational effectiveness but also support the professional development of its soldiers.

Beyond their military duties, Poachers will engage with local communities in Poland, participating in outreach activities and cultural exchanges. These efforts will help to build goodwill and strengthen the bond between NATO forces and the host nation, fostering trust and mutual respect.

The deployment of the ISR Group to Operation CABRIT required rigorous and comprehensive pre-deployment training to ensure the Company was

fully prepared for the challenges ahead. This training included intensive live-fire exercises and battlefield simulations to hone their combat skills. Soldiers also underwent cultural awareness training to foster effective collaboration with NATO allies and build rapport with the local population in Poland. Physical fitness and resilience were prioritised, with demanding exercises designed to prepare troops for operating in Poland's varied and often harsh terrain. Additionally, soldiers received instruction on NATO protocols and interoperability to ensure seamless integration with multinational forces.

As D Company prepares to deploy, their commitment to NATO's mission in Eastern Europe underscores the UK's dedication to collective defence and regional stability. The Poachers' professionalism, adaptability, and determination will undoubtedly make a significant contribution to the success of Operation CABRIT(P)18, reinforcing the alliance's deterrence posture and strengthening international partnerships.



# 2nd Battalion

## Live Fire Tactical Training on Exercise STAG'S FIRE



**The Machine Gun Platoon conducting a bounding gun line.**

The support company has successfully completed Exercise STAGS FIRE, a challenging and comprehensive period of dismounted Live Fire Tactical Training (LFTT) conducted in the rugged terrain of Sennybridge, Wales.

This exercise marked a significant milestone in the Company's operational readiness, bringing together all specialist platoons—Recce, Mortars,

Snipers, Anti-Tanks, and Machine Guns—to refine their skills and enhance their effectiveness in a variety of tactical scenarios.

The primary aim of Exercise STAGS FIRE was to prepare soldiers for Operation CABRIT, the UK's commitment to NATO's enhanced Forward Presence in Eastern Europe, as well as any subsequent operations that may arise. The training was designed to ensure that all personnel were capable of operating effectively in dismounted roles, from fire team level through to platoon level, under both day and night conditions. This focus on adaptability and readiness is critical for modern military operations, where soldiers must be prepared to face a wide range of challenges in diverse environments.



**LCpl Connor Dickinson and Pte Jermal Charlery moving to the Fire Support Position.**



# The Poachers

The exercise was meticulously planned to test and develop the unique capabilities of each specialist platoon. Patrols and Anti-Tank Platoons began their training with immediate action drills, progressing to patrol scenarios that simulated real-world situations. These scenarios included responding to compromises while conducting close target reconnaissance, a vital skill for gathering intelligence in hostile environments.

The training then shifted to more complex operations, with the platoons returning to the fundamentals of live platoon attacks. This back-to-basics approach ensured that all soldiers were proficient in core combat skills, which form the foundation for more advanced tactics.

Meanwhile, the Machine Gun and Mortar Platoons focused on scenarios centred around the protection of their respective gun and mortar lines. These scenarios included both offensive and defensive operations, reflecting the dual role these platoons often play in providing fire support while maintaining their own security. The training emphasised coordination and communication, as these elements are crucial for the effective deployment of heavy weapons in dynamic combat situations.

The challenging environment of Sennybridge provided an ideal setting for this rigorous training. Known for its unpredictable weather and varied terrain, the area tested the soldiers' physical endurance and mental resilience.

Operating in such conditions ensured that the Company was prepared for the demands of real-world deployments, where adaptability and perseverance are often the keys to success.

Exercise STAGS FIRE also served as a valuable opportunity for the platoons to work together and integrate their capabilities. The ability to operate cohesively as a single, unified force is essential for mission success, particularly in complex operational environments. By training together, the platoons were able to develop a deeper understanding of each other's roles and capabilities, fostering a spirit of



**Right Flanking!**



**Reaction to contact on the Mortar line.**



# 2nd Battalion

teamwork and mutual support.

The culmination of Exercise STAGS FIRE marked the final hurdle in the Company's operational readiness training. Having successfully completed this demanding exercise, Support

Company is now fully prepared to deploy on Operation CABRIT or any other missions that may arise. The soldiers have demonstrated their

ability to operate effectively in a wide range of scenarios, showcasing their professionalism, skill, and dedication.

This achievement is a testament to the hard work and commitment of everyone involved, from the soldiers on the ground to the leadership and support staff who planned and executed the exercise. It also highlights the importance of rigorous training in

ensuring that the British Army remains ready to meet the challenges of modern warfare.

As the Company looks ahead to its deployments, the lessons learned, and skills honed during Exercise STAGS FIRE will undoubtedly prove invaluable. Whether operating in Eastern Europe or elsewhere, Support Company stands ready to fulfil its mission.

## Ex STAGS GUNNER Live Fire Exercises, Lulworth

*Capt Hamish MacKellar, OC Anti-Tank Platoon*

At the end of April 2025, D (Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire) Fire Support Company departed for Lulworth Ranges in Dorset. Prior to Exercise WESSEX STORM, the Company needed to spend two weeks to complete our mounted Live Fire Exercises in preparation to be held at readiness over the summer and to deploy on Op CABRIT (P) 18.

The process of LFXs is simple. In just the same way as the training with

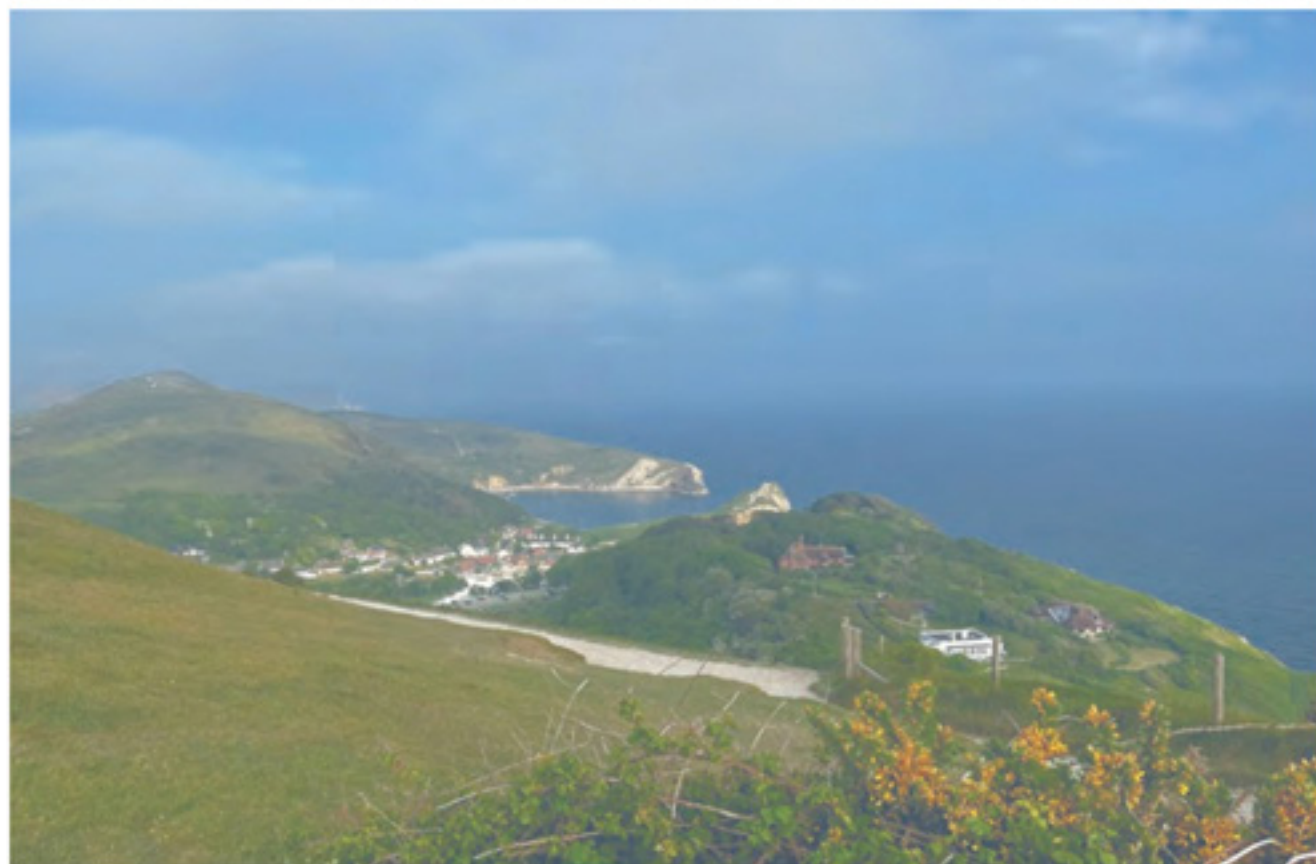
small arms progresses, starting with a Grouping and Zeroing shoot and finishing with LFTT by night, LFXs achieve the same when mounted on the High Mobility Truck Variant Jackals and Coyotes.

We start with Annual Combat Marksmanship Tests, progress through firing from the vehicles whilst static in all conditions and complete with each Platoon conducting tactical manoeuvre

whilst mounted and engaging targets.

As ever, troops relish the opportunity to fire heavy weapons live, the venerable Browning 12.7mm/.50 Heavy Machine Gun and 40mm Heckler & Koch Grenade Machine Gun are mounted to the cupolas of our Jackals and Coyotes, allowing us to pack a significant punch along with our speed and mobility.

Everyone's favourite weapon system, the General Purpose Machine



Lulworth Cove providing some respite for troops on the weekend



# The Poachers



**The sun shining on Support Company as they conduct Live Fire Exercises**

Gun – is mounted in front of the Commander, which allows them to take up the fight during reloads and barrel changes, indicate targets and protect the crew from close range opportunity targets.

With the intention to train as we would fight, and under the watchful eyes of our Range Team – headed by CSgts Ben Townsend (2IC Anti-Tanks) and Steve Presland (2IC Machine Guns), and Sgt Liam Parker (Section Commander, Anti-Tanks) – the Company went beyond the normal tendency to fire every shoot under parachute illumination flares. Thermal sights were fitted to the weapons, adding a degree of complexity to an already challenging environment – but accurately reflecting how we would seek to engage and destroy the enemy. As always, a special thanks need to go out to the supporting elements. Without the diligence and hard work of the Range Team, the CQs department and our CIS elements none of our success would have been possible.

No good period down in Dorset is complete without some relaxation. With Lulworth Cove just down the hill, the Company made best use of the local environment. With a split decision on whether the highlights of the weekend off were ice creams and relaxing on the beach, long runs over the hills of the Jurassic Coast or the cultural delights of Weymouth, the Company managed to find a route to enjoy some time away from home.

The troops, as always, grafted hard whilst in Lulworth. Making a strong representation for the Infantry despite being in the home of the Royal Armoured Corps, the standards of



**The Mortar Platoon firing under the watchful eye and coaching of a Safety Supervisor.**



## 2nd Battalion



Night engagements from the HMTVs, fired under illumination flares for this shoot.

mounted marksmanship started well and climbed throughout, with the majority of the Company achieving the highest possible Level 6 on their Annual Crew

Tests. Individual performances were equally strong, the best shooting crew was commanded by Cpl Cooper of the Patrols Platoon, and the Platoon

Commanders competed between themselves to see who shot the best. The result surprised everyone, but is now a bit of a sore point for OC Machine Guns



With safety staff diligently watching the firers' every move, coaching and development feedback was instant and valuable.



## HQ Company Overview

OC HQ Company Maj Ben Kelly MC  
CSM HQ Company WO1 Gary Farrell

As we look back on this year, I could not be prouder of what HQ Company has achieved. From enabling complex training to supporting operations overseas, every member of this team has played a vital role in the Battalion's success. Your professionalism, adaptability, and commitment have been second to none.

These achievements don't happen by chance, they happen because of the hard work and dedication you bring every day. As we move into the next phase, I know HQ Coy will continue to set the standard. Thank you for everything you've done this year, and for the support you've given each other along the way.

This year has been exceptionally busy for the Battalion and HQ Company. From deploying and recovering personnel from operations to enabling battalion-level training, the company has been at the heart of everything we've achieved.

One of the highlights was supporting the Combined Arms Staff Trainer Germany (CAST) training. Self-sustaining Battle Group Headquarters (BGHQ) and Signals Platoon to refine their drills and SOPs—preparation that paid off during Cyclone Training, a dedicated period free from brigade tasking. This gave the Poachers Battle Group a rare opportunity for a full run-out, and HQ Company played a key role in making it happen.

These efforts set the conditions for Exercise Wessex Storm, the Battle Group validation exercise. Facing a



peer enemy—Task Force Hannibal—every element of the BG was tested, from frontline troops to B Echelon, who worked tirelessly extracting soldiers from the battlefield, returning them to Kendrew Barracks, and moving stores across the UK. The exercise was a resounding success, with valuable lessons learned across the board. Following Wessex Storm, HQ Company shifted focus to preparing D Company and elements of HQ for deployment on Op CABRIT (Poland). As we write, they are settling into routine and strengthening interoperability with NATO partners.

This year saw significant changes in

key appointments: Battalion 2IC: Lt Col Frank Atkins departs on promotion; we welcome Maj James Walters; QMs: Maj Jay Greenhill moves from QM(T) to QM; Capt Scott Dickinson joins as QM(T); RSM: WO1 'Windy' Miller retires after an outstanding 26-year career; Signals Platoon: New RSO (Capt Dave Brown), BSM, Tech Sgt, and Platoon Sgt (Sgt Evans); CSM: WO2 Roffe moves to C Company; WO2 Gary Farrell takes over as HQ Company CSM; Welfare CSgt: CSgt Ireland transitions to civvy street after an outstanding 24-year career; LAD: New EME, ASM and a raft of SSgt as the detachment is growing to reflect the demands of Light Mechanised Infantry (LMI).

We thank those leaving for their dedication and wish them every success. To those promoted, well done. Your achievements reflect the very best of HQ Company.

Next on the horizon is Op INTERFLEX in January 2026, the UK's mission to train Ukrainian forces. Preparations are already underway to set conditions for success. Closer to home, we're turning our attention to Christmas and supporting families of deployed personnel, hosting the traditional soldiers' lunch (minus the food fight!), and inter-mess football on a regimental scale.

HQ Company remains immensely proud of its contribution and looks forward to carrying this momentum into the next phase of battalion activity. The future is bright, and HQ Coy will be at the forefront of every success.



# 2nd Battalion

## Catering Department

The Catering Department of 2nd Battalion The Royal Anglian Regiment, aligned under 7th Infantry Brigade, plays a vital role in sustaining the operational effectiveness and morale of our personnel. Based at Kendrew Barracks, our mission is to provide high-quality catering support to both unit and station.

We are a close-knit team of seven, trained and equipped to deliver catering services across a wide range of environments. Whether on exercise, operations, or adventure training—within the UK or overseas—we consistently deliver fresh, nutritious meals under all conditions.

Our recent deployments and support tasks include:

- Exercise Wessex Storm – Deployed with an Operation Field Catering System (OFCS) field kitchen supporting over 800 personnel with feeding in fresh rations, including morale-boosting initiatives like a BBQ on the maiden day.
- Exercise CPX Wessex Thunder (Germany) – Supporting command post operations with flexible and responsive catering solutions.

- Operation Cabrit (Poland) – Providing catering support to deployed personnel from D-Coy, ensuring continuity of service in austere environments.

- Unit and Station Functions – Delivering high-standard catering for numerous in-camp and out-of-camp



events, including VVIP visits and regimental functions.

Our team remains committed to excellence, adaptability, and

professionalism, ensuring that wherever the mission takes us, we are ready to feed the fight.

**WE SUSTAIN !**



## Light Aid Detachment

The Royal Anglian Regiment is a Light Mechanised Infantry (LMI) unit that primarily operates using FOXHOUND and HMTV platforms. The battalion boasts a fleet of over 90 of these advanced vehicles, with a total of more than 200 vehicles.

Supporting the unit is a dedicated Light Aid Detachment (LAD) comprising 1+ 35. 2025 has brought both opportunities and challenges for the LAD and the wider battalion. Most notably, the LAD has worked tirelessly to maintain the battalion's fleet at Very High Readiness (VHR) as part of the Allied Reaction Force (ARF).

Their efforts were further validated during the successful completion of Exercise WESSEX STORM 25/1. Additionally, the LAD is undergoing a significant restructure, with a much-needed increase in personnel to bolster its capabilities.

Throughout the year, the LAD has participated in a range of exercises and initiatives aimed at enhancing operational readiness, technical expertise, and individual development.

Exercise MOBILE POACHER tested the battalion's ability to deploy over long distances, providing the LAD with valuable experience in planning and executing sustained movements.

This also allowed team members to develop their driving skills under realistic field conditions. Similarly, the battalion's CYCLONE package exercises on Salisbury Plain prepared the unit for Exercise WESSEX STORM 25/1, focusing on tactical deployment, equipment readiness, and integration with other battalion elements.

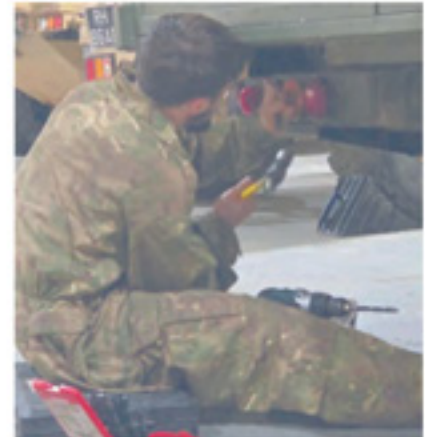
Working with FOXHOUND vehicles is always a challenging task, made even more demanding in field conditions with limited resources—often relying on nothing more than an issued headtorch.

This was particularly evident during Exercise WESSEX STORM 25/1, where the LAD worked extended hours, often late into the night, overcoming numerous obstacles (and the occasional dropped 10mm socket!) to meet the required



start standard. During the exercise, the LAD fought hard to maintain vehicle availability above 80%, with recovery vehicles working overtime to keep the battalion operational. Their efforts were instrumental in 2 R ANGLIAN's successful validation, as the exercise featured a complex and demanding enemy that rigorously tested both the battalion's equipment and the LAD's ability to sustain operations under pressure. The exercise concluded with the LAD ensuring the battalion could rely on a fully operational vehicle fleet throughout, a testament to their dedication and expertise.

Building on this success, the LAD has now deployed D Company Fitters as part of Operation CABRIT (P) 18. This deployment followed Pre-Deployment Training (PDT), which included Live Fire Tactical Training (LFTT) and Cold Weather Training. Additionally, the LAD has been focused on raising the 2 R ANGLIAN fleet to 85% readiness as part of Ex TOTALISE, a divisional-level



effort to ensure the unit is prepared for future tasks. The LAD is also enhancing its LMI capability through targeted training in Battle Damage Repair and Recovery, further strengthening its ability to support operations. These initiatives highlight the LAD's commitment to operational excellence and its proactive approach to maintaining readiness across all fronts. Beyond its operational commitments, the LAD has actively fostered team spirit and personal development through sports, adventurous training, and social activities. Members of the LAD have achieved notable successes, including Cpl Bryn Beange representing the Corps and Army in football and LCpl Epeli Koroiveibau excelling in Corps-level rugby.





# 2nd Battalion

## Motor Transport Platoon

In the heart of the 2nd Battalion, the Motor Transport (MT) Platoon stands as a quiet powerhouse, small in number but mighty in effect. With just twelve dedicated soldiers, the team is the logistical lifeblood of the battalion, ensuring that wherever The Poachers go, their wheels and the mission keep turning.

Our critical transport role: logistics, coordinate driver training, and maintain constant operational readiness. In reality, that means juggling everything from moving troops and kit to managing maintenance schedules, all while keeping an eye on the next task before the current one's even finished.

### Training: From Learners to Logistic Legends

The past year has been one of relentless progress. Under the expert guidance of the platoon's licence instructor, a structured, mission-focused training pipeline has taken shape. This isn't box-ticking it's about producing drivers who are confident, competent, and combat-ready.

Personnel have advanced through theory and practical training across Category B, C, and C+E licences. Each qualification represents a step up in skill and responsibility. These aren't just licences they're lifelines, ensuring that the battalion can manoeuvre and sustain itself anywhere in the world.

Green fleet training on the MAN Support Vehicle (SV) has also bolstered operational flexibility, ensuring that The Poachers can respond rapidly to any tasking. Looking ahead, coach licence acquisition has become a major focus as the battalion prepares for Operation

Interflex in early 2026, where coach-qualified drivers will play a vital role in transporting personnel and equipment.

### Digital Disasters and Team Triumphs

Not all challenges in MT are mechanical or even remotely logical. One of our most time-consuming (and entertaining) hurdles has been helping a technologically challenged comrade navigate the dark arts of Microsoft Office. Watching him try to open a PDF or update a spreadsheet is like watching someone attempt bomb disposal wearing oven mitts slow, sweaty, and genuinely suspenseful.

Yet beneath the laughter lies a truth that defines MT: teamwork. Whether it's navigating a convoy route or a computer interface, no one is left behind.

### ADR and the Art of Controlled Chaos

This year also saw several ADR (Accord Dangereux Routier) courses completed, adding another layer of skill to the platoon's already impressive arsenal. Handling hazardous materials safely and professionally is no small feat, but it's all in a day's work for MT.

Meanwhile, the White Fleet team three heroic souls continue to operate as the battalion's final line of mobility. They face an unending barrage of booking requests that hit harder and faster than a simulated artillery strike. Their inboxes overflow, their phones never stop ringing, and their calendars are more complex than an Ops order but somehow, they keep the battalion moving. Every booking is a battle won.

### On Exercise and Operations

Operationally, 2025 has been a landmark year. During Exercise Wessex

Storm, much of the platoon deployed as A1 logistics drivers, supporting battalion manoeuvres with precision and endurance. The exercise served as a key readiness test for future deployments and MT passed with flying colours.

Currently, several platoon members are deployed with D (Support) Company on Operation Cabrit, serving as UST operators within NATO's enhanced forward presence. Looking ahead, early 2026 will see a small MT team deploy on Operation Interflex, managing a fleet of over 200 vehicles. No pressure, then.

Growth, Grit, and Good Humour  
Amidst the operational tempo, the platoon continues to evolve. New faces have joined, roles have shifted, and leadership has developed. Our newly appointed Green Fleet IC was thrown into the deep end and has handled it with both enthusiasm and a sense of humour two essential traits for survival in MT.

Because that's what defines this team: grit, adaptability, and a good laugh when things inevitably go sideways. MT isn't just about vehicles, it's about people. The drivers, mechanics, and administrators who make sure that when the battalion moves, it does so with precision and purpose.

### Always Ready to Roll

Whether it's mastering ADR compliance, managing the White Fleet, or preparing for deployment, the MT Platoon remains the beating heart of battalion mobility. We're not just drivers we're logisticians, trainers, mentors, and problem-solvers. We drive forward not just vehicles, but the mission itself. And as any Poacher knows, that's what keeps the Regiment rolling, one perfectly maintained wheel at a time.



## Communications and Information Systems



**From Left: Pte Owen Coia, Pte Finnley Leader, Pte Christian Woods, Pte Oliver Wilson, Pte Joshua Poole, Pte Joe Leatherland, Cpl Chris Ryles, Pte Edward Agyei Agemang, Pte Logan Howard, LCpl Mark Gifford, Pte Dean Stubbings, CSgt Jamie Reeve, Cpl Shane Woods, Sgt Elliot Evans, Cpl Jacob Oates, Cpl Warrick Brittany, Pte Cameron Ives, Bdr Jordan Hunter (4RA).**

The Signals Platoon of the Poachers has had a very busy 2025. Working to renew live firing currency at the beginning of the year and following quickly onto the Cyclone training period, an opportunity for the CIS platoon to focus on their primary operational role; delivery of a functional Battlegroup communications plan and the workforce to maintain, move, reset and defend the headquarters. During the Cyclone package this looked like a three-week exercise in the field training and honing their skills in all things information systems and communications.

The Cyclone training exercise culminated in integrated training across the Battalions support company, rifle company and Headquarters in preparation for validation on Exercise Wessex storm.

Wessex Storm saw the CIS platoon deploy the Battalion Headquarters onto Salisbury plain training area for a seven-week validation exercise. The Headquarters commanded the Poachers Battalion with attachments from the Royal Artillery, Royal Engineers and a mechanised Company from the French army mounted in their new Griffon Armoured fighting vehicle. With some integration from reserve soldiers from the 3Rd battalion also deploying.

Wessex Storm brought Challenges for the CIS platoon, with a new deployed headquarters structure and the excitement of the first rollout of the Foxhound communication and command variant to contend with. The platoon worked tirelessly to delivery for the battalion and overcome all the frictions of delivering with new equipment new

process'. The C2 Foxhound marks a significant upgrade to the Battalions Communications capability.

Following on from Wessex storm the CIS platoon has deployed a number of its personnel to support a variety of exercises and Operations in the Fall of 2025 running through to 2026.

The remaining platoon is set to shift its focus towards building the knowledge base at the lowest level across the battlegroup, aiming to improve combat effectiveness through a greater depth of communications knowledge and experience. As the battalion looks forward to exciting deployment opportunities in the future the opportunity to trial and test new mounted Communications equipment could put the Poachers at the forefront of army communications solutions.



# 2nd Battalion

## Exercise FROSTED BLADE

The Poachers Entered the Annual Infantry skiing championships in 2024 deploying on Exercise FROSTED BLADE 39 in Val d'Isère France.

Teams of eight from the Poachers and Vikings attended the exercise from early December 2024 into January 2025.

A varied team of ages and abilities competes to master the alpine disciplines of Slalom, giant slalom, Super G and the Downhill.

The exercise was a success for both Battalions with members of the Poachers

team picking up medals in the novice and junior disciplines. Well done to Pte Edward Bradshaw, whilst the Vikings achieved success in the combined team event with an overall podium finish.

The Poachers progressed on with 4 of their skiers competing in the unit qualifying championships as a team in Les Contamine on Exercise PIPEDOWN, making a good showing with a team of inexperienced skiers. Team IC Capt David Brown was able to achieve qualification to progress on to

the individual army championships on Exercise LIONS CHALLENGE. A great achievement.

Frosted Blade continues to be an exciting exercise for Soldiers that would otherwise not get the opportunity to face their fears and test themselves in this Harsh and challenging sporting environment.

Even those inexperienced skiers have shown excellent success is possible in the Infantry Alpine disciplines.



Fromleft: Capt David Brown, Pte Archie Scotting, Lt Daniel Bradnam, Lt Calum McDermot, Pte Edward Bradshaw, Cpl Thomas Simmonds, LCpl Elliot Barton,



# STRONG FROM



## ROYAL ANGLIAN

The Royal Anglian CONNECT App is free for serving personnel, veterans, partners and family members. The App has Groups, Messaging, Chat Notifications, Search and Connect Functions for you to engage with other members of our Regimental family. There is a calander for you to host and track upcoming events. Available on desktop or both Apple and Android.



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# 2nd Battalion

## Royal Anglian Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu (BJJ): A Year of Dominance, Growth, and Brotherhood

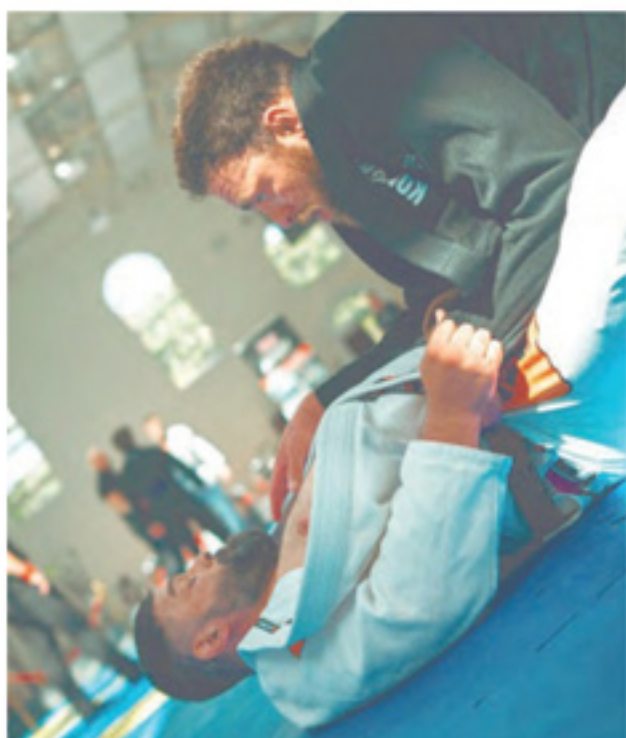
The past year has marked an incredible period of achievement, growth, and pride for Royal Anglian Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu (BJJ) – a team that continues to embody the Regimental ethos of Strength, Courage, and Unity. From Army-level victories to inspiring new grapplers across the battalion, 2024–2025 has been a defining year for the team both on and off the mats.

### Army BJJ Championships March 2025

At the Army BJJ Championships, the Royal Anglian team showcased exceptional skill, teamwork, and determination. Competing against the very best across the British Army, the team brought home an impressive 3 Gold, 2 Silver, and 6 Bronze medals, cementing the Regiment's position as a dominant force within Army-level competition.



**Solid Results and stronger bonds – Great showing from the team at the Army BJJ Championships! Hard Work on the mats paying off. From left: Cpl Matthew Ward, Pte Dylan Reynolds, CSgt Nick Foley, Pte Carl Ryan, LCpl Conner Dickson, WO2 Chris Roffe. Back: Maj Josh Sanders, Cpl Llewlyn Myburgh.**



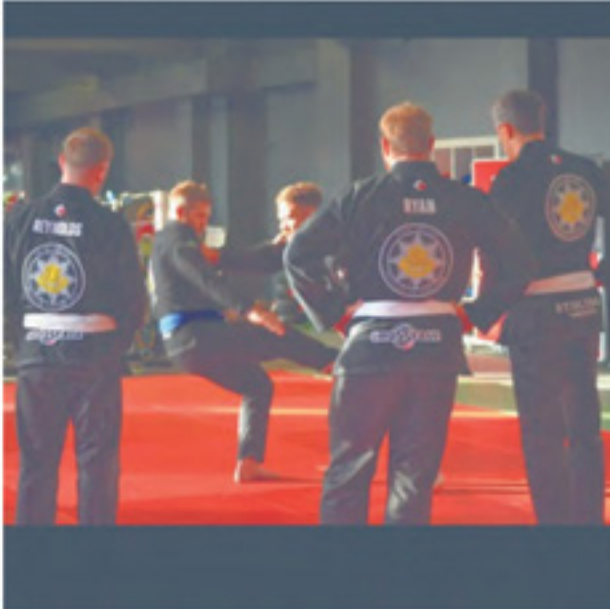
**LCpl Dan Konecke putting in a strong performance at the Frontline Services Championship.**



**Interservice Championships 2025. LCpl Conner Dickson on his way to securing Gold.**



# The Poachers



**Solid training session at the purpose-built BJJ facility in Kendrew Barracks – Sharpening skills and building the team. Fromt from left: Pte Dylan Reynolds, Pte Carl Ryan, Maj Josh Sanders. Back: CSgt Nick Foley and LCpl Dan Konecke.**



**Rolling for a cause! The BJJ team donating to charity after raising funds through training and competition – proud to give back to the community. From left:WO2 Chris Roffe, Pte Carl Ryan, Cpl Llewlyn Myburgh, CSgt Nick Foley**

## Front Line Services Championships May 2025

Momentum carried forward into the Front Line Services BJJ Championships, where Royal Anglian BJJ once again delivered outstanding results – earning 4 Golds and 1 Silver. This consistent performance across major tournaments reflects the strength of the team's training program and the dedication of its members.

## Growth, Selection, and Giving Back

Beyond competition, the team continued to grow from strength to strength, with a surge of 72 new grapplers taking up Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu across the Regiment this year. This increase highlights the growing popularity of BJJ as a means of improving physical fitness, mental resilience, and overall wellbeing within the ranks.

A standout achievement came when

one Royal Anglian BJJ athlete was selected for the Army BJJ Team, going on to win double gold while representing the British Army – an exceptional accomplishment that reflects the calibre of coaching and commitment within the Regiment.

In addition to success on the mats, Royal Anglian BJJ has remained committed to service and community. The team has raised money for a charity supporting the happiness and wellbeing of local children, reinforcing the Regiment's dedication to making a positive impact both inside and outside the wire.

## Looking Ahead

The team looks toward the coming year, Royal Anglian BJJ continues to exemplify the values of teamwork, discipline, and perseverance. The team is preparing to compete in the English

Open 2025, aiming to build on the strong performances of the past year and further develop its competitive edge.

Looking even further ahead, plans are already underway for another overseas tour in 2026, offering the opportunity to test themselves against international competition and strengthen partnerships within the global BJJ community.

With continued competitive success, and a steadfast focus on developing soldiers both physically and mentally, the future of Royal Anglian BJJ is brighter than ever.

**Strength in the body. Discipline in the mind. Unity on the mats. Royal Anglian BJJ – One Team. One Fight.**



## 2nd Battalion

### Battalion Boxing: A Season of Grit, Glory, and Growth

Following a successful Inter-Company Boxing competition in November 2024, a new Battalion Boxing team was formed, marking the beginning of an extraordinary season of military boxing excellence. The team quickly made its mark, defeating the Royal School of Military Engineering in Chatham with a clean sweep—six boxers entered, and all six emerged victorious.

Building on this momentum, the Poachers and 1st Battalion Royal Regiment of Fusiliers joined forces to take on the RAF in Marham in a thrilling contest. The combined team showcased their strength and unity securing four wins.

December saw the Battalion Boxing team enter the Infantry Box Cup, a week-long competition of elimination bouts showcasing the best of Infantry boxing talent. The Poachers' exceptional skill and determination, with six team members battling their way to the finals. Their efforts culminated in a resounding victory, earning the title of Infantry Box Cup Champions 2024—a proud moment that solidified their reputation as a force to be reckoned with.



#### Infantry Boxing Cup Winning Team.

In February, they faced the Royal Engineer Development Team in Kent, securing a hard-fought 5-3 victory.

The team's development continued with a training camp at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst where they trained alongside the RLC Corps team.

Their efforts paid off as they reached the Major Units Finals, maintaining a

rigorous training schedule with weekday evening sessions.

In Ripon, two boxers represented the team against 21 Regt Royal Engineers, both securing wins. LCpl George Sheldon stood out, earning the Best Boxer award for his performance. March saw a collaborative training camp in Hastings with the Engineers, preparing for the semi-final clash against 2 RIFLES.



SemiFinal of the Major Units Competition first round stoppage. (Pte James Edoh).

The semi-final was a night to remember, held at home in Kendrew Barracks, Cottesmore in front of the Battalion. With the score tied 4-4, Pte James Edoh delivered a stunning first-round stoppage against the 2 RIFLES heavyweight in the final bout, sealing a 5-4 victory for the Poachers. LCpl Blake Holness was named Best Boxer of the evening, highlighting the team's depth and talent.

April saw a standout performance from the Battalion's female boxer, LCpl Pheobe Mercer, who took centre stage at the 1st Battalion The Royal Anglian Regiment boxing show in Cottesmore.

Facing the Royal Engineers Corps champion, Mercer delivered a dominant display of skill and composure, securing a unanimous decision victory. Her win



## The Poachers

was a proud moment for the team and a powerful example of the growing strength and diversity within Battalion Boxing.

The season culminated in the Army Major Units Final against 2nd Battalion The Parachute Regiment at the Army Boxing Centre in Aldershot. It was a fiercely competitive night, with 2 Para edging the contest. Despite the loss, the Battalion Boxing team finished the season with an impressive 45 bouts, demonstrating resilience, camaraderie, and a relentless pursuit of excellence.

### Post-Season Development and Community Engagement

With the competitive season concluded, CSgt Walker and his dedicated team have continued to drive the momentum forward by running six boxing sessions a week. These sessions are open to both soldiers and dependants, serving as a platform to scout new talent and offer inclusive training opportunities for family members. This initiative not only strengthens the Battalion's boxing foundation but also fosters a sense of community and shared purpose beyond the ring.



Infantry Boxing Cup, Team and Coach talk prior to the first bout.

## Royal Anglian Regiment Corps of Drums Visit to Washington DC

In October 2025, the Royal Anglian Regiment Corps of Drums embarked on a memorable and prestigious visit to Washington D.C. representing both the Regiment and the British Army at a series of high-profile events.

The visit included performances at the British Embassy in Washington D.C. and daily presentations at the Association of the United States Army (AUSA) Annual Convention. It was a tremendous honour for all involved and provided a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to experience the historic and cultural heart of the United States.

The group arrived in Washington D.C. following weeks of preparation, with instruments and uniforms carefully packed to ensure that the



The Regimental Corps of Drums with the Honour Guard at Arlington National Cemetery.





## 2nd Battalion



Cpl Marcus Bent; Cpl Ryan Essex; Dmr Ben Hammond; DMaj Paul Meehan; British Chargé d'affaires ad interim to the United States, James Roscoe MVO; Dmr Taylor Porter; Dmr Kian Ruddlesdin; Dmr Garvin Serieux; Dmr Simon Owusu.



Capt Jacob Peel and Capt Charles Boffey-Rawlings.

Regimental Corps of Drums presented itself to the highest standard. The first major engagement of the visit was a performance at the AUSA convention. The music performed cut through with crisp precision and the display attracted large crowds, many of whom stopped to watch, film, and applaud. American servicemen and women were particularly drawn to the unique blend of discipline and musical tradition that defines the Royal Anglian Regimental Corps of Drums. Following the performance, the Corps of Drums were able to explore the convention itself, meeting with U.S. soldiers, defence representatives, and international partners. It was a valuable opportunity to share experiences, exchange ideas, and most importantly use and trial new equipment, anything from helicopters to night sights and weapon systems to camouflage.

The main event of the trip to Washington was the performance at the British Embassy. Guests included members of the diplomatic community, U.S. and U.K. military representatives, and British expatriates living in the

capital, hosted by the British Chargé d'affaires ad interim to the United States, James Roscoe MVO. The Corps of Drums, dressed immaculately in their scarlets, performed a selection of Regimental marches and traditional pieces that showcased the precision, discipline, and musicianship of the Royal Anglian Regiment.

The performance was met with enthusiastic applause, and several members of the audience commented on how the Corps of Drums brought a touch of British tradition and military pageantry to the heart of Washington. After the performance, we were invited to a reception hosted by Embassy staff, offering a chance to meet guests and discuss the Regiment's history and ongoing work both at home and overseas. For the Corps of Drums, it was a proud moment — not only to represent their Regiment but also to stand as ambassadors for the United Kingdom in one of the world's most influential cities.

Among the most moving experiences of the trip was a private tour of Arlington National Cemetery,



# The Poachers



**The Regimental Corps of Drums performing at the UK Embassy in Washington DC.**



**At the UK Embassy in Washington DC.**



**The Regimental Corps of Drums performing at AUSA.**

arranged by members of the U.S. Army Honour Guard. The Honour Guard very kindly provided a detailed and deeply respectful tour, explaining the history of the cemetery and its traditions of remembrance.

The Corps of Drums were shown the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and given the rare privilege of witnessing a private demonstration of the Guard's exacting drill movements as well as spending time with the soldiers and seeing their barracks which is directly underneath the Tomb. For many members of the Corps, standing among the endless rows of white headstones was the most

poignant part of the trip.

When not performing, we made the most of our time to explore Washington D.C.'s rich history and culture. Highlights included visits to the Lincoln Memorial, the U.S. Capitol, as well as a walk along the National Mall, seeing monuments to Washington, Jefferson, Roosevelt, and Martin Luther King Jr as well as the monuments dedicated to the Vietnam and Korean Wars, as well as a few visits to Georgetown!

The visit to Washington DC was, by every measure, a resounding success. The performances at the British Embassy and AUSA Convention

showcased the professionalism, pride, and musical excellence of the Royal Anglian Regiment Corps of Drums to international audiences.

The warm reception from both British and American hosts highlighted the continued importance of cultural and military exchange.

For those who took part, the experience will remain a career highlight; an opportunity to represent the Regiment and the British Army on foreign soil, to engage with international allies, and to immerse themselves in the history of one of the world's most iconic cities.





## 3rd Battalion

# From the CO

As we reflect on the past year, it is clear that 3rd Battalion, the Steelbacks, has continued to demonstrate its professionalism, dedication, and operational excellence. With a focus on preparing for Exercise RHINO HEART 2025, this year has been one of significant achievement, growth, and success for the Battalion.

The culmination of our efforts was the Battalion's participation in Exercise RHINO HEART 2025, held in October in Germany. This exercise, led by 19th Light Brigade (19X), was the largest deployment of Army Reservists in a generation, involving Service Personnel (SP) from over 30 units in a Battle Group force-on-force construct.

The exercise focused on fieldcraft and warfighting skills up to Company level and provided an unparalleled opportunity for our soldiers to operate in a complex and challenging environment.

The Steelbacks rose to the occasion, showcasing their capability, resilience, and professionalism. Our soldiers returned more experienced, capable, and with a deeper understanding of their role within the wider Army.

In addition to RHINO HEART, the Battalion has supported operations across the globe, with SP deployed on TOSCA, BATUK, BATSUB, and INTERFLEX. These deployments have further demonstrated the adaptability and operational readiness of our soldiers. Throughout the year, the Battalion has continued to excel in a variety of areas. We became the first unit in the Division to achieve the prestigious Gold Award for Army Continuous Improvement, highlighting our commitment to innovation and excellence. Our shooting team also achieved remarkable success, winning the 1st (UK) Division Reserve Operational Shooting Competition for the fourth consecutive year and placing



4th at the Defence Operational Shooting Competition (Reserves). Pte Middleton was named best on rifle and best female shooter, with all team members receiving 19X Commander's coins for their outstanding efforts.

In June, over 120 Army Reserve soldiers deployed to Salisbury Plain for the Battalion's annual Commanding Officer's training weekend. The training included urban warfare lessons, demonstrations by military working

dogs, and an introduction to the Warrior armoured fighting vehicle. The weekend culminated in a challenging urban attack exercise at Copehill Down village, where the Steelbacks successfully cleared and defended the area in a hard-fought night-time engagement.

The Battalion also maintained its strong links with the communities we serve. In June, 2 Company led 25 Steelbacks in exercising the Freedom of Kettering on behalf of the Regiment. Inspected by the Chief of Defence Logistics, the parade saw the Steelbacks march through the town centre with bayonets fixed and Colours flying, accompanied by around 1,000 cadets celebrating Armed Forces Day. It was a proud moment for the Battalion and a fitting tribute to our historic ties with the town.

This year has also seen a number of our SP recognised for their exceptional contributions. Capt Mick Green (ROSO), WO1 Phil Green (RSM), WO2 Mowle (RSWO), and Sgt Davitt (3 Coy PSI) were all awarded 19X Commander's Commendations, while LCpl Kingston (2 Coy) received a GOC 1 (UK) Division Commendation for her outstanding leadership on Exercise NORTHERN STRIKE.

Looking ahead, the Battalion will continue to build on the successes of this year, focusing on further developing our soldiers' skills and readiness for future challenges. With a strong foundation of professionalism and a commitment to excellence, the Steelbacks are well-prepared to meet the demands of the year to come while upholding the proud traditions and values of the Regiment.



# From the RSM

The relationship between Regular and Reserve forces has often been a topic of discussion. Stereotypes, misconceptions, and differing operational tempos have sometimes created a divide between the two.

However, as the Army continues to evolve, so too does the dynamic between Regular and Reserve units. Becoming RSM of the 3rd Battalion was my first real long-term interaction with Reserves. Having now been RSM for over a year I am thoroughly impressed with the professionalism, dedication, and capability I have seen.

Our Reserve soldiers are drawn from a variety of civilian professions and bring with them a unique blend of skills and experiences. Among our ranks are teachers, engineers, paramedics, IT specialists, the list goes on; this diversity is one of our greatest strengths. Having now had the opportunity to observe the Reserves in action from low level section attacks to working as a formed Company in a Battle Group context on Ex Rhino Heart; Steelbacks often demonstrate a level of competence and professionalism that match their Regular counterparts.

The past year has been marked by significant milestones, with the highlight being the Battalion's Annual Deployment Exercise (ADX) in Sennelager, Germany. Despite numerous other commitments, an impressive Company group of Steelbacks participated, cover a range of role from instructing to real life support as well as exercising troops.

Operationally, the Battalion has been actively engaged in a variety of deployments. Steelbacks have supported BATUK Force Protection in Kenya, contributed to Op INTERFLEX, and worked alongside 5 RRF on Op TOSCA to name but a few; many others remain ready to serve overseas and frequently volunteer. What has been on



display during these operations have been exemplary, further cementing the Battalion's reputation within the Regiment, the Brigade and the wider Army.

The Battalion has also experienced a successful year in recruitment, with strong numbers joining its ranks. This calendar year has seen 3 R ANGLIAN with the most applications to join of any Reserve Unit in the Army! Equally encouraging has been the positive outflow, with several Steelbacks transferring to the Regular Army. The Battalion has welcomed experienced soldiers from the Vikings, Poachers,

and other units through the Regular to Reserve transfer. These seasoned soldiers have brought invaluable skills and experience, further enhancing the Battalion's capabilities and strengthening the bonds within the Royal Anglian family.

There has been significant changes in leadership in the past twelve months, with a notable turnover of SPSIs and PSIs. I would like to extend heartfelt gratitude to the outgoing SNCOs for their unwavering commitment and professionalism, which have been instrumental to the Battalion's success.

Special thanks should also be given to the Regular Battalions, both the Vikings and Poachers for consistently providing exceptional SNCOs to fulfil these vital roles.

The focus for the coming year will be on honing Platoon and Company-level tactics in preparation for the next ADX; although what that looks like we don't yet know. This will be a crucial step in strengthening the Battalion's operational readiness and supporting our continued development.

Finally, I would like to offer a special congratulations to LCpl Kingston who was awarded a GOC commendation and promoted to Lance Corporal while in Germany, and to 3 Company for their outstanding performance in winning the RSM Competition Weekend back in January.

As the British Army continues to adapt to the demands of modern warfare, the integration of Regular and Reserve forces will play an increasingly important role and will undoubtedly continue to evolve. From what I have seen the Steelbacks have proved that the Reserves are more than capable of rising to challenges and are well-positioned to build on this year's achievements and reach even greater heights.



# 3rd Battalion

## 1 (Norfolk&Suffolk) Company

Overview

CaptCalebSmith, OC

A bitterly cold start to the New Year, at a foggy and frosty Kendrew participating in the RSMs patrol competition, also gave members of the both the Company and the wider Battalion the impromptu opportunity to catch up a former Viking from Suffolk.

As promised on the day a massive 'hello' to Simon Panter who was exercising both his shooting and sporting dog prowess on the local garrison shoot. Patrolling skills, first aid, trench clearing and pistol live firing

~~Note: This page is heavily invested within its recruiting and training staff to maximise on any recruiting events and coordinate effort to maximise effect. Sgt Warwick set up two open evenings which were supported by an RHQ funded social media campaign across all platforms well in advance as a new concept, that were delivered alongside the usual Norfolk and Suffolk Shows; currently the results seem promising. Exercise Future Leader was also successfully trialled for delivery from Norwich ARC. Aiming at exposing~~



Woodbridge Trg Serial.



RSM weekend.



## The Steelbacks

civilian personnel to the benefits that military service can bring directly and indirectly, coupled with employers' insight forums, we have been kept busy by the regional Reserve Forces & Cadet Association.

Critical academic training was successfully delivered by CSgt Bishop who has been working to ensure all JNCOs and above achieve their Safety Risk Management qualification, he has even managed to support Operation Interflex by assisting the Training Delivery Unit meet their Unit requirement. Elsewhere members of the Company were supporting the Army's wider efforts with Pte Stevenson completing another Op Tosca tour with the Fusiliers. Cpl Carr and Pte Cook have been supporting ATR Grantham providing PTI cover to Phase 1 training.

Congratulations must go to LCpl McNamara for a very good pass on SCBC, Pte Mann for coming top of his section on his Combat Infantry Course (CIC), Pte Cumming for receiving the Soldiers soldier award on his Recruit training battle camp and Pte Newton for being nominated as No1 Company's best soldier this year. Our thanks to 4th Royal Norfolks for once again providing such a generous prize. Our loss is someone else's gain as we say, goodbye to LCpl Booth who will be joining the Poachers, Pte Livock who will be joining 4 PARA and Pte Hutton who will be joining 8 Rifles.

All other training efforts focussed on preparation for the later Annual Deployment Exercise (ADX). OC training weekends at Woodbridge and Sculthorpe provided opportunities for soldiers to practise low level skills and get used to working with their latest issue of VIRTUS webbing. Following the mantra, shoot, move, communicate and medicate the serials were based at fireteam level building up to Platoon level. Focussing on Offensive and Defensive operations as per the Warning Order issued. Special mention must go to the background efforts by Cristina Baumber, our Coy administration civil servant, whose dedication to ensure that all the G1 was scheduled, planned and recorded in good time enabled a smooth



CSM WO2 Duncan Nash on Ex Rhino Heart 25.





# 3rd Battalion

transition through the pre deployment weekend.

October saw members of No1 Company participate in the ADX a Brigade level mobilisation to Sennelager in Germany. This 19 Bde exercise was the biggest deployment of the Reserves for a considerable time. It was the first time that many of our members had seen such a concentration of soldiers in one place. It certainly was good to work with the supporting arms of the Bde and the array of equipment they brought with them. Battle Lessons, then Exercises ensured a progressive build up; crawl, walk and run. The final TES force on force exercise saw our soldiers working as part of a Scottish Northern Irish Yeomanry (SNIY) led Battle Group (BG) alongside 6 Rifles pitted against a

peer level force made by the remainder of the Brigade. As usual a hectic post exercise administration period enabled a cultural day to the fine city of Paderborn, with some members managing to squeeze in a trip to Wewelsburg Castle, before the obligatory 'currywurst mit pommes'.

October/November has already proven to be busy, post Ex admin, mandatory equipment inspections and one of annual social events. With fireworks and Halloween being so close, 2Lt Charlie Rumball, doubled up the celebrations and a spectacular evening was laid on and was very well attended. Remembrance Day parade this year will be held at Lowestoft with a Battery from 7 RHA who also have a historical link to the maritime town. Soldiers

will be busy, completing a sweep up of any training deficiencies, and the usual drill and service dress final pressing and polishing, with a curry lunch at the ARC post parade. Looking forward to December to the Company led Exercise Steelback Spirit which includes a festive dinner prepared by our newly qualified and promoted Army chef, LCpl Bull under the careful guidance and mentorship from our Permanent Staff Administration Officer (PSAO) Captain Tim Jones.

This is topped off with the obligatory carol service with brass band, followed by the social function. Post festivities will be the RSM's competition in the New Year and of course supporting the Royal Anglian Big Breakfast in February 2026.

## The Enduring Relevance of Low-Level Soldiering at No 1 Company

Modern warfare is often portrayed as the domain of satellites, FPV drones, cyber capabilities and precision-guided munitions. The image of high-tech battles fought with cutting-edge systems dominates media coverage and casual workplace chat.

Yet beneath this layer of sophistication lies something less glamorous but utterly indispensable. Still relevant is the low-level soldiering skill of the infantry. These skills, often introduced at the very beginning of a soldier's journey provide the foundation upon which all advanced warfighting is built. Without them, the most complex technologies and tactics would collapse under the weight of practical realities on the ground. At No.1 Company the fundamentals are still giving their new soldiers a solid foundation to build upon.

No 1 Company Recruits have had a head start that has allowed them to hit the ground running on Op Shepherd. Their admin in the Field lessons have given them useful skills that they have since used for real. At first glance tasks such as managing kit, maintaining personal hygiene or keeping equipment



1 Company IBRU training.

serviceable may appear to be a mundane use of training time. Especially when retention initiatives call for the more glamorous types of training such as hands-on time with weapons systems, fire and manoeuvre or CQB. However, in the field these skills are vital. Poor field admin undermines morale, reduces effectiveness and can make soldiers vulnerable to preventable illnesses or equipment failure. A unit

relying on advanced imagine systems and encrypted radios still needs fit, alert personnel capable of sustaining themselves in the harshest of conditions. Admin is the bedrock of endurance.

Equally critical are patrol formations and contact drills. In an era where battles seem to be dominated by unmanned aerial vehicles, the small infantry section still needs to know how to move safely through terrain, maintain situational



# The Steelbacks

awareness and react instantly to effective enemy fire. Patrol formations provide both protection and flexibility. Contact drills build the muscle memory that allows soldiers to react without hesitation. It's an attraction piece when we get the weapons out at No.1 Company and we do it often. Not only do our new soldiers get hands on with the kit, they also get regular training to build this vital muscle memory. Technology may enhance awareness, but it cannot replace the discipline and cohesion formed through repeated practice of these fundamentals.

Introduction to signals further reinforces this. We've always had it reinforced that the Army's communication systems are only as effective as the soldiers who use them and that without communications, we don't leave the line of departure. At the lowest level, learning how to maintain communications equipment, send and receive clearly concise messages ensures information flows smoothly, whether on a training exercise in the UK or on operations.

This is another fundamental skill that links the individual rifleman to the Company, the Battalion and ultimately the wider Battlegroup. Not only that, No 1 Company structures communication training to match Individual Training Requirements. Constructing the radio, establishing communications and sending reports and returns is a series of tasks that our trained soldiers must achieve on an annual basis. No.1 Company RRMT instructors are getting ahead of the curve and building relevant experience in their recruits from the very start.

The rank structure also illustrates the interplay between basics and complexity. For those new to the Reserves, many of whom have no military or cadet background, the hierarchy may seem alien and archaic. Yet understanding the chain of command is vital. It ensures orders are passed clearly, discipline is maintained, and responsibilities are understood. No amount of advanced technology can replace the human need for organised leadership in high-pressure environments. Whilst new recruits may



**Sgt Lee Harvey delivering face to face orders.**

experience competency hierarchies in their civilian jobs, it's rare to encounter such defined and rigid structures outside of the military. This basic training teaches them to play the game while they're wearing the uniform.

Similarly, map reading remains essential despite the proliferation of GPS. Digital systems can fail, batteries can die and satellites can be destroyed. A soldier confident in reading contours, grid references, working out bearings and back-bearings retains the ability to navigate and operate independently.

This vital skill gives resilience to an increasingly tech-reliant force. On top of the military need, it also gives new recruits skills they can develop in adventurous training and for their own leisure pursuits. No.1 Company's map reading lessons aim to form the basis building blocks of navigation awareness that soldiers will continue build upon throughout their careers.

For many Reservists, joining the British Army represents a leap into the unknown. A proportion of new faces arrive with no prior exposure to military life. The concepts of patrol drills, map reading or even identifying a rank slide can be daunting. For many of them, the Army Reserve will lead them beyond anything they have experienced before.

This journey must begin in a structured, gradual way, with the fundamentals taught and reinforced until they become instinct.

This principle has been clearly demonstrated by the Battalion RRMT whose recent work on Op Shepherd, highlighted the continuing value of low-level soldiering skills. Over the course of the exercise, soldiers practised cooking in the field, basha construction, camouflage/concealment and the practical lessons on why things are seen. They moved on to judging distance, target indication, 100m pacing and range cards which feed directly into competent land navigation and situational awareness. While none of these lessons are new, their application remains timeless.

For No.1 Company instructors, these skills have to be cemented before they can hand the recruits over to the wider Platoons. Before a soldier can lead a section attack, they must understand how to move, observe and communicate. Before they can navigate cross-country at night, they must have an understanding of their pace count and how to orientate a map. The advanced skills only work when the basic ones are embedded.

Ultimately, while the modern





# 3rd Battalion

battlefield may be initially shaped by air power, advanced technology and precision systems, it will always be followed by boots on the ground. Whether under drones or satellites, it is still the fundamentals like admin in the field, camouflage discipline, navigation, fire and manoeuvre that infantry soldiers

rely upon. When soldiers depart for exercises like Op Shepherd, Battle Camp and even CIC, they go with the fundamentals that will be used throughout.

These concepts form the backbone of training throughout the year at No.1 Company, especially in relation to

Recruit training. For trained soldiers the basics mentioned here were tested on the RSM's competition in January and latterly on Exercise RHINO HEART in Germany. Each exercise gives No.1 Company the opportunity to learn and adapt its training in prep for future activities planned on the FoE.

## † Royal Anglian: Battalion Shooting Team

The Steelbacks re-formed their Shooting Team in November 2024 building on the success of the 2024 competition season. This yielded a third consecutive win at 1 (UK) Division Operational Shooting Competition (DIVOSC) and second place at the Army Reserve OSC (AROSC).

The team held five practice weekends to refine their rifle marksmanship whilst also progressing onto 9mm service pistol assessments. The original team of 25 members drawn from across the Battalion gradually reduced due to the progressive nature of training driven by each OSC's stringent qualification rules.

On Friday 9 May the team competed in the 1 (UK) DIVOSC at Altcar ranges near Liverpool. This was their first test in a competitive environment.

The event focused on operational marksmanship but also tested other key skills, including battle fitness, command, control, and qualification for the Defence OSC. DIVOSC consisted of a variety of assessments, some with a scored physical element conducted prior to firing.

Steelback achievements at DIVOSC were:

The winning team for a successive fourth year placing first of ten teams.

Pte Middleton individually placed first overall with LCpl Clements second.

Four of the team individually placed in the top ten. Pte Middleton (first), LCpl Clement (second), WO2 Nash (sixth) and Pte Cheesman (seventh).

The team placed first in the attack and re-org assessment, urban contact assessment and advanced fleeting encounter assessment.

The team placed runners up to six



Pte Georgia Middleton and her trophies at AROSC.



## The Steelbacks



The DIVOSC Team.



The AROSC Team.





# 3rd Battalion



## The Advanced Fleeting Encounter Assessment.

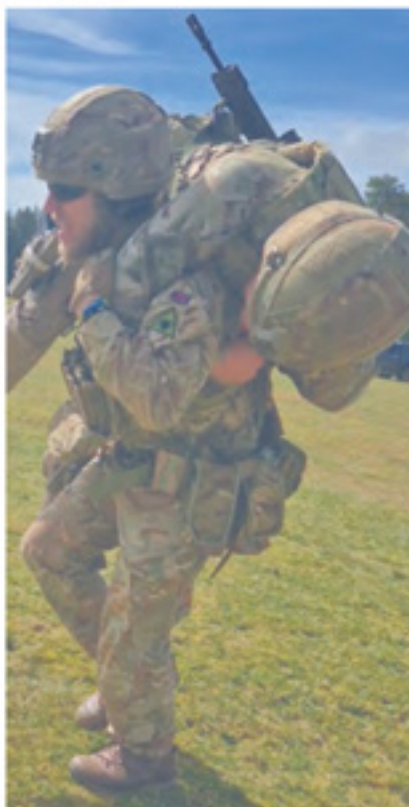
Rifles in the falling plate

DIVOSC firing Team members: Capt Chambers (1 Company), 2Lt Beckett (2 Company), WO2 Nash (1 Company), LCpl Clement (3 Company), LCpl Goodge (1 Company), LCpl Hyder (3 Company), LCpl Reeder (1 Company), Pte Cheeseman (3 Company) and Pte Middleton (3 Company).

practical moving assessment final moor, June quickly arrived with the team competing at the AROSC at Pirbright.

AROSC showcased the highest level of competitive marksmanship faced all season. 17 teams competed in a series of assessments designed to test precision and physical robustness, during the summer heatwave, firing the rifle and service pistol. The event featured individual and team events fostering leadership and a spirit of friendly rivalry across all teams. Highlights included rifle to pistol transition assessments, the long-range moving assessment and the defended house, impossible to practice ahead of the AROSC.

The event culminated in an award ceremony where the top shot received



The casevac element of the Section Attack Assessment.

the King's Medal.

Steelback results at AROSC were: Team placement; fourth of 17 teams overall with the winners being 7 Rifles.

Pte Middleton placed third overall from 129 firers.

Pte Middleton was the individual winner of the defence assessment. Pte Middleton was the overall rifle winner. Pte Middleton was the overall best female.

Six members of the team earned the AR50 award; Pte Middleton (3 Company), Pte Reeder (1 Company), LCpl Clement (3 Company) LCpl Hyder (3 Company), WO2 Nash (1 Company) & Pte Cheesman (3 Company).

AROSC Team members: WO2 Nash (1 Company), LCpl Clement (3 Company), LCpl Goodge (1 Company), LCpl Hyder (3 Company), LCpl Reeder (1 Company), Pte Cheeseman (3 Company), Pte Middleton (3 Company) and Pte Tomsett-Hurrell (1 Company).

Pte Middleton placing third is our highest result of recent years and another excellent result after winning DIVOSC.

Prep now begins for the 2026 competition season!



## Exercise COMBAT CADET 2025: Inspiring the Next Generation of Cadets



Every year, Exercise COMBAT CADET brings together some of the most promising young cadets from the Army Cadet Force (ACF) and the Combined Cadet Force (CCF) from around the region to test their skills, teamwork, and resilience.

Designed for senior cadets aged 15 and above, the event challenges participants to operate at section strength, simulating real-world military scenarios. In 2025, the event once again took place at the Beccingham Training Area, running over the weekend of 4–6 April. Sixteen teams from across the East Anglian region competed, showcasing their abilities and determination. This year, the Cadet Training Team

(Central) enlisted the support of soldiers from No.1 Company, 3 Royal Anglian, who brought their expertise to three key stands: the 81mm Mortar stand, Close Quarter Battle (CQB) stand, and a weapons, kit and equipment stand. The collaboration was facilitated by Capt Granfield, affectionately known as “Granny” across the Regiment, and Sgt Stone, both of whom have strong ties to No.1 Company. This marked the third consecutive year that No.1 Company has supported the event, further cementing their commitment to mentoring the next generation of military talent.

The weekend began with a preliminary move on Friday evening to Prince William of Gloucester Barracks

in Grantham. After a brief overnight stop and an early reveille, the team headed to Beccingham Training Area on Saturday morning. Upon arrival, the soldiers from No.1 Company split into their respective groups and set up their designated stands, ready to welcome the first wave of cadet teams.

The event kicked off with cadets tackling a single-storey building defence scenario, led by Sergeant Stone from the Cadet Training Team. This initial challenge tested their ability to react to effective enemy fire, judge distances, indicate targets, issue fire control orders, and apply the correct rates of fire. The exercise culminated in a simulated battlefield scenario, where each fire





## 3rd Battalion

team was tasked with supporting friendly forces as battlefield casualty replacements on the Mortar Line.

The 81mm Mortar stand, led by Capt Chambers and supported by No.1 Company soldiers, provided the cadets with a rare opportunity to get up close and personal with this powerful weapon system. Cadets were introduced to the roles of the number 1, 2, and 3 on the mortar detachment and were then tasked with completing basic fire missions. Rotating through each role, they gained hands-on experience in operating the mortar, a weapon system they rarely encounter in their usual training.

For many cadets, this was their first exposure to the 81mm Mortar, and their excitement was palpable. The chance to operate it was a definite highlight of the weekend, offering a unique insight into the capabilities of modern military hardware.

The CQB stand, led by 2Lt Hart and supported by Steelbacks LCpl Booth and Pte Newton, focused on the fundamentals of Close Quarter Battle and Training in Built-Up Areas. The soldiers demonstrated the latest techniques, tailored to the cadet audience, before guiding the teams through practice drills. The cadets were then given a mission; to assault and clear a two-storey building. After rehearsing with their section commanders, they launched their attack against a free-thinking enemy, played by the staff. The exercise tested their ability to work as a team, think on their feet, and apply their newly learned skills in a high-pressure environment.

The debriefs revealed just how much the cadets had enjoyed the experience. For many, it was their first time participating in such training, and their enthusiasm for learning and improving was evident.

The final stand, led by LCpl Sutton and supported by Ptes Bloomfield, Bull, and Russell, showcased a range of weapons and equipment. The display included the A3 Rifle, Service Pistol, Sharpshooter, GMPG, NLAW, HMNVS, Viper, and FFR Land Rover and Trailer. The NLAW (Next Generation Light Anti-Tank Weapon) was a particular highlight, as most cadets had never



seen this advanced system before. The soldiers provided detailed explanations and demonstrations, sparking curiosity and engagement among the cadets. The hands-on experience allowed the young participants to gain a deeper understanding of the tools and technology used by modern soldiers. The weekend was a resounding success, with Norfolk ACF emerging as the overall winners across all events. However, the true victory lay in the skills, confidence, and camaraderie that the cadets developed over the course of the exercise.

For one No.1 Company soldier, the event held a special significance. As a former Essex ACF cadet, he reflected on his own experiences as a teenager and the impact they had on his life. "I know all too well how much I enjoyed those teenage years," he shared. "It's incredibly rewarding to give something back to the next generation of cadets and help them develop their skills for the future."

an opportunity to reconnect with familiar faces, as several cadet instructors were former members of the Army Reserve or Regular Army. Their presence underscored the enduring bonds formed through military service and the shared commitment to mentoring young people.

more than just a competition; it was a celebration of teamwork, resilience, and the spirit of learning. The cadets' enthusiasm and willingness to embrace new challenges were evident throughout the weekend, as was the dedication of the soldiers and instructors who supported them.

Exercise COMBAT CADET 25 gave the cadets a glimpse into the world of military operations, providing them with valuable skills and memories that will last a lifetime. For the soldiers of No.1 Company, it was a chance to inspire and shape the next generation, passing on their knowledge and expertise to those who may one day follow in their footsteps.

As the weekend drew to a close, it was clear that Exercise COMBAT CADET 25 had achieved its goal: to challenge, inspire, and prepare young cadets for the future. Whether they go on to pursue careers in the military or apply their skills in other fields, these cadets have already demonstrated the qualities of leadership, teamwork, and determination that will serve them well in any endeavour.

In the words of one participant, "It's not just about winning; it's about learning, growing, and being part of something bigger than yourself." And that, ultimately, is what Exercise COMBAT CADET is all about.

Exercise COMBAT CADET 25 was



## 2 (Leicestershire & Northamptonshire) Company Overview

Capt Alex Jackson



### Ex Rhino Heart 25.

The past 12 months has been both busy and rewarding for the Company, bringing with it a fair share of change and challenge. It has also provided a wealth of opportunities to develop, grow, and strengthen the team. Throughout, our soldiers have shown commitment, adaptability, and professionalism in everything they do.

Much of the year's activity has centred on the handover of the Permanent Staff. Colour Sergeant Ward has left the Regular Army to pursue a new career in civilian life, and his replacement, Colour Sergeant Bell, will join us in late November.

We extend our sincere thanks to CSgt Ward for his hard work and the fresh approach he brought to Company training. His contribution has been significant and lasting. We look forward to welcoming CSgt Bell, who currently serves as a Company Quartermaster Sergeant at AFC Harrogate, and to the experience he will bring to the role.

In the interim, Sergeant Magwaza,

our Permanent Staff Instructor, has led from the front, taking on the responsibility of organising the majority of the Company's training activities. Under his guidance, we have delivered a series of high-quality exercises that have strengthened both basic and advanced infantry skills. These have been well received across the ranks and have provided our soldiers with renewed focus, valuable qualifications, and enhanced knowledge.

We have also seen a number of personnel movements this year. We said farewell and good luck to two of our Platoon Commanders, Second Lieutenants John Marshall and Ollie Beckett, who are both training at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, in their first and third terms respectively. In addition, Second Lieutenants Natasha Sampson and Max Titmuss have both moved away from Leicestershire but continue their service in other Army Reserve units.

After five years of dedicated service,

we also bid farewell to Corporal Lisa Young of the Adjutant General's Corps, who leaves her post as the

Company Clerk to take up a Full-Time Reserve Service position at 7 Brigade Headquarters. Her professionalism and attention to detail will be greatly missed. Our Captain Phil Staveley, Administration Officer, will retire in December after eight years in post and an impressive forty-four years of combined Regular and Reserve service. His leadership and depth of experience have been instrumental in maintaining the high standards of administration and support across the Company. We wish him a long and well-earned retirement.

Finally, we say goodbye to Major Andy Speechley, who has taken up an appointment with Oxford University Officer Training Corps as Training Major within the Senior Division. His guidance and dedication have left a strong legacy. We are delighted to welcome Captain Alex Jackson as the new Company



## 3rd Battalion



**Cpl Liam Reilly operating UAS.**

Commander of 2 Company, and we look forward to his leadership in the years ahead.

Recruiting and engagement have remained strong, supported by Sergeant Pete Sweeney the Company Recruiting, Engagement and Media Support Officer and the small but highly effective Recruiting and Mentoring Training Team. The team has represented the Company at a range of high-profile events including the Formula One Grand Prix at Silverstone and the MotoGP.

They have also maintained a strong local presence, visiting universities, colleges, and careers fairs throughout the region. This personal, face-to-face approach continues to prove effective, and we look forward to several key engagement and Remembrance events in November, including at Barclays Bank Headquarters in Northampton, Leicester City Football Club, and the annual Leicester Remembrance Parade in the city centre.

Feedback on our recruits continues to be excellent. The modern infantry training pathway now includes a Foundation Course and a Battle Camp before recruits travel to Catterick to complete the Combat Infantryman's Course, the culmination of their initial training. We were particularly proud that a 2 Company recruit recently achieved a Distinguished Pass - an outstanding accomplishment that reflects both individual dedication and the quality of our training support.

Training exercises have followed a steady rhythm throughout the year, progressing from individual skills to pairs, fire teams, and eventually section-level operations. Working alongside our sister unit, 4 Company, we have trained across a variety of environments from the patrol ranges of Catterick to urban warfare facilities on Salisbury Plain. Trench warfare has once again been a major focus, allowing soldiers to practise tactics and endurance in this demanding

but popular field. The trench system at Kendrew Barracks, Cottesmore, continues to provide an excellent facility for this type of training.

We have also seen the introduction of new specialist skills. Several soldiers have successfully completed the Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Operators Course, an increasingly important qualification that has already proved valuable during field exercises.

The Overseas Training Exercise (OTX) for 2025 took place in Sennelager, Germany, as part of a multi-national force-on-force exercise run by 19 Brigade. Seventeen reservists from the Company took part, many of whom were on their first overseas brigade deployment. It was a demanding but highly rewarding experience, offering valuable exposure to large-scale operations alongside our Regular counterparts.

In addition, Lance Corporal Singh represented the Company on another



# The Steelbacks

overseas exercise, this time in Gibraltar with the East Midlands University Officer Training Corps. As a Class One Chef, he played a key role within the catering and G4 support team, helping sustain the exercise over a two-week period.

Professional development has remained a strong focus for our Non-Commissioned Officers. Sergeant Hunt, recently transferred from the Royal Signals, attended the Platoon Sergeants' Battle Course at the Infantry Battle School, Brecon, achieving an excellent result and placing third overall. Sergeant Gray successfully completed the Army Development and Leadership Programme for Motor Transport, earning his substantive rank of Sergeant. Several Junior NCOs have also qualified as Section Commanders and Range Conducting Officers. These achievements ensure that our leadership cadre remains capable, confident, and ready to deliver the next phase of training and development.

The Company has also continued to make the most of sporting and adventurous training opportunities across the Army. Private Totty has



**Maj Andrew Speechley presenting the top soldier award for Ex Northern Strike to LCpl Amy Kingston.**

represented not only the Army but also the UK Armed Forces in football, recently competing in a tournament in the Netherlands. Private Nelson has been selected to represent both the Infantry and the Royal Logistic Corps in rugby, a tremendous accomplishment that reflects well on the Company.

Elsewhere, soldiers have taken part in adventure training in Scotland,

Wales, and Spain. Earlier in the year, a number of members travelled to Val Thorens in France to complete Ski Foundation Levels One to Three. The opportunity, made possible through our strong relationship with 2nd Battalion at Kendrew Barracks, provided invaluable experience in challenging conditions. We are pleased to confirm that several personnel will again participate in this event later in the year.

As the Company refocuses following the overseas exercise, we look ahead to our next training weekend, which coincides with the Remembrance period. Alongside 4 Company, we will conduct the Annual Combat Marksmanship Test at Beckingham Ranges in Lincolnshire. This will be followed by the annual Remembrance event at Victoria Park in Leicester, where we expect another strong turnout from both serving and former members of the Regiment.

In summary, 2025 has been a year of considerable transition, development, and success. Despite the changes in personnel, the Company has maintained its momentum, delivered high-quality training, and continued to demonstrate the professionalism and adaptability for which the Army Reserve is known. The achievements of our soldiers, both individually and collectively, are a source of great pride. We look forward to building on these foundations as we move into another year of opportunity, challenge, and service.



**Capt Alex Jackson promoting LCpl Manjit Singh.**





# 3rd Battalion

PJNCO Cadre, Otterburn,  
September 2020

No one ever truly feels ready for a course like this. You tell yourself you are, you pack and repack your kit until it all feels second nature, and then you make the long drive north. Yet the moment you arrive, it hits you - there's no easing into it. You are simply in it!

The first day was, as expected, filled with the familiar rhythm of military administration: sign-ins, briefings from the Commanding Officer and the Regimental Sergeant Major, section allocations, and kit issue. But there was no gentle start. We went straight into the Army Leadership Development Programme (ALDP), a four-day package designed to test both mind and character. The ALDP covered a broad range of subjects, from leadership principles and emotional intelligence to command tasks, mental health awareness, and risk assessments. We even delved into that most essential of processes, the AGAI system, which every future Non-Commissioned Officer must understand. The first evening concluded with a military knowledge test, taken before the Role Fitness Test the following morning. It was at this early stage that we lost our first course member. The standard had been set.

The course tempo was relentless from that point forward. Over the next twelve days, we were divided between two demanding exercise phases that would stretch us all physically, mentally, and emotionally. The cadre was run by the SCOTS, whose reputation for high standards preceded them. They did not disappoint. From the outset, expectations were uncompromising, and their instruction style was direct and disciplined.

For some, it felt reminiscent of Phase One training - the meticulous inspections, tight timings, and those rules that appear designed to catch people out. Yet with time, you come to see the purpose behind it all. The instructors were not testing for perfection; they were testing for consistency under pressure. They



**Brig Lisa Brooks promoting LCpl Amy Kingston.**

were establishing the tone expected of a future leader. If you cannot maintain standards and composure in a controlled environment, you will not manage it in the field, and certainly not when the situation becomes real.

Within the first few days, attrition began to take its toll. By the time we reached the field phase, a third of the original course had already gone. The remainder stepped off into Otterburn knowing that the real test was only beginning. Otterburn, true to form, greeted us with its usual charm. The rain was relentless, driving sideways and turning the training area into one

vast expanse of mud. Every step was an effort. You would plant your foot, hear that unmistakable squelch, and realise the soldier beside you had sunk halfway to his knees. At five foot five, every puddle felt like a river crossing, and by the end of the first day it was hard to tell where the bog ended and we began.

Conditions were constant and unforgiving. There was no respite, and that was precisely the point. One day in particular remains etched in my memory.

We were tasked with clearing eight enemy positions, each one somehow uphill, each one heavier than the last. The rain came in hard, the wind howled,



# The Steelbacks

and fatigue set in, but there was no hiding. Every candidate rotated through command appointments, each of us expected to plan, lead, and execute under pressure. You could not fade into the background. You learned to lead while utterly exhausted, soaked to the skin, and running on sheer determination. It was in those moments that I gained a real appreciation for field fitness. It is one thing to be fit in a gym or on a parade square; it is another entirely to function in full kit, in deep mud, against the elements. Otterburn does not reward appearance or enthusiasm. It rewards resilience, endurance, and quiet competence.

The nights were no easier. We conducted reconnaissance patrols, ambushes, and endless sets of patrol reports. Sleep became a luxury. My Garmin watch proudly recorded a personal best of fifteen minutes' sleep one night, an achievement I never thought I would celebrate. It is remarkable what starts to feel like a victory when you are cold, wet, and operating on fumes. Otterburn takes no prisoners. It tests your resolve in every conceivable way. You either hold the standard or you do not. The SCOTS made sure of that. They were firm but fair, demanding but purposeful. Every correction, every inspection, and every long night served a reason. They were not simply training us; they were shaping the habits and mindset required of a Junior NCO.

By the end of the second week, our numbers had thinned dramatically. Of the twenty-three who had started, only eight of us remained standing. Yet despite the exhaustion, the weight of the bergen, and the endless rain, there was a strong sense of pride among those who finished. The shared hardship had created a camaraderie that is difficult to put into words. We joked about "trauma bonding," but there is truth in it. You learn a lot about people when they are at their limit, and you learn even more about yourself.

Looking back, I can say without hesitation that this cadre was one of the most challenging and rewarding experiences of my military career so far. It reminded me that leadership is not



**LCpl Amy Kingston on Ex RHINOHEART 25.**

about noise or bravado. It is about control, timekeeping, and consistency. It is about setting an example when everything else is falling apart. Leadership is not simply issuing orders; it is creating calm in the chaos and ensuring that your team performs, even when you are long gone on the course when morale was tested to its limits. Equipment was constantly wet, boots were rarely dry, and the pace was unrelenting. Yet the sense of achievement that came from completing each phase outweighed any discomfort. The course demanded absolute focus, attention to detail, and the ability to think clearly under stress. It also required humility, the willingness to learn, to adapt, and to accept that sometimes you get things wrong. When we finally reached the end,

there was no dramatic celebration. Just quiet satisfaction. We were soaked, cold, and running on empty, but we had done it. We had met the standard, not through luck or chance, but through persistence. And in that, there was immediate pride. Otterburn is not a place that offers comfort, and the cadre is not designed to be pleasant. But it teaches lessons that stay with you. It strips away pretence and leaves you with the essentials: teamwork, self-discipline, and endurance. The SCOTS made it hard, but they made it meaningful.

As I reflect on those two weeks, I realise how much I gained - not just in skills, but in perspective. I learned that leadership can be quiet. It is often found in the small acts: being on time, maintaining kit discipline, and keeping morale steady when others falter. True





# 3rd Battalion

leadership is not about shouting the loudest but about holding the line when the conditions test every fibre of your resolve.

When we finally left Otterburn, I was proud. Proud to have endured, proud to have learned, and proud to have shared the experience with a group of soldiers

## Kettering Parade

Capt Philip Weatherall

On Sunday, 8 June 2025, the streets of Kettering came alive with the sound of marching bands, the sight of proud soldiers, and the cheers of a supportive community.

The town hosted a special Armed Forces Day Parade, which also marked the Royal Anglian Regiment exercising its Freedom of Kettering. The event was a powerful display of unity, tradition, and gratitude, bringing together military personnel, cadets, and civilians in a shared celebration of service and sacrifice.

The parade was a fantastic spectacle, featuring a Colour Party provided by the 3rd Battalion, joined by a Corps of Drums from the 1st and 2nd Battalions, as well as marching bands from cadets and other organisations. Adding to the impressive display were 1,000 cadets, representing all three branches of the armed forces, who marched proudly through the streets of Kettering.

The event began at noon, with the parade following a route that wound through the heart of Kettering. Starting on London Road, the procession moved through Horse market, Silver Street, Gold Street, and the High Street before assembling in the Market Place. Along the way, well-wishers lined the streets, waving flags and cheering as the soldiers and cadets marched past.

The parade culminated in the Market Place, where a drumhead service was held. The Reverend Jeremy Safford led the gathering in prayers and an Act of Remembrance, creating a poignant moment of reflection for all in attendance. The service was held in front of a host of VIP guests, including the Mayor of Kettering, Councillor Ben Jameson, and Vice Admiral Andy Kyte, who also took the time to inspect the parade.

Councillor Jameson expressed his gratitude and pride in his address to the assembled crowd. "It was my great

honour and privilege to welcome the Royal Anglian Regiment once again to Kettering," he said. "To everyone on parade, on behalf of the people of Kettering, thank you. Your presence, professionalism, and service are a great credit to you and a great honour to this town."

As the parade continued, a saluting base was set up outside the Toller Church on Gold Street, where county dignitaries gathered to take the salute from the regiment and the marching cadets. The event was not only a celebration of the Royal Anglian Regiment but also a showcase of Kettering's strong ties to the military. Col Robert Blomfield, County Colonel for the Royal Anglian Regiment, spoke ahead of the event about the significance of the day for the people of Kettering and nearby villages to show off the town with pride and to turn out in support of our armed forces, past, present, and future," he said. "The Royal Anglian Regiment is absolutely delighted to have been invited to take part in this very special event and to be able to march through a town which, for many years, has been one of its strongest recruiting areas."

"Not only will you be seeing soldiers from both Regular and Reserve battalions, but also many cadets who are in units affiliated with the Regiment. I am delighted that they will be marching alongside other cadets who will be representing all three of our armed services. Many of these young people will likely go on to serve as Regulars or Reservists. It promises to be a most memorable occasion."

The parade was a powerful reminder of the enduring bond between the military and the communities they serve. In a time of global uncertainty, the sight of Kettering's streets filled with people showing their support for the armed

forces was a heartening display of unity and gratitude. who refused to give up. We may have left soaked, exhausted, and covered in mud, but we left as better soldiers and, I hope, better leaders.

forces was a heartening display of unity and gratitude.

For the soldiers and cadets on parade, the event was an opportunity to connect with the community and to feel the warmth of their appreciation. For the people of Kettering, it was a chance to honour the sacrifices made by those who serve and to celebrate the values of duty, courage, and service that the armed forces represent.

The Armed Forces Day Parade in Kettering was more than just a ceremonial event; it was a celebration of shared values and a reaffirmation of the strong bond between the military and the community. It was a day to honour the past, celebrate the present, and inspire the future.

As the parade came to a close and the soldiers and cadets marched proudly through the streets, it was clear that the event had left a lasting impression on all who attended. The cheers of the crowd, the solemnity of the drumhead service, and the sight of young cadets marching alongside soldiers all spoke to the enduring strength of the relationship between the armed forces and the people they serve.

In the words of Col Blomfield, the day was a "most memorable occasion." It was a day that brought together people of all ages and backgrounds, united in their respect and admiration for the men and women who dedicate their lives to serving their country.

For Kettering, the parade was a moment of pride and celebration. For 2 Coy, the Steelbacks and the wider Royal Anglian Regimental family, it was a reminder of the support and gratitude of the community they serve. In uncertain times, it is good to see we are still supported by the public. It was a privilege to take part in something that brings not just the Regiment together but also the community.



## 3 (Essex & Hertfordshire) Company Overview

CapJackWright

In another year of heightening world tensions and a stark Strategic Defence Review, the role of the reserves and wider societal alignment gained relevance.

This was clear to me upon assuming command of 3 (Essex and Hertfordshire) Company in September this year and is reflected in the Company's continued positive attendance and workforce numbers. Yet again, this year saw a broad spectrum of activity, which is continued to show the Company and Battalion ambition and diligence.

A flurry of activity christened 2025, with three training events for 3 Coy in

January. The RSM's section level patrols competition was hosted at the new home of the Royal Anglian Regiment at Kendrew Barracks in Cottesmore, setting the tone for the year and kickstarting the annual tactical training progression. Shortly following, was an opportunity to provide infantry subject matter expertise in attendance on a 3MI Bn exercise in Longmoor, which focused on low-level urban training skills.

Late winter and spring saw the Company facilitate a shooting concentration that saw annual marksmanship qualifications, general service pistol training shoots and field

navigation training. Elements of the Company ran, facilitated and attended a meticulously planned and brilliantly executed GPMG sustained fire concentration in Sennybridge Training Area. This course qualified soldiers and officers across 19Bde as competent crew operators on the machine gun. In the same period, Company staff facilitated a Command Cadre, readying the next prospective students from the Battalion for upcoming promotional courses.

May saw the next major Battalion training event. A key step in the progression of training and readiness for those deploying on the ADX to Germany



CSM Ransley leading the way on a loaded march.





# 3rd Battalion



**A section of 3 Company competing in a stretcher race during the RSM's competition.**

later in the year, Ex STEELBACK HEART saw the Battalion occupy Copehill Down on Salisbury Plain Training Area. The extensive urban training complex played host to a variety of training serials, focusing on the complexities of integrating attachments and assets into infantry manoeuvres. It was an ambitious and ground-breaking exercise, exposing many reservist soldiers to career firsts such as working closely with armour and other engaging assets.

The first month of summer saw 3 Company conduct more advanced shooting training. Travelling down to Hythe on the south coast on a sunny weekend, the troops progressed through static shoots, to the individual battle skills range which required troops to fire from different pieces of range furniture and cover. The shoots also included a demonstration of penetration capability of different friendly weapon systems, and a section defensive shoot – both of which were new shoots for most.

In July, a conceptual study weekend took place in PWG Barracks near Grantham. This drew together the Officers' Mess and WOSM in utilisation of a dismounted command and control training system that saw BHQ exercise in simulated training environments. Later in the month, the Battalion converged once more in Cottesmore to cover

readiness checks and pre-deployment activity ahead of the impending ADX.

Over the summer period the Company were treated to the delights of a watersports package in the warm Solent waters of Thorney Island, before picking back up their webbing and weapons in the balmy September weather to conduct section and platoon actions at Sculthorpe near Thetford. Amid rising



**Taking aim from different firing positions to qualify for the annual marksmanship standard.**

geopolitical tensions and Defence's shift towards a pre-war footing, reminiscent of the BAOR era, it was fitting, and perhaps not-so-coincidental, that training calendar's main event marked the largest deployment of British reservists to mainland Europe in a generation. Ex RHINO HEART 25 in Sennelager, Germany, saw a platoon size of the Company fill roles in a multi-BG ORBAT, conducting rural and urban operations often within force-on-force training serials. This challenging and valuable training allowed our soldiers and officers to experience operating in yet another country, and being exposed to scale and complexity not experienced before.

As the days draw darker, we switch once more to focusing on our annual Remembrance events, ensuring we correctly honour those who have gone before us. This year we have the privilege of leading the parade in Chelmsford, where we expect a hearty ~~Without~~ arrival we bid goodbye to Maj Harry Macleod, who has been a leader and part of the furniture within the Company for a number of years, beginning as Platoon Commander of the Machine Gun Platoon, then Second-in-Command, and serving a full tenure as Officer Commanding. We wish him all the best in his endeavours as he moves on to his new position.



## Exercise TERTIAS COLDSTART

In the cold grip of early January 2025, Steelbacks from 3 Company, deployed to Longmoor Training Area for Exercise TERTIUS COLDSTART. This collaborative training event brought together Royal Anglian soldiers with soldiers from 3 Military Intelligence Battalion (3 MI) for an intensive weekend focused on Operations in Built-Up Areas (OBUA) and the development of core soldiering skills.

The exercise was more than just a training opportunity; it was a partnership that highlighted the unique strengths of both units. For the Steelbacks, it was a chance to share their expertise in infantry tactics and battle craft. For 3 MI, it was an opportunity to step outside their usual

analytical roles and immerse themselves in the practical, boots-on-the-ground skills that underpin the missions they support.

3 MI delivers Military Intelligence (MI) Operators to 1 ISR Brigade, specialising in Operational Intelligence (OPINT). These highly capable analysts are tasked with deciphering and formulating intelligence to support operations, often in complex and evolving theatres of conflict. While their primary role is analytical, they must also be confident leaders and soldiers, capable of operating effectively in challenging environments.

The Battle Craft Syllabus (BCS) forms the foundation of soldiering skills

on the modern battlefield. For infantry soldiers, these skills are second nature, honed through rigorous training and operational experience. For the Int

Corps soldiers of 3 MI, the exercise provided a valuable opportunity to harness this expertise, broadening their understanding of the missions they support and the challenges faced by the Army's teeth arms.

The exercise began with lessons and refresher sessions delivered by Steelback instructors. These covered OBUA serials up to section level, battlefield casualty drills, and casualty evacuation (CASEVAC) procedures.

The training was designed to build confidence and competence, ensuring



3MI Sect commander delivering orders.





# 3rd Battalion

that all participants understood the basics of operating in an urban environment.

The practical application of these skills came in the form of attack lanes, each presenting increasing levels of complexity. Soldiers navigated obstacle crossings, transitioned through rural and urban interfaces, cleared abandoned armoured fighting vehicles, and conducted building clearances. The scenarios were designed to test not only individual skills but also the ability of commanders to lead under pressure.

With the basics established, the exercise moved into its final phase. The Longmoor Forward Operating Base (FOB) became the centre of operations, as patrols ventured out to engage with an unpredictable and sometimes hostile local population. The soldiers faced a range of challenges, from verbal confrontations to physical threats, testing their ability to maintain focus and deploy appropriate responses under pressure.

These encounters fed into an



**Maj Berry-Ottaway from 3MI rewarding LCpl Perry.**

evolving intelligence picture, which the soldiers of 3 MI were tasked with building. The exercise culminated in a dawn raid on a high-value target, identified as a destabilising influence and a threat to both the local population and friendly forces. This final mission brought together all the skills developed over the weekend, from intelligence analysis to tactical execution.

While much of the exercise was focused on developing the skills of 3 MI soldiers, the collaboration was far from one-sided. The Int Corps soldiers brought their own expertise to the table, delivering sessions on OPINT skills, analysis, and the combat estimate and orders process. These sessions proved invaluable for the Steelbacks, providing insights that will undoubtedly benefit them on future career courses and operational deployments.

R ANGLIAN and 3 MI is not new. This was the second time the two units have collaborated, building on the success of previous joint training exercises. The relationship has proven to be mutually beneficial, enhancing the capabilities of both units and fostering a spirit of mutual respect and understanding.

Exercise TERTIUS COLDSTART was designed to push participants outside their usual roles and comfort zones. For the Int Corps soldiers, this meant stepping into the world of infantry tactics, dealing with casualties, captured persons, and public order scenarios.

The Steelbacks played a crucial role in this process, providing instructors to deliver in-depth lessons on fieldcraft and section battle drills. They also embedded within 3 MI sections to offer guidance and mentorship throughout the exercise. One standout moment came when Steelback LCpl Pretty was awarded a patch by the Officer Commanding 3 MI for his exceptional display of infantry skills and his commitment to mentoring junior and less experienced soldiers. His efforts exemplified the spirit of collaboration and mutual support that defined the exercise.

The partnership between 3 R ANGLIAN and 3 MI is not just about training for today; it's about preparing



**Cpl Craig Fernando delivering lessons to 3MI troops.**

for the challenges of tomorrow. The skills and relationships developed during Exercise TERTIUS COLDSTART will be put to the test later this year during the battalion's overseas training exercise, Ex RHINO HEART.

For the Int Corps soldiers, the exercise provided a deeper understanding of the missions they support, enhancing their ability to provide actionable intelligence. For the Steelbacks, it was an opportunity to refine their own skills while gaining valuable insights from their Int Corps counterparts.

As the soldiers of 3 R ANGLIAN and 3 MI returned to their respective units, they did so with new skills, stronger bonds, and a shared sense of purpose. "This exercise wasn't just about learning; it was about understanding each other's roles and working together to achieve a common goal."



## 19X GPMG (SF) Cadre 3 R ANGLIAN Runs Brigade-Level GPMG (SF) Cadre at Sennybridge

From 14 to 28 February 2025, 3rd Battalion The Royal Anglian Regiment (3 R ANGLIAN) hosted a demanding General Purpose Machine Gun (Sustained Fire) cadre at the Sennybridge Training Area (SENTA).

The cadre welcomed soldiers from across 19 Brigade, bringing together a diverse group of infantrymen with the common goal of developing expertise in one of the most important battlefield support weapons. This two-week course

was deliberately designed to challenge both the physical endurance and mental resilience of the students, culminating in rigorous live firing assessments that tested their ability to deliver effective fire support under pressure.

The cadre began in camp, sheltered—at least initially—from the Welsh drizzle that so often defines training at SENTA. Here, soldiers were immersed in the theory and mechanics of the GPMG in the sustained fire (SF) role. The cadre

instructors, all highly experienced and with extensive backgrounds in machine guns, led intensive classroom sessions covering the weapon's characteristics, capabilities, and its critical role in providing accurate and suppressive fire at battlegroup level.

Particular emphasis was placed on the use of the C2 sight, the vital optical instrument that allows gun crews to mark, record, and return to targets with precision. This was not simply a matter



Students learning to lay the C2 sight onto pre-determined firing points





## 3rd Battalion



**Pte Georgia Middleton observing fall of shot.**

of learning where to look and how to record; students had to grasp how the sight integrates into the wider system of fire planning and control. Day one was relentless, packing in a wealth of information that challenged even the most seasoned soldiers, but it laid the foundation for the demanding training to follow.

With the theory covered, the cadre shifted into practical application.

Soldiers broke down into two-person gun crews, with each pair responsible for mastering the setup and employment of the SF gun kit. These early practical sessions focused on the absolute basics—mounting and dismounting the weapon system—before progressing to increasingly complex drills. Timing was crucial, with the aim of reducing set-up times to a matter of minutes under field conditions.

The instructors stressed precision and discipline, ensuring that every crew member understood the importance of accuracy in laying the gun and establishing robust gun lines.

By extending drills, the gap between theory and live application. Students

practised laying the gun onto multiple targets, first using iron sights to refine their alignment, and then using the C2 sight to mark, record, and re-engage those targets quickly. One of the most impressive elements of this phase was the introduction of re-occupation drills. By recording target data with the C2, crews were able to remove the weapon from its tripod, redeploy it, and then re-lay the gun back onto the exact same target with remarkable accuracy. For many students, seeing this work in practice later in the cadre was a highlight, demonstrating just how powerful the system can be when correctly employed.

The final live firing milestone came in the form of light-role GPMG Annual Combat Marksmanship Tests (ACMTs). These shoots acted as a crucial stepping stone before the transition to sustained fire live firing. They tested not only weapon handling and marksmanship but also the students' ability to apply their training under live conditions. Passing this stage confirmed that each student was ready to progress to the far more complex and demanding SF role. Here, the cadre moved into SENTA's rugged and unforgiving terrain

to begin blank firing exercises. These field exercises introduced the realities of operating as an SF gun team under tactical conditions. Crews practiced engaging multiple targets at different ranges, adjusting fire in response to shifting scenarios, and communicating effectively as two-person teams. The importance of teamwork and chemistry became clear: the success of a gun crew depended not just on individual skill, but on their ability to operate seamlessly together. The mentoring from instructors during this phase was invaluable, with constant feedback and correction helping every soldier improve.

The final progression came with the transition to live SF firing—the pinnacle of the course. Under the close supervision of the training staff, students unleashed the full firepower of the GPMG in its sustained fire role. This phase was both awe-inspiring and humbling; the destructive effect of controlled, accurate sustained fire made clear just how decisive the weapon system can be in battle. Students not only experienced the raw power of the gun but also learned the heavy responsibility that comes with employing such firepower.



## The Steelbacks

Physical fitness was tested throughout the cadre, underpinning everything else. Carrying the heavy SF gun kits on repeated tactical advances was demanding in itself, but the cadre built gradually towards a final physical and mental test. This culminating challenge required students to complete a heavy insertion tab while carrying the full weight of SF equipment. The gunner shouldered the GPMG itself and spare barrels, while the gun controller carried the tripod, C2 sight, and individual weapon. Both members of the crew also carried frontline ammunition scales of 800 rounds each, bringing the total load to roughly 50kg per person. The tab ended at a designated gun line where, without pause, students immediately

conducted the SF ACMT.

The SF ACMT shoot itself is challenging - it included timed blind tests, where hessian screens restricted visibility and forced crews to rely entirely on the data they had previously recorded with the C2 sight. This ensured that accuracy and discipline—not just instinct—were maintained even under the most demanding conditions. For many, this was the hardest part of the course, requiring not only strength and stamina but also clarity of thought under stress.

Despite the challenges, every student successfully completed the cadre and passed the final GPMG (SF) ACMT. This was a testament to their determination, professionalism, and the

of instruction provided by 30 Role instructors. By the end of the two weeks, the students had not only developed their individual skills but had also strengthened the brigade's collective ability to deliver sustained and decisive fire support in future operations.

For those who completed it, the cadre was an unforgettable experience. It was physically and mentally gruelling, demanding long days, heavy loads, and absolute attention to detail. Yet the sense of achievement in mastering the SF role was immense. Soldiers left SENTA with the confidence that they could employ the GPMG to maximum effect, knowing that their hard work had directly increased the combat effectiveness of their battlegroup.

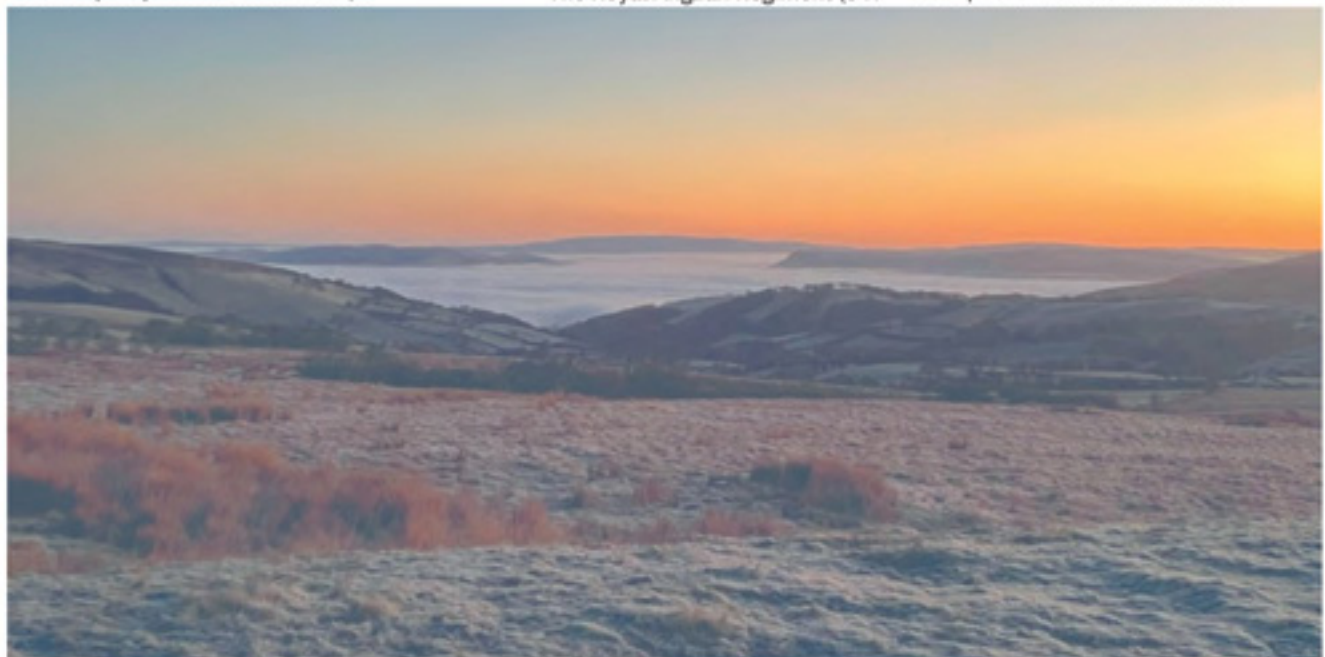
## Back to Brecon: Guest Instructing at the Infantry Battle School

Like the encore that (absolutely) nobody called for, I drove back past the infamous 'pointy man' statue and through the iron gates of Aberhonddu's very own Dering Lines in February this year. After two years of instructing at the Infantry Battle School (IBS) Platoon Commanders' Division (PCD) from 2022 to 2024, it

had been just over 12 months since I'd last heard the infamous 'tyres-over-the-cattlegrid' sound – a sound familiar to most.

This time, however, I wasn't returning as a full-time instructor but as a guest, representing 3rd Battalion, The Royal Anglian Regiment (3 R

ANGLIAN). With a hunger to step away from the predictable rhythm of my new 9-5 in civi street, once more I was to immerse myself the ways of the battle school in order to support in delivering a course I had once run: guiding junior reservist infantry commanders through their promotional battle course.

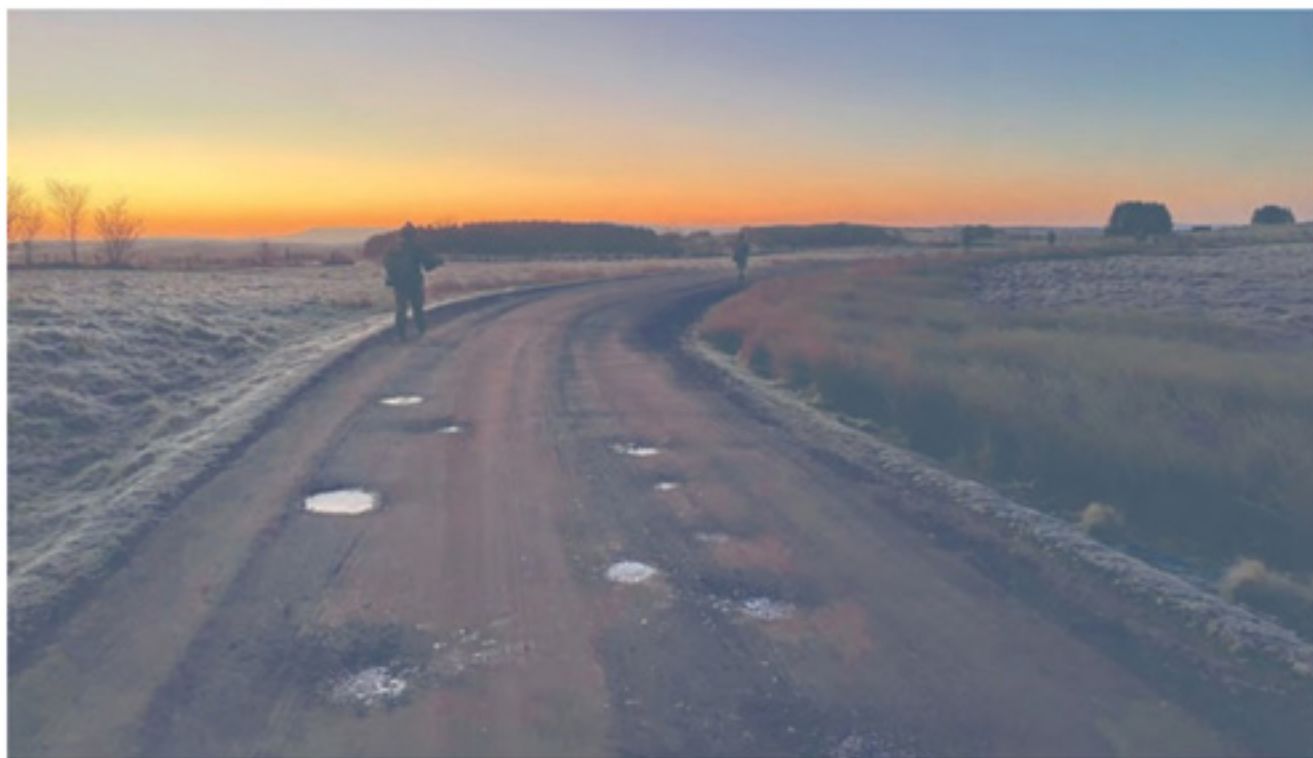


The early morning Dragon's breath creeping along the mouth of the Honddu.





## 3rd Battalion



Freezing conditions on final exercise gave a brief reprieve from the permeating moisture.

to ~~standing any flags and opportunity~~ wet again, I jumped at the invitation to IBS for a couple of weeks. The battle school, or IBS, is nestled in the rugged terrain of Brecon, and is renowned for its demanding battle courses and high standards.

The task for the mixed Regular and Reserve Directing Staff (DS) team was to take a consolidated course of prospective reservist Cpls, Sgts and trade-qualifying 2Lts, to guide them in developing the skills they would need to lead on the battlefield. Over the course of two weeks, the students would be tested on command, leadership, battlefield tactics, planning, and administration; key competencies for any junior infantry commander.

The course was structured into three phases. The first phase focused on arrivals, administration, start standards, and theory lessons. This was the foundation upon which the rest of the course was built, establishing baseline fundamentals in fitness, fieldcraft, tactical offensive actions, and planning.

The second phase saw a move out to the training area to conduct a formative

exercise, designed to allow students to apply their learning in a controlled environment, where mistakes could be made and lessons learned. This focused on planning and execution of platoon actions for the officers, battlefield discipline and administration for the SNCOs and section tactics for the JNCOs. The third and final phase featured a summative exercise, a culmination of all their training, where students endured multiple command appointments, testing their ability to exercise what they'd learned, whilst leading, commanding and controlling under pressure.

With only two weeks to take the students through their steep learning curve, much consideration was given to balancing a permissive learning environment with the requirement to test the students in adverse physical and mental conditions.

The reader will more than likely understand that Brecon in February is known for its less-than-mediterranean weather. This course was no exception.

Crossing onto Sennybridge Training Area, the first week greeted us with heavy downpours and relentless winds,

conditions that tested both the students' resolve and their ability to operate effectively in adverse environments. The cold, wet weather added an extra layer of challenge to the already demanding training, pushing the students to dig deep and demonstrate their resilience. When it wasn't raining, there was no escape from unsolicited bath-time as the water table had risen significantly from the heavy downpours over the previous weeks.

In stark contrast, the second week was blessed with tantalising sunshine, a rare but welcome reprieve. Whilst the sub-zero pre-and-post daylight hours offered its own chilling challenge, the freezing of the moist 'babies heads' offered a welcome brief reprieve from the sogginess. The arrival of sunshine in the daylight hours brought a noticeable shift in morale, as the students were able to focus more on their tasks without the added burden of battling the elements. With no trip to Sennybridge complete without a strong helping of mother nature's wrath, the students had truly been bloodied by the training area.

The core of the course revolved around the basics of junior infantry



## Steelbacks

command, particularly in the context of hasty and deliberate offensive operations. The students were presented the information through theory lessons, given the opportunity to apply it in 'walkthrough-talkthrough' practices, before reviewing their application of the knowledge in battle scenarios. With an active role-playing enemy, each tactical serial was designed to challenge their decision-making, leadership, and tactical acumen, with a strong emphasis on learning through repetition.

After each battle serial, the students participated in detailed after-action reviews, a critical component of the learning process. These reviews provided an opportunity to reflect on their performance, identify areas for improvement, and internalise the lessons learned. It was through this iterative process that the students began to develop the confidence and competence required to lead effectively, learning from shared experience.

From my privileged perspective as an instructor, it was immensely

rewarding to see the students grow over the course of the two weeks. Many arrived with limited tactical field experience and even less experience in command roles, but through hard work and determination they began to grow the qualities of effective leaders. Watching them take ownership of their decisions, learn from their mistakes, and support one another was a testament to the value of the training and the potential of these future leaders.

Given the geopolitical conditions our country currently faces, it was not lost on the DS team the importance and relevance of these reservists. There was a palpable sense and tacit awareness of the crucial role that these citizen-soldiers would likely play in the UK's echeloned Defence plan. Should the 'red flare go up', and the call to arms be issued, these would be the very junior infantry commanders likely to fight alongside or in the space of their regular counterparts. But in the meantime, ahead of a potential peer-on-peer conflict in mainland Europe, the reservists had developed

some invaluable skills to bring back to their communities at the relentless pace and unending demands on regular DS at the

Infantry Battle School, returning as a guest instructor to offer some relief was a deeply fulfilling experience. It was a chance to give back to an institution that had played a significant role in my own development and to contribute to the growth of the next generation of leaders.

In the end, the course was about far more than just teaching tactics and visiting an old home. It was about preparing a new generation of junior commanders in the Army Reserve – leaders who may soon be called upon to play a vital role in meeting the challenges of an uncertain future. It was about shaping individuals who can inspire confidence, make tough decisions under pressure, and lead with integrity when it matters most. Above all, it was about instilling the values, ethos, and mindset to "seize the initiative" – to step up, take charge, and rise to the generational challenges that lie ahead.

## From Rhinos to Black Panthers: Mentoring, Mortality, and Meaning on Ex Rhino Heart

In October, I had the privilege of deploying with 3rd Battalion, The Royal Anglian Regiment (3 R ANGLIAN) to Sennelager, Germany, for Exercise Rhino Heart 25. This was no ordinary exercise; it marked the largest deployment of Army Reservists since 1985. The name "Rhino Heart" is a nod to 1 (UK) Division, whose emblem features the mighty rhinoceros. However, for me, the exercise also evoked the history of the black panther on the 19th Light Brigade Tactical Recognition Flash.

The black panther, as the story goes, was inspired by Bagheera, the wise and cunning mentor from Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book*. Bagheera's role as a guide and protector to the young Mowgli, the man cub, is a powerful metaphor for the mentoring and investment that experienced soldiers provide to their younger counterparts.

This theme of mentorship was one of the most striking aspects of Exercise Rhino Heart, as seasoned soldiers took the time to pass on their knowledge, skills, and wisdom to the next generation.

As a padre, I often find myself reflecting on the relationships and interactions I witness within the military. During Rhino Heart, I saw countless examples of experienced NCOS taking younger soldiers under their wing, offering guidance and encouragement. It reminded me of my own early days in the Army, when a well-timed word from a wiser Sandhurst CSgt could make all the difference.

Mentorship in the military is not just about teaching skills and drills; it's about building confidence, resilience, and a sense of belonging. It's about showing younger soldiers that they are part of something bigger than themselves, that

they are valued, and that they have the potential to grow and succeed. This investment in others is one of the most powerful aspects of military life, and it was on full display during Rhino Heart.

One of the most profound moments for me during the exercise came when I was invited by 206 Multirole Medical Regiment to assist with a training scenario on end-of-life care. Their Commanding Officer was playing the role of a casualty who could not be saved, and the team was tasked with providing care and support in his final moments.

A building of opportunity had been used for their Role 2 field hospital. In this instance, a dark and austere Cold War-era ammunition bunker. As the scenario unfolded, I was asked to perform the last rites from the Christian tradition and offer pastoral support to the team. It was





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**A moment of reflection in the 206 MMR hospital.**

a deeply moving experience, not only for me but for everyone involved. This exercise was a stark reminder of the realities of soldiering. While the Army's medical teams are among the best in the world, experts as both civilians and in a military context, there are times when even their extraordinary skills are not enough. Death is a part of military life, and it is something that every soldier must come to terms with. This experience underscored the importance of the role of the chaplains department in the Army. We are there to provide pastoral care to all, regardless of faith or belief, and to support soldiers as they navigate the moral and spiritual challenges of military service. The role of a military chaplain is multifaceted. We are there to offer a listening ear, to provide guidance and support, and to help soldiers develop their moral and spiritual resilience. This can take many forms, from leading religious services to offering one-on-one counselling, to simply being a reassuring presence in times of stress or uncertainty.



**An end-of-life training scenario 206 Multirole Medical Regiment.**



# The Steelbacks



**Padre Antony Wilson conducting a service prior to deploying into the field.**

In a diverse and increasingly secular society, fewer people may identify with a specific faith tradition. However, the need for meaning, purpose, and connection is universal. As chaplains, we are there to help soldiers explore these questions, to find their own sources of strength and resilience, and to navigate the challenges of military life.

One of the key aspects of my role is to help soldiers build spiritual resilience. This is not about imposing a particular set of beliefs but about helping individuals to develop their own inner resources. It's about encouraging reflection, fostering a sense of purpose, and helping soldiers to

find meaning in their experiences, even in the face of adversity.

During Exercise Rhino Heart, I saw this resilience in action. I saw it in the way soldiers supported one another, in the way they rose to the challenges they faced, and in the way they found meaning and purpose in their service. I also saw it in the way they confronted the reality of mortality during the end-of-life care scenario.

As a padre, I am privileged to walk alongside soldiers on their journey, sharing in their joys and sorrows, their triumphs and challenges. I am constantly inspired by their courage, resilience, and

commitment to one another.

~~a powerful reminder of the importance of~~  
community, mentorship, and shared purpose. It was a reminder that, even in the most challenging of circumstances, we are stronger together. As I reflect on my time in Sennelager, I am reminded of the words of Rudyard Kipling's Bagheera: "For the strength of the Pack is the Wolf, and the strength of the Wolf is the Pack." This is as true in the military as it is in any community. We are stronger when we stand together, when we support one another, and when we invest in the next generation.





# 3rd Battalion

## Exercise EAGLETRIDENT r Company Watersports Weekend

As part of our battalion's summer training, 3 Company swapped their boots for wetsuits and embarked on an unforgettable water sports weekend at the Army Water Sports Centre on Thorney Island, Portsmouth. The centre is a hub for Adventurous Training (AT), offering a wide range of water-based activities and modern equipment, from powerboating to kayaking. Funded by Army Sport, the centre provides soldiers with the opportunity to develop new skills, build resilience, and strengthen camaraderie – all while enjoying the stunning coastal surroundings.

AT is important to Army life; designed to push soldiers out of their comfort zones, develop leadership skills, and foster teamwork. It's not just about learning new activities; it's about building confidence, resilience, and the ability to adapt to challenging situations.

These are qualities that are essential on the battlefield but also invaluable in everyday life. Due to the constraints on Reservists time to take part in AT is rare which made this weekend all the more valuable.

The Army Water Sports Centre on Thorney Island is a prime example of how AT can be both challenging and rewarding. With its state-of-the-art facilities, expert instructors, and access to the beautiful waters around Portsmouth, the centre offers soldiers the chance to try their hand at a variety of water sports, from windsurfing to paddleboarding. For many, it's an opportunity to learn something completely new, while for others, it's a chance to hone existing skills.

Our weekend began on Saturday morning with a crash course in windsurfing and dinghy sailing. The day started on dry land, where we practised the basics and got to grips with the equipment. But the real challenge began when we hit the water. To say it was chaotic would be an understatement. Sails spun wildly in the wind, boards tipped over, and there was no shortage of



**Ex EAGLE TRIDENT - Pte Tom Hyder proving he can stay out of the water for more than 60 seconds.**

unplanned swims. Yet, the laughter never stopped. Everyone threw themselves into the task with enthusiasm, determined to master the skills despite the occasional mishap.

For me, the highlight of the day was finally managing my first successful turns on a windsurfer after what felt like countless attempts. I also became quite adept at "de-capsizing" myself, a skill I hadn't anticipated needing but one that proved invaluable!

After an action-packed day on the

water, we gathered for a barbecue and a relaxed social evening. It was the perfect way to unwind, sharing stories of our triumphs and mishaps while enjoying the warm summer evening.

Sunday morning brought a new set of challenges with paddleboarding. We started with some basic drills before diving into races and team games. Of course, there was plenty of good-natured competition and, inevitably, some blatant cheating! The highlight of the morning was spotting seals and their cubs basking



## The Steelbacks



**Pte Millman, Cpl Smith-Watkins and LCpl Clements checking out a gang of seals.**

In the sun along the shoreline, a magical moment that reminded us of the beauty of our surroundings.

By the end of the weekend, we had all earned our Level 1 Paddleboarding qualification from the Royal Yachting Association. But more importantly, we had strengthened our bonds as a team, shared countless laughs, and created memories that will last a lifetime.

While the water sports were undoubtedly the main attraction, the weekend also offered us a fascinating glimpse into the history of Thorney Island. The island's story stretches back centuries, with its origins as the site of a Roman fort. During the Second World War, Thorney Island played a crucial role in the defence of Britain. It was used as a decoy site, with lights left on at night to divert enemy bombers away from Portsmouth.

The island is also home to a war graves site, a poignant reminder of the sacrifices made during the war. Among the graves are those of 21 German airmen who lost their lives when their bomber crashed nearby. Learning about the island's history added a deeper layer of meaning to our weekend, reminding us of the sacrifices made by those who came before us and the importance of the values we uphold as members of the Army.

While the weekend was filled with laughter and adventure, it also highlighted the broader purpose of AT in the Army. These activities are not just about having fun; they are about developing the skills and qualities that make a good soldier.



**Pte Lochlan Chamberlin practising his first gybe.**





## 3rd Battalion



**Pte Lewis Sneddon gets caught out by the gauntlet.**

Windsurfing, sailing, and paddleboarding may seem worlds apart from the challenges of military operations, but they share many of the same demands. They require focus, determination, adaptability, and the ability to work as a team. They also teach us to stay calm under pressure, to learn from our mistakes, and to keep going even when things get tough.

AT also plays a vital role in building camaraderie. The shared experience of tackling challenges, overcoming fears, and celebrating successes brings people together in a way that few other

activities can. For 3 Company, the weekend at Thorney Island was not just about learning new skills; it was about strengthening the bonds that make us a team.

The Army Water Sports Centre on Thorney Island is a hidden gem with its modern facilities, expert instructors, and stunning location, it provides an unparalleled opportunity for soldiers to engage in adventurous training.

For those of us who had the chance to experience it, the weekend was a reminder of the importance of stepping out of our comfort zones, embracing

new challenges, and supporting one another along the way. As we packed up our gear and prepared to return to our usual training routines, we left Thorney Island not only with new skills and qualifications but also with a renewed sense of purpose, personal growth, teamwork, and resilience that they inspire.

For anyone in the Army who hasn't yet experienced the Army Water Sports Centre, I can't recommend it enough. Whether you're a seasoned water sports enthusiast or a complete beginner, there's something for everyone.



## 4 (Lincolnshire) Company

### Overview

Maj Healey, OC

have returned from deployment on Op INTERFLEX, with several others returning from BATUK, whilst plans for the next cohort to deploy to Kenya are well underway. Additionally, we have soldiers posted to ATR (G) as instructors and Lt Sam Mercer currently out in BATSUB, Belize in an Ops Officer role. Only last month we welcomed back soldiers from the Coy following their deployment on Op TOSCA, with Pte Maria Fowler recently deployed to Cyprus on the next cycle. Four Coy have therefore continued to be a key provider of qualified soldiers and officers to these vitally important and wide-ranging taskings. These deployments continue to provide excellent development opportunities and experiences for both

I write this piece in the knowledge that it will be my last as OC 4 Coy, having decided to hang my uniform up after over 20 years as a Regular and Reservist.

The past couple of years have been challenging at times, but also extremely rewarding. And I'm incredibly proud to serve in the Royal Anglian Regiment and 4 Coy, particularly in the context of the Coy's connection to the Royal Lincolnshire Regiment, with which I have family ties going back to the First World War.

It may seem a little trite to describe 2025 as another busy year. But that's precisely what it's been! Providing support to operations and the wider Army has continued where it left off last year. Several of our soldiers

the individual and the Coy.

Much of our training and exercise this year have been geared towards the Bn Main Effort, namely the 19 Bde ADX Ex RHINOHEART, in Germany. This exercise proved to be the largest deployment of British Army Reserve soldiers since the Cold War. It also gave our soldiers a better understanding of the RSOI process, as well as continuing to develop their infantry skills in a different environment. There's also been Coy representation in other exercises including Ex NORTHERN STRIKE in the United States. We've seen soldiers complete the newly introduced Drone Operator Course and bring their experience back to help us better understand and adapt to the evolving



Ex RHINO HEART 25 – 4 Company soldiers pose during a lull in the battle.





## 3rd Battalion



**Pass-off Parade – OC with WO2 (RRMT WO) Limb and four latest additions to the Company.**

battlespace we may find ourselves operating in.

Four Coy have completed 2 OC weekends this year. The first saw members of the Coy and Padre visit East Kirkby Aviation Heritage Centre. The former WW2 home of 2 Lancaster bomber squadrons, it was an ideal location to teach the troops a little of Lincolnshire's wartime heritage and connection to Bomber Command.

It was also an opportunity highlight the similarities between soldiers in the modern military and those who came before, through the lens of Op TEAMWORK. LCpl Dominic Parry provided the troops with an excellent overview session on Soviet-era weapon systems during the second phase of the weekend. The second OC weekend saw members of 2 (Northamptonshire & Leicestershire) and 4 Coy walk a section of the Viking Way from the Humber Bridge, allowing members of the Coys to 'walk and talk' in a way that isn't always possible during training nights and exercises.

We've continued to welcome and integrate new members into the Coy and achieved good progression through the training pipeline, up to and including the Combat Infantry Course (CIC). This has been down to the hard work and dedication of WO2 John Limb and Sgt Matt Hardy and the team. Recently we attended a pass-off parade where 4 of our soldiers passed out together, with Pte Leon Ambler receiving the award for the best recruit.

Michael Gurne deserves a special mention having gone from 'zero to hero' by completing Foundation, Battelcamp and CIC in a single year, receiving the top soldier award on CIC. He topped off an excellent start to his military career by deploying on Ex RHINO HEART.

The NE Lincolnshire Armed Forces Day in Cleethorpes as well as Remembrance Day commemorations in both Grimsby and Lincoln continue to allow our soldiers to interact with the public and display the best of the military. With such huge public support

for our Armed Forces, it's always a great experience for the Troops and their families. Our connection with the local area continues to be extremely important to us, so the recognition of Pte Chloe Wilkinson's work with local schools and women's football team whilst deployed to BATUK in the Lord Lieutenant Awards was a great honour and very much deserved.

One of the privileges of my role is seeing our soldiers develop, grow and progress through the ranks. This year we congratulated Sgt James Robinson on his promotion to CSgt and appointment to CQMS, A/Cpl Michal Cybulski on his substantive promotion to Cpl and LCpl Ross McKenzie on his selection for promotion to Cpl. Finally, congratulations go to Pte Marea Fowler on her promotion to LCpl (presented remotely while deployed on Op TOSCA).

I anticipate several more promotions in the coming year. Finally, we'll be saying farewell to PSI Sgt Wayne Richardson next year as he leaves the



# The Steelbacks



**Remembrance Weekend – 4 Company personnel form up prior to the Service of Remembrance at Grimsby Minster.**

Army. Despite having only been with us a little over a year, he's made a huge impact on the Coy and his passion and dedication to the troops will be sorely missed. We also said farewell to WO2 (CSM) Keith Hack, who has transferred

units following a move up north.

So, 2025 is all but done. 2026 promises to be a similarly challenging and action-packed year, particularly with an Op TOSCA on the cards. With such a strong core of highly capable

and dedicated junior and senior NCOs, (as well as the incredible work of the permanent military and civilian staff) I'm in no doubt 4 Coy will continue to go from strength to strength.



**OC Weekend – Troops from 4 Company pose in front of Lancaster NX611 *Just Jane*.**





# 3rd Battalion

## ArmyServicewomen's Network

I recently had the privilege of attending the Army Servicewomen's Network (ASN) Conference at Ashton Gate Stadium in Bristol, which marked the 10-year anniversary of the ASN. The ASN is a British Army diversity network that supports women of all ranks by providing a platform for them to share ideas, raise issues, and promote causes. Its goals include raising awareness of issues affecting women, providing a forum for sharing and development, giving a unified voice to policymakers for improvements, and offering support through events like this annual conference.

The ASN's mission is to support and encourage servicewomen, thereby maximising the female contribution to fighting power, is both inspiring and essential. The Commander Field Army, Lt Gen Mike Elviss was there along with Chief of the General Staff, Gen Sir Roly Walker who delivered a speech



to those in attendance, followed by a question-and-answer session on fighting power and diversity. It was extremely positive to see senior leadership, in attendance. Their willingness to listen to and address the opinions and issues facing servicewomen today was very encouraging and demonstrated a genuine commitment to progress.

One of the highlights for me was learning about the work being conducted at the lab at Sandhurst, which monitors the physiological differences between men and women during training. This research is invaluable in understanding how to optimise training and support for servicewomen. Additionally, the opportunity to learn about the current services available to women, many of which I was previously unaware of, was incredibly beneficial.

Over the past decade the network has ensured women's voices were heard over the years...Members helped shape



PteMariaFowler on stage with the Army Engagement Ensemble for an interactive game with the public.



## Steelbacks

the army's approach when the ban on female troops serving in close combat roles was lifted; better fitting body armour and uniform, plus issued sports bras, were among the improvements that the network helped to lobby for; members helped to start more open conversation around female issues such as periods and menopause; pregnancy and breastfeeding support, parental leave, childcare, flexible working and dual-serving couple policies have all been updated thanks to the ASN. The network is also helping the army tackle widespread allegations of sexual misconduct and assisting with policy on unacceptable behaviours and more

training for troops. It's been a genuine force for good.

However, I would like to offer some constructive feedback. I feel that the presence of individuals higher in the chain of command at the company and battalion levels would have been beneficial. Their attendance could provide them with a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by women in Ground Close Combat roles and help identify actionable ways to better support us. For future events of this nature, I would also recommend encouraging the attendance of male leaders alongside their female counterparts. Their involvement could

foster a more inclusive dialogue and help bridge the gap in understanding and support for reservists. As a Reserve and Training Non-Commissioned Officer, I sometimes feel that my voice alone is not sufficient to drive the progress needed to fully achieve the ASN's aims. I am committed to supporting the women within 3 R ANGLIAN, but I believe that greater collaboration and engagement across all ranks and genders will be key to achieving meaningful change. I look forward to seeing how the ASN continues to evolve and make a positive impact on the lives and careers of servicewomen.

## Combat Infantryman's Course

In September 2025, I had the privilege of attending the Combat Infantryman's Course (CIC) at Vimy Barracks, Catterick. Having successfully completed Foundation and Battle Camp earlier in the year, I was fortunate to progress to CIC without a significant gap.

This continuity proved invaluable, as it allowed me to build on the skills I had recently developed, and avoided the skill fade that some of my peers experienced after a longer break following Phase 1 training.

The CIC is a cornerstone of infantry training, designed to transform recruits into capable and confident soldiers. The course follows a progressive structure often described as "walk, jog, run," gradually increasing in intensity to ensure participants are fully prepared for the challenges of infantry operations.

The course began with a focus on the fundamentals: weapons handling tests and the Role Fitness Test (RFT). The RFT, which assesses a soldier's physical readiness for the demands of their role, was a challenging introduction to the course. The combination of physical exertion and the rugged terrain of Catterick was a stark reminder of the importance of maintaining peak fitness. For me, it was a wake-up call, but also an opportunity to push myself and set

the tone for the rest of the course.

The first field exercise was conducted at a slower pace, allowing us to revisit and reinforce the skills we had learned during Phase 1 training. This included essential infantry tasks such as harbour administration, fire and movement and attacks up to section level.

These foundational skills are the building blocks of infantry operations, and the exercise provided a valuable opportunity to practise them in a controlled environment.

As the course progressed, we moved into the teaching phase, where we were introduced to new and more advanced skills. This included the use of grenades, platoon-level attacks, and urban operations. These skills were taught with a focus on practical application, ensuring that we not only understood the theory but could also execute them effectively in the field.

The highlight of this phase was the tactical exercise which brought together everything we had learned. The exercise culminated in a platoon attack and a bayonet lane, a physically and mentally demanding challenge that tested our endurance, teamwork, and determination. For me, this was the most memorable part of the course. It encapsulated the very essence of why I chose to join the Reserves under an

Infantry cap badge – the camaraderie, the challenge, and the sense of purpose that comes from working as part of a team to achieve a common goal.

The final exercise was the ultimate test of everything we had learned. It began with a tactical advance to battle, or "tab," into the area, followed by a recce to gather intelligence on the enemy. The culmination of the exercise was a Fighting in Woods and Forests (FIWAF) attack the following morning, based on the information we had gathered during the night's patrols.

This exercise was a genuine test of our physical and mental resilience. The tab was gruelling, the recce required focus and attention to detail, and the final attack demanded coordination, communication, and determination. It was a fitting conclusion to a course that had pushed us to our limits and beyond.

Looking back on my time at Catterick, I can confidently say that the CIC was both challenging and rewarding. It provided countless opportunities to develop new skills, refine personal drills, and improve my administration in the field. The importance of teamwork and mutual support, as I was fortunate to be part of a motivated and cohesive section.

The staff at Catterick were





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**Pte Mike Goulbourne with his Platoon at ITC Catterick.**

exceptional, drawing on their extensive experience to provide clear guidance and constructive feedback. Their dedication and professionalism were evident in every aspect of the course, and their support was instrumental in helping us succeed.

For those preparing to attend the CIC, I would offer the following advice: Physical Fitness is Key: The fitter you are, the easier the course will be. The physical demands of the RFT and the field exercises are significant, and being in good shape will allow you to focus on the training rather than simply trying to keep up.

Step Up as a Leader: Take every opportunity to volunteer for leadership

roles within your section. These roles provide invaluable learning experiences and allow you to demonstrate your capabilities to both your peers and instructors.

Embrace the Challenge: The CIC is demanding, but it is also incredibly rewarding. Approach the course with a positive attitude, and you'll find that the challenges become opportunities for growth and development.

The Combat Infantryman's Course at Catterick exceeded my expectations in every way. It was, without a doubt, the most valuable training I have undertaken in my Reserve career to date.

The skills I developed, the lessons I learned, and the bonds I formed with

my fellow soldiers will stay with me for years to come.

As I reflect on my time at Catterick, I am grateful for the opportunity to participate in such an excellent training programme. The experience has left me better prepared for the challenges ahead and more committed than ever to serving as a member of the Royal Anglian Regiment.

For anyone considering the Combat Infantryman's Course, my advice is simple: go for it. It will test you, push you, and challenge you, but it will also reward you in ways you can't imagine. It's an experience you'll never forget and one that will shape you into a better soldier and a stronger individual.



## Exercise STEELBACK EMOLUMENT

In February 2025, soldiers from 2 (Leicestershire) Company and 4 (Lincolnshire) Company of the 3rd Battalion, came together for Exercise STEELBACK EMOLUMENT. Held over two days at Kendrew Barracks training area, the exercise combined physical endurance with tactical trench warfare training, providing a challenging and rewarding experience for all involved.

The weekend's focus was twofold: revising section-level trench clearing skills and completing the Role Fitness Test (RFT). With a mix of physical exertion and battlefield drills, the exercise was designed to push soldiers to their limits while reinforcing essential skills for future operations.

Saturday morning began with the troops arriving at Kendrew Barracks, greeted by the ever-enthusiastic Battalion QMSI, SSgt Waddell. There was little time for pleasantries, however, as the soldiers were quickly ushered into a warm-up before tackling the RFT.

The RFT is a rigorous test of ensure physical fitness designed to ensure the physical demands of their roles. It began with the usual 4km squaddied march, followed by the 2km best effort. From there, the soldiers moved on to role-related tasks, including fire and movement drills, casualty drags, stretcher carries, vehicle casualty evacuations, and repeated lift-and-carry exercises.

Despite a few grumbles from those who would have preferred a lie-in, the soldiers pushed through the demanding tasks with determination. By the end of the RFT, the airfield was filled with the sound of heavy breathing and the sight of sweat-soaked uniforms — a testament to the effort put in by all.

After a well-earned meal in the Kendrew cookhouse, the troops moved to the old ammunition compound, where a set of trenches had been constructed to replicate those seen in modern conflict zones, such as Ukraine. The afternoon was dedicated to revising and practising trench clearing drills, with lessons and



exercises led by CSgt Baker. The training also focused on assault teams, including the responsibilities of assault pairs and the importance of maintaining autonomy and momentum within the trench. Soldiers were reminded of the need to stay spread out and avoid becoming stationary for too long — lessons that are critical in the fast-paced and unpredictable environment of trench warfare.

As the lessons began, the weather took a turn for the worse. The skies opened, and heavy rain quickly transformed the trenches into muddy quagmires. The conditions were a stark reminder of the challenges faced by soldiers in the

First World War, and the troops gained a visceral understanding of the physical and mental resilience required to operate in such an environment.

Despite the mud and rain, morale remained high. The soldiers threw themselves into the training, practising clearing corners, securing bunkers, and executing two- and four-man drills. The day culminated in a platoon-level assault, with the troops working together to clear both trench systems in a coordinated and dynamic operation.

The remainder of the exercise saw the companies return to their respective Reserve Centres to focus on mandatory Individual Training Requirements (ITRs). These essential skills are a





## 3rd Battalion



prerequisite for deployment and include everything from weapons handling to first aid. The soldiers also took time to conduct equipment maintenance, ensuring their kit was ready for the next challenge.

Exercise **STEELBACK EMOLUMENT** was more than just a weekend of physical and tactical training. It was an opportunity to build the conceptual understanding of how the Army fights, reinforcing the importance of teamwork, adaptability, and resilience. The exercise also served as a stepping stone in the battalion's preparation for

larger training events later in the year, both in the UK and overseas.

**STEELBACK EMOLUMENT** was a demanding and mentally stimulating training event that left a lasting impression on all who took part. It reinforced the importance of physical fitness, tactical proficiency, and teamwork, while also providing a glimpse into the realities of both modern and historical warfare.

As the soldiers of 2 and 4 Companies look ahead to future training exercises and deployments, the lessons learned

during this weekend will undoubtedly serve them well. Whether it's the physical resilience built during the RFT, the tactical skills honed in the trenches, or the camaraderie forged through shared challenges, the experience of Exercise **STEELBACK EMOLUMENT** will remain a part of their preparation for the demands of Army life.

In the words of one participant, "It was tough, but it was worth it. We pushed ourselves, learned a lot, and came away stronger as a team." And that, ultimately, is what exercises like **STEELBACK EMOLUMENT** are all about.



## 5 (Suffolk & Cambridgeshire) Company

### Overview

2025 has been same, same but different; much like last year, this Castle article is written with the background of a continuing major State on State conflict in Europe, continued violence in the middle east and a host of other actual and potential flashpoints around the world. However, with a new Government and a new Strategic Defence Review in 2025 we were presented with new challenges and changes in priority and focus.

5 Company has worked hard to develop our greatest asset; our people. Opening

up our Reserve Centres to the public in a targeted manner, with support from Regimental Headquarters, to show off who we are and how we train. These events have been a great way to recruit new soldiers.

Relationships with Cambridge University Officer Training Corps and with Suffolk and Cambridgeshire Reserve Forces and Cadet Association have been strengthened with Officers and soldiers acting as instructors supporting their training throughout the year. Recruiting and engagement

activity remains vital to our success, and we continue to allocate significant time and effort to it. With the hard work from many people, 5 Company continues to be well recruited in both Bury st Edmunds and Peterborough.

Those new recruits have done well coming through the training pipeline completing various career courses to become fully trained members of the Regiment, able to contribute to wider Defence output.

Positive 'dit-worthy' training activity and cohesion events within the Company



Cpl Darren Morgan teaching cadets.





# 3rd Battalion



**5 Company barbecue at CUOTC**  
have helped keep our people interested and motivated in what we do. The Companies inclusive and professional culture developed the physical, moral and conceptual components of fighting power with a view to increasing our deployability.

Having worked to recruit and retain our soldiers throughout the year, the Companies training team did an excellent job to increase our readiness to meet the main effort of 19 Light Brigade; deploying en masse to Germany on Ex RHINO HEART 25. Alongside that, members of the Company completed periods of mobilised service, career courses and a steady drumbeat of training events to maintain standards and develop new skills.

Op INTERFLEX remains a priority for the Army as a whole, members of 5 Company have mobilised within the UK providing training to Ukrainian service personnel just as they did in 2024. It is worth highlighting that they are fulfilling vital roles, delivering training directly to the Ukrainians to the highest of standards and alleviating some of the commitments the Regular Army has to meet. As demands on the British Army continue to rise, opportunities to mobilise and to deploy overseas will increase in a whole range of roles. WO2 Howe has spent much of the year in mobilised service in the British Army Training Unit Kenya



**5 Company Pte Joe Exton being promoted to LCpl by Brig Lisa Brooks.**



# The Steelbacks



## 5 Company Op SHEPHERD.

training wing. Steelbacks, including a healthy contingent of 5 Company soldiers, mobilised to deploy to Cyprus on Op TOSCA 41. This reflects well on them as individuals and the Regiment as well as being a great advert for the employability of Reservists.

The highlight of the year for many in 5 Company has undoubtedly been the Battalions Overseas Training Exercise in Sennelager, Germany, Ex RHINO HEART 25. The exercise was the largest Reserve deployment since the cold war with troops from across British Army joining other partner nations training together. For many it was the first time working with attached arms, such as Combat Engineers and Artillery Fire

Support Teams, and seeing how a Company works in the wider context of a Battle Group working under a Brigade Headquarters. These layers of additional complexity and enhanced capability, alongside working in a different country will be remembered by all those who participated for years to come.

The Company has also seen a few changes of note as people have left. WO2 Pritchard has now left Regular service after a full career but is becoming a Reservist so he has not vanished completely; WO2 Mole is taking over as the new CIS lead. 2Lt Smeeton left the Battalion to attend the Regular Commissioning Course at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, so

may join the Regular Battalions soon. He has been invaluable as a Platoon Commander and his departure will be felt. The whole Company wishes him luck with his new endeavours.

As the Army continues to navigate high tempo activity and with a new(ish) Government, there undoubtedly remains a degree of uncertainty over the size and shape of the Army, and exactly what future role Reservists will fulfil. There is very little we can do to influence the outcome of those discussions so 5 Company will continue to focus growing our capabilities to ensure we can be professional and ready; continually striving to be the best Company in the Battalion.





# 3rd Battalion

## ExercisSTEELBACK HEART

May saw the Battalion HQ deliver Ex Steelback Heart; another stepping stone toward the Battalions (and 19 Light Brigades) main effort, Ex Rhino Heart 25. The aim was to further familiarise the those deploying to Germany with the concepts they will need for the phases of Ex Rhino Heart. Additionally, the attachments they were working with were also invited to the party. This was also the first time the exercising Company and Platoon HQ elements would be able to train together in role.

The whole training package was delivered on Salisbury Plain training area focussed on the urban complexes

in Imber and Copehill Down Villages. Lessons that have been covered in recent months were revised; operations in the urban space along with the principles of defence were reiterated. During the earliest phase there were capability demonstrations from OC 2 Company on the Battalions fledgling Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) capabilities. 1 MERCIAN delivered an introduction to the Warrior and a detachment from 101 Squadron, 1st Military Working Dog (MWD) Regiment also joined the Battalion.

101 MWD Squadron is the only Army Reserve sub-unit of its kind in the British Army. MWDs are primarily a Force Protection asset, they provide commanders with a high-profile visual

deterrent that can detect, pursue, and detain an intruder with sub lethal force. Patrol dogs use their visual, audio, and olfactory senses to highlight the presence of enemy forces or unidentified personnel within an area of responsibility.

While the capability demonstrations were underway a set of confirmatory orders were delivered to the Platoon Commanders and the UAS and MWD attachments were introduced to the people they would be working with. The Platoons then began to refine and finish their planning cycles and deliver their own orders. On the Saturday of the Exercise the Brigade Commander 19 Brigade visited the Battalion. Brigadier Lisa Brooks last saw the Battalion in the



2LT Tom Coulter learning about the role of watchkeeper from Capt Matt Wilman.



# The Steelbacks



field in America while training with the Michigan National Guard in 2024 and was impressed with the buildup to Ex Rhino Heart.

As night began to draw in the exercising Company began to move into the execute phase. Patrolling toward Copehill Down gave the Platoons an opportunity to practice their night navigation skills while the recce elements had been forward using UAS to build up a picture of the pattern of life while securing the Company form up point.

After some issues with the initial break in, quick thinking from the commanders at the pointy end things meant that it began to unfold (more or less) to plan. Troops worked hard at all levels systematically clearing buildings then supporting other to do the same before the "rinse and repeat" process of pulling together in the confusion and going again to clear the next building.

Once the objective was cleared the focus shifted towards a hasty defence. The MWD detachment joined clearance patrols and began providing effect.

With late spring and the days getting longer means first light comes earlier.

The rising sun meant the UAS was







## 3rd Battalion



again able to be affectively employed. As operations in Ukraine are proving, UAS will be a significant part of the way Army operations are conducted for some considerable period of time. In this instance the UAS proved invaluable as the inevitable dawn attack came. Offering top-down real time feeds as to build ups of enemy it allowed pre-emptive activity to defeat the opposing forces.

Agility in commanders' decision making is imperative as the live feed updates can literally flip plans 180 degrees. The diversity of background in Reserve soldiers, more or less, guarantees diversity of thought and agility of mind and unorthodox thinking is an abundant resource in 3 R ANGLIAN. Having fought off a persistent and determined counterattack to retake the hard-won objective from the night before ENDEX was called.

Key lessons were learned; it takes effort to orchestrate capabilities in combination to exploit vulnerabilities in your opponent. Individuals at all levels had work on points and months to build and develop before deploying on Ex Rhino Heart 25. An important



part of Reserve training activity, is for that training to be professionally rewarding for the Reservist. For over 120 Steelbacks to give up a sunny late spring weekend to work hard, not sleep and eat rations voluntarily is testament

to the ethos in the Battalion and the quality of the training packages that are delivered. That ethos and enthusiasm is what delivers capable Army Reserve soldiers who are ready and able to work alongside the Regular counterparts.



## Uncrewed Aerial Systems (UAS)

Uncrewed or Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS), sometimes known as Uncrewed Aerial Vehicles (UAV) but commonly referred to as drones, have become a transformative tool in modern military operations. Their ability to provide real-time intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR), as well as their potential for offensive capabilities, has made them indispensable on the battlefield.

The British Army Reserve, as an integral part of the UK's defence structure, has increasingly embraced UAS technology to enhance its operational effectiveness. Furthermore, the ongoing conflict in Ukraine has provided valuable insights into the use of UAS in modern warfare, offering lessons that are shaping the British Army Reserve's approach to these systems.

3 R ANGLIAN has now had years of experience working with Ukrainian forces through Op INTERFLEX the British-led multinational training programme designed to provide military training to Ukrainian Armed Forces personnel. Lessons learned here have led the Battalions development of a nascent UAS capability. The integration of UAS into the capabilities of the Army Reserve



**Battalion UAS on Ex STEELBACK HEART.**

reflects the growing importance of these systems in modern military strategy.

Currently UAS are primarily used for ISR missions. These systems provide a cost-effective means of gathering intelligence, monitoring enemy movements, and assessing terrain.

UAS is particularly valuable in training exercises building up to Ex RHINO

HEART, where they simulate real-world scenarios and enhance situational awareness.

While the wider Army employs a range of UAS, from small, hand-launched systems to larger, more sophisticated platforms, the "off the shelf", quad copter type systems. These systems are portable, easy to deploy, and ideal for tactical-level operations such as close-range reconnaissance. It provides live video feeds and still images, allowing soldiers to scout areas without exposing themselves to danger.

has highlighted the critical role of UAS in modern warfare. Both sides have employed drones extensively, using them for reconnaissance, targeting, and even direct attacks. The lessons learned from Ukraine are shaping how the Army and the Reserve approach UAS operations.

One of the most striking aspects of the Ukraine conflict is the widespread use of commercially available drones. Off-the-shelf systems, such as the ones employed by the 3rd Battalion, have been adapted for military purposes,



**Integral 3rd Bn UAS watching trench training.**





## 3rd Battalion



### UAS providing ISR effect on Copehill Down Village.

demonstrating that UAS technology is no longer the exclusive domain of state actors. This democratisation of technology has significant implications. It highlights the need to train personnel not only to operate military-grade UAS but also to counter commercially available systems that adversaries might use.

The Ukraine conflict has underscored the vulnerability of UAS to electronic warfare (EW). Jamming and spoofing technologies have been used to disrupt drone operations, rendering them ineffective or even turning them against their operators. That integral EW capability is currently beyond the capability most Reserve Units and emphasises the need for simple soldiering to be done well with the use of cover and dispersal becoming more important. Additionally, we must be prepared to operate in contested environments where our systems may be targeted by adversaries.

The conflict in Ukraine has demonstrated the potential of UAS swarms—multiple drones operating in coordination to overwhelm enemy defences. While the British Army and the Reserve currently focuses on

individual systems, the concept of swarming is likely to influence future doctrine. Training programmes may need to incorporate tactics for deploying and countering UAS swarms, ensuring that we are prepared for this emerging threat.

The use of UAS in Ukraine has shown that relatively inexpensive drones can achieve significant results. This cost-effectiveness is particularly relevant for the Reserve, which operates on a more constrained budget than the Regular Army and where many of the UAS we use are owned by individual soldiers in the Battalion.

By investing in affordable UAS, the Reserve can enhance its capabilities without incurring prohibitive costs that come with weapon systems such as Javelin and its Command Launch Unit (CLU) which offers fantastic ISR capability.

The integration of UAS into the British Army Reserve presents both challenges and opportunities. On the one hand, these systems offer a significant force multiplier, enhancing the Reserve's ability to contribute to national defence. On the other hand, their effective use requires investment

in training, infrastructure, and counter-UAS capabilities.

Looking ahead, the role of UAS is likely to expand having provided two soldiers to support the Brigade UAS capability on Ex RHINO HEART in 2025 3 Royal Anglian will continue to develop in this area. Advances in technology, such as artificial intelligence and autonomous systems, will enhance the capabilities of UAS, making them even more valuable on the battlefield. The lessons from Ukraine will continue to inform our approach to UAS.

By learning from the successes and challenges of others, we can refine our tactics, techniques, and procedures, ensuring that we are prepared for the complexities of modern warfare.

The use of Uncrewed Aerial Systems in the British Army Reserve represents a significant step forward in the evolution of military operations. These systems provide a cost-effective means of enhancing situational awareness, improving decision-making, and supporting a wide range of missions.

The lessons learned as we develop capability underscore the importance of UAS in modern warfare highlighting their potential and their vulnerabilities.



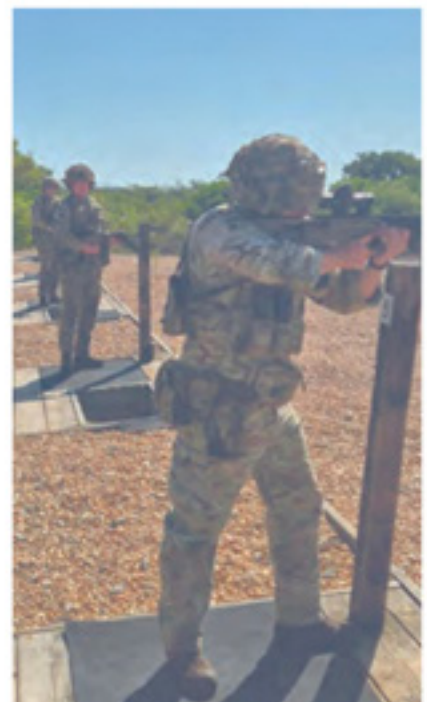
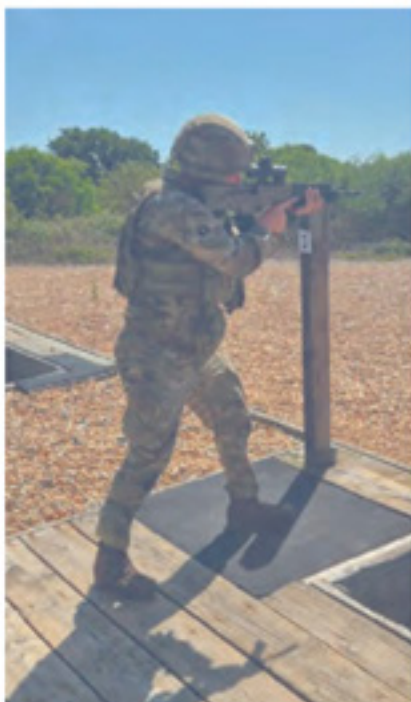
# The Steelbacks

## Live Fire Training 1, 3 and 5 Companies at Hythe Ranges

Soldiers from 3rd Battalion, The Royal Anglian Regiment recently completed a dynamic and comprehensive live fire training package for soldiers from across 1, 3 and 5 Companies at Hythe Ranges. The training event was designed to enhance marksmanship and develop section-level battlefield skills through a variety of challenging shoots.

Training began with the Annual Combat Marksmanship Test (ACMT), which assessed individual shooting accuracy and fundamentals. Soldiers then moved on to the Infantry Battle Shooting Range (IBSR), which involved engaging multiple targets at varying distances using various types of cover and firing positions, all while operating under time constraints. This was followed by a penetration demonstration, offering valuable insight into how different types of cover perform against 5.56mm and 7.62mm rounds.

Troops also took part in a section defence shoot, testing their ability to deliver effective fire from static defensive positions with an emphasis on communication and fire control.







# 3rd Battalion

## ReserveOpenEvenings

Over the past year, the battalion has hosted a series of Open Evenings across Norfolk and Suffolk, drawing in enthusiastic crowds and sparking interest in the opportunities offered by the Army Reserve.

Held at key Army Reserve Centres in Norwich and Lowestoft (1 Company – Norfolk & Suffolk) and Bury St Edmunds (5 Company – Headquarters Company), these events successfully connected with local communities and showcased the modern face of the British Army Reserve.

The primary aim of these evenings was to raise awareness about the diverse roles, training, and experiences available to reservists, while also fostering a deeper connection with the public. Attendees ranged from curious parents and students to individuals actively considering a career in the Army both Regular and Reserve. The events provided a unique opportunity to learn about the professionalism and capabilities of today's Reservists, as well as the ways in which military service complements civilian life.

From the moment visitors arrived, they were greeted by enthusiastic soldiers eager to share their experiences and answer questions. The evenings were carefully curated to be both informative and interactive, offering a range of displays and activities that highlighted the multifaceted life of a Reserve soldier. Ever popular stands such as weapons systems, kit and equipment



that supports reservists in their roles; fitness challenges allowing attendees to test their own fitness levels and gain insight into the physical demands of military life. There was also an urban operations demonstration, allowing attendees some hands on experience and offering a glimpse into the training and skills of reservists. These hands-on activities not only captured the attention of attendees but also provided a tangible sense of what it means to serve in the Army Reserve.

One of the most impactful aspects of the Open Evenings was the opportunity to hear directly from serving Reservists and soldiers still under training. Their personal stories offered a compelling look at how the Army Reserve fits into and enhances their civilian lives, whether through career development, education, or personal growth.

A key focus of the Open Evenings was to provide clear and accessible information about the recruitment process. Dedicated recruitment staff were on hand to guide attendees through the steps of joining, offer career advice, and answer individual questions. The results speak for themselves: of the 72 attendees across the events, many signed up for further information, and several submitted formal applications within days. Some of these individuals are now progressing through the recruitment pipeline and preparing for their assessment centre dates.

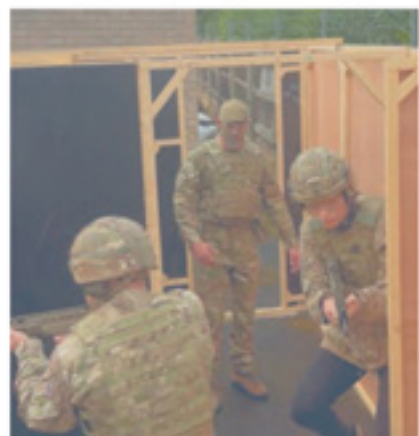
The success of these events highlights the effectiveness of the Open Evening format in not only raising awareness but also converting interest into action. By creating an engaging and welcoming environment, the Battalion

was able to inspire attendees to take the first step towards a rewarding and challenging new chapter in their lives.

These Open Evenings were about more than just recruitment. They were an opportunity to build bridges with the local community and demonstrate the vital role the Army Reserve plays in both for Defence and community support. The events underscored the unique opportunities available to Reservists, from specialist training and leadership development to the chance to make a meaningful contribution to society.

The success of the Open Evenings in Norfolk and Suffolk has set a strong precedent for future community engagement efforts for the whole of the Regiments recruiting area. By continuing to host events that are both informative and inspiring, the Battalion aims to build on this momentum and attract even more individuals to the Army Reserve. For those who attended, the evenings were a chance to learn, connect, and imagine themselves as part of a team that makes a real difference. The Battalion has received from the Regimental Headquarters as been vital for the process too. In order to generate interest, there has been a funded, and importantly targeted, digital media campaign via the Regiments various media platforms.

While traditional methods of handing out flyers and putting up posters remains important, to speak directly to the people we want to join via the media they use most has been invaluable.





# The Steelbacks

As the Army Reserve continues to evolve and adapt to the challenges of the modern world, events like these play a crucial role in ensuring that the public

understands and values the contributions of Reservists. Whether through cutting-edge technology, rigorous training, or the personal stories of those who serve,

## County Shows

Sgt Mat Hardy

the Open Evenings offered a powerful reminder of the opportunities and rewards that come with being part of the British Army Reserve.

With its roots firmly planted in the rural counties of Norfolk, Suffolk, and Lincolnshire, it's only fitting that the Royal Anglian Regiment makes its presence known at the annual county shows.

These events, steeped in tradition and community spirit, provide a unique opportunity for the Regiment to connect with the public, showcase its capabilities, and inspire the next generation of soldiers. This year, 1 (Norfolk and Suffolk) Company and 4 (Lincolnshire) Company, from 3 Royal Anglian, proudly represented the Regiment at the Norfolk Show, Suffolk Show, and Lincolnshire Show, engaging with over 226,000 attendees across the three events.

The counties of Norfolk, Suffolk, and Lincolnshire are among the least densely populated in the UK, presenting a unique challenge for Army recruitment, particularly for the Army Reserve. Unlike Regular soldiers, Reservists are required to live within a reasonable distance of their Army Reserve Centre, which can limit the pool of potential recruits in rural areas. By participating in these county shows, 3 Royal Anglian aims to bridge this gap, raising awareness of the opportunities available at company locations in Norwich, Lowestoft, Bury St Edmunds, Peterborough, Grimsby, and Lincoln. Additionally, the shows provide a platform to encourage those with aspirations of a Regular Army career to consider joining 1 or 2 Royal Anglian. For many visitors, these events are their first interaction with the military, making them a vital opportunity to leave a lasting, positive impression.

The county show season kicked off in May with the Suffolk Show at Trinity Park near Ipswich. First held in 1832, the show has a rich history and has been hosted at its purpose-built venue since 1960. Led by Sgt Ant Warwick, having



**Pte Daniel Symonds with the 81mm mortar eyeing up a fire mission on Ipswich.**

recently left the Regular Army he is now the Recruiting and Mentoring Support Officer (ReMSO) for 1 Company, the team set up an engaging display featuring weapons and equipment, including the 81mm mortar. As 1 Company has a Mortar capability, this was a fitting centrepiece for the stand. Over 1,000 visitors stopped by to learn about the Regiment and its capabilities.

This year's Suffolk Show also marked the 80th anniversary of Victory in Europe (VE) Day. Members of 1 Company joined other UK units and a contingent from the US Armed Forces in a joint parade to commemorate the occasion, further raising the Regiment's profile and demonstrating its commitment to honouring the past. In mid-June, it was 4 Company's

turn to shine at the Lincolnshire Show. First held in 1869, this event celebrated its 140th show this year with a visit from HRH Princess Anne, The Princess Royal. Known as "Bomber County" due to its significant role in World War II, Lincolnshire has a strong military heritage, and the show's military village reflects this.

The Royal Air Force, in particular, invests heavily in its displays, but as the county regiment, 3 Royal Anglian always rises to the challenge with a smaller but still high-quality stand.

Despite being a depleted team, three members of last year's recruiting team are currently deployed on Op TOSCA in Cyprus, 4 Company, led by Sgt Mat Hardy, put on an impressive display. Over two days, the team from





## 3rd Battalion

Grimsby and Lincoln engaged with visitors, showcasing weapon systems and equipment while holding their own against the RAF's extensive displays. The military village also provided an opportunity for some friendly inter-service banter, with the RAF proving particularly adept at dishing out cheeky remarks!

The highlight of the show was the anticipation of a visit from The Princess Royal, who was scheduled to tour the adjacent Royal Logistics Corps (RLC) stand, as she is their Colonel-in-Chief. However, much to the amusement of the Royal Anglian team, HRH didn't manage to make it to the RLC stand, sparking plenty of speculation. The season was the Royal Norfolk Show, held in late June at the Norfolk Showground in Costessey, just outside Norwich. Since its inception in 1847, the show has become a staple of the county's calendar, moving to its permanent home in 1953. Once again, 1 Company took the lead, setting up a stand in the military village that allowed visitors to interact with serving reservists and get hands-on with the weapons and kit they use.

In addition to the display, 1 Company raised the Regiment's profile by participating in a public services circuit competition, where they secured a first-place finish. The show was also visited by HRH Prince Edward, the Duke of Edinburgh, though it's rumoured he timed his visit to avoid witnessing the Steelbacks' sporting triumph!

The question of whether county shows are a worthwhile use of time and resources for the Army, particularly for already stretched Reserve units, is a topic of debate. However, for 3 Royal Anglian, the answer is clear. These



**Ptes Ben Cook and Carl Shiplee winning the Public Services Circuit Race at the Norfolk Show.**

events are some of the most visible opportunities to engage with the public, particularly in rural areas where contact with the military is often limited.

For many children, a visit to the county show is their first encounter with the Army, and the impression left can be profound. At the Lincolnshire Show, one young boy was so captivated by the Sharpshooter Rifle on display that he lost track of time and was accidentally left behind by his school group. His fascination with the stand caused such a delay that his group missed their bus back to school; a testament to the impact these displays can have.

Beyond recruitment, the county shows provide an opportunity to strengthen the Regiment's connection with the communities it serves. They are a chance to honour the Regiment's heritage, celebrate its achievements, and inspire the next generation of soldiers. Whether it's through a child's wide-eyed wonder at a piece of military

equipment or a meaningful conversation with a soldier, these moments have the potential to shape perceptions and spark aspirations.

As the 2025 county show season draws to a close, 3 Royal Anglian can reflect on another successful year of engagement. From the Suffolk Show's VE Day parade to the Lincolnshire Show's royal visit and the Norfolk Show's sporting victory, the Regiment has once again demonstrated its commitment to representing the Army with pride and professionalism.

In the rural heartlands of Norfolk, Suffolk, and Lincolnshire, where recruitment can be a challenge, the county shows offer a vital opportunity to connect with the public and showcase the best of the British Army. For 3 Royal Anglian, these events are more than just a display—they are a chance to build relationships, inspire futures, and ensure that the Regiment's legacy continues to thrive.



## Exercise RHINO HEART 25

In a historic display of military collaboration and readiness, Ex Rhino Heart 25 marked the largest deployment of British Army Reserve soldiers since the Cold War. Over 800 part-time soldiers from the UK, Canada, Estonia, and France came together in Sennelager, Germany, to participate in this ambitious multinational training exercise.

Designed to simulate real-world scenarios, the exercise tested the ability of the British Army Reserve to mobilise rapidly, operate alongside partner nations and NATO allies, and respond to a range of potential challenges. The exercise not only strengthened the capabilities of the individual units involved but also reinforced the operational readiness of the British Army and NATO, and their critical role in Defence.

Ex Rhino Heart 25 highlighted the essential role of the Army Reserve in contemporary Defence output, both domestically and overseas. The exercise brought together Reserve Combat Support (CS) and Combat Service Support (CSS) units from across the Army, demonstrating their ability to integrate with teeth arms. This collaboration underscores the importance of the Reserve Army as a vital component of UK Defence strategy, capable of contributing to large-scale operations and enhancing the nation's military capabilities.

particularly significant for the participating units, as it provided a unique opportunity to train in a multinational environment. For many of the Reserve soldiers, this was their first experience working alongside international allies and overseas. The exercise not only tested individual skills but also fostered a sense of camaraderie and mutual understanding among the troops and strengthened bonds between allied nations.

The build-up to Ex Rhino Heart 25 was a year-long process, with participating units focusing on meeting theatre entry standards. This rigorous



Cpl Craig Fernando.

preparation ensured that all soldiers, whether they deployed to Germany or not, were better trained and more operationally ready than ever before. For the Steelbacks this preparation significantly enhanced our deployability and overall readiness, making the Battalion the most prepared it has been as a Unit in recent years.

The exercise itself was divided into two distinct phases. The first phase focused on low-level, role-specific

training, allowing soldiers to hone their individual skills and develop their expertise in their respective trades. For the Infantry Units this phase was led by the training team from 3 Royal Anglian, under the leadership of the RSM. The team provided infantry training for all four participating companies, helping them refine their tactics, techniques, and procedures. They also delivered training for some of the CS and CSS units, reinforcing the "soldier first" ethos





## 3rd Battalion



**Padre Maj Antony Wilson delivering a service in the field to Steelbacks.**

that is sometimes overlooked in more technical roles.

One of the highlights of the first phase was the integration of the Battalion's fledgling Uncrewed Aerial Systems (UAS) capability. Drawing on lessons learned from the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, the UAS teams supported the Brigade's efforts to develop an integral Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) capability.

These systems were integrated into the training of infantry companies and allocated to the light reconnaissance troops of the Scottish and Northern Irish Yeomanry (SNIY), providing a genuine advantage in the field.

While the majority of troops were engaged in field training, the headquarters elements of SNIY and 4th Battalion, The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment (4 LANCS) participated in a command and staff training package this training prepared them to form and operate as Battle Group Headquarters (BGHQs). The newly formed BGHQs then issued orders to the exercising companies, setting the stage for the



**Sgt Lewis Dean delivering door entry drills lessons.**



**Sgt Craig Davitt being presented with a commendation by Brig Lisa Brooks.**



# The Steelbacks

second phase of the exercise.

Phase two of Ex Rhino Heart 25 brought together the newly formed BGs, complete with their attached CS and CSS elements, for a large-scale field training exercise. This phase focused on executing a series of offensive and defensive actions in both urban and rural environments. The scenarios were designed to test the BGs ability to operate as cohesive teams, adapt to changing circumstances, and achieve their objectives under challenging conditions with a freethinking opposition.

This phase also provided an opportunity for units to work alongside supporting arms, such as Royal Engineers and Fire Support Teams (FSTs) from the Royal Artillery. The Engineers demonstrated their expertise in explosive methods of entry, enabling freedom of manoeuvre through heavily defended urban areas.

The FSTs provided critical firepower, enhancing the effectiveness of the BGs.

For many soldiers, this was their first experience working with these attached assets, offering valuable insights into the capabilities and contributions of different arms of the Army.

A key feature of Ex Rhino Heart 25 was the use of Tactical Engagement Simulation (TES), a training tool that replicates the effects of weapons and battlefield conditions using laser-based equipment, sensors, and computer systems. TES is not commonly used in Reserve training, making its inclusion in



**Maj Matt Ottaway being served breakfast by Brig Lisa Brooks.**

this exercise particularly noteworthy.

TES allowed soldiers to practise their skills without the risks and costs associated with live fire. The system provided a safe and controlled environment for training, enabling troops to experience realistic combat scenarios while minimising the potential for injury. TES also introduced an additional layer of complexity to the exercise, as the UAS were used to simulate attacks that could affect individual soldiers' TES equipment, creating "casualties" in areas that might not typically be targeted. TES also provided immediate

feedback and enabling after-action reviews. These reviews allowed soldiers and commanders to analyse their performance, identify areas for improvement, and refine their tactics for future operations.

From an individual perspective, I would consider myself lucky to have been involved in Ex Rhino Heart 25. I am now one of only four OCs within the whole of the Army Reserve to have been in role in an exercise of this scale and significance. It was a fantastic opportunity to learn both from the mentoring delivered and from my peers; it's an opportunity that I am unlikely to get again.



**SNiY ROC Drill.**

Away from the green skills of the exercise there were opportunities to come together and socialise; the Battalion Padre had opportunities to bring us together in moments of reflection; there was a rare chance for the Brigade Commander to address and reward Steelbacks all helping to build the moral component of fighting power within the Battalion.

The benefits of Ex Rhino Heart 25 extend far beyond the individual units involved. For the British Army, the exercise reinforced the critical role of the Army Reserve in modern Defence considerations. It demonstrated the





# 3rd Battalion

Reserve's ability to mobilise quickly, integrate with other forces, and contribute to large-scale multinational exercises. This is particularly important as the British Army continues to adapt to the evolving demands of modern warfare, which increasingly require flexibility,

adaptability, and collaboration.

Ex Rhino Heart 25 was a landmark event for the British Army Reserve and the wider British Army. By providing realistic, large-scale training opportunities, the exercise enhanced operational readiness,

fostered interoperability, and reinforced collective Defence commitments. It also showcased the professionalism and dedication of military personnel from a multitude of cap badges and highlighted the role the Army Reserve plays today.

## Exercise FUTURE LEADER 25

The Ministry of Defence (MoD) is keen to establish open, strategic and long-lasting relationships with employers, tailoring partnering opportunities mutual needs and business goals. It is the Reserve Forces and Cadet Association (RFCA) Defence Relationship

Management team that provides the MoD with regional and local connections with employers. The voluntary membership of the East Anglia RFCA includes county groups of local employers supportive of the Defence community. It is these employers, who have pledged to support Defence people under the Armed Forces Covenant, who were offered the opportunity by the East Anglia RFCA to attend Ex Future Leader 25.

Fifty potential leaders from the civilian world of work from across the East Anglian region attended a Military Leadership course at the Norwich Army Reserve Centre. Future Leader is a professional development course based on the British Army's approach to leadership and management. The event is designed to build leadership skills, combining theory and practical applications. This opportunity is offered exclusively to local employers as part of the MoD's Employer Recognition Scheme.

After the welcome reception, the day began with an introduction to Op TEAMWORK and how the Army does leadership; the leadership code and values and standards were covered and bought to life by personal experiences from members of the Bn HQ team. During this the delegates are introduced to the "Big Picture" building the foundation for them to understand

military take on leadership, management but also how we as an organisation instil these principles throughout the careers of all our members and how they would be integrated by reserve soldiers into their civilian workplace.

Following the briefings the delegates are broken down into teams and rotate through practical and information stands including Physical Training, Airsoft Range, Command Tasks, Weapons and VR section drills, allowing them to develop their leadership and teamwork skills.

The physical Training stand was run by the units QMSI, he covered the basic parts of fitness requirements such as the SCR and load carriage, allowing the delegates to try on the standard kit expected to be carried by reserve soldiers on the annual physical tests.

The command stand was carried out in teams of four, one delegate was the team leader giving instructions using just a whistle to the remainder who were blindfolded making their way through a minefield to collect ammunition containers, before returning to the start location. This was seen by the delegates as one of the most difficult parts of the day as they hadn't met or worked with each other in a team before that morning. This challenged their communication and collaborative working, which did bring out natural leadership skills in some.

The Airsoft range allows delegates to see how we train using low tech weapons which allow for dry training to be carried out during a training evening where time and space are at a premium, this is one of the stands the delegates seem to enjoy, it was run using basic fire

control orders read out by the delegates to practice their communications skills whilst others engaged targets in a outdoor range built by Sgt Pritchard's team.

The delegates to find out about an array of section and platoon weapons used by reservists, they have a chance to handle the GPMG, Rifle and Pistol, many were surprised by the weights especially of the GPMG.

On the VR stand the delegates get to in pairs to carry out drills in an emersed environment, this is using equipment owned by 1 Company and used at great length by reserve soldiers on training evenings.

These three stands although carried out of sync for some delegates linked together give an understanding of the use of weapons and low-level tactics, the delegates all said at the end that being able to tie these together was one of the most informative parts of the day.

During these stands the delegates meet both regular and reserve soldiers, interacting and getting the soldiers view of Army Reserve life. This allows them to ask questions and gain an understanding that helps them inform their own organisation on how Army Reservists transferable skills can be carried over becoming a more valuable member of staff.

The day ends with the delegates being presented with a certificate of attendance and a feedback session. The event draws high praise from those who attend and seen a valuable worthwhile experience for both delegates and military personal.



## Gibraltar Study 2025: Developing Leadership, Fitness, and Battlegroup Expertise

In July 2025, the 3rd Battalion gathered in Grantham at Prince William of Gloucester Barracks for the annual Gibraltar Study weekend, a key event designed to challenge and develop the skills of Senior Non-Commissioned Officers (SNCOs) and Officers.

This year's focus was on building headquarters capability and deepening understanding of battlegroup tactics. For many participants, this was their first experience—or their first in quite some time—of operating at this level, making it a valuable opportunity for professional growth and leadership development.

However, before the training officially began, the weekend kicked off with a unique and very competitive Hyrox fitness challenge, setting the tone for teamwork, resilience, and physical endurance. For those who may be unaware, a Hyrox workout is a competitive fitness race that combines a 1km run with a functional exercise, repeated eight times. It is a hybrid of strength and endurance training, featuring a set order of eight stations including things like burpees, a rower, a kettlebell farmer's carry, weighted lunges, etc.

For some, this event was a chance to showcase their physical prowess, while for others, it was an opportunity to step outside their comfort zones and embrace the battalion's ethos of resilience and determination. The competition served as a powerful reminder of the importance of physical fitness in military leadership, reinforcing the connection between physical and mental readiness.

Following the high-energy start, the weekend transitioned into its primary focus: developing battlegroup expertise. The training began with an introduction to battlegroup tactics, providing a solid foundation for the practical exercises to follow. The session covered the fundamentals of how a battlegroup can be task-organised to meet specific operational requirements, as well as how a battlegroup fights.



**Experimenting with ICAVS(D) to understand capability.**



**The combined Messes of 3 R ANGLIAN with guests in the ATR(G) WOs and Sgts Mess.**

Particular emphasis was placed on command and control, highlighting the importance of effective communication, decision-making, and synchronisation of assets. We explored the flexibility of battlegroup structures, learning how to integrate combat, combat support, and combat service support elements to achieve mission success. This theoretical grounding set the stage for the more dynamic, hands-on training

that followed.

The highlight of the weekend was a practical exercise using the Integrated Command and Staff Trainer (Deployable), or ICAVS(D).

ICAVS(D) is a deployable virtual reality simulation system used by Defence to provide immersive, collective training for personnel from vehicle crews to combinedarms sub-units. Developed by ElbitSystems UK,





## 3rd Battalion

it allows units to train and rehearse missions in a wide range of complex scenarios at times and locations of their choosing.

It uses high-specification hardware and software (VTS2) to deliver realistic, immersive tactical training. The system simulates a wide variety of British Army equipment and weapon systems, including planned future systems, and can be adapted for almost any scenario and supports training at various levels, from individual vehicle crews to higher-level commands.

Because ICAVS(D) can be set up at barracks or deployed in the field, the Battalion was able to bring the training to us. It enables experimentation with emerging technologies like drones and helps maintain a high level of operational readiness for both Regular

and Reserve forces. Units can use the system to rehearse specific missions and prepare for operations, including for environments like urban settings that would be a part of Ex RHINO HEART 25 later in the year.

Participants were able to execute a pre-planned mission in a realistic and immersive environment, testing their ability to apply the principles of battle group tactics in a high-pressure scenario.

The mission centred on two key objectives: a deliberate obstacle crossing and a deliberate attack on Copehill Down Village on Salisbury Plain.

Adding to the complexity, participants were assigned roles "1- up" from their usual positions, pushing them out of their comfort zones and encouraging them to think and act at a higher level of command. This

approach not only enhanced individual development but also fostered a deeper appreciation of the challenges faced by those in higher command roles.

After a full day of intense training, the weekend transitioned to a more formal and social setting with a mess dinner. This provided an opportunity for participants to reflect on the day's activities, share insights, and strengthen bonds within the battalion.

As the 3rd Battalion continues to prepare for future challenges, events like Gibraltar Study play a crucial role in ensuring that its leaders are ready to operate effectively in complex and demanding environments. The skills and knowledge gained during the weekend will undoubtedly enhance the battalion's readiness and effectiveness, both at home and on operations.

## Parachuting

The journey from ground-based theory to freefall mastery is an intense one, meticulously crafted through the Parachute Foundation Training (PFT) and Parachute Intermediate Training (PIT) courses.

Before we even set foot near an aircraft, PFT have a ground training all candidates must pass. It was a comprehensive induction, designed to take individuals with absolutely no prior parachuting experience and equip them with the fundamental knowledge and skills. We started with the basics: parachute familiarisation, the mechanics of a static line jump, and the critical pre-jump checks. Hours were spent in the rigs strung up from the roof in a simulation for the descent under canopy, allowing us to practice steering, malfunction drills, and most importantly, the parachute landing fall (PLF). The PLF, practiced relentlessly, became muscle memory – an essential reflex to minimise injury upon returning to ground. Emergency drills, from dealing with malfunctions to tree and water landings, were also practiced until they were second nature. The PFT



2Lt Adam Smeeton in action.



## The Steelbacks

crafts and dedication to the task. Among us felt a growing confidence in our ability to safely exit an aircraft.

With PFT under my belt, Parachute intermediate training (PIT) took me to the next level. This is where the theoretical knowledge from PFT truly transitioned into practical application.

The initial phases of PIT focused heavily on static line jumps. Progressing onto "dummy pulling" is where the true art of controlled freefall begins to emerge. Dummy pulling, in essence, is practicing the manual deployment of your parachute in a controlled environment, mimicking a freefall jump without being in freefall. We'd wear our full static line rig and practice the entire sequence: the count, the arch, and pulling a square piece of fabric from the bottom of the container, all while simulating the in-air body position. Again, building the muscle memory and the mental fortitude required to progress onto the next stage.

Looking back, the PFT and PIT courses are "zero to hero courses" in progressive training. They build competence and confidence, taking raw novices to the sport and transforming them into proficient parachutists. As



**2Lt Adam Smeeton before his first jump.**

a Platoon Commander, the lessons learned extend far beyond the technical aspects of parachuting. The discipline, the attention to detail, the importance

of teamwork and trust, to enable the ability to perform under pressure are all invaluable attributes honed during this intensive training.

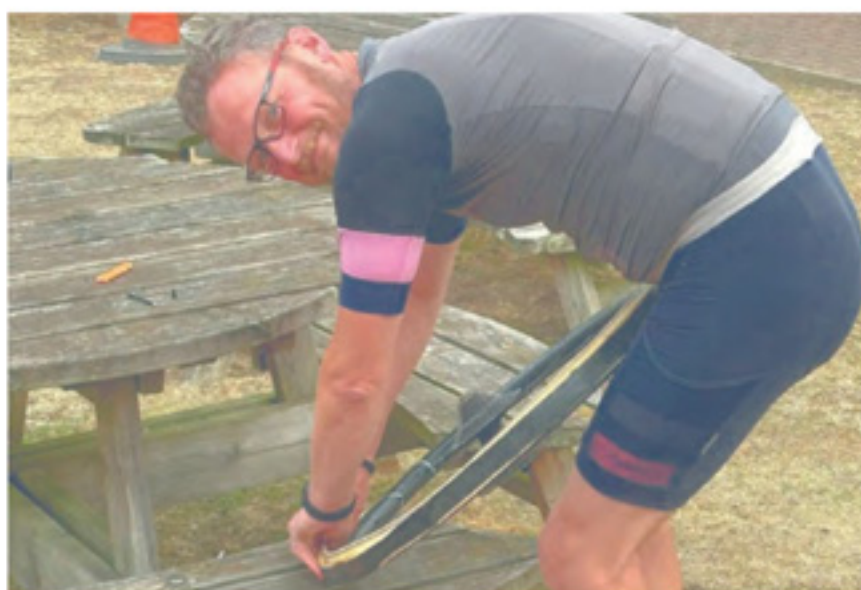
## Ex Royal Anglian Ride 20

Capt Matt Wilman, Adjutant + R. ANGLIAN

In July, a team from across the Regiment took part in a charity bike ride across the Regiment's recruiting counties. Led by the RSM of the 3rd Battalion, WO1 Phil Green, the team took on a 550 mile route over 5 days. The complete team included soldiers from all three Battalion's, as well as people currently posted across the UK, from ATR Grantham to MOD Main Building.

Day 1 took the team 115 miles from the start point at Kendrew Barracks to Norwich, joined on this day by a number of soldiers newer to cycling. Some good impromptu hill climb races added some fatigue to the legs! Great weather made this an enjoyable day's ride, finishing in the pub for some 'recovery'. The second day saw a smaller team ride 106 miles from Norwich to Chelmsford.

Wednesday saw the toughest stage,



**WO1 (RSM) Philip Green changing a flat.**





## 3rd Battalion

132 hilly miles from Chelmsford to Leicester, which was complete by just WO1 Green and WO2 Waters, with a number of the team away racing. This day started with drama as WO1 Green's tyre decided it didn't want to have any air in it before setting off, which resulted in a frustrating trip to a local bike shop. A long day in the saddle saw the team finish in Leicester, gone 1900hrs, for some well earned rest.

Day 4 saw the team grow again with me back from racing in Leeds. I clearly bought the northern weather back with me, as the only rain of the week fell for a miserable couple of hours, lessened only by a café stop! Fortunately, it didn't last all day, and we could enjoy a stop in Lincoln for a picture at the castle, and some big efforts on the front from all of us bought our timings back on track. We made it the 105 miles to Grimsby in good time, albeit with some very sore bodies.

The final day, from Grimsby back to Kendrew Barracks, was made more exciting with us joined by Guy Martin, the famous motorbike racer-turned-TV personality. Guy, having always lived in Grimsby and often used the airfield at Kendrew for his projects, was humbled to be asked to join us. We took an early morning spin down to Cleethorpes to



Capt Matt Willman, WO2 Matt Waters and WO1 Philip Green on the road.



ExRIDEteam before setting off from Kendrew Barracks.



## The Steelbacks

the Poacher memorial bench there for a picture, before beginning the 90 mile slog, powered by sugar and pain killers, back into Rutland. Joined by a number of other riders closer to Grantham, and with the sun beaming, we made it back into Kendrew to a small reception which

put a smile on everyone's face.

A much harder challenge than any of us keen cyclists expected, we finished with some very sore legs and tired bodies. We are happy to have raised £1300 for the Regimental benevolent fund, going towards helping our soldiers

and veterans.

It's too early to say what WO1 Green has planned for next year, but with an intent of making this an enduring event to both raise money and develop cycling across the Regiment, we only know it will be longer and harder!

## Racing Ahead: How 3 R ANGLIAN is Engaging the Public at Silverstone

For the past eight years, a dedicated team of Army Reserve personnel from the 3rd Battalion has been making its mark at one of the UK's most iconic venues; Silverstone racetrack. From humble beginnings, this initiative has grown into a significant engagement opportunity, showcasing the British Army to hundreds of thousands of motorsport fans during high-profile events like Formula 1 and MotoGP.

The journey began with a simple request. The Army Reserve Liaison Officer from Joint Military Command (JMC) Centre based in Chetwynd Barracks, Chilwell approached 3 R ANGLIAN to represent the Army at smaller events, such as touring car and classic car shows. The aim was to gain experience and build credibility, eventually earning an invitation to the larger, more prestigious events.

In those early days, the team's setup was modest: a single gazebo and a few weapons on display. However, even this small presence sparked interest among the public, and the team quickly realised the potential of these events as a platform to engage with a wide audience. Over time, their knowledge and confidence grew, and so did their ambitions. JMC took notice, and the military presence at Silverstone began to expand, showcasing not just the infantry but the diverse roles and opportunities available across, not just the British Army but Defence as a whole.

True to their infantry roots, the team soon upped their game. The display evolved to include heavy weapon systems such as the Heavy Machine Gun (HMG) and Grenade Machine



**Ptes Indiana Totty and Jessica Nelson with the public.**

Gun (GMG), as well as quad bikes, generously loaned by the 2nd Battalion. These additions proved to be a major draw for the public, who were eager to interact with the equipment and the soldiers themselves.

The numbers speak for themselves. During the four-day Formula 1 event,

Silverstone attracts an astonishing 500,000 visitors, while MotoGP sees around 100,000 fans. The 3 R ANGLIAN team quickly realised that the combination of cutting-edge military equipment and the chance to meet real soldiers was a winning formula. From the circuit opening at 0730 to 1830





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each day, the stand was inundated with visitors, and the team thrived on the energy and enthusiasm of the crowd.

While the weapon systems and vehicles are undoubtedly a highlight, the team's true passion lies in showcasing the people behind the kit. Motorsport fans travel from across the country, and indeed the world, to attend these events, providing a unique opportunity to demonstrate what the 3rd Battalion, the Regiment and the British Army as a whole have to offer.

The team's commitment to engagement extends beyond the stand itself. Soldiers often volunteer to participate in on-stage activities, adding a personal touch to the event.

For example, Private Fowler from 4 Company has become something of a regular in games and quizzes, even claiming to "deliberately lose" to keep the fans happy (or so she says!).

This year, the military presence at Silverstone included over 250 personnel from all three services, with helicopters, armoured personnel carriers, drones

and whole variety of other platforms on display. Looking ahead, the 3 R ANGLIAN team hopes to expand their presence even further, with plans to involve up to 20 soldiers and additional support weapons in future events.

The days at Silverstone are long and demanding. Reveille is at 0500, and the team doesn't stop until around 1900 each evening. However, the camaraderie and shared sense of purpose make it all worthwhile. After a hard day's work, the team often gathers for a well-earned curry at one of Leicester's best Indian restaurants, Paddy Martins, a tradition that has become a highlight of the experience.

There are also unique perks to being part of the Silverstone team. Members are often invited to exclusive behind-the-scenes experiences, such as walking the pit lanes, exploring the fan zones, and getting up close to the motorbikes and cars. These moments provide a rare opportunity to see the world of motorsport from a different perspective, adding an extra layer of excitement to

the event.

Silverstone also serves as a meeting point for the wider regimental family. The team frequently encounters ex-servicemen and women, sparking reminiscence about shared experiences. Inevitably, someone will bring up the classic line: "It's not as good as the SLR," referring to the kit they once used. These interactions are a reminder of the enduring bonds within the regiment and the Army as a whole.

What began as a small-scale initiative has grown into a major engagement opportunity, allowing the Regiment to connect with a diverse audience and showcase the best of the British Army.

With plans to expand their presence even further, the team is already looking ahead to next year's events. Whether it's through the roar of Formula 1 engines or the thrill of MotoGP, one thing is certain: 3 R ANGLIAN will continue to make their mark at Silverstone, demonstrating not just their equipment, but the dedication, professionalism, and spirit of their people.

## Steelback Remembrance





## The Steelbacks







## 3rd Battalion

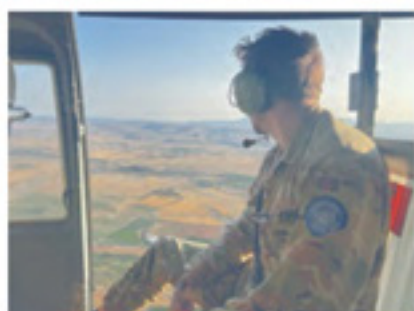
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# The Steelbacks

## Steelbacks Supporting Op TOSCA with a RRF







# Regimental Band

## The International Tattoo in Ostend, Belgium

Capt Jason Griffiths, Director of Music

During the first weekend of October, the International Tattoo in Ostend, Belgium, once again brought together the finest military musicians, dancers, and performers from around the globe. Among the key figures of this prestigious event was Capt Jason Griffiths, the Director of Music for the Royal Anglian Band, who was invited to serve as the Principal Director of Music for the Tattoo.

The term "Tattoo" has its roots in the 17th century, derived from the Dutch phrase "doe den tap toe," which translates to "turn off the taps." Originally, it was a military signal, played on a drum or bugle, instructing taverns to stop serving beer so that soldiers could return to their barracks for the night. Over time, the word evolved to represent grand military musical events, showcasing the precision, discipline, and artistry of military bands.

The International Tattoo Belgium, or Internationale Taptoe België, has been held annually since 2015 at the COREtec Dome in Ostend. This unique indoor venue, with a seating capacity of 2,800, provides the perfect setting for the elaborate performances. This year there was three sold-out shows, each offering a dazzling display of music, culture, and pageantry.

The International Tattoo Belgium is renowned for its diverse line-up, and this year's edition was no exception. Over 500 performers from countries including Belgium, Ukraine, Holland, Korea, and the United Kingdom took part, alongside international Pipes, Drums, and Dancers. Each act brought its own unique flavour to the event, blending cultural traditions with military precision to create a truly unforgettable experience.

The performances ranged from stirring pipe and drum displays to intricate marching routines and vibrant cultural dances. Each act showcased the rich heritage of its country, captivating the audience with a mix of traditional and contemporary music. The atmosphere in the COREtec Dome was



Director of Music Capt Jason Griffiths.

electric, as the audience was treated to a thrilling spectacle of sound, movement, and showmanship.

While each individual performance was a highlight in its own right, the true magic of the International Tattoo lay in its grand finale. The Massed Band Finale brought together all 500 performers for a breathtaking conclusion. Under the direction of Capt Griffiths, the Massed Bands performed a selection of iconic pieces, including the beloved pipe tune "Highland Cathedral." The

audience was also treated to a medley of music from The Greatest Showman, which added a touch of theatrical flair, and a rousing selection of ABBA's greatest hits, which had the crowd clapping and singing along.

The finale was a testament to the power of music to unite people from different cultures and backgrounds.

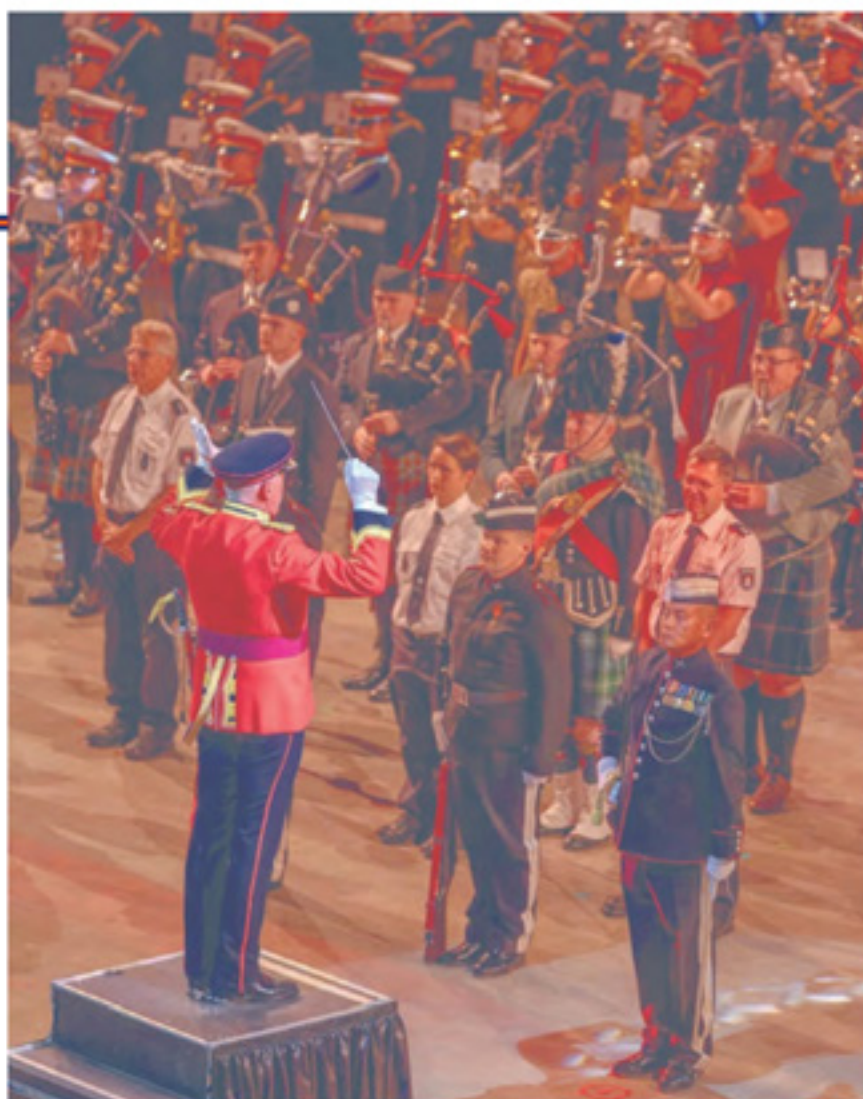
It was a moment of shared joy and celebration, leaving the audience with memories to treasure long after the final note had been played.



The International Tattoo in Ostend is a prestigious event, and the participation of Capt Griffiths as Principal Director of Music highlights the calibre of talent within the Royal Anglian Regiment. His leadership and vision were instrumental in bringing together the diverse performers and creating a seamless, awe-inspiring show.

The International Tattoo in Ostend is more than just a musical event; it is a celebration of tradition, culture, and unity. In a world that often feels divided, the Tattoo serves as a reminder of the power of music to bring people together, transcending borders and differences.

Looking ahead, there is hope that the Royal Anglian Band will one day have the opportunity to perform at the event. Their inclusion would not only showcase the exceptional talent within the Regiment but also further strengthen the bonds between the UK and the international military music community. Until then, the memories of this years Tattoo will serve as a source of inspiration, reminding us all of the enduring power of music to connect and inspire.



**R ANGLIAN DOM with massed pipes and drums.**



**The Massed Band Finale.**





# RMAS Sandhurst

Royal Anglian Regiment at the  
Royal Military Academy Sandhurst



From left: 2Lt Max Nicholls, 2Lt James Summerton, CSgt Oli Schurch, Maj Will Hoy, 2Lt Austin Brazier, 2Lt Jack Coffin

The Royal Military Academy Sandhurst (RMAS) remains the beating heart of British Army officer training. Every year, hundreds of civilians walk through the gates of the Academy and, over the course of forty-four demanding weeks, develop into capable, confident, combat ready Second Lieutenants ready to lead soldiers on operations across the world.

The Commissioning Course is tough by design. It tests character, intellect, resilience, leadership and fieldcraft, and crucially, prepares officers of every cap badge to join the Field Army. Within that mission, Royal Anglian instructors continue to play a key role.

The Royal Anglian Regiment  
presence at Sandhurst

The Regiment has a long tradition of excellence at Sandhurst and Royal

Anglian instructors have helped shape generations of young leaders with a number of our former RSMs having been instructors at the Academy. Today, the Royal Anglian Permanent Staff contingent consists of; Major Will Hoy (Chief Instructor New College), Colour Sergeant Oli Schurch (Senior Term Instructor) and Colour Sergeant Jake Harraway (Intermediate Term Instructor). All three have recently returned from Exercise DYNAMIC VICTORY in Germany, the culminating exercise for Officer Cadets prior to commissioning. Conducted across Grafenwoehr and Hohenfels training areas alongside US and Slovenian troops and soldiers from 2 PARA, 5 RIFLES and 1RRF, the exercise is the final test the cadets must pass before they march up the steps of Old College and join the

Field Army.

As any officer knows, the magic of RMAS lies with the CSgt instructors and both CSgt Schurch and Harraway have made an immediate impact across the Academy with both staff and cadets. CSgt Schurch won the Sovereign's Banner Competition which is awarded by the Sovereign to objectively the best platoon across the entire intake. This achievement reflects not only his personal professionalism, but the reputation and instructional quality of Royal Anglian SNCOs at the Academy. CSgt Schurch will receive a formal letter from His Majesty in recognition.

Why Royal Anglians should  
consider a Sandhurst posting

Serving as an instructor at RMAS is one of the most rewarding roles available to



Officers and SNCOs in the Regiment and directly affects the quality of the young officers who join the Battalions, and few appointments give you greater influence over the future leadership of the British Army. Royal Anglian Colour Sergeants shape and coach young men and women who will go on to command troops on operations worldwide and have a key role in the Regimental Selection Board (RSB) process.

As Brigadier Foden once explained at an RSB, the key viewpoint he is interested in when selecting an officer for our Regiment is the view of the Colour Sergeant.

The path to joining RMA as a SNCO instructor is an achievable and formative process. The Sandhurst Instructor Aptitude Course (SIAC) runs annually and is the gateway to joining the Academy staff. It is a six-week course designed to select and prepare some of the Army's best instructors and any Royal Anglian SNCO may apply and it is perfectly suited to a second-year Sergeant. Typically, instructors spend their early terms within the Combined Arms Manoeuvre Wing, delivering lessons, running ranges, supporting the Colleges, and deploy on every exercise with a platoon in support of the

lead SNCO. They then progress to the Colleges to take ownership of a platoon and carry them through the full 44-week commissioning journey – a career highlight for any SNCO. From there, opportunities exist to return as Company Sergeant Major, and later potentially as Regimental Sergeant Major of Old College.

The next SIAC runs in February 2026, with the following planned for February 2027. Any SNCO that is interested is strongly encouraged to attend and should get in touch of any of the current Royal Anglian staff at RMA who will guide them through the process.

Welcome to our newest Platoon Commanders

Finally, we are delighted to welcome the newest officers into the Regiment:

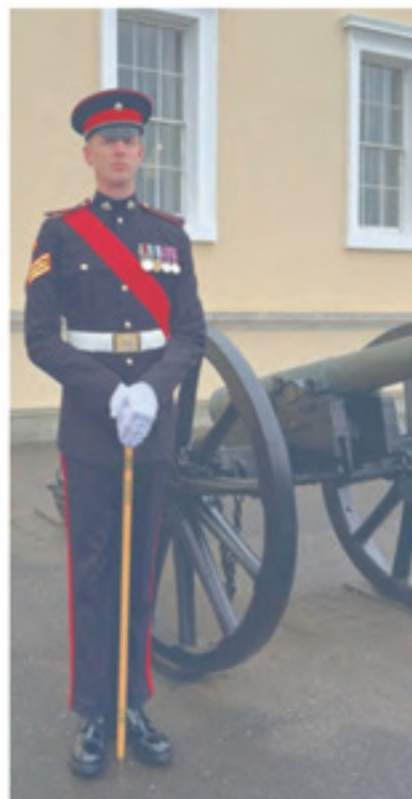
2Lt Austin Brazier – 1 R ANGLIAN

2Lt Max Nicholls – 1 R ANGLIAN

2Lt James Summerton – 2 R ANGLIAN

2Lt Jack Coffin – 2 R ANGLIAN

It is a huge achievement to be selected to join the Royal Regiment and the privilege of a lifetime to be able to lead Vikings and Poachers. We wish them all the very best and look forward to seeing them join the Battalions in the new year.



**Congratulations to CSgt Oli Schurch for his platoon winning the Sovereign's Banner competition which is awarded to the best Platoon of the intake.**



**The next generation of Royal Anglian Officers along with Major General Olly Brown CBE and the RMA team.**





# Book Reviews

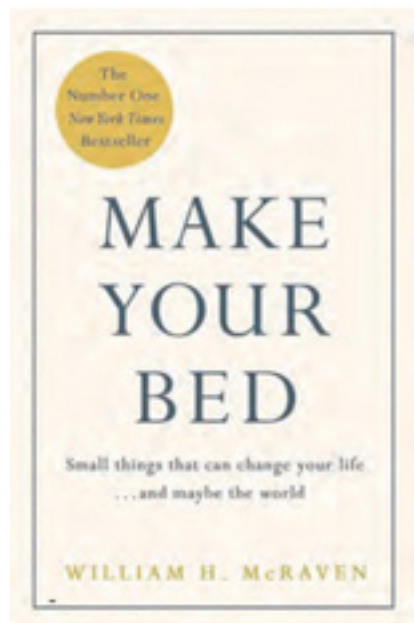
WO1 Paul Kennedy

When I returned from my first tour of Afghanistan, I picked up Peter Hopkirk's *The Great Game*. It was a revelation. The complex dynamics I had just experienced on the ground, tribal loyalties, shifting alliances, competing influences, all suddenly sat within a broader historical frame. I remember thinking that had I read it before deploying, I might have approached the tour differently, with a sharper sense of context and perspective. Fortunately, I was to return to Afghanistan on a further five deployments, and the perspective from this book, and many others, proved invaluable.

General James Mattis once observed, "The problem with being too busy to read is that you learn by experience." His point was simple: if we neglect the lessons recorded in books, we're condemned to learn only from our own mistakes, often at unnecessary cost. Reading doesn't replace experience, but it deepens it, and it prepares us for challenges we haven't yet faced. With that in mind, I want to recommend three books with lessons that have shaped my own approach to soldiering and to life.

McRaven shared lessons from his career as a Navy SEAL. He builds on those lessons in the book, each one centred on a simple principle, such as starting the day with a completed task or refusing to quit when things get tough. One I took from it was a reminder that resilience isn't built in grand gestures, but in the steady grind of daily habits. Even on the hardest tours, it was the small rituals, weapon cleaning, kit checks, meeting timings, these kept standards and morale intact. The book flows easily, and the audiobook version, narrated by McRaven himself, adds even more weight and context.

the bonds forged in hardship, they all resonate with the campaigns that our own Regiment has faced. Most of all, the book doesn't shy away from the leadership dilemmas and moral problems we sometimes like to pretend don't exist, but which every soldier and leader knows are absolutely real. For soldiers, it is raw and unvarnished; it is a sobering study in the cost of command and the burden of responsibility.



## Make Your Bed

Admiral William H McRaven

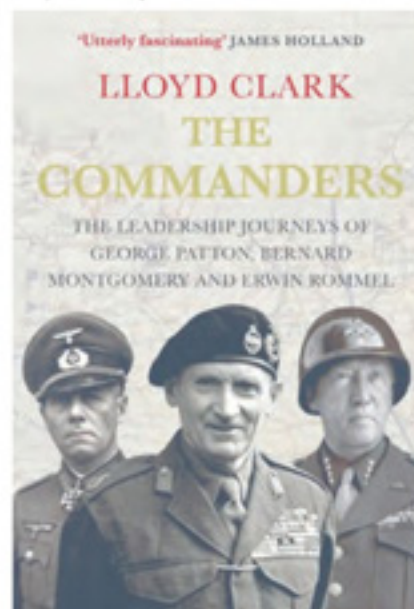
This book began as a commencement speech that went viral on YouTube,



## Matterhorn

Karl Marlantes

This is a brutally honest novel of the Vietnam War, and what makes it stand out is how vividly it captures the fear, exhaustion, and moral dilemmas of young soldiers and officers in combat, better than most history books ever could. Marlantes, himself a Marine veteran, gives a visceral sense of what it means to fight, endure, and make impossible choices in the harshest conditions. What I value most is that the stories transcend Vietnam: the situations he describes, such as confusion in the field, the weight of command, and



## The Commanders

Professor Lloyd Clark

Of working with Professor Clark whose contribution to the British Army as Director of Research at the Centre for Army Leadership has been immense. This book is a superb example of his ability to draw lessons from the past and present them in a way that is both engaging and relevant.

In it, he examines the leadership journeys of Montgomery, Patton, and Rommel. Rather than simply recounting battles, he explores how character, personality, and decision-making influenced events of global significance.

The result is a study rich with timeless lessons in the art of command, highlighting the tensions of coalition warfare, the centrality of trust, and the human flaws that even great leaders must contend with. What makes it



especially powerful is the human lens through which Clark tells the story: showing how these leaders were shaped first as young men and then junior officers, by the influences around them and the situations they faced, before stepping onto the stage of history. Professor Clark leaves us with a powerful truth: that great leaders are not born fully formed, but shaped over time by trial, error, and influence, something especially important for us to reflect on

as a Regiment that continues to shape and develop its own leaders.

#### The Power of Reading

Each of these books is very different, one built on simple principles, one a raw account of war, and one a study of the great commanders of history, but together they underline the value of reading as preparation for soldiering and for life.

General Mattis's warning was

clear: if we don't read, we're forced to learn only through our own mistakes.

By drawing on the lessons of others, whether through history, fiction, or leadership studies—we sharpen our perspective, strengthen our resilience, and better equip ourselves for the challenges ahead.

For a Regiment that continues to shape its own leaders, reading is not just a pastime, but a tool of professional excellence.

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# The SAS Reserve

The SAS Reserve has been operating for almost 80 years delivering a range of specialist roles. Today the two units, 21 and 23 SAS, provide UKSF a force of part time SAS soldiers conducting highly specialised missions and tasks. They operate overseas 24/7, globally, all year round. As an integrated, first echelon component of UKSF, SAS Reservists are deployed routinely across the spectrum of UKSF campaigns – offering an unparalleled sense of purpose, a high degree of autonomy and unrivalled operational mastery. The Units trace their roots back to World War 2 with their foundations laid by David Stirling in the North African desert and with links to other clandestine organisations such as the SOE and MI9. Nowadays, 21 and 23 SAS operate as independent units conducting sensitive operations as an integral part of UKSF, with motivated individuals doing this as a reservist alongside a civilian career.

21 and 23 SAS specialise in covert action alongside partner forces in enemy occupied territory, as well as more traditional Special Forces roles such as close protection, military assistance, specialist reconnaissance and direct action. Much like the rest of UKSF they're continually deployed on operations but, unlike conventional Reserves they routinely deploy on their own unit operations, sometimes alongside other elements of UKSF – not only as individual augmentees supporting their regular counterparts. This sets them apart, with more responsibility resting on the soldiers and commander's shoulders, with more autonomy at team, sub-unit and unit level than most units of the British Army. To do all this they require a higher level of training, more expansive permissions and the right kit and equipment to make sure they can operate at the limits



of what is possible.

To join the SAS Reserve, individuals must first be Phase 2 trained in another Reserve (or Regular) unit. They initially undergo the UKSF Briefing Course and, if successful, candidates will be mobilised and undertake a 6 month, full-time, selection course. If candidates are successful, they routinely progress immediately onto Mission Specific Training (MST) and deploy operationally. Underpinning operations, SAS Reservists are resourced with state of the art, specialist SF weapon systems and equipment. Furthermore, they conduct a wide range of challenging, exciting and specialised training activities, including exercises with other nation's Special Forces across the range of temperate, desert, arctic and jungle environments.

The role of an SAS Reserve Trooper or Commander is busy but flexible, depending on individual circumstances. Reservists are

expected to mobilise operationally, every 3 years. In the UK, 60 Reserve Service days is the average contribution albeit, as with most Reserve units, some do less – and some do considerably more. In addition, the Reserve units (and wider UKSF) employ considerably more people on Full Time Reserve Service contracts than elsewhere. The flexible employment model means members of the Unit can have a UKSF career on their terms.

21 & 23 SAS accepts applications from male and female applicants from all services. Applicants must be Phase 2 trained (regular and reserve) and be no older than 43 years and 364 days when they start Selection. They must pass the UKSF Briefing Course then attend the 6-month selection course. For individuals leaving regular service Selection can even be done as part of resettlement. The SAS Reserve has detachments across the UK from the southwest of England to the north of Scotland with Selection running twice a year alongside regular UKSF selection.

As both units can deploy as formed organisations, they also need the appropriate attached ranks from other cap badges. Talented individuals are required from the Signals, Int Corps, RLC, AGC, RAMS and even the Chaplaincy, as well as joint roles in the operational planning space. This ensures the SAS Reserve can achieve all the missions asked of it by UKSF HQ. Reservist roles are routinely advertised on SERVE.

21 and 23 SAS offer a UKSF career on your terms and with all the access to operations, equipment, training and SF pay you'd get in the regulars, but part time. If you want to know more or are interested in applying for 21 or 23 SAS [enquiries@uksf.mod.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@uksf.mod.gov.uk)







# ITC Catterick

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Congratulations to Cpl Elliott Porter 2nd Battalion for being selected as the best instructor at ITC Catterick. The 2nd Royal Anglian Soldier in two years!





# Special Feature

## Gandamack Revisited



Mould on the Colour April 2025.



The Colour after restoration and reframed ready to go back home to Warley chapel.

Part of my role in RHQ is to work alongside the Colonel Heritage and get involved in all things that impact our Regimental fabric and identity. The Gandamack colour which is framed and hung at Warley Chapel has for some time been in a state of bad decay. Hung in the chapel in 1927 The Colour has been starting to grow mould due to a combination of poor framing (albeit this was done 98 years ago) and some issue with the building and the frames environment. The fantastic Mick Chapman and I removed the colour earlier in the year along with Colonel Heritage and I whisked it away to a textile preservation company in Bristol.

I am pleased to say the colour has been treated and restored and the technician that worked on it came out with some fantastic insights into her findings. There is still a couple of small beads/pearls embedded in the colour that

clearly the Afghans could not remove back in January of 1842 and along the top of the colour where remnants of red, white and blue silk which matches the colour in the painting of Souter during his last stand.

There colour had also very clearly been ripped from the colour staff which was confirmed by Souter in the letter to his wife after release from captivity. There were also very light traces of blood remaining on the colour. After the tragedy of Gandamack, what was left of the 44th - and that included a large detachment which in January 1842 had been on its way from India to Afghanistan to join the main body when it was turned around - embarked for England in February 1843 to be brought up to strength, Lt Gen Gore Brown had died on 12 January 1843, being succeeded by Lt Gen The Hon Patrick Stewart on 7 April 1843. New

Colours were presented to the 44th on 11 December 1843 by Lady Pakenham at Haslar, the Regiment then being based in Gosport.

The remnant of the Colour saved by Lt Souter, by then a Captain, was trooped for the last time and placed in Alverstoke Church, together with a memorial tablet (now of course with the Colour in the Chapel at Warley).

Sacred to the memory of 22 named officers and 645 NCOs and soldiers, who died in the Afghan War of 1841 and 1842 and which states "Their Colours, saved by Capt J Souter, one of the few survivors, hang above this stone, which is erected by the officers of the 44th Regiment, June 1844". This inscription strongly suggests that the regiment claimed ownership of the Colours and that it was the regiment that preserved the remnant as a memorial to all those who had died.



Moving forward, the 'Essex Regiment Gazette' of September 1926 makes it clear that efforts towards the 'beautification of the chapel' following its dedication to the Essex Regiment on 1 March 1925 were very much

undertaken by the regiment financed by subscriptions from many officers, a tattoo and fete, etc.

These efforts included "only a few weeks ago, two officers motoring to Alverstoke' to bring back the

Gandamack remnant and plaque".

The next article tells us more of the story of Gandamack and explains a fantastic mission which took place in 2003 to Get Royal Anglian boots on the site of the tragedy.

## The Last Stand of the 44<sup>th</sup> Regiment – Gandamack, Afghanistan 13 January 1842 Revisited



**Last stand of the 44th at Gandamack.**

Her Majesty's 44th Foot (Later the Essex Regiment, and subsequently 3rd Battalion the Royal Anglian Regiment) formed part of the Kabul Garrison from March 1841 to January 1842. Following insurrection, they were forced to retreat eastwards to Jalalabad.

Harried all the way by Afghan tribesmen, the remaining 30 men of HM 44th made their last stand on a hill to the west of the small village of Gandamack on 13 January 1842. This scene was subsequently immortalised in

the painting by William Barnes Wollen. In June 2003, a party of five men from A Company 2 R Anglian reached Gandamack to pay their respects. This is an historical overview of the retreat, and an account of the June 2003 expedition.

### Historical Overview

The Governor General of India (Lord Auckland) had deposed Dost Muhammed, the Emir, in the belief that he was under Russian influence, and, on 1st October 1838, a British army crossed

the Indus, drove the deposed monarch from Kabul and installed his rival Shah Suja instead. For the next two years, there followed a period of relative calm, and the garrison were able to enjoy a lifestyle like that enjoyed by the British Army in India.

The garrison troops numbered approximately 4,500 and consisted of HM 44th Foot, 5th, 27th, 35th, 37th 42nd, 54th, 58th and 61st Bengal Native Infantry (NI) Regiments, 5th Regiment Bengal Cavalry and elements from the





# Special Feature

Bengal Horse Artillery.

In October 1841, the 44th comprised 25 officers and 684 other ranks. It is noteworthy that of the officers, only three survived the subsequent fighting. The Regiment was deployed mainly on the Sia Sang Hills to the east of Kabul (which guarded the road to India), however, on the opening of hostilities in early November, a detachment of 100 men (under the command of Lt Souter) were deployed to the Bala Hissar - the ruinous citadel of Kabul.

Between November 1841 and January 1842, the Afghans engaged in guerrilla warfare, mounting increasingly bolder attacks against the political staff and garrison troops. On 2nd November, the Shah's political Advisor, Sir Alexander Burnes was murdered, followed by MacNaughten on 23rd December. Over this period, indecision and inaction prevented the GOC (Gen Elphinstone) from consolidating his defences.

Despite the murders thus far, and that on 6th December the bridge over the Kabul River connecting the cantonments and the Bala Hissar had been burned; he still believed a deal could be struck with the Afghans. Accordingly, Elphinstone accepted the promise of Akhbar Khan (son of Dost Muhammed) of safe passage for his troops from Kabul to the frontier.

So it was that at 0900hrs on 6th January 1842, the advance guard left the cantonments. In addition to the garrison troops, camp followers consisting of political/civil staff, wives, women and children joined the exodus. This added nearly 12,000 souls to the garrison strength of circa 4,400.

The account of the retreat is harrowing, but as it is not the object of this treatise, must be read elsewhere. Suffice to say that after six days of retreat, on 12th January, six mounted officers (none from the 44th) left the column in a desperate attempt to reach Jalalabad. Only one made it, Surgeon Brydon, who was subsequently immortalised in Lady Elizabeth Butler's portrait depicting him approaching the gates of Jalalabad in a state of near exhaustion. When asked by the Guards on the gate "where is the



The author with the Head Man of Gandamak.

army" he reportedly quoted, "I am the Army".

The remnants of the 44th (some 45 men) conducted a night march and crossed the Surkhab River. By daylight of 13th January, they were in the vicinity of Gandamak.

The last stand of HM 44th Foot Lance-Sergeant Fair described the scene:

"The enemy commenced to loot, and this caused the firing to commence. They immediately ran off the hill, so we kept the position there until about 12 noon, frequently compelling the enemy to retire with great loss. Of course, our numbers (30), which at first were very few, decreased in proportion and at last we found ourselves with only about twelve effective men. The enemy now commenced to grow bolder. Although





I am quite sure there were upwards of 800 or 900 men, we thought to make one desperate charge downhill might prove effective in keeping them off, when we would again start for Jellalabad. Accordingly, the charge was made and that proved our disaster. The enemy gave way in our front, but completely surrounded us in our flanks and rear. Then our ruin came. Souter, Lance-Sergeant Fair, six soldiers for the 44th, three gunners, and Maj Griffiths (37th NI) survived the encounter. Souter owed the preservation of his life to an act of duty and Regimental loyalty. At Jagdallak (12th Jan), Souter had torn the Regimental Colour from its staff and wrapped it around his body for safe keeping.

Lt Cumberland did the same with the Queen's Colour, but, as he could not button his coat, he handed it to CSgt Carey of the Grenadier Company.

During the battle at Gandamak, Souter's sheepskin posteeen flew open revealing the Colour. Seeing the finery of the material, the Afghans believed Souter to be an officer of some import and took him for ransom. He was handed over to the headman of Gandamak village, and in due course one of the assailants returned the Colour. (Souter

was subsequently re- united with other prisoners and returned to the UK with the Colour).

#### Reorganisation of the Regiment and its Return to Afghanistan

HM 44th Foot became the Essex Regiment under the Cardwell Reforms, and latterly 3rd Battalion the Royal Anglian Regiment in 1964. Under Options for Change in 1992, the 3rd Battalion was amalgamated with the 1st and 2nd battalions.

During the first half of 2002, The 1st Battalion was stationed in Kabul as part of the ISAF Contingent, then under the command of (now) Lieutenant General J C McColl CBE DSO (late R ANGLIAN). The CO for the 1st Battalion at the time (Lt Col Phil Jones) was commissioned into 3 R ANGLIAN. It was appropriate, therefore, that he should name the camp which the battalion established as Camp SOUTER. It retains that name today, and was, until recently, the base for the British Kabul Patrols Company (KP).

During their tour, Gen McColl and the Battalions, C (Essex) Coy in particular, tried to reach Gandamak. Unfortunately, a lack of detailed information on the exact site and the geographical constraints of the ISAF boundary, coupled with the prevailing

security situation, the battalions said, they were able to follow the route of the retreat from Kabul to the Khoord - Kabul Pass (reached on 8th Jan 1842), and a monument was erected in memoriam. Regrettably, it is understood that the monument was smashed down within a week of its erection.

How ironic, then, that soldiers of the 2nd Battalion should also find themselves serving in Afghanistan as part of the ISAF Garrison between March and June 2003. As the first Infantry troops back in Kabul since the 1st Battalion's tour, A(Lincolnshire) Coy was responsible for establishing the KPC format and modus operandi, whilst also providing a secure base from which other BRITFOR interests could be pursued.

The company was fortunate in as much as it was employed as an independent company within the Kabul Multi National Brigade (KMNB), rather than being subordinated to one of the constituent battlegroups. Any disquiet toward this arrangement was immediately quashed by the German Brigade Commander who had been the ISAF Chief of Staff during Gen McColl's tenure and had been singularly impressed by the performance of the 1st Battalion.





# Special Feature



**The Basla Hissar in 2003.**

## By Chance or By Design?

I, too, had been commissioned into the 3rd Battalion and had spent many occasions over the years looking into Wollen's evocative depiction of Gandamak as it hung in the Mess, trying to envisage the scene and feelings of those who were there. Having arrived in Kabul, it seemed poignant to try and mount an expedition to honour the fallen at Gandamak. However, the factors which precluded the 1st Battalion from reaching the battlefield were still limiting factors for us, or were they?

One of our duties as the KPC was to provide a guard for the British element of the ammunition compound at the US base at Bagram. During one of my visits to the soldiers on duty there, I was invited to visit the US Headquarters. During the 'guided tour', I was shown the Topographic Cell. Seeing the complexity of the technology, I asked whether they could produce any imagery of Gandamak. Having dismissed two settlements which were to the west and northwest of Kabul, I settled on the village which was some 60 miles southeast of Kabul, and some 30 miles to the west of Jalalabad. This fitted the record, and I was very kindly provided with air photographs and mapping of

various scales. Whilst this 'placed' Gandamak, it did not provide a 6-figure grid reference of the hill in question - in what is a very hilly landscape!

A subsequent visit led to a meeting with Colonel Ian Sinclair (late RA), who was one of the embedded British officers within the US HQ. This, in turn, led to a meeting with one of their Commanders, who requested a briefing on the history of the battle and other pertinent detail. I concluded the brief by stating that it was an ambition to try and reach the site. It was, therefore, with nothing short of amazement when I received a message from Col Sinclair that the Americans were prepared to authorise and oversee the trip.

They would provide local guides, protection (including air assets on call), and an escort party. All we had to do was to get to Jalalabad.

If one could fly to and from Jalalabad, it might be possible to conduct the whole trip in a 26 hour period. As luck (or design) might have it, the in-country C-130 looked as if it might have some taskings to carry out in that area at the end of May 2003. Almost miraculously, the transport conundrum was solved at a stroke by the promise of some 4x4 vehicles belonging to one of the other

agencies resident in Camp Souter. Comd KMNB understood exactly what I was trying to achieve, and agreed for me to take a party of five men, all of whom were volunteers, and Ex 3rd Battalion.

## Travelogue Planning

Military planning for the trip was straightforward. But as to the exact site what was needed was the testimony of someone who had been there. The Rev Arthur Male visited the site during the second Afghan War in 1878, in the company of a photographer, John Burke. An extract from his account is reproduced below:

"But there was more than this to see, and so we turned to our old guide, one of whose accomplishments, very important to us, was that he could understand a little Hindustani. "Larai ki jagah kahon hai, buddha?" "Where is the place of fight, old man?" said we. And the old man said not a word, but pointing with his finger forward, silently led us on. Away to our right, perhaps two miles off, we could see a conical hill rising out of the plain, round-topped and solitary. The hill ranges were around it, but distant. It stood alone, a monument itself! We did not say much as we neared it. Both my companion and I were thinking of the



old tragedy and its consummation on that hilltop. We thought of the devoted band who had struggled down the passes from Kabul, fighting every inch of the way; men, women, camp-followers, and soldiers dropping in their tracks under murderous fire or savage attack; or perchance lying down at night, weary of life, to rise no more. We thought of them, a diminished band, indeed, sixteen thousand souls reduced to about five hundred and forty-five soldiers to a bare hundred reaching the river four miles ahead and finding the ford and bridge bared by an overwhelming host of savage foes. But they cut their way through and come on thus far. And here they paused awhile and then climbed the hill yonder to die. We could see it all again after a lapse of thirty-seven years. The little band toiling with painful effort up the hillside and forming up on the top shoulder to shoulder at bay. The fierce tribesmen gathering round, closing in more and more, the band of heroes lessening moment by moment; and then the great wave of the human sea around surging over them and burying them away out of sight unshaken in discipline, undaunted in spirit, faithful unto death!

I slowly ascended; my horse, which belonged to a hill breed, climbing like a cat among the big rocks that covered the side. Soon I reached the summit and prepared to look upon the very spot where our gallant fellows had made their death-stand. There it must be, I thought, towards the centre. And I made my way towards it. The summit of the hill was of fairly large extent; but as I came nearer the middle, I saw that there the surface seemed strangely white. What could it be? I hurried forward; and to my horror there I saw gathered in a great heap the skeleton bones of that heroic band. There, where the men had fallen, their remains had been lying for thirty-seven long years, bleached by the sun, and swept by every tempest which had broken on that hilltop. It was a ghostly sight. But it was not the ghastliness so much as the sadness of it that struck me most of all. Alien feet had trodden around that hill summit; the wild shepherds who tended their mountain sheep and goats, Kujiani and Ghilzai tribesmen, all had looked upon that open sepulchre; but never before had foot of brother Englishman been there, nor had friendly eyes lighted on the unburied remains.

Here were truly the "relics of a last army. Probably when Pollock's avenging force, after relieving the "Illustrious Garrison" at Jellalabad, had marched on up the passes towards Kabul, they had found the bodies here and had buried them out of sight by covering them with a great stone cairn.

This subsequently doubtless had been done by the Afghans belonging to the tribes around, and the bodies left shamefully exposed; the Mussulman creed allowing them to desecrate the place of sepulchre, but not the dead bodies themselves. This was the general opinion. Burke brought up his camera, and from the top of a neighbouring height took a picture of the "Hill of Bones," as it afterward came to be called. It was a gloomy, weird picture enough! All around were the mountain spurs reaching down to the barren plain, the furthestmost peaks still capped with snow. Yonder away the dark entrance to the Jugallok Pass. And here in the middle the one solitary round-topped hill, a monument and grave at once. Two human forms could be discerned, myself and the old Kujiani, who had now been induced to come up too; we two looking down sadly on the gathered bones of the brave men, as they lay resting on God's earth, and looking up into the face of God's heaven. When we returned to camp we unfolded the tale of what we had found, and arrangements were made soon after for the reverent burial of the bones. A detachment was sent out, and over the great grave they raised a tall obelisk which no doubt still marks the spot".

The British Library website provided Burke's photographs. Significant to me was the reference to an 'obelisk. I had certainly not seen an obelisk during my time in theatre, and, asking the C-130 pilots to see whether they could spot any on their travels around the country, they responded in due course that they had not. Perhaps this is unsurprising given the very European nature of this.

Armed with the maps and imagery (the former marked with the route of the retreat). Burke's photograph, the Rev Male's account, and confidence that an Infantryman's eye for ground

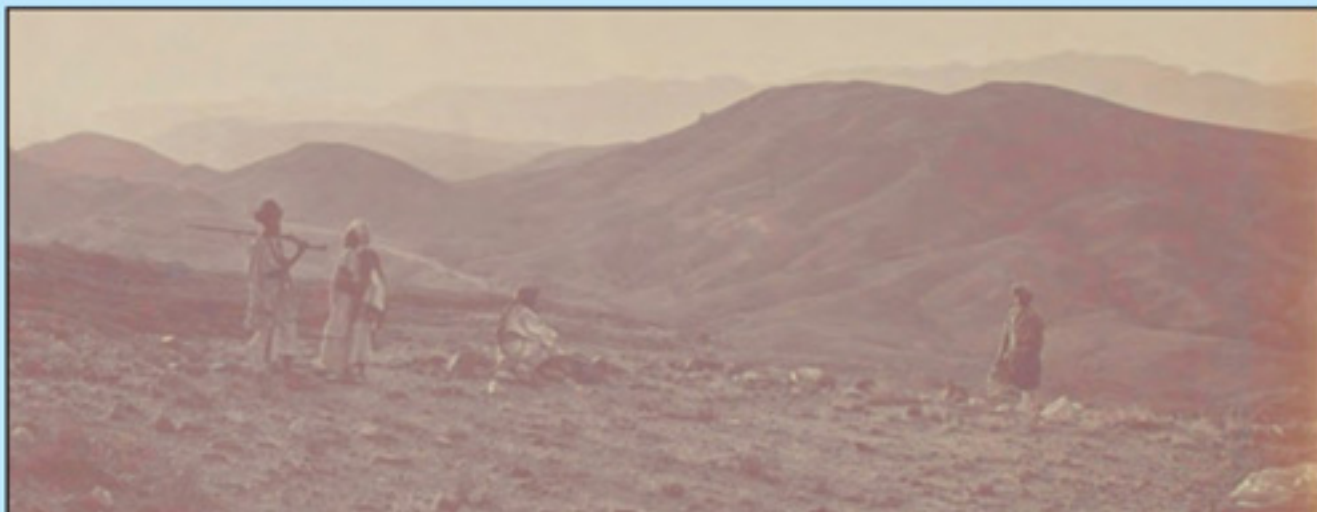


The narrowest part of the Jagdallak Pass.





# Special Feature



**Burke's photo - The Hill of Bones.** should help identify likely hills which the remnants of the Kabul garrison would have occupied, we awaited the combination of C-130 tasking and our American allies availability to coincide.

## The Journey

On 2nd June we departed for the short flight to Jalalabad. At the time, Jalalabad was considered a 'hot LZ,' and we landed at about 1600hrs to find the airstrip secured by two platoons of Afghan soldiers. We were met by a US Captain and a small detachment of US personnel mounted in 2 Hum-Vees, who, along with the Afghans escorted us to their base in the outskirts of Jalalabad. In addition to the military personnel, there were representatives from the DEA, civil affairs, Psy Ops, and other SU Government Agencies. All were tremendously welcoming to their British guests, and helped us settle in to our temporary accommodation.

At about 1900hrs that evening, we attended the 0 Group for the mission to Gandamak. At it, we learnt that a reconnaissance party had removed some land mines the previous day from the route upon which we were due to travel. Whilst this concentrated our minds, it was routine for them, given the levels of hostile activity in that AO. At the conclusion of orders, I was asked to give a short presentation on the battle, and our intentions upon reaching the site. It was quite surprising that a group of seasoned soldiers should

take a keen interest in what was not only a historical event, but one in which there was no US involvement. Before turning in, we familiarised ourselves with their communications equipment, 'actions-on' and did a final check of our own weapons, equipment and vehicles.

We left the base at about 0600hrs the following morning. What I thought was going to be a relatively small escort ended up being (including our three vehicles) a 13 vehicle convoy! Although slightly alarmed by the convoy's obvious signature, the presence of a Platoon of Afghans, armoured Humvees and rotary assets on call was very reassuring.

As we drove through Jalalabad, as in Kabul, the local people appeared well disposed to us, with the usual waving. It was notable, however, that on leaving the city limits, the reception changed from acceptance, through deliberately ignoring our passage, to verbal comments and gestures which signalled their disapproval.

Heading west from Jalalabad, the countryside is open and barren, with isolated settlements along the route. Shortly beyond Fatehabad, the ground rises to the foothills of what will become the mountain ranges between Gandamak and Kabul.

This route was once the main access from Kabul to Jalalabad, but has been replaced by Highway 1 to the north. As a result, our route was unmetalled, rutted, and slow going in some parts. As we

progressed, our US escorts pointed out previous ambush locations, and where the land mines had been removed from. Whilst nothing like the terrain through which the 44th had to fight, it did at least give one the impression of close country, and the difficulties of fighting in this type of terrain, particularly if your opponent commanded the high ground. We completed the 30-mile journey in approximately three hours. Upon arrival in Gandamak, we set about finding the village headman to try and gain further information about the location of the hill in question.

After paying respects and presenting him with some gifts, I enquired as to the location of the hill. Unsurprisingly in a culture where history is handed from one generation to the next verbally, rather than in writing, he was mixing events from the first Afghan War with those of the Second. Nevertheless, we were able to see the remnants of the fort at Gandamak (which was the last outpost en route to Kabul before entering the mountain passes), and were given a wave of the hand pointing to some hills a couple of miles distant I must admit, I had hoped for a little more detail. Nevertheless, his information, coupled with that which I already had at my disposal, binoculars, and a quick ground appreciation; led us to what is, to the best of my knowledge, the site of the Last Stand of the 44th.

From the road, it is difficult to



appreciably matched the hill. Arthur Male's description of a 'conical hill rising out of the plain, round-topped and solitary. Conscious of the possible mine threat, it took between 30 to 45 minutes to reach the summit, and became something of a scramble over the last 50 yards.

The top of the hill was relatively flat, and measured some 40 yards west to east, by 15-20 yards north to south, which would have permitted all round defence, a facet not provided by any of the surrounding lower and more gently undulating hillocks. Importantly, on the eastern end of the summit was a cairn.

In the centre of the hill was a slight depression in the ground, which we took to be the site of the grave, although there was no sign of human remains. At the summit were the descendants of the 44th, some of our American colleagues, some of the Afghan soldiers, my interpreter, and the American Professor. After some individual reflection, I read the account from the Essex Regimental history as to what had taken place here, our drummer blew the Last Post, and we placed an Essex Regiment wreath at the base of the cairn in memory of those who had given their lives here. For the text on the wreath, an extract from Campbell's poem seemed appropriate:

"Few shall part where many meet, the snow shall be their winding sheet, and every turf beneath their feet Shall be a soldier's Sepulchre".

Even during a quiet moment of reflection, it is impossible to begin to comprehend the thoughts and feelings of those who fought and died here. First, the weather - we were here in June; they had endured a week of the bitter Afghan winter before reaching this spot. An overwhelming sense of hopelessness must have engulfed them on reaching the summit of this hill. I guess for the following reasons. Firstly, those present would have been able to see the fort at Gandamak (no more than two miles away), which might have offered some form of protection. Secondly, they knew that from Gandamak onwards they would be in open country - country suited to the British Infantry, rather than



**The Brit Prison where Souter was held.**

the close country of the mountain passes so well used by the Afghan tribesmen. Consider then, if you will, the western end of the summit looking to the north-west, over the ground from whence they had come. The eastern end of the summit is looking roughly eastwards over the open country towards Jalalabad. The sense of "so near and yet so far" must have been palpable. Perhaps this is what led to the doomed charge to get off the hill. Given our limited timeframe to conduct this mission, we left the scene in relative silence and contemplation. Our journey back to Jalalabad was uneventful, albeit there was an unspoken thought within the group regarding the possibility of ambush and/or mines on the return trip, as we had no option but to use the same. Fortunately, no such eventuality occurred, and we reached Jalalabad airstrip in good time for the C-130. Shortly after take-off, we were alerted by the pilot that our flight path would allow us one last view of that

evocative site. The flight also proved uneventful, other than one of my SNCOs' commenting on the bizarre experience of being sat, seat-belted, and stationary in a Toyota 4x4 within a C-130, which was flying fast and low! We arrived back at Camp Souter some 26 hours after we had left.

#### **What Became of The 44th**

The remnants of HM 44th sailed for England in February 1843. Reconstituted on landing, the Regiment was at Chichester in July, and Gosport in August. On 11th December, new Colours were presented at Hasted by Lady Pakenham. The old Colour saved by Lt Souter was trooped and placed in nearby Alverstoke Church for safe keeping.

The Afghan Colour was removed in 1926 to the Essex (later Royal Anglian) Regimental Chapel in Warley Essex, where the remains thereof can still be viewed today.





# Affiliated Cadets



## Oundle School CCF (Army Section) 2024-25

The Oundle School CCF (Army Section) has enjoyed a busy and purposeful academic year 2024-25, with much achieved in terms of both infantry training and also participation in a number of significant ceremonial events. Weekly training for the 280 cadets in the Army Section takes place at Oundle School. The Year 10 (Fourth Form) cadets, numbering 120 recruit cadets, undertake training in accordance with the Army Cadet Syllabus, under the leadership and direction of Captain Charlie Standley, who served with 2nd Battalion Royal Anglian Regiment (The Poachers) from 2004 to 2008.

Older cadets undertake further infantry and leadership training and the senior cadets undertake leadership appointments within the Recruit Training Company or the Advanced Infantry Company.

Highlights of the training calendar



**Cambrian Patrol.**



**Alpine Ski Development Camp.**





#### Combat Cadet.

Blended competition junior cadets operate the Cadet Small Bore (.22) Rifle, whilst senior cadets, using the Cadet GP Rifle, fire 5.56mm at the nearby Elmington Range.

These shooting competitions are coordinated by the School shooting coach, Simon Pearson, a former SNCO in the Poachers. Furthermore, the best marksmen in the School, again under the leadership and direction of Mr Pearson, compete in the annual national events held at Bisley.

Further opportunities for the cadets to put their training into practice occur during the autumn and spring Field Weekends which occurred at the Stanford Training Area (STANTA). Each junior cadet will fire blank in three



Combat Cadet.





# Affiliated Cadets



**Lord Mayor's Show Oundle CCF.**

phases of the exercise, stalk, ambush and section attack. Senior cadets will engage similar but deliberately more challenging serials.

The next stage of training, and with the opportunity to train further afield and in novel terrain, occurred in July at Warcop Training Area. It is during annual camp that the development of cadets, in terms of both military skills and in the exposure to leadership appointments, is accelerated and thus identifies the most capable of cadets who then have the opportunity to participate and compete in events such as Combat Cadet (held at Beckingham in March 2025 where Oundle achieved a Gold Award) and Cadet Cambrian Patrol (held at Sennybridge in May 2025 and where a Silver Award was secured).

It is emphasised that these competitions are deliberately intended to challenge and extend cadets. Much credit is deservedly given to the cadets who successfully complete these competitions.



**Lord Mayor's Show Oundle CCF Band.**

The annual calendar also included a number of significant ceremonial occasions. The reviewing officer for the Annual Passing Out Parade was former Oundle pupil and cadet, Major General Tony Turner Royal Marines. Additional parades that occurred in 2024-25 were the Freedom of Kettering Parade held on Armed Forces Day 8 June 2025 and Oundle's participation in the Lord Mayor of London's parade in November 2024.

A tri-service contingent from Oundle marched from the City of London to the City of Westminster, accompanied by the 70 strong CCF Band, which proudly wears the Royal Anglian Regiment Cap-badge.

The same cadets and musicians paraded in Oundle on the following day, Remembrance Sunday, to participate in the Oundle Town Service of Remembrance.

Oundle School pupils are also able to benefit from a wider education of military history and heritage through the annual June trip for all Year 10

cadets to the Somme Battlefields and Cemeteries. This trip, which also has visits to specific locations near Loos and to Vimy Ridge, focusses on the events of July 1916 and along the 14 mile front from Serre to Mametz Woods. Having visited a number of graves of former Oundle pupils, the visit concludes with the undoubted highlight of the tour, an evening sunset memorial service held at the Thiepval memorial. Furthermore, in May 2025 a smaller number of cadets, travelling by bicycle, enjoyed a 4-day tour of the D-day Normandy Beaches, Pegasus Bridge, Bayeux and the US Cemetery above Omaha Beach.

The opportunity at Oundle occurs as a consequence of the dedication of the Cadet Force Adult Volunteers, and of the perennially dynamic leadership of the Contingent Commander, Lt Col Andrew Mansergh Royal Marines, and the School Staff Instructor, Warrant Officer II (Battery Sergeant-Major) Mike Williams.





Summer Camp - Building Clearance.





# Affiliated Cadets



## Quick Thinking Cambridgeshire Army Cadet helps Road Casualty

A Cambridgeshire Army Cadet put first aid skills he had learned at his detachment in Melbourn to work when he found a casualty lying injured at the roadside last month.

After happening upon the older man, who had suffered a significant head injury and fallen to the ground, Cdt Sgt Pope drew on his training to assess the situation and took charge as no one else was doing so.

Cdt Sgt Pope recalled: "I began communicating with the casualty, reassuring him, and I instructed him to apply pressure to the head injury." When a passer-by stopped to help, he asked her to call 999 and, on learning that an ambulance would take an hour to arrive, he ran more than 200 yards to a nearby pet shop to ask for their first aid kit.

After treating a three-inch head wound and a laceration to the man's nose, Cdt Sgt Pope became concerned about the cold weather and the busy road location. He arranged for the casualty to be moved to a local garden centre, where he continued providing care and reassurance until paramedics arrived.

"It was daunting and stressful, particularly as I had older people looking at me to make decisions, but I was pleased to have done something of value," Cdt Sgt Pope said. "As well as teaching me first aid skills, the Army



Cadet Foirce has taught me how to take initiative and be confident in front of others."

The 15 year old joined the ACF three years ago and quickly rose to become Melbourn Detachment's most senior cadet. As well as his "first aid at work" course taken earlier this year, Cdt Sgt Pope took part in Exercise Cambrian Patrol, a demanding British Army training exercise.

His Detachment Commander, SSI Lamonte, said: "It's always inspiring to see our cadets put their training into action. Sgt Pope showed real confidence and professionalism, using his first aid skills to care for a patient, take control of the scene and offer clear advice.

"Well done, Sgt Pope! We're proud to see you lead by example and hope you continue to build on this success in the future."



# Royal Anglian DIRECT

The Official Online Store of The Royal Anglian Regiment

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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.

[www.royalangliandirect.co.uk](http://www.royalangliandirect.co.uk)  
[shop@royalangliandirect.co.uk](mailto:shop@royalangliandirect.co.uk)





**THE COMBAT CLIPPER COMPANY,  
PROVIDING TACTICAL GROOMING  
SOLUTIONS FOR ARMED FORCES PERSONNEL.**

The Combat Clipper Company is a business founded by CSgt Young, 2 Royal Anglian. He launched the site on the 10th June 2024. HIS MISSION is to provide serving personnel and beard enthusiasts alike with top-tier grooming products designed for optimal tactical and durable performance in modern warfare situations and everyday life.

The establishment of The Combat Clipper Company comes in response to the recent introduction of a beard policy within the British Armed Forces, highlighting the need for specialised grooming solutions tailored to the unique requirements of armed forces soldiers.

As a company founded by military professionals, the Combat Clipper Company has rigorously tested its products to ensure they meet the highest standards of performance and durability in the field. From precision clippers to grooming kits, every product is designed with the needs of Armed Forces personnel in mind, offering reliability and functionality in even the most demanding conditions.



In addition to its commitment to providing top-tier grooming solutions, The Combat Clipper Company is dedicated to giving back to the military community. The company has pledged to donate a % of its profits to The Combat Stress Company, an organisation that offers clinical treatment and support to veterans from the British Armed Forces, with a specific focus on individuals facing complex mental health challenges.

"We are proud to launch Combat Clipper Company and to support our fellow service members with products that are not only practical but also contribute to their well-being," said Teague, Founder of The Combat Clipper Company. "By partnering with The Combat Stress Charity, we hope to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those who have served our country."

**[WWW.COMBATCLIPPERCOMPANY.CO.UK](http://WWW.COMBATCLIPPERCOMPANY.CO.UK)**





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**BUILT BY  
SOLDIERS FOR  
SOLDIERS**

## The Royal Anglian Regiment Website

After a lot of hard work and some serious thought about its layout and design, we have a new Regimental Website at [royalanglianregiment.com](http://royalanglianregiment.com).

The website retains the well-proven features of the earlier version, it gives members of the regimental family access to a regularly updated news feed, our Diary of Events, and the Regimental Shop. We have further enhanced [royalanglianregiment.com](http://royalanglianregiment.com)

by incorporating the Royal Anglian Regiment Museum within the site, thereby allowing visitors digital access to the Museum and its archives.

In addition, website users will be able to access a steadily expanding archive of Regimental publications. The website now holds digital back copies of Royal Anglian News (RAN), back issues of our Annual Journal (Castle), and it will eventually include all past Regt Bulletins. This will create an unrivalled archive of our Regt history for future generations.

This new digital community has been named the Royal Anglian Digital Muster, it will be open to all Royal Anglians past and present. An additional feature of the Muster will be a facility for any Association Member to upload a personal biography of their service as a Royal Anglian. These biographies will be located within the Digital Muster. Access to the DM will be granted on registration with RHQ and subsequent verification.

The idea being to capture our collective and personal histories of our time within the Regiment. In this our 60th year, the creation of the Royal Anglian Digital Muster offers us all a unique and precious opportunity. Few Regiment's have the opportunity to capture and collate their history while it is all still within living memory. Please visit [royalanglianregiment.com](http://royalanglianregiment.com) and take the opportunity to contribute to the



Royal Anglian story. If you have not visited [royalanglianregiment.com](http://royalanglianregiment.com), please take the time to register and connect with the Royal Anglian Family.



# Proud to Support Army boxing

Sport is critically important to Army life, whether the funding also supports adaptive sports for soldiers serving in campaigns overseas, providing rehabilitation of injured soldiers and operational support in the UK, or recovering from injuries sustained in combat.

Team Army raises funds for Army sports through sponsorship, contracts and charitable donations, ensuring the sports are distributed fairly across more than 40 sports units played in the Army.

We help industry partners and the private sector achieve their corporate goals, through valuable networking opportunities provided by sporting events. Team Army sponsors become involved with Army sports at the level they choose, through gold, silver or bronze sponsorship options.

Team Army is endorsed by the UK Ministry of Defence's Executive Committee Army Board (ECAB) and works in partnership with the Sports Control Board, which regulates all sports played in the Army.

Team Army continuously campaign to increase the funding for Army sports associations with a steady income.

If you want to know more about Team Army or discuss it further with our CEO, Major General Lamont Kirkland CBE, please contact Gerald Callus at [gerald.callus@teamarmy.org](mailto:gerald.callus@teamarmy.org), or on 07427 175 530, who will facilitate the next steps.

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Team Army is an ETHOS initiative. [www.ethosfundraising.org](http://www.ethosfundraising.org)  
The Team Army Sports Foundation is a registered charity, number 1134567.





# Regimental Family



## Norfolk

Norwich Branch continues to go from strength to strength with several new members joining through the year.

The branch meet at the Army Reserves Centre in Norwich bi-monthly at 11.00am where there is an opportunity to catch up with old and new friends. During 2025 the branch ran a very successful trip to Hendon RAF Museum which was enjoyed by members from both Norwich and Dereham Branch and then in September both branches shared a coach to the National Memorial Arboretum for the opening of the new Le Paradis Memorial by Princess Anne.

Members of the branch also attended the Regimental Day at Kendrew Barracks in September. Branch members also attended the 80th Anniversary Services at Norwich Cathedral for VE and VJ day, the latter being the National focus with the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester in attendance.

During the year members of the branch took part in bucket collections in Norwich City Centre and also at Waitrose in Eaton where they raised over £1700, which will help fund donations to military associated charities in 2026. At the May meeting in 2025 cheques for £1,000 were presented by the Branch Chairman Col David Hedges (retired)



Col David Hedges, Gregg Baker and his son from Bridge for Heroes.



Col David Hedges and John Steele from Norwich Branch and SSAFA.



Col David Hedges and Nik Chapman from Combat Street.





# Regimental Family



## Norfolk

to Combat Stress, Bridge for Heroes and SSAFA Norfolk.

In September the branch joined with the 4th Battalion Royal Norfolk Regiment Comrades Association for a regimental dinner at the Army Reserves Centre.

Sixty-one people attended including serving soldiers from both No 1 Company 3 Royal Anglian, A (Norfolk) Company together with members of Dereham Branch. It was an enjoyable evening, and the guest speaker was Hazel Mindham who gave an insight into the 2nd Battalion, The Royal Norfolk Regiment at Kohima, 1944, which she has recently published a book about and it has raised over £1700 for the Norfolk Regimental Association.

**Hazel Mindham  
at the Regimental  
Dinner**



## Dereham Branch Royal Anglian Association

The Dereham Branch was formed by Major David Whitehead of the 2nd Battalion (The Poachers) in the summer of 2011 with the view of getting the ex-members from the Regiment to meet together for a drink and a chat to reminisce on their experiences and just to enjoy each other's company.

The branch meets on the first Sunday of the month in the Royal Standard in Dereham at 11.00am. The branch also accepts members of other regiments and the armed forces. The branch is well supported by the landlord of the Royal Standard who lets the branch use the venue free of charge and also lays on free tea and coffee for the meetings.

The Partner of the Landlord was a Pompadour, and he has made the meeting room into a welcoming space full of regimental memorabilia, which makes the meetings more enjoyable.

Dereham Branch have an active

social calendar throughout the year with quiz nights, visits to the local greyhound stadium and a well established Christmas dinner.

The Branch works closely with Dereham Branch of the Royal British Legion, and this year have been assisting in selling Poppies in Morrisons and Tesco's, helping out as car parking Stewards on Town Council events and representing the Branch at Town and County civic events.

The Branch supports the RHQ events and has recently started to engage more with Norwich Branch and is planning to do more networking with Norwich, for example sharing travel to events like the recent visit to Kendrew Barracks and two proposed trips in 2026, to Dover to the Dover Experience tunnels/Dover castle and to Normandy to tour the Beaches and other sites

A monthly Veterans' Hub in

Dereham Market Place has been set up in conjunction with the Royal British Legion. This has been a very successful and worthwhile experience in networking with the community in Dereham and in recruiting new members and the branch membership currently stands at 62 with 35 -40 regularly attending branch meetings. Some branch members attended an event in October to meet the soldiers from A (Norfolk) Company 1st Battalion (Vikings). It was a good chance to engage with the younger members of the Regiment: both parties had a good time talking about how much the Army has changed over the years. The branch will continue to network with other Armed Forces associations within the community to raise the branch profile and to reach out to those who have served with the Royal Anglian Regiment who are not yet aware of the meetings in Dereham.



## Meet the Veterans



On 23 October A (Norfolk) Company 1st. Battalion Royal Anglian Regiment came to Norwich on an R&R day based at what we all know as the TA Centre, Aylsham Road, Norwich.

The plan was to give the soldiers the opportunity to learn about the Regiment's past and their connection to Norfolk, to this end they had asked to meet any "old soldiers" for an hour, which was then followed by a visit to the Royal Norfolk Regimental Museum in Norwich Castle.

The request for "Old Soldiers" was put out to all members of the Royal Norfolk and Royal Anglian Regimental Association resulting in the attendance of 16 "old soldiers" and one widow of an

old soldier, most of whom had already met up with A Company at the Le Paradis Memorial event at the Arboretum on 25 September so it was easy to catch up. The aim of the meeting was to enable the veterans to share the regimental history and their experiences with the serving soldiers. One veteran donned his old uniform that was issued some 45 years ago and brought in some of the equipment he was issued with including a deactivated SLR and Bren (LMG).

When it came to the crunch the shirt (hairy, horrible), woolie pulley and old pattern Stable Belt and beret all stretched to fit but the lightweight O.G. trousers would not, so Barrack trousers and shiny shoes stepped up to the job!

The woolie pulley with its 6th. Battalion all yellow Minden Flash created a lot of interest, but the stars of the day were definitely the deactivated weapons, both of which were "early deacs." and could be stripped and assembled.

After NSPs had been taught plus basic handling techniques both weapons were in almost constant use, phrases like "keep your feet together, dig your toes in to prevent the gun pulling you forward", "count your shots, after 20 you will get the dead man's click" were heard in the TA centre for the first time in well over 30 years!

Many of the veterans had brought photos of their times in service from Korea, Cyprus, Aden, Ulster etc. with many memories and stories. There were veterans who had served in the Royal Norfolk, East Anglian and Royal Anglian Regiments sitting at tables around the hall with a constant stream of eager interested young soldiers to talk with.

Such was the interest, engagement and general enjoyment of the event that the hour allotted was nearly two before everyone lined up for a group photo and presentation of a cheque from the Royal

Norfolk and Royal Anglian Regiment Association to A Company's soldier of the year. (Rumour has it that it had to be explained to the young soldier what a cheque was!) Major James Pugh, OC A Company thanked everyone for attending, before belatedly departed to the Castle Museum. Afterwards there







# Regimental Family



## Norfolk

was a discussion about the session and two things became very plain, first how interested and engaged the young soldiers had been, they were keen to learn the Regiment's recent history, second the number of full beards in the company.

We "Cold war warriors" were never allowed to grow facial hair below our top lip as we were told our respirators

would not seal but talking to one of the lads with a full beard he told me that with the new NBC equipment he could have a full beard as long as it was less than a certain length, he did admit, however, if he was ever deployed where there was a risk of a gas attack that beard would be gone!

A lot of positive feedback has been received since details of this session

were posted on Social Media, with everyone keen to repeat it and a number of Royal Anglian veterans who would have liked to have taken part but did not know about it, the answer to that is, "join your local branch of the Regimental Association". Major Pugh was, it seems, really impressed with the session and has requested a repeat later in 2026 when the company returns from deployment.

### Presentation to Lt Col Mark Nicholas MBE

Mark Nicholas attended Sandhurst Military Academy in 1998 having gained his degree, which was the start of his army career, finally retiring as a Lieutenant Colonel in 2016. Lt Col Nicholas had a varied career in the Royal Anglian Regiment with tours of Northern Ireland, Afghanistan, Iraq, Germany and Cyprus.

On leaving the army, he returned to his home county of Norfolk where his wife and two sons lived and worked as a Director for the Royal Norfolk Agricultural Association and then as the CEO for the Priscilla Bacon Hospice who were trying to raise £12.5 million to build a new complex medical facility. After this he was invited back to the RNAA and took up the role of Managing Director in January 2021.

For the last seven years Lt Col Nicholas was the County Colonel for the Royal Norfolk and Royal Anglian Regiment Association in Norfolk, which also included being a trustee of the Royal Norfolk Regimental Museum at Norwich Castle. At the County Meeting on 11 April 2025 Mark stepped down and handed the baton to Major Duncan Gregory.

Mark's last official duty was at the National FEPOW Service in Norwich



**Lt Col Mark Nicholas and Gavin Good.**

Cathedral on 15th August 2025 where he did a reading. At the County Meeting Lt Col Nicholas was presented with a

print by Gavin Good from RHQ at Bury St Edmunds to thank him for his service to Norfolk.

### Veterans' Walks in Norfolk

With the general population living longer and, in the main, more active lives, some veterans, many of whom are still energetic mid lifers, may seek opportunities to meet with former comrades outside of the usual confines of a bar (not that sharing a pint isn't an

important bonding opportunity).

To that end the regimental association in Norfolk has begun, what it is expected will be, bi-monthly walk and talk events. Meeting at a pub there is normally a roughly four-mile circular walk with a pint (and food) as a reward

at the end. It is hoped that these will attract around a dozen participants for walks that will be organised in 2026 and publicised through Royal Anglian Connect. If nothing else it is a chance to hear KC Jones's endless, and often very amusing tales, of uniformed life.



## Best Soldier Awards



**Best Soldier - Pte Damian Newton.**

Each year the Royal Norfolk and Royal Anglian Regiment Association award a prize to the best soldier in A (Norfolk) Company and No 1 Company 3 Royal Anglian. The beneficiaries receive a cheque for £300, and they are identified by their Company Commander. The soldier needs to have excelled through the year and be an exemplar for the those around them to aspire to.

This year the award for No 1 Company 3 Royal Anglian went to Private Damian Newton who was presented with his cheque by Major Smith. Pte Newton encapsulates the

Army's Values and Standards of Selfless Commitment and Integrity, in that he regularly puts his team and fellow soldiers before his own needs. Pte Newton has a busy home life with his wife and children however he attends every event and training evening, displaying his unwavering commitment and his commanding officer said he is richly deserving of this award.

The 2025 recipient from A (Norfolk) Company was Private Scott Shearing who received his cheque from veteran KC Jones MBE. Maj James Pugh said that 'Pte Shearing has repeatedly



**Veteran KC Jones MBE presenting Pte Scott Shearing with his best soldier cheque.**

gone above and beyond the standards expected of a private soldier. His enthusiasm and professionalism inspires those around him, a performance that is well above what is expected from a first-year soldier. His initiative and strong work-ethic contributes to the effective management of the platoon, aiding his brother Vikings in the conduct of the administrative tasks that will enable their deployment on Operations next year. A solid team-player, Shearing is an asset to A (Norfolk) Company and a model Viking for those that surround him.'





# Regimental Family



## Lincolnshire

Simon Bacon



**A (Lincolnshire) Company with the Sheriff of Lincoln, Gary Daly and the Mayor of Lincoln, Bill Mara, with members and Standards of the Lincoln Branch.**

The Regimental Family is doing well across the County with many activities being undertaken by Branches or Breakfast Clubs and a range of informal events organised by individuals on social media.

All members of the Regimental Family are cordially invited to attend any of these events regardless of whether they belong to a Branch or Club. In addition, the Association continues to support the wider Regimental Family across the County and, if required or specifically requested, other parts of the Country.

A wide range of support varies according to each case. Common activities include keeping in touch with those members who are in need, providing transport and undertaking hospital visiting. Welfare support also includes DIY projects to help those unable to complete the tasks themselves.

It is of note that this support is provided at member's own expense and is extremely valued. Association



**Jim Freeman Lincoln Branch Chairman presenting a representative of Lincs & Notts Air Ambulance with a donation for £150.**





**Spalding Remembrance Day. From left: R LINCOLNS John Smith, Ken Willows, Arthur Nicols and Malcolm Mitchell with the Chair of SHDC, Jan Whitbourn.**

members enjoy the chance to join battlefield tours or trips of remembrance either organised by individuals or Branches. There are also opportunities to interact with serving members of the Regiment.

In early November the Lincoln Branch welcomed A (Lincolnshire) Company at the Cathedral, after their march from Kendrew Barracks, with a welcome glass of port, Standards flying and afterwards, made a donation to the

fund-raising appeal. ~~wer~~ ~~attended~~ ~~by~~ ~~services~~ of the Regimental Family across the County. In addition, preparations are underway for a variety of Christmas activities and functions.



**From left: Capt K Martin, Maj J Freeman, Capt J Watson, Ben Ground, Mayor Bill Mara and Sheriff Gary Daly.**





# Regimental Family



## Lincolnshire

GrimsbyBranch



Grimsby Branch members setting off for the Regimental Day at Kendrew Barracks.



Wayne Okopskyj (Ski) presenting Tim Robinson (Robbo) winner of the Poppadour Football Raffle at the Regimental Day.



From left: Wayne (Ski) Okopskyj, Jamie (Titch) Taylor, Andy McCurdy and the late Charlie Long laying decking in Barton for former 7 RANGLIAN member Graham Robinson.





Wayne Okopskyj and the Association leading the Army Guard at AFD Cleethorpes.



John Cooper Grimsby Branch Secretary( ex Pompadour Drums Platoon) on AFD parade.



Members enjoying the Christmas lunch.



Table laid for absent friends.



Happy Pompadours at the Christmas lunch.





# Regimental Family



## Lincolnshire

Lincoln Armed Forces Day 28 June 2020

The Lincoln Branch supported the City's resurgent Armed Forces Day on 28 June. Numerous members of the Association attended along with Major(retd) Jim Freeman and Mrs Sue Freeman. David Metcalfe MBE carried the Branch Standard.

All enjoyed the day despite the heat which did provide a great excuse for several ice creams. Members met the Mayor of Lincoln, Councillor Bill Mara. The group also met the MP for Lincoln, Hamish Falconer, along with many former and serving members of the Armed Forces.

Earlier during the week Jim Freeman had been invited to Lincoln City Radio to talk about the Regiment and its varied history.



MP for Lincoln Mr Hamish Falconer engaged in conversation with Maj Jim Freeman and Mr David Metcalfe.



Maj(Retd)Jim Freeman and Standard Bearer Mr David Metcalfe MBE.



Maj J Freeman with the AFD organiser Mr Nick Pettit GM QGM.



## Lincoln Regimental Association Reunion : October



86 members of the Regiment enjoyed a very festive three-course lunch on Saturday 4th October at the Lincoln Masonic Hall.

At this notable event members from across the Regiment join together. The event is based on the very successful annual reunion of the 7th Battalion

and Lincoln Branch Association and Vikings, Poachers and Pompadours join in and enjoy one another's company.

After a very sociable meal, the list of the fallen was read from a new book of remembrance along with a toast and the last post. A full rendition of the Lincolnshire Poacher was sung followed

by the Regimental March and toasts to the King and the Regiment ending with the National Anthem. The event organisers were; Major Jim Freeman, Captain Brian Barber, Captain Kevin Martin, Captain Jim Watson, W02 Roy Lock and last but not least, the real organiser Mrs Sue Freeman.







# Regimental Family

## Lincolnshire



### LostComrades

Unfortunately, the Regimental Family has lost several members during this year. If requested, the Association also provides assistance at funerals to those families who have suffered the loss of a family member with a military background.

#### Charlie Long

Charlie Long's funeral took place on 7 March at Grimsby Crematorium. Charlie was the Grimsby Branch Standard Bearer for many years and a long serving member of 7 RANGLIAN. He was a very popular and respected member of the Branch, 7 RANGLIAN and the RBL.

The funeral was attended by well over 200 from the Regimental Family who lined the road to the crematorium. Former comrades were the pall bearers and 8 Regimental and RBL Standards were on parade. Lt Col (retd) Simon Bacon gave the eulogy. (see obituary & photo)



Regimental Family pall bearers at Charlie Long's funeral.

#### David Selby

The funeral of David Selby took place on 21 March at Lincoln Crematorium. David was an ex-Poacher and, along with his brother Rob a fellow Poacher, many other old friends and comrades attended. David was a member of the MILAN Platoon and a detachment of the 2nd Battalion Anti-Tank Platoon under

their OC, Capt Hamish MacKellar, came and paid their respects. (see obituary regt bulletin in March),

#### Paul Doherty

On 2 May a Standard Party from Lincoln of Jim Freeman, David

Metcalfe, Fraser Finlay and Paul Spence went to Doncaster for the funeral of Paul Doherty, an ex-Pompadour and Poacher. The funeral was well attended with many veterans and the family were extremely grateful for the support they received from the Branch.



Regimental Family members getting ready to line the route at Charlie Long's funeral.





**From left: Maj (Retd) Jim Freeman, Fraser Findlay, Dave Metcalfe and Paul Spence at Paul Doherty's funeral on 2 May in Doncaster.**



**Lincoln Branch in attendance at Melvyn Carter's funeral on 30 July at Leverton.**



**The Regimental Family at John Kitchen's funeral.**



**The funeral of Len Richards on 4 July at Lincoln.**

**Len Richards**

On 4 July a Standard Party and many members of the Lincoln Branch paid their respects at the funeral of Len Richards. Len had been a member of the Branch for many years and had served with the Royal Corps of Transport.

**Melvyn Carter**

At the request of the family, the Lincoln Branch represented the Regiment at the funeral of Melvyn Carter, ex 7 RANGLIAN, on 30 July at Leverton near Boston. Melvyn's service was wide ranging and began with seven years in the Royal Pioneer Corps and included tours of Northern Ireland and Malta. In 1978 he joined 7 RANGLIAN for seven years and was involved in some of the largest reinforcement exercises to Germany during that time. In 1985 he transferred to the Royal Logistic Corps, utilising his HGV skills, before transferring to the Royal Engineers in 1989 at RAF Coningsby. He finished his military service in 1992.

**John Kitchen**

John (Kitch) Kitchen died on 7 October at his home in Grimsby and his funeral took place at Grimsby Crematorium on Monday 10 November. Kitch served with 7 RANGLIAN in Boston for eight years. He was also the Grimsby Branch Secretary for many years, showing dedication and commitment. Kitch worked for Kettles, the Funeral Directors, and always arranged transport for veterans with mobility issues to attend functions. He was instrumental in organising the 7 R ANGLIAN reunion which has grown from strength to strength. The service was attended by family, friends and the Association.





# Regimental Family



## Lincolnshire

### Regimental Day



Lincoln Branch Standard Party at the Regimental Gathering. From left: Paul Spence, Fraser Findlay, Shaun Palme and Maj (retd) Jim Freeman.



Some of the 27 Lincoln Branch members enjoying themselves at the Regimental Gathering.



## Lincoln Branch Sobroan Celebration



**Branch members at Sobroan celebration.**

The Lincoln Branch held its annual celebration of the Battle of Sobroan on Thursday 13 February. Forty seven members and friends

attended and enjoyed the light refreshments provided.

Syd Elms, former Chairman of Grimsby Branch, gave an account of the

battle.

Loyal and Regimental toasts followed along with a rousing rendition of The Lincolnshire Poacher.



**R Lincolns and R Anglians at the Sobroan lunch.**

## Lincoln Branch Christmas Social



70 members attended the Lincoln Branch Christmas Social on Thursday 12th December. Santa and 'Elpful Elf' were in attendance. In-house entertainment included singing of out of tune carols, a pass the parcel (which was treated like an unexploded IED), and a quiz which

defeated most of the crowd. There was an excellent Buffet provided by Jo Stone and Boodles Cafe of Hykeham. Santa visited and gifts were distributed to those who had been good, orchestrated by 'Elpful Elf and his crowd! A charity Raffle, for a large bottle of

Whisky donated by Shani Hocking, in memory of the late Derek ex-chairman, was followed by a well organised raffle. The Association would like to thank Mr Nigel O'Leary (RLC) and his staff at Sobroan Barracks for their co-operation in the evening a great success.





# Regimental Family



## Lincolnshire

Lincoln Branch VE Commemoration Evening 9 May 2020



### Branch members assembled for the evening festivities.

A VE commemoration evening held in Sobroan Barracks was attended by 64 association members and friends. The drill hall was decked with Regimental Standards along with RN, RAF and other flags.

The evening was started with a quick overview of the conflict followed by a lovely two course meal provided by Sue

Freeman. During the meal the National Anthem was played, followed by the Loyal Toast and a rousing rendition of the Lincolnshire Poacher.

A World War Two quiz followed with background 40's music to encourage the happy quizzers!

As ever, it culminated in a very successful raffle. Raffles at these

functions provide money to enable the Branch to undertake so many more events.

Caroline and Sandra Bond were presented with cushions made by Heather Spring in memory of their father Cpl Alan Bond MM, as a thank you to them for hosting the Malayan Veterans reunion for many years.



Happy ration pack consumers!





Sue Freeman preparing the evening rations.



From left: Sue Bond, Heather Spring and Sandra Bond with their cushions in memory of their father.



Memories of World War Two.





# Regimental Family



## Lincolnshire

### Lincoln Branch Visit to Venray 20

Following on from the very successful visit to Venray last year for the 80th anniversary of the liberation of Venray, the Lincoln Branch of the Regimental Association were invited back to represent the Regiment again.

The ceremony took place on Sunday 12 October. And this year's party comprised of Lincoln Branch Chairman, Major (Retd) Jim Freeman, his wife Sue Lincoln Branch Secretary, Mr Shaun Watson Branch Standard Bearer, Captain John Watson and Captain Kevin Watson. Prior to the service at Venray the party visited Overloon to lay a wreath in commemoration of the 32 Lincolnshire Regiment soldiers buried there.

At Venray, after the formal service and wreath laying, Captain John Watson and Mrs Sue Freeman distributed chocolate to the local scouts in memory of this act of kindness carried out in 1944 by soldiers of the Regiment.



Capt Jim Watson laying a wreath at Overloon.



Regimental Wreaths at Venray.





**Association Standard Party  
marching on at Venray.**



**Capt Jim Watson laying the wreath  
at Venray.**



**Capt Jim Watson and Mrs Sue Freeman handing out chocolate bars  
to the local children.**



**Venray Standard Party. From left: Maj J Freeman, Mr S Palmer, CaptK  
Martin and Capt J Watson.**





# Regimental Family



## Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire

### Battlefield Tour 2020

The Bedford branch of the Royal Anglian Regiment association toured the D Day landings in Normandy. 1st day Britain's D Day, Pegasus Bridge, Horsa Bridge, Memorial Museum. Visited the actual landing site for 3 gliders which landed at a speed of 90 mph just 40 meters from the Pegasus bridge. It was insane, brave and highly skillful.

We moved onto Ranville war cemetery then Sword, Juno, and Gold beach visiting the scenes of the British and Canadian landings and finally to the British Normandy Memorial that overlooks the beach at Arromanches-les-Bains.

You can still see the mulberry harbour another great British success to get troops and supplies to land.

We visited the Americans D Day beaches, Omaha & Utah. Uncovering the real story of saving private Ryan and how close to this factual film the carnage was. We then moved on to the Normandy American Cemetery and the



From left: Clive Homan, Pete Willars, Brian Soper, Helen Sutton, Jeff Henman and Brian Sutton.



German Cemetery at La Cambe.

We had a great night in the port side of Caen to have a few beers and

evening meal. It was getting late, and we eventually got a taxi to take us back to the hotel to find we were locked out.

So, operation Break-in took place in the early hours of the morning and was a successful mission.

### Branch Christmas Lunch







# Regimental Family



# Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire

BlenheimLunch 2020



Fifty-six attended this year's Blenheim Day Lunch.

The day started at 10:00hrs at the Church of Transfiguration, for a service that is dedicated to the Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire Regiment. This was followed at midday by a short service of remembrance the Memorial Garden before adjourning to the Keep for Lunch at 13:00hrs

We were delighted to play host to CSM David Craycraft of D Coy 2nd Battalion and his wife Sarah-Lee, The Mayor & Deputy Mayor of Kempston, The High Sheriff of Bedfordshire, Hannan Ali DL representing the Lord Lieutenant and 2 representatives of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Bedfordshire.

It was also fantastic having 14 members and guests from the Watford Branch.





## Memorial Garden Mausoleum



As reported in the 2024 edition of the Castle, the mausoleum ceiling suffered water damage around 2 years ago. Kempston Town Council have taken great strides in handling the issue and we have got to the stage where a list of approved tradespersons has been sought, given the building is listed and consequently, only approved tradespersons can be allowed to submit tenders for the repair work. Hopefully, a positive update will be written for the Castle Journal in 2026.

## Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire Regiment Memorial Bench

The new Embankment Bench is now in situ, with the correctly spelt name plaque attached. As you can see from the photograph, it is very close to the war memorial on the Bedford Embankment. It is paid for for 15 years after which a renewal fee becomes due. It is hoped that we will still be in office, at the time the renewal becomes due.







# Regimental Family



# Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire

## 150th Anniversary of the Keep, Kempston Bedford

Keep management committee, together with the Provincial Grand Lodge of Bedfordshire, with support from the Bedford Branch of the Royal Anglian Regiment Association, are in the latter stages of planning an event on Sunday 22nd March 2026, to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the Keep, in Kempston Bedford.

A small museum is being created on the 2nd floor, outside of the main Temple, and it is hoped that several items from the Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire Regiment might also be included for the display.

## Bedfordshire Military Lodge No 10075

All formalities have now been concluded and the Bedfordshire Military Lodge, No 10075, will be consecrated on 13th June 2026 at the Corn Exchange, Bedford.

2 Royal Anglian Regiment veterans, myself and another member of the Bedford Branch will be taking up

Lodge officer positions, namely the Assistant Secretary and Secretary roles,

respectively.

Additionally, there will be several other Royal Anglian Regiment veterans becoming founder/joining members of this new Lodge. If there are any readers of this Journal, who wish to consider becoming a Freemason or be a joining member, please contact the Bedford Branch Secretary who will be more than happy to provide further details. ([royalanglianassociationbedford@aol.co.uk](mailto:royalanglianassociationbedford@aol.co.uk))

## Membership

This remains static with 59 members on Branch Records.

Recruitment is hard, given there is no local record of Royal Anglian Regiment soldiers or veterans living in Bedfordshire, thanks to GDPR and it is only by luck or accident, that they are found, living in plain sight. The Secretary used his eagle eyes to spy a Royal Anglian flag, flying on a flagpole in the village where his mother lives. A knock at the door, a short conversation and 1 more member joins the Bedford Branch ranks.

It would be lovely if our existence

could be shared with the 1st & 2nd Bn soldiers who come from the Bedford area and who might be leaving the Army but want to continue to have a connection with their Regiment. We would love for them to consider joining the Bedford Branch.

## Meetings

We continue to hold Branch Meetings on the first Friday of every month, excluding December (or March/April, if Good Friday falls on this date, as it does in April 2026).

Our Biannual General Meeting is to be held in March, so, hopefully, there will be some Branch Member interest, in wishing to seek nomination for the Branch Committee positions.

## Memorial Garden Wall

Readers might have logged, over past Castle Journals, the story of the damaged and deteriorating Memorial Garden wall, opposite the Keep, in Kempston. I am delighted to report that after nearly six years; the whole affected area of the wall has been demolished and a new wall erected.







# Deaths and Obituaries

## Deaths 2025

|                              |               |                               |                |
|------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------|----------------|
| Colonel Martin Romilly OBE   | January 2025  | Jonathan Charlie Bateman      | May 2025       |
| Michael Shoesmith            | January 2025  | Tony Coyston                  | May 2025       |
| Captain Julian Dean          | January 2025  | Terry Hutley                  | June 2025      |
| Paul Thomas                  | January 2025  | Roland Rawlinson              | July 2025      |
| Peter Dawkins                | January 2025  | Matthew Jones                 | July 2025      |
| Major Anthony Jones          | January 2025  | Phil Brewill                  | July 2025      |
| Jake Waddington              | January 2025  | Allen Orton                   | July 2025      |
| Charlie Long                 | February 2025 | Lt Colonel Brian Davenport    | July 2025      |
| David Selby                  | February 2025 | Michael Fairweather           | July 2025      |
| Micky Dowland BEM            | February 2025 | Colonel Jonathan Hall-Tipping | September 2025 |
| Brigadier John Wheatley Gray | February 2025 | Steve Saddington              | September 2025 |
| David Bausor                 | March 2025    | Barrie North                  | September 2025 |
| Mark Doherty                 | March 2025    | John Kitchen                  | October 2025   |
| Alan Ainsworth               | March 2025    | Colonel Tony Winton OBE DL    | November 2025  |
| Stephen Edwards              | May 2025      | David Wright                  | November 2025  |







# Obituaries

## Lieutenant Colonel BHM Davenport



On leaving Royal Grammar School Worcester Brian enlisted into the Army as a private soldier. It was not long before he was sent to Sandhurst from where, in December 1962, he was commissioned into the Royal Leicestershire Regiment, in which his father had served.

He was posted to Watchet and soon deployed with the Battalion to Hong Kong where the Battalion was part of the defence against 'confrontation' from Indonesia. Tours in Aden and the Depot at Bury St Edmunds followed and it was at the latter that he got into the routine of playing as much cricket as he could in the summer and then, in the winter, he was found on the hockey pitch. He represented the Infantry at both sports.

In 1968 he joined the 4th Battalion as the Recce Platoon Commander and then became the Regimental Signals Officer. In 1970 he joined the Pompadours in Paderborn, serving first as the Regimental Signals Officer and then as the Operations Officer. His time with the Battalion included a tour to the Lower Falls in Belfast. His first Staff appointment was with HQ 2 Division at Lubbecke before he joined the 2nd Battalion in Munster as OC C Company. Postings followed to 11 Ulster Defence Regiment and then to REME Arborfield, as the Infantry advisor. It was at Arborfield that Brian took the opportunity to regularly play cricket

for Brook Cricket Club and Sydenhurst Ramblers; he was to maintain close links with both clubs for many years and would often travel back from Germany at weekends to play for them.

In 1980 he returned to the Poachers, first as OC D (Support) Company and then as Second in Command, serving briefly in Berlin followed by Londonderry and Colchester. In 1984 he moved to Seoul as the Assistant Defence Advisor, a Cold War relic that Brian found fascinating. Yet another tour in Northern Ireland followed, this time at the Headquarters at Lisburn. In 1987, on promotion to Lieutenant Colonel, he was posted to Headquarters 1ST British Corps as the Staff Officer in charge of physical and adventurous training. He was ideally suited for this role and soon won the respect and admiration of the many units that he worked with. A year in the Directorate of Public Relations followed at the Ministry of Defence and then in 1992 he moved to Colchester as the Garrison Adjutant finally retiring from the Army in 1997.

Retirement from active service was not to be the end of his association with Colchester Garrison since he became the Station Staff Officer, an appointment he held for 10 years. During this time he became very much involved in the local life of Colchester (he loved the oyster festivals), he was the Secretary of the Colchester Branch of The Royal Anglian Regiment and he ran the Garrison cricket side. He also contributed to officer recruiting for the Regiment by running the cricket team which played at many schools across East Anglia. As his cricket playing days came to an end he continued to organize annual tours worldwide for the Sydenhurst Ramblers and, as a MCC member he was often seen at Lord's. For many years he escaped the English winter and followed England's fortunes abroad and he was always willing to offer his services as a scorer. Sport always played an important part in Brian's life, he excelled at cricket and hockey and he was even an active supporter of the Foxes (Leicester FC) which in his later years he found rather stressful.

A Memorial Service for Brian

was held at the Garrison Church in Colchester on 10 September 2025. Members of the Regiment, the cricket fraternity and many friends turned out to say goodbye to a very able officer with wide operational experience who was also an exceptional sportsman and organiser. He was humble, modest and a great team player.

## Colonel Tony Winton OBE DL

Colonel Tony Winton OBE DL who was the President of the Bedford Branch of the Regimental Association sadly passed away on 7th November 2024 after a relatively short fight with terminal cancer.

into the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment and spent his early years at Regimental Duty in Goslar, close to the beautiful Harz Mountains on the inner German border followed by a tour with the 3rd Bn in Berlin where one of his duties was the guarding of Rudolf Hess in Spandau Prison.

On completion of this tour, he transferred to the RAOC completing his service in 1984 after which he became a Logistics manager for the Burton Group. In the mid-90s he was posted to the Former Yugoslavia working for the British Government and was awarded an OBE for his services.

In 1996 he was appointed as an Honorary Colonel of 5th Bn R Anglian Regt and in 2008 appointed a Deputy Lieutenant of Bedfordshire. Tony was for many years President of the Bedford Branch of the Regimental Association and was active both with regimental matters and in his duties as a Deputy Lieutenant. In July 2025 Tony's ashes were interned within the Regiment's Garden of Remembrance, opposite the Keep. The Service was led by one of the Honorary Regimental Chaplains, Revd Stephen Smith.

It was good to see all those that turned up, not just from the association but from Tony's time serving in the 3rd Bn and of course Tony's family some of whom had travelled from Scotland, N Ireland and the United States.



## Major (Retd) David Wright



Major David Wright passed away on the 5th November 2025 in Shaftesbury. David was 84. David served in the 3rd Battalion, The Pompadours from 1962 to 1988.

On leaving Hertford Grammar School he became a National Servicemen in 3rd Battalion the East Anglian Regiment and following this duty was selected for training at RMAS.

On commissioning he joined the Pompadours in Berlin and then had a long career with appointments in Northern Ireland, Germany, Cyprus (as a company commander in the Battalion), Hong Kong and Bermuda.

On retirement from the Army, he and his wife Pamela settled in Shaftesbury and David took on the security officer role at the School of Signals in Blandford.

David 'Chippy' Wright was a keen carpenter and gardener and in his latter years focussed much of his time on his home. He is survived by Pamela, his 2 sons John and Bill and his 5 grandchildren.

## Steve Saddington

Born in Leicester and has five siblings Wendy, Tracey, Kevin, Mark and Jason. His mum and dad were Shirley and Brian. No army connections previously. His children's names are Kristen, Aneka-Cherie, Jake, Sara and Craig from different marriages, and two step children

Rory and Alastair. He worked in a shoe factory after school then joined the army in 1978 I believe. His tours of duty

included Northern Ireland stationed in Londonderry. Also Germany based in Berlin and Cyprus in the North but not sure where.

After leaving in around 1987 he worked at various places in Leicester including Walkers Crisps, and as a butcher in a meat processing factory. He then mainly worked in warehouses in despatch and as a fork lift truck driver, including for B & Q, his last job where he was about to go back to work before becoming ill after immunotherapy treatment, following successful chemo and radiotherapy for lung cancer.

## Matthew Jones



Matthew joined the Second Battalion in Chepstow in the summer of 2003. Throughout his military career, he served with C (Northamptonshire) Company, spending most of his time in 8 Platoon. After starting in Chepstow, he moved with the Battalion to Ballykelly, Northern Ireland, and later to Ternhill in Shropshire. He deployed to Iraq on Operation TELIC 8 and went on to serve in Celle, Germany, before leaving the Army.

Matthew was the life and soul of his platoon. If there was mischief to be found, he was sure to be involved. A highly capable soldier and a natural mentor to junior ranks, he earned the trust and respect of both his peers and his commanders. Exceptionally fit and competitive, he relished challenging his platoon sergeant and commander on all aspects of fitness, whether during camp

duties or on operations.

On operations in Northern Ireland and Iraq, Matthew served with distinction. In Basra in 2006 he was frequently entrusted with significant responsibilities, often leading entry teams during strike operations across the city. He always displayed courage, skill, and an unwavering willingness to help others. His boundless energy and sense of humour were legendary, once, during an exercise in Jordan, he accidentally misused a "puffing Billy," blowing off his eyebrows and damaging his eyes. Undeterred, he spent the rest of the exercise wearing tinted goggles, still very much his lively and spirited self.

8, Matthew and his platoon tragically lost Privates Joseva Lewaicei and Adam Morris to an IED strike. Matthew was especially close to Private Lewaicei and was honoured to be Godfather to his daughter, Anna-Marie.

After leaving the Army, Matthew returned to education and successfully gained a degree in electrical engineering.

He went on to use his skills to program and service advanced industrial manufacturing robots.

Matthew was 39, a devoted father of two, a beloved son to Ruth and Kenny, and a much-loved brother. He will be deeply missed and forever remembered.

## John Richardson



John Richardson passed away on 21st October 2024. John served in the RLINCOLNS during his National Service and after training in 1954, was





# Obituaries

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based with the 1st Battalion in Berlin and was employed in the MT Section. John greatly enjoyed his time in Berlin during an exciting period in history and after only a short time, reached the rank of Corporal.

To quote from his discharge book, he "...has been with this unit only since July. During his national service he has reached the paid rank of Corporal and has been in charge of 20 load carrying vehicles while serving with the 1st Bn R LINCOLNS. He is a smart NCO who is reliable observant and intelligent."

On leaving the Regular Army John was enlisted in 4/6 RLINCOLNS in Sobroan Barracks and again worked in the MT Section. During his service, John made many lifelong friends with whom he kept in touch and continued this with the Spalding Branch. John and his wife Eileen were active members of the Branch for many decades and where Eileen assisted with the administration. John is survived by his wife their son and grandchildren.

## Corporal Charlie Long

Charlie was born on 11th June 1952 in Royston, Hertfordshire. He eventually arrived in Grimsby working as a painter and decorator and enlisted into

A Company 7 RANGLIAN in 1984, intimate to take part in the large multinational Exercise LIONHEART in Germany.

Charlie then remained in Grimsby with 7 RANGLIAN during the 1999 amalgamation into the East of England Regiment and then back to the reformed 3 RANGLIAN in 2006.

In all, Charlie served 25 years with these units at the Territorial Army Centre in Grimsby. With the Territorial Army, Charlie travelled extensively not only to Germany but also to Cyprus, Gibraltar, Kazakhstan and the Ascension Islands, taking great pride in his job as a driver. Charlie was a loyal stalwart of the unit and is fondly remembered by many generations at Grimsby, particularly for his mentoring role with newly enlisted personnel.

Charlie was generous with his time and never had a bad word to say about anyone. Throughout his service he forged lifelong friendships across all ranks and ages. Charlie took great pride in his appearance and that of his vehicles which were always in tip top condition. He was committed to service, standards and comradeship.

Charlie continued to maintain his high standards of turnout after he left 3

RANGLIAN. He was already a member of the Regimental Association and soon became a mainstay of the Grimsby Branch. He continued to help others, particularly Association members.

This ranged from moving furniture to decorating homes for those unable to do so. As a very active member of the Grimsby Branch, he was most visible as the Branch Standard Bearer. In this role Charlie represented the Regimental Association on countless occasions at Duxford, Armed Forces Day Cleethorpes, Remembrance Day and other major events. That was in addition to attendance at numerous funerals, not just in Lincolnshire but across the Regimental Area. He also performed this role as the British Legion Grimsby Branch Standard Bearer.

It is difficult to summarize a character like Charlie Long but he is best described as a very passionate man, living life to the full, forgiving, kind and generous, always prepared to help others. He was an outstanding member of the Regimental Association and will be sorely missed by all his friends and comrades. Charlie is survived by his wife, Heather, his daughter and son Rachel and Steven and five grandchildren.





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RIGHT  
AWAY.”**

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# STRENGTH FROM WITHIN



## ROYAL ANGLIAN

### Regimental Voluntary Days Pay Scheme

The Royal Anglian Charity raises funds in a variety of ways, including donations from benefactors, both individuals and businesses, fundraising events and from the "day's pay scheme". This latter route sees serving members of the Regiment donating the equivalent of a day's pay every year (in fact for soldiers it works out 128% of a day's pay and for officers 218%).

As the Regimental charity expands its activities, particularly around providing support to those in hardship need or distress and seeks to do more for the Family in general, we need to raise more funds. We are therefore requesting all members of the Regimental Family who are not currently paying into the day's pay scheme to kindly consider making a regular donation to the charity.

For serving personnel the simplest and most effective route is to join the day's pay scheme by contacting your unit's administrative staff. For everybody else it is by making a regular monthly or yearly donation to the charity. However the donation is made every penny will be used to directly support members of the Regimental Family in the form of grants to those in hardship, need or distress, to support those currently serving in the Regiment's three battalions or to support events and activities for the wider Family.

The level of donation is a personal matter. Some may be able to follow the principal/spirit of the soldier's day's pay scheme and donate the equivalent of their current day's pay. For others it will be another amount. We understand the current financial challenges and would ask people only to give what they can afford. Every pound donated makes a difference.

Standing orders can be paid to Royal Anglian Regiment Charity:

Sort 16-19-26

Account 28233435

Alternatively you can follow the QR code to use enthuze to arrange a monthly payment.

Thank you.









