

COMMISSIONING

1. The following was commissioned on 29 Jul 06 and will join the 3rd Battalion:

2Lt M Burrows.

PROMOTION

2. Capt D J Haggar 13 Jun 06.

POSTINGS

3. Maj D A England from COS(W) Warfare to SO2 G3/G5(O&D/Polic) HQ Inf	Aug 06
Maj J D Hughes from 1 st Bn to SO2 BOWTAG(G)	Aug 06
Capt N D B Charlwood from PJHQ(UK) to ICSC(L)	Sep 06
Lt Col A M Wylie from BDS(W) to Australian Staff College	Dec 06
Capt A P Wolfe from 4 Armd Bde to 2IC/Trg Offr PCD Inf Battle School	Dec 06
A/Maj A P R Bowman from 28 Sq GL Sect to ICSC(L)	Jan 07
Capt T B Mellar from BOWTAG(Jt) to ICSC(L)	Jan 07
Capt P A Muncey from 1 UK Armd Div HQ & Sig Regt to ICSC(L)	Jan 07
Capt O B Ormiston from ATR Bassingbourn to Coy 2IC 1 st Bn	Jan 07
Lt A J Griffiths from 2 nd Bn to ATR Bassingbourn	Jan 07
Lt G E Osborne from 2 nd Bn to ATR Winchester	Jan 07

BATTALION ACTIVITIES4. **1st Battalion.**

Although postulated as a 'quiet month' for the Vikings, July has been anything but. With A(Norfolk) Company and elements of Support(Cambridgeshire) Company still in BATUS supporting the Med Man exercises and B Company on leave in preparation for replacing A Company Pirbright has seemed quieter. Not so, the PNCO Cadre passed off the square on 21 July after a demanding course, which saw 76 candidates start, but only 28 finish. Of those 28, the best 8 were promoted on the day and the remainder will promote in due course. PNCO Cadres

are meant to be challenging and with a firm eye on Op HERRICK this one was no different but has ensured the battalion has produced a good new crop of junior commanders ahead of demanding operations next year. The Battalion has also run a Divisional Pre-Brecon Cadre and we welcomed aspirants from our sister units onto the course. Some sound preparation has hopefully provided the best possible chance of success for them all.

Aside from core training activities the Battalion has also been focused on recruiting and Minden Day. Following a tour of the Recruiting Offices by the Commanding Officer a plan is now in place for a serious recruiting push in September prior to commencing pre-deployment training. This will include C(Essex) Company conducting Freedom Parades in Essex in the coming months and a series of initiatives designed to raise interest in the Battalion across the recruiting area. We have also re-vamped the website with the aim of making it more accessible to potential soldiers. Minden Day preparations continue to gain momentum with the RSM enjoying the opportunity to put the soldiers through their paces on the parade square. With a parade, fair and all ranks party planned for 1 August it is shaping up to be a memorable day and a good start to the Summer Leave period.

Planning for Op HERRICK continues and much work has already been invested in preparatory courses and likely ORBATS. This groundwork ensures that post-leave the Battalion can begin pre-deployment training well prepared and on the right foot.

Finally we say goodbye to Maj James York, OC C Company who departs to take up a post at DLO Andover and we welcome Maj Phil Messenger who takes over from him in September.

5. **2nd Battalion.**

The 2 R ANGLIAN Battle Group has had command of BASRA City South Area of Operations for 6 weeks based at BASRA Palace. The addition of a second battle group was in response to increased violence and was one of the MNF's contributions to the state of emergency. The Battle Group has under command A Company, 17 Bty 26 Regt RA (in Snatch), B Company 1 LI (in WARRIOR) and the 2 R ANGLIAN echelon. C Company remain as 20 Armd Bde's reserve but find their time is occupied on operations, equally busy are B and D Companies under command of 1 LI Battle Group in the north of the city.

July has been a successful month for the Battle Group. One operation planned and executed led to the removal of 2 tonnes of ordnance and bomb making equipment from BASRA, the largest find on Op TELIC to date. All our soldiers are working very hard but are in good spirit especially after a

success like the find. A Company were also successful in apprehending an enemy death squad at a snap VCP. A car with 5 individuals posing as policemen was stopped complete with the sixth passenger bound and hooded. There is little doubt that the victim's life had been saved by the company, prevented from a miserable end at the hand of murderers. Moments like this while uncommon do make the hard work and sweat worthwhile.

Our thoughts go to Cpl Sutcliffe from D Company who was badly injured while on patrol in the north of the city. We wish him all the best and I know the CO expects to see him back at Battalion after a spell of convalescence.

The Battle Group celebrated Talavera Day (early) on 22 July. Stuart Nicholson as PMC and his committee treated us to a grand event, albeit dry at BASRA Palace. Officers and Warrant Officers from the Battalion from the north and southern AOs and non-Poacher members of the Battle Group were treated to drinks on the veranda outside the Headquarters and then a wonderful three-course candlelit dinner with real plates and cutlery.

Some were surprised to see a selection of Mess silver on display and the Colours completed the picture. The Talavera Cup was passed around the table as befits tradition; no champagne but lemonade this year. Mr Vice got off lightly.

A Company

The formation of the Basra South Battle Group has certainly meant that the pace of life has picked up for A Company. While before our days were pleasantly, although fully, filled with Liaison Officer visits and escorts to Iraqi Army camps, followed by a quick dip in the pool we now find ourselves more fully integrated into the day to day patrolling of the city. The focus of the Battle Group remains Security Sector Reform, the building of Iraqi Police, Army and other security sector departments.

A Company has taken on some responsibility for liaising with the Police, of note the Traffic Police and Schools and Colleges Police both of which have been visited recently by the company to find promising development within the stations. While these visits are good in terms of the wider security situation in Basra, Police confidence and international relations, the lack of tangible effect on the ground is often difficult for soldiers to deal with. Recently however, a greater number of 'Strike Operations' have taken place that are aimed at removing the terrorists weapons, methods of transport and their leadership.

A Company has been heavily involved in these operations and has recently had a great success in a local district where a number of mortars, explosively formed projectiles, rockets and small arms. Since the removal of this arsenal, attacks on the Palace have diminished considerably, which is better for a nights sleep.

A Company soldiers are still managing to find time to go to the gym as well as, following a period of closure, the swimming pool. Unfortunately the football league that was running has been put on hold as the tempo of ops has increased; luckily this has stopped the rapid slide of the A Company HQ team. Facilities at the Palace are improving all the time, both in terms of welfare and also force protection. Food remains excellent, despite the epic task of moving rations round the City.

With R&R in full swing, multiples on the ground are perhaps working harder than when the company is complete in theatre, but all agree that the extra work is worth the pleasure of the seeing family at home mid-tour.

B Company

B(Leicestershire) Company is now almost four months into our tour in Basra, and the men are coping admirably with privations of life in one of the world's hottest spots. The Company continues to serve as part of the Basra City North Battle Group from 1 LI. Its role to provide the SSR focus has not changed, however, the Company now provides the serge capability, carrying out a variety of tasks from patrolling to search and arrest operations.

Temperatures now routinely reach almost 50 degrees Celsius, and the sky has been unfailingly clear of cloud for at least a month. Needless to say, that any rest time experienced at night is classed as invaluable and we enjoy nothing more than retreating to anywhere air-conditioned as soon as night falls. In more gentile times we would have surely enjoyed the view overlooking the Shatt-al Arab river. Unfortunately, years of neglect has left the city - once described as the 'Venice of the Middle East' not particularly easy on the eye!

The developing situation in Israel and Lebanon shows how quickly a seemingly stable situation can deteriorate. The men of B Company are kept acutely aware of this through briefs on intelligence gathered and the wider political situation. The Company continues, as ever, to be sensitive to the cultural implications of their actions and endeavour to engage with the population. The soldiers look forward to a chance to talk to the locals, even if it is in a mixture of pigeon Arabic and sign-language!

Morale in the Company is kept high by the same mix of sport, mickey-taking and black humour that has fuelled the British Army for generations. The company recently took part in a Battle Group five-a-side competition (in between patrols) and the Leicester City shirts donated by the Mercury were worn with pride.

D Company

The pace of life for the men of FSp Company continues unabated since the time of last writing. The routine patrols to Iraqi Police Stations and security duties for the Shaat Al-Arab Hotel are on-going but have been punctuated by several occurrences.

Whilst sitting down to write this article I've been trying to put into words the events of Tuesday 18 July 2006. Suffice to say that Cpl Sutcliffe was injured whilst on patrol and that his life was undoubtedly saved by his multiple commander, Sgt Whiteley and others. These events highlighted just how competent our soldiers are when put into high-pressure situations. The Company wishes Cpl Sutcliffe the best and looks forward to seeing him back in Bn soon.

The Company has also been involved in other incidents within the city. These have principally been reactive operations to aid other units in distress and also the arresting of wanted persons. All of these occurrences have highlighted a variety of things to the Company and the Light Infantry Battle Group. Principally however, it has shown that the Company is ready to react without prior warning to things as they evolve out on the ground. In an environment such as Iraq, this is perhaps a comforting thought to the soldiers as they go about their duties.

On a far lighter note however, the recent Talavera Day celebrations must be mentioned. On Saturday 22 July some of the Company HQ staff went to Basra Palace to join in with the rest of the Poachers for an early celebration of Talavera Day.

The Company held its own pre-Talavera celebration on Tuesday 25 July in the form of a BBQ and the taking of a company photograph that included the Light Infantry platoon that has been working with the Company for the last few weeks. This event also gave the Company chance to say goodbye to its current OC Maj Nigel Johnson.

Maj Johnson has been in the chair for two years and has commanded the Company in NI, Jordan and during the turbulent times here in Iraq. He has guided the Company through its role change in theatre and has provided leadership through

some difficult times, notably the incident mentioned previously. He will be missed and all wish him well for the future and hope to see him again soon. Maj Johnson will be replaced by Maj Phil Birch, who will command the Company for the remainder of the tour and will oversee its move to Germany next year.

6. 3rd Battalion.

Recruit Selection Day - 03 June

The Battalion's Recruit Selection Day on 3 June proved the worth of the last Battalion Recruiting period when all the Companies switched their Main Effort to recruiting. There is a full Recruit Cadre already running and now the Cadre at Annual Camp will also be full with 43 promising recruits. B(Lincolnshire) Company boast soldier manning in excess of 150% and all Companies exceed 100%. We are fast reducing our shortage in trained soldiers and JNCOs but know we will have to maintain these high figures for two years to achieve full trained manning - but we are on the way.

Command Post Exercise - 09-11 June

The deployable Battalion Headquarters and the four Company Headquarters were stretched and tested at Ex STEELBACK COMMAND on the old Watton Airfield. Maj Simon Watson, the 2IC with the Battalion Planning Team including our new Support Platoon Commanders had mastered the 7 Questions and produced their first Battalion Operation Orders to be played at a CPX. With HICONS and LOCONS choreographed by Maj Dennis Vincent in his last outing as our Training Major, the Battalion staff became increasingly familiar with faster O Groups, Estimates, Back-briefs and Wargames. The battles stretched us all and made us wish we had read our SOPs before we started but while our procedures were not quite perfect, the break in play to watch England qualify and the BBQ went according to plan.

Medal Parades

E(Essex and Hertfordshire) Company, from which 76 soldiers have volunteered for Operations, held Medal Parades in Chelmsford and Hertford on the 10 and 17 June. The Lord Lieutenants of Essex and Hertfordshire kindly made the presentations and with Honorary Colonels, family and friends in support - there was the right sense of occasion and celebration.

The Regimental Band and Corps of Drums played at the Regimental Service in Leicester Cathedral on 25 June before the Lord Lieutenant of Leicestershire accompanied by Lt Gen McColl presented medals to C(Leicestershire and

Northamptonshire) Company. It was a nice touch that those receiving medals joined the Regiments Old Comrades from Leicestershire in a March Past led by the Regimental Band and Corps of Drums in Scarlets. Having the serving Territorial Company and the Band and Drums with the Old Comrades seemed most natural and is a model we would like to follow.

Battalion Camp - 23 June-09 July

The Battalion deployed to Otterburn Training Area on 23 June. With much bigger Support Platoons in all Companies, we have concentrated on Cadres to launch the Support Platoons strongly. The 1st and 2nd Battalions are kindly providing additional instructors for the Javelin and Mortar Cadres as well as essential equipment and an OPFOR on the FTX. Contingents from the US National Guard, the Bermuda Regiment and the Lithuanian Army Reserve have lent a multinational flavour to the training. The Cadres have all had their high points - the Bermudan Section on the Assault Pioneer Cadre were particularly impressed to be offered a Medium Girder Bridge on which to practice their cutting charges. The Lithuanian Section quickly passed their training tests on our new A2 Rifles and were soon showing the way on field firing. The SNCOs from the US National Guard impressed the WO & Sgts' Mess at their mid-Camp Regimental Dinner by knowing all the verses of their National Anthem.

On the Mid-Camp Break we are looking forward to a Battalion Drum Head Service, the visit of our Honorary Colonel and a Battalion Inter-Company Sports Day. In the final week of camp we will deploy all the Support Platoons in a Battle Group FTX culminating with a live firing attack.

About People

We wish our storming former Training Major, now Lt Col Dennis Vincent good luck in his new appointment at Headquarters Infantry and warmly welcome Maj Ian Couch who joins from the 1st Battalion via Recruiting Group in Upavon.