



01/08

## ROYAL ANGLIAN NEWS

JAN 08

### **HOMECOMING / FREEDOM PARADES**

1. C (Essex) Coy 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, supported by their Battalion Corps of Drums, have been invited to represent the 1st Battalion at a Homecoming Parade in Thurrock on Thur 28 Feb 08 (outside times are 1145 - 1245 hrs). On Sat 1 Mar, supported by the Minden Band, they have been invited to exercise the Freedom of Brentwood (outside times are 1300 – 1400 hrs).

The Regimental Officer responsible for both of these events is the Area Secretary Warley, Maj David Gilchrist, to whom any queries should be addressed (tel: 01277 213051 email: [ahqroyalanglian1@btconnect.com](mailto:ahqroyalanglian1@btconnect.com)). The Colonel of the Regiment will be represented in Thurrock by CO 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, Lt Col Dennis Vincent and in Brentwood by Deputy Colonel 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, Brig Tony Calder.

These are the last major events that Maj David Gilchrist will organize before he retires on 14 Mar 08. David, Maj Phil Messenger and C (Essex) Company would therefore very much welcome your support on these important days for both The Regiment, Thurrock and Brentwood.

Details of a parade in King's Lynn on 30 Mar 08, involving A (Norfolk) Company, will be published shortly. The Area Secretary Norwich, Col Tony Taylor, will be the Regimental Officer responsible for this event.

### **TRANSFERS**

2. A/Capt ME Frehse (Markus), late of 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion The Royal Australian Regiment and 51<sup>st</sup> Battalion The Far North Queensland Regiment, has been accepted into the British Army and The Regiment on a SSC in the rank of A/Capt wef 30 Jan 08. He is to join The Poachers on probation for 12 months.

### **BATTALION ACTIVITIES**

#### **1<sup>st</sup> Battalion**

The Battalion returned to work on the 16<sup>th</sup> January after POTL and Christmas Leave. The main focus now will be the conversion to the Bulldog vehicles. The Bulldog has already seen service in Iraq and the feedback to date has been positive. The training will focus on drivers' and commanders' cadres, followed by progressive tactical training from Section level up to a Battle Group exercise in October. The Battalion will also be covering the Northern Ireland Public Order commitment from February and the mandatory Training Day for this took place at Sandhurst on 28<sup>th</sup> January. This was followed by the tactics and commanders' cadres. In February the companies will conduct their cascade training before a confirmatory exercise at the end of the month.

The Battalion is also running a Potential NCO Cadre. There were in excess of 80 volunteers for the selection week, which will be whittled down to 44 for the start of the cadre. On the peripheries there will be Inter Company Boxing, the annual Ski Camp, Company Adventurous Training and a Battlefield Tour.

The Memorial Fund continues to grow exponentially - the current total being £240,000. The companies continue their fundraising efforts; these have included B Company conducting a sponsored row in the middle of Guildford and A Company visiting Norwich City FC at Carrow Road and raising over £600. Future events include C Company parades in Thurrock on 28<sup>th</sup> February, which will include a church service and parade, and in Brentwood on 1<sup>st</sup> March, a Freedom Parade with the Minden Band in support.

Sky One are currently showing the series "Ross Kemp in Afghanistan". It is a five part series following Ross and the time he spent with the Battalion in Afghanistan. It features B Company as they train for the deployment, conduct operations and return to the UK. The first episode was on 21<sup>st</sup> January, which drew in nearly one million viewers. It is on every Monday at 2100hrs for the remaining weeks.

### **A (Norfolk) Company**

With 6 weeks leave over and fully refreshed, the Company has returned to Pirbright for another year of business. The war fighting that we experienced last year has been put to the back of the mind and the Company focus has switched to Public Order Training and Bulldog conversion. The OPTAG training has already begun and the soldiers are all looking forward to practicing their skills on the CIVPOP of HQ Company in the near future.

The best of the Company's Private soldiers have been on the Selection Week for the PNCO Cadre. Afghanistan has given these young men a great deal of experience and extra responsibility. All of them would make excellent Junior NCOs. Fortunately it is the same in every Company, which can only be for the greater good of the Battalion.

As ever in A Company it is not all work and no play; there are those going on the Battalion Ski Camp; others will represent the Company at rugby, boxing and athletics. It will be a very different year to 2007, but one with new and exciting challenges for the men of A Company.

### **B (Suffolk) Company**

B (Suffolk) Company have said goodbye to two stalwarts of the Company. Capt Robinson, the 2IC, has moved to the Training Wing to run the Potential NCO Cadre before being posted to RHQ; and WO2 Newton has moved on to take over as RQMS(M). Lt Seal Coon has taken over as 2IC and WO2 Self is the new Company Sergeant Major.

The Company has returned from leave fully recuperated and ready for what looks to be a busy first few months. The initial training will concentrate on Public Order. This will be very interesting as there is now very little Public Order experience within the Company. Between this training, the Driver and Commander cadres for Bulldog will be run. There will be a fine balance between the Public Order commitment and the need to have drivers and commanders in time for the training to start in June.

While all this is going on there are still plans for Adventurous Training, the boxing squad has begun training and several members of the Company are looking forward to their first skiing experience on the Battalion Ski Camp.

### **C (Essex) Company**

Just before POTL, C Company showed its skills on the football pitch by winning the Inter Company Football Tournament. The boys then fought valiantly to come second in the Inter Company Tug of War, closely losing out to the Man Mountains that are the D Company team.

The Sgts and WOs v Officers' Mess annual football match was a very close run thing this year. WO2 Ramm was injured before the match and was not expected to make an appearance, much to the relief of many of the officers; however, he strapped up his injured foot and played well for the full match. C Company OC, Major Messenger decided that football was a bit tame for him so decided to make it a full contact sport instead, putting in tackles that Lawrence Delaglio would be proud of. The final score was 2 -1 to the Sgts and WOs' Mess. The evening entertainment in the Sergeants' Mess saw all the new officers consuming a Yard of Ale each, much to the amusement of all present.

The Company was stood down at the end of November for 6 weeks of POTL. The Company quickly dispersed to the four corners of the earth and a large group of the lads found themselves in Thailand for the majority of leave. Plans are already in the pipeline for the C Company Team Thailand to return in Easter leave. We are sure that LCpl Watson is devising ways in which he can stay in Thailand a bit longer again this time!

Since returning from leave the Company has reformed and, after sending people to D Coy and CIS Platoon, we have also received our members from Rear Party. The Public Order ORBAT has been finalised and the initial training has started. We are looking forward to testing our new skills in the controlled environment of "Misery Square" and Rype village at Lydd in the middle of February.

### **D (Cambridgeshire) Company**

Now that the New Year has started the Company is back refreshed and ready to begin training again. Over Christmas leave the Company spread itself pretty much across the World, with everyone making the most of the 6 weeks of hard earned leave. Vikings from D Company were spotted visiting Thailand, America, New Zealand, Australia and the whole of Europe. Naturally it was excellent to be seeing families and friends again and making the most of the Christmas cheer. Back at work, the conversion to Bulldog is still in the pipeline, but training has begun on the induction cadres. Already the Sniper Platoon has been out practising the stalking skills it will need for TESEX later this year. Mortar Platoon and Javelin are beginning their specialist training with the Javelin Platoon travelling down to Bovington to visit the Tank Museum for an intensive AFV recognition day. These cadres will be running until May, looking towards when the Company will be gathering on Salisbury Plain for it final training and tests.

In the meantime however, the soldiers are looking forward to our upcoming 'mid spring' leave and the Battalion ski trip. Training continues for the Inter-Company Boxing, and Cpl Buff is outside putting his team through their paces as I write these words. In spite of the hectic schedule the members of the Company are obviously enjoying the opportunity to see

their friends and relatives after the tour, with several members of the Company making the most of the notoriety created courtesy of Ross Kemp and Sky!

### **Headquarter Company**

Headquarter Company reformed on the 16<sup>th</sup> January, with Maj Hall continuing in command assisted by CSM Freeman. The priority for the Company is the conversion to Bulldog. The Quartermaster's Department are busy bringing the new vehicles onto account, while the LAD is servicing them and preparing them for the driving cadres that are coming up. This is made slightly harder with the vehicles being housed at Mons Barracks in Aldershot, thus causing a daily commute through some nasty traffic.

The MTO has planned the Drivers' and Commanders' cadres. Currently the Platoon is conducting Snatch training to ensure the Public Order companies have enough drivers to fill their commitment. This is particularly time sensitive, as the training begins in February.

The MTWO has taken on the responsibility for the Company Boxing Team and is giving his squad as much time as training and other commitments will allow. With a strong squad it is hoped that the Company will do well in the finals.

### **4. 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion**

Firstly a warm welcome to 2008 from the Poachers and it is already promising to be a busy one. It hardly seems like any time at all since the Battalion conducted its march through Celle and Carol Service prior to Christmas leave, which saw soldiers taking maximum advantage of Germany with breaks in Prague and skiing trips to Garmish.

The three weeks of leave did, as usual, fly by and the Battalion is now well into its pre-tour training for OP TELIC 12. The daily trips to Sennelager ranges are being conducted by the companies and even the BHQ element had managed to complete their APWTs by the second week of January. The rifle companies are carrying on and have now progressed onto basic field firing.

The command element of the Battalion attended the Brigade Commanders' Cadre and received, as usual, a mixture of useful and spurious power point presentations. However, all who attended agreed they were now in a better position to explain to their soldiers the new challenges they would face on TELIC 12.

It appears that the security situation in Iraq has progressed a lot since the Poachers left in 2006 and this was more than highlighted in the BHQ recce last week. It didn't seem five minutes since the last time desert combats were pulled out of wardrobes but, after the BHQ party returned, it seemed apparent that the challenges in Iraq are still there. However, more emphasis is now placed on the training of a fledgling Iraqi Army and the results, so far, are paying off.

As far as further training for the tour is concerned, OPTAG is looming along with various MRXs, FTXs and courses of all types. The challenge of non-specific training still exists and currently Captain Ben Hawes is putting another batch of Potential NCOs through their paces. Various signals and driving cadres are also running on camp.

Although the Battalion continues to be busy at work, the soldiers are still finding the time to do well on the sports pitch. Both the rugby and the football teams are in the running for their respective German plates, with both in the quarter finals. To get to this stage the football team have now beaten both 1 RRF and 1 PWRR. Sadly, however, they were knocked out of the running for the Army Cup by 1 YORKS.

The next few months promise to be even busier but I am sure it will all be worth it when we arrive in Theatre.

## 5. 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion

The New Year sees a series of new faces in the Permanent Staff of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion. Lt Col Dennis Vincent has replaced Lt Col Mike Gooze as CO, with Capt Paul Steel taking over from Maj Matt Woodeson as Adj. In addition, the RSM, WO1 Penn, has departed on a tour in Kabul and A/WO1 Curtis will stand in as RSM for the next 6 months. Finally, E (Essex & Herts) Company have new PSIs in the shape of WO2 Taylor and Sgt Wallis.

The New Year has also seen the Battalion focus on the next operational tour for The Regiment and 27 volunteers have come forward to be embedded with the Poachers on Op TELIC. The group, which is headed up by CSgt Hunter, deployed to RTMC on 28 Jan and will arrive with the Poachers in early Feb, just in time for the start of OPTAG training.

January has also seen the extremely successful Battalion ski trip, Ex SNOW CAPTIVE 08, deploy to Flanie in the French Alps. The expedition was led by Maj Nick Sutherland, with Padre Paul Whitehead as the main instructor. The snow was good and 11 members of the trip achieved their novice awards, with a further 6 gaining the intermediate.

During this period the Battalion has also conducted the last Battalion sponsored Recruit Selection Weekend and full Phase 1 Recruit Training Cycle. All recruits will now be selected by 49 Brigade Staff on 2 separate days each month and conduct their first 4 weekends at the Regional Training Centre at Grantham. Although this is the end of an era, it will allow the Battalion Recruit Training Team to concentrate on delivering the Infantry part of Phase 1 Training, which in turn will allow the Battalion to double the amount of recruit training cycles conducted each year.

The training focus for this month has been the conversion of half the Battalion to Bowman under the watchful eye of CSgt Beard, the RSWO. The conversion, which covers VHF voice only, was conducted for A, E and HQ Companies over a 2 1/2 day period. The second half of the Battalion will convert in Feb. Other training has been on low level defence drills and shooting, in preparation for the Battalion Field Firing Weekend, Ex STEELBACK DEFENDER I, on Feldom ranges, in early Feb.