



06/08

## ROYAL ANGLIAN NEWS

JUN 08

### HONOURS AND AWARDS

1. The Regiment is proud to note and to congratulate the following for their recent awards, published in The 2008 Queen's Birthday Honours List:

#### **OBE**

Lt Col RJ Clements

#### **MBE**

Maj DJ Stefanetti

#### **MSM**

Capt AL Buff  
WO2 MR Rackham

### PROMOTIONS

2. The Regiment is delighted to note the Pink List 2008 and to congratulate the following for their provisional selection for promotion to the substantive rank of Lt Col:

Maj SB Brunt  
Maj NA Johnson

### APPOINTMENTS

3. RHQ have been informed of the following appointments:

- Brig SL Porter CBE: A 12 month extension in tenure until Jan 2010 as Div Hd J5 Plans and Policy, SHAPE.
- Maj JD Carnegie: From Trg Maj Birmingham University OTC to SO2(A) British Peace Support Team, Pretoria, South Africa wef 7 Jul 08 for 2 years.

## **BATTALION ACTIVITIES**

### **4. 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion**

This has been the Commanding Officer's final month before handing over to Lt Col J Woodham MC. Thus time has been spent in ensuring that everything is in good order for the handover.

The main event has been the Inter Company Boxing Competition. After the mandatory six weeks training, the preliminary rounds were fought on Monday 23 June. After some very good bouts the winners went on to fight at the Maida Gym in Aldershot in front of the whole Battalion. It was a great atmosphere; there has not been any time to hold the event in the past few years, so it was a new experience for the majority of the Battalion. All fighters performed well and the hard work during training and the determination to give their all was clear for all to see. The overall winners were C Company. Cfn Burns was awarded the Best Boxer title, with Pte Burnell winning the Most Gallant Fighter accolade. Also on the sporting front the Inter Company Cricket took place, fortunately using an all weather wicket, otherwise rain would have stopped play. B Company won a closely competed final with A Company.

In early June the Battalion's PTIs moved to Penhale Camp, near Newquay, to run the Battalion Adventure Training Camp. The companies each had a week there, taking part in kayaking, mountain biking and rock climbing, all with instructors from within the Battalion. There was also the opportunity to pay for an alternative activity, and most spent the extra day on Newquay's famous Fistral Beach, attempting to surf the waves. It was a good opportunity for the companies to get away for the week and enjoy some arduous adventurous training in the relaxed Cornish environment.

There have been several A Vehicle maintenance days with members of the Battalion moving to Mons Barracks to conduct the required inspections and maintenance - the Battalion is now getting used to the higher requirement for maintenance on these vehicles whilst continuing in the background have been the BULLDOG Commander and Driver courses.

Thirty officers and SNCOs visited Normandy on a Staff Ride. The Ops Officer organised a very interesting week, made more poignant by our visiting the week after the D Day commemorations. Dr Duncan Anderson, Head of The War Studies Department at RMAS, came on the trip to give an historical perspective on the Normandy Campaign, while syndicates identified themes for discussion and lessons for the present. It brought out some interesting points and all ranks took away a great deal from the week.

The Battalion Afghan Memorial Fund continues to grow and currently stands at £317,000. The final fund raising event will be a 100 mile sponsored walk from Brookwood Cemetery to Duxford 7 – 13 Jul 08. The event has been named "100 miles for 9 smiles" and has been developed by Mrs Christine Bonner, the Mother of Cpl Daz Bonner.

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

A Company was due to conduct CT2 training at the end of June. This was postponed because of the number of soldiers away on courses and competing in the Inter Company

Boxing Competition. This extra time allowed the Company to conduct inspections and maintenance on the vehicles in Aldershot.

The Company went to Penhale to conduct adventurous training. Fortunately the weather was very good, which made the activities even more enjoyable. They definitely achieved the aims of adventurous training and people were tested throughout the week. At the same time the OC, CSM, CQMS and Cpl Moore took part in the Normandy Staff Ride. Dr Anderson joined the tour infecting the whole group with his passion for the campaign. It was great to meet up with him again after his stay with A Company in Sangin last year. One interesting discussion compared the Green Zone in Helmand to the Bocage in Normandy.

After a lot of hard work and sacrifice by the men, the Company entered a strong team into the Inter Company Boxing Competition. The preliminary rounds went quite well and the Company had a good representation in the finals, with Lt Denning, LCpl Johnson and Ptes Taylor, Broom and Roller fighting in front of the Battalion. All of the boxers put in really spirited performances with LCpl Johnson and Pte Broom winning their bouts. The whole team is commended for the effort that they put into the training and the fortitude they showed in the ring. The Company also put up a good fight in the Inter Company Cricket, narrowly losing the final to B Company.

The Company had built up a respectable Company Fund, so the OC decided to spend it on a Company party. On 19 Jun the Company held their function in the Cpl's Mess and Viking Club. Entertainments were provided by bouncy boxing and gladiator style pudgel stick fighting. Wives and girlfriends were invited and all ranks enjoyed a very good sociable evening.

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

It has been an interesting month for B Company with many soldiers undergoing Signals, BULLDOG and JNCO training; so there has been a distinct lack of faces at the morning musters. In addition to those courses that form a regular part of day to day life, many in the Company have been lucky enough to attend either the Suffolk Regiment Battlefield Tour or Company Adventurous Training (a fortunate few managed both!).

Lt Driver led the Battlefield Tour to Normandy, in the company of Suffolk Regiment veterans. It was an excellent chance for the B Company soldiers to meet, talk and socialize with these men. It was also a poignant reminder of the sacrifices made by so many in the course of our Regimental history.

The much awaited Company Adventure Training was set in the idyllic, coastal town of Penhale, not far from the sea-side resort of Newquay. 45 members of the Company took part in a busy programme - climbing, surfing, fishing, mountain biking and coastal navigation, to name a few of the activities. In the words of Lt Luff 'the weather was unbelievable', with a few of the Company's aspiring boxers (down for a 'training camp') turning a crispy shade of red, having trained topless in the sun, in front of an admiring female audience! It was an immensely successful week.

More recently and following two excellent weeks, the Company has been re-immersed in vehicle maintenance, track-bashing and admin, with daily shuttle runs down to Aldershot.

B Company's boxers came to blows with their opponents during the quarter and semi-finals of the Inter Company Boxing. Each fought with indomitable spirit and skill, with the formidable LCpl Murphy unfortunately beaten in the super heavy weight final.

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

The Company has continued with the BULLDOG conversion programme, qualifying a number of new drivers and commanders. For those with little experience of the vehicles, there was an opportunity early in the month to go down to Aldershot and get to grips with maintenance and the use of the upgraded 432's. With these new qualifications the Company is reaching the required numbers in preparation for CT2 and, eventually, the next tour.

The second week of this month saw the Inter Company Cricket take place. The Battalion was able to take advantage of the pitches in Deepcut Camp, even though heavy rain threatened to call an end to the event. Our team, ably lead by Pte Trussler, had a win against HQ Company; a sterling performance by all involved.

From cricket to surfing as the majority of the Company moved to Penhale, Cornwall, as part of the Battalion's adventure training package, organized by the OC. It included rock climbing led by Sgt Lilley, with mountain biking and kayaking run by the CQMS and CSgt Culshaw. With a day set aside for a self-funded activity, many took this opportunity to visit Newquay's famous Fistral beach and experience the surf. The week was a success and allowed the soldiers and officers to relax, whilst gaining new experiences and continuing to build the Company team spirit.

Back on the home front the last week of June saw the final Inter Company sporting event, with the boxing Quarter and Semi- Finals. The final took place in Aldershot on 26 June and the Company boxers were outstanding and won the competition. A great result for C (Essex) Company.

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

This month has seen D (Cambridgeshire) Company engaged in many activities ranging from sporting to military and community projects.

On the 8<sup>th</sup> of June the Company paraded through Ely as part of the TA 100 celebrations. It was a long but successful day that was the highlight of our recruiting drive in Cambridgeshire; this had involved a section of soldiers recruiting for the week across the County. D Company's CVR(T) armoured vehicles have also been in high demand at local fetes with two Spartan crews attending Aldershot Military Fair for a week and two Scimitars joining in with the Scarecrow Festival – an event for children on Pirbright village green.

In mid June those members of D Company who are supporting the rifle companies in their Public Order commitment, moved to high readiness as the Marching Season began. So far the commitment has only called for a practice recall of the troops but it does have the potential for them to deploy to Northern Ireland with their allocated companies until mid July. During this period the Company has also been heavily committed to the BULLDOG conversion, training drivers and commanders, maintaining the new vehicle pool and familiarising the platoons with the vehicle.

Throughout this month D Company soldiers have had the opportunity to go adventure training in Penhale. Activities included climbing, mountain biking, kayaking and even surfing. Meanwhile most of the Company officers and SNCOs spent a week in Normandy, just after the D-Day commemorations, to tour the major battlefields.

D Company came third in the Inter Company Cricket, a really good, fast paced tournament that showed that there are some promising players within the Battalion's ranks. The most significant event of this month's Company Calendar has been the Inter Company Boxing. Five members of D Company fought in the finals: Pte Scott, Pte Purcell, Pte Burnell, LCpl Chadwick and Cpl Meadows. All of which gave a good account of themselves, with Pte Scott and Purcell winning their bouts and Pte Burnell winning Most Gallant Fighter after his defeat to Cfn Burns.

### **Headquarter Company**

The first week saw 45 members of the Company deploy to Penhale for adventure training. All ranks enjoyed themselves and several pushed their boundaries with the rock climbing and mountain biking. While the majority were in Penhale, the Quartermaster took the Viking Motorbike Club on a trip around Normandy. 15 members, mainly from HQ Company, rode from Pirbright around the famous battlefields. This coincided with the D Day commemorations. The group found it inspiring and humbling to discuss the battles with the veterans that were there. Fortunately everybody got used to driving on the wrong side and made it home in one piece.

The main effort for the month has been the Inter Company Boxing competition. Cpl Buff worked the team hard and they all produced some very valiant performances; unfortunately, and despite their best efforts, only Cfn Burns made it to the finals. He won his bout and was given the title of Best Boxer for his outstanding effort. Unfortunately the cricket team lost the Inter Company Cricket competition, but as ever with HQ Company, they showed great enthusiasm and grit.

## **5. 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion**

Lt Col Simon Browne, CO the Poachers, writes from Basra:

Where to start? Well the obvious comment to make is just how much this place has changed since the Battalion left over 18 months ago. Then, as we left Basra Place, we were receiving at least 3 indirect fire attacks a day. Nearly every patrol resulted in some form of incident or contact, and the battlegroup we handed over to were about to start a tour which would see 14 of their number killed and over 50 wounded. Basra was in chaos and getting worse. I remember members of B Company telling me how they had to call up a Challenger 2 tank to fire its main armament to cover them during a fighting withdrawal across the Qarmat Ali Bridge in Northern Basra. Well B Company is now back on the Qarmat Ali Bridge, which they cross unmolested, surrounded by the bustle of a vibrant suburb of a city that is optimistic about its future. Things have changed in Basra, the place is unrecognisable, so what has made the difference? Quite simply it has been the actions of the Iraqi Government and its Army in particular.

When I came on my last recce at the end of March, the Iraqi Army was in the throes of the grandly named Operation Charge of the Knights. The brain child of the Iraqi Prime

Minister, it was an attempt to take Basra back from the Militias. So confident were they of success, that they launched the operation without telling either UK forces or the US Chain of Command up in Baghdad about it. Things did not start well, but by the time I got there a real momentum had built up. UK and US forces were deployed on the streets of Basra in support of the Iraqi Army who were systematically taking back the city block by block. With large numbers of Iraqi Soldiers on the streets, backed by Coalition ISTAR and firepower, the Militias began to crumble, huge amounts of arms and ammunition were seized, and a population tired of violence were getting behind the Government and Army. This situation has endured, and is what we found as we started our tour. Key to the Iraqi Army success has been the embedding of MiTTs into their units at all levels. A MiTT is a small advisory team of about platoon strength that lives and operates alongside their allocated Iraqi Army unit, offering training and advice as well as access to capabilities their Army just doesn't have at the moment; and that is what many Poachers now find themselves doing.

Less than two weeks before we deployed, and about three days after we had finished our training, the Battalion was still due to deploy as a battlegroup when I was told to report to Brigade Headquarters to attend an emergency command group. Within the space of two hours everything had changed radically, we were no longer a battlegroup, but instead the Poachers were to provide the MiTTs to three out of the four Iraqi Bdes in the Division responsible for Basra. We retained our responsibility for the PROFOR commitment in Baghdad based on A Coy, C Coy were still to man the Divisional Training Centre in Shaiba and D Coy were still in role as the Divisional Surveillance Company. But BHQ was gone, subsumed into a multi-capbadge organisation called the UK MiTT Group, which is responsible for coordinating the efforts of all the teams working alongside the Iraqi Army.

Now of course I am biased, but it does seem as if everywhere you look there are Poachers really driving this operation along. The only people 'MiTTing' on the ground are Poachers. A team under Major Herbie Hancock is in the city looking after the Iraqi 50 Brigade, whilst another under Major Bev Allen is looking after 51 Brigade, also in the city. They are doing a remarkable job, pushing the Iraqis along, harnessing their local knowledge and then supporting it with all the technological wonders the coalition can provide. They have already been responsible for several big finds, which are best quantified by weight rather than type! The UK MiTT group is also built on Poacher foundations; the Chief of Staff is our 2ic Major James Hart, and key appointments such as the QM are also Poachers, in this case Danny Mackness. Both have the unenviable task of trying to satisfy 4 COs, not only me, but those of the SCOTS DG, 9/12L and 4 SCOTS. They are doing a remarkable job, not least in the way they are forcing through a very radical change in the face of some occasional resistance.

Personally I do not see as many of the Battalion as I would have hoped. That is because I have been given the 52<sup>nd</sup> Brigade to look after. I have a unique challenge not faced by the other Brigades because my unit has something of a chequered past. During the initial phases of Charge of the Knights they had been committed to operations straight out of training. Only recently formed, and ill equipped they were sent into one of the toughest parts of Basra and to put it simply they folded. In the first few hours of the operation 980 Soldiers deserted in the face of the enemy, many handing over their weapons before they went. They lost 50 killed and many more wounded, and after just a few days they were down to only 30% of their stated combat effectiveness. Withdrawn from operations in disgrace, they were sent back to re-train and refurbish. Because they needed more help

than the other Brigades, I was embedded with a much larger MiTT based on B Company. I currently work alongside their Brigade Headquarters with a team of about 30, whilst each Battalion has a platoon of Poachers with a major in charge looking after them. Major Ian Chance is looking after 1/52, Major Lawrence Ives has 2/52 and Major Pete Smith has 3/52. Our unique challenge is further complicated by the fact that the Brigade is responsible for a huge area that stretches from the Northern suburbs of Basra to beyond a town called Al Qurnah, more than 60kms North of the city. It means we are strung out in isolated outposts, a long way from help if we should require it and in many cases living in appalling conditions with very limited logistical support. It is a testament to the professionalism of the Poachers that they have achieved so much in such a short time already. Just knowing where to start was enough of a struggle.

The Brigade is dysfunctional in almost every way imaginable, but they have a job to do and we need to help them do it. Their approach to planning is novel to say the least, their logistic chain is laughable, and they live in grim conditions and in some units even have to share rifles between soldiers. But they get things done, all because of a concept we are now getting very used to, Iraqi Magic! A good example being a large search operation they mounted onto an area called Leaf Island (an area that will be familiar to Vikings from TELIC 5), which started as chaos, got even worse and then descended into farce. Yet they still came back with big smiles on their faces and over a 1000 mortar rounds, several illegally held weapons including two medium machine guns, explosives and over 40 boxes of 12.7mm ammunition! We played our part, but at all times ensuring that the Iraqis took the credit.

It is still early days, but we know we are making a difference. Many of our successes are significant, we are now getting them to plan more than 5 minutes ahead, and they are incorporating fast air and ISTAR into their operations for example. Some are much smaller; the RSM for instance has got them area cleaning! But already a bit of Poacher Magic has had the desired effect. Many months lie ahead for us to take them even further, it is a challenge, but one we are enjoying despite the frustrations and the conditions.

## **6. 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion**

June will be remembered as the main TA 100 month for the Battalion. On 8 June there were three TA 100 celebrations involving the Battalion in Norfolk, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire. The Norfolk event was the Battalion TA 100 Main Effort and consisted of Battalion HQ, A Company and the Band and Drums conducting a family's day, starting with a Drumhead Service and concluding with a Beating Retreat. The day went exceptionally well and over 3,000 people attended the event at the Muckleburgh Collection on the North Norfolk coast. The Cambridgeshire celebrations centred on a Service attended by the Duke of Gloucester and was supported by members of HQ Company. The Northampton event was a parade attended by a strong contingent from C Company. There were two other TA 100 events this month; the National Pageant and Reception in London, which saw our Colour Party and a marching contingent on Horse Guards and the CO, OC C Company and Captain Horner at the RFCA Reception, with Prince Charles. The Brigade Cocktail Party took place in Bassingbourn at the end of the month but there is now a break in TA100 for a few weeks, before the Royal Garden Party on 10 July.

Another key event was Ex STEELBACK CENENTAIRE, in which a 12 man C Company Team conducted a 100 mile walk in France/Belgium, retracing the footsteps of the Leicestershire Regiment in World War 1. It raised £3,000 for military charities. The CO managed to visit the walk and took part in the wreath laying ceremony at the Menin Gate on the evening of 3 June.

Sgt Dunn from HQ Company also managed to get to France in June, taking part in the very successful R ANGLIAN Regt Battlefield Tour to Normandy. A Company continued to support the Regiment, by assisting in the running of the Regimental Tent at the Royal Norfolk Show and this hard work paid off when members of the Company were presented to Prince Harry.

The key event for the majority of the Battalion in June was the deployment to Hythe Ranges on CPTA for COIN live firing. The Battalion used 7 of the best ranges, including the new Compound Assault, which involved the blowing of a charge to enter a compound and the engagement of targets therein. One of the most enjoyable ranges was, however, the dry CQB(U) range, in which Cpl Morris taught Enhanced House Assault Drills to the Battalion. Another highlight for many was the first live use of LMG, UGL and Pistol. The ranges also offered the first opportunity this year for a visit by the Comd 49 (E) Bde, Brig Richardson); he enjoyed the visit which gave him the opportunity to chat to members of the Battalion. The turnout for this weekend was also very good, considering that the Battalion RRTT was taking part in 4 other activities - RSD, TAFS, RT3 and RT 7, which saw another 7 recruits pass Phase 1 Training.

Early July will see the Battalion deploy to Longmoor for the next COIN based training weekend, which will include Public Order procedures and our first visit by the new GOC 5<sup>th</sup> Division.