



01/09

ROYAL ANGLIAN NEWS

JAN 09

HOMECOMING PARADES

1. The 2nd Battalion, accompanied by the Minden Band, will conduct Homecoming Parades over the period 9 – 12 March 09 as follows:

- 9th March: Stamford (1215 – 1315 hrs)
 - Route: Star Lane, Broad Street, Brownes Hospital (Receive Honorary Status), Red Lion Street, Red Lion Square, High Street, Star Lane.
- 10th March: Luton (1230 – 1330 hrs)
 - During which the Freedom of Luton will be exercised.
 - Route: Park Street West, Flowers Way, Castle Street, George Street, Gordon Street, St George's Square (Inspection).
- 11th March: Watford (1230 – 1330 hrs)
 - During which the Freedom of Watford will be exercised.
 - Route: From Lower High Street, across Exchange Road, High Street (Inspection by British Home Stores), The Parade.
- 12th March: Lincoln (1215 – 1315 hrs)
 - During which the Freedom of Lincoln will be exercised.
 - Route: Market Square Precinct, City Square, High Street (Inspection by War Memorial), The Stonebow, The Strait, Hungate.

2. The Regimental officers responsible for the Homecoming Parades, to whom any queries should be directed, are:

- Stamford (9th March) and Lincoln (12th March): Major Bill O'Driscoll, Area Secretary, (Tel: 01604 635412; Email: 1ANGLIAN-AO@mod.uk)
- Luton (10th March) and Watford (11th March): Major Tony Jones, Area Secretary, (Tel: 01277 213051; Email: ahqroyalanglian1@btconnect.com)

3. This is a Regimental event. You are therefore asked to support The Poachers' homecoming and encourage others to do likewise. If they are not coming to your town or county, then please make every effort to attend whichever parade is nearest to you. In particular, please pass this message on to your contacts.

BATTALION ACTIVITIES

4. 1st Battalion

After a busy November for the Vikings, December followed in a similar fashion. Initially the Battalion found themselves at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst for the All Ranks' Briefing Day, which signalled the beginning of Pre-Deployment Training. The companies were concurrently preparing for the Equipment Care Inspection with many hands involved at the Bulldog Wing in Aldershot. The penultimate working week of the year was a Military Annual Training Tests (MATTs) week during which we endeavoured to pass the lion's share of the Battalion through their annual tests.

During the final week of work before Christmas, numerous traditional activities took place. The Padre welcomed the Battalion into the gym for a Christmas carol service. With the encouragement (bribes) of bottles of port for the most vocal company during the singing, the Battalion raised the roof. Marks were definitely given for enthusiasm, although few candidates for next year's X Factor were identified. The Commanding Officer used the occasion to address the Battalion prior to leave and announced that we had been warned off for the Spearhead Land Element (SLE) task from 1 Mar 09. In addition, those who had still to be promoted after successfully completing the Queen's Division Fire Team Commanders' Course in the Autumn, were awarded their well-deserved Lance Corporal rank slides. The soldiers then moved directly to the cookhouse where they were served Christmas Lunch by the officers and SNCOs. On the final day of work, after the soldiers had been fallen-out, the Officers' Mess took on the Warrant Officers and Sergeants' Mess on the football pitch. Dressed in the blue and white finery of the Ipswich Town reserve team, the officers were feeling buoyant. It proved to be quite a contest and was closely fought until the end. Ultimately the Warrant Officers and Sergeants stole the match in the dying seconds, winning 11-0.

Whilst the majority of the Battalion were enjoying the third week of Christmas leave, 32 Vikings deployed to the southern French Alps on Ex SNOW VIKING 09. The exercise included four instructors, one of whom was the Padre from 3 R ANGLIAN, and twelve novice skiers. The conditions in Risoul were excellent with the resort having received a large amount of snow the preceding week; so everyone, grouped according to ability, found plenty to challenge them. The week finished successfully with all twelve novices being awarded Basic Ski Proficiency (Alpine).

In the same week, C (Essex) Company deployed on the Surveillance & Reconnaissance Course at Lydd. This particularly demanding course included a lot of varied and exciting training to pique the soldiers' interest; from a range package that stands apart from the conventional and an interesting technical programme where the soldiers learnt how to use a diverse array of new surveillance equipment. They then deployed on their first exercise which focused around inserting OPs. The course was also peppered with several 0500hrs PT sessions along the unforgiving Lydd shingle.

The return from Christmas leave for the rest of Battalion saw continued MATTs training with emphasis being placed on weapon handling, first aid and fitness. The rifle companies sent platoon commanders and SNCOs to Lydd to complete the Public Order Instructors' Course; in turn they cascaded the training to their subordinates.

Concurrently, the G1 staff have been busily working to prepare the Battalion for the possibility of a short notice deployment as part of the SLE. Passports, wills, driving licences and many other documents all need to be in order. The LAD have been kept busy, not only in implementing the changes that BAE Systems have made to the Bulldog fleet, but also in sending members of the LAD away on career courses whilst preparing for a significant uplift in A and B fleet vehicles ahead of assuming SLE.

5. 2nd Battalion

January has been a short month at work for the Battalion. The Rear Party has continued its long task of keeping the camp and the wider Battalion running smoothly, whilst those who deployed to Iraq last year completed their Post-Operational Tour leave. The remainder of the Battalion returned to work on 26 Jan, having found their long unused and now strange-looking temperate combats.

A key event during January was the inaugural pre-Fire Team Commander's Course (FTCC) confirmation week run by new platoon commanders 2Lts Aspinall and Roden. The arduous week put the best of the Battalion's young (and not so young) private soldiers through their paces, to ensure that the best possible candidates were sent on to the Queen's Division FTCC in the snowy Brecon Beacons. The soldiers performed well after their Christmas turkey, proved to the Battalion Second in Command that they had what it takes to represent the Poachers, and have deployed to Brecon. The entire Battalion wishes them well and looks forward to welcoming back a new generation of JNCOs.

On 26 Jan the Commanding Officer, Colour Sergeant Graham and Private Moffatt, along with a small delegation of soldiers and officers paid a visit to the Houses of Parliament in order to brief those Members representing constituencies in the Royal Anglian Regiment recruiting area. All soldiers found the experience fascinating; the buzz around the home of our democracy was palpable. Particular highlights included the tour of the Commons' and Lords' chambers. Capt Cook, the Adjutant, was also surprised to see John Reid MP, former Secretary of State for Defence, putting him under pressure whilst trying to get the IT and projector working, prior to the Colonel of the Regiment's arrival. The presentation was a great success with many positive comments received from the MPs and a number of positive news articles published in the following days. The main aim of showing our representatives what a professional job is done on operations by all three of their Battalions was achieved. Particular commendation from the day goes to Private Moffatt who gave a marvellous performance that would put many to shame.

The Battalion is now back at work at full speed and this week begins a Board of Officers, under the direction of Major Danny Mackness, to ensure that all is in good order. The next few months provides an excellent opportunity to train the next generation of signallers and support weapons soldiers, whilst re-building the rifle companies after many changes. The Battalion is also looking ahead to the handover of Commanding Officers in late February, followed by the homecoming parades in the second week in March. We look forward to seeing as many of the Regimental community as can make it to help us mark our return from a successful tour of Iraq.

6. 3rd Battalion

The final training event of 2008 was Ex STEELBACK SPIRIT, the annual Christmas Weekend. After CBRN revision and a CFT, the Honorary Colonel and Deputy Honorary Colonels helped the officers serve Christmas dinner to the other ranks. This in turn was followed by the sergeants to Officers' Mess and an All Ranks' Party, with any hangovers being cured on Sunday morning by the Battalion Orienteering Competition. This was the final event for the RSM, WO1 Penn, who is now Captain Penn and the RCMO of the Vikings.

In late December, WO2 Farthing deployed to Iraq and CSgt Starrie deployed to Afghanistan as individual augmentees. The Force Generation for 11 Platoon's Kabul Tour this year is going well, with over 40 initial volunteers for the 34 posts. This has allowed the Battalion to offer much needed Mortar Platoon specialists to 2 RRF. The details of the mobilisation for this tour will become clearer in the next few weeks, but official Call Out is likely to be in early April, with Mobilisation in early May.

One of the first duties of 2009 was the happy task of re-badging the Grimsby ACF detachment to R ANGLIAN. At this event the detachment became the 103rd R ANGLIAN Platoon, with an extra 44 new members of The Regiment. Another important visit was the link up with 29 (R) Squadron at RAF Coningsby. This is the Typhoon Training Squadron and is now affiliated to The Regiment, and in particular to A (Lincolnshire) Company 2 R ANGLIAN and B (Lincolnshire) Company 3 R ANGLIAN.

On the training front, January has seen the focus switch to Offensive Ops, in order to shake out the war fighting skills after a long period of COIN. Companies held a low level skills weekend on 16-18 January, with A, E & HQ companies training on STANTA and B & C companies at Yardley Chase. This is also a period for Cadre Training with the Mortars, Javelin and SF Platoon training in preparation for their joint cadres with the Poachers. The Battalion is also running a Combat Signals Cadre and a Driver Conversion Cadre. For anyone not doing the above, there is a Platoon Weapons Cadre covering LMG, UGL, GPMG and 9mm Pistol. The Battalion is also holding a Pre-Brecon Weekend for the 6 students attending SCBC and PSBC in February. This trial event is being organised by the new Training Warrant Officer, WO2 Chilingsworth.

January has also seen the start of the CO's Inspection of companies, with the Bn HQ Team decamping to one Company per week for the annual assurance checks. These checks have offered the new RSM, WO1 Granfield, an early opportunity to see the real estate and meet the Battalion.

There are two major events in February; the first is the presentation of the Iraq Medals to the 24 soldiers who served with the Poachers on Op TELIC 12. These will be presented by Mr Martin Bell at Duxford on Sunday 15 February. The second event is the BG FTX on Salisbury Plain on the last weekend of the month, which will see a 3 R ANGLIAN BG, with Engineer and Artillery support conduct Offensive Ops missions and a culmination of the training period.