



03/09

ROYAL ANGLIAN NEWS

MAR 09

APPOINTMENTS

1. RHQ has been informed of the following appointments:
 - Lt Col STH Andrews from Ch G5 Plans NRDC-T to AMA to UN SRSG (Baghdad) wef Aug 09 for 9 months.
 - Lt Col DP O'Driscoll from SO1 MOD A Block to Ch Iraqi Offr Trg NATO Trg Mission Iraq wef Jan 09 (provisionally selected for promotion to substantive rank of Col in 09).
 - Lt Col JA York from PJHQ (UK) to Command ITDU Warminster wef Sep 09.
 - Maj A Borgnis from Coy Comd 1st Bn to Coy Comd RMAS wef Jul 09.
 - Maj (for Lt Col 09) DA England from ACSC 12 to SO1 Joint Warfare (Land) Fort Halstead wef Oct 09.
 - Maj (for Lt Col 09) NA Johnson from 2ic 1st Bn to SO1 EP/STP D Army RP (London) wef Oct 09.
 - Maj DJ Stefanetti MBE from QM ASPT to ADSO (4) ADSC (P) Pirbright wef Dec 08.
 - Maj JJW Hart has been selected for a place on ACSC 13.
 - Maj JCJ Wright has been selected for a place on ACSC 14.

CONVERSION OF COMMISSION

2. The Regiment is pleased to announce and congratulates the following officers for being awarded Intermediate Regular Commissions wef 18 Sep 08: Capt TGBP Coleman, Capt AK Dart, Capt GJ Goodey, Capt GJR Hudson, Capt DAW Jaggard and Capt SR Poulter

BATTALION ACTIVITIES

3. 1st Battalion

In the final hours of February, the Battalion took over the Spearhead Land Element (SLE) commitment and the companies and fire support groups tested their high readiness elements to confirm their ability to deploy at short notice. Another dominating event this month was running a Permanent Range Team on Lydd and Hythe ranges in order to support other units from 12 Mechanized Brigade on their mission specific Live Fire Tactical Training package prior to deployment to Iraq. B (Suffolk) Company were responsible for this commitment which involved a large number of range qualified NCOs and officers across the Battalion. There was also support provided to the Brigade Mission Rehearsal Exercise held on Salisbury Plain Training Area.

Two of the more exotic tasks this month have gone to Sgt Johnson who is providing Public Order Training Support with JCTATT in the Lebanon and Capt Seal Coon who is in Kenya

supporting Ex GRAND PRIX; meanwhile across the Battalion driving training and education has continued.

Having completed the arduous 7 week Advanced Surveillance and Reconnaissance Course in Lydd, C (Essex) Company took two weeks of leave. During this time, rumours were confirmed and the anticipated 6 month deployment to Kosovo was cancelled. They remain on notice to move should someone need to utilise their new skill set but the Company's new focus is becoming the third SLE Company. 9 Platoon also provided men for a RAAT task, acting as a Bde HQ Defence Platoon.

The Sniper Platoon ran a Battalion Sharp-Shooting Course which trained soldiers from the rifle companies in the use of the L96 Sniper Rifle, providing an organic precision shooting capability for each platoon. Recce Platoon have been preparing for their forthcoming Recce Induction Week with a view to carrying out Gunnery, Commanders' and Driving cadres in the future; and several Recce soldiers have recently returned from a two week free fall course based at Netheravon. Machine Gun Platoon have continued to juggle their two specialities - preparing to assist the Drums School at Catterick to run a 3 week Drumming Cadre and then a 3 week Gunnery Cadre. The Mortar Platoon spent an interesting week in Otterburn supporting the Forward Air Controllers' Course in practising the integration of joint fire. This involved engaging targets with a mortar section and then lifting the fire to allow coordinated low-level attack from Hawk and Tornado aircraft.

The Battalion has been warned off to provide the HQ and support staff to a temporary off-site Infantry Recruit Training Camp to be run at Barry Budden, in Scotland. This is part of Op SOLOMON, an Army plan to bring its manning strength up to establishment. This would run from Sep 09 - Apr 10 and, although it is early in the planning stage, initial recces have already been conducted.

CSM C (Essex) Company, WO2(CSM) Clarke was awarded the Poulterers' Prize 2008 by the Master Poulter, Mr David Bridges, at a recent Battalion parade. A reception was held in the Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess to celebrate the award.

On 14 March the Officers' Mess hosted a reception to unveil the commemorative statue of Capt David Hicks MC. This work of art was created by the well-known sculptor Ian Rank-Broadley, who was present and spoke briefly about the work. The Mess was also pleased to welcome the Hicks Family to the Reception and David's Mother unveiled the statue.

CO's PT this month has been developing the Battalion's ability to march with weight, culminating in the ACFT2 on the final two days of the month. This test consists of two 12 mile marches on consecutive days; the first with 30kg in 3.5hrs, the second with 20kg in 3hrs. The Battalion Orienteering Team has also had a good month, training hard to take runner-up in the Army Team Night Championships.

4. 2nd Battalion

POACHERS INTER – COY BOXING COMPETITION 2009

After an enforced absence last year due to Operations in Iraq, the Poachers returned to the noble sport of boxing in late March with the 2009 Inter - Company Novice Class A Boxing Competition. All five companies had formed their squads in January and training had been pretty thorough and gruelling. The finale of the 6 weeks of preparation was held in the gymnasium on Thursday 27th March in front of a huge crowd of all ranks. The event, as ever, was a highlight of the sporting year for the Battalion and showed the spirit of the boxers from first to last fight.

The preparation for the competition had been intense with company boxers dedicated to pure fitness and boxing skills training since Christmas. Pte Taylor, from A (Lincolnshire)

Coy, particularly enjoyed the training: “As well as runs, circuits, skills training, strength training and sparring, we also did regular swimming sessions. I had never realised that swimming could be so hard! We even went to the Harz Mountains where we lived in tents and trained in the snow. It was totally different running up hills in 10 inches of snow, but brilliant nonetheless, whilst living and training together really bonded us as a team.” Pte Taylor, like many of the boxers, had never fought in the ring before. “Entering the ring for the first time was incredible. The gym was packed, with all of my Company screaming my name, which gave me an incredible boost. I was a little nervous, but felt fitter and stronger than ever before in my life. I knew my training had been excellent and I really wanted to do well for the team and my Company. I beat my opponent within 30 seconds of the first round – I have never felt so good! And all our team felt just as good as me – the team spirit was sky-high”.

With support from all ranks, preparation from the coaches and enthusiasm from the boxers, the night could not fail to be a success; and it certainly did not disappoint. The Bantamweight competition set the standard for the rest of the evening with Pte McPhearson (B (Leicestershire) Coy) and Pte Chadwick (C (Northamptonshire) Coy) putting on a great display in a finely balanced bout. The majority points decision went in favour of Pte McPhearson, but it was a close call. C (Northamptonshire) Coy regained the initiative in the Featherweight competition when a skilled performance from Pte Ficetola saw him win a unanimous points decision over the plucky Pte Thompson of A (Lincolnshire) Coy.

The Lightweight bout was one of the best of the evening and all spectators were split on who had won. The result went the way of Pte Brewer (A (Lincolnshire) Coy) who also won the Cooper Cup, awarded to the Commanding Officer’s best boxer. His opponent, Pte Sears of B (Leicestershire) Coy, won the Most Gallant Runner-Up trophy, which gives an idea of the quality of the bout. The final bout before the break was a walkover for Pte Watts (B (Leicestershire) Coy) due to his opponent, Pte Walker (A (Lincolnshire) Coy) breaking his hand in the semi-finals. With admirable, albeit misguided, determination, Pte Walker showed true Poacher spirit, when he tried to convince the RMO that he was still able to box!

The Welterweight bout had the whole crowd on their feet for three rounds as neither Pte Tofton (B (Leicestershire) Coy) nor his opponent, Pte Pochetty (A (Lincolnshire) Coy) would give ground. In what was perhaps the hardest fought contest of the evening, both men gave it their all and fully deserved the long standing ovation they received. The majority points decision went to Pte Tofton, but it was extremely close.

With two strong boxers winning the Middleweight semi-finals, the final was eagerly anticipated. Unfortunately, Pte Bates (B (Leicestershire) Coy), failed the medical due to a hand injury and Pte Taylor (A (Lincolnshire) Coy) was awarded the win by walkover. The Light Heavyweight bout saw an even match between Pte Huggins (D (Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire) Coy) and Pte Tonks (A (Lincolnshire) Coy) with the majority points decision going in favour of Pte Huggins.

In the Cruiserweight bout, LCpl Underwood (D (Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire) Coy) boxed clever, making good use of his jab and long reach to get a unanimous points decision over Pte Davidson (A (Lincolnshire) Coy). The final bout of the evening, the Heavyweight competition, matched the short, but powerful, Pte Reeve (C (Northamptonshire) Coy), against the taller LCpl Chapman (D (Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire) Coy). Despite LCpl Chapman’s efforts, Pte Reeve continually got inside and scored well with some good close in work, with the result being a majority points decision in favour of Pte Reeve.

After a fantastic evening the overall result was extremely close, with A (Lincolnshire) Coy winning by only one point, with B (Leicestershire) Coy coming second. C (Northamptonshire) Coy came in third, D (Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire) Coy came in fourth, with HQ Coy bringing up the rear.

After the fight all of the boxers were thanked by the Commanding Officer for the spirit that they, and the boxers who did not make the final, had shown. All had displayed fine examples of the courage, skill and intelligence that marks a Poacher. At the close of the evening the Sergeants' Mess held their traditional reception for the Officers' Mess, whilst the boxers and their coaches let their hair down for the first time in many weeks. For many of the boxers it will only be a short respite before training begins in earnest for the Inter-Unit Competition, which the Poachers will be entering for the first time in over five years.

5. 3rd Battalion

March started with the Battalion deployed on Salisbury Plain on Ex STEELBACK ASSAULT II. This FTX was the culmination of the Offensive Ops Training Period and involved a Battle Group of over 250 TA soldiers, with artillery support from 201 Battery 100 Regiment RA and engineer support from 73 Engineer Regiment, along with rifle platoons from East Midlands UOTC, 158 Transport Regiment and 36 Signals Regiment.

The FTX started with Battle Preparation and then a move forward by 1 Company who, with an RE Section, conducted a minefield breach and assault on the covering force. This was rapidly followed by a 2 Company assault river crossing, following the construction of an Infantry Bridge, again by the Engineers. The next phase was a Battle Group Deliberate Attack on an enemy Brigade HQ, swiftly followed by a hasty Battle Group attack on a second location. The FTX was testing for all levels of the Battle Group and delivered both tough and enjoyable training.

For two weeks of this month three of the Battalions' support weapon platoons joined D Company of the Poachers on cadres. 11 members of the GPMG SF Platoon and 8 members of the Mortar Platoon in Germany, and 8 members of the Anti Tank Platoon on Salisbury Plain, were all fully integrated into the training. This has been an excellent example of inter Battalion co-operation, with the soldiers learning much from each other in addition to gaining their weapon qualification.

Other training this month has included a Company Level Shooting Weekend, which has been used to select teams for the Battalion SAAM in Apr and to sweep up the final APWTs of the year. At the end of the month was Ex POLAR EFFICIENCY, a Brigade level MATTs weekend at STANTA, on which the Battalion had to run the range package.

As well as attending the four Poacher Homecoming Parades, the Battalion also assisted in the admin for the events in supplying rifles, bayonets and vehicles. During the week of the Parades, the Steelbacks hosted the Under Secretary of State for Defence, Mr Kevan Jones MP. He was interested in the Battalions' deployment to Kabul and Helmand this year and on how the TA deal with combat stress. This visit, combined with the Homecoming Parades, generated a lot of media attention, which in turn has led to an increase in recruiting enquires.

The Battalion paid in the final cheque to Regimental Headquarters this month for our contribution to the Regimental Memorial at Duxford. Each Company raised slightly over its target figure of £1,000. Events conducted over the year have varied but most have included some kind of sponsored arduous physical challenge, such as the Three Peaks or crossing Dartmoor.

The next major training event is the Battalion SAAM, which will be held at Beckingham on the first weekend of April and will also include the Officers' Mess Arnhem Dinner. The Battalion now moves onto a period of Urban Ops Training, which will conclude with the exchanges with the Texas National Guard. The Urban Ops Training will start with a Company Level Basic Skills weekend at the end of April.