



7/10

ROYAL ANGLIAN NEWS

JUL 10

BATTALION ACTIVITIES

1. **1st Battalion**

The Battalion is now firmly back in routine in barracks conducting military training, sending many of our soldiers on Adventure Training, supporting charities and indulging in some social events.

Military training has been focused on the companies completing ranges after the re-ORBAT to start to prepare them for the Live Fire Tactical Training in Kenya in March. Despite this being 8 months in the future the busy program next year and the number of ranges required under the new Army Operational Shooting Policy mean that getting the basics done early is essential. The Battalion has also had its logistic and administration was given a check up by a successful Battalion Board of Officers and the next batch of JNCOs were selected at Pte to LCpl and LCpl to Cpl selection boards.

With the Battalion having a summer in the UK the opportunities for sport and Adventurerous Training have been abundant. Three weeks of mixed activity training was run from Chickerell camp near Weymouth, soldiers took part in walking, canoeing, climbing and mountain biking around the picturesque and surprisingly hilly Dorset countryside. Recce Platoon conducted similar training around Coniston Water in the Lake District. Lt Chris Duncalfe led a sailing expedition on a 34 ft Army yacht to the Channel Islands, qualifying a number of soldiers as competent crew and day skippers. In camp A Company won the Battalion Athletics competition, while C Company triumphed in the inter Company Cricket. The highlight of the Battalion sporting calendar was the Inter Company boxing. Preliminary bouts were fought on Monday 26 July and 16 boxers fought in the finals on 29 Jul. The final was held at the Army Training Corps Pirbright gym and was attended by the Brigade Commander, Brigadier Maciejewski DSO MBE and guests from RHQ. It was a fantastic evening of high quality boxing, sportsmanship, courage and Battalion spirit. C Company were the eventual overall winners with Pte Arrowsmith winning most gallant boxer and Pte George (D Company) winning most skilful boxer.

The Battalion Second in Command Maj Olly Brown led a contingent to the Houses of Parliament to brief MPs on theatre realities and the Battalions experiences. Then the CO, Battalion 2IC and four soldiers from D (Cambridgeshire) Company were hosted by Churchill College, Cambridge University in order to give a similar presentation to the Lord Lieutenant, local Mayors, Town Councillors and business leaders of Cambridgeshire. Cpl Owusu received a standing ovation for his frank and from the heart description of operational life.

On 10 July the Battalion cricket team travelled to Stradbroke, Suffolk to play in the James Grigg memorial cricket match. Pte James Grigg was killed by an IED explosion on 16 March 2010 in Helmand, he was a keen cricketer and coach of the youth team at

Stradbroke CC. One of the Stradbroke sides has been renamed Stradbroke 'Vikings' in honour of James and the Battalion was invited by James's father to play them. The weather was perfect and the match was a hard fought one. Stradbroke put on a strong total of 149 from 20 overs. In the Battalion's innings Capt Paul Kelly made a welcome return from the Mortar division at Warminster to open the batting and scored a half century not out. 1 R ANGLIAN came very close but ultimately our 145 was not enough. Our hosts were excellent and the addition of the 'Radio Stradbroke' commentators broadcasting around the ground was amusing addition.

Members of the Battalion have also been active working for charity. 19 Vikings supported the 'All The 4s' charity march organised by Christine Bonner and RHQ. Eight marched, led by Capt Adey Penn, and the remainder helped with collections. The Battalion was proud to support the march which raised over £15000 from street donations alone. Eight personnel from the REME LAD took part in Exercise 20/20, a sponsored march covering 20 miles whilst carrying 20 Kg. The march was carried out to raise money for the REME Benevolent Fund. The route started at Elizabeth Bks and meandered via Frimley, Camberley, Sandhurst and Wokingham ending at the REME Benevolent Fund HQ in Arborfield Garrison.

2. 2nd Battalion

It has once again been an extremely hectic month for the Poachers as the Battalion's time in Germany finally draws to a close. With a final week long exercise on Salisbury Plain, a Royal visit and Freedom Parade along with preparations for the handover to 2RRF, July has been one of the busiest months of the year so far.

The first week of the month saw the ongoing UK training reach its climax, with the hard work of June at CATT, Thetford and Otterburn culminating in a final exercise on Salisbury Plain under the close scrutiny of both 16 and 1 Brigade. A fast-paced week saw the Coys deploy into FOB locations with the full operational training package of theatre specific equipment in support. Along with the familiar sights of Jackals, Mastiff and quads, the full resources of 16 Air Assault Brigade became apparent with the widespread availability of both support and attack helicopters at all times.

With the Royal Irish occupying the west of the Plain, the 2 R ANGLIAN BG assumed control of the east, working in conjunction with simulated Afghan National Army, reconstruction teams, embedded press and Afghan governors. The addition of Amputees in Action and a Coy of 1RRF as OPFOR added a very realistic and unpredictable nature to the training at all levels throughout the week. However, the culmination of the exercise on the Friday was not the end of activities for the Battalion, with a green fleet move back to Germany at a steady sixty mph bringing to an end the Battalion's 2500 mile UK odyssey back in Celle in the early hours of the Sunday morning.

Any thoughts of a respite were quickly dispelled on the Monday morning, with drill beginning in earnest in preparation for the visit of the Duke of Gloucester and the Freedom of Celle. With only three days to practice, a lot of hard work and drill ensured that the Battalion was in shape to march through the town in good form. With the Duke of Gloucester and the Colonel of the Regiment looking on the Battalion marched through the town with strong support from the people of Celle and families of the soldiers, a fitting tribute to the close ties that the town has enjoyed with the regiment over the past forty years. If proof were needed of these ties, the dinner in the Officers' Mess in the evening

saw the dining out of Maj Mick Abbs after thirty three years service, a third of which had been spent in Celle.

Once the celebrations of the Freedom Parade were over, it was time to begin preparing for the handover to the Fusiliers with a board of officers and the obligatory checks and inspections. With the personal belongings of families and soldiers alike being packed for sea transit to Cyprus, a seemingly endless round of checking, counterchecking, packing, stacking and loading interspersed with a great deal of cleaning took place to ensure that the barracks were in order for the arrival of 2 RRF in August.

As the families began the process of leaving Celle, a final highlight was the Celle Shutzenfest, a festival marking the beginning of the hunting season. Following close on the heels of the Freedom Parade it was characterised by a weekend of German marching, singing and drinking along with a large funfair for the families to enjoy. The weather certainly contributed to the carnival atmosphere, with temperatures regularly hitting the mid thirties.

The majority of families have now left their homes in Celle and have begun departing for the warmer climes of Cyprus. The rest of the Battalion will join them towards the end of August after enjoying some well earned leave.

3. **3rd Battalion**

LCpl O'Malley has now been discharged from Selly Oak having been injured by an IED whilst on patrol with the 1 MERCIAN BG and is recovering well at home. His ankle and lower leg injury will however take many months to repair. The remainder of those deployed are continuing to patrol and some have recently visited their TA Centres during R&R

The last Battalion COIN Training weekend was held on Swynnerton Training Area on 2-4 July. This involved two companies conducted a rural patrol stand and a mobile patrol stand with base drills during Saturday. There was then a short break to watch a disappointing World Cup quarter final, before the companies launch two Strike Ops in the early hours. On Sunday, the companies joined together to conduct a Public Order BE. Once again this turned out to be a gloriously warm weekend, which really got everyone sweating on the Sunday morning.

There have been two major community engagement events this month, one in London and the other in Cambridge. The London event took place in the houses of Parliament, where Lt Rhys Little explained his experience of 11 Platoons operations in Kabul, whilst OC D Company of the Vikings talked about his role in Helmand. The audience consisted of 32 MPs from our recruiting area, who had earlier had their photos taken with 10 members of the Battalion from both 11 and 12 platoons. Following the brief, the MPs invited us all to the Strangers Bar on the terrace next to the Thames for a well earned beer. The second event consisted of a similar brief, this time given by the CO and Lt Ian Ginns, 200 members of the East Anglia and East Midlands communities. This event, held again with the Vikings and under 49 (E) Brigade control, was very similar to an Army Presentation Team event and was held in Churchill College, Cambridge.

On 17th July, 75 members of the Officers and Warrant Officers and Sergeants Mess took over the victory Services Club, in order to dine out the CO and RSM. The RV for those that were early was the Carpenters Arms, which B Company managed to reach at around

1400 hrs! After a great meal, the Drums conducted a sick beating, which both the CO and RSM joined in with, much to the amusement of the Messes. The CO received an outstanding bespoke Band Stand drop from the Warrant Officers and Sergeant and a wonderful silver statue, with all the Mess Members name engraved on it from the Officer Mess. In return, he presented a Doug Farthing painting called "The Steelbacks in Afghanistan".

Belatedly the STEELBACKS Golf Championship was held at the Suffolk Golf Club on Wed 30 June. A turnout of 34 past and present players attended. Capt Chris Tate picked up the 3 R ANGLAIN champion golfer prize.

Captain Ty Smith has once again been leading the All The 4s walk, this time through East Anglia. The CO joined the walker on Mon 19th July for the 20 miles prior to Norwich. A company having been playing host to the walkers in both Norwich and Lowestoft TA Centres and some of the Battalions soldiers have joined the walk for the odd day, in order to help raise funds.

After a visit to the Duke of Gloucester, Lt Col Vincent handed over command of the Steelbacks to Lt Col Lynne on 23 July, with WO1 Granfield handing over as RSM the Steelbacks to WO1 Main on 29 July.

August will be a quiet month, with each company conducting an Adventurous Training weekend, the Band on Camp at RAF Digby and the final preparations for the Brigade COIN Concentration, Ex POLAR PROGRESS, which starts in early September.