



03/11

ROYAL ANGLIAN NEWS

MAR 11

1. **POSTINGS**

Regimental Headquarters has been informed of the following officer postings:

Lt Col DA England	from SO1 Joint Warfare(Land) DSTL	to SO1 Capability(Tech) HQLF wef Feb 12
Maj (for Lt Col 11) DSJ Biddick MC	from ACSC Student	to MA to CINC wef Jul 11
Maj LM Ives	from SO2 ANSF HQ RC(SW)	to SO2 Trg/Liaison BATUK Nairobi wef Jul 11
Maj PA Muncey	from 2 R ANGLIAN	to SO2 G7 CD (UK Doctrine) HQ ARRC wef Aug 11
Maj FJR Grounds	from SO2 A G1 HQ 4 Div	to SO2 J5/J9 MSSG Div Planning Team 2 Blackwater wef Aug 11
Maj AJ Wadman	from SO3 G3(GLO) 13 Sqn RAF Marham	Area Rec Offr AFCO Liverpool wef Aug 11
Maj AHC Borgnis	from Coy Comd RMAS	to SO2 DS Def AC JSCSC wef Sep 11
Maj PS Leslie MBE	from SO2 J3/J5 HQ BF Gibraltar	to Dep Ch Pol and Plans HQ EUFOR Sarajevo wef Aug 11
Maj PM Birch	from Staff Officer Bermuda Regt	to SO2 J3 Capability HQ JFSP(A) Camp Bastion wef Nov 11
A/Maj PMJ Kelly	from SO3 Ops JSSU wef Apr 11	to ISAF PAK LO Op HERRICK

2. **BATTALION ACTIVITIES**

a. **1<sup>st</sup> Battalion**

The Vikings have had a demanding March, being put through the rigours of ASKARI THUNDER in Kenya. The Battalion successfully deployed over the period 23–28 February, with the first of the Battalion's soldiers returning in the week beginning 4<sup>th</sup> April. Concurrent to this activity, the Battalion's Rear Party conducted low level training in the UK in order to be ready and fit to re-join their companies on return from Kenya.

The Kenyan exercise has seen the culmination of the Battalion's individual-level Infantry skills training conducted earlier on Sennybridge and Salisbury Plain training areas. ASKARI THUNDER also built on and developed Battalion HQ's successful Command and Staff Trainer attendance in Warminster previously this year. But the time spent in Kenyan has provided that 'rugged' environment which has challenged the Vikings in a terrain that resembles Afghanistan. It was also the first step in a

series of mission-specific training exercises planned for the Battalion, with all the steps leading towards success on the Vikings' deployment early in 2012.

On the horizon, the Battalion sees a staggered deployment on Exercise PRAIRIE THUNDER 1, 2 and 3 in Alberta, Canada. This all commences after a swift turn around, post ASKARI THUNDER, during the first week of April, with the first troops arriving in Canada shortly afterwards. PRAIRIE THUNDER will take place at the British Army Training Unit Suffield, with the Vikings acting as 'enemy' in support of 1st Battalion Grenadier Guards, 3rd Battalion Yorkshire Regiment, the Light Dragoons and the King's Royal Hussars.

Canada also presents some great opportunities for the soldiers to conduct Adventurous Training, building on that which they did whilst in Kenya – namely open water diving, white water rafting and trekking on Mount Kenya.

In the background the Battalion will also be preparing for its move to Bulford in December, with the aim being to complete the move before Christmas leave, thus allowing a settled Christmas for those who have to move.

b. **2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion**

March has been a varied month for the Poachers with the companies on training, leave and operational shooting. There remains a small detachment of the Battalion deployed forward in various locations in Afghanistan.

The highlight of the month has been the Battalion's annual Inter-Platoon Competition. The week saw each of the Battalion's 13 platoons compete over a gruelling 36 hour period. The competition consisted of a series of stands, starting with a rigorous kit inspection by the RSM, then moving on to First Aid Theory. This was followed by challenges such as a 3 km stretcher run, field craft and a 20m abseil with kit that some soldiers found particularly difficult. Other challenges included foreign weapons and equipment and a long night navigation exercise, where even the most junior soldiers were expected to navigate in pairs. A series of physically demanding command tasks was followed by a difficult ammo resupply, with each man carrying between 15-30 kg on top of his usual equipment scales. The culmination of a hard 24 hours was a watermanship stand where each individual had to test his kit as a floatation device, before paddling a kayak out to sea and back. The competition was a challenge for all platoons and, despite the arduous conditions, was hotly contested, but eventually 3 Platoon A Coy was placed 1st.

The focus of the Battalion then shifted from testing the deployable platoons to making sure that we were correctly administered. The Regimental Administrative Office was subjected to the Annual Operational Readiness Inspection. This activity meant that the rest of the Battalion was occupied in preparing for the inspection for much of the training 'down-time' in the month.

The month has closed with an educational activity for D (Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire) Company. Immediately prior to leave, FSG C deployed on a short battlefield tour to follow the WW1 exploits of the Bedfordshire Regiment in France and Belgium.

On the sporting front the Battalion's teams have had an extremely successful month. The football team won a convincing 4-1 victory over the combined UN team in the

Island Joint Services semi-finals, before a hard fought loss to the RAF Akrotiri team in the final – so well done all round. The Dhekelia Poachers rugby team beat the Limassol Crusaders 55-5 in a friendly that acted as a warm up for a number of the Battalion players who will be representing the Army in the Island Inter-Services competition later on in the year.

The Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess has had an active month, with their own Regimental Dinner; the Colour Sergeants then hosted the Battalion's Lance Corporals and, on a separate night, the Warrant Officers hosted the Corporals.

Next month the focus of the Battalion's activity will be shooting. Having booked over 90 percent of the ranges available on the Island for April, the month should be an excellent opportunity to sharpen marksmanship and will culminate in the Battalion Operational Shooting Competition at the end of April. Successful teams will go on to represent the Battalion in the Cyprus operational shooting competition, where the Poachers hope for a result which reflects the Battalion's hard work and extensive training.

c. **3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion**

This month's contribution kicks off with the Op TOSCA Cyprus latest: as of four days ago, 3 R ANGLIAN Group has been in command of Sector 2 of the UN Buffer Zone and are settling in well. The start of a tour is always a flurry of activity and this is no different, with everyone learning their job and the patch (as opposed to Shropshire countryside), while dealing with real issues and no opportunity for a re-run or second chance. Our home grown training prepared us well - in five weeks we achieved an enormous amount and welded a disparate gaggle, drawn from 31 different units, into a coherent, effective and professional unit that has been out on the ground from the minute they arrived in Nicosia. This is no mean feat and I am delighted to report that every soldier is up for it and ready to get on with the job. The tempo has been relatively brisk and has included a programme of in-theatre training (in-between normal patrol activity) and even a welcome brief from the Chinese 2-Star Force Commander (surely the first time UK troops have come under the direct command of a Chinese officer?). There will be more from Cyprus in the next edition but for now I'd like to concentrate on the Bn Main Effort - that of delivering success back in the UK.

Whilst preparation for the OP TOSCA commitment has featured large in our lives, it would be wrong to create the impression that other activity has been on hold or even ceased. Perceptions of a "rear party" have been banished from the minds of not just our own people and woe betide anyone who seeks to enquire how the "rear party" is getting on! Instead we divide into 3 R ANGLIAN (Forward) and 3 R ANGLIAN (Main) and the message is not just business as normal, but, emphatically, a hunger to move forward in a number of areas and activities.

The life blood of any Battalion is its recruits and in the last 6 months we have overhauled the system to bring it into line with ITG direction and ensure that the training we are delivering reflects the demands that soldiers face. Under Capt John Pickering the team has moved from strength to strength and, by the time you read these notes, will have received a validation visit from ITG's staff. It would be wrong to be complacent, but we are quietly confident that the hard work of our RRTT staff and others will have paid off.

At the same time and thanks to TOSCA, we have had to address the impact of 120 active members of the Bn being away from weekend training and are happy to report that the gloom and doom merchants predicting melt-down of our ability to train have been proved wrong; a situation we fully expect to maintain and better as the year goes on. We have taken a long hard look at how we train and what we offer and, without any rocket science, have focused on the time-worn basics of delivering fun, challenging and rewarding training. There are tight, even very tight, resource constraints, but we are not unique in that respect and it has focused the mind to generate imaginative training. The last Bn training was a culmination of HFT Block 2 training and the Saturday morning saw commanders revising their bread and butter skills of estimates and orders whilst their soldiers took part in a series of BLs and BEs. For the next 24 hours the two components married up for a patrols exercise before rounding off with a surprise endurance tab and fire team exercise. The weekend pulled 50 soldiers to STANTA, which may not sound much for a Bn event, but exceeded expectation and provided us with a firm building block for future events.

A key driver now is the preparation of soldiers for OP HERRICK 16 and volunteers are aware of what will be expected of them over the next 6 months before mobilisation and, for the majority, a year with the Vikings. The remainder have their own focus and will, where possible, broadly follow the same training programme, which will run through to include this years ADX, where the focus is on achieving the mobilisation start state as defined by Comd 12 Bde.

Finally our congratulations to the Band who were recently inspected by DCAMUS and his Kneller Hall inspection team for their three yearly assessment. We await the written report which we expect to talk about tempo, crochets and tone in detail, but are buoyed up by DCAMUS's unprecedented verbal pronouncement on an inspection visit that the Band is "fit for purpose" - so all that remains is to persuade those with the purse strings to release them slightly and "let the music play". As an aside, we plan to get the Band over to Cyprus in late Jul/early Aug and are already planning an ambitious programme in support of Regimental business and wider UK influence.