



CASTLE

JOURNAL OF THE ROYAL ANGLIAN REGIMENT





June 2002
Vol 12 No 2



Editor: Lt Col PRC Dixon OBE

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Front cover

1st Battalion - 2Lt Duppa-Miller on patrol in Kabul

Back cover

Exercise Andes Dragon - the group with Mt Aconcagua summit in the background

Regiment and Museum Internet Website

www.army.mod.uk



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The Deputy Colonel-in-Chief, Her Royal Highness Princess Alice, Duchess of Gloucester.

From the Colonel of the Regiment



Gen Sir Michael Walker GCB CMG CBE ADC Gen, Colonel of the Regiment.

As I write this, my last foreword as your Colonel, I reflect on six months filled with extraordinary events. The sad deaths of our Deputy Colonel-in-Chief, The Princess Margaret and her mother, our Colonel-in-Chief, Her Majesty The Queen Mother, have occupied the nation's consciousness.

It was both fitting and a privilege that the Regiment should contribute to the pageantry of their funerals and religious services; pageantry conducted with dignity and style that confounded the pundits in the media and showed that, like us in the Regiment, the country did care. I am grateful to all those who represented the Regiment and they will know that, on behalf of you all, they were part of something very special.

Nor could we have known, six months ago, that one of our battalions would find itself in Kabul as the British battle group in the International Security Assistance Force. In this alien, uncertain and dangerous place the Battalion's performance is outstanding. I would

say that wouldn't I? But I do so not because I know, but because I have been told. And I have been told by a wide variety of people who have seen our officers and soldiers on operations. The leadership is outstanding, the professionalism is outstanding and the Royal Anglian ethos delivers an operational fighting spirit that is second to none. It remains my view that this spirit is an absolute consequence of our wider horizons as a large Regiment and the quality of all of you who serve within it.

Having served the Regiment for 38 years, I must now pass on the Colonel's baton to my successor and become (and staunchly remain) an Old Comrade. My pride in your achievements is unbounded. I know that I have been a member of a good family, one of exceptional pedigree and one that does what is right. It is a family in which there have been great men in all ranks and from which I have drawn supreme confidence. I know that it will continue to inspire all who serve it.

CASTLE



The Regiment

Deputy Colonel-in-Chief
HRH Princess Alice, Duchess of Gloucester

Colonel of the Regiment
Gen Sir Michael Walker GCB CMG CBE ADC Gen

Honorary Chaplain to the Regiment
The Rev MD Franks MBE

Deputy Colonels of the Regiment
1st Battalion: Maj Gen JCB Sutherland CB CBE
2nd Battalion: Maj Gen JC McColl CBE
TA Sub Units: Col NH Kelsey OBE TD

Deputy Honorary Colonels TA

Norfolk, Suffolk	Col PJS Child
Lincolnshire	Col RJM Drummond OBE
Leicestershire, Northamptonshire	Col JBC Prescott
Essex, Hertfordshire	Col RA Shervington TD DL

Alliances

Australia	The Royal Tasmania Regiment
Barbados	The Barbados Regiment
Belize	The Belize Defence Force
Bermuda	The Bermuda Regiment
Canada	Sherbrooke Hussars
	The Lincoln and Welland Regiment
	The Essex and Kent Scottish
	The Lake Superior Scottish Regiment
Gibraltar	The Royal Gibraltar Regiment
Malaysia	1st Battalion the Royal Malay Regiment
New Zealand	3rd Battalion (Auckland (Countess of Ranfurly's Own) and Northland) Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment
Pakistan	5th Battalion the Frontier Force Regiment
South Africa	First City Regiment
	Regiment de la Rey

The Regiment is affiliated to 158 (Royal Anglian) Transport Regiment RLC(V)
and to the Worshipful Company of Poulterers
1st Battalion has a Bond of Friendship with *HMS Norfolk*

Civic Honours

The Regiment has been granted the honour of the freedom of:
 Bedford, Boston, Brentwood, Bury St Edmunds, Cambridge, Chelmsford,
 Cleethorpes, Colchester, Dunstable, Ely, Grantham, Grimsby, Grays and Thurrock,
 Hertford, Hinckley and Bosworth, Ilford, Ipswich, King's Lynn, Leicester,
 Lincoln, Lowestoft, Luton, Newham, Northampton, Norwich, Peterborough,
 Romford, Southend, Sudbury, Watford, Wellingborough, Wisbech, Great Yarmouth,
 and the Colour of the Borough of Barking and Dagenham.

Regimental Locations

Regimental Headquarters

The Keep, Gibraltar Barracks, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP33 3RN
 Tel: 01284-752394. Fax: 752026/Colchester Military 5124
 e-mail: rhq_ranglian@keme.co.uk

Regimental Secretary: Lt Col PRC Dixon OBE

Assistant Regimental Secretary: Maj J Fisk

Regimental Careers Officer: Capt RJ James

Area Office Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire

Britannia House TA Centre,
 325 Aylsham Road, Norwich NR3 2AD
 Tel: 01603-400290
Area Secretary: Col AC Taylor

Area Office Leicestershire, Rutland and Northamptonshire

TA Centre, Clare Street, Northampton NN1 3JQ
 Tel: 01604-635412
Area Secretary: Lt Col FAH Swallow OBE

Regimental Information Teams

Army Training Regiment, Bassingbourn (127 AYT)
 Tel: 01223-204216
 Goojerat Barracks, Colchester (160 AYT)
 Tel: 01206-782311
 North Luffenham (161 AYT)
 Tel: 01780-727806

Area Office Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Essex

Blenheim House, Eagle Way,
 Warley, Essex CM13 3BN
 Tel: 01277-213051
Area Secretary: Maj DI Gilchrist

Area Office Lincoln

Sobraon Barracks, Lincoln LN1 3PY
 Tel: 01522-544886
Area Secretary: Capt DJ Lee BEM

Regimental Museum

Imperial War Museum, Duxford, Cambs CB2 4QR
 Tel: 01223-835000 Ext 298
Regimental Attendant: Mr GA Boss

Battalion Locations

1st Battalion

Elizabeth Barracks,
 Pirbright GU24 0DT

Lt Col PD Jones MBE

2nd Battalion

Beachley Barracks,
 Chepstow,
 Glos NP16 7YG

Lt Col RJ Ladley MBE

East of England Regiment

TA Centre, Blenheim Camp,
 Newmarket Road,
 Bury St Edmunds,
 Suffolk IP33 3SW

Lt Col NA ffitch TD

Regimental Representatives

Army Training Regiment, Bassingbourn: Capt AG Grinonneau (August 2002)

Infantry Training Centre, Catterick: Maj PD Bailey

RMA Sandhurst: Capt IM Chance

Army Foundation College Harrogate: Lt MC Melia

Personalia

Honours and Awards

New Year's Honours

CB

Maj Gen JCB Sutherland CBE

MBE

Maj PCT Monk (Haileybury School CCF)

Senior Appointments

Col DJ Clements MBE to be Comd 107(U) Bde and NI Trg Ops in July 2002, in the rank of Brigadier.
Lt Col RMC Colville TD to be Dep Comd HQ 49(E) Bde in April 2002, in the rank of Colonel.

Commissioning

The following were commissioned on 12 April 2002:

2Lt PR Steel

2Lt AR Lewin

The following have been selected for commissioning in 2002/3:

WO1(RSM) MJ Abbs

WO1(RSM) PJ Martin

WO1(RSM) SD Robinson

RSM Appointments

WO2 PN Blanchfield to be RMS 1st Battalion

WO2 TJ Jones to be RSM 2nd Battalion ITC Catterick

WO2 PS Thompson to be RSM Cambridge UOTC

Postings

Lt JD Delf	from 2nd Battalion to 1st Battalion	February 2002
Capt DJ Moss	from Flying Wing SAAVN to 9 Regt AAC	February 2002
Capt SD Wilson	from 3(UK) Div HQ and Sig Regt to 2nd Battalion	March 2002
Capt MA Nicholas	from 2nd Battalion to 3(UK) Div HQ and Sig Regt	March 2002
Maj JAB Borthwick	from BGTU to Manchester and Salford Univs OTC	April 2002
Capt IM Chance	from 2nd Battalion to RMAS	April 2002
Lt TW Gregory	from 1st Battalion to ITC Catterick	May 2002
Capt RJ James	from ATR Bassingbourn to 1st Battalion (att to RHQ)	May 2002
Maj JE Harris	from HQ 4 Div to BGTU	July 2002
Maj DC Napier	from Air Gunnery School to OEC HQ Land (Sierra Leone)	July 2002
Maj SW Carver	from DMO to 2nd Battalion	August 2002
Maj I Couch	from HQ(NE) Bde to 3rd Battalion ITC Catterick	August 2002
Capt AG Grinonneau	from HQ Inf to ATR Bassingbourn	August 2002
Maj DP O'Driscoll	from 2nd Battalion to DASD	August 2002
Lt SF Roberts	from 2nd Battalion to ATR Bassingbourn	August 2002
Lt C Swallow	from ITC Catterick to 2nd Battalion	August 2002
Maj WA Willmott	from HQ AIRSOUTH(BAE) to DNBC	August 2002
Capt ML Elphee	from ASD to Spec Course Div, RMCS Shrivenham	September 2002
Maj PD Bailey	from 3rd Battalion ITC Catterick to RMCS Shrivenham	October 2002
Maj PM Birch	from 1st Battalion to RMCS Shrivenham and to JSCSC	October 2002
Maj PM Smith	from 1st Battalion to RMCS Shrivenham and to JSCSC	September 2003
Maj PH Gaskin	from RRV to ITDU FIST	October 2002

Regimental Matters

Death of our Colonel-in-Chief



It was with great sadness that the Regiment learned of the death of our Colonel-in-Chief, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother, on 30 March. This brings to an end an association that has lasted 38 years. Her Majesty had previously been Colonel-in-Chief of the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment and graciously took on the appointment of Colonel-in-Chief the Royal Anglian Regiment on its formation in 1964.

As the Regiment's Colonel-in-Chief The Queen Mother visited the Regiment on no fewer than 13 occasions. These included the Presentation and Laying Up of Colours and visits to our Depots and Battalions. Her last visit was to the 1st and 3rd Battalions in 1990 when the Battalions were based in Colchester.

At Her Majesty's funeral the Colonel of the Regiment represented the Regiment and the Poachers provided a four-man detachment led by Capt Russell Newmarch.

Death of Our Deputy Colonel-in-Chief



It was with great sadness that the Regiment learned of the death of our Deputy Colonel-in-Chief, Her Royal Highness The Princess Margaret Countess of Snowdon on 9 February.

Her Royal Highness had previously been Colonel-in-Chief the Suffolk Regiment, Colonel-in-Chief 1st East Anglian Regiment and in 1964, on its formation, she graciously accepted the appointment of Deputy Colonel-in-Chief the Royal Anglian Regiment. Since then Her Royal Highness visited the Regiment on no fewer than nine occasions. Her last visit was on 29 April 1995 when she presented new Colours to the 1st and 2nd Battalions at Duxford.

New Colonel of the Regiment Appointed

Maj Gen JCB Sutherell CB CBE has been appointed Colonel of the Regiment in succession to Gen Sir Michael Walker GCB CMG CBE ADC Gen with effect 1 July 2002.

Maj Gen Sutherell was born in 1947 and educated at Christ's Hospital. He read for an honours degree in geography at Durham University 1965-68, gaining an upper second. A member of the Territorial Army while at university, and earning a Territorial commission, he was commissioned as a Regular officer in July 1968, joining the 2nd Battalion the Royal Anglian Regiment at Felixstowe.

He served six years with the 2nd Battalion as a rifle platoon commander in UK, Cyprus, Gibraltar, Kenya, and Malaysia; Regimental Signals Officer in England, Northern Ireland and Germany and as Adjutant in Germany and Northern Ireland. Taking SAS selection in early 1974, he served with 22 SAS as a troop and squadron commander and Adjutant until October 1978.

Having attended the Army Staff Course at Shrivenham (Division III) and Camberley

1978-79, he completed his SO2 appointment as DAA and QMG HQ DSAS 1980-82. He returned to the Royal Anglian Regiment, this time to the 1st Battalion, in May 1982, serving for 14 months as

OC B Company in Oakington and Belize and then as Battalion 2IC for six months in Oakington and Cyprus.

On promotion to lieutenant colonel in February 1984 he was appointed to be a member of the Directing Staff at the Army Staff College Camberley, where he remained until July 1987, serving as a teaching DS, team leader and SO1 Tactical Doctrine. Assuming command of the 1st Battalion the Royal Anglian Regiment in Gibraltar in August 1987, after 17 months he brought the Battalion back to Colchester to the Mechanised (Wheeled) role in 19 Infantry Brigade, and a tour in South Armagh August 1989 to January 1990.

On completing this tour he returned to the Staff College, Camberley on promotion as Colonel C Division. His tour was cut short, and, in December 1990, he moved to Londonderry to Command 8th Infantry Brigade, responsible for the Western half of the Province. During this two-year tour he was fortunate enough to have 3rd Battalion the Royal Anglian Regiment as the resident battalion in Ebrington Barracks, Londonderry from May 1991 to August 1992 and 1st Battalion the Royal Anglian Regiment as the roulement battalion in Fermanagh from April to November 1991.

After attending RCDS in 1993 he served as Deputy Military Secretary (A) until April 1996 and then three years as Director



Maj Gen JCB Sutherell CB CBE, the new Colonel of the Regiment.

Special Forces. Promoted to major general in March 1999 and appointed as Commandant, Royal Military College of Science, he served in this post for three years of considerable change embracing the arrival of the Joint Doctrine and Concept Centre and the Joint Services Command and Staff College at Shrivenham, the Defence Training Review, the Army's Review of Career Courses and the formation of the Defence Academy.

Maj Gen Sutherell is married to Amanda and has a 12-year-old daughter, Charlotte.

New Deputy Colonel of the Regiment Appointed



Brig RM Brunt CBE, the new Deputy Colonel of the Regiment.

Brig RM Brunt CBE has been appointed to succeed Maj Gen JCB Sutherell as Deputy Colonel of the Regiment with special responsibility for the 1st Battalion. Brig Roger Brunt, who grew up near Woodbridge, joined the Army through the SSLC and University Cadet schemes. He was commissioned into the 2nd Battalion in 1974, read history at Cambridge University and then, apart from a

year away in 1980 as ADC to Maj Gen Dick Gerrard-Wright in Colchester, he served with the Poachers in Gillingham, Berlin, Londonderry, Colchester and Cyprus (UNFICYP).

In 1986, he attended the Army Staff Course at Camberley followed by two years at HQNI as the SO2 G3 Ops. Thereafter, he commanded B Company of the Poachers in Celle, Belfast and BATUS before returning to Northern Ireland as the MA to the GOC. He was appointed Commanding Officer of the 1st Battalion in September 1993 and over the next two years the Vikings deployed to East Tyrone and the Balkans and co-ordinated the Presentation of new Colours to the Regular Battalions at Duxford in 1995.

Since leaving the Vikings at the end of 1995, Brig Brunt has served in the MOD, commanded 3 Inf Bde and attended the Royal College of Defence Studies. He is currently ACOS Commitments at Headquarters LAND Command.

Battalions on the Move

The 1st Battalion at the beginning of March was warned that it was to deploy to Kabul to relieve 2 Para as part of the International Security Assistance Force. The deployment was completed by the end of March. The Battalion's primary role is to patrol the capital in conjunction with the Afghan police. The Battalion will probably remain in Afghanistan for two to three months. On its return to the UK the Battalion will start training for deployment to Northern Ireland in December 2002 for a six-month emergency tour.

The 2nd Battalion will move to Ballykelly, Northern Ireland in January 2004 for a two-year residential tour.

All Change at Warley



Maj David Thorogood hands over to the new Area Secretary, Maj Dave Gilchrist.

After 15 years as area secretary at Warley Maj David Thorogood finally handed the reins of power to Maj Dave Gilchrist on 1 February. The latter spent a full career in the Royal Signals and we extend to him a very warm welcome to the Regiment. We wish David and Sue Thorogood a long and happy retirement and thank David for his immense contribution to the Regiment over the years.

Mrs Joan Westover, the administrative officer for the past 10 years at Warley, also retired on 1 February. To mark her retirement she was presented with two glass fruit bowls, one engraved with the badge of the Essex Regiment, the other with the crest of the Royal Anglian Regiment. We wish Joan and her husband a long and happy retirement.

Area Secretary, Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland

To date, we have been unable to find a successor to replace Lt Col Anthony Swallow who is the area secretary for Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland. He is due to retire in October 2002 and anyone who would like to know more about the job should contact RHQ or Lt Col Swallow direct.

Recruiting

The Regiment continues to place great importance on recruiting and it is vital that we all do our best to ensure that both our Battalions are fully manned. It is forecast that in June 2002 the 1st Battalion will be up to establishment but the 2nd Battalion will be showing a considerable shortfall. Perhaps even more important than recruiting is successful retention; we must do everything we can to retain those soldiers that join our Battalions. An article dealing with various aspects of retention follows later in the journal.

The Regimental recruiting video, *First Choice*, is in the process of being distributed to all those involved in recruiting for the Regiment.

Capt Richard James has joined RHQ for a year to act as the Regimental Careers Officer.

Association Gathering

The annual Association Gathering will be held at Bassingbourn Barracks on Sunday 14 July 2002.

The programme will be:

1000 hrs	Gates open
1130 hrs	Drumhead service
1215 hrs	March past
1230 hrs	Bar, kiosks and stalls open
pm	Band and drums display
1730 hrs	Bars close

All serving and ex-members of the Regiment and former Regiments are warmly invited to attend. Entry passes are not required. Just turn up on the day. You are asked to bring along your own picnics or use the refreshment facilities on site.

Next Edition of Castle

Contributions for the December's issue of *Castle* should reach the editor no later than 15 October 2002.

The Day's Pay Scheme

Each year the Regiment, the Royal British Legion and the Army Benevolent Fund provide financial assistance to a large number of ex-soldiers from our Regiment and Former Regiments. Unfortunately, on occasions assistance has to be given to serving members and their dependants.

The funds that enable us to provide assistance have been built up over the years by those contributing to the Day's Pay Scheme. We obviously all hope that we will never be in a position where we will need to ask for financial assistance but sadly the number of requests for assistance is gradually increasing. During the last year RHQ received nearly 100 requests for assistance and paid out over £26,000 in grants.

We will only be able to maintain the present level of financial support if those of you who are serving continue your Day's Pay subscriptions. To the few who do not contribute please see your RAO and sign the necessary forms; one day you might need financial assistance.

Web Sites

Information on the Regiment and Battalions can be obtained by going to the following web sites:

www.army.mod.uk www.poachers.org www.vikings.uk.com

Personal Accident Policy

At the Regimental Council Meeting held on 17 May 2002, it was decided that the personal accident policy, which covers all members of the Regimental Association in the event of death or being maimed by accident while not on duty, is to be terminated with effect 1 August 2002.



The four members of the B Company 2nd Battalion Royal Anglian Regiment who acted as ushers at the Westminster Abbey funeral service of The Queen Mother. From left: Capt Russell Newmarch, WO2 Malcolm Philpott, Cpl Nick Vasquez and Pte Gavin Allatt.

Have You Lost Contact?



Cpl Stainton in Cyprus 1965...and now, aged 58 (2001).

Ex-Cpl John Stainton 2nd Battalion is trying to make contact with ex-Sgt Geoff Faint 3rd Battalion, whom he last met in the recruiting office in Northampton. Contact details JR Stainton, 43 Marketstead Estate, Kirton, Boston, Lincolnshire PE20 1JL (tel: 01205 724479).

Andrew Evans of 4 Willow Cottages, 29 High Street, Coltishall, Norwich NR12 7AA (tel: 01603 738809) is trying to trace 24748918 ex-Bandsman Neil Smith formerly of the 2nd Battalion. Neil Smith lived at Thurlton in Norfolk and married Nicola Mayes just after the Gulf War.

Ex-CSgt Ken Parsons 1st Battalion has recently suffered a stroke and he would like to re-establish contact with some of his 'old muckers'. Most of his service was spent in the gym where his fellow PTIs were Cpl Bill Tancred, LCpl Maine, Durrant and Froggat. He trained the Battalion's athletics squad and one day a young subaltern appeared in the gym and asked: 'Sgt Parsons do you think you could get me fit enough to compete in athletics?'... 'I can only try Sir,' was the reply. The subaltern was Lt MJD Walker. Ken Parsons' contact details are: 65c Radbourne Road, London SW12 0ED (tel: 0181 6735074).

Alastair Irvine is trying to trace ex-WO2 Nigel Dawson who he last saw in Ipswich when he was a PSI with 6 R Anglian (1989). They were both best man at each other's wedding. Contact details are A Irvine, 19 Oaklands Way, Sturry, Canterbury, Kent CT2 0EP (tel: 01227 711333).

Mainly about People



Commander ISAF in A Company's location, Norfolk House, from left: WO2 Buff, COMISAF, CO, Maj Heap.

Maj Gen John McColl with his ADC, **Capt Sam Wilson**, left his headquarters in Bulford in December 2001 to fly out to Afghanistan to command the International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF). **Capt Wilson** returned to the UK in March and was replaced by **Capt Mark Nicholas**.

Maj James Harris hit the headlines of the national newspapers by dangling for two hours on a rope above a 200ft deep crevasse during a British Army Expedition to Antarctica. At the time the expedition was launching an attempt on the Forbidden Plateau and **Maj Harris** was climbing a glacier when the snow-covered ground suddenly gave way beneath his skis, to reveal the chasm.

On the Sovereign's Parade held on 14 December 2001 the Regimental Colour was carried by **Off Cdt TP Dunlop** with **Off Cdt SR Poulter** acting as an Escort.

Cpl S Smith (2nd Battalion) is congratulated on being awarded Infantry Sports Colours for clay target shooting 2001/02.

Maj Charles Groves (ex 3rd Battalion) was awarded the MBE in the New Year's Honours for his services to the British community in Cyprus.

A Message from the Chaplain

The year 2002 has been tinted with sadness for the Regiment, as we have mourned the loss of our Colonel-in-Chief, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother and our Deputy Colonel-in-Chief, Her Royal Highness The Princess Margaret, Countess of Snowdon. Many of you and your families may have had the honour of meeting either the Colonel-in-Chief or the Deputy Colonel-in-Chief, and have experienced the sincerity and love that these ladies had for our Regiment. They will be sadly missed by us all. We pray for the members of the Royal Family.

Writing my message to you, the Easter season has just concluded. Christ, prior to His crucifixion, offered the following prayers: 'Peace Be with You, My Peace I give You'. In the world today this 'peace' seems to have disappeared. Afghanistan, Israel, Pakistan, Zimbabwe, and even in the UK peace is not prevalent.

We hear of daily killings, some caused by drugs, politics or religion; others acts of violence or revenge. Our thoughts and prayers are with those members of the 1st Battalion who are at present deployed in Afghanistan.

May the peace of Christ be with you and those you love.



Maj Gen McColl, Commander ISAF, plants a tree to mark the reopening of a school refurbished by ISAF.

Diary Dates

June

- 1 R Norfolks Officers' Dinner Club - Norwich
 4-7 Suffolk Regiment 'Hillman' Pilgrimage
 7 Dedication of Memorial to 2nd Battalion the Essex Regiment - Bayeaux
 12 R Lincolns Officers' Reunion Lunch
 21 Summer Golf Meeting - Ely
 22 Beds and Herts Association dinner and dance - Hertford
 22/23 Royal Tigers' Weekend - Leicester/Bagworth
 26 Royal Norfolk Show
 27 16th Foot Officers' annual lunch - Buckden
 30 Essex Regiment Association Reunion - Warley

July

- 6 4th Battalion the Essex Regiment Comrades Association garden party - Warley
 Beds and Herts Officers' Goslar Reunion - Kettlebaston
 6/7 Northamptonshire Regiment Annual Reunion - Northampton
 13 Eagle and Garter Club Dinner - Bassingbourn
 14 Royal Anglian Regiment Gathering - Bassingbourn
 19 Essex Regiment Association Luncheon - Chelmsford

August

- 4 Minden Day Reunion - Bury St Edmunds

September

- 13 Autumn Golf Meeting - Flempton
 28 Royal Norfolk Association Dinner - Norwich
 1st Battalion (old 50th/8th) Royal Leicestershire Regiment

Reunion - Leicester

- 28/29 R Lincolns Regimental Reunion - Sobraon Barracks, Lincoln

October

- 4 3rd Battalion Officers' Dinner Club, Annual Lunch - Warley
 70th Battalion Northamptonshire Regiment Reunion Dinner - Kettering
 12 Royal Leicestershire Regiment TA Dinner - Leicester
 19 Royal Leicestershire Regiment 1st Battalion Cyprus Veterans Reunion - Leicester
 Peterborough Branch Dinner - Peterborough

November

- 1 Royal Anglian Officers' Dinner - London
 2 Hindoostan Club Dinner - Leicester
 7 Field of Remembrance - Westminster Abbey
 10 Remembrance Sunday
 17 Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment Association Wreath Laying and Reunion - Kempston

December

- 6 Royal Tigers' Association Christmas Reunion
 7 Royal Leicestershire Regiment Officers' Dinner Club Luncheon - London
 10 4th Battalion the Essex Regiment Comrades Association Service and Parade - Ilford
 11 Beds and Herts Association Visit to Royal Hospital Chelsea

Letters to the Editor



I write to draw your attention to the welfare facilities provided by the Officers' Association for the benefit of retired officers of Her Majesty's Forces. In addition to operating a very effective employment service which last year successfully placed over 600 officers in new jobs, the Association disbursed over £1 million of benevolence support to needy individuals and eligible dependants. The third pillar of the Association's work is the management of a residential home for single officers and almshouses for disabled officers and their families, details of which are given below:

Huntly is set in its own magnificent grounds overlooking the Teign estuary in South Devon. Huntly offers first class residential accommodation for single officers (male and female) for a very reasonable fee of £270 per week. We currently have a few vacancies, and look forward to receiving applications from eligible individuals.

Macdonnell Gardens is located in a small private estate at Leavesden. Macdonnell Gardens comprises 12 self-contained bungalows providing comfortable accommodation for a modest monthly maintenance charge of £246. While most of our residents have been living at Macdonnell Gardens for some time, we do have one or two vacancies at the moment which we seek to fill.

I should be grateful if you would publicise the enclosed information about these excellent welfare facilities to your members. Copies of leaflets and more detailed information can be obtained by contacting the Assistant General Secretary, The Officers' Association, 48 Pall Mall, London SW1Y 5JY1. Telephone: 0207 389 5203. Fax: 0207 930 9053. Email: ags@oaed.org.uk.

Gp Capt JW Hollowood RAF (Retd)



Members of the Regiment who served with the King's African Rifles, Northern Rhodesia Regiment and Somaliland Scouts will be pleased to know that the Askari Appeal has raised well over £200,000 for the veterans of those regiments. The response has been remarkable, and we have received donations from all over the world. The Royal Anglian Regiment

has been particularly generous, as has every one of the old regiments comprising our present Regiment.

The money is distributed personally by officers of the British Commonwealth Ex Services League, in the old African regimental areas. We have one old veteran of both world wars, Sgt Sempira, who is 110 years old and comes from Uganda.

May I express our thanks to everyone who has supported the Appeal.

Col AF Mackain-Bremmer OBE
 Summerlee
 The Street
 East Knoyle
 Salisbury SP3 6AJ



Would you please place in your magazine something about the Golden Jubilee Military Medal which was struck for British Forces Veterans. The medal recognises the service of British Veterans who served in the reigns of HM King George VI and the 50-year reign of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

The medal has a portrait of Her Majesty on its face and her shield and arms on the reverse. The medal has already raised £3,496 for SSAFA Forces Help. For further information send a SAE to: Mr GE Harris, 124 Haven Park Crescent, Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire SA61 1DS (tel 01437 768668).

GE Harris (Ex RE)

Proposed 5th Battalion Officers' Dinner Club



Following the annual dinner of the 6th Battalion Officers' Dinner Club in March this year, (53 attended), of which more is said elsewhere, and apropos his attendance at the 7th Battalion Officers' Dinner Club, (22 attended so I believe), Lt Col Nigel ffitch remarked that there was no similar dinner for the Officers of the 5th Battalion. This was not the first time that the

subject had been aired. When one considers that the 5th Battalion produced eight (I think) Territorial Commanding Officers from its ranks, let alone an abundance of officers who have served over the years, and some of whom have moved on with their expertise to serve with other capbadges, that we do not collect on an annual basis is perhaps something of a surprise.

A venture such as this cannot be taken up lightly, and it is with some trepidation that I find myself putting finger to keyboard to construct a letter for *Castle* in order to find out what support for this Dinner Club there may be.

It is proposed that a dinner be held in November, at a venue to be confirmed but from contacts could be in either Peterborough or London. A cut-off date of 31 August is suggested, in order to make all the necessary administrative arrangements. The cost will depend on take-up, but should be commensurate with meals of this nature.

Please also pass on by word of mouth to those who may not take *Castle*.

Would any officer who is interested in this venture please contact me at my home address, or email my office. The full contact details are:

Col Charles Thomas TD DL
59 Chinchilla Road
Southend on Sea
Essex SSI 2QJ

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Poacher and Pompadour Musicians Reunited



Lt Col Stuart Watts OBE and WO1(BM) Peter Hudson, former Pompadour and Poacher respectively, will share the concert platform as conductors in a one-off joint concert of the bands that they now direct. Peter Hudson was a member of the Poachers Band during the 70s and 80s while Stuart Watts was the BM of the Pompadours from 1974–79. For a short time in the early 1980s they were both on the staff at the Queen's Division Junior School of Music, Bassingbourn.

The occasion when they again team up is for a grand charity concert at Wimpole Hall, Cambridgeshire on Thursday 1 August at 1930hrs where they will conduct the bands of the Honourable Artillery Company and the Royal Anglian Regiment. The location within Wimpole Hall is the *al fresco* yet intimate venue of the old stable yard where there will be seating for approximately 350 lucky folk who will enjoy an evening of popular music including well known marches, music from the shows, soloists, new sounds and old favourites; in fact, hopefully, something to suit all tastes and yes, there will be a raffle.

If you would like to support the Army Benevolent Fund National Trust and Motor Neurone Disease Research and enjoy an entertaining evening while dining on your own picnic contact the Wimpole Hall Administration Office 01223-207257 to reserve your tickets now which are priced at £12 including free parking.

Stuart Watts

Can you Remember?

30 Years Ago



Meeting of Commanding Officers of the 2nd and 3rd Battalions, Hastings Street, Belfast, on 2 August 1972.

The 1st Battalion, having left Ebrington Barracks, Londonderry, moved in March 1972 to Episkopi, Cyprus for a two-year accompanied tour. The Poachers, based in Oxford Barracks, Münster, went to Belfast in July for an emergency tour. The 3rd Battalion, based in Alanbrooke Barracks, Paderborn, also went to Belfast in April.

Tiger Company moved to Gibraltar in January having completed a year as demonstration troops at Sandhurst and Mons.

In the May edition of *Castle* it was announced that the khaki beret was to be introduced to the Regiment, 'the khaki beret with black patch behind the badge is to be worn by all officers forthwith. This replaces the blue beret. This conforms with the tradition started by the 1st Battalion, the Royal Norfolk Regiment, after the war. Not universally popular I understand. Nevertheless it does in some small measure compensate for the fact that the 9th Foot badges and accoutrements did not appear in the Royal Anglian dress to date'.



Ceremonial Guard changes on the frontier. From left: Pte Hedges, Pte Mann, CSM Spalding, Maj Heggs, Cpl Fuller, Cpl Kerr.

20 Years Ago

The Vikings moved to Oakington from Celle in May 1982. In June and July the Battalion provided the guard at Windsor Palace before moving to Belize to take over from the Pompadours.



Cpl Soames posting reliefs during A Company's tour as Windsor Castle Guard Company.

The 2nd Battalion was based in Ebrington Barracks, Londonderry with A and B Companies carrying out rural operations in South Amagh.



A Company on the move, courtesy of the RAF in South Armagh.

The Pompadours, based in Meeanee Barracks, Colchester unexpectedly moved to Belize in May for a five-month tour.



Lt Col Alan Thompson hands over operational command in Belize, together with the Mess parrots, Premium Bond and Hercules, to Lt Col Tony Calder.

10 Years Ago

The Vikings were based at Hyderabad Barracks, Colchester. The Battalion participated in Exercise Lion Sun in Cyprus before training at Stanta and Salisbury Plain.



Cpl Eales briefs Support Company at Stanta.

The 2nd Battalion was in Trenchard Barracks, Celle where it had been based for five years.



The band marches past in quick time during the Talavera Parade.

The Pompadours completed their tour in Londonderry and returned to Colchester prior to the merger with the 1st and 2nd Battalions. On 29 September the Battalion exercised the Freedom of Colchester which was followed by a Thanksgiving Parade and the Laying Up of Colours at Warley Chapel on 3 October.



The Battalion marching through Colchester.

1st Battalion - The Vikings



Kabul International Airport – the APOD where The Vikings arrived in Afghanistan.

The past four months has been a busy and exciting period for the Battalion. Due to the current pace of life, it now seems like years ago that we completed our conversion to mechanised infantry, which culminated in a demanding Tesex package during December 2001. In the new-year we began a busy Battalion cadre period and most recently we have deployed to Afghanistan as part of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). I am sure that none of *Castle's* readership would have predicted a British Army deployment into Afghanistan prior to 11 September last year, let alone the Battalion becoming involved, following in the footsteps (or hopefully not as the case may be) of its forebears the 44th Foot.

The Battalion started the period on Salisbury Plain, as the battle group formed up for Exercise Wessex Warrior. Following a compressed but thorough and progressive training package, the stage was set for an exciting series of battles. The OPFOR, provided by 1 Staffords, were a determined and calculating enemy having recently completed an exercise season in Batus. The final result was a tribute to the hard work and efforts of the Viking battle group, as we recorded a 3-0 win. On completion of Tesex, the Battalion assumed the role of lead mechanised battle group within 12 Mech Brigade.

Following the Christmas break, the Battalion returned to work with refreshed vigour to undertake a busy cadre period. A potential NCO cadre ran during January and February, which culminated in a very exacting final exercise and field-firing package at Sennybridge. Fine performances by the students during the cadre led to the promotion of ten new lance corporals.

In terms of sport, as you will read in later articles, we have been able to play plenty of sport in tandem with our working commitments. The Battalion has competed with great success in cross-country, football and rugby.

The Battalion was delighted at the announcement of the New Year's Honours list. Capt Dom Biddick was awarded an MBE for his performance as COP commander during the Londonderry tour.

Further awards gained during the tour were, Cpl Culshaw who was awarded a QCB, Majs Clements and England and Cpl Faupel were awarded a QCVS and GOC's commendations were awarded to WO2 Skelton, Sgt Woods and Cpl Kulkarni.

The Battalion also conducted an infantry field firing camp (IFFC) during February, which comprised a range package at the Bisley range complex and field firing at Otterburn. The IFFC was interrupted at the halfway point as the Battalion was detailed for the task of replacing 2 Para in Afghanistan.

After a fortnight of rumours and veiled comments, the Battalion was finally given orders to conduct a relief in place of 2 Para in Kabul. Understandably, a mood of elation swept through the Battalion. We knew that this deployment would be the opportunity of a lifetime, and that our new role as UK Battlegroup (UKBG) in ISAF would be the envy of the infantry.

This article is being written at the outset of the tour, as the final members of the Battalion are arriving in theatre. The current disposition of the Battalion is three company outstations in the southwest of the city, Battle group HQ and echelon in the north of the city and a ring of observation posts providing



The Deputy Colonel of the Regiment speaking to Vikings 'en route' to Kabul at Brize Norton.

The Vikings



Lt Dobbin and his victorious March and Shoot team.

a surveillance matrix across the UKBG area of responsibility. At a later stage in the tour there will be more reports from the front line in Afghanistan; however this article will reflect upon all the activities, which are mentioned earlier.

Brigade March and Shoot Champions

Lt ASM Dobbin writes:

Just when we thought it was safe to enter a company O group, without fear of 'fast-balls', along came the next one. Having not long returned from an outstandingly successful tour in BATUS, the 'Fighting Ninth' heroes of A (Norfolk) Company were tasked to provide two ten man teams, to participate in the 12 (Mechanised) Brigade's march and shoot competition.

In the true sense of the word 'competition', an inter-platoon march and shoot competition was established. This was to take the form of an eight-mile march, falling plate shoot, as well as the following military skills stands: first aid, NBC, signals, AFV recognition, indirect fire target indication and map reading. In short, it was to replicate, to the best of our knowledge, the format for the Brigade Competition.

After an interesting contest, with Sgt Wilcox, very generously, marking the route for the march, with a trail of his broken soldiers and Lt Tom Gregory deciding that eight miles was not enough of a challenge for the Drums Platoon, two teams were finally named.

The Brigade Competition was run over three days from 12-14 November 2001, at Ash Ranges, near Aldershot. Team 2, commanded by myself was one of the first teams to compete, as we began our epic bid for victory in the early hours of 12 November. After some challenging military skills stands, we began the marching phase. A somewhat 'cheeky' course, the march was a test of both mental and physical stamina, across seven and a half miles of arduous terrain, before we reached the river crossing stand. Doing what Vikings do best, we rowed our way to victory, on Mk 5 assault

boats, before the final half-mile dash to the finish line.

Still looking fresh-faced and not at all out of breath (honest), we moved straight onto the range for the falling plate shoot. This went well, despite some targets being more bullet proof than others. Despite some stiff competition, predominantly from the Vikings, it was my team that came out the final victors. The end state was that from a total of some 50 teams that competed, four of the top five teams were from the Battalion. In short, an awesome display of true Viking spirit!

Tesex Success - The Istar Group

by Maj AB Beart

A battle group's ability to 'fix' and 'strike' the enemy depends fundamentally on its ability first to 'find' him. It was very clear in the months preceding the start of Tesex, as the Viking battle group began its preparations for Exercise Druids Dance, that the Istar group was going to be the critical element determining mission success or failure.

D (Cambridgeshire) Company, the Manoeuvre Support Company, was configured as a large and highly mobile Reconnaissance Company comprising four platoons: A newly formed sniper platoon consisting of four four-man sniper teams equipped with stripped down Land Rovers, the Recce Platoon of eight Sabre, a mobile Anti-Tank Platoon of six Milan firing posts in stripped down Land Rovers, FOO and MFC parties and the remainder of the Mortar Platoon. Based in battle group main and

part of the Istar group was the Istar cell whose task it was to collate the information gathered by the reconnaissance and surveillance assets.

I put the Reconnaissance Company through a very intensive FTX on SPTA a few weeks prior to the start of the Tesex build-up training and it gave the company a chance to be exercised under pressure, identify strengths, practise drills and perfect SOPs. This thorough preparation proved invaluable and enabled us to perfect tactics such as the superimposed use of static and mobile reconnaissance matrices.

The Istar matrix was carefully co-ordinated at all stages of the planning process and assets were tasked and retasked carefully throughout the various missions to ensure that the assets were fully optimised. The IO and Istar cell focused on collating the information gained on the enemy, which enabled me, the Istar officer to focus on the deployment and command of the Istar assets. We had perfected the ability to command the Reconnaissance Company from either a forward tac headquarters, which was basically the front seats of an FFR with me working off a map board on my knee and Cpl 'Dinger' Bell acting as my driver/operator, or from the comfort of BG Main.

The principle of recce by stealth was used throughout and this proved a highly successful method of gaining information. There were a number of peacetime health and safety issues that prevented us from configuring our vehicles in such a fashion to reduce our visual signature. We weren't able to remove windscreen and door glass, which caused considerable problems with reflection. Various other issues relating to Land Rover warranties seemed to do their best to interfere with our preparations for operations!

I was very pleased that I was, at last, able to dispel the myth that snipers are only interested in or capable of precision fire out to long ranges. It is now clear to all that this is only a mere fraction of their capabilities and it is really their ability to observe at long range, report, visually fix/track, call in OS, infiltrate and exfiltrate that make them worth their weight in gold!

There is no doubt that the actions of the Istar group and the Reconnaissance company were the key to success for the battle group in all three of its missions. It is with great pleasure that I have subsequently been invited by BGIU to go to a series of DGD&D meetings so that our success could be fully documented in the new doctrine note entitled - Istar at the battle group level.



The Vikings

Tesex – A Soldier's Story

Ptes Alexander and Vasilakis,

2 Platoon, A Company write:

'Weary-eyed and trembling, I leaned over to check the time – 0330hrs. Gazing through the driving rain, I noticed a flicker of movement from the corner of my eye. Immediately, I brought my weapon into the aim and observed through my CWS – there was a four-man patrol approaching my position. Instantly forgetting about my wind-chilled face and frozen toes, I issued a challenge and all hell broke loose. The night sky was suddenly alight with shermulies and the SF positions opened up, as I stood my section to. As another fire team appeared over the ridge, it became apparent that the first wave of the attack had begun. Standing in my trench, issuing target indications and watching the enemy fall, as my section's fire power came to bear, it occurred to me that Exercise Druid's Dance would be different to any other exercise, I had ever been on!'

Moving into the accommodation, on Salisbury Plain, the skies were grey and there was a certain chill in the air; everything seemed set for another 'bog standard' exercise – how wrong we were! Training started immediately with two weeks' build-up training in preparation for the final exercise. Firstly, we were introduced to the ISAWES equipment, applying it to low-level section tactics: it soon became clear that our 'drills and skills' would have to be up to the expected Viking standards, if we were to avoid a trip to 'hell'.

The training was far more realistic than standard blank firing exercises and we soon began to appreciate how important it was to adopt correct fire positions and the correct meaning of 'suppressive fire'. Any bad habits and sloppy drills were soon corrected, as we were determined to show I Staffords our true Viking might – as we had done in BATUS. Despite the weather conditions,



Members of 2 (Kohima) Platoon going into the final assault.

morale was very high, as was 2 Platoon's sense of humour, especially as most nights were spent in Westdown Camp, where we could enjoy several 'McCQMS' burgers and a good night's sleep.

From low-level section and platoon level tactics, we progressed to company-level training, which included every soldier's nightmare – 'digging-in' a company defensive position. Surprisingly, morale was still high and everyone was in good spirits – especially when the digger finally arrived! After several days of company-level training, everything was in place for an excellent final exercise.

'Our section began to dry fire and manoeuvre towards the enemy position and we were almost close enough to smell their

breath, when they finally opened up. Immediately, everyone returned fire and threw smoke, as the manoeuvre support section unleashed 'Viking Hell'. The adrenaline was pumping, as we crawled forward, weighed down with front line scales. All our hard training eventually paid off, as we steam rolled over a supposedly difficult position.'

On a standard exercise, a lot of realism is lost, as every soldier relies entirely on the section commander. On Tesex, everyone has a critical role and junior private soldiers regularly found themselves as section commander, facing a free thinking enemy, supported by armour. The saying 'you're only a bullet away from being in command' is definitely an accurate one.

Exercise Druid's Dance was both a realistic and challenging exercise and one that certainly prepared us well for our high readiness year!

Potential Junior NCO Cadre

By Capt MW Woodeson

The Battalion Training Wing was tasked with running the first PJNCO cadre upon the Battalion's return from Londonderry. The programme was carefully devised to incorporate the requirements of the National Examining Board (NEB) team leader qualification. In outline, the students were to spend two weeks in camp learning basic skills and instructional techniques, then move to Sennybridge for a two-week FTX phase before returning to camp for the final week.

The cadre commenced on 14 January 2002. Due to the high numbers of students (97 at one point), it was decided to turn the first week into an assessment week. This would concentrate upon the core infantry skills – weapon handling, fitness and some basic



The author preparing for a final assault.

The Vikings



The PJNCO Cadre in the OBUA Battle.

instruction. The cadre staff were prepared to instruct up to 90 students, but due to the natural selection process, a number of candidates dropped out.

Most students arrived well-prepared and highly motivated for the task ahead. Even though the whole ethos of the cadre was to produce a high quality product at the end of the course, the students were tested physically and mentally during the first two weeks of the cadre. One of the highlights for all concerned was when the weapons training warrant officer (WTWO), WO2 Tate, decided that an impromptu tour of the local hills was needed, thus the entire cadre moved on foot to Pirbright training area. It was here that the students were introduced to what was affectionately known as the 'improvised stretcher race' with geographical command tasks. Needless to say the students were rather interested in WO2 Tate's choice of route, as were most of the staff.

With the camp based instructional phase nearing completion, and all of the squad instructors having exhausted their extensive Powerpoint video footage, the cadre began to prepare for the more testing phase of the course. Sennybridge training area was to be the setting for phase two and three of the cadre. For some, this proved to be a daunting prospect, indeed Brecon in January is not a pleasant thought.

The cadre now consisted of 60 students who were organised into two-strong platoons. Moving down to Brecon from Pirbright in a convoy of TCVs gave the students a chance to become battle-hardened to the rigours of what lay ahead. High winds and rain typified the weather during the journey, a climate that would become very familiar over the next two weeks.

On arrival at SENTA the students spent four days running battle exercises and battle lessons. Again, due to the nature of the ground, injuries began to resurface and the cadre numbers started to dwindle. The adverse weather conditions were not too bad at this point and the students were still living in Sennybridge camp. Life was

proving to be good. However, this was to change. As the students deployed into Cilleni village the weather started to become worse. The students were not having an easy time as the conditions tested the administration skills of all personnel involved. However, as the FTX neared the final phase, the weather at last began to improve.

A detachment of Royal Marine recruits arrived in the village to defend it from Viking attack. After a long, cold and wet ambush, the cadre moved in to attack the village. Thus, the tired and damp Vikings set about retaking the village. Following three hours of intense fighting, the cadre emerged victorious as they seized the Royal Marine stronghold position. Upon return to Sennybridge camp, the students prepared themselves for the field-firing phase. A three-day firing package ensued, which put the students through their final paces.

Moving back to Pirbright, the students embarked upon the final week of training. Special mention must go to WO2 Tate, who went beyond the call of duty in his efforts on the drill square. To sum up, the PJNCO cadre was not an easy one. The soldiers who were participated and indeed all members of the cadre staff will remember the cadre for many years in the future.

Vikings Rugby Football Club

By Maj JMH Heap

Another season has passed, and unfortunately due to commitments to BATUS, Tesex and then Afghanistan, not

as much rugby has been played as would have been liked. However, there have been a number of noticeable successes both on an individual and team basis.

The Vikings have been exceptionally well represented at the Army and Combined Services U21 level, with WO2 Wilkins being heavily involved in coaching the side, 2Lt Ed Gooderson playing at both levels, and Sgt Bevan fronting up the administrative arrangements of the squad.

While games for the Battalion have been few and far between, the first ever Vikings old boys game was played the day before Tesex. The game was very hard-fought and attracted a large crowd that were treated to an excellent game of rugby, with the current Vikings side coming out close winners. 'Old Vikings' who came down, most of whom are still playing club rugby, included Julian Pollard, Adrian Anema, Chris Cooper, Hoggy Hogsdon, Pete Barrs, Jock Appleton, Dan Howson, Bomber Brown, Loatsy Loats and many others.

The post match reception saw Pete Barrs presented with a framed Vikings rugby jersey to commemorate 22 years of playing for the Vikings – an outstanding achievement. A 'Viking Old Boys' committee has now been set up to ensure that this fixture does not become a one-off but an annual fixture. With postings looming, Q Wilkins and I certainly look forward to playing for the 'old boys' next year!

Another highlight was the inter-company 10-a-side competition, which took place in February. Played in awful conditions of howling wind and rain, the Battalion was treated to some outstanding rugby, with the outcome coming down to the final match between C and HQ Company, with HQ Company's strength up front enabling them to pull off the decisive victory that enabled them to win the competition.

As we deploy to Afghanistan, this season comes to an end with high hopes for next year. Despite the forthcoming Northern Ireland tour, a full fixtures list is planned, including while in NI, with the intent of enjoying a good cup run. The Battalion also looks forward to the return of some of its quality players who were missed this year, including Cpts Biggs and Hitching and Maj Grounds. Whatever the outcome of next season, the 'Viking Old Boys' are certainly looking forward to the pleasure of returning to the Battalion with the intent of winning. Time will tell if this proves to be the case.



The end of the inter-company 10-a-side competition'.

The Vikings

1st Battalion Football Club

By Maj SJR Browne

After such a successful season last year that saw the team reach the semi-finals of the Army Cup, the quarter-finals of the Infantry Cup and the semi-finals of the Northern Ireland Cup, the start of this season was awaited with great anticipation. However, despite improving the squad, the reality turned out to be a bitter disappointment. Right from the off a busy programme severely curtailed the squad's ability to train and crucially play together regularly. The irony is that it has proved much more difficult to play football in Pirbright than it ever did in Northern Ireland. Once the football got serious the flashes of brilliance, teamwork and the 'never-say-die' attitude that took us so far last year were only seen in patches.

The season got off to an inauspicious start when the team, despite being one of the favourites, exited the Brigade competition at the qualification stage. Our performances in this competition were to mirror the forthcoming season almost perfectly. In the first game we outplayed the opposition only to lose on penalties. In the next match the team cut loose and won 7-0 only to follow that up with an inept performance that saw us lose by the odd, unfortunately own, goal!

Due to training and exercise commitments the season did not really get under way until January, and a shortage of friendly fixtures meant that it had to get serious straight away. In the Infantry Cup we struggled to beat 1 PWO 3-2. Having been 3-0 up by half time we failed to kill them off and very nearly threw the game away. Instead we saved such an outcome for the next round. Having been given a tough draw against 1 Cheshire the team played the first half like a team possessed. Having gone behind against the run of play we fought back to lead 2-1 at half time. At this point there was only one team in it, but poor discipline and bad defending changed the game out of recognition. In the end we lost 7-3, not a true reflection of how the game had gone, but an object lesson in what happens if you give good opposition too many easy chances.

In the Army Cup we once again failed to kill off inferior opposition. However, this did result in a ridiculously exciting game against 33 Engineer Regiment that saw us win 5-4 with a goal in the last 30 seconds. In the next round we got another tough draw against 1 RSME, the other defeated semi-finalists in last year's competition. Unfortunately we lost 3-1, but once again the team proved that they could live with the best, and at one stage I was convinced we were going to win.

Afghanistan has now put paid to the rest of the season, which is disappointing. It is not all bad news. The Viking FC squad continues to grow and new talent is being identified all the time. What is particularly encouraging is the number of young soldiers who have made their debuts this year. Given more experience I believe that the

foundations of a team capable of winning a major honour are being laid. Many people contribute to the squad, and singling people out is always dangerous. However, this season special mention must be made of CSgt Ramm who remains a regular in the Infantry side. In addition Ptes Wallace and Vandecar have also begun to establish themselves in the infantry squad. After many years of excellent service Cpl Stevenson has finally retired, but is now also a regular in the Infantry squad. He will tell you that he is one of the coaches, but Terry we all know that every team needs a kit man!

Kabul - First Impressions

Lt ASM Dobbin,

A (Norfolk) Company writes:

The 'DPM rumour grapevine' had been highly suspicious of a battalion deployment for some time. However, the company was on Otterburn Training Area, conducting a field firing camp, when the news was finally confirmed that the battalion was to deploy to Kabul to perform a relief in place with 2 Para. There was an instantaneous feeling

of euphoria as the news was broken to the troops. Rapid plans were put in place in order to move the company back to Pirbright so that we could begin our hasty pre-deployment administration.

After a day's OPTAG training, the advance party were due to leave. However, after numerous delays and numerous practices of the 'on the bus, off the bus' theory, it would take a further three weeks for A (Norfolk) Company to be complete in theatre.

No amount of briefings and personal accounts of life in Kabul could have prepared us for what we were about to encounter: to describe the city as war torn would be an understatement. Every building shows signs of war damage, with many of them missing walls and roofs. In fact large areas of the city are completely destroyed. There is a distinct lack of basic amenities, with very few houses possessing electricity or running water and the sewage system consisting of open drainage ditches that flow down the streets. Despite the hardship in which much of the population live, approximately 95



OC and 2IC A (Norfolk) Company outside Norfolk House.



Soldiers of A (Norfolk) Company preparing the defences.

The Vikings

per cent of the people are now pro-Vikings and are exceptionally friendly and welcoming; the remaining five per cent have not yet given us cause for concern.

On first arrival in the Afghan capital, A (Norfolk) Company were initially co-located with Battalion HQ. Within days our mission was to change and we would have to find new lodgings, within our AO. Maj Jon Heap, OC A (Norfolk) Company, managed to find an old Taliban HQ building that would become our new company base. At first sight it was obvious that some imagination would be required in order to see the true potential of 'Norfolk House': the majority of the front wall had been destroyed; a large amount of unexploded ordnance and mines had been left scattered in and around the building and most of the rooms were filled with rubble and human faeces. Work began immediately to transform this 'human cess pit' into a Viking style patrol base, while day and night patrols were conducted from Camp Souter (BHQ). As I write, the construction work continues along with our operations in support of the community of Kabul. Interesting and fascinating times await the Company over the next three months – a great Viking challenge and certainly one to be remembered forever!

Initial Impressions of Kabul

By Lt PC Moxey

Three months ago B (Suffolk) Company arrived back in Pirbright after Christmas leave suffering from New Year blues and to a man complained that after the hectic events of the preceding 12 months (Northern Ireland, Canada and Tesex), all the company had to look forward to was a Civpop RAAT task in Lydd. It is now mid-March and the company is settling into life in Kabul. You really do not know what's around the next corner!

The Battalion received about two weeks' notice of the deployment and the company about seven days' notice that we would be the first to deploy. Despite the perennial 'are we going, aren't we going?' it was impressive to see the Battalion switch up a gear as we were issued equipment to cater for every climate and eventuality. Training



Child with an SKS - typical in Kabul.

on the Minimi machine gun, zeroing the new A2 rifle, issue of PRR and introduction to helmet-mounted night vision devices and laser aiming devices all had to be completed in short order.

After the inevitable delays imposed by the RAF, the advance party finally left in the small hours of 10 March, about a week later than first anticipated. The advance party consisted of the OC, Lts Moxey, Hartley and Coleman and a handful of team commanders. The flight was an experience for us all. The RAF C-17 pilots combined a series of sharp, evasive moves conducted in pitch darkness which are required for a safe landing, in an area where a threat exists from a man sitting on a mountain with a hand held anti-aircraft missile (ironically, the missile could well have been supplied by us to the Mujehadin!).

After a morale-boosting 'welcome to theatre' chat at the APOD telling us 'don't touch this, don't eat that, don't look at her, don't do this etc.', we were taken to 2 Para Battalion HQ, situated in the north of the city on the Jellalabad road. Most ISAF

locations are on this MSR in old college buildings, factories and similar buildings. It was surreal driving through deserted streets lined on all sides by mud houses and bombed out buildings after 18 hours in the interior of the ultra-modern C-17.

After a few hours' sleep we were moved to our new home on Monday 11 March. We had no time to lose (D Company, 2 Para with whom we were to conduct a relief in place had all but thinned out and the remaining handful of commanders were due to leave in 24 hours). Consequently, the remainder of the day was spent on familiarisation patrols and picking our airborne counterparts' brains (which didn't take long...?!).

Over the next few days, the remainder of the company filtered into Suffolk House, as our patrol base is now known. Some had more pleasurable flights than others – one group flew to Cyprus, then Bahrain, doubled back to Oman before finally flying into theatre, a mammoth flight of 24 hours! The Paras left the base with 'a little room for improvement'. So now, 10 days and 400 sandbags later, Suffolk House has become more liveable in and definitely more secure, while still maintaining an old Taliban-esque charm, including a room downstairs full of mines and unexploded ordnance.

Kabul is a world away from Pirbright, the sights, sounds and smells are alien to us. All the soldiers are keen to get on patrol as much as possible in order to begin the lengthy process of trying to understand the local people, the country and the threats we face. Our area (Police District 6) is lively, bustling and the people have welcomed us warmly. All foot patrols are mobbed by hundreds of children and nearly all the adults are keen to tell us the difference that ISAF is making to their lives. The scope to make a difference and conduct novel tasks is huge. Patrols, be they daylight framework, or night deterrence against bandits, offer unique challenges for soldiers and commanders alike. While in daylight hours the emphasis is on selling the ISAF as a force for good, at night the emphasis switches to peace enforcement, as Kabul remains a violent city rife with armed gangs. The proliferation of AK47s emphasises the very real nature of the threat.

Although the company has only been conducting patrols for a little over a week, events are already moving at pace. Weekly meetings have been established with police and community leaders alike. There have been a number of initiatives set up by the company including a football match against a local select XI. Of all the tasks carried out thus far, one of the most rewarding has been giving out unwanted rations and mattresses to worthy causes in our area. A mosque, school and an orphanage all received an equal share. Of all the needy places in Kabul, the orphanage stands out. 560 children between four and seven years old are crammed into a dilapidated building in one of the most devastated parts of the city. All the children crave attention and swamped



Devastation in the UKBG AOR.

The Vikings



Above and below...members of B Company - distributing food and mattresses at a local orphanage.



the troops who delivered the food. Everything we gave was gratefully accepted and our soldiers, allowing their normally hard exterior to crack for a while, made a real impact on these otherwise desolate lives. As a company we have decided to focus our aid effort on the orphanage, and the smallest things can make a real difference: our empty drinking water bottles and unused puritabs are a godsend in preventing waterborne diseases in such a confined environment.

All in all, the company has risen to the challenge with ease and, as we settle into routine, all are looking forward to the next few months. For everyone, this is a once in a lifetime opportunity and it would seem that the professionalism and temperament of our soldiers is ideally suited to our role in Afghanistan.

Following in the Footsteps of her Majesty's 44th Soldiers of Essex Return to Kabul

by Capt PJ Messenger

Hanging on a wall in C (Essex) Company's office is a picture of a small group of tired, grim faced Victorian redcoats, standing on the top of a small rocky hill, surrounded by dead bodies of both the enemy and their comrades. In the middle of the group stands an officer, the Regiment's colours wrapped around his body, partially hidden by a rough sheepskin coat. As most students of Regimental history will know, that officer's name is Capt Souter, and the picture depicts the last stand of the 44th of Foot (the Essex

Regiment), on 13 January 1842 at Gandamak in eastern Afghanistan.

Gandamak was the last action of one of the greatest disasters ever to befall the British Army. Following a successful invasion of Afghanistan in the summer of 1839, the British authorities never properly pacified this traditionally belligerent nation. As a result, in the winter of 1842, only two years after they had arrived, the British were forced to attempt a withdrawal from the capital Kabul. A combination of factors conspired to ensure that the withdrawal, right from the outset, went disastrously wrong. Most notable among these factors were poor Generalship, the ground, appalling weather and the fact that the garrison of 4,500 men had to escort over 12,000 camp followers. Of this motley group of over 16,000 people only one person, a surgeon called Capt Brydon, was to make it to the safety of the British garrison at Jellalabad, 65 miles from Kabul, but still over 100 miles from the security of British India. The last stand of the 44th at Gandamak marked the final coherent attempt by the garrison to fight its way to safety. By this stage, the Regiment had been reduced to only about 120 men, who only had two rounds left for their muskets. In many ways it was a futile gesture, undeniably though it was the stuff of legend.

Almost every working day for the past 18 months I have looked at the print of Gandamak that hangs in the company office. It is one of those very evocative, and very Imperial pictures that so reeks of defiance and bravery against all odds that occasionally you have to remind yourself that it is in fact that most British of things, a celebration of defeat. Post 11 September 2001, as British forces once again returned to Afghanistan the picture became a catalyst for many a conversation. 'Look what happened last time we went there!'... 'Do you think there is any chance we will go sir?'... 'Wouldn't it be ironic if Essex Company were sent to Afghanistan!'

Well writing this as I am in a disused girls' school in the western suburbs of Kabul, the irony has still to desert me!

Regimental links aside, Kabul's sense of history, both past and in the making, is almost bewildering. Even though so much of the city is badly damaged, and in some areas totally destroyed, there is plenty of evidence of the previous conflict and cultures that have helped to shape this fascinating city. Most obvious is the evidence left behind by the Russian occupation. Former Soviet hardware is the local weapons of choice, and given the number of armoured vehicles around the place it makes Kabul an AFV nerd's paradise! There are, however, more subtle traces of the former Russian presence. Many of the more substantial reinforced concrete buildings that have stood up best to the recent fighting were built during the Soviet occupation. Remarkably many of them, such as in a district called Spin Kalay, are in fact old Russian married quarters. Some still

The Vikings



Cpl McHenry gathering intelligence on patrol.

remarkably well-appointed and better than much of what the DHE has to offer.

Juxtaposed to these modern examples of Afghanistan's past is evidence of more ancient history. Even the people are the embodiment of this. It is not unusual to see an Afghan with European features, ginger hair and piercing blue eyes. The men of the 44th noticed them too, and legend has it that they are the descendants of Alexander the Great's Macedonian army that passed through on its way to invade India. There are people of Arab descent, Hazaras of Tartar origin; some Afghans even claim to be descendants of the Israelites. In many ways it is a confusing multi-cultural experience, but what is apparent is that much of what we have seen would be familiar to the Victorian British soldier. It is a bit of a cliché, but visiting these villages you really do gain a sense of stepping back in time, not only hundreds of years, but in some places thousands of years. Out in these villages we have already found what appears to be an old colonial mud fort. Unfortunately, it appears to be mined so historical curiosity has lost out to operational prudence!

Amidst all this we are searching desperately for evidence of the 44th. Looking at mid-Victorian maps of the city, and then comparing them with modern maps it is easy to pinpoint exactly where the British cantonment was in 1842. This area, which would have been home to the 44th, currently lies within the German battle group's area. The remains of the infamous Bala Hissar, however, lies within our TAOR, in the area currently patrolled by the Turkish company that is attached to the battle group. It was at the Bala Hissar that the revolt, which ultimately resulted in the withdrawal, began, and it was there that the garrison originally contemplated moving to before the fateful decision to leave Kabul was made. Appropriately the new camp into which Battalion HQ has recently moved has been called Camp Souter. Appositely the camp lies just off the Jellalabad road, the route chosen for the withdrawal, and the road on which many British and Indian soldiers and civilians were to lose their lives, many before they had even left the city. The road is still deadly today, however, it is now the standard of Afghani driving rather than marksmanship that poses the major threat to life and limb.

Frustratingly our locally hired interpreters, while already familiar with the story in outline, are not that much use in helping to tie what we know into our surroundings. The exact location of Gandamak is a case in point. All historical evidence points to a location some 30 to 45 miles east of Kabul along the Jellalabad road. However, according to the locals such a place does not exist, although they do say that there is a district called Gandamak about 90 miles to the north west of Kabul, and thanks to the inflexibility of local logic they insist this must be it. The British got many things wrong in 1842, but I am fairly sure that such



Cpl Nieves on patrol – making new friends.

The Vikings

a radical geographical embarrassment was not one of them! Unfortunately, this particular mystery may never be solved because what we are certain about is that the location of the last stand of the 44th lies outside ISAF's currently mandated boundaries. The British contingent of ISAF researched this infamous withdrawal before our arrival. They have also conducted a number of battlefield tours along its route to the head of the Koord Kabul pass. It was in this pass that many thousands perished at the hands of the Afghans. To commemorate this massacre ISAF has erected a monument to the dead at the head of the pass.



The monument in the Koord Kabul Pass.

We remain determined to try and track down as much evidence of the 44th as we can. Currently we are trying to track down a number of graves that are believed to be in the city. As for Gandamak we have not given up hope. We have the map, we have numerous descriptions of the location, and we even have a photograph. All we need now is permission to go there. So watch this space for a reconstruction of the last stand of the 44th. That is right up to the point that it went horribly wrong.

Life Above Kabul

by Maj AB Beart - OC Surveillance Company

The physical destruction of Kabul has turned it into the Dresden of the late 20th Century. The crossroads of Asia on the ancient silk route is now nothing but miles of rubble. Towering 7,389ft above sea level out from the dusty landscape below are a range of mountains that border the city to the northwest and then head south dividing the city in two. Perched high on the two rocky peaks are the observation posts of Surveillance Company (D Cambridgeshire Company). Tasked with gathering information on the activity of the population below the remote Viking outposts play a

vital role in providing security, freedom of action and support to the framework patrols below.

The view from these positions is outstanding and no photograph can ever replicate the clarity with which one can see the buildings, streets, smog and chaos below. The air is refreshingly clean at this altitude, which makes a welcome break from the dust and pollution that exists down at street level. To get to the start of the tortuous route up one of the mountains to the Artillery Hill observation post one has to transit through the barracks of 99 Rocket Regiment, a former Taliban stronghold and now a Northern Alliance unit. The area was fought over as recently as November 2001 and contains a multitude of different bits and pieces of military hardware ranging from anti-aircraft guns, rockets, BMPs, BTRs and artillery pieces. The track up the mountain is little more than a donkey track and includes some pretty hair-raising moments. Several landslides and rockfalls have created a number of obstacles which result in your vehicle being pitched over at a 60 degree angle so the occupants are looking down the sheer cliff. Thousands of feet below you get a brief glimpse of a burnt out BRDM that was unfortunate enough to have gone over the edge!

The observation posts are equipped with a multitude of surveillance devices which give an excellent picture of what is going on down below. Perched in a little cairn of rocks and sandbags the observation post team take their turn on stag. Living conditions are primitive. The guys have enough rations, drinking water and ammunition to last a considerable period should they become isolated due to the actions of forces opposed to ISAF and the

Interim Administration.

All toilet waste is collected in black bin liners and is double bagged for collection by the CQMS at the resupply every four to five days.

Capt Bev Allen was tasked with establishing another hilltop observation post known as 'Kabul Gates' which dominates the main arterial route out of the city towards Kandahar. While we were conducting the recce to site the observation post a local military unit decided to let rip with an anti-aircraft gun and the focus of our attention was immediately centred on the valley below as we tried to identify their target and reassure ourselves that it wasn't us! At the south of the city stands the beautiful but totally destroyed King's palace. The building is located on a large mound of earth, which looks north into A and B Companies' areas.

Once a very grand building it is now totally riddled with bullet and shell holes making it a war-movie maker's dream. Following an EOD clearance of part of this building our next operation will be to insert two long term observation posts into the attic. Capt Chris Barry, who is attached to the Surveillance Company from the Poachers, has been tasked with conducting reconnaissance to select future short term observation post locations in central Kabul. He has recently enjoyed the setting up and running of a Minimi, GPMG and pistol range on the sandy plains to the north of the city which gave everyone a chance to check zero their weapons. As I write this we have much work still to do. The observation posts have a demanding and risky job and it is therefore no surprise that the soldiers from Surveillance Company are relishing every minute!



The view from Artillery Hill OP looking southeast towards TV Hill observation post.

2nd Battalion - The Poachers

Introduction from The Commanding Officer

Unless you're serving it is difficult to really grasp how busy infantry battalions are nowadays. Army commitments, from Afghanistan through to the Balkans and Northern Ireland, impact on us all. Sports afternoons, a previous regular attraction of battalion life, are now few and far between. Nights out of bed are high and days in the office a luxury. It is against this background that I must report that morale in the Battalion remains high.

While all of us envy our sister battalion's deserved deployment to Kabul, we wish them every success. The genuine feeling here is that it could not happen to a nicer bunch of people. Over the last two years the relationship between the two battalions has grown stronger than ever and we know that Colonel Philip and his boys will do us all proud.

For us, after Christmas as the UK Stand-by Battalion (floods, famine and foot-and-mouth), we have had two foci. First, A and C companies have deployed to Belize, each for six-weeks. On my visits the Commanding Officer of the Belize training organisation was extremely complimentary about both deployments, quoting that in his two years there they were up there with the best he had seen. Maj Simon Etherington's Company hosted HRH Prince Andrew on one day in the jungle and, as he outstayed his allocated time, he obviously was well entertained.

Our second focus is our summer Northern Ireland deployment. In June we become NIBAT 4 which, in short, is GOC Northern Ireland's reserve. We will have a company in Omagh for six months supporting an under-strength 1 PWO, and I expect the whole battalion to be in Northern Ireland for the marching season over the summer. Training for this deployment started in February and culminates with mission rehearsal on Stanford Training Area in May.

In the gaps we continue to squeeze in extra-curricular activities. The boxing team was beaten by the RRW (by one bout) in the Army Novice semi-finals in February. The orienteering team has also begun to show its colours winning the Army Night championships and, more recently, taking home the Fifth Division Championship title. We have two young officers representing the Army at squash, and some very promising Divisional-level under-21 cross-country runners.

The Battalion was stunned in February by the tragic death of Cpl Geoffrey Towler in a motorcycle accident. Cpl Towler was a much liked and professional mortarman. He leaves Claire and two children who we sincerely hope to manage to reconcile their loss; we will all miss him.

The next six months could well be as busy as the last. Much depends on the terrorist and public order situation in Northern

Ireland. Where we have time we will concentrate on recruiting, adventure training and sport. On a personnel note I would like to thank Col Alasdair Wild for handing me a Battalion in very good order which has made my first few months easier than I had envisaged. The whole battalion wishes him and Annie the best for the future.

Exercise Mayan Poacher

Capt IM Chance writes:

After a period of intensive jungle training, the final hurdle before the much-anticipated R and R package, was the Commanding Officers' FTX. The five-day period was to be the culmination of the basic, intermediate and advanced jungle schools. It was designed to confirm the training objectives set; jungle navigation, communications, tactical river crossings, deliberate offensive action (platoon and company level), pursuit operations, patrol ambush, CTR, observation post drills, as well as route clearance and security drills.

Unlike following the normal Genforce scenarios, the FTX pitted the exercising troops against the local Estalan drugs cartel (EC). They operated with guerrilla tactics and utilised mercenaries such as Dalic Krazdic (aka Sgt Shaw of the EER) to protect

their main supply routes throughout the Macal Valley, some 70km west of Belize City. Distinctly dressed in olive green uniforms with red bandannas, they operated in training camps and distribution centres within the exercising troops' AOR. Locally hired 4x4 vehicles, sporting a multitude of colours, allowed the cartel to operate highly mobile gun platforms, with Belize Defence Force (BDF) AR15 and M16 weapons. A boat was also utilised for transporting their narcotics from production to distribution centres along the Macal River. This made the whole exercise extremely interesting and stimulated some sound deductions from both of the exercising company commanders' estimates.

The troops were to initially deploy to crossing points on the Macal River where they would cross tactically and set up harbour locations. On the way to one of the crossing points, one of the platoons 'stumbled' on a broken-down cartel vehicle, and in the ensuing fire-fight a number of the cartel militia were slain. Intelligence taken from the enemy dead allowed more accurate locations for the platoons to conduct their area searches, identifying training camps from where observation posts could observe the routine at each site. After some 24 hours of observation, the British Ambassador (the



OC D, RSM and CO on the banks of the Macal River.



Enemy jungle camp.

The Poachers



BDF, aka Estalan cartel!

Commanding Officer sporting smart casuals and a trilby!) was in a position to sanction the use of offensive action. During the period preceding the offensive action, the troops will be pleased to know that the company headquarters element was very busy dealing with the task of planning for the possible evacuation of some 40 UK nationals, currently marooned in the Macal Valley. After successfully defeating the cartel at their training sites and distribution centres, samples of all narcotics were sealed and sent back to government laboratories, allowing their source region or country to be identified. Explosive charges were utilised to render all cartel sites within the area of responsibility inoperable.

The company was soon retasked by the ambassador to interdict to the east of its current location where the local government forces had been heavily defeated and forced to withdraw. Subsequently, platoon-sized ambushes were set and inflicted heavy losses on the already weak cartel, who had by now extracted to their stronghold with a few hostages. Capt Witham thought he might have the opportunity to wander around like a pirate in enemy uniform during the FTX, this myth was quickly dismissed as he was placed into a purpose-built cage along with a BDF volunteer!

The stage was set for the grand finale, a company attack onto the main EC stronghold. The precursor to such an audacious attack was sound information gained from company reconnaissance assets. The Ambassador sanctioned the attack, allowing the company to move to a bergen cache and into the designated FUP. After a short wade through the Macal River in the early hours of the morning, the company was unleashed upon the enemy stronghold. Ferocious firefights ensued where casualties were nominated on both sides (the use of casualty cards for each of the exercising troops allowed the casevac chain to be thoroughly exercised). After a last ditch

counter-attack by the EC they were finally defeated in their entirety. The signal for the end of the FTX was the securing and evacuation by helicopter from the EC stronghold.

The feedback from the exercising troops was extremely positive and the exercise represented a healthy deviation from the normal general and special ideas of previous exercises. The Commanding Officer and Maj Des O'Driscoll certainly produced an inventive scenario which was doubtless an accurate representation of issues likely to be found in such tropical climates. It has certainly aided planning for Exercise Mayan Warrior, the battalion sized deployment to Belize, next year.

Changeover of Commanding Officers and RSMs

WO1 (RSM) D Hazlewood writes:

The early part of November 2001 saw the change in appointment for RSMs between



WO1 (RSM) Hazlewood takes over from WO1 (RSM) Martin.

WO1 RSM P Martin and WO1 D Hazlewood. On promotion, Capt Martin took over as the new RCMO in the busy world of recruitment and retention. Having come from the G4 world as RQMS(M) the hardest part of this appointment was having to get to know all the new faces within the Battalion and their history. I was amazed how quickly individuals change around within the Battalion. Having been CSM of C Company from 1998-2000 there were only a few individuals apart from Cpl Morrissey, of course, that I remember. Within the first week there had been a number of G1 issues that had to be dealt with quickly. The similarity between being a new RSM and OPTAG training are immense, in other words everything is thrown at you within a couple of days and then off you go on your own. Believe me it was a long week.

The preparation was now in place for the arrival of the new Commanding Officer Lt Col RJ Ladley MBE who was taking over from Lt Col AJC Wild MBE. In true Poacher tradition Lt Col Wild was given a good send



Lt Col RJ Ladley MBE meets the 'Poacher', Sgt Mutch, shortly before the new CO vowed not to be seen in The Castle!

The Poachers



Lt Col AJC Wild MBE about to be pulled out of camp.

off. Having promoted 13 lance corporals on successful completion of their JNCO cadre he was pulled from the Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess as the Battalion lined the route while the Corps of Drums played the *Lincolnshire Poacher* for the final time. There is a little history between the new Commanding Officer and myself in that our fathers had served together as warrant officers some 30 years ago in the 3rd Battalion. In addition, when Lt Col Ladley was OC A Company, I was his CQMS.

Life within the Battalion has been busy but enjoyable. Like me, the Commanding Officer has set out to get to know every soldier within the Battalion. The only problem with this is, when the Commanding Officer is walking around, I get asked to name everyone. It's surprising how many Smiths and Jones's there are within the Battalion!

Adventure Training on Exercise Panther Cub One

WO2 (QMSI) D Evans writes:

The adventure training phase for exercising units on Panther Cub is conducted on a Caribbean island eight miles off the coast of Belize, called St George's Cay. Here the British Forces Adventure Training Centre (BFATC) is based with its complement of two military personnel (Chief Instructor and Admin NCO) and several locally employed civilians (LEC).

Predictably the adventure training conducted at St George's Cay is based on water-based activities, for the duration of our exercise these were: scuba diving, kayaking, offshore sailing, dinghy sailing and windsurfing.

The five instructors including myself who had the enviable task of being located on the island for five weeks, were Sgt King (kayaking), Sgt Gadsden, Pic Burdass (safety boat operators) and Cpl Anderton - 14 Sig Regt (dinghy sailing). The diving and offshore sailing were contracted out to civilian instructors.

The company group rotated through the

island on five different locations, each platoon had a designated number of divers who completed the five-day PADI Open Water Dive Course. The remainder of the soldiers conducted a multi-activity, day and a half long rotation between dinghy sailing, kayaking, offshore sailing or windsurfing. Thus, each individual had a taster of each activity and, where applicable, refreshed previously learned skills. Before anyone could begin any of the training everyone had to pass a swimming test. This was normally conducted at 0630hrs on the first morning and, despite some apprehension from members of the company, everyone came up to the required standard.

Once the activities were under way the training week ran itself, with possible interruptions for inclement weather (high winds). This gave the opportunity for the lads to top up their suntans and for those who felt more energetic to improve their beach volleyball skills. However, certain members of the company (Sgt 'Frank' Berridge and Cpl 'Robbo' Roberts) wouldn't improve even if given the whole duration of the exercise to practise! Another constant observation by the groups was how the kayakers seemed to be under water more than the divers, certainly for the early part of the course.

The offshore sailing was a new activity for virtually all the participants, with the soldiers being introduced to basic sailing techniques during the day's sailing, followed by an evening moored off one of the local islands. This gave the opportunity for the crew to go ashore and sample the local culture and hospitality. Naturally, the offshore sailing became a popular activity for all those given the opportunity to participate. The week culminated in a series of dives for the sub aqua people and a triathlon competition involving the skills learned on the multi-activities throughout the week. Notable achievements from this contest were from Cpl 'Dick' Elliot's crew, who set the most impressive time.

The majority of the company group enjoyed their break from the jungle and

found how enjoyable and fulfilling adventure training can be, given the perfect weather conditions and environment to pursue the activities. A special thanks should go to the civilian instructors at BFATC, the two dive instructors Tim and Mike and the offshore skipper, Steve.

The Battalion is always short of instructors... anyone wishing to spend five weeks on a Caribbean island during the Battalion adventure training exercise in 2003, should seek the relevant courses and qualifications in the next 12 months.

Exercise Appalachian Dragon

WO2 (QMSI) D Evans writes:

Exercise Appalachian Dragon was a trekking expedition in the Shenandoah National Park, Virginia USA. The exercise was organised by Capt Simon Otter and comprised 10 other members of the Battalion (D Company) plus one Scots Guard, Cpl 'Tommo' Thomson (JSMEL).

The aim of the expedition was to hike the length of the Appalachian Trail (AT) within the National Park and to scale some of the major peaks. In total we would spend 12 days walking the trail, with the remaining time spent in Washington DC, expedition dates running from 9 to 26 October 2001.

Our departure from the UK went smoothly courtesy of Virgin Atlantic, on arrival at Dullas airport Washington, the group managed to cram themselves into two people carriers for our journey to the accommodation at Friendship Heights, Washington. We were pleasantly surprised at the standard of accommodation we encountered at the Embassy Suites, large four-man rooms with en-suite bathroom, satellite TV and a fitness room and pool within the complex.

We had a day and half in Washington to sort out some admin, purchase food for the trek and to do some sightseeing, before we departed by 15 seater mini-bus for the two-hour journey to the National Park. Before we left town we stopped off at an outdoor pursuits store to purchase some fuel for our cookers. It was here that we discovered that the issued gas stoves we were carrying were incompatible with the American gas canisters on sale. The group proceeded to purchase a number of small jelly stoves which, as we discovered later, were very slow to heat the water required for the rations we had purchased earlier, this became a constant frustration for the majority of the group.

Once we arrived at the National park our driver dropped us off at Compton's Gap in the northern section and before departing was given information about the time and location of our pick-up in 12 days' time. The trek would be split into three stages taking in the Northern, Central and Southern sections of the park, each stage taking three to four days to complete.

The idea for the first couple of days was

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Exercise Appalachian Dragon...from left (back): Pte Shaw, Pte Bryl, Sgt Baker, Cpl Oldenburg, WO2 Evans, Pte Keeton. Front: Pte Denton, Pte Green, Pte Tipling, Pte Farrow, Capt Otter, Cpl Thomson.

for individuals to become accustomed to carrying their bergens for long periods and develop a daily routine. We set ourselves a challenging eight miles of walking to our destination for the first night's stay at Gravel Springs Hut. After four hours of brisk walking by the group we reached our location for the night, where several members chose to stay in the hiker's hut provided and maintained by the Potomac AT Club. The word hut is a slight exaggeration, the wooden construction has an open front with a raised section inside for sleeping, during the night small animals and rodents roam freely between the sleeping occupants. After an early start on the second day we arrived at our destination, the Mathews Arms campground, within a few hours. After pitching our tents on the designated plot, there was the opportunity to walk to the camp store to purchase some provisions. The one drawback was that the store was two miles down the road. We found this to be a common feature with all the large campgrounds, with sites catering for the motorist rather than the hiker. As the weekend city folk flock into the park on a Friday evening, the size of some of the mobile camper homes are quite astounding, and 4x4s are as common as Vauxhall Astras in the U.K.

The mid fall (autumn) period is one of the busiest in the park, when tourists come into the park to see the changing of the leaves (colour). Our trek through the northern section of the park went fairly smoothly, with us arriving at Pass Mountain hut at the end of the third day.

By this stage it was apparent that the trail

would offer uneventful views, due to the dense forest that we were constantly finding ourselves weaving through following the AT. On more than one occasion the words 'Blair Witch' were used to describe various areas encountered on the trail. Our glimpses of scenery had to be made from the overlooks positioned for the motor vehicle users, every few miles along Skyline drive. During the first phase the group saw several deer within the woods and a black bear and her cubs, which disappeared rapidly once the mother had spotted us.

The trek through the central part of the park begins at Thornton Gap, where a large cafeteria called the Panorama can be found. After having our fill of the American breakfast on offer and with our stomachs full of coffee, we began the next day's walking with the first of several climbs of the day up to Mary's Rock 3,514ft, at this peak we were able to witness an excellent panoramic view of the park. However, shortly after leaving the peak the weather turned for the worse, with constant rain and drizzle falling. The remaining 10 miles covered that day were hard going with the trail contouring along a high ridge and eventually taking in the summit of Hawksbill at 4,050ft, the highest peak in the park. We eventually arrived at Rock Spring hut late in the afternoon and we were all very wet and tired. Tents were erected quickly and a hot meal and drink were consumed before settling down for a good night's rest. We made a slightly later start than normal (0900hrs) the next morning to begin the short hike to Big Meadows campground. One of the best equipped campgrounds in

the park the lads treated themselves to showers and laundry facilities, as well as being able to retreat to the Tap Room in the evening to have a beer and listen to the local country and western singer. A rest day was programmed in for the following day, with members of the group able to do some personal admin and any running repairs required to their feet. A small team however, did venture out onto a day walk to Lewis Spring Falls. The waterfall is 80ft high and when in full flow would be a spectacular sight. Unfortunately, due to the lack of rainfall the previous months, the fall was a mere trickle on the day we visited.

We left the halfway point of the trek on a cold crisp morning for our intended destination of Bearfence hut. Taking a slight detour the group negotiated the Bearfence mountain scramble, where one or two members of the group showed signs of increased anxiety while traversing along this small ridge. Once past the scramble we decided to push on the extra couple of miles to Lewis Mountain campground for the night. By this stage of the trek we had established the best method of cooking our food was to use the fireplaces provided in the campgrounds (hot dogs became a popular alternative to noodles and pasta).

Our night's stay at Lewis Mountain was the coldest yet, with temperatures dropping to -6C. We hastily packed our tents away in the morning and headed for the camp shop to purchase several cups of coffee and to heat our pop-tarts in the microwave, which on reflection, actually taste nicer cold. The day's walking took us to Hightop Mountain Hut, where the final approach takes in a

The Poachers

steep 500ft climb. All members of the group were feeling particularly tired from the day's walking and were relieved to have crossed into the southern section of the park before arriving at Hightop. It was another clear warm day for the next day's trek to Loft Mountain campground. We covered the 12 miles in relatively quick time and on our arrival were able to stop at the Wayside cafeteria for a late lunch. Each member of the group consumed the now customary American burger with fries, before walking the final mile and half into the campground.

After a long scouting mission around the camp ground, the party finally located Capt Otter and Cpl Thomson, who had already pitched their tent on a shabby looking site some distance from the other camp users, where they had apparently been directed to, by the camp warden. Again the campgrounds are designed for the motorised visitor to the park, with showers and laundry facilities over a kilometre away. During the evening after a meal of hot dogs and Bud light, we helped a couple erect their tent on a pitch in our location. After we had retired to bed around midnight the visiting pair of backpackers decided to stay up through out the night making as much noise as they could. It wasn't until Cpl Thomson eventually overturned their tent (with the couple still inside it), that the pair became silent. Unfortunately, by this time it was time for us all to rise for the next day's trek to Black Rock Mountain Hut.

The day's walk was uneventful with us arriving at our destination around mid afternoon, with the weather particularly warm (80F), giving Cpl Fred Oldenburg the opportunity to top up his tan once more. All of the party pitched their tents, as we had been pre-warned of the various rodents that were occupying the Mountain hut. Again, it being the weekend, the hut was particularly busy, one hiker passing through was trekking the whole of the Appalachian Trail and had started some three months previously. The hiker told us how he had been slowed up slightly when he had broken his ankle a couple of months back, but after a few days' rest was back on the trail, (those crazy Yanks).

We were up and ready for the next day's trek before the Americans residing in the Mountain hut had risen. During these final days of the trek the rations carried were down to the bare minimum. Pte Daz Shaw found this ever-decreasing amount of food unbearable and on several occasions would be seen loitering around group members in the hope of receiving some morsel of food. Again a hot day made the 12-mile stretch to Calf Mountain hut somewhat tiresome with us arriving around mid afternoon. On route Sgt Mick Baker and Cpl Fred Oldenburg had helped an American walker who had damaged her ankle and was being carried down the path by her friends, immobilising the victim's leg with an inflatable splint.

The final day's trek took us to a location near Rock Fish Gap, where we had arranged our pick-up with our driver Mr George. Once

the driver had arrived some three hours later than the time we had agreed, we eventually negotiated a price for our return journey to the Embassy Suites in Washington, via McDonalds.

Training for Northern Ireland

The Battalion is now well into its pre NIBAT 4 training, which started in December last year. From December to March a series of individual courses, including the Intelligence Platoon course, search courses and driver training all took place. The formal 'in barracks' training started on 4 March with the OPTAG presentation, with the tactics course the week after.

Twenty-five members of the Battalion deployed for a two-day visit to Northern Ireland. The junior commanders spent two days on operations with 1 PWO in Omagh, while the senior commanders carried out two days military tourism around the Province.

Collective training at CPTA and STANTA is due to start soon, with the emphasis placed on public order drills and rural patrolling.

WO2 Phillpot CSM B Company writes: Well yet again the Battalion is preparing for another tour of Northern Ireland, this time in June. What does this mean? Well it means certain criteria of training and capabilities have to be met before we deploy. So training started early for Northern Ireland, as in before Christmas 2001. However, my involvement didn't start until the New Year.

The battalion's requirement was to have all arms search teams (AAST) from each company deploying. This meant a requirement for the battalion to have a unit search co-ordinator (USC), and each company to have a unit search advisor (USA). So on 6 January 2002 off went the co-ordinator and the USAs to learn their parts down in Chatham Kent. A two-week course on search techniques and then the planning of search operations. The course focused on the paperwork legalities and the planning of all types of search, from area search to venue searches.

With that done and dusted a two-week break was taken before we deployed back down to Chatham, this time each USA deployed down to Kent with their AAST. Another two-weeks but this time the course was split with the AASTs going into depth on all their search equipment and techniques, while the USAs went through an intensive number of planning observation postss. All this was done in the first week so that both courses could join up for the second week to be tested from start to finish. Each team was tested on all aspects and all types of search. Each team had to pass all phases to achieve a pass over the whole course. This now done means the battalion has the correct teams to deploy, but constant training and regular assessments must continue to ensure that the Poachers deploy qualified and up to speed. Roll on June.

B Company Civpop and RAAT Tasks

Maj JCJ Wright writes:

Regular Army Assistance Tasks (RAAT) are part of the territory for a light role Battalion based in the UK and one of the largest commitments is to provide the civilian population (Civpop) and permanent range team (PRT) for units conducting their pre-deployment training for operations at CPTA and Stanta. In January the task fell to B Company to provide support to 42 Cdo RM. For many in the company this was the second Civpop tasking in less than a year and yet another return to CPTA following previous Northern Ireland training in the summer of 2001.

Despite this the company was remarkably upbeat about the task. Perhaps it was the opportunity to get away from Chepstow and the guard duties, the chance to eat burgers to excess, have a few beers or maybe to have a dig at the Marines in the public order exercises.

Our task in the village at Lydd was to establish a typical pattern of life in which the Marines based in a security force base could conduct their operations around. All of us had to adopt aliases and most played law-abiding citizens, such as postmen, road sweepers, milkmen, ambulancemen and even a tramp; a role for which LCpl Davis was perfectly suited. Within this normal(?) nearly all-male society were placed a few active terrorists and political activists, also played by members of the company, who waged a ballot box and bullet campaign against the Crown Forces. Does this sound familiar? A four-woman team was attached to add to realism. All of us were housed in the village itself for the full two weeks.

Despite some of the continuity inaccuracies of a typical village somewhere in the far north west of the British Isles the company did very well to provide an excellent training environment for the Marines. This was because they have undergone this type of deployment training frequently over the past two years and this experience has allowed them to gauge the correct response by civilians for a number of incidents.

The Poachers had to provide the PRT of about 20 of a wide range of ranks with various range qualifications. This was quite a commitment for the Battalion as the C Company group were in Belize. All reports from 42 Cdo were favourable and the team, under Capt Mark Dingle's control, provided a worthwhile and exciting package.

The final phase of the commitment was based at Stanta near Thetford, where the Marines were tested on their training received in CPTA. The training was rural operation based with an element of public order incidents included. For the Civpop this was our busiest time as incidents were provided for three Royal Marines companies over the five-day period and not just the one. A great deal of driving was required to deliver the Civpop to their locations before

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incidents went ahead. Again the company was praised, quite rightly for the realism and support as well as being the first Civpop never to have any vehicle accidents.

Some may consider the RAAT as time out from training; however in this case everyone involved received a good refresher prior to starting our own Northern Ireland training. Despite all this I can safely say members of B Company are looking forward to being the exercising troops on our next visit.

D (Sp) Company

After a more relaxing Christmas than last year in Belfast, D (Sp) Company returned to a frantic day of activity in barracks before the Mortar and Milan Platoons deployed as part of the C Company group on Exercise Panther Cub One in Belize. The platoons benefited greatly from training in a new and challenging environment. The Mortar Platoon managed to practise aural adjustment of fire in an area of virgin jungle, a rare opportunity indeed. After a well-earned period of R and R we briefly met up with our Recce Platoon who were inbound with the A Company Group on Exercise Panther Cub Two. This is the second time in a year that the Recce Platoon has exercised in Belize.

Upon return to Chepstow our attention turned to our forthcoming Northern Ireland tour - Belize to Belfast is quite a mental leap for most of us! A battalion initiative to reduce manning turbulence has resulted in an adjustment to the D (Sp) Company Orbat. This realignment should reduce the need for personnel to be posted in or out of the company for Northern Ireland commitments and promote stability.

As our Northern Ireland training gathers apace, we look forward to the return of Recce Platoon from their sojourn in the jungle and say goodbye to CSM Ricky Dunn who moves on to a new post at CUOTC. We wish him well and thank him for all his hard work with the company.



Pte Wood, Mortar Platoon.



River crossing. Milan Platoon get their feet wet, Cpl Woods, LCpl Potter, LCpl Auckland and Pte Bryl, Belize January 2002.



Mortar Platoon - aural adjustment of fire - Ptes Brown, Harrison and Tipling, Belize, January 2002.



Pte Bryl meets his supper!

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Fishing in Belize

Capt FA Ralph writes:

When you hear that you are deploying on Exercise Panther Cub01/02 to the Caribbean for the worst part of our winter (ie just after Christmas and the New Year) no-one could blame you if your mind drifted towards thoughts of a palm tree clad sandy Caye surrounded by a warm calm sea and a beer in your hand...all right - a few beers!

Well, not wanting to disappoint you, I decided to write about just that, in other words how the other half lived...you know the REMFs, those unsung heroes who were 'stuck' on the coast at least four hours' drive east of the jungle in Price Barracks (Airport Camp for the 'old sweats') along with the entire Belizean mosquito population.

Once all the work had been completed, of course, I had to come up with some way of reducing the alcohol consumption...so naturally I came up with the idea of challenging the British Army Training Support Unit Belize (Batsub) to an off-shore fishing competition.

Did you know that off the coast of Belize lies the longest living coral reef in the world and, as such, it supports a large and varied population of many different species of fish? So, having made a few phone calls, negotiated a price, a date was set, teams selected and off we went with sun cream, hats and of course a cooler full of cold ones, which would always remain close at hand.

Clearly the 'Batsub Boys' saw themselves as the natural favourites, as they knew the waters, what they had not taken into account was the Poachers secret weapon - Cpl 'Gortex' Turner - who would prove not only to be the Poachers answer to Bob Nudd...(who?)...but the overall competition winner.

After a dubious start, which saw the 'favourites' taking all of the best tackle and the boats setting off in a gale force eight breeze, closely supported by a mini monsoon, things started to improve, with



The author, Capt Felix Ralph, with 12lb barracuda.

the 'noddors' boat, (a term used to describe a novice angler) starting to catch fish steadily, ranging from small barracuda, yellow tails, blue fins, grunts and red snappers from inside the reef, where the waters were much calmer.

My team on the other hand decided to 'go for gold' and fish the much deeper and rougher waters beyond the reef with less luck. We did, however, manage to catch a few good fish after we dropped the Master Chef, SSgt Mick Barry, off on 'Goughs Caye' as he was complaining of feeling seasick...nothing to do with the fact that a Russian dance troupe of some 15 ladies were sun bathing naked on that particular Caye I'm sure!

Cpl 'Blister face' Bannon had a quieter day than usual by catching the day's bait



Cpl Turner with a 10lb red snapper, the winning fish of the day.



Gough's Caye, one of the many small atolls that link the reef.

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fish and of course the sun, unlike the doctor, Maj Andrew Baker, who caught a string of barracuda in the 7-9lb region. I managed a measly 12 pounder...some people have all the luck!

At the end of a very wet and windy yet fantastic day, which proved to be a lot closer than originally thought, with the favourites ending up in third place, second place my team and a resounding win for the 'nodders', who also caught the best fish of the day (which was judged by weight according to species comparison). Well done the nodders who were rewarded with the coveted Barracuda Trophy and T-shirts to match.

It is hoped to organise a Battalion-level event during Exercise *Mayan Warrior* in early 2003, in which we will hopefully see the Commanding Officer leading the way! Lastly, I would like to thank the Batsub staff for supplying the rods and tackle and for being so gracious in defeat.

Orienteering

As one of the Battalion's main sports, the Poachers Orienteering team has been as active as possible this season, foot and mouth and NI training allowing. The Battalion Championship was held in October 2001, based on a Harris Relay style event. The championship was based at platoon-level, with HQ Company 1 winning and Recce Platoon as runners up.

The Poachers then took on the task of providing the admin for the three-day Army night and short orienteering championships. This was held in the Forest of Dean in early February. The first day was planned by Maj Vincent and held on Caerwent training area. The Army night championships were held on day two with a Battalion team consisting of Maj Vincent, Maj Bushell (AGC), Capt Beighton, WO2 Beswick, Sgt Sumner, and coming third in the major units competition.

In March the Battalion team took part in the Fifth Division Championships, while on the Optag Tactics Course, achieving a respectable runners-up position.

The team is looking forward to the Army Championships, which take place during pre-deployment leave in May.

Visit of the Regimental Associations to Beachley Barracks

11-12 September 2001

Maj NMP Brown writes:

I was genuinely delighted to be given responsibility for running this visit as I had only really come across the Beds and Herts Association during my time in the TA at Hertford, Hemel and Dunstable, so this provided a great opportunity to meet the Lincolnshires, Leicestershires and Northamptonshires. What I hadn't realised at first was how many there were and when I finally totted up the numbers, there were well over 100 members visiting over the two days.

I wasn't certain, at first, if we would be able to provide enough accommodation, let



alone find enough soldiers, during a very busy period for the Battalion, to man stands and help with administrative arrangements. However, all the companies rallied round and supported this event admirably.

Just under half of the total number of Association members arrived during the afternoon of Tuesday 11 September (a date to be remembered for other reasons) and initially there was a concern that the visit would have to be cancelled owing to the Battalion going to one hour's notice to move. Having greeted the visitors I then had to explain that they might be left somewhat to

their own devices if we had to move out. True to form they responded that they were quite capable of looking after themselves and some even volunteered to cook breakfast and man the front gate! Fortunately, the expected callout did not occur and we were able to commence the visit with a curry supper courtesy of the Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess.

The Association members admirably demonstrated their capacity for socialising and a busy and noisy Mess regaled with tales from yesteryear. As closing time for the bar approached the more industrious

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members carried out some clever IPB and found out that A Company was having its farewell party for the OC in the Corporals' Mess.

An invitation was duly given and accepted and festivities carried on. One bedraggled WO2 was heard to ask one of the members if he could possibly consider going to bed as it was 4am!

The new day dawned and after a welcome breakfast the overnight attendees visited Chepstow Castle prior to the arrival of the remainder of the party. This is an impressive monument and all of us were left in no doubt about the importance of Chepstow in days gone by. Once all were assembled, after an initial welcome and presentation about the Battalion and its role, everyone then visited a series of stands in a round robin fashion, with a short break for lunch in the Officers' Mess.

Essentially there were four main stands, comprising a tour of the camp, the roles of the Battalion, a support weapons display and a chance to experience the small arms trainer.

The tour of the camp presented the chance for a comparison between today's accommodation and that of the past. Certainly many were impressed with the four-man rooms and the way in which soldiers made their bedspace a little piece of 'home'. There was also a chance to look closely at the range of vehicles now held in the Battalion and discuss them with the MT Platoon.

The roles of the Battalion stand gave us an opportunity to show such current skills as public order training (ably demonstrated by Sgt Marshallsay and his multiple), jungle patrols (a joint effort by Cpls Spray and Oldenburg and their sections) and a display of our communications equipment (naturally handled by the Signals Platoon).

D (Sp) Company put on a very comprehensive display of the weapons and equipment of the Milan, Recce and Mortar platoons. Great attention was paid to some of the technical equipment now available, particularly the night vision devices. There was also a lot of interest in the more personal aspects of soldiers' kit.

Finally, WO2 Philpott ran a very enjoyable small arms trainer package, which gave a very good insight into the effectiveness of this very useful training aid.

Finally, it was time to bid farewell and after a tea break in the Sergeants' Mess, the Associations departed in their various forms of transport.

For us, as a Battalion, it was a great opportunity to retain that important link with our ancestor Regiments and learn something from the past. Also it gave us a chance to pay back, in some way, the hard work and support that the Associations provide to the Battalion.

We hope that all the Association members enjoyed their visit and that they left the day with a feeling that the officers and soldiers of the Battalion are maintaining the high standards set by them in the past.



Maj NMP Brown chats to one of the members.



A member makes light work of a modern pack!



The Poachers



Drums Platoon at Lincoln Cathedral.

The Corps of Drums

Drum Maj S Huggins writes:

It has been a very busy time for the Poachers Corps of Drums. The balance of conventional exercises and RAAT has outweighed the musical and public engagement side of life for the last few months. The platoon were involved in Exercise Lark Song, which saw the platoon in Denmark exercising next to a Danish armoured infantry platoon. After Christmas the platoon moved to Lydd (Rype village) and then Stanta as Civpop, assisting 42 Commando in preparation for their future deployment to the Province.

However, there has been a steady supply of engagements that has assisted the platoon in maintaining its high musical standard. The main event of last year was the Lincoln Christmas Market (5-9 December). This was the fourth year that the Poachers Corps of Drums has supplied musical support to the event and as ever, was supported warmly by the locals and guests of the market. Special thanks this year should go to Capt John Lee (Area Regimental Secretary) and Sgt Chris Headland (ACIO Lincoln) for their assistance in organising a very busy schedule. Not forgetting the Commanding Officer and permanent staff of the Lincoln TA Centre for their support with accommodation and administration. Performances for the Market, ACFLincoln, Lincoln Old Comrades and the Lincoln

Regimental Museum were all well received and assisted in the aim of raising the Battalion's profile and support to recruiting activities in the area.

At present, the platoon is facing the challenge of moving from B Company to HQ Company. The re-role will see the Drums Platoon as the Commanding Officer's reserve for the forthcoming NIBAT 4 commitment, manoeuvre support platoon for the conventional orbat and a more pro-active musical commitment to the Battalion's PR and recruitment activities. The platoon can look forward to their involvement with the NIBAT 4 commitment and a very busy summer programme of musical engagements.

Exercise Cambrian Patrol

Maj JCJ Wright writes:

Not just another RAAT task, but the opportunity not to shave, wear and carry foreign uniforms and weapons. This was how it was sold. Whilst not wholly convinced, B Company did embrace the role of OPFOR for Exercise Cambrian Patrol 2001 with more enthusiasm than two weeks of permanent range team tasks at Lydd and Hythe.

For those not aware Exercise Cambrian Patrol is, as the name suggests, a patrol exercise in Mid-Wales covering about 55km of difficult terrain over a 48-hour period. The patrol includes a variety of tests of military skills that the eight-man (or woman)



LCpl Wooley wins the beard growing competition!

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team has to undertake. The teams are not officially in competition with one another, but are awarded gold, silver, bronze or a certificate depending on the success of the patrol. However, there is a great deal of credibility for a unit receiving a gold medal, so there is an element of competition, which is a good thing.

The task for B Company in detail was to provide an Opfor as well as a friendly forces training camp in the mountains north west of the Sennybridge training area, and assistance to an attack and NBC stand on the training area itself. It became quite clear that the task itself was relatively simple but that the support necessary to keep the company in some comfort in the mountains for two weeks was not. My CQMS, CSgt Kyffin, as he regularly made me understand, likened the work and the stores required equal to that in Sierra Leone in 2000. The company had five separate locations all very remote away from the comfort of Orange and Cellnet mobile telephone signals; two enemy, two friendly training camps and one rear location on the training area were established.

The main effort was to be with the training camps where the patrols were tested on their patrol reports, orders, signals, armoured fighting vehicle recognition, first aid and setting up of a trip flare. Company headquarters was co-located with an enemy position and a rebro and was fortunate enough to be sited in a youth hostel that the Exercise Cambrian Patrol staff managed to acquire for the duration. This provided a good base from which to work.

The company had three days to set up camp, rehearse and get into the routine of work. This went smoothly and everyone was warm and dry whenever they managed to get some sleep. The first phase of patrols, 23 in all, were TA or from the OTC and as expected were of mixed ability. A few withdrew prior to arriving at the training camp (about 25km from the start). Some looked very sorry for themselves whereas



Cambrian Patr 11 October 2001

others, most notably the OTCs, looked keen and motivated.

The next five phases over five days were for the Regular Army and foreign teams to attempt the course. As with the part timers there was a mixed bag, some clearly not prepared or used to such an event and others that looked very good. The Poachers entered a team from each Company, C received a silver, A and D were awarded a certificate and sadly the B Company team had to withdraw. We shall be back next year! But for us, as the RAAT company, the work continued as well as welcomed visits from the Commanding Officer and the Comd 160 (W) Bde. By the end of the week the company had dealt with 128 teams and as the final patrols passed each location the extraction plan took effect.

This RAAT task culminated in the beard competition. Prizes were to be awarded for the most hirsute and smoothest soldier. Young Pte Hassle won the 'bumfluff' award and he promised he didn't shave. LCpl Gibson managed to prove that he had the best beard. In reflection the sales pitch was truthful, this was a RAAT task with a difference and was preferable to many others that are likely to come our way in the future. However, once a career is enough.

Army Inter-Unit Grade 3 Novice Boxing Competition 2001/2002

After a successful inter-company boxing competition during which B Company took the honours again, the Battalion team was selected and formed up in October 2001, for the Poachers to enter the Army Inter-Unit Grade 3 Novice Boxing Competition 2001/02. After falling foul at the semi finals stage two years in succession the phrase third time lucky seemed to spring to mind.

The team was selected from the inter-company competition along with some veterans from past seasons, training started under Cpls Groom and Sherrin. The first fight of the season was expected to be against 9 Supply Regiment in December - however, after the draw was announced, they pulled out before a punch was thrown. After a few hundred phone calls a new opponent was found in the form of 27 RLC, 23 Pnr Regiment and some of the younger boxers from the Army team, the first fight was to be in Aldershot with the return match in Chepstow prior to the Christmas break.



B company on exercise in Denmark, December 2001.



Pte Allatt.

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Poachers boxing team 2002.

Both teams gained a great deal of experience from both encounters with some excellent performances from all the boxers, the Poachers winning four out of nine fights in Aldershot, and aided by the ever-vocal supporters of the Poachers boxing team managed to shave eight out of 11 fights at home in Chepstow.

After Christmas, training for the quarter final fight against 1 RHA started with some long sweat runs to remove the extra bellies and the remaining turkey. After a gruelling two-week training period the fight was held on 10 January at home. The first fight of the evening at bantamweight was Pte Allatt (B Company) who produced a devastating

performance winning by a stoppage; the second fight of the evening was Cpl Hume (B Company) at featherweight who lost by a close majority decision after three hard-fought rounds. With the standard set Dmr Reid (B Company) was eventually out-pointed after a good technical contest. With the Poachers 2-1 down next in a light-welterweight was Cpl Gillespie (C Company) who produced a powerful performance to beat his opponent very convincingly.

After the break Pte Lyons (B Company) lost on points to the 1 RHA boxer after a hard-fought three-round contest. Next in at middleweight Pte Martin (B Company)

produced the performance of his season to out point a strong opponent in a toe-to-toe three round contest. At light-heavy, Cpl Hardy (B Company) proved too strong and clever for his opponent, stopping him in the second round. Next at heavyweight was Cpl David (B Company) who after a hard three-round fight found that the decision went against him. With the score now at 4-4 all the pressure fell on Pte Conroy's shoulders at welter-weight, who after an aggressive three-round contest, during which both boxers showed aggression, power and a great deal of durability, Pte Conroy was awarded a unanimous points decision for the Poachers to win 5-4 on the night. The judges voted



Cpl Hardy v Pte Heally 1RRW.



Pte Mason v Pte Mullins 1RRW.

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Cpl Gillespie v Pte Haddock 1RRW.

Cpl Gillespie best boxer of the evening and Cpl Hume was best runner-up.

After a two-week break the team reformed ready to start training for the semi-final fight against 1 RRW, which was to be held on 21 February in Chepstow. Yet again both Cpl Groom and Cpl Sherrin took the team through a rigorous training routine to get them into the best possible shape. First up on the night again at bantamweight was Pte Allatt who gave 110 per cent throughout a bloody three-round contest. The referee eventually stopped the fight in the tail end of the third round due to Pte Allatt having a broken nose. Next, at featherweight, Pte Mason once again proved his ability by easily out-pointing his opponent with some heavy left hooks and clever movement. At lightweight Cpl Gillespie once again produced a brilliant boxing performance to easily outpoint a strong opponent with his clever footwork, lightning reactions and accurate punching. Next up at light-welter Pte Reid was matched punch for punch in an exciting three-round bout, during which both boxers showed a great deal of boxing skill, aggression, and accurate punching, a very even contest which Pte Reid eventually lost on points.

After the break Pte Martin, at light-middleweight, proved to be too clever for his opponent for the first two rounds... however as the pressure was applied by the RRW boxer in the third round, Pte Martin was given a standing count and stopped. Cpl Hardy at middleweight, with vengeance on his mind after the last decision, stopped his opponent with a devastating performance. Next at light-heavy Pte Fenton was awarded a walkover after the RRW

boxer failed the pre-fight medical.

Next in at heavyweight Cpl David showed power, aggression, and determination after clearly winning the first two rounds Cpl David was again counted by the referee after both boxers took some heavy blows in a big exchange and the contest was stopped in favour of the RRW. Again the competition was poised at 4-4. The final fighter of the night at welterweight was Pte Hilton. In his first battalion fight he gave 100 per cent, however the RRW boxer produced a sound performance to wear down Pte Hilton, eventually stopping him in the third round to secure a 5-4 win for the RRW. Once again, Cpl Gillespie was voted best boxer of the evening and this time Pte Allatt was best runner-up.

The final mention must go to the Poachers superstar, Cpl J Whitfield, who fought outstandingly at middleweight for the Poachers last year, after the first invitation fight against 27 Regt RLC in November, he was approached by the Army team coach after the contest in Aldershot. After a lengthy conversation it was decided that it would be in Cpl Whitfield's interest to hand over his boxing card and lose him from the team.

However to his credit Cpl Whitfield has continued his outstanding performances with the Army team on a much bigger stage than we could hope to offer him, he has reached the ABA final which takes place in April and looks to be in prime position to be representing Wales in the next Commonwealth Games at light-heavyweight.

The whole Battalion wishes Cpl Whitfield the very best of luck in the ABA final and hopefully the Commonwealth Games.

It's a Jungle out There! C Company Group Deploys to Belize

*Maj RF Lyne (OC C Company)
writes:*

Exercise Panther Cub is a six-week company group exercise in Belize, Central America. The exercise is primarily designed for jungle specialised light role companies and allows you to train up to 160 personnel in special-to-role skills from individual survival through to company deliberate attack. C Company Group 2 R Anglian, comprising 7, 8, 9 Platoons, Milan Platoon, Mortar Platoon, a permanent range team and echelon slice, deployed to Belize from 3 January to 28 February 2002. What follows is an overview of the deployment and an individual perspective from a newly commissioned platoon commander.

Prepare for action

While attending the CATAC course in autumn 2001 prior to taking command of C Company, I conducted a recce to Belize to glean all the necessary information required to start planning the exercise, not to mention some first hand knowledge of some of the better bars and clubs in Miami. Refreshingly there is no laid down main events list for the exercise and the company commander is left to construct and shape his training around a set of training objectives laid down by Land Command and Director Infantry.

Preparation time, as usual, was extremely short as the Battalion was fully committed to RAAT up until the Christmas leave break. I had to choose carefully how to best prepare for deployment in terms of individual training without compromising the support to in place tasks. By carefully examining the training objectives and consulting my jungle warfare instructors (JWI), a detailed training programme was constructed and some limited pre-training objectives agreed. Although there were a couple of stand-alone pre-training events such as jungle medic instruction, the majority occurred alongside RAAT commitments and consisted of subjects that could be dovetailed into the existing activity; use of PRC 320 during Exercise Globe Trot, Belize orientation briefs during a stint as the Demonstration Company at ITC Wales etc. Luckily, I had a dedicated pre-deployment training period in which to hone the company's skills - this consisted of three days at Sennybridge in early December (very jungle!). Given the short time available I decided to forego this unique opportunity in order to ensure that we were administratively ready to deploy on the first day back from Christmas leave. Jungle combats issued, personal documents checked and MCCC complete, we all departed with some trepidation on a well-earned Yuletide break.

Deployment

With New Year celebrations still fresh in our minds (some more than others) we

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returned to work on 3 January and readied ourselves for our first class trip to Belize courtesy of the RAF. For the first time since planning and training began I had the company group together in one place and it was most reassuring to find that everyone was actually present. The advance party arrived in Belize after a delightful 18-hour journey and immediately set about setting up the exercise before the main body arrived two days later. This was a frantic period with multiple tasks including taking over stores, vehicles and buildings as well as setting up our echelon, forward mounting base (FMB), jungle training and field firing locations from scratch. With much hard work and application all was ready when the rest of the company arrived. Rather than moving straight into the jungle, I decided that we should spend a couple of days at airport camp conducting acclimatisation, revision training and preparation as well as a trip to the local zoo (so we could see the native animals on favourable turf!). This period proved invaluable and ensured that when the time came we were fully prepared to move 'up country' and begin the exercise in earnest. Following a three-hour incident-rich local coach ride to the FMB, we transferred to four-ton trucks for the final leg of the journey via a series of jungle tracks that combined some command task type mobility problems with breathtaking scenery. Two hours later we arrived at the jungle school and had the basic dos and don'ts explained by the senior JWI before setting up harbours and hammocks for the night.

The training package

The training package was organised across three broad areas; jungle training, a confirmatory company test exercise and in-theatre post deployment administration. Jungle training consisted of a four-way platoon rotation of five-day duration basic skills, intermediate skills, live firing and adventure training packages. Basic and



Basic school: 8 Platoon move to their improvised shelters, complete with well-cooked pig!

Intermediate schools took place at our purpose-built jungle school with live firing on another Poacher-built area and adventure training at the British Forces Adventure Training Centre. Between each rotation there was a changeover day at the FMB when all personnel had a chance to sort out their administration prior to moving on to the next activity.

Basic school

Basic school was designed as a beginner's introduction to surviving and living in the jungle as well as introducing commanders and soldiers to the jungle minor tactics of area search, close target recce and camp attack. Survival involved a series of lectures and demonstrations ranging from how to slaughter, butcher and cook pigs and chickens through to learning edible plants and building shelters from jungle materials. The survival package rounded off with a night out with no equipment save a water bottle, machete and mini survival kit; this proved to be a memorable and valuable learning experience for all, especially those who were fortunate to experience a jungle downpour during their time out! The

remainder of the package concentrated on getting the basic skills and drills in place before moving on to more specialised training. Having completed navigation, Immediate action/routine drills and communications stands, platoons were taken through a series of tactical lessons followed by either TEWT or walk through practice. As confirmation, each platoon conducted a tactical mini-exercise where they practised all of the basic skills in one go and conducted a deliberate bergen raft and single man river crossing.

Intermediate school

The aim of the Intermediate school was to take platoons from their basic understanding of jungle tactics to the point where they could conduct a variety of operations as an independent unit with little or no supervision. Building on the lessons learned in basic, platoons completed revision stands on day one followed by a series of tactical mini-exercises with a common battle picture. The requirements were testing with each platoon conducting non-stop operations against a live enemy provided by the Belize Defence Force (BDF). DS gave gentle



Basic school, from left: Pte Baldry, LCpl Wolfe, LCpl Wakefield and Pte Lucas conduct a bergen raft crossing of the Macal River.



A pig is prepared for cooking during the survival lesson.

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Intermediate School, Cpl Roberts instructs.

encouragement as troops discovered the rigours of real time area searches, close target recces, camp attacks, 24-hour ambushes. The package concluded with a full run of preliminary operations, a deliberate attack (with a couple of subsequent quick attacks for added enjoyment) and a strenuous extraction march. Training was highly realistic; the effort required to conduct an attack against a well-defended jungle location in 35C and 80 per cent humidity conditions while wearing personal equipment, helmets and body armour followed by a serious uphill forced march carrying full equipment cannot be underestimated. All those who took part will never forget the very real lessons learned and will always conduct attacks from a belt buckle rather than kneeling perspective from now on.

Live Firing

Live firing was conducted exclusively by the Permanent Range Team (PRT) under command of Maj Des O'Driscoll. On arrival in Belize, the PRT had deployed to the jungle early in order to start planning and preparing the live firing areas. This was a difficult task and required a considerable amount of the usual field firing preparation activity including the submission of traces and letters as well as the back breaking work of cutting the various lanes and areas. As an addition to the usual light weapons firing, an 81mm mortar range was planned by OC Mortar Platoon to allow practice of aural adjustment techniques. By the time the first troops were ready to deploy on firing all was ready and platoons deployed from the jungle school area on a daily basis to conduct a challenging variety of progressive field firing practices

ranging from individual instinctive shoots and fire and manoeuvre through to pairs, fire team and platoon ranges. The highlights were the platoon night riverine ambush and live camp attack ranges which combined many of the dry training lessons with the extra edge that live ammunition provides.

Adventure training

The adventure training package was unique. The British Forces adventure training centre was situated on St George's Caye, a pleasant island seven miles off the Belize Coast. In addition to the in place staff, we set up a Poachers adventure training team that provided kayak and dingy sailing instructors under the direction of WO2 (QMSI) Evans. Civilian instructors provided PADI open water diving and offshore sailing instruction. The diving course lasted a full five days and



Intermediate school. An unexpected fresh ration break is provided by the CQMS.

The Poachers



Pre-deployment training - OC Milan Platoon, Capt Simon Otter, demonstrates equipment SOPs.

those not involved took part in a round robin that took in all of the disciplines and allowed everyone to have a go at a variety of activities rather than being trapped, against ones will, in a kayak for the whole period. A world away from the rigours of the jungle, the package proved immensely popular; all of the divers receiving the PADI qualification and everyone else experiencing some first rate training in a variety of subjects in a relaxing yet challenging environment.

Final Exercise

At the end of the last rotation, the company re-deployed as one to the FMB and began preparation for the final exercise. As well as practising the conduct of operations at company level, the exercise provided the very necessary confirmatory training required to wrap up all the lessons learned to date. Run on a limited force on force basis, the company was pitted, by the ever-

helpful British Embassy, against the fictional rogue Estelan drug cartel in support of the Belize Government. With warning orders issued and rumours of the level of the Ambassadors' (CO 2 R Anglian) personal interest in the conduct of the war, we prepared for deployment. There was plenty to do in terms of company-level activity and vehicle anti-ambush, harbour, movement and attack drills were the name of the game. Finally the order arrived and we moved out to infiltrate, dominate and take control of a discrete jungle AOR known to be used by the cartel. The deployment was relatively tricky and involved a river crossing by each platoon before setting themselves up in hard routine harbours prior to conducting area searches to find the enemy HQ and three suspected satellite camps.

The area searches provided a mixed level of success with 9 and Milan Platoons finding

their objectives and 8 and Mortar Platoons conducting renewed searches to locate their quarry. By close of play on day two all locations had been found and target reces were being conducted against a particularly competent and aggressive enemy. Under pressure from the Embassy, attack plans were made for a simultaneous attack on all four locations at dawn on day three. Radio orders were given in the early hours and platoons prepared for offensive action while the enemy attempted to confound their efforts. Our recce group had been tasked to attack a depth target and had moved into place overnight. No plan survives contact with the enemy and the recce was compromised 45 minutes before the coordinated H hour; with no other option available, bearing in mind the nature of the enemy, the order to attack immediately was given. As such, surprise was achieved for friendly forces and the enemy equally and within 15 minutes of the hurried order all platoons were in contact. An hour later it was all over with the majority of the enemy destroyed and the minimum of friendly casualties sustained. The action had been successful and had pushed the surviving cartel members to a new location and orders were given to begin an aggressive follow up.

Mission briefs complete, the company moved out by road to establish a new harbour nearer to the suspected new enemy location. The advance party moved ahead under Capt Steve Romilly, the Company 2IC, to set up the location while the remainder moved in two-platoon packets along a new and as yet uncleared route. Our anti-ambush preparation was thoroughly worthwhile as the leading packet became embroiled in a large area ambush that involved tree roadblocks and numerous small enemy positions. Following a bitter exchange the



Field firing - Capt Davies surveys Sgt Laurence's explosive tree cutting handiwork.



Casevac - Cpl Cowen thanks the doctor for some extra vest!

The Poachers

enemy withdrew and the company moved on to the new location. After a few of the more familiar frictions such as broken trucks and lost comms, the company arrived at the harbour at dusk. Night activity in the jungle is particularly difficult and considerable amounts of practice and time are required to execute the simplest tasks. Moving in and out of a harbour, concealed in dense secondary foliage under cover of darkness proved a challenge all of its own; personal experience of struggling through to the emergency RV with full personal kit to see how difficult it actually was confirmed my worst nightmares. Despite the excitement of getting in and out of our temporary home there was work to do.

Overnight, platoons conducted a series of ambush operations in order to disrupt the enemy's supply routine and to try and discover the exact location of the main hostile location. Following an intelligence drop from the Embassy and information gleaned from ambushes, it rapidly became clear that two British journalists had been taken hostage in response to our recent activity and were being held at a large enemy location some 10km away. The main effort quickly shifted from destruction of the enemy to successful rescue of the hostages. In order to get the ball rolling early, the recon section was dispatched to confirm the target location and to get some CTR and eyes-on. Within hours they reported two possible enemy locations, one approximately platoon size and the other a section strength outpost. Unfortunately the critical information requirement, the exact location of the hostages, remained a mystery. While the recon continued to probe the enemy location with mixed success, the remainder of the company conducted further ambush operations to cause general disruption. Time was now the critical factor: Company Tac moved by vehicle well forward to within 3km of the objective and following some expert camouflaging by WO2 (CSM) Limb, remained undetected despite the close proximity (10 metres) of the enemy MSR. Over the next few hours the company moved forward to an assembly



The long journey home. OC C and OC Milan sample the transition from 35C to -10C during a stopover in Newfoundland.

area under the 21C, reconns were conducted (via some interesting water routes) and orders were given.

The plan called for a simultaneous attack onto the two enemy locations; the location of the hostages had been confirmed as the smaller of the camps and was to be the objective of the Mortar Platoon with the remainder of the company attacking the larger location. Offensive support was guaranteed by a battery of BDF light guns whose task was to fix the larger objective while the Mortars snatched the hostages. Again we moved at night in order to be in position by first light. This was a real adventure and involved the movement along tracks, rivers and through dense foliage to get to our planned lines of departure. Following an interesting few hours (unforgettable for those moving to attack the large camp) H Hour eventually came and the attack began in earnest. Mortars quickly grabbed the hostages while engaging the enemy in a fierce firefight. The remainder of the company attacked the other location and soon gained the upper hand. Just over

an hour later it was all over and with the hostages safe and the enemy defeated the company consolidated on a nearby HLS to prepare for subsequent operations. At this stage endex was called and we rapidly moved to conduct post exercise administration.

Post-exercise administration

Following the conclusion of the exercise it was now time to get involved in the very real task of preparing our equipment and personnel for recovery back to UK. The echelon staff under Capt Felix Ralph worked tirelessly to ensure that we were prepared to leave on time and, most importantly, everything was in place for the arrival of A Company who would follow us on the next exercise. Following a rather unsuccessful sports competition against the in-place Belize permanent staff we departed on two days' well-earned RandR with destinations ranging from Cancun in Mexico through to

Rumble in the Jungle – A Platoon Commander's Perspective

2Lt AJF Houchin (OC 8 Platoon)

writes:

I arrived at the Battalion on the 10 December 2001 straight from the final part of my initial training, the Platoon Commander's Battle Course. Ten working days later, I was on the plane to Belize with my platoon to conduct a company-level jungle exercise. It was certainly a far cry from the training areas that I was used to and it held many new fears particularly of the arachnid and reptilian kind.

On arrival the training started immediately with the emphasis on learning. I was in the same position as the majority of the platoon in the sense of knowing nothing about the environment that we were operating in. We started with a basic school that entailed



Adventure training - an avid muscle beach member, Sgt Favell, flexes for support.

The Poachers



Jungle warriors (?!) - 8 Platoon take time off to pose.

simple jungle drills such as survival, harbour administration and low level tactical skills. The early part of the survival stand had everyone intrigued as Pedro, the local slayer, set about skinning and gutting a pig that we were to eat later that day. After murdering a few chickens we set up our improvised harbour and spent an entertaining night out under the stars. The tactical training introduced, for many, their first Close Target Recce(CTR). Again the emphasis was on learning, which was fortunate due to the number of teams compromised. Recce complete and teams debriefed, we conducted a platoon camp attack on the same position, which in truth was what I had been trained to do for the last few months. Sweating away, my thoughts were of both how lucky I was to be conducting something like this so early in my tenure as a platoon commander, but also of how nervous I was. A platoon of men that you are to command, watching you for the first time, is far more pressure than any DS could muster.

Our next stop on the rotation was the adventurous training package that included a diving course and a round robin of sailing, canoeing and offshore yachting. The guys took to this superbly and those that took part in the diving course came away with a PADI Open Water Diver qualification,

myself included. The adventure training centre was a well appointed location and there was even the opportunity to do some weight training in the mock-up environment of muscle beach, carefully re-created by the impressively bronzed permanent staff QMSI! Prior to our return to the jungle, the platoon took part in some equally demanding evening out training in Belize City with LCpl Wakefield leading the way; proving that leading by example was one of his strengths.

All good things come to an end and we soon found ourselves back in the jungle. The next stage of the training was an intermediate school that involved a more testing and tactically orientated package, developing and putting into practice what we had learned during the basic school. This put the commanders under more pressure at the same time as testing basic jungle soldiering. Activities included area searches, CTRs, camp attacks and an ambush, all tasks that a platoon must be proficient in. For me, this phase will be remembered more for one six-hour period than the rest of the package put together. Needless to say, don't ever put your ambush position too far away from the objective, and remember where you put your bergen cache. Two valuable lessons that I learned the hard way and two mistakes I

won't make again.

We then moved on to the live firing package which consisted of individual, pairs, and team drills, culminating in a platoon live firing attack that went extremely well. Looking back now at that very first attack we did and comparing it with this one, the level of improvement was enormous, proving two things; firstly, that the training had sunk in and secondly, it signalled an improved working relationship between the NCOs, and myself, which I now see as one of the most vitally important components of a platoon's fighting effectiveness. The phase also included a couple of improvised shoots that tested the ability of even the most experienced of soldiers.

The penultimate stage of our exercise was the FTX. This was the testing ground where everything we had learned was put into practice including the river crossing. CTRs took place, teams were compromised, regretful radio messages sent to the OC and Pte Shand provided a very real test of the Casevac procedures by dislocating his shoulder. Overall, improvements were made. As the exercise progressed I conducted several platoon ambush operations and attacked the larger of the two final objectives following a particularly exciting water approach at night! At times the pace of the exercise seemed quite slow, but with hindsight, to fulfil an area search and CTR properly, we could probably have done with another few days. Working in the jungle is a demanding, difficult and time-consuming process and one of the main lessons I learned was that you can't rush operations if you want to succeed.

Finally, there was the R and R package. The less said about this the better but I'm sure one day a film will be made, featuring some Mexicans, the police, females, some soldiers and a few mopeds. Overall the deployment to Belize was the most memorable activity I have ever taken part in – as a newly commissioned officer it was a unique opportunity to lead my platoon and learn my trade in one of the most inhospitable environments in the world. I look forward to another jungle trip next year.



Endex - B Company officers and SNCOs.

Exercise Andes Dragon*Lt JP Downes writes:*

'Why not organise a Regimental adventurous training exercise to a country on the verge of an economic breakdown to climb the highest mountain in the southern hemisphere?... I must be losing my mind!'

The aim of the exercise was to climb Mount Aconcagua (height 6,962m) which, being the highest point on the planet outside the Himalayas, was some undertaking. The collapse of the Argentine economy two months prior to the start of the exercise only served to add another interesting dimension to what was to be, for all members of the exercise, an incredible experience.

Despite its size with the proper preparation the mountain can even be climbed by very determined – albeit very fit – newcomers to the world of high altitude mountaineering. The secondary aim was to give novices an introduction to what it is like to take part in an expedition to climb a peak in the greater ranges.

The group would be made up of a mix of abilities including two members from the Vikings and three members from the Poachers, a doctor from the RAMC and two instructors from the APTC. The range of experience varied from the complete novice (Pte Byrne Evans whom had never even climbed Mt Snowdon) to our instructors (Capt Carter and Edwards - two of the most experienced instructors in the Army).

We deployed from the UK to Buenos Aires, then to Mendoza, which is in the



Lt JP Downes approaches the summit.



From left: Sgt Garvie, Lt Downes and Capt Carter on the summit.

The Poachers

heart of the wine region of Argentina. This was to be the base for the duration of our stay. After a couple of days for final preparations to be made and the opportunity for Sgt Garvie to put together an excellent and interesting menu we moved to Puente del Inca at the bottom of the valley that led to our objective.

Climbing a mountain of this altitude requires a different strategy to, for example, climbing Ben Nevis. Time has to be spent to gradually acclimatise; otherwise individuals can become extremely ill from simply climbing too high too quickly which can ultimately lead to death!

The outline plan was to spend three days walking into base camp; there have a rest day before starting a process of carrying rations and additional equipment up to the next higher camp. The group would then come down to the lower camp to sleep, prior to moving up to the higher camp, which had previously been stocked up, the next day. The theory being that you should always climb high and sleep low. Once we were at camp three, Berlin Huts (height 5,900m) the plan was to prepare for the eight-hour climb to the summit.

Weather on any mountain of this size is a crucial factor, the weather patterns on Aconcagua are notoriously unpredictable, and therefore we had planned to have the flexibility to sit out any storms waiting for a clear day to summit on.

On moving from base camp to our first high camp (Camp Canada) we encountered a number of problems; ever worsening jokes by Sgt Garvie, LCpl Potter's somewhat *avant garde* approach to packing his bergen and most importantly a heavy dump of snow. Concerns as to whether or not this would delay our progress were dismissed when the weather following this revealed a completely cloudless sky, and the barometer showed a steady increase in pressure.

As we moved higher and higher up the mountain, everyone found that the thinning air made progress harder and harder. However, the entire group made it successfully to the final high camp (Berlin huts) having overcome a number of difficulties. The ex-doctor Capt Mahan, had even managed to cure himself of food poisoning.

Having occupied Berlin Camp everyone settled in for the night, hoping the following day's weather would give the group its chance to summit. Above 5,000m the human body doesn't acclimatise and unless you're a 'Yeti', a good night's sleep is a rare thing. High winds throughout the night didn't help, and at 7am Capt Carter suggested that we delay our departure for an hour. Today perhaps wouldn't be our day.

At about 0730hrs, as the sun started to rise, the weather looked more favourable and the decision was made to go for it. It was still quite dark; as we were on the south side of the mountain we would not see the sun for another five hours.

The wind speed had reduced but was still 40-50mph, meaning we were walking in



Dmr Dunstan plays the bugle with the summit in the background

temperatures that were about -20°C . Everyone was reminded to check their extremities; frost bite was a very real threat.

The exhaustion from prolonged climbing at high altitude is immensely draining. Within a couple of hours the pace had settled, 'to one that a pensioner would have found leisurely', even so people's heart rates were all comfortably in the hundreds.

As we progressed it became clear that some may not be strong enough to reach the summit, after we had been climbing for about four and a half hours the decision was made for some members of the group to turn back. This is always a very difficult thing to do as a leader and personally for the individual involved. However, safety has to be foremost when you are in a place too high for helicopters to fly or mountain rescue to reach you before you would perish from exposure.

Once some of the group had turned back, the remainder's resolve to all reach the summit hardened. It would take another three and a half hours before the summit. On 25 February at 1530hrs, Capt Carter, Capt Edwards, Sgt Garvie (his jokes had dried up by then) and myself reach the summit. On the summit there is a cross and

a visitor's book, which is kept in a metal box but, more significantly, there is a memorial to *La Malvinas* - the Falklands. Capt Carter is veteran of the Falklands and suddenly our achievement was given another dimension.

Time was running out, the need to get down the mountain before the sun set and the wind picked up pressing. Unlike climbing up the mountain, one can descend as much and quickly as one dare - with one proviso - 85 per cent of the people killed on Mt Everest are killed when descending. It took two days to descend to base camp and out to the park entrance. The final day was a 'cheeky', as Dmr Dunstan put it, 15-mile walk. Once there, all that was on everyone's mind was the desire to eat a steak and have a cold beer.

There is no doubt that Exercise Andes Dragon was a very challenging undertaking for everyone involved. Whether or not individuals made it to the summit or not is irrespective, all members worked to the maximum of their own personal limits. The dangers are very real, the fear in people faces very genuine and the sense of achievement you see on people's faces confirms why adventure training is an important part of military training.

The Poachers

The Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess team.

**Warrant Officers' and
Sergeants' Mess
v
Officers' Mess Football
match
December 2001**

Sgt Smith writes:

Dreams of the Officers' Mess beating their arch rivals the Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess in their annual football match was nearly a dream come true. A close fought match saw the Officers' Mess just missing out on their first win for many years.

The referee started the game on a cold wet December afternoon. But the weather was soon forgotten as the game started at a furious pace. Both teams had good possession in the early stages of the first half, and neither team gave any quarter with tackles going in hard and fast. Midway through the first half the Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess started to relax and display why they had retained the trophy for so many years, however the Officers' Mess were determined and drew first blood with Lt McNeil scoring the first goal. Immediately the Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess responded with a great solo effort by WO2 CSM Adie to level the game. The equaliser settled the Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess and allowed them to start to dominate the first half.

However, both teams had some very good chances with the Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess scoring two goals from CSgt Burt and QMSI Evans. The half time whistle went and the Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess were 3-1 in front.

The second half started with as much pace as the first with neither team giving any quarter. The Officers' Mess were determined to get into the game and scored first with a fine goal from the Battalion 2IC Maj Vincent. The Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess soon responded with an excellent goal from Sgt Phillips to make it 4-2. But the Officers' Mess were not going to lie down and started to battle back into the game and with two quick goals from Lt

Harris and Lt Delf, the game was tied at 4-4. For the next ten minutes the game was fast and furious with both teams playing well, finally the deadlock was broken by a fine drive by RQMS Humphreys, the score was now 5-4 and with 15 minutes to go Sgt Phillips scored his second, from a tight angle and fired into the top of the net. The Officers' Mess soon responded with a long range shot which came close but hit the bar. The score was now 6-4 and with both teams battling hard Sgt Mutch scored to make it 7-4. With a cushion of three goals it was hard for the Officers' Mess fought to the final whistle and came close on several occasions.

At the final whistle the Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess were triumphant once again. But each year the games are becoming closer. And one day soon maybe, just maybe, their dreams may come true.

**Famous author
JK Rowling visits
The Poachers**

Lt J-P Downes writes:

Early in October last year, The Poachers had a rather unexpected, famous visitor to the Officers' Mess, *Harry Potter* author JK Rowling, who grew up and attended school in the Chepstow area.

Miss Rowling was filming a documentary about her childhood.

Accompanying her was an old friend of hers, an unknown officer in the Army, and he suggested that they call into the Mess for a coffee!

Miss Rowling very kindly signed the visitors' book and posed for a photo in front of the Battalion Colours.



East of England Regiment



Patrol skills training.

Commanding Officer's Introduction

The period from November to February has been an uncharacteristically quiet one for the Regiment necessitated by the need to counter a budgetary overspend following the excellent and successful Exercise Lions Pride in Cyprus in June last year. This lull was brought into stark contrast by the frenetic activity generated within our Regular counterparts following the 11 September terrorist attacks in America.

This has prompted a 'Question 4' reassessment of the TA Infantry mission by MOD and the results of the 'Additional Chapter' to SDR are eagerly awaited. This is not perhaps the right forum to expound on the pros and cons of a radical change in the role of the TA Infantry. The Regiment hopes that something rather more tangible and unit oriented will emerge to enable us to refocus our training at a higher collective level. Whether there will be any additional funding to allow us to train to a higher level is, of course, another matter entirely.

There is no doubt that TA infantry battalions have a great deal to offer in terms of an enhanced role. Comparisons with the work of the National Guard in the immediate aftermath of Ground Zero are easy to make, but rather more difficult to achieve in the current political atmosphere. What is certain is that the East of England Regiment is eager to play a more fulfilling and cohesive role in the defence of our country, whether at home or abroad.

To this end a major defence exercise is being planned for September this year, when some of the possible future mission scenarios can be explored and exercised. Further challenges lie ahead in forging a 'linkage' with the North Luffenham light role battalion, currently 2RRF, and the prospect of being the lead Territorial infantry unit in the Whole Fleet Management trials in 2003. In the meantime all eyes are on camp which will be in Barry Buddon in the Golden Jubilee month of June.

The main focus of the training conducted by the Regiment since December 2001 has been the forthcoming Commanding

Officer's patrols exercise. During Exercise Eastern Spring two composite rifle companies will deploy to Stanta and conduct 'free play' patrol activity against each other. A 'third force' of potential officers and officer cadets, led by Maj de Planta, will be used to initiate set enemy activity as required. The Regiment will move to a FMB at RAF Honington where re-grouping and confirmatory orders will take place. Companies will then move forward and establish patrol bases before conducting aggressive patrols activity against each other.

Pre-training weekends have been conducted over the past few months at company level. Preliminary orders were given to the three exercising sub-units by the Commanding Officer and his Battalion HQ team on 23 March 2002 to allow OCs to conduct initial briefings and planning..

Officer Training in the Regiment

Maj FMG de Planta de Wildenburg writes:

The East of England Regiment, in recognition of a lack of young officers across

its five rifle companies decided, in September 1999, to allocate time and resources to address the problem. A comprehensive potential officer training programme was developed to actively prepare candidates for the three main hurdles in training and selecting Territorial Army Officers. These are the Territorial Commissioning Board (TCB), Military Training Qualification 2 (MTQ 2) and the TA Commissioning Course at RMAS. Led by Maj Frank de Planta and supported by two other former Regulars; WO2 Alan Ralph and CSgt Paul Mann, both from 2 R Anglian, the training team has so far produced nine commissioned officers for the Regiment with three more scheduled to attend Sandhurst in May 2002. This is a significant improvement when compared to the average annual number of newly commissioned Sandhurst trained officers in the period 1995-2000 for 6 R Anglian, 7 R Anglian and 3 WFR combined. The average was three per year, one for each Battalion.

The team's success has been recognised across the 49 Bde area and has attracted candidates from 100 Regt RA, 36 Sig Regt, 158 Tpt Regt RLC, 254 Fd Amb, 4 GS Med Regt and 73 Engr Regt. From small beginnings, the team now trains an average of 20 candidates each weekend and sends, on average, five candidates to each Sandhurst course. Students have been known to travel from as far afield as Scotland to participate in the training! A rolling programme of six modules covers all aspects of officer type skills; from estimates and orders for MTQ 2 and RMA Sandhurst to command tasks, lecturettes and planning exercises for TCB. The aim is to ensure that each candidate has, in the limited time available, the best possible chance of success on the road to commissioning. The seventh, and last module, practices all these skills through command appointments in the field leading a rifle platoon and working with an experienced platoon sergeant.

The Officer training work has expanded in 2002 to include preparing young officers



Potential officers get to grips with the orders process.

The East of England Regiment

for their JOTES 1 exam. Four EER students were trained in 2001 and all successfully passed the exam. In 2002, 22, from across 49 (E) Bde, have joined the training and are being prepared for the exam on 25-26 May 2002. HQ RLC TA have recognised the quality of the team's work by inviting them to run a two-week pre-MTQ 2 course entirely for RLC candidates in August 2002. HQ RLC TA hope to use this course to go some way towards addressing their own lack of young officers. The continued hard work and commitment of the training team will ensure that within the East of England Regiment in particular and in 49(E) Bde in general, the pool of Young Officers is more plentiful and better trained than their forebears. This bodes well for the future of the TA in East Anglia.

Exercise Eastern Thistle – Annual Camp 2002

The initial plan at the beginning of the year was for the Regiment to conduct its annual camp in 2002 at Lydd Camp CPTA. The training major and RSM conducted an initial recon in January and this allowed Maj Knox to start planning. But as the old adage goes his plan was destined not to survive contact with the enemy. The Regiment was moved to a different barracks and faced the prospect of sharing this with two other units during our two weeks. This was obviously not an ideal situation and alternative camp locations were sought. After a very successful recon to Barry Buddon Camp and training area (near Dundee) by the training major, QM and RSM it was decided to change venues to Scotland.

Recruit Training in the Regiment

Lt RG Rogers writes:

The Regiment has recently reviewed the way it conducts its recruit selection procedures. Two selection weekends are conducted prior to the start of the Phase 1 training package. This allows for greater flexibility and ensures that the Phase 1 training weekends are correctly loaded. The



Potential recruits learn about the 81mm mortar.

two recruit training teams (north and south) also now combine their efforts to produce a more coherent and well-resourced selection weekend.

The first of these selection weekends were held on 26 January and 9 March 2002 respectively. A total of 38 potential recruits attended both weekends, with such large numbers it is essential that pre-weekend admin such as medicals is completed prior to the weekend. This allows maximum time for the recruits to be tested and for the instructors to ensure their final selections are fair. The selection weekend on 9 March saw some appalling weather conditions. On the journey to the assault course on Stanta the winds were gusting up to 60mph, this was blowing the topsoil off the local farmland making it seem like you were driving through a sandstorm! The winds were also bringing down branches and the odd tree on the training area, upon arrival at the assault course I went forward to ensure it was safe for the recruits. The PTI then assessed the risk and was satisfied with the safety of the obstacles although the recruits did get lucky with the 12ft wall being placed OOB. I then placed two SNCOs on tree watch, the first time I have ever detailed anyone just to watch trees!

All 38 recruits successfully passed the selection weekends and have progressed on to the four-weekend Phase 1 training package. One recruit has even expressed an

interest in officer training, I just hope he does not think we spend all of our time looking at trees!

Exercise Eagle Endurance

Pte Reeve writes:

On 26 January at 0830hrs 13 men of E (Essex and Hertfordshire) Company the East of England Regiment, (Maj Googe, Cpl Marns, LCpls Instance and McLatchey, Ptes Kovacs, Collinson, Clark-Tuncliffe, Johnson, Kelson, Needham, Brady, Brett and Reeve) set off on Exercise Eagle Endurance, a 35-mile endurance march from Hertford town centre to Chelmsford's town centre along the A414.

The objectives of the endurance march were twofold. Firstly, to raise money for two charities - the Little Haven Hospice in Thundersley and the Special Care Baby Unit at Lister hospital in Stevenage. Secondly, to raise awareness of E Company and to put us in the public eye.

Morale was high at the start and the weather looked promising. We had time for some quick photos before the off. We were joking about the challenge that lay ahead and anticipated a hard but steady pace. The first leg was from Hertford to Harlow - approximately 12 miles. We marched in twos for a quick warm-up, then before we hit our first hill we broke into double time. Half way up we thought that any minute we would break into quick time. No chance! In fact we accelerated up the hill, which then felt like a mountain. I, if not all of us, longed to reach the top. When we did I turned to my colleague and said: 'I hope we don't keep this pace all the way'. That hill certainly warmed us up. The first 2-3 miles were the worst, getting your muscles warmed and your feet comfortable in your boots. Once we relaxed we found a good rhythm, the pace was brisk followed by short runs. We sprinted across roads and roundabouts where we were encouraged by drivers and passers by and able to enjoy the march and countryside, we now had a routine and the miles flew by!

Having passed Stanstead Abbots we knew Harlow was not far from our first RV or stop and we were all still in high spirits. We had reached Harlow in less than two hours.



Potential recruits monkeying around!

The East of England Regiment



Maj Mike Googe conducts his pre-start foot inspection.



Approaching Chelmsford.

time for a quick bite to eat and those all-important fluids. But most importantly we could dry our feet and check each other over. Time for another photo, but just before we were about to set off a member of the public dropped off some well appreciated alcohol, something to look forward to later! For me the next 3-4 miles were very hard to get back into a rhythm. I had quite bad cramps in my legs, feeling that this was due to stopping. No time to complain I just had to get my head down and get through the pain. I was not going to let the company, charities or myself down.

The weather took a turn for the worse from gusty winds to hailstones, which was relentless. In one respect it made me forget my aches and pains but it made it extremely tough going. We had to move in single file because of the conditions of the road. We reached the Stansted M11 roundabout at roughly the same pace as the last leg. Our packs were feeling twice as heavy (each man carrying 30lb approximately). Our equipment was beginning to rub our shoulders and our feet were now feeling slightly damp. We had reached our second stop-off point. I put on a clean pair of socks and it felt so good words cannot describe it. We had to cut our stop short as we were all feeling the cold. With 12 miles to go I just wanted to finish and have a nice warm bath. Everyone was now feeling the effects of the march. Weeks of training had prepared us physically but not mentally. Some of the chaps had picked up injuries but no one wanted to stop to let the company down or the charities. For me it was a personal challenge I had to pass!

Everything that could hurt was hurting at this stage. Approximately six miles to go and we had to lose a few to injuries, but I was going to carry on to the end. Muscles I did not know I had were now hurting but I was not going to give in. I looked behind me and saw someone looking in worse condition than me. He kept me going until we saw a sign *four miles to Chelmsford* and suddenly

all the aches and pains disappeared and the thought of quitting wasn't a option. Coming into Chelmsford made me forget all those things, as people cheered as we came into the town centre. We could hold our heads high and be proud of who we are. I would like to say that this wouldn't have been so successful without the back-up team and the rest of the company. This is my own view of this experience. Each individual had their own experience and way of coping, but we all pulled together and worked as a team and raised over £4,000.

Norfolk Lord Lieutenant's Certificates

At a Dereham, Norfolk, ceremony in February 2002, Lord Lieutenant's Certificates were presented for outstanding service to three soldiers of A (Norfolk and Suffolk) Company, The East of England Regiment; Sgt Ivan Paul Roe, WO2 Thomas Steele and Cpl Jason Lee Brown. They received the certificates from HM Lord Lieutenant for Norfolk, Sir Timothy Coleman KG JP DCL.



The team at the start point - Hertford town centre.

158 (Royal Anglian) Transport Regiment

The last few months are reported in some style for you here by the Squadrons. From a Regimental perspective we have proud congratulations for our ski teams both Alpine and Nordic in the RLC Corps Championships in February.

Our Alpine team was the fifth overall TA team, with Pte Simon Kennell coming 12th, and Lt Jenny McArthur coming 14th TA soldier and eighth female overall. The brave Nordic team came fourth, an excellent effort considering they were all novices. Sgt Tony Ng came eighth and Pte Alistair Whybrow came 12th. In the President's Race (a 5km sprint) Pte Simon Kennell was second and SSgt Paul Spencer third. The Commanding Officer was not to be outdone in all this, and



Cpl Richie 'Never Say Die' Southwell prior to an arduous nordic training session.



From left: WO2 Mick Watkins who organised it all, the CO, Lt Col Jeremy Smith and SSgt Paul Spencer who was 3rd TA Soldier in the President's Race.

gamely played his part in the Alpine ski team – the only Corps Commanding Officer to do so! Well done to everyone, and many grateful thanks to WO2 Mick 'The Reg' Watkins for organising it so efficiently.

In other sports, Pte Mattin won second place and LCpl Cross came third in the ladies veteran section of the RLC TA Cross Country Championships. These same girls also were part of the winning ladies veteran team which won the Regular Army versus

TA challenge at the same event. And the mad Training Major, Adrian Clark, put a strong team in for the Army(TA) half marathon championships in Fleet, which was narrowly beaten into second place by 151 Regiment. Sport, of a sort, was also had by those game 200 Squadron personnel who completed the Tough Guy competition, accompanied by a rather regretful Adjutant – a graphic account of which follows later.

The Regiment has also recently successfully completed another Canadian exchange, with a strong contingent joining 23 Hamilton Service Battalion for winter warfare training – something a little different! Great fun was had by all, and many thanks go to the Canadians for their hospitality, and Maj Sam Evans for leading the trip. But now, over to the squadrons for their news.

200 (Peterborough) Headquarters Squadron RLC(V)

The last three months of 2001 commenced in style with 200 Squadron exercising with the Regiment on Exercise Silver Beaver, 2 Log Support Group's major FTX. The exercise spanned the length and breadth of the country from Hull to Salisbury Plain and saw the squadron perform particularly well in a variety of last minute taskings including running a demonstration railhead on the principle visitors' day. Visitors ranged from our Honorary Colonel, Lady Victoria Leatham to COMMARRC. Other demanding tasks undertaken by squadron personnel included a night cross country



'Are there any questions? The team of novices prior to the nordic competition.

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drive over Salisbury Plain, which was particularly well received.

Since return from camp, and participation in the usual Remembrance Day parade in Peterborough City Centre, it is with some sadness that the squadron said goodbye to SPSI WO2 Boulds on posting and promotion to be RSM to 156 Regiment in Liverpool. We wish him well for the future and he goes with our many thanks for his selfless and self-mocking service to the squadron. In his place we have welcomed WO2 Green who has joined the squadron from 4 GS Regiment. The squadron has also seen the return of Cpl Southwell following a further six-month detachment at BATUS and Sgt Lightfoot who has enabled the squadron to step up its C and C+E licence acquisition by running courses over the period with eight successful passes and hopefully more to follow.

The squadron 'Soldier of the Year' award was presented to Pte Leggett who not only completed his recruit cadre in January 2001, but also passed FLRT, Cat C, Cat C+E and BITS courses as well as organising the Tough Guy Competition for this January. More from him on that event later in the journal.

December started with another personnel change, this time a change of command with Maj Simon Messervy assuming command

from Maj Colin Bingham who takes up a post as Regimental special projects officer prior to his next move. Saturday 15 December was the day of the squadron Christmas party held in the TA Centre. Thanks go to all of the committee who organised an excellent 1940s theme party. The evening went well although there appeared to be a disturbing number of German soldiers present in 1940s England - obviously doing their pre-invasion recess!

As our heads clear from the Christmas and New Year festivities we look forward to producing a good team for the RSAAM in March and the start of the new training year, which will see the squadron concentrate on individual training.

Tough Guy 2002

Introduction

Sunday 27 January was 200 Squadron's first attempt at Tough Guy. Competing were Capt Kate Rawdon Smith, Sgt 'Ninja' Ng, Sgt Neil Joyce, Cpl Dave Linley, LCpl Ali Carter, LCpl 'Lamby' Lambe, Mr Bruce Boxhall-Hunt, Pte Simon Kennel, Pte Mick Ledley, and myself, Pte Doug Leggett (Tough Guy 2000 and 2001).

On our arrival we handed in our death warrants which dubiously declared: 'If we die during the race, it's our own bloody fault', then joined the other 6,000 or so

competitors in the start area. Tough Guys (those who had completed the course before) stand on the hill while everyone else waits at the bottom and after much jeering and goading the race began, Tough Guys first, all others one minute later.

The Run

Started well but 400m later we were knee deep in thick mud (Treacle Mines) through that we entered 'The Long Mile' (more like two!) and into 'Viet Cong Forest' with our legs now battered and bleeding from the brambles, we traversed 'Dead Leg Brook' (600m of ice cold water) then into 'Elephant's Graveyard' (three 6ft deep slurry tanks) LCpl Carter decided to go round it, though I can't think why. Then came 'Slalom No 1' (eight times up and down a hillside) Capt Rawdon-Smith was *not* enjoying this.

Another mile and 'Slalom No 2' (steeper this time, all fours going up, on your 'ass' going down, only five times though!) *nobody* enjoyed this, least of all me as I was pulling Cpl Linley up the hills with a piece of rope after he twisted his ankle in the first mile!

The Killing Fields

At six country miles we entered The Killing Fields, this was the start of the assault course and where it really gets tough (they don't call it tough guy for nothing) first up is the 'Tiger' (a 30ft 'A' frame but the higher you go the further apart the steps get) then 'Tigers Teeth' (an electric fence with twice the shock needed to stun a cow!!) onto 'Tigers Tail' (same as Tiger). New to this year was 'Colditz' (6ft then 8ft then 10ft walls) after that the dreaded 'Behemoth' (rope crossing 20ft up 20ft across, three times) abseil down (or fall) and into 'Battle of the Somme' a series of water filled trenches, some waist deep, some neck deep, you couldn't tell until you jumped in. Burning straw bales in between and thunder flashes going off either side, they were designed to give us a taste of what our great grandfathers' went through during the First World War.

After the 'Swamp' (knee deep again) we entered the 'Viet Cong Tunnels' (concrete pipes with a bend in the middle to keep you in the dark); over 'Paradise Climb' (cargo net platform); through 'Pig Village' to the dreaded 'Under Water Tunnels'. These were chest deep water with five 'bridges' to go under. The water by this time felt unbelievably painful, particularly on your head, and totally took our breath away, the worst bit by far.

Across the 'Dunkirk Beaches' (60ft swim) and onto 'Berlin Wall' (unclimbable without assistance) next up is 'Walk on Water' (30ft chest deep) out of that and over 'The Benn' (as Berlin but bigger) more mud and onto 'The Desperate Dan Platform' (crawl 60ft on ropes or crawl 5ft drop 15ft and swim the remaining 55ft like I did!) over 'The Dragon Pool'. After a warm up jog, up 'Boot Hill', down to the 'Barrel Bridge' and through 'Stalag Escape Crawl' (in mud, under 15 inches of barbed wire) traverse the 'Tyre Trek' (600m of discarded vehicle tyres) and



Pte Kennel enjoying himself a little too much, we think! Ten Regimental personnel finished the Tough Guy 2002. Picture courtesy of Action Photo UK.

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'The Sting' (ask Sgt Joyce about cramp!) and it's hurrah for hot tea, big medals and another cold bath (but this one was provided by the management to wash in!). The obstacles were not that bad (honest guv!), but the cold and wet and rain, and the fact that the whole thing took almost four hours to complete are what made a couple of the guys mutter in awe, 'I think I seriously underestimated that!'

After rubbing the mud (that didn't come off) in the bath further into our cuts and grazes we changed into our clean clothes and pushed the minibus out of the muddy field. When I asked everyone if they enjoyed it I expected to get 'filled in' but amazingly everyone said how great it was (even Cpl Linley!) and I expect at least seven of the 10 will be there again next year.

201 (Bedford) Transport Squadron

There was no time to sit back and reflect on the success, or otherwise, of Exercise Silver Beaver when the squadron returned to base from annual camp in October. We were soon very busy preparing for the annual inspections of vehicles and weapons in November.

During November the squadron attended the Remembrance Day parade in Bedford, and also hosted the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiments' annual wreath laying parade and reunion in Kempston on 18 November. The Old Comrades had a very good turnout this year and over 150 were on parade, with over 200 attending the post-parade reunion and helping to swell the bar profits for the squadron.

On 27 November the Lord Lieutenant of Bedfordshire, Mr Sam Whitbread, attended our training night to present awards to members of the TA, ATC and ACF. The following presentations were made to 201 Squadron personnel: Lt Goodfellow REME - VRSM, Cpl Warwick - Lord Lieutenant's Certificate and LCpl Fuller - Clasp to his TEM. After the presentations had been made the Lord Lieutenant led the way to the bar where the normal post-parade celebrations were enjoyed by all.

Pte Johnson completed a seven-month tour of duty in Bosnia on Op Palatine on 10 January 2002 and is currently enjoying six weeks leave.

202 (Ipswich) Transport Squadron RLC(V) Exercise Roadmaster - A Beginner's View

Team 65: Driver Cpl Tooley, Navigator Cpl Spalding, Scribe Cpl Spalding.

Using the 'officers never lie' tactic, Cpl Tooley and myself were persuaded to enter Exercise Roadmaster last November at ATR Pirbright. 'Just a little competition,' said the TCO... 'Nothing too taxing, just a bit of navigation and some off-road driving to test your skills'.

By the time we'd managed to get three Land Rovers around the M25 during rush hour, both our navigation and driving skills had been tested to the limit. However, the enthusiasm was rekindled when we arrived at Princess Royal Barracks in Deepcut. More than 85 Land Rovers were entered into the competition, from all three Services, both TA and Regular units, rank ranged from private to major. Being a female team, we were interested to notice that most teams were male - 'We'll show them how it's done,' we thought.

The initial brief that evening emphasised the fun and safety aspects of the exercise. Drivers' hours had to be watched and speeding was forbidden - there were marshals with speed guns throughout the route to enforce this and the threat of a massive point penalty was enough to prevent most from trying.

After a thorough scrutinising of our vehicle, we were presented with our set of documentation for Exercise Scattermaster (now known as 'Wacky Races') and given our start time - 30 minutes go far too quickly. We were then let loose with two maps, far too much paper and whatever equipment we'd brought with us - in our case a magnifying map light, a roamer, a lot of highlighters and, most importantly, a large flask of coffee. Getting to the exercise area was easy as it was highlighted in the night sky from about a mile away, due to the number of landrovers careering madly round it in various directions. Finding any one of the 40 markers, via whichever route we wished, proved slightly harder. The tracks and paths were amazingly difficult to find in the dark. My frustration at navigating was matched only by the patience of my driver, Cpl 'Stirling' Tooley, as she reversed down the same track for the third time, resisting her overwhelming urge to snatch the map from me. After four hours of circling around bushes... 'it must be here somewhere'... we hit our time limit and headed for the finish point, exhausted - but not as exhausted as the few teams whose Land Rovers had to be pulled out of ditches.

The next day dawned bright and far too early and we descended with the other 84 teams onto the cookhouse for a late fry-up. With our vehicles also fuelled up and sorted out, we started the three-part exercise for that day.

'Exercise Maze Master' consisted of a frantic drive around a nearby exercise area, collecting letters from unknown points. Again, we must have criss-crossed every other team at some point, all going in every possible direction. Despite it being a competition, everyone was friendly and helpful, although everyone had different ideas of which route was correct.

We then moved onto 'Exercise Orienteering Master' bit of a change - on to a much smaller area and with only an orienteering map, roughly translated by those of us with less experience as 'mud here, grass here, swampy bit on the left'. As

it happens, the swampy bits were just about everywhere due to the recent rain. This only made it more fun for the drivers who spent 40 minutes skidding around 20 points with stops to laugh at the navigator as they leapt from the vehicles into ankle deep mud to clip the score card. The last daytime task was a 'test and half' for the drivers. Organised by the Berkshire Four-Wheel Drive Club, each Rover had to complete a three-section off-road course. Being one of the last teams through, the rain and 65 previous vehicles had very thoughtfully made the ruts nice and deep and slippery. As we started the first section, we tipped over the top into the steepest, narrowest downhill course I've ever seen. As a navigator, with not a lot to do but shout from the passenger seat, (they may have sounded like screams of fear but were actually encouragement), I dutifully closed my eyes and held on. I needn't have worried. Despite everything not strapped down hitting the ceiling at least twice, Cpl Tooley drove round all three sections of the course, demonstrating a competitive spirit that surprised many of the onlookers, being one of the very few drivers to avoid getting stuck and scoring joint second place over all.

The last, and main part, of the competition took place over Saturday night. 'Exercise Navex Master' started at 8pm and consisted of navigating a 155-mile plotted route, including 18 manned time controls, throughout Hampshire and Surrey. Although we knew the locations of the time controls well in advance, the route was given out only 60 minutes before each start time and was made up of various forms of navigation, such as tulip diagrams, traces, spot heights etc. Despite frantic plotting by the navigator and passing of highlighters by the driver, we still managed to plot only 13 stages of our route before our start time. The rest would be plotted when time permitted. The exercise lasted approximately eight hours, but was completely full of adrenaline, mental and physical effort, and coffee - which all seemed to make it fly past. A lot of the course was off-road and we had been warned to remove anything from the sides of our vehicles as some tracks were so narrow - in some cases vegetation on both sides was brushing the edges of the windscreens! We had also been warned to watch our speed and always be careful, something we were glad about as we passed yet another ditched Rover being recovered. Despite only reaching 14 checkpoints, we managed to arrive at the finish only just within our time limit, Cpl Tooley with arms like Tyson and myself unable to see anything further than 2m away that wasn't highlighted by a map magnifier.

After a very welcome lie-in until 12 (unheard of for a military weekend!) we had time to wash-down and refuel the Rovers, and compare 'night nav stories' with the other teams before prizegiving.

All in all it is difficult to understand why more teams don't enter this competition.

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Although undoubtedly hard work, it was great fun and we emerged with two trophies but more importantly, a far greater confidence and ability in our navigation and driving skills. Even the M25 on the way home didn't seem so bad! Full marks to the organisers for putting on an excellent and well-run event. When's the next one Sir?

203 (Loughborough) Transport Squadron RLC(V)

A Postcard from 203 Squadron
Hello all, well here we at Tiddesley Ranges, south of Birmingham shooting our APWT. As I'm writing, the excellent shooting weather, or so I'm told, is closing in. I don't quite understand why it needs to be cold but SSgt Tug Wilson has explained that it's all for my own good.

In September, the Regimental IMM team

that went to Germany, picked up a stunning sweep of results, third best UK male, third best female, second and third place international teams.

In September we completed Exercise SilverBeaver, our tri-annual formation FTX, what a lark that was! We started off with a Mobex, it's just like queuing for a school dinner, about as popular as well! My overriding memories of the exercise were the TRRC at Hull, where we were treated to a traditional Humber-side frozen breakfast, just what we needed to set us out of the assembly area, Marné Barracks, Catterick. It was here that our task troop, under Lt Ben Wing, was chopped to 201 Squadron, while the remainder of the squadron became a Regt C3 node. The squadron was tasked with the outload of pre-positioned stocks from the Tankadrome to FSGs in the Midlands. It all seemed to go smoothly,

although I will treasure the sight of the 2IC sitting on top of the ops box scrim trying to hold it down in the wind - found a use for him at last.

The exercise culminated in a night drive across Salisbury Plain, which was relatively trouble free for the squadron, apart from Pte 'Did I do that?' Towers who decided to rest his DROPS in a ditch in front of the OC, causing him a few grey hairs! Once that was complete the squadron had a couple of tasks to return simmo to where it came from before heading home for tea and medals.

Of course while we were all having fun and games in the field we had four guys who were on courses, which they all passed. LCpls 'Oz' Osmond and Pat Deadman gaining their B2, Oz also became a UBRE operator and Ptes Edge and Titcombe passed their B3 trade course with flying colours, all in all a satisfactory two weeks' work.

Special Features

The Minden Band of the Queen's Division

It has now been a year since the Minden Band's last entry in *Castle* so there is naturally a lot to catch up on.

The year, in following tradition, has proved to be very busy and extremely fulfilling with many prestige engagements, plenty of travel and a chance for some well-deserved adventurous training.

The winter lull gave various band members an opportunity to put away their musical instruments and participate in a series of adventurous training activities. Cpl Steve Duqueno and LCpl Fraser Hurman took full advantage and in January joined Exercise Spring Tiger; an ATR Bassingbourn led expedition scuba diving in the Caribbean Sea, off the coast of Belize. During the two-week exercise

both novice divers picked up their sports diver qualification however.

February saw a further two band members set off for Germany for a two-week basic parachuting course. SSgt Frank Barker and Musn Ian Travers enlisted on the Senelager based course and both completed the 'static line' phase of parachuting jumping from 3,500ft. Fortunately they both lived to tell the tale and returned safely. March saw the band skiers dust off their blades and participate in a weeklong skiing exercise in Les Arcs, France.

The seven Minden Band members were joined by 11 members of the Normandy Band along with a couple of instructors from ATR Bassingbourn. Led by the Bandmaster, WO1 Morfill, a great time



The Band at Prowse.



The Band marching through Sondeberg.

was had by all as band members who did not go are constantly reminded!

At the end of March the band took part in a week-long recruiting event held at Gamecock Barracks near Nuneaton. The whole event entitled 'Expertech 01' was held in old aircraft hangars and despite the extremely cold snowy weather some positive results were achieved.

After Easter leave the band performed at the Wembley arena and at the Natural History Museum in London straight after which instruments and equipment were packed for a ten-week roulement tour of Germany.

Arriving in mid-May, the band were based in the picturesque spring city of Paderborn and travelled extensively throughout Germany. Highlights included performing at the Brit-fest in Hamburg, playing at the Ambassador's residence in Berlin and during the Tall Ships Festival in Kiel. The band also performed at a concert in the beautiful baroque city of Dresden alongside a Herres Musikcorps band.

During the return journey from Dresden the band were fortunate enough to stop at the infamous village of Colditz, where a very informative and interesting tour of the castle was given. Fortunately the entire band managed to escape and make their way back to Paderborn.

The roulement tour was not just restricted to Germany and during the tour the band managed to travel to Belgium to perform a beating retreat ceremony at SHAPE, the band also performed during the Nijmegen marches in Holland and perhaps the highlight of the tour the band performed during the Ring Riding Festival in Sonderborg, Denmark. The friendship and hospitality of the Danish people was incredible and will not be forgotten.

The band returned to Bassingbourn Barracks at the end of July and, after a well-deserved leave, was back on the road again performing at the Hilton in London, Hampton Court and a week on the famous bandstand at Eastbourne.

During the autumn the band performed at a number of concerts in such venues as Northampton, Braunstone near Leicester, Orford in Suffolk and Southend. These concerts gave the band a perfect opportunity to rehearse the music for the latest CD. This fourth Minden Band CD was recorded in the Minden Band rehearsal room,

Bassingbourn Barracks. Entitled *Orb and Sceptre*, it is dedicated to Her Majesty's forthcoming Golden Jubilee.

The most poignant moment of the year came towards the end of October when the band had the privilege to travel to Belgium and play for the burial ceremony of a lost soldier from the First World War in Flanders. Pte Harry Wilkinson of the Lancashire Fusiliers was killed during a skirmish in Ypres on 10 November 1914. His body lay buried where he fell until last year when a farmer ploughed the field and found, along with fragments of his uniform, his identity tag. Pte Wilkinson was laid to rest at Prowse Point Military Cemetery where the band performed during the ceremony. LCpl Tim Hammond performed the Last Post after which Pte Wilkinson's granddaughter and the Duke of Kent laid wreaths.

The Christmas period saw the band travel to Chepstow to visit the Poachers and play for the Regimental boxing and a potential NCOs cadre pass off parade as well as performing for both Mess Christmas functions.

The band also visited Addenbrookes Hospital in Cambridge to administer some well-needed Christmas cheer to patients and staff alike.

The band returned from Christmas leave in time to say farewell to the Bandmaster, WO1 Norman Morfill, who retired from the Army after 22 years of loyal service. The band dined out Mr Morfill during a formal Mess type dinner night along with his wife Sharon. We wish them both every success for the future.

Other band members to leave during the year were LCpl Jim Moss, who has successfully transferred to the Central Band of the Royal Air Force and Musn Pete (Bill) Bailey who has transferred to the Clive Band of the Prince of Wales Division. We also wish them the best of luck in their new postings.

Our thoughts are now turned towards the forthcoming tour of Cyprus as in April the band move to Episkopi for a three-month roulement tour of the Island. Highlights will include playing for the tercentenary of the King's Own Border Regiment at Happy Valley, Episkopi, Britcon medal parade in Nicosia, playing for the Queen's Birthday Parade as well as playing for parades in Athens, Ankara and Tel Aviv.

For further details of the Minden Band, visit our website at www.minden-band.co.uk

Special Features

Regimental Museum Battle of the Month

Col JP Macdonald writes:

The Regiment has inherited over 100 Battle Honours which were awarded for actions between May 1940 (Norway) and November 1951 (Korea).

The Trustees of the Regimental Museum believed that we should take advantage of this, not only to show that there was 'life before 1964' but also that several of our founder regiments fought in most of the well-known actions. After much discussion the trustees decided to adopt a 'Battle of the Month' - going rather further than just the Battle Honours. These will be displayed month by month in the museum. The presentation will be at A2 size and will include a brief account of the battle supported/reinforced by maps/drawings, photographs etc. The sources of these accounts will be published regimental histories, fleshed out, if possible, by veterans' experiences.

The trustees debated long and hard over which battles to choose and finally decided on those listed here, either on the basis that these were actions involving more than one founder regiment, or that this was an action by a single battalion which illustrated the 'Regimental character'.

January: *Jahore 1942*, Royal Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, Leicestershire.

February: *Singapore Island 1942*, Royal Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire, Leicestershire.

March: *Cassino I 1944*, Essex.

April: *Imphal 1944*, Suffolk, Northamptonshire.

May: *Dunkirk, 1940*, Lincolnshire, Suffolk, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire.

June: *Normandy Landings 1944*, Royal Norfolk, Lincolnshire, Suffolk, Hertfordshire, Essex, Northamptonshire.

July: *Sicily 1943*, Northamptonshire.

August: *Chindits 1944*, Bedfordshire, Leicestershire, Essex.

September: *Antwerp-Turnhout Canal 1944*, Lincolnshire, Leicestershire, Essex.

October: *Venray 1944*, Royal Norfolk, Lincolnshire, Suffolk.

November: *Korea 1951*, Royal Leicestershire.

December: *Tobruk 1941*, Leicestershire, Essex.

No doubt some readers will disagree with this list. If so, would they please write to RHQ telling us why? The trustees will examine each case carefully.

Lastly, it would be a great help if veterans of these battles and/or Regimental archives could supply photos, maps or anything to enhance the presentation. They will be returned promptly.

Donations

The following have kindly donated items to the museum.

Lt M Beaumont: Items from his tour in Zimbabwe. Capbadges, T shirts, tape recordings and the Main Gate Regimental capbadge.

Mr T Edge: Photographs of the 5th Battalion and Freedoms Certificate.

Mr G Smith: Photographs of the 5th Battalion 1971-92.

Mr P Ferguson: Scrapbook for copying into the 5th Battalion's records.

Sgt C Headland: Iraqi plastic helmet - Russian headdress with capbadge. Badge of rank of a corporal and shoulder badge. Record, *Marching with the Tigers*, photograph album (Gulf War), booklet (*Berlin, How it Started*), maps and troops agenda.

Mr JF Collinge: Olive green jacket and trousers and a pair of jungle boots. Photographs from his album (Malacca in Malaya).

LCpl A Kendall: Various items of signal equipment from the 50s and 60s.

Mrs N Grace (step-daughter of WO2 E Madlin: Items from Malaya, kris dagger, shield (tug-of-war), ash tray, books and pamphlets, morse key for a field phone, photograph (School of Infantry).

Sgt LG Parsons: Mess kit complete.

Mr CS Pain: No1 Dress complete.

Mr J Valentine BEM: Video recording of 3rd Battalion newsreel Belfast 72 (the Divis flats area).

WO2 T Norton: Photograph Bury St Edmunds 1964-65 period.

Mr J Walker and Mr J Enright: Information on Aden 1963-67 and a CD rewriter for museum use.

Mr N Cracknell: No 2 Dress ORs complete.

Mr C Sharpe: 1968 Peace medal, ashtray glass and ACE III certificate.

Mr A Wilde: Orders for opening fire - Aden-NI. Copy of awards given to British persons in the Oman.

Mr L Baker: No 4 rifle bayonet.

Mrs E Martin: Copies of a marriage certificate (Berlin) and copies of photographs from Aden.

Mr I Owens (South Africa): Items of clothing from the Regiment de la Rey, bush jacket and trousers, beret and badge, stable belt, cravat and photographs of the unit in training.

Operation Fingal

Capt Sam Wilson, ADC to COMISAF from January-March, reviews the early months of the ISAF deployment in Kabul

Not many soldiers are privileged to be involved in an operation from its conception, when it is arguably at its most challenging and demanding. But the rapid progress of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan and the rout of the Taleban regime once again provided British forces with an opportunity to prove their worth on peace support operations. With most national governments unwilling to assume the role of lead nation in mounting such a difficult operation, particularly to somewhere as volatile as Afghanistan, it was little surprise when the Prime Minister volunteered British troops to lead the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). As a Regiment we can rightly be proud that one of our own, Maj Gen John McColl, was appointed as the commander of the force.

Regrettably the United Kingdom has an inglorious history on this particular stretch of the infamous North-West Frontier, but Operation Fingal has offered the chance to assist the regeneration of a country whose turbulent past in recent centuries has been due in no small part to our own self-interested meddling. The very fact that the Anglo-Russian struggle for dominance in Afghanistan in the 19th Century was referred to as 'the Great Game' does not speak well of

the respect we showed for Afghan internal politics at the time, and our shameful conduct in the 1830s and 1840s contributed to one of the Royal Anglian Regiment's most disastrous hours, when the men of the 44th Foot (later the Essex Regiment) were massacred at Gandamak during the Retreat from Kabul in January 1842. We are fortunate now, however, with such a high level of Regimental involvement in the current operation, to have the opportunity to rebuild a shattered country and write a more worthy chapter in the history of British involvement here.

Maj Gen McColl was enjoying the quiet life commanding the 3rd (United Kingdom) Division in Bulford, when on 11 December the Commander-in-Chief livened up the Land Command Board by confirming that he had been appointed to command the International Security Assistance Force (COMISAF); four days later he was on his recce in Kabul. Over the months he has become the accepted face and voice of ISAF, required to play the role of politician and diplomat as well as military commander and strategist. That he is still running the show now, when Tony Blair had originally pledged to hand over as lead nation in April, might be largely due to Turkish reluctance to

take over, but it is also testament to the importance of one man to the success of the mission, and an indication of how widely respected he is by the Afghan Interim Administration and the wider international community.

It was the Bonn agreement, drawn up in early December in the wake of the collapse of the Taleban regime to map out Afghanistan's democratic development, which set the conditions for the deployment of an international force to Kabul to assist the fledgling Interim Administration in restoring security and stability, and thereby aid its bid internally and internationally for credibility. However the detailed terms under which the force would deploy remained undetermined, and Gen McColl arrived in Kabul on 15 December to negotiate the Military Technical Agreement (MTA). His adversary was the Defence Minister (designate), Gen Fahim Khan. Fahim had been head of intelligence for Masoud, the revered Northern Alliance leader assassinated by the Taleban two days before 11 September, and like many members of the Northern Alliance he did not see the need for foreign troops on the streets of Kabul – he believed his own troops were more than capable of providing security. His proposed solution was to confine ISAF troops to barracks outside Kabul, allowing them into the city only at the invitation of the IA when deemed necessary! As for patrolling the streets, this idea seemed anathema to Fahim – the word 'patrolling', which does not exist in either of the principal dialects, Dari or Pashtun, translates simply as 'going for a walk'. On these points, as with many others, Gen McColl dug his heels in and gained concessions, though it has to be said the Afghans never fully grasped the patrolling concept – in the early days at least joint patrols were accompanied by an Afghan one star or above!

With the inauguration of the Interim Administration on 22 December and the signing of the MTA on 4 January, the way was clear for the deployment of the 19 national contingents that make up the ISAF, ranging from a 1200-strong German battle group to a Bulgarian mobile bath and laundry unit! The city they encountered on arrival was a devastated yet fascinating place. The location is spectacular, sitting at 1800m in a vast bowl surrounded by the mountains of the Hindu Kush, but has its drawbacks – a thick layer of dust and smog hovers like an acrid cloud over the whole city. In the 1960s and early 1970s Kabul was a thriving, vibrant, cosmopolitan city, popular with tourists and backpackers alike. But 23 years of conflict have torn it apart, wearing the people down and driving many residents to flee the city and even the country. The Russians actually did much for the city's infrastructure before and during the Soviet occupation, but the civil war between warlords such as Masoud and Hekmatyar (1992-1996) has left large swathes of the city in ruins.

The Taleban undertook little in terms of reconstruction and regeneration, and much of what was left standing is derelict and dilapidated, having more often than not been used as some kind of defensive position at one time or another. Five years of drought have dried out the bed of the Kabul River and left many locals, who live out a meagre subsistence existence, on the verge of poverty and starvation. The people of Kabul, sick of war and desperate for peace and stability, greeted the deployment of ISAF with tremendous enthusiasm and goodwill. Initially nervous at the sight of foreign troops once more on the streets of Kabul, the locals soon realised that ISAF is a force for good. It was amazing to see how quickly a smile and a few friendly words could break down the barriers of mistrust, and soon one was greeted everywhere by children chirping the only words of English they knew... 'Hello, how are you?' Assisted by an intensive information operations campaign, Gen McColl was swiftly elevated to the status of local hero, instantly recognizable and mobbed wherever he went. The cause was helped immeasurably by an inclement weather front in early February which brought more rain and snow in a few days than had been experienced during five years of Taleban rule.

In and amongst getting to grips with the situation on the ground, the truly multi-national nature of the force (HQ ISAF itself multi-nationalised on 18 February) threw up problems of its own. Mounting the entire operation via a fragile air bridge had proved challenging for the UK, and highlighted the scarcity of military air transport assets, but it had not prevented us from achieving early effect on the



Capt Wilson on the road to Bagram.

ground – the first foot patrol took place on 29 December, six days before the MTA was formally signed. For the other troop contributing nations, however, the inload of troops and equipment was proving less problematic, and indeed many were queuing up to fly in before UK as lead nation was ready to receive them. But the notion of early or rapid effect was alien to them – the Turkish force bakery, the Finnish sauna and the German bierkeller all had to be in place before full operating capability could be declared! In comparison, our own antique expeditionary infrastructure has rightly come in for a great deal of criticism, but it has to be said that the British ability to get on with the job in hand with the bare minimum of infrastructure support seems unmatched. In other areas we have also had some valuable lessons to pass on – the rapid availability of government funds (principally from the Department for International Development, and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office) for quick impact CIMIC projects has meant that we have been able to have a rapid ameliorative effect on the quality of life in Kabul. The money has been focussed on rebuilding schools, hospitals and roads, and although such projects barely scratch the surface of the wholesale reconstruction needed throughout the country, they are at least making a visible difference to the people of Kabul, who are increasingly seeking some sort of tangible improvements from the presence of so many foreign troops. No other nation has been able to provide funding as quickly, and whilst the international community has pledged billions of dollars for reconstruction at the Tokyo Conference in January, it could be years before Afghanistan sees the benefits.

With tactical command in Kabul delegated down to the one star headquarters (the Kabul Multi-National Brigade, initially based on HQ 16 Air Asslt Bde, with the lead role handed over to Germany in late March), Gen McColl and his own two star headquarters have been able to concentrate their efforts on liaison and co-ordination with the Interim Administration and other key political players. For all the goodwill behind the new government, many former Mujahidin warlords have been disenfranchised with the inauguration of the IA (including Dr Rabbani, the former president), and COMISAF has spent a considerable amount of time trying to identify what, if any, threat these people pose to the IA and ISAF. These meetings frequently involve feasting on vast Afghan banquets (much to the

Special Features

horror of the Environmental Health Team!) while seated cross-legged on cushions around the room, being assured that neither the IA nor ISAF are under threat; but Afghan treachery is as famous as its hospitality, and such declarations can rarely be taken at face value. Meetings with government ministers have invariably developed their own patterns – the Afghan sense of time is much more relaxed than our own, and waiting and rescheduling is commonplace, but as hosts they are courteous enough to ply visitors with an endless stream of green tea, nuts, raisins and sugared almonds.

In spite of such frustrations, progress has been encouraging, though not without the occasional bizarre twist of events which has prompted the ISAF Chief of Staff to adopt the refrain 'You couldn't make it up!' Years from now historians will look back and wonder how on earth ISAF got involved with flying 7,000 Hajj pilgrims to Mecca; or how ISAF organised a football match between ISAF and Kabul United, the biggest sporting event the Olympic Stadium had seen for years (and why the good old British press preferred to focus on the trouble outside the ground); and why on one occasion, over the Muslim festival of Ede, a British staff officer was to be seen on the outskirts of Kabul bartering with a local shepherd for the purchase of a dozen sheep for COMISAF. There have been setbacks too – the murder of the Aviation Minister at the airport, a contentious shooting incident – but a redoubling of information operations and the CIMIC campaign has shored up any force protection concerns these incidents might have thrown up. The stream of visitors who have flocked to meet COMISAF has been equally eclectic – Tony Blair, Jack Straw, Kofi Annan, Gen Tommy Franks, Bianca Jagger, Gary Mabbutt, and Lawrie McMenemie, to name but a few.

There has at least been time in the margins to immerse oneself in the history of the country beyond the obligatory reading of Flashman's adventures! Renovation work has been undertaken by the British contingent at the old Christian cemetery to salvage the nine remaining headstones of the several thousand British officers and soldiers who died in the first and second Afghan Wars, and a commemorative stone commissioned. A memorial stone was also unveiled in the Khoord Kabul Pass to commemorate the 4,000 British, Indian and Afghan soldiers and their wives and children slaughtered there during the infamous Retreat from Kabul in 1842. At the mercy of the local warlords and their own commanders' lack of resolve, the British forces had no choice but to withdraw to Jellalabad and the safety of the Indian frontier, less than 100 miles away over unforgiving terrain in mid-winter. On several occasions during the retreat the treacherous Mohammad Akbar offered the men of the 44th the opportunity to surrender, but they refused, and finally at Gandamak fought heroically to the bitter end, surrounded and drastically outnumbered by the Ghazi tribesmen. Walking over the difficult terrain now, it is easy to see how the land lies hugely in favour of the attacker, especially with the Pass deep in snow.

Today the Pass is littered with the debris of more recent conflict; to wander off the beaten track is to put oneself at risk from the millions of landmines which blight the whole country. Removing



The new memorial at the top of the Khoord Kabul Pass to commemorate those killed there during the retreat from Kabul in January 1842, among them the men of the 44th.

the scars of war and restoring peace and stability to Afghanistan will undoubtedly take years, but ISAF is achieving rapid success. The change in Kabul since December has been nothing short of remarkable – the city has quite literally come to life. Shops have reopened, street traders have set up, traffic has returned to the streets, lorries are arriving from the provinces and Pakistan, and refugees are flooding back. This has only been possible because the security situation has improved dramatically, and public confidence boosted. Irregular troops have been largely disarmed and disbanded or returned to barracks; the police are being re-equipped and retrained. Crime rates in Kabul now compare very favourably with similar-sized cities across the world. Our training of the 1st Battalion of the Afghan National Guard, now employed as the Presidential Guard at the palace, is the first step in enabling the Afghans to guarantee their own security, with a restructured national army and police force. The reopening of Kabul International Airport, only made possible by ISAF engineering work and the continued presence of a strong RAF contingent, has once more made the city accessible to the wider international community. The ISAF presence has made a real difference on the ground, but there is still a long way to go, and to extract ourselves too early could badly undermine Afghanistan's chances of peaceful, democratic development. There seems little option other than to commit ourselves to the long haul, but we can be optimistic that when eventually we do withdraw, this time, unlike 1842, it will be in good order and with the goodwill of the Afghan people.

Life with the Bermuda Regiment

Maj RHC Lucas writes:

I have been seconded to the Bermuda Regiment since May 1999. My family and I have had a wonderful time here and for my part I feel very privileged to have been able to have had this marvelous opportunity. Highlights for me have included two Regiment exercises in Jamaica, Regiment embodiments here in Bermuda as a result of Hurricane Gert in 1999 and Hurricane Erin last year as well as the visit by Tall Ships 2000 to Bermuda. We were also directly affected by the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Centre with the Regiment being embodied at no notice for five days guarding grounded planes at the International Airport and Cruise Ships at our three ports.

It has been a time of change for the Regiment largely as a result of a review that took place in February 2000. B Company, our second rifle company, was dropped from the Orbat and Support Company increased in size and gained new roles to reflect the move to greater specialisation. This has meant a reduction in Regiment strength of some 100 soldiers. The Commanding Officer, for most of this period has been Lt Col David Gibbons. He hands over to Maj Eddie Lamb in July. Throughout this period the CO has been strongly supported by Maj Larry Mussenden, the 2IC, Capt William White, the Adjutant and WO1 Sherwyn Richardson, the RSM.

I am delighted to report that the Royal Anglian affiliation to the Bermuda Regiment remains very strong. When I arrived I joined WO2s Kev Stollery and Chris Cooper. Shortly after WO2 Phillip Tilley replaced WO2 Stollery and in July 2000 WO2 Cooper's post was gapped along with that of the Jamaican Defence Force WO2. In April 2000 Lt Col Peter Holme, assisted by two CATC instructors, ran a very successful senior commanders' course for majors and captains in the Regiment. In October 2001 WO2 Dale Robinson arrived for a four-month attachment with the Regiment. He took over as QM's Company 2IC and among other things assisted Capt Herman Eve the new QM with producing a completely new inventory. In November the Colonel of the Regiment visited the Bermuda Regiment and presented the Corps Warrant so strengthening our ties with the British Army. Lt Col Mike Beard has just finished a short visit to the Regiment. On behalf of the Commandant Infantry Battle School he has negotiated a new package of infantry courses for our commanders that will guarantee a certain number of places per year and save us some money as well!

I was joined by WO2 Darren Marsh in June 2001 and Maj Phil Birch in January of this year, so currently there are three of us with the Bermuda Regiment along with our wives and families. I will finish in August and be replaced by Maj Andrew Wadman who is currently in Kuwait.



Majs Lucas and Birch and WO2 Marsh at Cool Runnings Restaurant, Jamaica.

Maj PM Birch writes:

From January 2002 I have been lucky enough to have been attached to The Bermuda Regiment as the special projects officer. So far this has involved helping to update the Regiment's SOPs, key point instructions and other contingency plans. In addition I have been acting as chief instructor on the Potential Officers' Commissioning Course (POCC) being run locally as an alternative to sending officer cadets to RMAS. The course started in February with a selection weekend at which seven lance corporals were chosen to be officer cadets. The course is taking place over two drill nights per week, the Regiment's annual camp in Jamaica and then an additional overseas camp to be run at Camp Blanding, Florida in June.

The highlight of the course so far has been the trip to Jamaica in March 2002 as part of Exercise Blue Mountain II, the Regiment's biennial visit to Jamaica. The aim of the POCC overseas camp was to instruct, practise and assess the potential officers in the skills required to perform as a platoon commander in a conventional setting. The potential officers were on a separate programme to the rest of the Regiment and their camp was divided into four main phases.

Phase one consisted of a four-day teaching package involving practical lessons in tactics, signals and map reading. There were also several TEWTs and orders exercises in which the officer cadets were introduced to the intricacies of mission analysis, estimates and the orders process. They had been given some instruction on this back in Bermuda but this was their first opportunity to try it out on

the ground. Instruction was by myself, the Adjutant Capt William White, and Lt David King who was on exchange from the Royal Gibraltar Regiment for the duration of the camp. This phase took place in the exotic setting of a banana plantation in the Golden Vale area of the Rio Grande river valley, just south of Port Antonio. The farmers were very friendly and negotiated with our two Jamaica Defence Force escorts to provide us with an endless supply of jelly coconuts, star apples and other fruits. We also found time on an evening to walk to the village of Fellowship and experience the local delicacy, jerk chicken, and the obligatory couple of Red Stripe beers.

The next phase was a three-day POCC exercise which took place during the Regiment's community projects phase. This began with an infiltration march across the Compass Gap, a six-hour slog along a narrow, slippery path



Maj Phil Birch with his gang in Jamaica, March 2002.

Special Features



WO2 Marsh living off the land, Jamaica 2002.

through the high jungle on the edge of the famous Blue Mountains coffee region. On completion they occupied a patrol harbour and were immediately tasked with writing recce patrol orders for that night. A successful recce patrol was sent out with one of the officer cadets in command, followed the next day by a fighting patrol against an enemy-occupied banana hut and a extraction march down the valley on the last morning. This phase fully tested the endurance of the officer cadets and their ability to think clearly when tired.

Next, the POCC acted as enemy for the remainder of the Regiment for the four-day Regimental final exercise. Reinforced by some Support Company personnel and three Gibraltarians, the POCC became a drug-dealing band known as the Chains Gang, with myself as their leader 'JJ Moffat'. This phase continued to be excellent training for the potential officers as, despite their unconventional distinguishing attire, the Chains Gang used correct battle procedure and the officer cadets continued to be exercised in command appointments. Inevitably this phase ended with the defeat of the Chains Gang and JJ's last stand during the Regiment's final attack.

Finally, after spending almost the whole of the camp living in the field and nourishing the ticks and mosquitoes, everyone earned a well-deserved two days' R and R package in the tourist hotspots of Montego Bay or Negril.

So far instructing on this course has provided me with immense job satisfaction, not only for professional reasons but also as I have had the chance to spend over three weeks in a beautiful country like Jamaica and see not only the tourist hotspots but also areas which are well off the beaten track. Over the next few months I look forward to continuing the training and seeing all those who reach the required standard receive their Governor's Commission at the passing out parade in July.

WO2 D J Marsh writes:

Bermuda has been a great posting so far as I have only been in post for nine months now. However, it is not quite the relaxing tanning post that some said it would be (and I hoped it would be!). Loads of beach time and very little time away was the cry to my family and I. Six days after arrival I was off to North Carolina with the PNC Cadres for 10 days leaving Tracey and the kids to be very successfully settled in by the all the Regiment staff. On return I got to grips with

the post of Training Wing Warrant Officer and set about sorting out a small office and find my way around the computer so that I could familiarise myself with all the documents I would need for the next couple of years. Unfortunately while having the computer software upgraded something went horribly wrong and all was lost. With the majority of the pre-course starting in the next couple of weeks it called for some panic one-fingered typing.

The Training Wing does not have a Training Officer at present which has allowed me to get more involved with aspects of training for the Regiment that I would not normally do. We ran a RMQ course for 20 local students and 10 Caribbean students in October of last year. Four SASC instructors from TAG North put the students through the course. I had great fun assisting the Training Company Training Team develop and run the annual recruit camp in January this year. I was also involved in the planning of the Regiment's overseas camp to Jamaica. I was given a seven-day window to plan and conduct a four-day jungle and patrol package and a three-day live firing package taking the soldiers from individual, pairs Jungle CQB and fire-team attack. I also ran platoon-level live firing ambushes that were enjoyed as much by the training team as they were by the soldiers.

The planning for this started way back in September with the initial recce followed by a confirmatory recce in December. It was a challenging task but, with the hard work and co-operation from the Bermuda instructors and the Jamaica Defence Force Training team, the aim was achieved well.

I am currently assisting the PNCOs' Cadre Training Team to plan the final phase of the cadre to be held at Camp Blanding, North Florida in June of this year. The recce went well and the students along with the potential officers cadre will be put through their paces during dry training, live firing and final exercise phases. Camp Blanding offers a variety of demanding environments to train in, and with the assistance of the US National Guard for helicopters and boats the final exercise will prove to be demanding and fast moving.

The only other area of significant interest looming over the horizon will be the summer stand down. Here the main objectives will be to get to know some of the best beaches, do some boating and fishing and also see what the golfing world has to offer – though not necessarily in that order!

East of England Regiment



Cpl Criddle preparing rabbit stew - D Company survival training.



Exercise Eagle Endurance - Maj Mike Googe (left) and Lt Tim Irwin-Parker present a cheque to a local hospice.



E Company Recruiting Team - Chelmsford town centre.



Recruit election Weekend - Bury St Edmunds..

Visit by the Colonel-in-Chief Colchester 20 May 1983



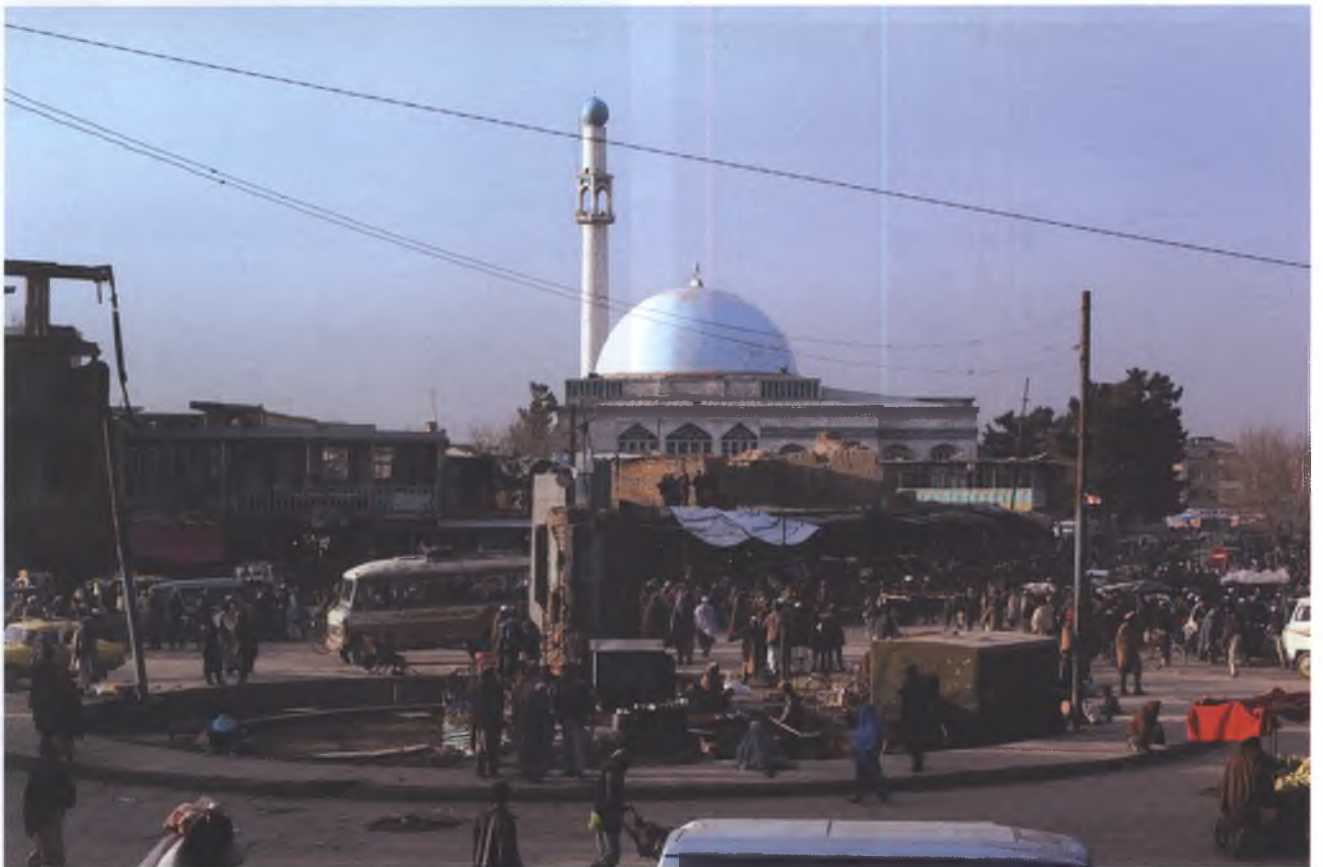
Back from left: 2Lt CLW Szabo, 2Lt DAP Cox, Lt J Burgess, Lt ADW McArdle, Lt RJ Edmondson-James, Lt SJ Boast, Lt RCJ Goodin, 2Lt DJ Gregory, Lt AJC Wild, 2Lt DME Moorat, Lt JD Lopez, Lt JA Stewardson. Centre row: Capt CT Page, WO1 MNJ Dawe, Capt CJ Pearce, WO1 L Keogh, Capt MJ Beard, WO1 D Whitehead, Capt TR Wilkes, WO1 A Powell, Capt DJ Clements, WO1 W Burford, Capt SPB Badger, WO1 RE Eke. Front: Lt Col HW Lambert, Lt Col PBD Long, Lt Col DJW Browne MBE, Maj Gen JB Akehurst CBE, Gen Sir Timothy Creasey KCB OBE, Colonel-in-Chief, Maj Gen DC Thorne CBE, Maj Gen JA Ward-Booth OBE, Lt Col AJK Calder, Lt Col AE Thompson MBE MC, Lt Col DW James.



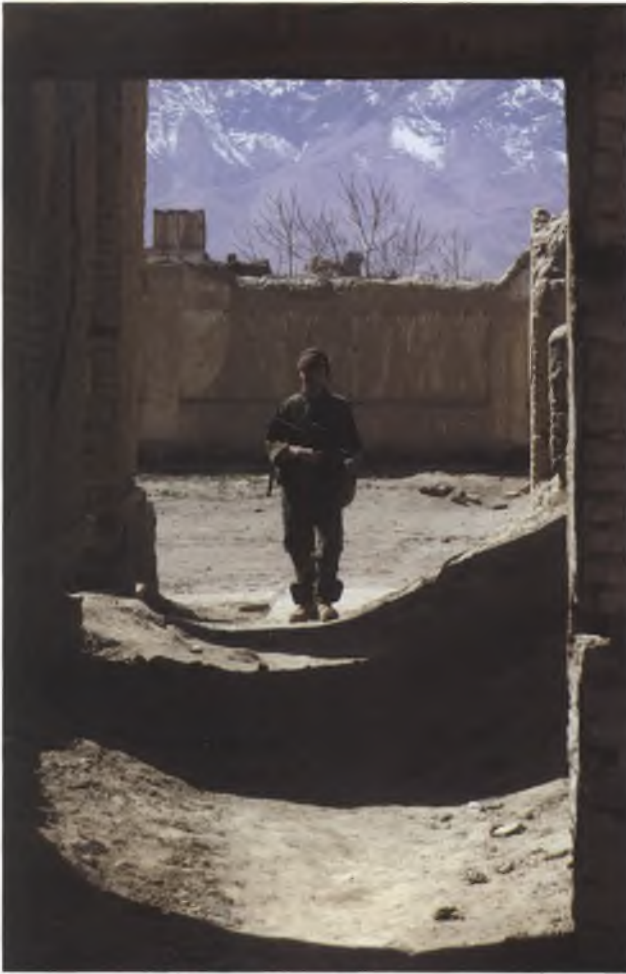
Presentation of Colours...the Deputy Colonel-in-Chief at Duxford on 29 April 1995.

1st Battalion in Afghanistan











Ironman USA Triathlon

Maj AW Price writes:



Only 26 miles to run after this...phew!

The story started in 1999 while the author was on the Dagger course at the Royal Military College of Science at Shrivenham. I joined the Triathlon Club and started training for the various races scheduled for 2000. The driving force behind the club asked during a meeting: 'Who wants to build up to the Ironman distance?' I started looking out of the window thinking... 'rather you than me mate!' After a suitable pause he said: 'OK then so that's half Ironman in 2000 and full Ironman in 2001. Four-man team of me, (Jon Tink), Mike Kelly, Simon Jordan and Andy Price'. 'What was that?' I said jolting back from my day dreaming. Jon said: 'Andy - you can't swim, your technique on the bike is awful and you then lose time on the run - you're in. You could use the training!'

On 29 July 2001 all four of us stood on the edge of the water at Lake Placid, New York State, USA. We were among 1,808 entrants



Maj Andrew Price completes the triathlon.

in the largest single wave Ironman Triathlon start ever. Ahead lay a gruelling 2.4 miles of swimming followed by a hilly cycle course of 112 miles (Lake Placid hosted the 1935 and 1980 winter Olympics so it has hills a plenty!) and to finish it all off a marathon run of 26.2 miles. With a cut off time of 17 hours we had all set personal goals - mine was to finish before the cut off and if possible beat the 65-year-old white haired woman and the bloke with one leg. The day proved to be one of the most memorable of my life. I finished in 12 hours 25 minutes smashing even my most optimistic estimate of overall time. I was the first placed British Army athlete, a complete surprise considering I had never beaten the other three at any distance before the Ironman. Since the race I have been in intensive training once again - this time the three activities have been beer, eating out and sleeping.



Proudly sporting their finishers T-shirts...from left: Jon Tink, Mike Kelly, Andrew Price and Simon Jordan.

Special Features

Retention

WO2 R Langley-Stevens RCMO, 1st Battalion writes:

Stabilisation of manning in the 21st Century is fundamental to the future of our regimental survival. But in a modern world we face a multitude of employers seeking our target audience and serving soldiers and those employers are prepared to offer a vast array of opportunities in order to attract them. Another important factor is the growing gap between the focus of the Army and that of society from which we draw recruits. Changes within our cultural society and an increasing attitude of self-orientation, rights of the individual and constant changes in litigation policy place ever-changing conditions upon us, as to how we operate. As a Regiment we have to accommodate these changes and workable solutions are required to be found, this can sometimes prove challenging!

Hence the Regimental retention plan driven by the Commanding Officer has to be a polished stepping stone in order to retain as many of our soldiers as possible. To assess this we look at our termination rates and analyse why soldiers leave which enables us to establish and highlight any trend patterns that may become visible.

Recruitment should be done in balanced moderation as high recruitment causes more to fall into the termination bracket three to four years down the line which adversely affects stabilisation of manning with a boom or bust recruitment ethos (as some units will experience), which in turn causes a vacuum of combat power. It is only by looking at the source of the problem that we are able to put in place preventative measures to counteract any foreseeable manning problems in the future.

We must observe in minute detail the day-to-day management of our soldiers, who must feel valued and not looked upon as just a number. To achieve this, communication is the essence to success; just by the chain of command talking passes information onto the individual making him feel that he is an integral part of the Regimental ethos.

The Regiment has invested much time in designing a cradle to grave policy and retention starts from first contact in the towns and cities where we recruit. This is swiftly followed by the Royal Anglian Encounter (36 hours showcase on the opportunities available to potential applicants) supported by high profile visit programmes throughout training as a nurturing tool to instil a sense of belonging.

On a new soldier's arrival into the Battalion he is immediately offered a supporting induction package and mentors are allocated to act as chaperons until the individual feels fully integrated into Battalion life (there is no time limit to this support offered).

There is no apprenticeship period and no form on initiation is tolerated. Instead, the Battalion's culture is to immediately assimilate the new soldier into his platoon, so that he increases in confidence and quickly becomes a useful asset. This process is led by commanders.

New arrivals are able to promote their educational skills by attending Viking Scholar (a week's package sponsored by Farnborough College of Further Education) to reinforce and, in some cases, revise certain educational aspects in literacy and numeracy. The college also opens up a raft of opportunities for other courses such as the European Computer Driving Licence and more advanced educational subjects. A driving cadre is conducted at Leconsfield where the young soldier

is able to obtain a Category B licence (free of charge) and an internally run adventure training package including paint balling and mountain biking stimulates interest and builds team spirit further assisting the retention of the individual.

Career advancement cadres are then offered on ability and merit throughout the individual's career. These courses vary from junior command to senior command offering NVQs on completion. Other courses with specialisation in areas such as heavy weapons, drill and outward bound adventure courses culminate in a vast array of experience until successful completion of the soldier's career. The opportunities are endless with the only limitation being the commander's imagination.

There is no place in 1 R Anglian for the 'bollocking culture', which is an all too common approach in the infantry. We see this mentality as weakness of leadership; the preferred form of leadership includes encouragement and motivation. This does not mean that no-one is ever 'gripped'; they are, but only when it is necessary and not as an automatic reflex. Soldiers are treated as human beings and their interests, well-being and self-esteem are regarded as paramount.

We hold focus group sessions for each rank, conducted by the CO, RSM and RCMO. This provides the CO with an opportunity to deliver key messages direct to the soldier, and gives them the chance to ask questions and bring issues to his personal attention. The results have been significant in improving understanding and quality of life for soldiers, and on several occasions swift action has been taken to remedy nagging problems. This process does not undermine the chain of command, it reinforces it; and a similar concept is employed at the highest level through GCS's Briefing Team.

The average number of terminations for an Infantry Battalion is 86 per year. At present our annual total is about half of this. The 1st Battalion, for example, at the time of writing has only 25 terminations (over the next 12 months) which is an all time low since August 1998. I believe this is down to operational opportunities and the day-to-day management of soldiers.

It is not our desire to concentrate on turning around those who have applied to terminate; the need for action at this stage in many ways reflects failure of our retention measures.

However, although we try to maintain an environment in which the soldier does not wish to leave, there will always be cases where this fails. As a counter measure to the standard interview process, we hold discussion groups for those individuals who have applied to leave (Viking Hold). This is programmed according to service remaining (the soldier is at his most vulnerable, with only eight weeks service remaining, two pay packets, the promise of a job or house offer has fallen through, etc). A short talk by a soldier who has re-enlisted following a recent period outside the Army is given to all planning to leave. We also issue a flyer entitled 'The principal aim of which is to highlight our blue print policy document highlighting the advantages of continued service compared to civilian employment and conditions.

These areas are merely examples of the overall culture that we believe necessary to maintain high morale and thus retention (with operational effectiveness) in the 21st Century.

Army Foundation College (Harrogate)

Capt R Whitham writes:

In January 2001 I began work at the Army Foundation College as a platoon commander. It was a step into the unknown. I knew very little of what the college actually did, or indeed, what my new job would entail. I suspect many reading this article will also know little about the college. I hope therefore to provide *Castle* readers, and any prospective instructors, with a better understanding of both the college and its importance to us as a Regiment.

The Army Foundation College is situated near Harrogate in North Yorkshire. It is the Army's flagship training establishment and shares many similarities with both Sandhurst and what was formerly

known as Junior Leaders. Recruits arrive for the 42-week foundation course in either January or September aged 16 to begin a syllabus that combines vocational education with military skills and leadership training. In addition to basic soldiering, junior soldiers work towards NVQs and the Duke of Edinburgh's bronze award. On completion of the course, recruits move to Phase Two training before joining the Household Cavalry, the Royal Armoured Corps, the Royal Artillery or the infantry.

The college aims to train more than 1,000 recruits annually. It is organised into five training companies with six platoons in each.

Each platoon usually starts with upwards of 50 recruits, but subsequently lose many in the period when recruits can 'discharge as of right'. Each platoon training team comprises a platoon commander, a platoon sergeant and four JNCOs. The Regiment currently has six permanent staff at the college and more than 50 potential Royal Anglians.

The training programme at Harrogate is always busy. In addition to the normal working week, permanent staff assist up to twice weekly with Duke of Edinburgh award evenings and again with military training on Saturday mornings. Needless to say, the working hours are long, particularly after one has accounted for exercises, external visits and college duties.

Aside from the usual 'Phase One' advantages of knowing exactly what the platoon will be doing from one day to the next, a posting to the Army Foundation College does have some unique benefits. Training teams have the same platoon for the entire 42 weeks. It is therefore much easier than at other Phase One establishments to develop individuals, foster platoon identities and achieve a real sense of job satisfaction. Opportunities for adventure training are excellent. The college has a leadership and initiative training department dedicated exclusively to adventurous pursuits. In short, a period at the college is an eye-opening and refreshing opportunity to work with individuals from many other different units, in an environment that is both challenging and rewarding.

Since February 2000, the college has undergone an £80 million redevelopment programme with one new building appearing after another. In addition to new accommodation and messing halls the college will comprise a purpose-built swimming pool, lecture halls, computer centres and floodlit sports pitches. It is very much a joint civilian/military co-operative with, among others, civilian run clothing, administrative, messing and accommodation services. The move towards integrated civilian/military support services has provoked a significant amount of controversy and is certainly an emotive issue among the permanent staff within the college!

Such has been the success of Harrogate that there are already plans to establish another college, the location of which has yet to be decided. The challenge for our Regiment lies in filling posts with suitable NCOs and officers. Since the recruits do not choose their capbadge until week 22, it is absolutely vital that we continue to attract and retain high quality junior soldiers from day one of the course.

Rightly or wrongly, a 16-year-old Junior Soldier will frequently choose his regiment on the basis of whom he meets at the college. If we are to attract the best recruits, then high quality, professional and enthusiastic individuals are needed. The importance of this *cannot* be over-emphasised.

6(V) Battalion the Royal Anglian Regiment Officers' Dinner Club

A record 53 attended the 20th annual dinner in the Officers' Mess, Bury St Edmunds on Saturday 2 March 2002. Among those present were founder members Col Dick Shervington, Maj Fred Ayers, Paddie Drake, Ron James and Duncan Stewart.

Lt Col Nigel ffitch briefed those present on the activities of the East of England Regiment. Once again Maj Keith Martin is thanked for the vast amount of work involved in organising the event.

We were able to congratulate two of our members who have recently been appointed Deputy Lieutenants for Essex, Cols Dick Shervington and Charles Thomas.

Former Battalion officers, not on the mailing list, who wish to receive details should inform the Dinner Club Secretary, Maj John Raybould preferably by email to raybould@pipemajor.freeserve.co.uk. Colour photograph of the 2002 dinner may be accessed via the 6 Royal Anglian Officers' Dinner Club web page at www.sandawana.freeserve.co.uk.



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Affiliated ACF and CCF Detachments

Norfolk Army Cadet Force

Norfolk ACF PRO, Maj John L Raybould TD reports that Norfolk Army Cadets have again put themselves on the local, regional and national map. There have been many staff retirements: from County HQ of the Commandant Col Mike Mizen, Padre Philip Rushton, QM Capt Derek Davison and Permanent Staff Admin Officer Capt David Marshall; from Britannia Company OC Maj Stuart Sprules and Permanent Staff (CAA) Cadet Admin Assistant Capt Bill Craig; from CNA (Cadet Norfolk Artillery Bty) Permanent Staff CAA, Capt Dave Cooper. The new County Commandant is Col Howard Gill, formerly OC A (Norfolk and Suffolk) Company and CO 6 R Anglian. OC Brit Company is Maj Chris Wilkinson formerly OC CNE (Cadet Norfolk Engineer) Squadron, OC CNE Squadron is Maj Sue Pratt MBE and the new County Admin Officer is Ron Barnes, formerly AGC.

Camps 2002

The foot and mouth crisis caused the loss of the 2001 June Adventurous Training Camp at Halton in Lancashire, but it is set for 2002 and by the time you read this Dep Comdt Lt Col Miles Green will be again highly satisfied with the range of canoeing, climbing, mountain-biking, walking and DoE expeditions undertaken by our cadets. As ever, we thank the adults who give up their holidays to enable this most worthwhile aspect of the ACF to function. Months of preparation for annual camp 2001 at Warcop were also scuttled but we were glad to be offered Rolleston on Salisbury Plain instead of utilising the contingency plans for a camp in Norfolk with all the inherent problems of not just feeding and accommodating 400 cadets and 100 adults (yes – they are the proportions!) In August 2002 we are heading for Ripon and in 2003 for Warcop so the detailed reces and planning for 2001 by County HQ Dep Comdt Lt Col Miles M Green, Trg Offr Maj John Doughty and Executive Officer Maj David Whitehead will be resurrected.

Cross Country

At the Eastern Region Army Cadet Force Cross-Country Championships, where 250 cadets from 10 counties competed, outstanding performances by the Norfolk senior girls' team made them Regional Champions by a margin of 30 points. Gemma, from Attleborough Troop, Cadet Norfolk Engineer Squadron won the Individual Senior Girls' Gold Medal. The Norfolk junior girls' team finished second, the senior boys third and the junior boys fifth. In the overall championships, Norfolk were runners-up to Derbyshire ACF. Norfolk ACF county sports officer Maj Chris Wilkinson said: 'We are enormously proud of our 22 cadets who produced some magnificent performances. Seven of our Norfolk runners have been selected to join the Eastern Region team of 28 in the National ACF Cross Country 2002 Championships in Cumbria'. At the same Cumbrian venue, Norfolk ACF, holders of the Eastern Region senior six-a-side soccer Knockout Cup, represented the region in the national championships.

National Swimming

Five Norfolk cadets represented the region in the national championships and ensured Eastern Region retained the national title. Two Britannia Company cadets from Cromer Detachment were outstanding. Simon Abbs won a gold medal in the junior boys' freestyle relay and his brother Daryl won silver in the senior boys' freestyle relay.

Award

Gorleston and Great Yarmouth Troop, Cadet Norfolk Artillery Battery, commanded by former Royal Anglian Maj Jimmy Keywood, had the 'Best Maintained Cadet Premises' for 2001 in East Anglia, based on inspections by RFCEA (Reserve Forces and Cadets Association, East Anglia). The troop were presented with a framed award by Lt Col Jackie Allen, Dep Sec RFCEA.

Annual Inspections

The season for annual visits by local TA and Regular officers to troops and detachments is nearly complete. The cadets enjoy showing

off their skills and we are grateful for the patience and understanding of the Inspecting officers as they peruse unit accounts, attendance figures, Cadet Star Passes and present promotion chevrons and awards.

Any adults who wish to become instructors should telephone the CEO, Maj David Whitehead (tel 01362 694515) or visit the website at www.norfolkacfsnet.co.uk.

Suffolk ACF

Two Go Up Together

Dreams can come true and ambitions can be achieved. Two of the instructors in B Company saw their wishes realised at annual camp when they each received promotion.

Alan Barnard became RSM and SSI Mark Galley takes on the responsibility in his stead as Company Sergeant Major. Both are from Beccles Detachment where they have worked hard to produce cadets with confidence, ability and skills needed to gain outstanding results in APC, D of E and annual inspections.

The new RSM has been involved with cadets for 27 years and says: 'This is something I have been hoping for for a long time, having worked my way up through the system. It's an ambition come true, and I look forward to the new responsibilities. Sergeant Major Galley says, 'It's a great achievement to become CSM. It was one of my goals when I joined cadets 17 years ago'.



Recruiters Visit Bungay

The Royal Anglian Recruiting Information Team recently visited the Bungay Detachment where 31 cadets from Beccles and Bungay joined together to listen to a graphic preservation describing the role of the infantry in modern times.

The evening was brought to an end with a competition based on observation skills which Bungay won.



Affiliated ACF and CCF Detachments

Cambridgeshire Army Cadets are Out and About

The last six months have been very busy but enjoyable for Cambridgeshire Army Cadet Force. We have seen cadets visit Turkey, India and 50 are off to Gibraltar immediately on return from summer camp this year. Our annual camp in August was held at the Cadet Training Centre Waterbeach with our training exercise on Stanta training area. Although we missed out on travelling away we certainly made the best of what we had despite the outbreak of foot and mouth.

Each cadet company went through a training package which included military skills, the cadet proficiency syllabus and adventurous training. Assistance was given to our local authority with cadets planting new trees completing their 'cadet in the community'. Maj Mark Knight and his No 1 Peterborough Company were given the freedom of March town. They honoured the town mayor and its citizens by parading through the town led by the Corps of Drums. The company was also on parade to commemorate Octavia Hill Day in Wisbech.

No 2 Company, now under command of Maj Ken Kidman, has been busy helping out our major TA Units supplying them with enemy forces and cadets acting as casualties for 254 Fd Amb (V). They have also been seen supporting local charities including the Royal British Legion with detachments parading throughout the county on Remembrance Day. 3 Company now has been fully committed to community projects in supporting the Fenland Fair and the British Grand Prix. We have also recently conducted our inter-company cross country competition with No 2 Company the overall winners.

The next six months

We are all looking forward to the new training year with Easter Camp just around the corner, which will be held at West Tofts. Each

company will then be given a training weekend making full use of Watton Airfield in late spring in preparation for annual camp in July/August. This year we will head down to Lydd in Kent concentrating on our shooting skills and adventure training.

Our Recruiting

For both cadets and adults recruiting is on the up and up with a new detachment now open in Haddenham (capbadged Royal Anglian). It is hoped that some 450 cadets and adults will attend annual camp this year. A number of our young cadets have now enlisted into the Army we wish them all the best in their new careers.

On the move

There have been a number of changes within the county. Maj T Cox has taken command of No 3 Company and Maj K Kidman, 2 Company. Maj D Denson has been promoted to lieutenant colonel and appointed Deputy Commandant. Our congratulations go to Capt John Watson on being appointed county training officer to Bedford ACF and being awarded the ACIF Certificate of Good Service along with Cdt CSM Brownlie. Lt Lance Kester, Lt Nigel Taylor, Capt Andrew Powell and SSI Johnson have recently joined the Force.

Cambridgeshire Cadets go to Turkey

Cdt LCpl William Reverchon

It all started with a selection programme and a squad of some 35 cadets with only seven of us being accepted. Halfway through our training I myself was beginning to wonder why I had volunteered. We were then told that it was our responsibility to raise funds under the supervision of Lt Steve Swann. Letters to our affiliated regiments were sent out hoping for sponsorship (a big thank-you to RHQ The Royal Anglian Regiment for their kind donation of £350). We managed, over a six-month period, to raise the remaining funds required by a sponsored abseil, litter picking at the British Grand



Fundraisers for the trip to Turkey.

Affiliated ACF and CCF Detachments



Cdt Sgt Deerman learning to abseil.

Prix, waiting on tables, washing cars and packing peoples' shopping at our local Tesco.

The expedition was a great experience for us all, our aircraft landed on time in the middle of the night and the temperature was soaring. We then made a short road journey of only eight hours on a standing-room-only coach to a small village called Nidge some 600km north of Antalya. It was there we received our first meal of bread, jam and cucumber; all pleasantly washed down with black tea. Once breakfast was over and our equipment check completed, we were off on our acclimatisation trek up a mountain 3,200m high. Some members of the group were sick and suffered altitude sickness but soon acclimatised and we all made serious headway from then on. Some of the scenery was breathtaking. On route we took the opportunity to practise our climbing and abseiling skills. After seven days we managed our first wash in a mountain stream while our guide went off to purchase a goat for supper. It was day nine when we reached the summit and at 0500hrs we all watched the sun rise over the Turkish mountains before we started our descent. On day 12 we reached the village of Goreme and witnessed all the young men departing for their military service. After camping out overnight on the village outskirts we made our way to the local bus park for our return journey to Antalya. We all enjoyed a rest day on the beach and a very comfortable night in a hotel before our flight



At the summit.



Cambridgeshire Cadets in Turkey.

home. We would like to thank all our adult instructors, the Cadet Commandant, and sponsors that made this an expedition of a lifetime possible.

Cambridgeshire Cadets in India

Cpls Harry Harrison, Nick Wright, Mark Etienne and Neil McCarthy all departed for India in January of this year on a 15-day international cadet exchange visit. Flying out from London Heathrow, having to stop off in Bombay to refuel, and finally arriving in New Delhi. They were met on arrival by the Indian Army Cadet Force and taken to accommodation in Agra. The first 24 hours were spent resting and familiarisation tours.

On the second day the military training started in earnest with normal skills being put to the test. The small competitions gave them all an ideal opportunity to make new friends and it was very interesting to learn about their cultures and way of life. It also made them appreciate how lucky we all are living in the United Kingdom with the facilities that we have at hand but take for granted. The accommodation was basic but comfortable and they were certainly made welcome. They managed to take in sites such as the Taj Mahal, Amber Fort in Jaipur and paid visits to Connaught Place, Delhi Zoo and the Indian Forces' Museums before flying back to the UK.



Cdt Cpls Harris and Wright in India.

Affiliated ACF and CCF Detachments

Lincolnshire ACF



The Corps of Drums visit.

Musical Evening

Lincoln detachments of the Lincolnshire Army Cadet Force received a visit on 5 December from the Corps of Drums of the 2nd Battalion the Royal Anglian Regiment. The Corps were at Newport Training Centre after playing the fanfare for the ceremony of opening the annual Christmas Market in Lincoln Castle Square. The Battalion has a close relationship with the Army Cadet Force in the county as many detachments are affiliated to the Regiment. Many of their battalion members served in Lincolnshire Army Cadet Force before taking up a career in the Regular Army.

The Corps of Drums demonstrated to the cadets their musical skills with marching and counter marching to regimental music. The Regimental Band of the Army Cadet Force joined them during the evening in the playing of further regimental marches for a short programme and a photoshoot.

County Sharpshooters

Cadets from Lincolnshire ACF were in good form when they attended the 49 (East) Brigade Target Rifle Meeting at Beckingham Ranges on the weekend 29-30 September 2001. The aim of the meeting was to encourage target rifle shooting for the cadets within the Brigade and maintain the interest that they had shown at other competitions in the year.

The Lincolnshire team had been in rigorous training with the county shooting officer, Capt Norman Vardy and his coaches over a period of months. At the end of the meeting their dedication and training was to be seen in the number of awards they received and they achieved a creditable second place against a strong team from Derbyshire. Fifteen other teams competed from the Brigade area.

In the LSW pairs match, cadets Darren Hill and Gareth Addelesea of Birchwood Detachment were clear winners and in the LSW Team Shield event cadets Darren Hill, Gareth Addelesea, Andrew Steer of Newport and Brett Lane of Sobraon proudly brought back the shield. In the individual Rifle match cadet Matthew Poucher of North Hykeham Detachment took a creditable third place and ended up on the day the proud winner of four medallions.



The successful shooting team.

Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland ACF

Evington Detachment

The Evington Detachment of the Leicestershire ACF recently celebrated moving into a new base with a presentation and display of military skills. Around 20 cadets enjoyed the first night in the Davenport Road Centre. Sgt Nick Cleaver said: 'It was very successful and we gained some new recruits as it was an open night for the community as well'. Now that the detachment has its own centre it will be able to hold meetings on a more regular basis.

The Lord Lieutenant's Cadet for Northamptonshire

Cdt Sgt Andrew Cox lives in Kettering and parades with the Montagu Detachment. He holds APC three-star and is training for four star and will attend the next senior cadet instructors cadre. He is an excellent shot and has been awarded his county colours as well as being captain of his detachment's shooting and drill squads. His role as Lord Lieutenant's Cadet is a 12-month tour over and above his other commitments. He was selected at interview by the Commanding Officer of the Northamptonshire Cadet Battalion following interviews and a recommendation from his detachment and area commanders. This is a much sought after accolade and fiercely contested by all the senior cadets in the counties. He has already accompanied Lady Juliet Townsend on official engagements but this year will involve far more duties than in previous years.

Anyone interested in joining as a cadet or instructor in Leicestershire, Northamptonshire or Rutland should contact Maj Andrews on 0116 2779701.



From left: Outgoing Cdt RSM Georgina Tabor from Kingsthorpe (ACF), Cdt FS Richard Cooke from Rushden (ATC), Lady Juliet Townsend Lord Lieutenant of Northamptonshire, Cdt PO Shane Daly from Far Cotton (SCC) and Cdt FS Victoria Lee of Rushden (ACF).



From left: Air Chf Mshl Sir Thomas Kennedy Lord Lieutenant of Rutland, Cdt Sgt Martin Gibbs (ATC), Cdt SSgt Leigh Brown (ACF) and Cdt FS Jessica Bailey (ATC).

Affiliated ACF and CCF Detachments



Above and below left: Haileybury School CCF cadets at work on the graves.

Haileybury CCF

Cadets from Haileybury School CCF recently undertook the task of restoring the area surrounding the site of the Martin-Leake graves which are located close to Haileybury School.

Arthur Martin-Leake was the first man to be awarded the Victoria Cross twice, only two other men have ever equalled this feat. In 1900 he sailed for the South African campaign against the Boers having enlisted as a trooper with the Hertfordshire Yeomanry. He was commissioned in the rank of captain and at Van Tonder's Hoek he won his first VC in 1902.

At the outbreak of war in 1914 he returned to Europe from India and joined the Royal Army Medical Corps and served with the Corps until 1918, having reached the rank of lieutenant colonel. In the Ypres Salient in Belgium he was awarded his second VC.



Gresham's School CCF

The new training year began with over 100 recruits joining the contingent and, with the problems caused by foot and mouth disease now largely overcome, the task of catching up on training that had had to be curtailed has begun in earnest. The Michaelmas term field days saw nearly 400 cadets enjoying a wide variety of activities, both military and adventurous. The sub-aqua unit undertook its usual visit to the Red Sea in October and Easter adventure training camp in the Lake District in April took place in conditions of almost unheard-of warmth and sunshine. The poet Wordsworth spoke of wandering 'lonely as a cloud' in the Lake District, but those who know the area say that there is no such thing as a lonely cloud in that part of the country.

Annual camp this year will be at Leek, a spot that we have not been to for several years, but which in the past we used to find ideally suited for our purposes. We are much looking forward to returning there.

RHP



Gresham's School cadets enjoy the unseasonal sunshine in the Lake District.

The Associations



The Essex Regiment Association and The Royal Anglian Regiment Association (Essex)

Warley

On 1 February 2002, our new Regimental Secretary, Maj David Gilchrist, officially took over from Maj David Thorogood who had held that post for no less than 16 years. Dave Gilchrist is most welcome at Warley and has speedily fitted in, becoming closely involved with all the activities of the Association. We hope very much that he will enjoy his new appointment. At present Rosayne Jones is running the office and we trust that her position will be made permanent before long. We also hope that David Thorogood is enjoying his bottle of malt!

Sadly, it was also the day when we said farewell to Joan Westover. Joan had been our administrative officer for ten years and had taken the decision to retire so she could spend more time with her husband who recently retired. It was a splendid occasion, fully recognising the high regard in which she had been held by all members of the Association, RHQ, and everyone she had come into contact with. In all there were 35 present including representatives from the Essex Regiment Association, Maj Gordon O'Neill Roe from Headquarters Infantry and Col Peter Dixon, Regimental Secretary, from RHQ Bury, with Queenie Martin and Brenda Robins.

Joan was presented with two matching glass flower bowls, one with the Royal Anglian Regiment crest and the other with the crest of the Essex Regiment. The 4th Battalion Comrades Association presented a silver salver. Rosayne made a cake and Joan herself produced one depicting the Regimental badge. A buffet completed the enjoyment of the occasion.

We all hope that Joan will enjoy her retirement and that she will be able to attend many of our functions. We shall certainly miss her.

Both Capt George Green and Mr Ted Hazle DCM have decided to step down from the 4th Battalion Comrades Association committee. Both have made a splendid contribution to the work of this strong branch over many years and we wish them well.

Bayeux

The 'Bayeux committee' is forging ahead with arrangements for 7 June 2002. An enormous amount of detailed planning has been necessary and Col Morgan and his committee have been burning the midnight oil to ensure that the function goes ahead like clockwork. There will be at least 30 Old Comrades on parade who served with the 2nd Battalion together with many others including the Lord Lieutenant of Essex, The Lord Braybrooke, and the Colonel of the Regiment, Gen Sir Michael Walker. The redeployment of the 1st Battalion the Royal Anglian Regiment has caused a few changes,



David Dewey, of Widford, Hertfordshire, crafting the memorial to the 2nd Battalion the Essex Regiment, the Pompadours.

but E (Essex and Hertfordshire) Company the East of England Regiment have stepped into the breach with great enthusiasm and we are most grateful to them for their help.

Events

We are looking forward to a busy programme of events during the summer. The full list appears in the current edition of *The Eagle* but it is worth remembering that the Reunion will be at Warley on 30 June and the Salamanca Lunch, this year to be held at the County Hotel in Chelmsford, will be on 19 July. We are hoping for a big turnout on both days. Those wishing to come should fill in the application forms sent out with *The Eagle*. At the reunion the inspecting officer will be our new Deputy Colonel, Brig Roger Brunt CBE.

Chapel services take place at Warley on the first Sunday in the month. All are welcome to attend.

The Associations



Presentation of the two bowls with, from left, Lt Col Peter Dixon, Maj David Thorogood, Joan Westover and Col Morgan.

Colchester Branch

The Royal Anglian Association are starting a new branch in Colchester. The first meeting was held on 10 April 2002 at the TA Centre. This is good news for all Royal Anglian and Essex Old Comrades and the new branch will establish a strong link with our Association.

Colchester Branch

The inaugural meeting of the Colchester Branch took place on 10 April 2002 with 70 members present. The idea of a Colchester Branch has been around for a number of years and was initially proposed by Maj Tony Downes, as far back as 1993. The aim of forming a branch in Colchester, or indeed any town or place in the world, and naming it the Royal Anglian Regiment Association, is not to run in competition with any present county or battalion organisation, but to move into the future encompassing any serving or ex serving member of our Regiment, including our Former Regiments, who may live in the area.

And so 'we are formed', and ready to maintain and develop the esprit de corps of the Regiment, as well as assist our members, in the way the branches of the Former Regiments are already doing. Anyone requiring more information about the new branch should contact Lt Col (Retd) Brian Davenport, 36 Catherine Hunt Way, Colchester, Essex CO2 9HS. Tel: 01206 564919.

The Rev Ken Belben TD ChStJ CF (TA)

Ken Belben died on 14 March 2002. This news was received with great sadness by all who knew Ken, a staunch supporter of the Association who will be remembered for taking our annual Remembrance Service for many years and for his work on the chapel committee. His funeral took place at Great Maplestead Church, Near Halstead, on 25 March. A full appreciation of his life will appear in *The Eagle* 2003.

'Chippy' Carpenter

We are also sad to announce the death of one of our oldest Old Comrades, 'Chippy' Carpenter. Born in 1906, EJ Carpenter joined the Pompadours in Cawnpore in 1926. He was in D Company when Maj Wilmer was company commander. In the 1994 'Eagle' there is a letter from 'Chippy' with some of his memories and will be found on page 21. He was a Regular attender at the Chapel of the Royal Hospital, Chelsea. Again, the story of his life will be told in the next *Eagle*.

Thurrock Branch

I usually write this report after our AGM in March, could it be that our editor knows something I don't? Not to worry.

As usual, most functions were attended by some personnel from the branch. These have included the 4th Battalion Comrades Remembrance Service, the RBL, Burma Star and RAFA, not forgetting the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Association dinner and dance. Our thanks to them for the invitation.

Other events included our annual visit to the Royal Hospital, Chelsea, in October, to parade with the in-pensioners for morning prayer. It was great.

Our November branch meeting was certainly different when our mayor, Cllr Barrie Lawrence, offered us the use of his parlour for our meeting. We, of course, accepted and both the mayor and our Association President, Col Geoffrey Morgan OBE DL, attended as guests. The meeting was followed by an excellent buffet.

In my last report I mentioned that we were going to try a midday lunch instead of our usual evening dinner and dance. I am pleased to say that this was a most successful occasion, held at the Foxhound at Orsett, and very much enjoyed by members and guests which included the mayor and his wife, the Lady Mayoress, and Mr Andrew Mackinlay, our local MP, together with Mrs Mackinlay. Altogether 38 sat down for an excellent meal.

Armistice services were attended by branch members in different towns and villages in the borough. I attended the service and parade in Grays/Thurrock and placed a wreath on behalf of the Essex Regiment on the war memorial. We also attended a short service at the Essex Chapel at Chelmsford Cathedral. We were unable to be at the Garden of Remembrance, Westminster, as it was on the same day as the funeral of our great friend and colleague Bill Brown. Bill had been our Standard Bearer for many years, never missing a parade even through failing health. We Will Remember.

Our next main event, to which we are all looking forward, will be on 7 June in Bayeux.

Here we will be unveiling a memorial to the 2nd Battalion The Essex Regiment, The Pompadours, who gave their lives between 6 June 1944 and the 8 May 1945.

4th Battalion Comrades Association

The 4th Battalion Association has again had a busy year, albeit one with organisational changes forced upon us when our Chairman,

The Associations

Capt George Green was taken seriously ill. As always, being the efficient Battalion that the 4th always was, the 'Table of Command' was adjusted and it has been 'business as usual' as far as the membership was concerned. This must reflect great credit on the organisation that George Green set up and we are indebted to vice-chairman Ted Hazle who has been acting as chairman since June, and to council member captain John Youles, who has been acting as Ted's deputy and the co-operation of all members of the council to allow the smooth conduct of business. We all wish George a speedy recovery.

The Association has suffered the inevitable 'casualties' since the last report was submitted, but is maintaining its strength by selectively recruiting from the successor Regiments and organisations such as the Army Cadet Force and Territorial Forces. We feel that if we are to keep the 'Essex' name and traditions alive we must foster and maintain close links with the serving soldiers today.

Our dinner and dance on 13 October was well subscribed, with over 120 members and guests sitting down to dinner in the TA Centre at Warley. All enjoyed a convivial evening of conversation, good food and wine, and dancing. Guests attending included Gordon Wren and his family and Maj AA Fisher OC A Company Essex Army Cadet Force (Royal Anglian)

The Remembrance Day parade at St Mary's Church Ilford was well attended, with Comrades being joined by a detachment from 3 Group, North East London Army Cadet Force, based at Gordon Road. We were honoured to have a 'VC' join us in church, Mr David Baker had been invited to join the services held in Ilford by the local historical society, where he proudly wore his grandfather's medals. David's grandfather was John William Sayers, a man of Essex (who lived in the Ilford area) who was awarded his VC posthumously; he died of wounds received on 21 March 1918 at Le Chateau while serving with the Queen's Royal West Surrey Regiment. Buglers from the Essex Corps of Drums, who led the parade back to the Gordon Road TA Centre, sounded the Last Post and Rouse. Lt Col Brewer commanded the marching contingent of Comrades and Maj

Gen Beckett took the salute. It is always a good feeling to swing into the gates at Gordon Field's, throw the mace up to cut the Royal Corps of Signals March and belt out the *Pompadours* as we come home. (Note: The author is still serving as Drum Major of The Essex Corps of Drums).

As always, we were made very welcome in the Messes of 36 Signal Regiment, where a first class lunch was laid on. It was nice to see that the painting of Monte Cassino, by Capt Tom Lucy, has been returned to Gordon Road and is prominently displayed in the Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess.

After a quiet winter period we held our annual memorial service at the Regimental Chapel at Warley on Sunday 17 March. This year, for the first time, we invited the cadets of A Company, Essex Army Cadet Force (Royal Anglian) and members of 45 Squadron, 36 (E) Regiment, Royal Corps of Signals to join us, both units are based at the TA Centre at Warley. After the service, Standard Bearers, Comrades and uniformed contingents marched past the Chapel behind the Essex Corps of Drums to the TA Centre. Our President, Lt Col GH Brewer, who was accompanied by Col GCP Morgan OBE DL, President of the Essex Regiment Association, took the salute. Light refreshments were then served in the TA Centre. All who attended deemed the change of format for the Service a great success.

It is with regret that I conclude this account of the year's activities by reporting that Capt George Green will be standing down as Chairman of the Association due to ill health at our AGM in April. Ted Hazle, DCM our vice-chairman, who has been standing in for George for most of this year has also stated his intention to stand down at the same time due to personal reasons. Both George and Ted have given unstinting and outstanding service to the Association for many years and I can only pay the highest tribute to them. Both of them have been made vice-presidents of the Association in recognition of their efforts on our behalf over many years and whoever is elected to fill these posts in April will have a very hard act to follow.



The Royal Norfolk Regiment Association and The Royal Anglian Regiment Association (Norfolk)

Regimental War Memorial Cottages

Last year the Trustees of the War Memorial Cottages decided that it would be in the best interests of the Regiment and current and future tenants of the cottages for Haig Homes to take over the cottages.

Haig Homes is a national charity dedicated to providing good quality housing for ex-servicemen. The charity has considerable financial resources, experienced staff and, as a housing corporation, access to central government funds. Over recent years it has assumed responsibility for many former Regimental cottages including those of the Suffolk Regiment.

Discussions are now taking place and the trustees are confident that they will proceed smoothly to the transfer and that the new arrangements will be in the best interests of all concerned. The Cottages will retain the name: Royal Norfolk War Memorial Cottages.

The Museum

The museum now has valuable additional storage space, having been granted the use of the former cellblock from the Shire Hall Courts. The block provides excellent storage space with purpose built racking which will enable the archives currently stored in the



The Regimental museum.

curator's office to be rehoused. This in turn will enable the Trustees to develop the curator's office as a study centre for researchers and scholars as well as providing more space for the curator and her helpers. The process of moving the archives has started.

The Associations

In the museum itself the Jamieson VC is now displayed along with his other medals, and the World War One Mural at the end of the trench system is complete. With the reopening of the Castle itself,

the Regimental Museum is receiving many more visitors and recent exhibitions such as that covering National Service have been particularly popular.



The Suffolk Regiment Association and The Royal Anglian Regiment Association (Suffolk) The Death of HRH The Princess Margaret

Members of The Suffolk Regiment will have been saddened at the death of Princess Margaret. The Princess was appointed our Colonel-in-Chief on 29 May 1953 following the return of the 1st Battalion from Malaya where it had won great distinction.

In the remaining six years of the Regiment's active life the Princess made no fewer than six visits: to meet 1st Battalion families in Germany, to attend an Old Comrades Reunion at the Depot; to present Colours to the 1st Battalion in Germany, to bid the 1st Battalion farewell at Colchester when leaving for active service in Cyprus; to visit the fourth Battalion at Benacre Hall and to join the Cambridgeshire Regiment at a service at Ely Cathedral to dedicate the Roll of Honour for the Second World War.

Most of us will have seen the Princess on one or more of those occasions and we remember her with pleasure then as a distinguished and busy member of the Royal family who found time to join us much more often than we might ever have expected.

News from the Branches

The winter saw all branches in good spirits with almost all report flourishing membership. And all appear to have had a seasonal party of one sort or another. For example, Felixstowe Branch excelled itself by running a very successful Christmas party attended by 64. And then, as if that wasn't enough, 42 members took off in a coach to visit the Isle of Wight. On that occasion darkest winter was banished as the sun shone down on the ferry!

In January Bury St Edmunds and District Branch held an extremely successful dinner at the TA Centre in Newmarket Road. With a number of guests, 56 sat down to an excellent meal. Then in March a large party attended The Regimental Chapel for a Service of Dedication of Memorial Plaques and Kneelers.

In March, also, a large number of members from different branches took the opportunity to visit the new Regimental Museum Gallery at Moyses Hall.

Memorial Cottages

On 2 February 2002 the Memorial Cottages at Minden Close and Out Risbygate were transferred to Haig Homes, a National Charity dedicated to providing good quality housing for ex-Servicemen. The cottages will continue to be called The Suffolk Regiment Memorial Cottages, the present occupants have the same rights and conditions of occupancy as before and ex-Suffolk Regiment soldiers (and their successors, East Anglians and Royal Anglians) will have priority when vacancies occur.

Haig Homes have considerable financial backing and a full time professional staff and the Trustees of The Suffolk Regiment are confident that the change is in the best interest of all concerned.

The Sinking of the Trooper *HMS Birkenhead*

This year marks the 150th anniversary of the sinking of the *Birkenhead* off the southern coast of South Africa. The ship was on its way to Port Elizabeth carrying reinforcements to regiments

deployed in operations against tribal uprisings in Natal. Among the troops on board there was a draft of 55 men of the Reserve Battalion of the 12th of Foot.

The *Birkenhead* struck a rock a mile off shore. Within 20 minutes it had sunk and of the 643 men and families on board 436 perished. All the women and children were saved and survivors told of the extraordinary discipline and self sacrifice of the officers and men which alone made it possible for the families to reach the shore.

To honour the courage of these men Commemoration Services were held in February in South Africa and in London at the Royal Hospital Chelsea. A party representing the Suffolk Regiment attended the service in London. Brig WC Deller OBE, Chairman of the Suffolk Regiment Council, laid a wreath and the Standard of the Bury St Edmunds Branch of the Regimental Old Comrades Association was carried by Mr D Johnson. Maj Jeremy Frere, late of the Suffolk Regiment, who retired to South Africa after leaving the Army, represented the Regiment at the Service held in Simonstown, Cape Province.



Anniversary of the sinking of *Birmingham*.

The Suffolk Museum Gallery

The new gallery in Moyses Hall Bury St Edmunds was duly completed to plan and formally opened by the Lord Lieutenant of Suffolk, Lord Belstead on 10 May 2002. He was accompanied by Maj General Sutherell and the Mayor of St Edmundsbury. The gallery is a credit to all those associated with its development and the history and traditions of the Suffolk Regiment are imaginatively displayed. It could not have happened without the generous financial support from the people of Suffolk, the local business community and members of the Association.

The gallery is well worth a visit. A relatively small percentage of the collection is on display in the new gallery so the main museum is still in the Keep, Gibraltar Barracks. It will be open on special occasions such as Minden Day and can be visited at other times by prior agreement.



The Cambridgeshire Regimental Association and The Royal Anglian Regiment Association

Death of Our Colonel-in-Chief

The following message was sent on the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother.

Lt Col WF Badcock MBE, President of the Cambridgeshire Regiment (TA) Association on behalf of all the members of the Regiment would like to offer their sincere condolences at the loss of their Colonel-in-Chief.

She has supported the Regiment over the years and will be sadly missed.

The following message was received, by return, from her Private Secretary.

Dear Col Badcock,

Thank you for your letter. I greatly appreciate your message of sympathy on the death of Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother, and was deeply touched by the sentiments you expressed.

I will, of course, pass on your condolences to the Queen and I know that Her Majesty would wish you to convey her gratitude to all concerned.

The Cambridgeshire Regiment Collection

Patrons: Col JGP Crowden KStJ JP Lord Lieutenant
Col WF Page MC TD

President: Lt Col WF Badcock MBE

Chairman: Capt Paul Leach

45a Cambridge Road Ely CB7 4HJ Tel: 01353 662685

Martin Boswell continues to maintain day to day supervision of the collection at Duxford. There have been no additions to our display, but Martin Boswell has rearranged certain exhibits and medals.

We are still awaiting the County Record Office's decision to take aboard and store some archives and photographs that we are not able to display. These have been amplified recently by further archives concerning the Ely Old Comrades Branch and various regalia belonging to Col Beckett that was in the hands of Roy Stubbings.

One new artefact that came to light in this haul was a metal bowl that had belonged to Sgt Bert Major, and used by him 'for all purposes' while held as a Japanese PoW. As Sgt Major was with a B (Ely) Company the bowl was offered to the Ely Museum and is now displayed there, appropriately labelled.

With the opening of the new Suffolk Regiment Museum in Bury St Edmunds, we have received a request to display the Regimental Colour belt there that was currently with the Royal Anglian Sergeants' Mess. This has been agreed and the belt has been returned. Colonel Pat Macdonald has taken charge of it and we look forward to seeing it alongside similar Suffolk Regiment belts in their new museum.

Martin Boswell has expressed concern about how the various other items loaned to the Sergeants' Mess have been displayed and we have now requested their return. However this does raise the question of the importance of ensuring that any future loans that are made from the collection are properly cared for.

The finances remain in good order and are looked after at Bury St Edmunds. Our thanks to Col Taylor and Major Fisk. The current balance of £4,307 is up from £4,210 as a result of small sales of the guide and Christmas Cards. We still have large stocks.

The major redistribution of Regimental artefacts held in various

stores is now complete and the principle 'job' of the Guardians must now be to see that our displays around the county, and at Duxford are kept 'fresh' and hopefully we will continue to add to them as new interesting items become available.

Please continue to be vigilant for any suitable items.

The Regimental Taxi

During 1957, to help with recruiting, arrangements were made to publicise our existence as the County Territorial Regiment. Being a University centre something out of the ordinary was thought more likely to attract attention in the City of Cambridge.

The Training Major, Maj PSW Dean, came across an advertisement for the sale of an old London taxi which he presented to the Regiment.

With the help and ingenuity of RSM Norman, and the local REME unit, the taxi was made roadworthy and painted in the Regimental colours of blue and black, together with the crest on the doors, and a pennant on the roof.

The taxi could be seen in Cambridge each week when pay was collected from the bank, it was used as the Commanding Officer's staff car, and as transport for the Regimental Dance Band and was named 'The Band Wagon'.

On one memorable occasion in 1959, at the Dedication of the Regimental 1939-1945 War Roll of Honour in the Regimental Chapel in Ely Cathedral, in the presence of the Colonel-in-Chief, HRH The Princess Margaret, the car, driven by QM Lt HH Norman brought up the rear. The Colonel-in-Chief expressed her delight, but declined the offer of a ride. Sadly, upon amalgamation in 1961, and after a hurried coat of black paint, the vehicle was 'disposed of'.



Princess Margaret being invited to ride in the car by the CO, Col WF Page.

The Associations

Information Required

Pte Frank Maidwell 58833046 2nd Battalion the Cambridgeshire Regiment died as a PoW, working on the Bangkok-Burma Railway, on 25 June 1943 and buried at the Kanchanaburi Cemetery, Thailand. If anyone has more details would they please send it to his niece, Mrs G Dumpleton, 90 Drakes Drive, St Albans, Herts AL1 5AD.

Extracts from the Regimental Chapel Guide and Handbook
From 'The Cambridgeshire Regiment in France - a glorious Record'
Printed by the Cambridge Chronicle 1919.

At a meeting of officers held in Cambridge on 27 June 1919, it was unanimously decided to take steps for an adequate Regimental War Memorial in Ely Cathedral. A small sub-committee was appointed to carry the matter through, and the Dean and Chapter of Ely have agreed to the general idea of the proposed Memorial, the design to be submitted to them, for approval.

It is proposed to fit up the disused chapel in the north transept of the cathedral as a 'Cambridgeshire Regiment Chapel'. In this chapel will be inscribed the names of those fallen in the war, and it will be the place where, in future, the Regiment's Colours will be deposited in case of need and the Old Colours preserved.

The design and scheme generally is now being worked out by Dudley Newman Esq, FRIBA. The existing chapel is in the Norman arch and embrasure. The necessary work to be done comprises a stained glass window, the erection of a small altar with hangings and furniture, the panelling of the walls to a height of seven feet in oak, and the provision of a small open-work oak screen across the exterior of the arch to form an entrance to the chapel. On the panelling of the walls will be placed a silver or bronze shield, on which will be inscribed the names of all ranks in the Regiment who have given their lives for their country.

The estimated cost has not yet been definitely ascertained, but the

more funds there are available the more complete the scheme of decoration can be made to the chapel. In addition it is hoped to erect a stone cross, costing approximately £299, in the neighbourhood of Ypres to commemorate the lengthy and glorious services of the Regiment in the Salient.

This appeal is made to surviving officers and all other ranks in the confident expectation that they will assist, as far as they can, the proposed Regimental memorial, as a worthy commemoration of fallen comrades and the years when all worked together for the good of the Regiment. An account will be opened at Messrs, Barclays Ltd, Ely, where donations can be sent to the 'Cambridgeshire Regiment War Memorial' or they can be sent to Lt Col GL Archer, Silver Street, Ely.

Obituaries

We are sorry to report the following death and express our deepest sympathy.

Mrs Deborah Fenn: Died in the Icen ward of Doddington Hospital on January 17. She had been a patient there since October and prior to this had lived with her daughter in March. Born in Littleport and in 1941 married Arthur Bernard Fenn, who was taken prisoner of War at Singapore. During this time she served in the fire service and delivered milk by horse and cart.

In the late 1950s she and her husband started a taxi business and she went on to drive a 29-seater coach, making her one of the very few female bus drivers in the area.

Following the death of her husband in 1972 she continued to work for the family travel concern.

For many years she was involved in the Cambridgeshire Regiment OCA and at the time of her death she was branch treasurer and vice-president.

The funeral service was held at St Peter's Church, March followed by interment at Eastwood Cemetery, March.



Royal Lincolnshire and Royal Anglian Regimental Association Stamford and District Branch

The *Springer* monthly newsletter continues to let members know about our various activities and the ongoing 'saga' of the 4th Battalion of 'The Lincolns' in north west Europe. We have had stories about Arnhem, our own visit to Arnhem and about the activities of the 4th Battalion in NW Europe. Reports about the findings of the 10th Battalion World War Two graves at Arras were many and varied, eventually we were told that they were found by some archaeologists;

war graves are being frequently found. As they were in an identical position with arms folded, probably were buried at a field hospital site especially as such a limited amount of brassware was found with no other means of identification. Re-interment will be private but a special ceremony on 9 April is being arranged.

On 10 September, we started on a memorable five-day tour of the World War One battlefields around the Ypres-Salient, an illuminating



Members of the Royal Lincolns together with National Servicemen at Birmingham's Hall of Memory, November 2001.

The Associations

historical experience...why we could not win battles and neither could the Germans! However, we managed to attend the special ceremony at the Menin Gate and visit St. George's Church in Ypres. Tour of the town of Albert on the Somme, Vimy Ridge and the Lochnagar Crater. We were shocked and amazed at the hundreds of names of our soldiers without known graves at Thiepval, Tyne Cot and the Menin Gate memorials where we left our Poppies. Of course we were not really aware of the 11 September atrocity in the USA and the anxiety at home!

On 11 October we had a very enjoyable branch meeting in the newly renovated Stamford Brewery Museum Restaurant. On 11 November, we paraded for the Royal British Legion Remembrance Parade attended by the mayor and council, also Col B Foster DL. There were more ex-Service and general public than ever before and more poppy wreaths on the memorial. We laid our poppy wreath with our Standard on Parade.

On 15 November we had our annual remembrance dinner. 50 members and friends sat down to a succulent roast beef dinner and all the trimmings, arranged by our member Eileen Miller. We thanked our welfare officer who had been busy and caring 'as ever', for those in his welfare section. He asked us to remember days gone by and the traditions and reputation of the Regiment. We were pleased to have Regimental Secretary Capt John Lee BEM with us.

On December 11 we held our Christmas meeting and party at the home of our secretary and his wife. A jolly time with Christmas refreshments and lots of mulled wine.

Christmas cards and gifts were taken out to eight members including the widows of recent past members, three members visited in hospital, receiving gifts of fruit. We are pleased to note that our veteran member Jack Lindly is still quite active and regularly joins in with our raffles. It is worth noting that our monthly raffles are essential to keep the branch funds healthy.

We started 2002 with our January ladies night, refreshments and punch of course! We were entertained with a delightful speaker describing the local Christmas birds and their songs - the feathered kind!

We followed on in February with our 'Sobraon' sausage and mash supper, lots of bangers and seconds, apple pie and coffee - 28 members and friends, able to use the sports club bar, had a very enjoyable evening. After the toasts to Her Majesty, the Regiment and branch, we had the pleasure of a piano playing during the evening, the songs we all knew.

Sadly, we lost one member during the year, an ex World War One 6th Battalion Lincoln (African and Italy). We are now 32 members, with six associate members and 15 honorary members (the ladies).

We will always welcome ex Royal Anglians. We meet on the second Tuesday of the month in the RAFA Club and pleased to receive stories and anecdotes from other branches and members that

we can publish in the *Springer*.

Capt Bill Simpson - Secretary

Poacher 2002 Reunion

On Saturday, 16 March 2002 over 300 veterans from the Royal Lincolns, the East Anglian and the Royal Anglian Regiments gathered at Springfields Exhibition Centre, Spalding, Lincolnshire for the third annual Poacher 2002 Reunion.

Maj Gen REJ Gerrard-Wright CB CBE DL gave the opening address and the evening events included a display by the Military Vehicle Trust of World War Two Military Vehicles; musical entertainment by the CS Big Band; grand raffle; buffet meal.

For the third year running a commemorative glass was given to all those in attendance. The glasses, with the Poacher motif, were sponsored by Coors Brewery and Springfields Exhibition Centre.

The Reunion continues to grow in popularity and next year's event has been confirmed for Saturday, 15 March 2003.

Royal Lincolnshire Regimental Museum

The Museum of the Royal Lincolnshire Regiment was started in the early part of the 20th Century as a purely regimental venture, located in the Regimental Depot in Lincoln. It was traditionally run by the Quartermaster of the day and was, frankly, little more than an amateur display. It was only seen by visitors who had a special interest (and had to go through quite a performance even to gain access to the barracks) and queues of recruits who were (sometimes reluctantly) marched through in the early weeks of their basic training. Following the amalgamation of the Regiment in 1960 and the consequent closure of the Depot, the museum was closed and, for the next 25 years, remained unseen and moribund.

In 1985 the Regimental Trustees negotiated an arrangement with the Lincolnshire County Council, the latter to take on the entire collection as an integral part of the Museum of Lincolnshire Life in Lincoln. The museum took on responsibility for the presentation of the displays, security and insurance on the collection while the artefacts remained the property of the Trustees. A successful partnership developed with advantages on both sides: the museum gained a valuable addition to its overall aim of reflecting another aspect of life in the county and the Regiment a vastly improved public image of its service over the 300 years of its history.

However, by 1995, the displays had become rather shabby and the Trustees decided to raise funds for a major refurbishment on the same terms. With much help from the National Army Museum who suggested and costed a design it became clear that this was a major undertaking and the decision was taken to apply for a Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) grant to raise the £225,000 required. This was, in itself, a major undertaking! It took some two years to complete



The Poachers 2002 Reunion.

The Associations



The Regimental Band.



Royal Lincolnshire Regiment in Malaya.



Colour sergeant 1863.



Second World War.



American War of Independence.

the bid and raise the £60,000 Partnership Funding needed to complement the £165,000 offered by the HLF. It then took something over two years to complete the refurbishment and the museum was formally re-opened by HRH The Duke of York in April 2000.

The design (by JANVS of York) is based on the theme of following the Colours. It is a modern, innovative and educational display with videos, multimedia, surround sound and an audio tour. Particular attention is given to the close links that the Regiment always enjoyed with the county: aspects of both social and military history are closely linked to the national curriculum.

The Trustees were recently notified that the museum had been granted a 'Museum of the Year' Award by the Association for Heritage Interpretation (AHI). AHI is the only national and

professional body for those working and teaching in the 'interpretative field' in the UK. It runs the prestigious 'Interpret Britain' awards, which recognise excellence in the interpretation of our national heritage. The museum came second equal out of 80 sites visited anonymously by AHI and the citation reads as follows:

'This museum takes a refreshing approach to the interpretation of military history by concentrating on the experiences and sacrifices of ordinary men who followed their Regimental Colours into battle.

'There is very effective use of mannequins to illustrate human stories. It is easy to connect with the figures and to understand a little clearer the hardships of warfare. The overall success is that the exhibition balances the pride of The Royal Lincolnshire Regiment with the realities of warfare over the last 300 years'.



The Royal Anglian Regiment and Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment Association

Change of Staff at Warley

Maj David Thorogood has finally finished at HQ Warley where he has been helping part time to keep the office open. He has done us well there and we will miss him.

Our new full time Regimental Secretary is Maj Dave Gilchrist, who has only just recently retired from the Royal Corps of Signals after 37 years' service at home and abroad. Already he shows great enthusiasm for the job and seems to have settled in very quickly.

Dave is a keen sportsman. He was captain of the Army Windsurfing team from 1996 to 2000, and last year was world champion of one of the competition classes. We wish him luck at Warley where he is house hunting.

On 1 February 2002 a small reception took place at HQ Warley, first to welcome Maj Gilchrist and then to wish Maj Thorogood good luck now that he has finally retired. He went home with a bottle of champagne.

The reception was also to say goodbye to another member of our excellent staff at Warley, when Mrs Joan Westover left after ten years. Joan has worked hard and long for us there and is highly regarded by all who had dealings with her. Now she has left to join her husband in retirement and we wish Joan good luck from us all.

The Regiment's Museum

The trustees of the museum, which is situated at the Luton Museum, Wardow Park, Luton, are pleased to report that the refurbishment display is now open to the public. At the time of writing neither the diorama nor the audio/visual display have been completed, and a few other modifications to the display are in progress.

Association Annual Wreath Laying Ceremony and Reunion

It was a dull day with slight damp to the air on the morning of the wreath laying Ceremony at Kempston on Sunday 18 November 2001.

This, however, did not daunt members travelling far and wide to attend this day of the reunion, when comrades of over 50 years meet and greet each other again with handshakes of affection. Tea and coffee were again served free of charge by the soldiers of 158 (Royal Anglian) Royal Logistic Corps(V) which was most appreciated. Bars at the TA Centre by courtesy of the Squadron and 754 Troop Royal Signals were also open for those who wished to purchase a longer or warmer drink until the parade started.

We were fortunate to have the Band of the East of England Regiment TA together with the Corps of Drums of The Regiment on parade with us.

The parade was basically the same as the previous years with the detachments forming up in 'The Keep' car park. With the Branch Standards and Wreath Laying Parties leading the Association, members marched through the old barrack's Keep to their position in front of the Regimental Memorial. The Vice President's Party took up their positions and a short service began and the wreaths were laid. On the completion of the service the parade turned left and the Standards and wreath parties took up their positions behind the Band, marching off on its designated route back to the rear of 'The Keep' for the march past, before halting on the car park in a three-sided square.

The Vice-President, Maj Robin Medley, addressed the parade, thanking members for a splendid turnout. He then presented certificates of merit to the following Association members: Mr WJ

Baggardige, Mr TA Cox, Mr HA Pike, Mr B Sutcliffe (Bedford Branch); Mr J Russell (Luton Branch); Mr R Austin, Mr R Dormer (Watford and Hemel Hempstead Branch).

This is the second year that the certificates of merit have been awarded to members for their distinguished service of over ten years or more to the Association.

The parade dismissed and members either went to the TA Centre to their packed lunches or to The Keep for a buffet lunch. The Corps of Drums played in The Keep during the luncheon and later in the TA Centre. During the luncheon the Chairman of the Association, Brig Angus Robertson, presented Mrs Joan Westover, (who retired from HQ Warley), with a crystal Royal Doulton wine decanter for her services to the Association over the last ten years. The Vice-President then presented Mrs Joan Sharpe with a bouquet in appreciation for all she does in connection with the Association's journal.

After the lunch in The Keep members and their wives and families returned to the TA Centre for the raffle which is run with lots of prizes every year by the Bedford Branch. It was then time to say goodbye for another year and make our weary way home.

Other Events Taking Place in 2002

The Association's annual dinner and dance will take place at the Castle Hall, Hertford on Saturday 22 June 2002. The Band of the Essex Yeomanry will again be playing during dinner with live music for the dance afterwards.

The 16th Foot Officers' Lunch will be at The Lion Hotel, Buckden on Thursday 27 June 2002 at 12.30pm.

The Officers' Goslar Reunion will be at Kettlebaston on Saturday 6 July 2002.

It is hoped that 45 branch members of the Association will visit the Royal Hospital, Chelsea on Sunday 29 September 2002.

News from the Branches

The **Bedford Branch** attended a service in early August 2001 at the Church of Transfiguration, Kempston which was followed by a buffet lunch in The Keep. The Peace Day on 15 August, with a service at St Peter's Church, Bedford, was attended by members and the Branch Standards. It was cold and windy in November when branch members helped to collect for the Poppy Appeal in Greyfriars, Bedford. Over five hours members collected £294.98. A service and wreath laying at the Forest Hill Road Cemetery, Bedford was supported by members and the Branch Standards.

This took place on 4 November for the men in the Highland Division TA who died locally in 1915 prior to going to France - 85 soldiers died of measles caught from the children. The graves had been sadly neglected, there being many more from all the three Armed Forces, including 'Bedfords'. Members attended the 11 November Parade on the Embankment and the Wreath Laying Parade and Reunion at Kempston on the following Sunday. On 8 December the branch held its dinner and dance at The Keep which was a great success.

On 7 November last year many members of **Hertford Branch** attended the rededication ceremony of the Hertford War Memorial, which has undergone extensive preservation work recently. On 18 November the branch had a good attendance at the Regimental Day at Kempston. On 10 February 2002 the branch held a very successful lunch.

The Associations

Five members of the **St Albans Branch** travelled to the Cenotaph for the Remembrance Day Parade and marched with the National Servicemen contingent. Twenty one members attended the Wreath Laying and Reunion at Kempston. The Branch Christmas party on 5 December was a very enjoyable evening.

The **Watford and Hemel Hempstead Branch** held a race night in October in aid of branch funds. Mick Allum represented the Association at the opening of the Field of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey. For the third year running the branch organised an Association party of 60 former national Servicemen to march in the Cenotaph parade at Whitehall. Close on 40 members attended the Reunion at Kempston. The branch dinner/dance was moved from December to February 2002 and proved a great success with 117 people attending.

Members of the **Luton and Dunstable Branch** attended the Wreath Laying and Reunion at Kempston on 18 November 2001. After the December meeting which took place on the 12th, a buffet and social was held at the Luton Naval Club, where the branch meetings are held, it was a great success.

Obituaries

The following members have died since the last issue:

Mr Frank (Ticker) Eames died on 5 November 2001. He served with the 1st Battalion Beds and Herts Regiment from 1933 to 1958, in India, Palestine, Tobruk, finishing as RSM at the Depot at Bedford.

Maj Cyril Rowton Hefford died on 8 November, aged 85. Served with the 1st Battalion Beds and Herts Regiment from 1937-41 in India, Palestine, Syria and Egypt.



The Royal Tigers Association and The Royal Anglian Regiment Association (Leicestershire)

Royal Tigers' Weekend 22 and 23 June 2002

As the East of England Regiment will be returning from its Annual Camp again, the Association will be unable to use the TA Centre at Ulverscroft Road this year. Nevertheless it is confidently predicted that the arrangements will be as good as ever.

The Annual General Meeting of the Association will take place in the Morley Suite at Devonshire Place, 80 London Road, Leicester at 6.30 p.m. on 22 June 2002. This will be followed by the 77th Annual Dinner at 7.15 for 7.45pm in the Oliver Suite at Devonshire Place.

On Sunday 23 June 2002 the Regimental Service will be at 11.00 am in Royal Tigers' Wood. After the service there will be a Regimental Reception and lunch in the Working Men's Club in Bagworth.

Entry to the annual dinner, the reception and the lunch will be by ticket only, so please apply to the Area Office.

HM The Queen's Jubilee Baton Relay

The Association sends its congratulations to Mr Ken McLavin on his selection as a Jubilee Runner for Her Majesty The Queen's Jubilee Baton Relay. This relay is the traditional opening to the Commonwealth Games.

Ken McLavin, who has already raised a large amount of money for charity in marathons and other running events, was nominated by Leicester City Council as a special representative of the community as someone who embodies community values, spirit and national pride. He will be one of 5,000 people who will take part in the relay in the UK, covering 500 towns and cities in 50 days.

Cyprus Veterans' Reunion

The sixth reunion of ex-members of the 1st Battalion who served in Cyprus 1955-1958 will be held at the Braunstone District Working Men's Club on 19 October 2002. Please make a note in your diary. Further details can be obtained from Mr Rob Freeman on 0116-2335716.

Christmas Reunion

Following the very successful December reunions in recent years, a follow up reunion has been organised for 6 December 2002 at the South Wigston Working Men's Club. Please make a note in your diary for this happy event. Further details will be in the autumn newsletter.

Regimental Benevolence

During 2001 the Royal Leicestershire Regiment Charitable Fund disbursed £7,600 of Regimental money, and also £4,515 from the ABF, to ex-Tigers and their families. In addition £3,000 was distributed as ABF annuities to ex-soldiers or their widows. The Regimental Charitable Fund remains very healthy.

In-Pensioners

It is nice to report that we now have another in-pensioner at the Royal Hospital to accompany Cpl Myles Foster. Sgt D ('Bomber') Wells was admitted on 3 March 2002 and is enjoying life in his new home.



The Northamptonshire Regiment Association and The Royal Anglian Regiment Association (Northamptonshire Branch)

Benevolence

During 2001 the Northamptonshire Regimental Benevolent Fund disbursed £4,755 of Regimental money, and also £1,165 from the Army Benevolent Fund. In addition, £1,950 was distributed to ex-soldiers or their widows as ABF annuities. The Regimental Benevolent fund remains very healthy.

Officers' Lunch Party

The Officers' Dining Club held their annual lunch on 9 May 2002. This was our last year at the Duke of York's Headquarters, where the caterers gave us a splendid meal. Even though several members were unable to attend this year, the happy family atmosphere made it another memorable occasion.

HM The Queen's Golden Jubilee

Mr Thornley will be the Regimental representative, with the Finedon Branch Standard, at the parade in St James's Park on 4 June 2002.

Northamptonshire Regiment Museum

As a result of worrying rumours and newspaper articles about disastrous cuts in staff and storage, the Chairman and Secretary have been to see representatives from the Borough Solicitor and the Borough Museum Service. As a result, the Chairman has received a letter signed personally by the Borough Solicitor confirming that there was 'no intention to take any action in relation to Regimental collections, of which we are merely the trustee rather than the owner'. This is excellent news but, as a result of staff reductions, the remaining staff will be unable to devote as much time to the Regimental collection as previously.

Regimental Chapel

The 1st Battalion Colours have been remounted on an acid-free board and properly attached to it and the brass plaque in memory of Brig Taunton has been refurbished, cleaned and lacquered. A proposal to improve the lighting has been agreed in principle by the PCC and detailed planning is now taking place with the Church's electrician. The profits from a Minden Band Concert have been earmarked for repairs to the Chapel roof.

Peterborough Branch

Our Annual General Meeting was held again at the TA Centre in London Road and, as in previous years, it was a very successful gathering with a good attendance. It was a chance for us to meet the present day Territorials in Peterborough and hear of their achievements and the success of their unit. Additionally the meeting provided an excellent sounding board for the branch itself as to what

their wishes were for future activities.

The branch has expressed a wish to visit the Regimental Museum in Northampton during the summer, and in the early autumn a return visit to the Royal Hospital in Chelsea. The Cambridgeshire Regiment is again organising the annual joint barbecue at Childers in Whittlesey on Thursday 18 July at 7pm. Do get a ticket and join us then. Our annual reunion dinner will again be held at the TA Centre in London Road on Saturday 19 October.

It is now 30 years since Maj Richard Hill took over the presidency of the branch, which is now looking forward to its 50th anniversary in less than two years' time.

Corby Branch

As the branch was now virtually moribund, the branch's remaining funds have now been handed over to the Northamptonshire Regiment Association. The branch Standard is in a case in the Royal British Legion Club in Corby.

Future of Reunions

The February meeting of the management committee held a discussion on the format of the reunions. It has been suggested that it should remain unchanged for 2002 and 2003, but that it might be better to hold a final parade in 2003, and that from 2004 the annual reunion should be a one-day event, on a Saturday. A questionnaire, requiring simple yes/no answers, will be sent out with the next newsletter.

Silver Dispersal

Apart from nine pieces being retained in RHQ for use at reunions, almost all the Northamptonshire Regimental silver has now been returned to a donor family, given away, lent or sold. It has been a sad but necessary exercise, although it is nice to record that many of the most splendid pieces have gone to 2 R Anglian or the Northamptonshire Regimental Museum. It is also gratifying that many Association members have been able to obtain a wonderful memento of their service.

Mr G Durrant

The area office is losing the services of Mr George Durrant, upon his retirement. The Trustees have agreed that, in view of his outstanding service, he should be made an honorary member of the Northamptonshire Regiment.

A short ceremony was held after the February management committee meeting to present him with a Regimental tie and with a cheque which had been collected in very generous donations from over 200 comrades.

Deaths and Obituaries

The Rev KF Belben TD ChStJ CF(TA)



The Rev Ken Belben, who died unexpectedly in hospital on 14 March 2002, at the age of 72, served for many years as Chaplain to TA, ACF and Volunteer units of the Essex and Royal Anglian Regiment. He also regularly conducted services at the Regimental Chapel at Warley, where his familiar presence will be much missed.

Kenneth Frank Belben was born at the small Essex village of Latton, near Harlow, in 1930. As a small boy he went to Fawbert... Barnard's School, where he became very interested in the Church of England. His Methodist grandparents took him to chapel, but he soon discovered that choirboys at the Parish Church were paid 2d for choir practice and 2s 5d for each service. Ken was quickly converted to the Anglican Church and increased his weekly income by 7d.

Gradually he genuinely and completely grew to love the church services, so much so that by the age of 11 he never wanted anything other than to be ordained a priest in the church. It was a passion he never lost. Even after he retired in 1995 he couldn't bear having a Sunday when he didn't take one service - better still two!

As a teenager Ken went to St John's College, Harlow. Then followed five years in the civil service, before going up to Durham University to read theology. In 1955 he was ordained in the Diocese of Chelmsford, where he spent the whole of his ministry. He was curate in three East End parishes - first at Plaistow, then Chadwell Heath and finally at Marks Gate. In complete contrast, in 1964, Ken was appointed vicar of the rural parishes of Great and Little Maplestead near Halstead. These parishes were united in 1914, just after the Knights of the Order of St John of Jerusalem became patrons of the living. The hospitallers had built a considerable estate at Little Maplestead in the Middle Ages, and the round church was designed especially to accommodate the Knights' own form of worship. Ken's long association with them led to him becoming Chaplain to the Order of St John from 1977. For 20 years, from 1975, until retirement, he was also rector of Gestingthorpe.

During his ministry Ken was very active in other fields as well. He was a local councillor, chairman of the Friends of Halstead Hospital and clerk to the local Deanery Clergy Chapter. He loved the village school at Great Maplestead - the children, the teachers and the parents. As if this wasn't enough he arranged pilgrimages to the Holy Land and other biblical sites. On retirement in 1995, Ken and his wife Janet went to live at Earls Colne. 'Retired' is of course rather a loose word to apply to clergy, and to Ken especially. He usually took one service each Sunday, mostly at Earls Colne, and he celebrated the Eucharist one day a month at Chelmsford Cathedral. From 1996 until his death he helped care in succession for three groups of parishes during their interregnums, and when he died he

was just completing a year as Chaplain to George Courtauld, High Sheriff of Essex.

The Church of St Giles at Great Maplestead was solidly packed for Ken's funeral, a telling testament of a highly-regarded and much-loved parish priest and padre. The Essex and Royal Anglian Regiment Associations were represented by Col Geoffrey Morgan. Many former members of the units served, and served in, by Ken also attended.

Ken was the devoted husband of Janet for nearly 47 years, a wonderful father to his daughters Susan and Wendy, and the super grandfather of Jemma, Sarah, Hayley and Mark. Our deepest sympathy goes out to them all.

JFH/PS

WO2 Eddie Davies

On 8 January 2002. Formerly CSM A Company 1 R Anglian and CSM Tiger Company 4 R Anglian.

Brig WT Dodd OBE

Brig Bill Dodd died in Cyprus on 2 April 2002, aged 65. He commanded 3rd Battalion the Royal Anglian Regiment 1976-1979 and was Deputy Colonel of the Regiment for Bedfordshire Hertfordshire and Essex 1987-92. A full obituary will appear in December's issue.

Capt KG Ford

On 22 January 2002 late the Northamptonshire and the Royal Anglian Regiment.

LCpl DJ George

LCpl Darren George was tragically shot and subsequently died of his injuries on 9 April 2002 while serving with the 1st Battalion in Kabul. An obituary will appear in December's issue.

Maj MKD (Mike) Gunton



Maj Mike Gunton of New Romney died, aged 71, on 4 November 2001. Two buglers from the 1st Battalion played calls at his funeral in Kent where an address was given by Capt Freddy Herring who regarded himself lucky enough to have been one of Mike's friends for more than 50 years.

Born 23 October 1930, Mike joined the Army after a great school career at Christ's Hospital where he was captain not only of rugby, but of cricket and boxing too. He entered the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst in the autumn of 1949. I watched from the sidelines while he performed brilliantly in all the sports and in every military activity and earned himself a formidable reputation. He became the 1950s version of a 'superstar'.

Mike was commissioned into the Royal Norfolk Regiment in 1951. He was a really impressive man, with all the qualities one

Deaths and Obituaries

would like to see in oneself. But he had another great asset that one might politely call 'cosmetic'. He looked very distinguished and rather senior before he was 21. I will never forget the day he joined the 1st Battalion of the Royal Norfolk Regiment, as a very young second lieutenant, at Dover Castle. He walked into the ante-room for the first time just before dinner. Most of the officers were there and most of them jumped to their feet like scalded cats when they saw him. Not just politely - but as if a visiting General had walked into the room. I don't know who was the most embarrassed.

I was lucky enough to serve with Mike in England, Korea and Hong Kong, and for me and many others his friendship made it an unforgettable time. We still competed, of course, but only for fun - a kind of continuous 'one-upmanship'. Mike carried the competition and the 'one-upmanship' a bit far, we thought, when he proposed marriage to Gen Hayes' daughter, Monique. But no-one could blame him for that! They were married in 1955.

In the Korean War, Mike was an outstanding young commander - brave, decisive, and very reassuring. He was as steady as a rock in hard or dangerous times, and just the same when times were good. He was a born leader - and he believed in leading by example, from the front. His soldiers would have followed him anywhere - and indeed they did. When he was wounded in close-quarter fighting on a night patrol, his men carried him a long way back to his company position, in the dark and with enemy patrols in the area. His brother Brian and I have agreed that if he hadn't been Mike, they might well have been unable to take on such a difficult and dangerous rescue.

After that introduction to the Regiment and to military service came the honour of a summons to England to take part in the Coronation Ceremonies of 1953. The late Maj Neil Pullen carried the Queen's Colour and Mike carried the Regimental Colour. He continued his boxing prowess by winning the Hong Kong inter-service heavyweight boxing in 1954/5.

Mike served in many parts of the world: 1954-55 with the Regiment in Hong Kong, based in the New Territories close to the Chinese border; 1956-58 with the King's African Rifles in Kenya (where the dreaded Idi Amin was a warrant officer in his battalion - though I'm sure he never got the better of Mike) and 1962 in British Guiana. Between 1965-69 Mike was on active service as a company commander with the Malaysian Rangers in Malaya and Borneo, where he made a great name for himself during the troubles of the 1960s. He also served nearer home: at The Depot 1955-56; on Divisional Staff 1958-61; with 1 R Anglian in Felixstowe as a company commander under CO (later General) Jack Dye 1962-64; in various interesting and demanding staff appointments in England 1969-74; in the British Army of the Rhine with 1 R Anglian at Celle 1974-76 and at Div HQ Herford 1978-82; with the United Nations force in Cyprus, in action against the EOKA terrorists, 1976-78. In all these situations and in all these places Mike served with the same dedication and the same distinction as he did in his early years.

After serving as recruiting officer Birmingham 1982-86, Mike retired from the Army but he still hadn't had enough. He continued to serve as a retired officer, running the ranges and training areas at Lydd (a job he really enjoyed, because he loved the country and its wildlife, and he loved to live at home) until he finally retired, for the second time, in 1992.

In addition to all this, in addition to a lifetime of distinguished service to his country, Mike achieved his most important success of all: a long, happy and loyal family life: with Monique, with delightful twin daughters, Marieanne and Noelle, and two lovely granddaughters, Philippa and Nicola - and a very large number of good friends. Mike was a man of great achievement and fine qualities: integrity, courage, determination, loyalty, great kindness and good humour and the high principles which were natural to him. He was an inspiring man, and I think he was a real Christian soldier.

All of us who knew him, loved him and respected him, and I'm sure none of us will ever forget the fine person that he was. He'll always be with us in spirit and in memory.

FH

Sgt John Frederick Newcomb

Sgt John Frederick Newcombe died on 25 March 2002 aged 64. He served with RAOC 1956-68 and with 1 Royal Anglian 1968-1980.

Maj Anthony D Russell MBE

Tony Russell, born in 1919, first joined the Royal Leicestershire Regiment TA in 1937 and was called to the Colours in 1937. He served with the Leicesters in various stations throughout the war, including the withdrawal from Norway. In 1946 he was posted as a CSM Instructor at Mons Officer Cadet School in Aldershot under the watchful eye of RSM Brittain, a man of immense size with an equivalent personality, who, he readily admitted, taught him a great deal: the two became close friends. In 1950, under the Midland Brigade system, he was posted to the 1st Battalion the Royal Lincolnshire Regiment then stationed in Egypt. He was to remain with that Regiment until 1958, becoming RSM in 1952 and it is in that appointment where he became little short of a legend! Badged Royal Anglian following the amalgamations in 1960, he remained a member of the new Regiment until his retirement from the Army in 1974.

Tony (or Yedder as he is better remembered by most) was the epitome of an RSM. Always immaculately turned out himself, he expected nothing less of everybody in the Battalion, and showed no reluctance in expressing his displeasure when necessary regardless of rank! Though fairly small of stature he had a fine bearing and real presence with a steely eye which, it was said, could, by a glance, open an oyster at 50 yards! He was a highly professional soldier in every respect - knowledgeable, efficient, fearless and led by example. He ruled with a rod of iron but was always scrupulously straight and fair and, underneath his somewhat intimidating exterior, was a most kind and caring man who earned enormous respect and much affection from all of those with whom he served. The tales are still told time and again!

In 1957, while serving in Malaya, Tony was struck down by tuberculosis and spent the next 13 months in hospital. On his release from hospital in 1958 he was posted as RSM at the Depot in Lincoln and on its closure went as Garrison RSM at the REME Depot in Bordon. Commissioned in 1963 he was posted ERE to the Royal Signals in Bulford (where he earned the MBE) and from there, in 1970, went as a major to run a training camp at Troon in Scotland from which he retired in 1974. In his latter years Tony worked in the office of the Belleisle Golf Club, Ayr - from which he finally retired, to settle in Scotland, in 1985.

Tony was an unforgettable character who set a standard of professional soldiering to which all should aspire. Sadly, ill health and geography meant that, in latter years, we saw much less of him and his charming wife, Joan, whom he married in 1939, than we would have liked. Together they set a perfect example of how to make the very best of the turbulent lifestyle that is part of being married in the Army. To her and their daughters Victoria and Julie we extend our deepest sympathy.

REJG-W

Maj TH (Tom) Styles

Tom Styles died unexpectedly, aged 73, on 19 February 2001. Born on 13 July 1927, most of Tom's service was with 1 Royal Norfolk. He said: 'Britannia was my capbadge and my first loyalty was always going to be to the 9th.'

From April 1945 to September 1946 his first career was with the Royal Navy then the Royal Marines before going to the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst.

Tom served first at the Depot until 1947, then with 1st Battalion the Royal Norfolk Regiment in Germany and at the Depot until 1949 before a posting to the Malay Regiment 1949-51. Between 1951 and 1955 Tom was intelligence officer in Korea, boxing officer in Hong Kong in 1953 and then in Colchester. Succeeding Maj Ben Chapman as OC Training Wing at the Depot in 1955 he then went in 1957 as Adjutant to 1st Battalion, the Singapore Regiment until 1960, before rejoining the 1st Battalion, the Royal Norfolk Regiment, in Berlin, thence to Dovercourt and Guyana until 1962. As an East Anglian he went to the Depot in Bury St Edmunds 1962-64 4th/6th Royal Lincolns TA 1964-66 then to the FARELF Training Centre Singapore before resigning in 1968.

Tom then had a successful career in industry. In recent years he was a regular attender at the Royal Norfolk Regiment Officers' Dinner Club.

Following a stroke, Tom became severely immobile and went to live at the Royal Star and Garter Home in Richmond. He married Margaret in 1971 and is survived by her, son Ben and daughter Jacqueline.

J.L.R

Cpl Geoffrey Craig Towler

Geoffrey Towler of the Poachers was tragically killed in a road traffic accident on 15 February 2002. Cpl Towler hailed originally from East Ham, in London. He joined the 2nd Battalion the Royal Anglian Regiment in 1992 while it was serving in the armoured infantry role in Celle, Germany. Over the ensuing ten years, not counting a brief sojourn in civvy street, Cpl Towler followed the Battalion to Warminster, Cyprus and Chepstow. He participated in all the major exercises and completed operational tours in Northern Ireland. Cpl Towler was one of the stalwarts of the Mortar Platoon and it is there that he left his mark.

He was a gifted soldier, professional to his fingertips. A hard, fit man with tremendous personality, he was a gifted instructor and was able to enthuse his students with ease.

On a personal level, he was humorous, approachable and patient; always ready to look out for the interests of his soldiers and fiercely loyal to his friends, the platoon and the Battalion.

Cpl Towler is particularly remembered for his passion for football. A talented player himself, he represented the company and Battalion and was an ardent Hammers fan all his life.

As a soldier, sportsman and devoted family man, Cpl Towler will be sadly missed. Our deepest sympathies extend to his wife, Claire and their children Joe and Aimee.



Cpl Geoffrey Towler.

Book Reviews

A Tiger and a Fusilier

The stories of two young boys both of whom were in the care of the Leicester Board of Guardians and were admitted to the Leicester Union Workhouse and then transferred to the Countesthorpe Cottage Homes. Each of them went on to be awarded the world's most coveted decoration for gallantry during the First World War. Both Pte Buckingham and Capt Gee received the Victoria Cross from King George V at Buckingham Palace.

For more information contact the author, Derek Seaton. Cheques (£9.69 including postage and packing) should be made payable to D Seaton, 78 Spinney Drive, Kirkby Grange, Botcheston, Leics LE9 9FG. Telephone (01455) 824511.

The book contains 80 pages and 98 illustrations.

Net proceeds from the sale of the book will be donated to the charitable funds of the Royal Leicestershire Regiment and the Royal Fusiliers.

Who goes there? Friend and Foe

by Sustainer

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or the three books for only £32 (cheques payable to the Army Benevolent Fund please) from Sustainer Books, Freeport LON 18568 London N19 4BR. Tel: 020-7263-5854. Or visit the website www.sustainer.co.uk (secure server).

Once again the Army Benevolent Fund has captured another selection of Sustainer's entertaining stories about service life. So far their first two collections have raised over £11,000 for benevolence – money that could be helping our soldiers. The latest book, *Friend & Foe*, measures up to the previous ones and, with Piscator's illustrations, produces a distinctive 'house' style. As Prince Philip says in his foreword: 'I congratulate both Sustainer and his illustrator, Piscator, in producing this amusing, affectionate and, in places, provocative, book.' We can all recognise the events he recounts; indeed, we may be in some of them!



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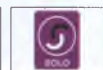


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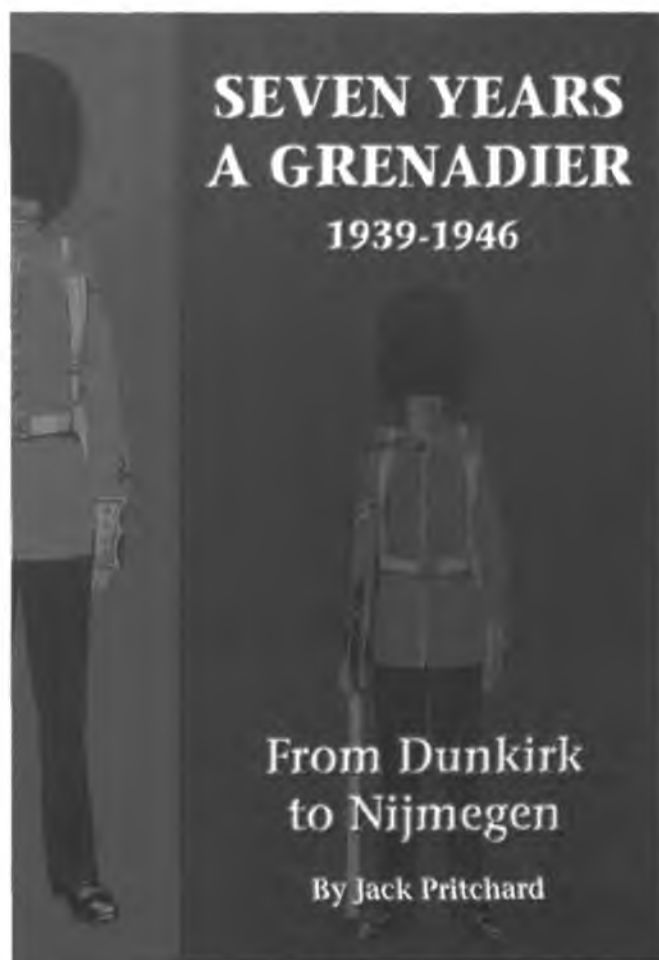
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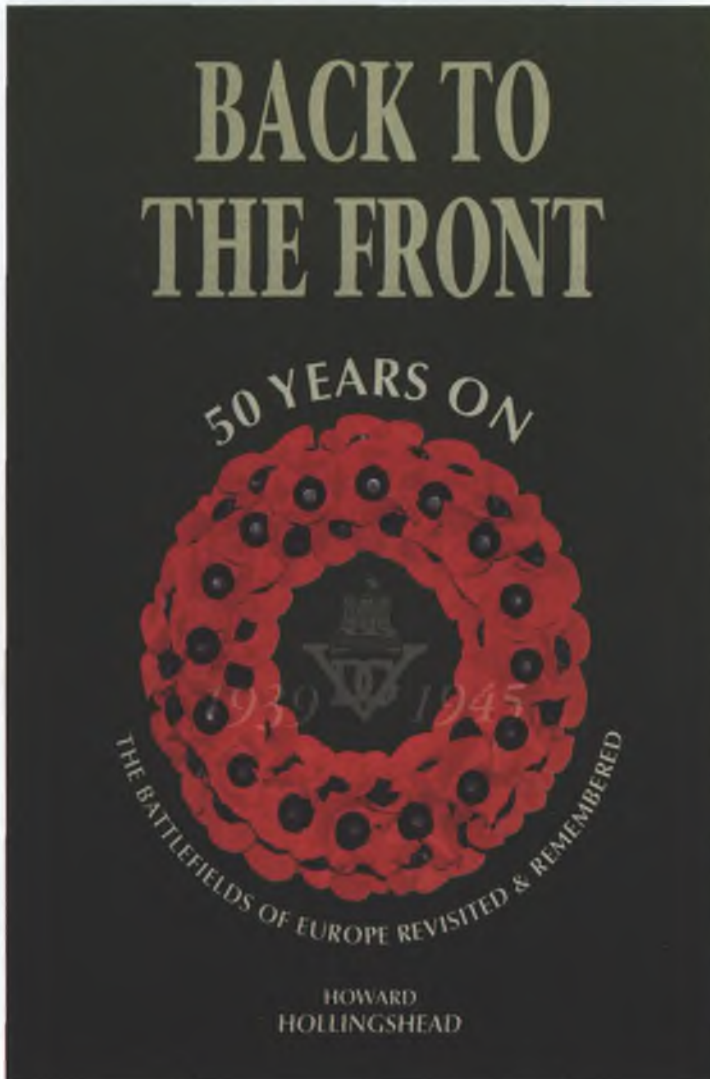
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