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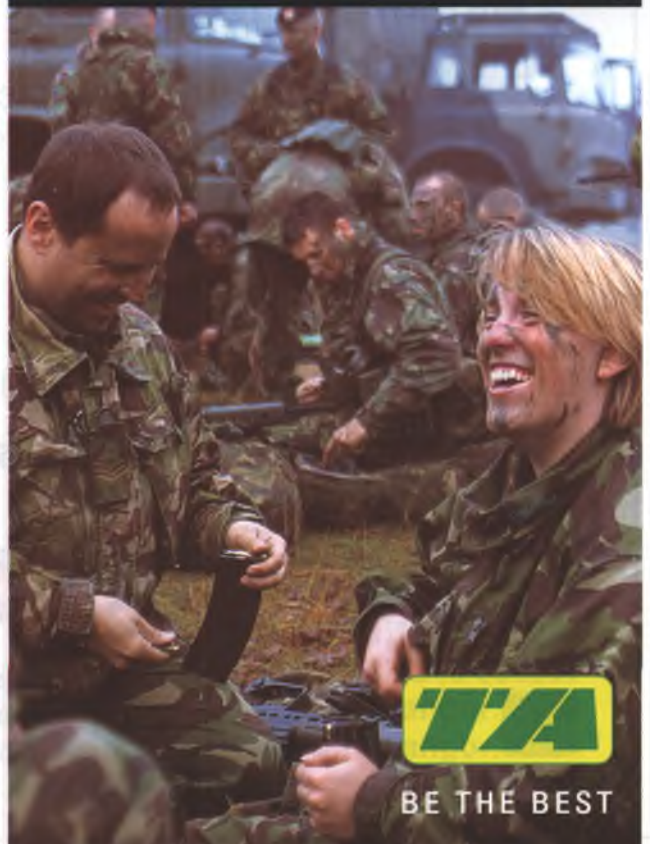
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June 2003
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Front cover

The Poachers carrying out BART training at RAF Manston.

Back cover

LCpl Wand, a member of the Vikings ski team.

Regiment and Museum Internet Website

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

From the Colonel of the Regiment

The last six months have demanded from the operational component of the Regiment considerable flexibility, adaptability, and a sense of humour. Preparations for and the conduct of fire-fighting duties in response to the prolonged series of strikes by the Fire Brigades Union have been a major commitment for both Regular Battalions throughout the period, and a serious constraint on their ability to train, recruit and respond to other operational tasks. It is to the considerable credit of all concerned that Battalions have seized every opportunity to overcome problems and continue to train and gain operational experience. The 2nd Battalion's transition from a long planned Battle Group jungle exercise in Belize, which became a victim of the strike, to an expanding, rolling two-company operational deployment to ISAF in Kabul, was a model of agility. By the end of the commitment in October, 60 per cent of the Battalion will have completed a tour with ISAF. This was a classic example of '*Carpe Diem*'.

Our companies of the East of England Regiment (EER) provided basing facilities for units deployed on fire-fighting duties but, more significantly, fielded a composite platoon for operations in Afghanistan and mobilised 18 individuals to take part in war fighting operations in Iraq. The two Regular Battalions provided a total of 25 volunteer individual reinforcements for Iraq, most going to our sister Queen's Division Battalion, 1 RRF. The EER is now mobilising a further 112 officers and soldiers for follow on operations.

At Regimental level two initiatives are under way. I have written to all captains and majors explaining the Regimental dimension in career management and encouraging them all to keep RHQ informed of their aspirations and intentions. If, as a Regiment, we are to make the most of our people and enable them to fulfil their potential, we need, in the closest co-operation with the staff of MS, Commanding Officers and individuals, to take a real interest in career development. This subject will now constitute a separate part of each six monthly Regimental Council Meeting.

In May the Council considered a paper on how we should make best use of our limited RHQ resources, including our Area Secretaries. The Council decided that, while continuing to underpin the activities of our forebear Regiments, the work of Area Secretaries needs to be progressively rationalised and re-focused as part of the overall Royal Anglian Regimental structure. As part of this process, it is intended to build county committees to synchronise Regimental activities in each county of the Regimental area. These developments will take time, patience, co-operation and sensitivity to implement, but are essential if the Regiment is to be in a position to meet future challenges.

Looking ahead, the 1st Battalion, which is to be warmly congratulated on their hard-earned and richly deserved awards for last year's tour in Kabul, having prepared carefully, are about to launch the Bowman conversion programme for the Field Army. This is a professional, intellectual and practical challenge of considerable significance that needs the maximum support of all members of our Regiment that are in a position to help. The Second Battalion's preparations for their next task, a residential tour in Ballykelly in early 2004, are already well underway, while our companies with EER are continuing to grapple with making their contribution to the Civil Contingency Reaction Force (CCRF) in 49 Brigade concurrently with meeting their mobilization obligations. Regimentally, 14 September sees the first of our Regimental Days being held at Duxford. I encourage strongly all members of the Regiment and forebear Regiments to attend what is planned to be a thoroughly enjoyable family day out in an exciting and interesting new location.



Maj Gen JCB Sutherland CB CBE, Colonel of the Regiment.

Underpinning all this activity, continues the battle to recruit and retain quality soldiers. We are doing well, but have no grounds at all for complacency. Analysis and experience shows that higher quality recruits are more likely to win through training and excel in units. Since there are now restrictions on the numbers of recruits that are being accepted for training, it is crucial that we fill our vacancies with individuals who have the qualities to succeed and the commitment to serve with the Regiment. Within Battalions, retention, which has always been important, is now crucial if we are to man our units to their full establishment. This is obviously important for the operational effectiveness of the units, but is also likely to be of crucial significance in deciding the future size and shape of the Regiment. As in so many other things, the Battalions are in the lead and playing a crucial role, but this is the business of everyone in the Regiment, and indeed our forebear Regiments where they are in a position to help. Recruiting and retention are vital, second only to operations.



The Regiment

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TA Centre, Clare Street, Northampton NN1 3JQ
 Tel: 01604-635412
Area Secretary: Maj IRJ Dexter

Area Office Lincoln

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

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

Regimental Museum

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

Battalion Locations

1st Battalion

Elizabeth Barracks,
 Pirbright,
 Surrey GU24 0DT

Lt Col EEC Thorne MC

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
 (Des Lt Col RCJ Goodin MBE)

Regimental Representatives

Army Training Regiment, Bassingbourn: Maj AG Grinonneau

Infantry Training Centre, Catterick: Maj I Couch

RMA Sandhurst: Capt IM Chance

Army Foundation College Harrogate: Capt JD Inch

Personalialia

Honours and Awards

New Year's Honours List

MBE
Maj RCJ Goodin

Operational List (Afghanistan)

MBE
Maj SJR Browne
MID
Sgt KG McHenry
QCVS
Lt Col PD Jones MBE

Joint Commander's Commendation

Capt CBK Barry
Sgt JR Eccles

Commander ISAF's Commendation

CSgt FDL Pascall
Cpl BJ Richardson
Pte SJ Lathangue

Senior Appointments

Maj Gen JC McColl CBE DSO was appointed Commandant Joint Service Command and Staff College in March 2003
Brig RM Brunt CBE to be Director Operational Capability (London) in August 2003

Commissioning

The following were selected for commissioning in 2003:

WO1 (RSM) PN Blanchfield
WO1 (RSM) DM Hazlewood

The following were commissioned on 11 April 2003:

2Lt PM Martin
2 Lt DJ Robinson

Promotions

The following are promoted to the rank of substantive Major on 31 July 2003

A/Maj CBK Barry
Capt JD Carnegie
A/Maj FJR Grounds
A/Maj JD Hughes
Capt SN Pallant
Capt SC Worthy

Postings

Capt EL Paden	from SAAVN to 5 Regt AAC	Nov 02
Capt GL Allen	from 1st Bn to ITC Catterick	Dec 02
Capt APR Bowman	from 1st Bn to 43(Wessex) Bde/7 Regional AFH	Jan 03
Lt M Duppa-Miller	from 1st Bn to ITC Catterick	Jan 03
Maj DC Napier	from HQ Land to Command Field Army HQ	Jan 03
Lt MA Nicholas	from HQ 3(UK) Div to 1st Bn	Feb 03
Lt Col SJ Bacon	from HQ LWCTG (G) to DMCS London	Mar 03
Capt NJ Haden	from 2nd Bn to 6 MI Coy, 2MI Bn	Mar 03
Capt MR Evans	from 1st Bn to JACIG (AE)	Apr 03
Lt Col JE Harris	from Battlegroup Training Unit to HQ ATRA	Apr 03
Capt PJ Messenger	from 1st Bn to ITC Wales	Apr 03
Capt DJ Moss	from 9 Regt AAC to 5 Regt AAC	Apr 03
Maj CBK Barry	from ITC Catterick to 1st Bn	Apr 03
Lt TGPB Coleman	from 1st Bn to ITC Catterick	May 03
Lt AS Dobbin	from ITC Catterick to 1st Bn	May 03
Capt TW Gregory	from ITC Catterick to 1st Bn	May 03
Capt PA Munciey	from 1st Bn to HQ 20 Armd Bde	May 03
Maj AE Eaton	from 1st Bn to DCI(A)	Jun 03
Capt SN Pallant	from HQ 20 Armd Bde to 2nd Bn	Jun 03

Capt FA Ralph MBE	from 2nd Bn to ITC Catterick	Jun 03
Col RM Chisnall OBE	from DOMA to IMATT (Sierra Leone)	Jul 03
Maj P D Bailey	from Defence Academy to DGM IPT	Aug 03
Maj AB Beart	from 1st Bn to UNMO (Sierra Leone)	Aug 03
Maj CS Calder	from JSCSC to HQ 20 Arm'd Bde	Aug 03
Maj ML Elphee	from Defence Academy to DII Convergence- UNICOM	Aug 03
Maj PS Leslie	from JSCSC to HQ UK Sp Comd	Aug 03
Maj ACE Marinos	from BTU to 2nd Bn	Aug 03
Maj NFC Nottingham	from HQ Land to HQ ARRC	Aug 03
Capt TB Mellar	from JACIG(AE) to ITC Catterick	Aug 03
Maj AW Price	from TRACU IPT to 1st Bn	Aug 03
Capt SR Smith	from HQ Lond-Dist to 2nd Bn	Aug 03
Maj AE Todd MBE	from 2nd Bn to HQ PAT GP and ASPT	Aug 03
Maj DG Vincent	from 2nd Bn to EER	Aug 03
Maj JM Woodham	from DBE to 1st Bn	Aug 03
Maj JCJ Wright	from 2nd Bn to BDS (Washington)	Aug 03
Maj AM Wylie	from 1st Bn to MOD Abbey Wood	Aug 03
Lt PD Connolly	from 2nd Bn to ITC Catterick	Sep 03
Maj SD Etherington	from 2nd Bn to HQ Land	Sep 03
Capt J Hancock	from 1st Bn to OPTAT	Sep 03
Capt PA Harris	from ITC Catterick to 2nd Bn	Sep 03
Maj JJW Hart	from DGM IPT to RAF College	Sep 03
Lt AJF Houchin	from 2nd Bn to ITC Catterick	Sep 03
Capt SF Roberts	from ITC Catterick to 2nd Bn	Sep 03

Left the Army

The following have left the Army. We hope to see them from time to time at Regimental functions:

Capt CD Hoyles April 2003
Maj WJ Saunders April 2003

Regimental Matters

Area Secretary, Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland

Maj Ian Dexter has succeeded Lt Col Anthony Swallow as Area Secretary for Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland. Maj Dexter was commissioned into the Royal Anglian Regiment in 1972 and served with both the *Pompadors* and *Vikings* before transferring to the RAOC in 1975. We welcome him back to the Royal Anglian fold.

Lt Col Anthony Swallow retired in March 2003 having been Area Secretary since 1996. The Regiment is extremely grateful for his contribution over the years and we wish him every happiness in his well earned retirement. In fact, his retirement is likely to be very temporary, as he is heavily involved in the creation of a new museum for the Royal Leicestershire Regiment.

The Regimental Day - 14 September 2003

This year the Regimental Day will be held at the Imperial War Museum, Duxford on Sunday 14 September. The programme for the day will be:

1000 hrs	Association Annual General Meeting
1100 hrs	Muster for Drumhead Service
1130 hrs	Drumhead Service
1215 hrs	March Past
1230 hrs	Bars and stalls open
1500 hrs	Display by the Minden Band and Corps of Drums of 1st Battalion, 2nd Battalion and East of England Regiment
1700 hrs	Bars close

Entrance to the event will be by Gate 1 (see enclosed map). Members of the Association are encouraged to use their Association Card to facilitate entry.

This year there will be a greater number of stalls and sideshows which will include bungee running, shooting, football and bouncy castle. Those attending will also be able to visit free of charge the

Regimental Museum, which is situated in the Land Warfare Hall, and the rest of the Imperial War Museum.

Please come along and help make our Regimental Day a success.

Regimental Benevolence

During the six-month period 1 October 2002 - 1 April 2003 the Executive Committee of the Regimental Benevolent Charity dealt with 54 benevolent cases disbursing a total of £10,472. The Regiment made a donation of £12,000 to the Army Benevolent Fund in 2002 and £2,000 to each of our former Regiments. During the past year the Army Benevolent Fund disbursed a total of £49,151 to past and present members and their families, of the Regiment and their antecedent regiments.

Regimental Trustees

Col Richard Wilkes has stood down as a Regimental Trustee. The Colonel of the Regiment at the Annual Officers' Dinner in November 2002 acknowledged the contribution he had made both as a Trustee and as a member of the Investment and Audit Committee. He is replaced by Capt Stuart Lane who served in the 1st Battalion.

Regimental Shop

The Regimental Shop is run by the staff at RHQ. Details of items for sale can be found in the enclosed leaflet. All profit from the shop goes to the Regimental Association.

Regimental Uniform Shop

RHQ operates a shop selling second hand officers' uniforms. More details can be obtained from the Assistant Regimental Secretary, Maj John Fisk.

Next Edition of Castle

Contributions for December's issue of *Castle* should reach the Editor no later than **15 October 2003**. As always, any letters and articles will be greatly welcomed.

Mainly About People

Gen Sir Michael Walker took up his new post as Chief of the Defence Staff in May 2003.

Sgt AR Walker was awarded a Certificate of Commendation by the General Officer Commanding 4th Division in recognition of his courageous and public-spirited arrest of a supermarket roller.



OCdt Robinson, the Colonel of the Regiment and OCdt Martin.

The Colonel of the Regiment was present at the Sovereign's Parade on 11 April when **OCdts David Robinson** and **Peter Martin** were commissioned. (The latter is the nephew of **Maj McGowan**).

Five former Pompadour officers, **Trevor and Jeremy Veitch, David Norbury, Dick Tewkesbury** and **Pat Shervington** are planning to fly out to Berlin during the middle of May with the aim of visiting old haunts (the Pompadours were based in Wavell Barracks from 1964-66). A full report of the expedition with photographic evidence will appear in the next edition.



Maj Charles Lumby at a meet in January 2003.

Maj Charles Lumby is Master and Secretary of the Palmen Milburn Beagles.



Col Fergus Mackain-Bremner.

Col Fergus Mackain-Bremner is a late Master and Huntsman of the School of Infantry Beagles. He started whipping in 1951 when the Bedfordshire Regiment was the Demonstration Battalion at Warminster and has just completed 50 years with the pack.



WO1 Wright takes over as RSM MCTC.

In January 2003 six warrant officers in the Regiment were selected to become Regimental Sergeant Majors. **WO2 R Bredin** was appointed to be RSM 2nd Battalion, **WO2 CJ Tate** to be RSM 1st Battalion, **WO2 PJ Humphreys** to be RSM Cambridge University OTC, **WO2 S Hale** to be RSM RTMC Chilwell and **WO2 M Heycock** RSM Project DRUMM at Warminster. Finally, **WO2 CJ Wright** was selected to fill the appointment of RSM the Military Corrective Training Centre at Colchester. This is the first time in the history of the Centre that the Military Provost Staff have appointed an RSM from outside their Corps.



WO2 P Tilley, as a member of the Compulsory Drugs Testing Team, travels all over the world. When in Nepal in March 2003 he took the opportunity to trek for six days from Phedi to Beni.

Have You Lost Contact?

Miss Dawn Wright is searching, on behalf of her father, **Michael Wright** (known as **Lofty**), for some of his friends. In particular, they were: **Chalky White, Smudger Smith, Lennie (the Lion) Lyons, Jock McGraig** and **Bones Nicholls**. Mr Wright served with the 3rd East Anglian Regiment in Ballykinler and in Berlin. Miss Wright can be contacted at 110 Newhouse Crescent, Watford, Herts WD2 7HY, tel 01923 441250 (after 8pm).

Letters to the Editor

On Saturday 18 October 2003 the Vikings' Corps of Drums Reunion will take place at the Marlborough Hotel, Felixstowe. The event is open to ex-members of the Corps of 1 East Anglian Regiment and the 1st Battalion the Royal Anglian Regiment as well as serving members. Further details can be obtained from Ben Palmer, 10 Northfield Lane, Wells Next The Sea, Norfolk NR23 1LQ. Tel: 01328 711142.



I am writing to you as secretary to one of the regiments that served in Cyprus in the period between World War Two and the Turkish Intervention in 1974. At that time Kyrenia in the north of the island was a popular weekend and holiday retreat, with its ancient harbour and castle, and the pretty white church of St Andrew's overlooking both. Many of my, and I am sure your, older colleagues will have fond memories of time spent in the town and the church; indeed some of them may be among the many who chose to be married there.

In the 1970s the eastern end of the church suffered serious problems of subsidence and had to be demolished, a false wall being added to enclose the remainder. This reduced the internal seating capacity to less than 70, a number that sufficed for a while but which now is totally inadequate for the only Anglican church in the north. Although a part of the diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf, St Andrew's is totally self supporting, with annual running costs in excess of £25,000. This has to be found from an aging ex-pat community with help from the visitors.

The decision to rebuild the eastern end was made in 2002 and after endorsement by all concerned an appeal was launched on 3 November to raise the £100,000 required. This is a large amount for a small community so we are appealing to all who have, or who in the past have had, an interest in St Andrew's, to give to our fund. The results will be there for all to enjoy from early 2004 onwards.

Any donation, however small, will be most welcome and should be sent to The North Cyprus Church Appeal, St Andrew's Church PK 171, Girne, via Mersin 10, Turkey. Cheques should be made payable to St Andrew's Church (NCCA).

Gp Capt H Moses



The Changi Chapel replica.



Simone and I stopped over in Singapore in February on a sentimental journey which took in a visit to Changi where many soldiers from our Former Regiments were incarcerated as prisoners of war. Their suffering at the hands of the Japanese was appalling; there was a first class museum reflecting their ill-treatment which made for a very sobering visit. Additionally there was an exact replica of the old Changi Chapel which had been built by the prisoners.

The photograph (above) shows a noticeboard to the left of the altar to which visitors could pin messages, all of which were very touching. A Suffolk Regiment wreath hung to the right of the altar.

Col Christopher Dale
Locks Cottage
Chapel Farm Lane
Thornham Parva
Eye IP23 8EX

Diary Dates 2003

June

- 1 Cambridgeshire Regiment Association Church Service - Ely
- 6 Royal Norfolk Regiment Officers' Dinner - Norwich
- 11 Royal Lincolnshire Regiment Officers' Luncheon - London
- 14 1st Battalion Open Day
- 20 2/5 Battalion The Essex Regiment Officers' Luncheon
- 21/22 Royal Tigers' Weekend - Leicester
- 25 Royal Norfolk Show
- 29 Essex Regiment Association Reunion - Warley

July

- 12/13 Royal Lincolnshire Regimental Reunion - Lincoln
- Northamptonshire Regiment Reunion - Northampton
- 18 Essex Regiment Association Luncheon - Chelmsford
- 19 Eagle and Garter Dinner - Bassingbourn
- 22 Salamanca Day
- 25 Regimental Golf Summer Meeting - Ely

August

- 1 Minden Day
- 3 Minden Day Reunion - Bury St Edmunds
- 13 Blenheim Day

September

- 14 Royal Anglian Regimental Day - Duxford
- 20 Hertfordshire Regiment Autumn Supper
- 27 1st Battalion (50th/80th) Royal Leicestershire Regiment

Reunion - Leicester

- 28 Norfolk Association Dinner - Norwich
- Norfolk Association Church Service - Norwich

October

- 3/4 70th Battalion Northamptonshire Regiment Reunion - Kettering
- 11 4th Battalion The Essex Regiment Dinner and Dance - Warley
- Royal Leicestershire Regiment TA Dinner - Leicester
- 18 Peterborough Branch Dinner - Peterborough
- 19 Essex Regiment Service and Lunch at Royal Hospital, Chelsea
- 25 Royal Leicestershire Regiment 1st Battalion Cyprus Veterans Reunion - Leicester
- 3rd Battalion Officers' Dinner Club Curry Lunch, London

November

- 1 Hindoostan Club Dinner - Leicester
- 2 Hertfordshire Regiment Annual Reunion
- 6 Field of Remembrance - Westminster
- 7 Royal Anglian Regiment Officers' Dinner - London
- 9 Remembrance Sunday
- 16 Beds & Herts Regiment Association Reunion

December

- 5 Royal Tigers' Association Christmas Reunion
- 6 Royal Leicestershire Regiment Officers' Dinner Club Luncheon - London

Can You Remember?

25 Years Ago



The Colonel-in-Chief accompanied by the Colonel of the Regiment and Maj Mike Boocock.



The Band and Drums on Angel Hill, Bury St Edmunds.



The GOC/Colonel of the Regiment meets the Big Three.

On 5 May 1978, with all three battalions stationed in England, Her Majesty The Queen Mother as Colonel-in-Chief visited the Regiment at Tidworth.

The 1st Battalion moved from Tidworth to Celle in August to take up their new role as a mechanised battalion. Before the Battalion left it exercised its right to march through the city of Norwich and Bury St Edmunds.

The Second Battalion ended their training in the Gambia in May 1978 with A Company, commanded by Maj Gordon Brett, completing a 50km escape and evasion exercise. The summer was spent preparing for the move to Berlin and by the end of August the Battalion was complete in Montgomery Barracks.

The Pompadours on 19 May took over operational control from the Gordon Highlanders, having moved into Palace Barracks, Belfast. The final few weeks were relatively quiet... however this was all to change when Lt Paul Currell (5 Platoon) was tragically injured by a radio-controlled device which resulted in him losing a leg.



Sir Sawda Jawrara, President of The Gambia, takes a close look at a platoon hide.

20 Years Ago 30



The Battalion marches through King's Lynn's Lynn.

Based at Oakington the Vikings were having a busying a busy year. Following the visit of the Colonel-in-Chief to Colchester in hester in May the Battalion was granted the Freedom of King's Lynn in July, in in July, with the occasion being marked by a march through the town. In Sepv'n. In September it assumed Spearhead duties and in November the Battalior Battalion was deployed to



LCpl Sean Lofty, Pte Peter Frank and Pte Tim Beighton, all from Leicester, crew one of the Recce Platoon's Foxes.

Greenham Common.

The 2nd Battalion, based at Colchester, spent much of the summer on exercise at Sennybridge, Porton Down, Stanford, and finally in BAOR on Exercise Eternal Triangle.

Meanwhile the Pompadours, also based in Colchester, were busy

completing the programme of mechanised conversion prior to moving to Minden. Salamanca Day was celebrated by a battalion parade and fete. The original Salamanca Eagle was carried on parade by Drummer Flack. On 18 November the Battalion marched through Colchester as a farewell before leaving for Minden.

10 Years Ago

The Vikings, based in Colchester, were responsible for setting up and administering the Regular Army Skill-at-Arms Meeting in its centenary year. Lt Col Robin Chisnall was succeeded as CO in September by Lt Col Roger Brunt and from October onwards the Battalion trained prior to deploying to Northern Ireland.

The last four months of 1993 saw the Poachers completing a six-month tour in Northern Ireland and then moving to BATUS, Canada for an armoured test exercise. The battlegroup consisted of 1,200 soldiers and spent 21 days on the prairie.



Salamanca Day



The Vikings' Shooting Team.



Maj Napier and his Command Team.



WO1 (RSM) Todd hands over to WO1 (RSM) Cutter.

1st Battalion The Vikings

Introduction by the Commanding Officer

By the time that you read this I will have handed over to Lt Col Eddie Thorne and the Battalion will be in the middle of converting to Bowman.

Following hard on the heels of an amazing high readiness year in 2002 the Battalion has suffered from a turbulent and fragmented programme for the last six months. We deployed four platoons in East Tyrone with the KRH, RAAT commitments have come in thick and fast taking people away to a variety of tasks - some very good and some not so good, and Operation Fresco has occupied the whole of the remainder of the Battalion sporadically.

Although Operation Fresco resulted in many planned activities being cancelled Battalion life has continued at some pace. Recognising that opportunities for exciting collective training were going to be few and far between we decided to focus on individual training, sport and fitness and polishing our pre-Bowman skills. In the margins we have managed to run a Tactics Cadre, two to one upgrading cadres, an assault pioneer cadre in Weymouth, RRU Cadres, a sniper cadre, a comprehensive inter-company competition, the ski team got away for the Army championships and the Corps of Drums ran a drums cadre in March. We have also done a lot of planning for the future.

As I write this, the final touches are being put to the course plot for the Bowman conversion. The fact that we are the first Battalion through the Bowman conversion programme is not lost on us. We are looking forward to getting into a superb period of experimentation, supporting the development of the Bowman programme,



LCpls Meadows and Smith help out Sgt Shaw with some fire training.

and lots of good training. Already the huge potential benefits of the system are becoming apparent.

So, the Battalion has been busy covering a lot of ground in the past few months. But it has been a different sort of programme that has required a lot of good humour and flexibility at times. Fortunately good humour and flexibility are abundant and the morale of the troops is as strong as ever. The Battalion is in very good shape and eagerly looking forward to getting back into a demanding training regime.

Operation Fresco Overview

Capt D Biddick, Ops Officer, writes...

Back in the summer of 2002 rumblings

began to sound from the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) concerning grievances with pay and conditions. These amounted to a demand for a 40 per cent pay increase, a demand that 'Two Jags' Prescott (a former union boss himself) could never comply with. Consequently plans were drawn up to provide emergency cover over strike periods using Army, Navy and RAF personnel. Despite initial hopes that negotiations might settle the dispute amicably it soon became apparent that strikes were inevitable. Operation Fresco (or *Fiasco* as the troops prefer to call it!) was set to impact upon the Battalion for a significant period of time.

The Mission

1 Royal Anglian is to provide an emergency firefighting and rescue capability for the county of Surrey. What does that mean then? Surrey Fire Service uses 24 full-time and about six reserve fire stations to cover the county. The Vikings' mission is to provide cover from just seven temporary fire stations using 12 of the infamous 'Green Goddess' engines and a couple of more modern appliances. The operation is controlled from a Joint Call Centre (JCC) at Surrey Police HQ in Guildford. Viking watchkeepers at the JCC co-ordinate the responses to emergencies with the help of the emergency services. Navy personnel from *HMS Lancaster* are supporting 1 Royal Anglian in the task. About 100 sailors make up the Breathing Apparatus Rescue Teams and specialist cutting units that accompany engines to major incidents.

The Facts

It takes 256 men and women to make the operation work, in addition to the command, administration, and equipment support elements of the Battalion. At the time of



The CO leads HQ Company stretcher race team into first place.

The Vikings

writing, 312 hours of strike cover have been provided over 13 days. During this time Viking teams have dealt with 159 emergencies. The majority of incidents have been domestic and car fires. Others have included road traffic accidents and commercial fires. It is difficult to calculate what injuries have been prevented or what property the men have saved. One thing is certain however; the Vikings have provided Surrey with first-rate cover during a difficult time, despite working with very limited resources. This fact is a credit to the men and women involved in the operation.

The Future

After Operation Fingal, (and watching ongoing operations in Iraq) it has been difficult to get excited by fire strikes. The Battalion is keen to get on with its primary role - training for future operations. The official end to the dispute still looks some time off. When it comes it will be greeted with some relief.

A (Norfolk) Company

The Corps of Drums

D/Maj JE Self writes...

The Corps of Drums is the third rifle platoon in A (Norfolk) Company. We have had a busy period since December 2002. The platoon has mainly been employed covering firemen's strikes. The drumming that has taken place has been limited to Mess nights and the occasional boxing event where the side drummers have performed well despite limited training.

A Look to the Future

An internal drums course started mid-March despite Operation Fresco as we are determined to raise our standards in



Drum Majors past, present and future. From left: Sgt Wildney, DMaj Self and Sgt Howlett.

preparation for the summer season, always a busy period. We are carrying out a Beating the Retreat at the Battalion Open Day on 14

June in addition to drumming at the Regimental Day, Bury Minden Day and the Minden Day in the Battalion. On top of this and our rifle platoon training, we hope to get the platoon back on the local streets to do some recruiting.

Hand Over Of Drum Major

It has come to the end of my period as Drum Major after three years in place. I have enjoyed every minute of it having served all my Army career in the Vikings' Corps of Drums. Having done every exercise and operation since 1989 with the platoon it is going to be very difficult to leave. I have completed two and a half years as the platoon sergeant, 17 months in Londonderry and three and a half months in Afghanistan, taking over as platoon commander from July 2002 to present day. It has been a busy period operationally and the drumming has had to take a back seat during most of that period but 2003 seems to be a year when



Drums training for the march and shoot.



Drum Major Self hands over to Drum Major Howlett.



Grade 1 training in Clogher.

The Vikings

drumming has the opportunity to come to the fore. Sgt Paul Howlett takes over on 1 April while I will remain as platoon commander until June when I start my next post.

The Platoon

The Platoon has seen many new faces over the last three years with the Corps now being full of keen, young, talented individuals. While the Platoon has a bright future with the up and coming drummers and NCOs, it is also sad to see people with a lot of experience leaving the Corps. The drums cadre and a season of drumming will see us back in full public view and at a very high standard. It has been difficult to recruit drummers and we have to take an active role by getting the lads up to ITC Catterick on the Regimental gatherings and directly recruiting young recruits into the platoon. At the end of the year, we should be back at plus 25 drummers.

Summary

The Vikings' Corps of Drums has a busy and eventful year ahead of it and the Platoon looks forward to getting back in the public eye. Under D/Maj Howlett's guidance, the Corps will display its true potential and represent the Regiment in a manner that we have become used to in the past. We hope to play at the Regimental engagements with the Poacher Corps of Drums and even the East of England Regiment, so you should all hopefully see a massed Corps of Drums of some 50 or 60 men.

2 Platoon in Northern Ireland

Lt AP Dart writes...

9 September saw the seasoned veterans of A (Norfolk) Company form into the composite 2 Platoon and become attached to A Squadron, The King's Royal Hussars for the next ten months. Having escaped Area 7, Kabul, the willing volunteers were assured of making it through the drizzle and fields of rural East Tyrone.

With the delights of five weeks previous leave still coursing through our bloodstreams; it was time for some range packages and PT, incorporating low-level Northern Ireland lessons to get into the NI frame of mind. Everything went well, with even Pte 'Shotgun' Cartwright being able to zero...well eventually!!

The orbat suffered a few chops and changes, most notably with the additions of the newly promoted LCpls 'Frankie' Freeman and 'Burnie' Byrne-Evans. Also on tour and wearing a Minden Flash was Pte Mason, the company clerk, adding the female perspective to the request for 'female searchers' - even if Pte Armstrong was all too willing to volunteer.

As Lt Dart and Sgt Faupel were suffering the delights of the 'train the trainer' package, the remainder of the platoon were being led through early in-barrack training by the ITT, most notably Sgt Shaw also of A (Norfolk)



From left: Ptes Knight, Vasalakis and Fox.



A slightly concerned CGS talks to OC A Company.

Company. Taking care of the admin were the multiple 2ICs in the shape of LCpl 'Pondy' Lilley and LCpl 'General' Sell, and the initial deployment to Aghnacloy would see these two computer wizards in close competition as to who could produce the better team door sign.

With over 60 per cent of the platoon being veterans of the Londonderry tour, the in-barracks training went well, and soon the OPTAG package was upon us. The ranges were excellent, especially the urban complex, and on more than one occasion the General was to be relieved of his command having been killed off by Directing Staff and a vicious exploding dustbin. Stepping into his place was Pte 'Turkish' Vasalakis, aka the Greek

mercenary, who nimbly dispatched baddies and civvies alike before covering the area in white tape, and returning his battlefield promotion for tea and medals. The urban phase was enjoyed by all, complete with its satirical Directing Staff voice-overs on the video recordings as both callsigns went through the process of shoots. MK 15 coffee jar bombs and improvised explosive devices.

Then came the much awaited public order phase, which saw the platoon close in for hand-to-hand fighting through the gardens and rubble of Rype Village, displaying scenes reminiscent of an OBUA conflict, where fixing bayonets and closing with the enemy was unfortunately not allowed. As Civpop were beaten back yard by yard and the petrol bombs flew, several Civpop

The Vihe Vikings

unwisely chose to get too close and were on the receiving end of some 'Viking' hickory action. As Civpop limped off battered and bruised, it was deemed in their best interests to flee the next time they saw a Minden Flash advancing.

The rural phase was greeted with the usual groans, as by now we knew it meant getting across those infernal waterlogged ditches, and the joys of digging in, again. This passed without major incident, and the final exercise was upon us. Sgt Faupel traded his rifle for a pen as he deserted on his education package. Sgt Pattern stepped into his place and managed to avoid all major incidents.

With endex in sight, Ptes Fox and Armstrong bravely demonstrated the Infantry river crossing technique, unfortunately unintentionally, and sans footbridge! With many vital NI lessons learned, leave came and went all too quickly, with most taking the time to enjoy the delights of night life for the last time.

Now sitting within 900m of the border, 2 Platoon are well set for the next six months, and for once will remember New Year's Eve, as it was spent on patrol in AUGHNACLOY.

B (Suffolk) Company Post-Afghanistan Training

CSgt JR Eccles writes...

After the Company returned from post-Afghanistan leave, 5 Platoon, led by Lt Coleman, was attached to the KRH for their impending Northern Ireland tour. The remainder of the company embarked on some well-deserved adventurous training in the Lake District, which was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone.

The fire strikes have seen us entering into an uncertain period in the training cycle, a dispute that at the time of writing has still not been resolved. Despite many last minute



CSgt Jason Eccles adventurous training.

cancellations of training facilities and changes to the training programme, the company has managed to piece together plenty of worthwhile training. In between the fire strikes we have concentrated on their marksmanship skills, firing the APWT for all weapon systems and identifying potential members for the forthcoming SAAM.

January saw the company deploy onto a long overdue field firing camp in Thetford, with what must have been Nato's supply of ammunition. This allowed for some very exciting and realistic ranges that were demanding but enjoyed by everyone involved.

Shortly after returning it was straight onto the training area and platoons were given an opportunity to deploy in Saxons and practise their low level skills for the first time since deployment to Afghanistan. The highlight of this exercise has to be WO2 Andy Buxton's Para Cup competition, with the

opportunity for the winning twinning team to claim an all expenses paid trip to id trip to France. The competition was closely contested but it was Cpl 'Tiger' Gardner's team who were smiling at the end of the day. f the day.

The vast majority of soldie of soldiers now find themselves on a wide rangeide range of courses ranging from the EuropearEuropean Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) gear'DL) geared up to assist in the transition to Bowman, Sowman, Saxon driving cadres and numerous adventuis adventurous training courses. Those not on coot on courses have volunteered for deployments toyments to BATUS and a possible attachment to the:int to the Poachers in Belize. Of particular note is Fr note is Pte Reynolds who has deployed to Kuwait w Kuwait with the Black Watch.

Operation Fresco

Sgt I Collins writes...

There are not many Vikings or Poachers who have not been affected t affected by Operation Fresco since the end of last yea of last year. For myself and many other Vikings my comgs my conversion from soldier to fire-fighter began lar began last November with a hectic day's training t training on the Green Goddesses.

On the square we were soe were soon sorted out into the teams we would be would be using for the training before being hustledg hustled away to the Green Goddesses to be sh to be shown all the equipment and how to use w to use it. The day's training was on the whole ge whole good fun and made an interesting change to change to the norm for most of us, except for the die-or the die-hard soldiers who would find something omething to complain about even if they were sent t were sent to Hawaii for a month!

During our training we had ag we had a large number of Navy personnel with us, t with us, so everything had a competitive element, element, and in true Viking spirit, more of them gc of them got wet than us!

To complete the training training there was an exercise involving all the Greall the Green Goddesses to deal with an incident. It wident. It was during this exercise that my trusty c trusty crew and me deployed into action with siren with sirens blazing on the outside - and fits of lafits of laughter on the inside as we reached terrified terrifying speeds of 25mph!! It must have been ave been during one of



B Company field firing.

The Vikings

these moments that the slogan 'Army - be the Best' was born. After less than 12 hours' training, we were now ready to deploy.

Over the following strikes that took us past the Christmas period and into February, I noticed a changing opinion in the crews over our new role. At first most saw it as quite exciting and just a good change, with of course a good dose of, 'Why are we doing this - they wouldn't do our job!'.

During each strike the opinion of most was becoming more resentful towards the firemen yet, because we could see the public supporting us every time we went out, it made the troops more determined to do the job as best as they could. We all knew that we had outdated kit in the Green Goddesses, and that in reality 12 hours compared to four months' training was not anywhere near enough; I believe the public sympathised with this due to the low call-out rate. This support from the public and the police let the teams understand just how important our role was over the strikes and how much they relied on us not only to do the job, but to do it well.

During rest periods, you would hear the blokes comparing their job to that of firemen, and working out how easy they have it compared to a soldier due to the rotations and the fact that most firemen have a second job. By February the general opinion was that we would rather continue to cover the strikes than have the Fire Brigade Union win by holding the public to ransom over its demands.

Op Fresco has been a busy time for the Vikings, and may well be again if the strikes continue in March. It has given commanders at all levels a chance to see the men in a different environment and reacting to different pressures, as well as seeing good team work and camaraderie during

deployment. As for the blokes, for some it has been exciting and a good change, while for others it has been an extra, but understandable, strain on an already busy period for the Battalion.

Changeover of RSM

The handover of appointment for RSM 1 Royal Anglian took place on 1 February 2003, between WO1 RSM P Blanchfield and WO1 C Tate. On promotion Capt Blanchfield took over as the training officer and, within a couple of weeks, deployed with the Tactics Cadre to Brecon.

C (Essex) Company Squashed to Death!

2Lt T A Walker writes...

Following a fun-filled week's skiing at the Army championships in Scotland I returned home to sunny Pirbright looking forward to making my platoon jealous of all the surprisingly attractive (and not so attractive) OTC women that had emerged from various universities across the UK for the skiing. However, as I sat at breakfast Pte Arnold approached me and told me Cpl Nieves was on the phone. With a certain amount of concern I ventured out to greet Cpl Nieves only to be met by, 'oh you are back then Sir, are you coming into work today?' Noting the slight anxiousness in his voice I responded positively and he then proceeded to remind me that I was heading up the company squash team in the inter-company squash tournament, which took place in about half an hour. I quickly finished my coco pops and arrived at my company office in double quick time where I was accosted by my Sergeant Major who happily backed up Cpl Nieves' statement, adding that he couldn't play due to a pulled calf muscle

and that Pte Lawrence had been sent to the Gulf. So I was on good form, I'd partially forgotten about the inter-company squash and I was already two men down before I'd even got to the venue. However, as my company had just began a week of guard duties it wasn't too difficult to find some keen volunteers to join myself, Sgt Thurston and Cpl Nieves who made up the basis of the team. Pte Morpeth and Pte Donner both came to the rescue of the company suggesting that they might be able to play squash. That was good enough for me and soon we were piled into Cpl Nieves' car on our way to Aldershot sports centre.

By the time we arrived, we were only 20 minutes late and I had only forgotten the packed lunches and missed the team captain's brief; the morning was going exactly as I'd planned it. Nonetheless, we had a team and we had made the event so all was not bad. We had a quick training session running Donner and Morpeth through the rules and rapidly organised a seed structure. In fact, the team was looking as though we might be able to make some degree of impact on the tournament.

The event was soon underway and HQ Company were, predictably, swiftly running away with the tournament. The competition was going well with Sgt Thurston picking up an early victory and Cpl Nieves winning two out of his four matches. I also managed to pick up a few victories and Donner and Morpeth were putting in some sterling performances. Considering their limited amount of experience they fought valiantly taking many games from some stunned opponents and showing a lot of potential for the future.

However, as the contest came to an end victory was out of sight but a placing was possible. When it came to prizegiving it came to fruition that HQ Company had triumphed with first place and that we had achieved fourth place. I was more than content with this result, as every competitor from my company had tried their hardest with some success resulting. It also made me wonder how we could have done with a full squad as we were very close to second and third position.

However, more importantly we had really enjoyed our day and ended it with a healthy Burger King to put back on any weight we may have lost during the physical exertion. There we sat and talked up our performances while Cpl Nieves worried how he was going to hide it from his wife that he couldn't finish his dinner because he'd just necked three double burgers (sorry in advance if she's reading this Cpl Nieves).

The day was a success and it concluded with both Donner and Morpeth being so enthused by the event that I am now organising a battalion squash training session on Monday nights for all those who are interested in developing their squash. Therefore, hopefully next year the event will be of an even higher standard and the other companies can really give HQ Company a run for their money.



Leaving Dungannon Camp.

The Vikings

Testing the 40mm underslung grenade launcher. From left: Cpl Rix, Pte Heard, Pte Wright, Pte Malone and Pte Robson.

Minus 60 Degrees

Cpl NJ Rix writes...

I was really chuffed to be nominated along with a number of other Vikings to attend a cold weather weapons trial in Canada in January 2003. We received our cold weather clothing and equipment along with \$1,480 cash in hand before jetting off to a Canadian camp in French Colombia, about 20 minutes north of Quebec, called Valcartier. With a fistful of dollars in my hand and a foreign trip including some skiing about to start - things were looking good!

We met up with the other participants on the weapon trials who were REME armourers, an SMI from the SASC, a couple of Royal Marines, a member of the Special Air Service and a civil servant. We took off from Heathrow and after a seven-hour flight finally touched down in Montreal. The first thing we noticed as we travelled by coach for four hours to our final destination at the Canadian forces base was the temperature, which was about minus 20 degrees. We finally got to the base at stupid o'clock in the morning and I was pleased to get to my room and crash out.

The next day, after a short lie-in, we received various admin briefs including one on how to avoid getting into trouble with the law and then headed into Quebec for a few sherbets in a couple of people-carriers which the civil servant had hired. I knew he'd come in useful for something! Day two involved doing some weapon training with the two Royal Marine instructors to confirm that our handling skills on the GPMG, Minimi, MG43, SA80 Carbine and 40mm Under Slung Grenade Launcher were up to speed. Split into two teams; Team 1 (which was my team) was responsible for firing the MG43 and the SA80 Carbine; leaving Team 2 with the responsibility for

firing the Minimi and the 40mm UGL. Both teams consisted of five Vikings.

The first hurdle of the weapons trial was to zero the weapons and this was followed by a liability test consisting of 15 missions. Each mission consisted of firing 1,000 rounds, in belts of between 50 and 200

rounds within a certain time limit. During each mission, if the weapon for any reason stopped firing, the weapons trial team would run over, determine the reason for the stoppage so that it could be logged and consolidated into a file report at the end of the trial. After several missions the Royal



The Vikings

Marines would then put the Minimi, GPMG, MG43 and LSW through an accuracy test. After each mission we battle cleaned our weapons under the guidance of the REME armourers.

The weather was pretty good while we were there, however this unfortunately meant that we had to start many of our days at 0500hrs so that we could put the weapons through their paces under the correct trial temperatures. As well as conducting firing trials we also conducted a number of configuration and ergonomic trials including the carriage of the weapons while using snow shoes, cross country skis and skidoos. In order to simulate blizzard conditions we also had to sit in three feet of snow while a helicopter hovered approximately 10 feet above us for 20 minutes to create a whiteout. The temperature fell to -60 degrees and it was absolutely freezing! Covering every single bit of bare flesh using the kit we had been issued with was essential.

When we weren't working hard on the trials we managed to get some time to go skiing which cost us about \$70 for the day. We also had a great laugh at an ice park where you basically flung yourself down a giant ice hill sitting in a rubber ring. We also went into Quebec on a few occasions to do some shopping and to go pubbing and clubbing. The accommodation was excellent and the food was very good and cost only \$7 per day in the cookhouse. The 'Cable Club' bar was only about 100m from my room which was very convenient because we spent virtually every evening there, usually locking out on our hands and knees at about midnight. The Canadian soldiers hadn't seen British soldiers in the camp before and were very welcoming, albeit dull. The camp also had a large gym complex, indoor swimming pool, indoor athletics track, five-a-side football, saunas and everything else you can imagine and it was regularly used by the Vikings, particularly when there were lots of women working out!

The trials went well and the Vikings were able to make many recommendations on user issues. We had no dramas throughout the trip and a good time was had by all. It was certainly one of the best times I had in my Viking career.

Dive, Dive Dive!

LCpl Owen writes...

Shortly after the Christmas break a number of volunteers from the company were tasked to go down to SPTA to take part in something called a 'DIVE' trial. Knowing only that it was something to do with operations in built-up areas and computers I headed down to Copehill Down along with 12 of my blokes. We were all eager to shift the Christmas bulge and had willingly volunteered to get stuck in for a bit of street fighting!

On arrival we met up with Maj Pennington (RLC) who was bouncing around and looking dead proud of himself which only intrigued us even more as to what we were going to be doing. We were quickly ushered



Dive to replay mode displaying Middle Barn Close.

inside a small building at one end of the village and given a brief on why we were there. Initially I got the impression that we were just going to be used as guinea pigs however, by the end of the brief, we realised that we had well and truly landed on our feet and from what I could gather we were going to be paid to play computer games! 'The idea is that you play the computer game and then move into the village and practise it live' he said. I looked around the room and saw the broad smiles of all the blokes who were preparing themselves for a 'Playstation Fest'. Even though it sounded like a cushy week a few of us were concerned at our distinct lack of computer skills and queried if we could still be employed. Thankfully we were fully reassured that you didn't have to be Stephen Hawkins to work the system.

After the briefing we were introduced to several long haired scientists who looked like the cast of the 'X-Files' and who were all dribbling with excitement. They quickly guided us over to several computer systems and began to demonstrate the full potential of what was to become known as DIVE (Dismounted Infantry Virtual Environment). The Copehill Down village had been reproduced on computer in a virtual environment and this virtual environment had been integrated with software similar to that found in the Sony Playstation shoot-em-up games. By using the mouse and cursor keys you could move freely around the virtual environment as if you were in the village for real. After just a few minutes we were running about in our virtual world creating havoc and, as you can imagine, with a choice of rifle, Minimi, RGGS or grenade we didn't hold back! Following several hours of practice on the computers we then had to go into the village to complete our drills for real to see exactly how close the computers were to the real thing. We were really impressed and it seemed every

last detail had been captured by the scientists.

As the week progressed both our computer and OBUA skills had improved dramatically and we were ready to face our first real test - to move through the village as a team of four to evacuate a casualty while under fire. Having the opportunity to practise the task in a virtual environment before we did it for real gave us a significant advantage and made the task very much easier to complete. The advantage of rehearsing procedures on the computer is that you can repeat the task several times until all team members get it right. We found the DIVE system an excellent training tool which quickly improved our skills and enabled us to try out things that would normally be far too time-consuming or dangerous. By the end of the week we were very confident in using the system and the scientists were very pleased with the progress we had made. The DIVE system has the potential to be an extremely powerful training aid and is one which I would have no hesitation in using.

D (Cambridgeshire)

Company

Operation Fresco and All

Maj FJR Grounds, OC, writes...

Since the December edition of *Castle*, D (Cambridgeshire) Company has had a busy time. Operationally, Operation Fresco has dominated the programme and resulted in a number of exciting training opportunities being cancelled at the last moment. Fresco aside, the company's focus has been firmly directed towards getting the specialist platoons correctly manned and qualified in time for the Bowman conversion later this year.

There are currently 27 D Company Vikings on operations in Northern Ireland, reinforcing the KRH for their six-month

The Vikings



The indomitable bravo callsign led by Sgt Evans.

tour. The bulk of these have come from the Mortar and Anti-Tank Platoons, and have been ably commanded by the energetic CSgt 'Terry' Taylor, who found it hard to disguise his delight at casting off the shackles of CQMS for six months!

The Operation Fresco period has seen the company running one of the Battalion's Temporary Fire Stations in Godalming. Inevitably there have been some minor frustrations over the Fresco period, not least the cancellation of a company exercise in Gibraltar at the last safe moment (although not before the OC, CSM and CQMS managed to get away for a week long recce!). That said, the company still managed to send Cpl Ratten from the Anti-Tank Platoon to Bermuda for three weeks to help instruct on their Potential NCOs' Cadre, and six members of the company were also able to deploy to Canada with Maj England (of Viking fame) from ITDU, to trial the new LMG and under-slung grenade launchers, in the extremes of Arctic conditions.

In the past six months, eight members of the company have successfully completed PSBC, two of whom have comprehensively proved there is still life after the Mortar Platoon! Another three NCOs will be attending the next PSBC in April. Six members of the company have also successfully completed SCBC, including Cpl Armon from the Sniper Platoon, who attained a distinction. In addition to Brecon, over the past six months some 20 other soldiers have attended specialist career courses, which does not include the many soldiers who have completed signals, driving, upgrading, range management and tactics cadres which have been ongoing throughout this period.

The Mortar Platoon has recently attained considerable success at the Mortar Division in Warminster. Five members of the platoon have passed career courses, including Cpl

Kitson (Mor Adv) and Cpl Ward (Mor Std) both of whom passed with distinction and CSgt Pascal (Mor PI Comd) who obtained an instructor recommendation. Two more JNCOs are about to attend the next Mor Std Course in April and Cpl Ward returns to the Mor Adv Course. Members of the platoon also received much praise from the Mortar Division for their support to the live firing phase of the last course. As this is being written, the Mortar Platoon is deploying for live firing in Otterburn, which marks the culmination point of a highly successful Numbers Cadre.

The Anti-Tank Platoon has also enjoyed a successful six months in which four members of the platoon have almost

completed their respective Milan career courses, meaning that the platoon will be almost brought up to their full complement of qualified personnel for the first time in a number of years. The first Numbers Cadre for nearly three years also awaits the platoon following Easter leave.

The decision has been made by the chain of command that the Recce Platoon is to be relieved of its Sabre vehicles, which are to be replaced with Scimitar. Due to Scimitar not being capable of receiving the Bowman fit, the platoon will convert to the light role for the next 12 months, to see us through the Bowman conversion period and then re-role with Scimitar in April 2004. Prior to Christmas, three members of the platoon successfully passed the Armoured Recce Commanders' Course and LCpl Ling achieved a distinction on the Driver and Maintenance Instructor Course. The platoon has just completed armoured driver, gunnery and commander cadres, which should smooth the way for re-roling with Scimitar next year. Three of the commanders are soon to attend the Light Role Recce Commanders' Course in time for Bowman conversion.

The Sniper Platoon has endured a testing time since our return from Afghanistan last summer. Due to postings, SCBC and support to the KRH, what remained of the platoon became attached to the Recce Platoon for the period up to Christmas leave. However, the platoon has since benefited from the selection cadre at the start of the year and it now has a fully manned orbat, including a newly qualified platoon commander. Since reforming, plenty of excellent training has been carried out under the watchful eye of the platoon 2IC, Cpl Morris, and all of this bodes well for the six-week sniper cadre which commences after Easter leave and will include a number of nominations from



The Vikings

the rifle companies.

In early November, the company had to come to terms with the sad loss of LCpl Matt Saunders who was tragically killed in a hit-and-run incident while on weekend leave with his family in Cambridge. LCpl Saunders was an extremely popular and well-respected member of the company who had a very bright future ahead of him in the Vikings. The Saunders family are again to be thanked for their most generous gift of a pool table, donated to the Corporals' Mess in memory of their son.

On a lighter note, and in the wake of a highly enjoyable Company party, where the officers and SNCOs ranks were auctioned off (the £800 profit being split two ways, between company funds and East Anglia Children's Hospice charity), the D Company Partners Club has been formed. Despite being still in its infancy, the initial signs are encouraging and there has already been a considerable amount interest and support shown.

Morale is high and as a result of much hard work from all ranks, D (Cambridgeshire) Company find themselves in a strong position approaching the training year and are ready to face the challenges of the conversion to Bowman in the near future.

D Company in Northern Ireland

CSgt T Taylor writes...

The platoon was formed shortly after returning from Afghanistan and quickly moved to Tidworth to join the King's Royal Hussars to conduct training for the forthcoming tour of Northern Ireland based in East Tyrone.

Being based in Tidworth made the majority of us realise just how fortunate our Battalion was being based in Pirbright where the nearest towns and city of London are just a short train ride away. In Tidworth it soon became apparent just how isolated the



Recovery practice during the cadre.

Garrison was from the real world.

D Squadron, to which we were attached, soon made our lads feel welcome and it wasn't long before the 'Vikings' were mixing and settling in well with the Squadron personalities. Due to the KRH having not been to Ireland since 1995 they had a short fall in experience. This made it easier for the senior members to get together as our Battalion had a vast amount of knowledge. This was put to the test in the early stages of training and greatly appreciated by D Squadron.

The low level training stages went really quickly with the NCOs putting a lot of experience and knowledge across in the lessons that they had to take. All this effort was not going to waste as the soldiers from D Squadron were improving on a massive scale. Soon enough the NITAT training package started. Before we all knew it, it was all over and we were on a well earned

7-14 days pre-tour leave.

The Squadron was complete in Dungannon by 15 December 2002 where we took on the role as the Dungannon ground holding company. Over the last three months the Vikings have participated in various competitions and sporting events; the most successful of these was the Inter-Squadron shooting competition where the D Squadron team, mainly consisting of Vikings, thrashed the rest of the Regiment, winning every event. The sharp shooters of the day were Cpl 'Big Gay' Al Ives and Cpl Ryan Gamham with sniper 'I missed the target' LCpl Micheal Robinson taking the wooden spoon.

The Vikings were heavily involved on New Year's Eve when the Police Service of Northern Ireland closed Dungannon town centre down for the first time in 10 years. This was a successful operation, with no disturbances other than many happy drunken people passing through the VCPs held in the town centre.

In January, CSgt Taylor was deployed on the ground as cordon commander. when a new wheelie bin type device was discovered at the front of the local Tesco's supermarket in Dungannon. This incident was dealt with quickly and nobody was hurt.

Now with half of the tour completed we are all looking forward to the next three months especially with the change round. The soldiers have endured fairly cramped living quarters in Dungannon and are looking forward to having a touch more space and a few basic but much fantasised luxuries such as a window as we move to Armagh.

On completion of this we will be finishing the last six weeks of the tour on Brigade reserve where we can expect to be deployed anywhere in the Province and who knows, possibly on some sort of public disorder operation.

If the next three months pass as quickly as the first three it will not be long before we all find ourselves back with the Battalion on Bowman training.



Not another guard!

MT Platoon

Capt SD Robinson writes...

Since Christmas, the Platoon has been able to get back to some form of normal life with the exception of the continual support to Operation Fresco! During Operation Fresco the platoon is required to produce a duty NCO and duty driver, in conjunction with the REME, who provide a duty fitter and standby fitter. Together they provide a 24-hour mobile support to the Battalion's fire-fighters and their equipment and vehicles at the temporary fire stations. In addition to this, the platoon also supplies the Battalion with Green Goddess and Red Goddess training via LCpl Norman. Additional training was also undertaken for outside units who were unable to provide their own instructor, hence LCpl Norman has also been used as a Brigade asset to ensure not only ourselves but other units within the Brigade have met the requirements, for Goddess drivers.

The Servicing Bay continues to be one of the busiest, yet probably in the eyes of the men of the Battalion, an unknown area! Cpl McKenna, and LCpl Moore have continued their outstanding work servicing the Battalion's green fleet to a high standard which has seen the Battalion smoothly negotiate its Logistic Support Inspection and its Equipment Care Inspection during this period.

Deployed On Operations

Over this period Cpl Pierce has been deployed with 1 Staffords on Operation Oecla at Pristina in Kosovo. He has also received praise for his proposal to the GEMS Scheme for a modification to the 'Tavern' Auxiliary Battery Sliding Tray, which he designed during the Londonderry tour and has just been accepted into service.

1 Staffords' Kosovo Tour November 2002 - May 2003

Cpl A Pierce writes...

I was attached to 1 Staffords MT Platoon for the period 7 October 2002 until 30 June 2003 for their tour of Kosovo. Initially I joined the Staffords in Tidworth, where preparation of the Battalion's vehicles for transportation to Marchwood for the boat trip to Greece was my first mission.

The MT Platoon and various other drivers from the Battalion then flew out 10 days later to Thessaloniki in Greece to meet the boat where we spent two days unloading the boat and getting briefings on road safety. The Master Driver's brief on driver's hours was particularly poignant due to a very long drive of about 15 hours up through Greece to the Macedonia border, then through Macedonia to the Kosovo border and down into our final destination Pristina. The move was conducted in several small convoys escorted by members of the Battalion's advance party and 1 PWRR who we relieved in Pristina.

The camp the MT was based in was called



Cpl McKenna servicing.

Jubilee Lines which was just on the edge of Pristina where Brigade Headquarters were also based. The accommodation was corrimech buildings with two man rooms which are very comfortable to live in. All of the rifle companies had outstations to work in so the main camp was virtually empty.

The MT Platoon had a number of tasks to do daily around all the locations which included filling up the generators which I took part in on several occasions. I was then given the job of Operation Reserve Force (ORF) Vehicle Commander as the Battalion was required to have a company always ready to deploy anywhere in the region. I was given the responsibility of looking after nine DAF trucks and six Snatch vehicles.

All the vehicles under my control had to be prepared to be flown at short notice so things like batteries had to be wrapped and fuel tanks only kept three-quarters full.

At the beginning of December A Company was deployed to Tuzla in Bosnia to work with the Americans for ten days. I was also deployed along with half my fleet of vehicles, driven mostly by MT drivers. The vehicles flew out of Pristina Airport by C17 straight into the American base at Tuzla.



Cpl Pierce receives his GEMS award.

Once we arrived my job was to help maintain the vehicles between patrols. In addition to my normal fleet the company also acquired several other vehicles which I was also required to maintain.

Once back in Pristina the Battalion started to hand over some of its out-stations to the Swedish Battalion who took over command of the whole area and the Staffords then became the Multi-National Brigade Reserve Battalion and were used constantly on search operations throughout the whole area.

Winter here was very cold and we had a vast amount of snow which caused driving to become treacherous and very dangerous. As a result of the onset of winter all vehicles had to be winterised so that took up a lot of time changing oils and other items on vehicles to help them through the winter. Additionally, I was tasked to instruct all the companies on fitting snow chains to various types of vehicles. Fortunately, due to a combination of the vehicles weight and the correct fitting of snow chains in the deep snow the Battalion managed to keep the number of accidents down to a minimum in the bad conditions. The temperature dropped to minus 15 which made vehicle maintenance outside interesting! You could only work outside for about 15 minutes and had to go inside to warm up. So a normal job that would take about an hour to do would almost require treble the time.

The tour for me has been exceptionally busy but enjoyable working with the Staffords and other nations.

Viking Alpine Ski and Snowboard Teams

Capt SD Robinson writes...

The Battalion Alpine Ski and Snowboard teams have just competed in the UK Land Command Ski Championships (Exercise Snow Lion 2003) held at Aviemore Scotland over the period 2-8 March 2003.

The Vikings

The Battalion has not competed competitively in Alpine Racing since its time in Oakington Barracks in 1997, and as a result, the team, less Capt Robinson, LCpl Wand and Sgt Roach, lacked any previous Alpine racing experience. Cpl Shropshire had competed in last year's Army Snowboard Championships where he finished tenth, but otherwise the remaining snowboarders were participating in their first racing competition.

The team arrived in Aviemore two days prior to the seeding race to regain our ski and snowboarding legs and to conduct some race training. This was achieved with the assistance of a local instructor arranged via the manager at the Rothiemurchus Lodge, which was the accommodation base for the team during our stay in Scotland.

Due to the limited snow on the Cairngorm Mountains, where the championships took place, and the number of Alpine racers in excess of 100, priority was given to ski racing. As a result, the snowboarders ended up only racing one race. The Vikings achieved excellent results, especially Cpl Shropshire who came third in the race and was also awarded third overall snowboarder.

The Alpine skiers formed two teams and 2Lt Walker was entered into the competition as an individual. The achievement of 20th place in the giant slalom by LCpl Wand and 20th place by Capt Robinson in the slalom were the team's best results of the week by



LCpl Wand.



The Viking ski team.

individuals. Pte Lombard achieved second overall novice and 2Lt Walker third overall novice in the competition, which were both excellent results for their first attempt at alpine racing. As a team, the Vikings A team achieved ninth place overall and fourth Regular team in the slalom race with three skiers in the top 39. These results are even more creditable when you consider the team was competing on issued skis dressed in recreational ski wear against teams on racing skis in race catsuits!

Applications have been submitted for sports grants, which if received, will permit the team to compete on an equal footing with the other well established teams at future events. Additionally, anyone reading this who may be in a position to possibly assist in any small way with sponsorship for the team, is asked to contact Capt Robinson in Pirbright. He is now beginning with the planning for the next competition, the Infantry Championships, due to be held in France in December 2003.

Viking Sports

Maj A Jones, OC HQ Coy, writes...

Since our return from Afghanistan the Battalion has put the sporting emphasis on getting as many of the Vikings playing sport as possible. This is a *résumé* of some of the sports played.

Football

This season has seen a clear-out of the majority of the old guard and an influx of youth into the battalion squad. Interest was so good at the beginning of the season when the first get together saw some 50 individuals in attendance, that a decision was made to form two squads with the first team playing in the 4 Div 1st Division where they currently share top spot having won five and lost two. The second team has managed to play only



Cpl Mitchell turns having scored against SEAE with Ptes Field and Rix in support.



Vikings in defence.

friendlies... however, next season it is hoped to get them into a league.

The Infantry and Army Cup did not prove as rewarding as the league and we fell at the first hurdle in both competitions to 1 PWRR and 1 KING'S respectively. We also played in the Infantry sixes coming third in our league. The post-Afghanistan tour leave was obviously enjoyed to the full and while we showed some good football skills our football fitness was sadly lacking.

The Infantry squad has called up Ptes Wallace and Field this season with Wallace receiving his Infantry colours. Pte Rudkin recently joined the battalion from AFC Harrogate and has already had a run out with the Army youth team and looks a good prospect.

In closing, we said goodbye to several members of the squad who left the Battalion

The Vikings

and the Army and are thanked for their efforts in support of Vikings football, they are: Cpl Stevens, LCpl Jardine, Pte Vandecar, LCpl Meekings, LCpl Hornsey and Pte Tuppen (the Army FA Disciplinary Committee will also miss him).

Basketball

With the arrival of WO2 (AQMS) Tolson onto the LAD books the Battalion has once again become interested in basketball. This is a sport that last took off in the Vikings in the early nineties when the then MO, Capt Karen Jenkins, who played at international level for Wales, sparked an interest. The AQMS has represented the Army and Combined Services for several years and has captained both teams, so with his expert guidance HQ Company won the inter-company competition with D Company runners-up. In January the Battalion entered the 4 Division Championships even though the squad was depleted by the Operation Fresco commitment. The six men the AQMS took to the championships put up a good show and were only beaten by the current Army champions. WO2 Kerton was picked out as the Viking player of the tournament. The AQMS is congratulated in leading the Army team to this year's inter-service championships.

Squash

Being located close to Aldershot has its advantages and one of these was a phone call from the School of PT to offer at short notice some places on a squash skills course for a week. The offer was taken up by the author, WO2 Buff, Cpls Chamberlin and Johnson.

Following a week of first class coaching and enjoyable squash the four returned to Pirbright intent on entering the Army individuals (novice) and team event. Of the four entries into the individual competition,



Major Tony Jones - the Vikings' answer to Bobby Robson.

two were finalists, 2Lt Walker won the individual novice open category and was runner-up in the under 25s category. Cpl Chamberlin put in a sterling performance in coming runner-up in the plate category of the novice open category and, while WO2 (RQMS) Buff and WO2 (CSM) Ellis didn't reach the finals they competed in some close matches that could have gone either way.

The Army team championships saw us come up against some very experienced and skilful teams and while we were well out of our depth it was good to take part and see the level we need to aspire to. The season was finished off with an inter-company competition won by HQ Company with C Company as runners-up.

Viking Hockey

Won: 14 Drawn: 2 Lost: 4

As the results show the Battalion hockey team has had a good set of results this season and some success in a number of competitions. The team secured second place in the 4 Div League, reached the semi-final of the 4 Div Cup, and came plate runners up in the Infantry Cup. The season began with a surprise victory over 27 RLC Regiment. Prior to the match no previous training had been undertaken. However, we shocked ourselves by gelling effectively and coming away with a convincing 3-1 win. This run of form continued throughout the season with minimal training sessions due to various commitments but good results nonetheless. It seemed that if we rocked up having done no training, practised for an hour and then played, we were unstoppable. This theory was upheld until the seventh game we were still unbeaten and lying joint first in the league.

However, our downfall came when we played a very organised 3 RSME team in the semi-finals of the 4 Div Cup. They had strength in numbers and many set game plans. Yet, we played effectively and although 3-1 down by the start of the second half, we were still in the game. Here we demonstrated the true capabilities and spirit of the squad turning the game around and bringing the scores level by the time the full time whistle was blown. However, 3 RSME proved to be too strong for us in the end beating us in extra time.

The team also entered the Infantry Cup, which was held at the Aldershot Astroturf pitches. This was a very well organised and enjoyable event. The team had a considerable amount of success coming runners-up in the plate after only losing narrowly in penalties to the PWRR. Run concurrently with the tournament was an



All those who took part in the inter-company squash.

The Vikings

umpiring course. This was also very successful and individually for the Battalion we managed to qualify five people as umpires. CSgt Eccles and Cpl Chamberlin also qualified as coaches.

Special thanks this season should go to Cpl Chamberlain who managed all the kit and captained the team very effectively this year.

Luge

LCpl Nichols of the Vikings' CIS platoon attended an ice camp in Lillehammer and attempted the Luge (The equivalent of completing a bobsleigh run on a tea tray) for the very first time; here are his notes.

LCpl Nichols writes...

I first became interested in Luge having spotted a poster on the company noticeboard advertising a week ski-camp in Lillehammer. The Army were scouting for talent to either compete in the luge, skeleton or bobsleigh. Living on the edge as we do in the CIS platoon I opted for the luge and having never seen one let alone been on a sled I am now hooked. The cost varies depending on flights, accommodation, track fees etc, assistance is given by the Army Luge Association who will pay your track fees and help with accommodation. Equipment is supplied less the suit but for starters an old tracksuit will suffice.

The ice camp cost £375 and was worth every penny. It consisted of learning the basics before getting down to the main business. I started off at the junior start where you do very little except lay there and get use to the sled and track. The next stage was the Diamond start where I reached speeds of 80-90 kph. Having got the basics and the bug I entered the Army Novice championships in Austria and came second. La Plange in France was next where I competed in the Army Championships finishing fourth, the British novices finishing second and the British individuals where I managed a creditable fifth. The championships all take place on Olympic



CSgt Kev Main telling the RQMS(T) where he was going to take a dive in the inter-unit relay championships.

tracks and are a great thrill.

Next season my aim is to get onto the world cup circuit as a member of the Great Britain team. I would recommend the luge to anyone who enjoys living on the edge.

For details on the Ice Camps run by the Army Winter Sports Association, contact Maj Johnston on 94251 Ext 2863.

Orienteering

With the return from operations in Afghanistan and little or no time to train, it was time to get the orienteering team back 'on the map' prior to the start of the 4/5 Division league. WO1 (RSM) Tate's first task was to select what was hoped to be a 'fit, youthful' team to compete in the league that normally generates the Army Champions.

In order to encourage the younger



Chippy Chandler warms up.

members to take up this 'military training' as part of their personal development, it was decided that orienteering would form part of the Inter-Company competition, unfortunately Op Fresco put pay to various attempts to piggyback a league event and stage the competition. We eventually ran our own event on the 2 April with the eventual winners coming from Headquarter Company.

The season has meandered through approximately 16 events to date that have tested the endurance, speed, navigation and at times night visibility. The two most notable events were Bulford Ridge revisited, again and again and again, the 'Grand Old Duke of York' springs to mind, and the Divisional Inter-Unit Relay championships where the team was very unfortunate not to come away with some silverware when CSgt Kev Main sustained an injury and hobbled around not completing the course, getting the whole team disqualified but no-one has mentioned it since!

These events aside the Vikings are very



LCpl Nicholls on the run.

The Vikings



The Inter-company orienteering champions - HQ Company.

much holding their own, again in what is a very competitive league. Individually, CSgt Main has completed the planner's course and I was fortunate enough to represent the Infantry and Army earlier in the year. The longer-term plan is to regain the mantle as 'Infantry Champions' but I am sure the Poachers and Lt Col Ladley will have something to say about that!

Rugby

The constant call out of Operation Fresco saw us call off no fewer than ten fixtures. This did not stop the following players playing representative rugby: Army Veterans - WO2 Wilkins AGC(SPS), Sgt Bevan, LCpl Mataceva; Army U-20s - 2Lt Walker, Pte Brooks AGC(SPS); WO2 Wilkins AGC(SPS), 2Lt Bailey, LCpl Williams, Infantry - Capt Biggs.

The annual Old Boys' game saw a hard fought effort go the way of the older and greyer generation. A lively renewing acquaintances and comparing bruises was followed by a dinner with 40 members attending. Awards were made to WO2 Wilkins for his services to Royal Anglian Rugby and to Sgt Dave Bevan on completion of 22 years' rugby in Viking colours.

The Battalion enjoyed an up and down season with the following results:
 Woking XV L 12-18.
 AGC Development XV L 24-38.
 1 Scots Guards W 32-24.
 19 Regiment RA (Army Cup) L 21-23.
 11 Sig Regiment (Army Shield) L 18-36.
 Old Boys L 10-28.

Training Wing

Capt P Blanchfield writes...

The permanent staff of the Training Wing bid farewell to Capt David James-Roll and welcome Capt Phil Blanchfield.

On 10 February the Training Wing started a Tactics Cadre, aimed at those soldiers who had recently completed a PNCO Cadre and the Junior Lance Corporals from within the Battalion. It aimed to fill the training gap between PNCO Cadre and SCBC. Twenty-one students started the Cadre which spent

a week in camp at Pirbright brushing up on lesson and orders techniques, followed by three weeks in SENTA.

While at SENTA the cadre practised battle lessons and exercise techniques and also attack, defence and a host of basic infantry skills. There were a number of navigation exercises that included navigation over difficult terrain (Pen Y Fan) and night navigation exercises. The cadre finished with reports being written on 10 of the 21 starting students highlighting the need to run tactics cadres on a more frequent basis.

The Training Wmg is now busy preparing for a host of cadres that are to be directed from the wing, these include sniper cadre, PNCO cadre and a number of upgrading cadres.

Bowman - The Vikings lead the Army into digitisation

Capt O Brown writes...

In July this year the long awaited arrival of the new Bowman communication system will formally mark the start of the digital era for the Army. We will join all other modern Armies in the world by harnessing the benefits offered by modern technology in order to improve our effectiveness and tempo of operations on the battlefield. The Vikings have the great privilege of leading the Army into digitisation, as we will be the first unit that converts to the Bowman system.

The Nature of Bowman

When considering Bowman, it is absolutely critical to understand the fact that it is not simply a new radio, which is replacing Clansman. Bowman is a complete system, which has an array of capabilities that will fundamentally change and improve the manner in which we communicate and conduct Command and Control functions when deployed. The Bowman system is the key enabler of UK Land Forces Digitisation. Accordingly, as this article will explain, the Bowman system includes a plethora of functions and capabilities, which will assist

us in drawing benefits from modern technology and exploiting them on the battlefield.

In essence, the Bowman system will create a 'battlefield internet', which will facilitate the electronic transfer of orders, reports, returns and other messages. The system consists of three key components, which are...

Software Applications - These applications will form ComBAT (Common Battlefield Application Toolset). ComBAT will be the final collection of software applications available on the system - this completed package is due to be in service by 2008.

ComBAT will consist of a number of BISAs (Battlefield Information System Application) such as a fire control BISA for use by mortar platoons and an NBC BISA for use by intelligence cells. These BISAs will be superimposed on top of BSAM (Bowman Situational Awareness Module), which is the primary application available for use at all levels. BSAM is the key software applications which the Vikings will trial later this year (more details on BSAM are given later in this article).

Hardware (User Data Terminals - UDTs) - Units will be issued with a number of computer systems, which will operate the software applications shown above. Commanders at all levels (from section upwards) will be issued with a hand-held UDT and all key command vehicles will contain laptop style UDTs.

Communication Network - The new digital radios which form an integral part of the system will provide the communications network across which all of the messages prepared on the UDTs will travel around the battlefield.

The components of the system as detailed above, clearly demonstrate a quantum leap in terms of communications technology, which Bowman represents. To that end, it is critical that the Regiment as a whole embraces the new system from the outset. For I fear that anyone who adopts a Luddite mentality will surely struggle in the digital era.

Bowman Facilities and Services

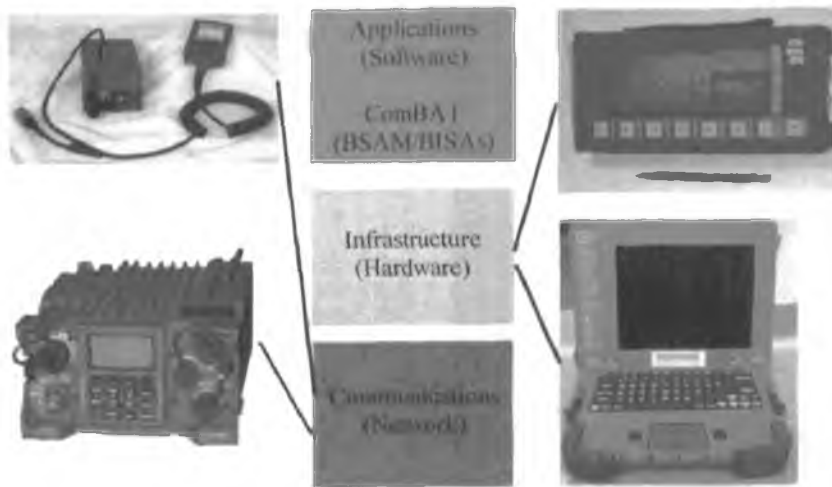
The Bowman system offers the following facilities and services to its users:

Secure Voice - The days of relying on BATCO will become a distant memory as every radio from section commander upwards will be fully secure.

Secure Data - All necessary reports, returns and requests will be sent across the secure communications network.

GPS - Every man-pack radio will have an inbuilt GPS system and all vehicle-mounted radios will operate through a shared GPS. This function is a key element of BSAM - effectively the location of every radio and therefore each sub-unit/section/vehicle will be automatically reported over the network and will be automatically plotted on the digital map screen on each of the UDTs.

The Vikings



Bowman system components and equipment - the new shiny kit.

Situational Awareness - BSAM is the key enabler of situational awareness. This software package facilitates the functions as detailed in the paragraph relating to GPS above. There are a great number of other facets to BSAM, which the Vikings will become accustomed to over the coming months.

Battlefield Intranet - In terms of data transmission, the communication network will enable reports, orders and overlays to be sent across the entire length and breadth of the Battlegroup and indeed Brigade Area.

Electronic Protective Measures (EPM). There are a number of inbuilt EPM systems within Bowman. In essence, the ability to avoid jamming and interception will be vastly enhanced by the new system.

Bowman Situational Awareness Module (BSAM)

As previously mentioned in this article, BSAM is the cornerstone of the software

packages, which Bowman will offer its users. There are three components of the BSAM software application:

Situational Awareness - This function has already been covered in broad outline. Effectively it offers users a near real-time battle picture which is displayed on all UDTs. This capability will enhance all commanders' assessments of the current battle situation and therefore speed of their decision-making processes. In addition, the function should greatly assist a reduction of fratricide incidents on the battlefield.

Messaging - All reports, returns and requests, which are required on the battlefield are available on BSAM. Messages are prepared on user-friendly Microsoft Word-style documents. In terms of immediate messages, there is an ability to send flash alert messages at the touch of a button eg Contact and NBC reports. Such messages instantly flash up on the screen of all other UDTs on the network, thereby

ensuring an extremely rapid passage of such critical information. The message delivery and receipt system is very similar to Microsoft Outlook.

Planning Features - BSAM has the ability to prepare transmit and receive Op Orders, FragOs, Warning Orders, Decision Support Overlays and a host of other key planning related products.

These three components of BSAM offer a massive advantage to Bowman users. In terms of passage of information, the ability to conduct maximum concurrent activity in preparation for an operation and situational awareness while conducting operations, the benefits offered by BSAM are huge.

In summary, Bowman and Digitisation offer an amazing opportunity and challenge to all units. The Vikings are relishing the chance to pave the way for the rest of the Army. We will be instrumental in developing not only the system itself but also its functionality on the battlefield and the SOPs, which will be used in conjunction with the system. Embracing and harnessing the benefits of Digitisation is a great challenge, for which the Battalion is thoroughly prepared.

Marriages

LCpl and Mrs A Hitchcock, 28 February 2003.

Cpl and Mrs W Cole, 15 March 2003.

Births

LCpl and Mrs Debus a daughter, Mia.

Pte and Mrs Fincham a son, Beau.

LCpl and Mrs Jackson a son, Joshua.

Pte and Mrs Stevens a son/daughter, David/Chelsea.

Pte and Mrs Tollerson a daughter, Mai-Li.

Pte and Mrs Urquart a daughter, Megan.

LCpl and Mrs Baxter a daughter, Erica.



The CO talks to the new members of the Battalion on Viking Scholar.



Cpl Ward and Pte Fox talk to potential recruits.



Sgt Thorn and Pte Pluck show off Recce Platoon's kit.

BART Training





WO2 Bartlett and his car-cutting crew sit astride one of their recent victims.

Afghanistan



The Poachers training the Afghan National Army.



CSgt Brownlie visiting the Great Wall of China.



King Edward VI School CCF Corps of Drums at the Essex Regiment Reunion at Warley.



WO1 (RSM) Tate takes over from WO1 (RSM) Blanchfield as RSM 1st Battalion.



WO1 D Hazelwood hands over to the new RSM 2nd Battalion, WO1 RJ Bredin.

East of England Regiment



Pte Gatlor receiving the Champion Company Shield on behalf of E Company at the Regimental SAAM, 27 April 2003.



E (Essex and Hertfordshire) Company EER, the Champion Company 2002/2003.



The Colonel of the Regiment inspects the NCO Cadre.



Commissioning Course 021 on their final exercise in Cyprus - November 2002. From left: OCdts Hicks, Faruque, Bland, Capt Chance, OCdts Glover and Maclay.

The CO leaving camp, May 2003





Operation Fresco training



Triathlon



Right: Pte Downie, inter-company triathlon.

Below - A Company triathlon team.



2nd Battalion The Poachers

Introduction by the Commanding Officer

It seems churlish to talk about how busy and committed the Battalion is when, as I write, the British Army is excelling itself in Iraq. When the balloon went up I had a queue of soldiers stretching out from my office door to front gate volunteering for jobs 'in the front line'. Unfortunately for them, we have had too much on our plate to release many (although in the final event 15 Poachers are now serving in the Gulf, including my padre).

Exactly what is on our plate to make us that busy?

The final throes of NIBAT 4 last year made for an interesting time as they coincided with the start of the Fire Brigades Union's (FBU) industrial action. Fighting fires in the Province is not the same as fighting fires in Gloucestershire. Northern Ireland has its security peculiarities which added some spice to almost every deployment. Operation Fresco was HQ Northern Ireland's largest cross-Province operation for over a decade and we were it. The 1,000-man organisation deployed into all of the hard Republican areas (to fight fires) - streets which had not seen British soldiers for over five years. Putting out fires in the Creggan and Divis required a degree of protection, but time was always of the essence. The soldiers were magnificent, balancing security against speed and always getting it right. We encountered few problems and I think I can genuinely say that the people of Northern Ireland were grateful for what we were able to achieve.

Not satisfied with the hard areas of Northern Ireland, after Christmas we took over another 1000-man fire-fighting group in Strathclyde, Glasgow. Already noted for its hard-edged busyness we were soon dousing apartment block fires in central Glasgow and getting a hard time in the more predominantly Catholic regions. Again, the now seasoned fire-fighting battalion took it in its stride.

One could argue that we proved so good at the low-level fire fighting that the Army decided that in March we would take responsibility for the bulk of the Army's specialist fire-fighting commitment. (Actually, the truth is we were the only sensible replacement for 2 PWRR, who had to prepare for a Northern Ireland deployment). So in late February we changed role again and pushed off down to RAF Manston in Kent to train over 200 Breathing Apparatus and Rescue Team (BART) soldiers. This skilled and difficult course is five weeks long and is not easy; I'll leave the details to one of the specialist articles further on. Some six weeks down the line we are now a fully trained BART Battalion and ready for any potential strikes that the FBU will throw at us. It is cheering to note that we achieved a 94 per cent pass rate on the BART course - well above



The Commanding Officer (as Commander the Province Fire and Rescue Group) tries to get inside the mind of the enemy.

previous units.

All this fire fighting should be set against the core activity of military operations. The Battalion currently has A Company (Maj Simon Etherington) patrolling two police districts in Kabul - the first time the British Army has patrolled in Kabul since the 1st Battalion left last year. In addition, a specialist training team, led by Maj Stuart Carver, has started training Afghan National Army NCOs as part of US-sponsored training for the whole Afghan Army. We have also filled a couple of posts in the HQ establishment. The aim remains to route these two organisations at the three-month point (June 2003) with C Company taking on the patrolling task and B Company the training task. The incumbent companies are having an excellent time and, I believe, doing a very sound job.

The future remains unclear. With the FBU still messing about on potential strikes we remain committed to fire fighting. The task list in Afghanistan could increase and by the summer over half of the Battalion might well be committed there. Our arms plot to Ballykelly remains firm for January 2004 and we have planned our training (which starts in October), and the wives have already sent a small team to Ballykelly on a fact-finding mission. However, with current Army commitment levels as high as they are, who knows what I might be writing about in six months time?

Op Fresco (ZULU) NI - Unrolling the Celtic Hose

*Capt CDW Davies, Ops Officer,
writes...*

Split between the rolling hills and lakes of Fermanagh and the unhappy streets of East and North Belfast, Operation Fresco (ZULU) began to slowly sneak up on the Poachers. NIBAT 4 has recently been a rear-based period of readiness, occasionally requiring personnel for short durations during the more emotional periods. However, the ongoing loyalist feud in Belfast managed to attract two battalions for the majority of 2002 in order to assist the PSNI maintain order. Concurrently, the Fire Brigade Union (FBU) dispute over pay had gathered pace over the preceding months leading up to September 2002. As tensions decreased within the loyalist community, 2 Royal Anglian was suitably placed to take control of the Operation Fresco (ZULU) NI mantle. Unbending opinions between the FBU and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) led to over 1,500 personnel, sporting 30 different capbadges, forging together to ensure that an effective fire and rescue service was available for the population of Northern Ireland to cover any strike action. The Province Fire and Rescue Group (PFRG) was born.

The preparatory planning for Operation Fresco was mainly completed in conjunction with G3 Ops HQNI. The concept was reasonably simple; the 3 NI Brigade areas would be given a Company HQ and associated personnel and equipment to complete the task, and be known as Fire Fighting Groups (FFGs) North (8 Inf Bde AO), South (3 Inf Bde AO) and Urban (39 Inf Bde AO). A Joint Operations Control Centre (JOCC) would be located at the PSNI HQ and a shadow ops room would be established at RAF Aldergrove to make sure the whole operation worked - simple! However, the amount of planning, deconfliction, and contingency planning involved was quite extraordinary. Recces of each proposed Temporary Service Fire Station (TSFS) took place, which in turn brought our attention to a number of unique issues which required solving. These ranged from raising force protection measures within TA centres to solving the 'South Armagh problem'; South Armagh was deemed too dangerous to operate Yellow Goddess fire engines in and therefore an airborne fire-fighting and protection force was established. There was also a requirement for close liaison to take place with non-striking emergency services, community personnel and sites of particular danger such as chemical factories and airports.

During late September 2002, all personnel tasked to support Operation Fresco (ZULU) in Northern Ireland congregated at RAF Aldergrove in order to participate in coherence training. The aim of the coherence

The Poachers



Cpl Gelder seems oblivious to the fact that there is no water flowing.



GOC NI is presented with a framed photo of the PFRG on the Poachers' departure from the Province...



...but seems far happier with the T-shirt!

training was twofold; firstly to make all personnel aware of how fire-fighting operations in Northern Ireland would be conducted and secondly to forge personnel from numerous backgrounds into effective, coherent teams. Concurrent to a series of practical demonstrations and lectures were a number of MAPEXs and CPXs, which managed to identify all those awkward hidden problems that usually surface when it's too late. The Poachers provided C2 and protection for the operation while other units provided fire-fighters and specialist breathing apparatus rescue teams.

The deployment from RAF Aldergrove to the 19 Province-wide TSFSs, three FFG HQ locations and the JOCC was an event that became well practised. Movement tables, CH47 and PUMA flight plans, top cover for movement, breakdown and recovery plans, CT protection by resident brigade units and detailed communications plans were considered each time in detail. Once in position, the fire-fighting group commanders were responsible for continuation training and maintaining the preparedness of their troops.

Once ready for fire-fighting operations, PFRG personnel remained glued to Radio Five Live in order to capture the latest dispute updates. The unpredictability of the talks between the FBU and the ODPM forced the PFRG to deploy and extract - often out of Province for non-NIBAT 4/NI based personnel - a total of five times.

Inevitably, the first strike occurred and the PFRG assumed responsibility for fire and rescue within Northern Ireland. The Poachers were involved with all pre-Christmas strikes, which consisted of one 24-hour, one 48-hour and one eight-day strike period. The concept of reacting swiftly to a 'call out' and whizzing towards an unknown incident aroused the troops' sense of adventure and excitement. However, the shocking reality of certain incidents quickly sobered minds and evoked the seriousness of our newly learned business. The majority of 'call outs' were to hoaxes and 'come ons' within Belfast and Londonderry, but there was a fairly large amount of real calls, including house fires, RTAs and industrial accidents. During the Poachers' period as the core of the PFRG, there were luckily no major incidents. One fatality occurred which was subsequently investigated as a suspected murder by the PSNI.

NIBAT 4 was unlike any operational tour anyone had previously completed. It seemed a swirling cocktail of counter terrorist, public order and fire-fighting operations; the last of which allowed the battalion, bar B Company OPCOM 1 PWO in Omagh, to operate together for a prolonged period of time. The operation had been extremely busy at all times. During 'operational stand down periods' much hard work was completed to maintain the morale of all PFRG personnel. In early November, a warning order for subsequent fire-fighting

operations in Strathclyde arrived. Stand down periods between strikes were used to conduct the required training. Fortunately, this negated the need to interfere with any post-operational tour leave planned on return to Chepstow. By the end of NIBAT 4, everyone had completed a variety of interesting tasks and had prepared to tackle the challenges of Scottish fire-fighting in the New Year - but that's a different story

The Life of a TSFS Commander in Belfast

WO2 JR Limb, 2IC Mortar Platoon,
writes...

Having spent the previous four months on public order duties it was a bit of a culture shock to be told that we were then to become the escort battalion for the fire strikes out in Northern Ireland.

But the Battalion began to plan for the strikes and for the amount of personnel that would be involved, and for my sins I was given the post of Temporary Service Fire Station (TSFS) Commander at Mount Pleasant Hospital in Belfast. The station's AOR included many parts of West Belfast which had not seen any 'green' troops for five years, which had the prospect of being interesting!

We began with training at RAF Aldergrove, a mixture of lessons and stands, which was aimed at getting all the different

The Poachers



The infamous Yellow Goddess in action.

capbadges working as one station. I had eight different capbadges under my control and as the training progressed so did the teamwork, and it wasn't long before we deployed to the TSFS. Our small convoy was made up of four Snatches, two Yellow Goddess and two LDV vans for the BART vehicles, which were later changed to Snatch due to the areas which we were working in.

There was time now for the command group to set up the operations room and to carry on with continuation training within the confines of the small camp. The vehicle commanders had to carry out area recces, but this was somewhat difficult as 80 per cent of our area was a 'no go' for green troops; however, as all good soldiers do, the commanders adapted and overcame this.

As the day of the first 48-hour strike crept closer so did the amount of CPXs and radio checks, until the morning of the first strike arrived and everyone was well drilled and in place and the sweepstakes were going round on the time of the first call and who would be the most active TSFS station in the whole of Northern Ireland.

It didn't take long to see that Mount Pleasant Hospital would be one of the more active stations as the calls started to flood in, from RTAs to rubbish fires - all needed a response from a Yellow Goddess. The deployment was always a good sight to witness, with the police leading followed by a Snatch then a Goddess and the BART vehicle, and last but not least the rear Snatch for security.

As the first call came in to a red area, the call sign deployed with caution and on arrival at the scene was greeted by all the local press. But the locals were very co-operative and the incident went well with the Brigade Commander flying over for a look.

As the strikes went on the crews were now more confident, having deployed on numerous occasions. On one occasion all the vehicles were deployed to an empty house fire which then required another two vehicles from Moscow Camp to deal with

it, and the Yellow Goddesses fought the fire for well over seven hours before handing it over to the fire brigade as they finished their strike and came back on duty. But it still took them an hour to check their kit before they could deploy, and once they had taken control of the incident it took them four more hours to get the fire under control.

As the strikes went on the calls began to slow down as all the hoaxes began to stop, and for the last few days of the eight-day strike the station was only called out twice. But overall Mount Pleasant Hospital was one of the most-used stations out in Northern Ireland along with Girdwood just down the road.

We handed over in Northern Ireland in early December and then went on leave after an interesting six-month deployment. Since then we have deployed to cover Glasgow and most of the Battalion has now completed a five-week BART course and are awaiting the next round of strikes!

Strathclyde Fire and Rescue Group (SFRG)

Capt SD Wilson, RSO, writes...

No-one could ever accuse the Poachers of resting on our laurels, but clearly someone

at HQ Land running the Operation Fresco merry-go-round decided that, having solved the problem of delivering fire and rescue cover amidst the somewhat unique challenges of Northern Ireland, we needed a new goal to aim at. Two weeks before we had even escaped the province, the Battalion 2IC, Ops WO and QM(T) were undertaking an initial reccé to Strathclyde in preparation for our assumption of command of the SFRG from the Highlanders who needed to be released for pre-Balkan training in early January. They came back with reports of an AO that made West Belfast seem like Tunbridge Wells! With the prospect of Poachers manning Green Goddesses rather than providing local security, crew training packages were run between strikes at RAF Aldergrove under the expert tuition of the Defence Fire Service, or Creeping Black Death as they are affectionately known!

The Battalion handed over the PFRG to 1 RGBW, our NIBAT 4 replacements, on schedule on 4 December and stood down for some well-earned leave. With strikes still planned and no prospect at that time of a negotiated resolution to the fire dispute there was a very real chance that we would all have to return to work on 2 January, so the CO despatched us all on leave a week early. That left a mere four days to squeeze in all the usual pre-Christmas festivities - not to mention a commanders' reccé up to Glasgow - before dispersal, but everyone rose admirably to the challenge!

A nervous wait ensued for word of the Fire Brigades Union's intentions, but their announcement the week before Christmas that no further strikes would take place until the end of January meant the Battalion was able to enjoy its full entitlement of combined post-operational tour and Christmas leave, plus a bit more for good measure. Most importantly, the Officers' Mess ski trip to Courchevel could go ahead after all - although the AGC Det Comd's holiday didn't survive contact with the slopes, as she exchanged her poles for crutches!

But we should have known it was too good to last, and sure enough the Fire Brigades Union soon confounded all expectations by announcing an additional strike for 21 January, which played havoc with the



Capability in Strathclyde was enhanced by the addition of a handful of state-of-the-art big red fire engines.

The Poachers

Battalion's planned pre-Belize training and forced the cancellation of a pioneering Commanders' Cadre in Brunei. Instead, only three days after returning to work Battalion HQ and B, C and D Companies found themselves on an epic coach journey up to Glasgow, to get to grips with the challenges of providing emergency fire and rescue cover in the UK's busiest region after London. The SFRG consisted of some 850 personnel from all three Services operating out of 18 fire stations, with the Poachers providing C2 and G4 infrastructure, and 25 Green Goddess crews. A (Lincolnshire) Company's impending departure for Afghanistan left something of a hole in our orbit, so additional crews were recruited from I RGJ and assorted artillery and logistic regiments.

On arrival, the well-oiled training and logistic machinery, honed during our time in NI, swiftly swung into action, and the entire SFRG attended a central coherence training package at Glencorse before dispersing to their fire stations for further continuation training. The package included extensive syringe awareness training - the drug problem in Glasgow is particularly bad, and militant firemen have been known to booby-trap hydrants with discarded syringes. The HQ staff, meanwhile, were getting to grips with running the Joint Operation Control Centre - a challenge we had not fulfilled ourselves in NI - in Strathclyde Police HQ and endearing themselves to their police counterparts with their tedious and repetitive Taggart impressions!

Strike day came and went without major incident, and we were all surprised that the first 24 hours had not been busier. However, after a long weekend back in Chepstow (involving more interminable coach journeys!), the pace of the second (48-hour) strike more than made up for the first. The second night proved particularly busy, featuring a huge blaze in Glasgow city centre which required five Green Goddesses to attend, and saw the first deployment of our aerial water tower; and a tanker full of aerosol propellant which crashed and caught fire on the M74. All those tasked to these and other incidents acquitted themselves with the utmost professionalism, and both blazes were eventually brought under control. The final strike could not but seem boring after such excitement, and those on nights in the JOCC even found time for pop quizzes and Trivial Pursuit with their police and fire brigade counterparts between incidents. Before we knew it we were packing up and heading south again, awaiting further developments in the dispute.

But against all expectations negotiations recommenced, and we found ourselves heading into our latest task - BART training - without having handed over our responsibilities in Strathclyde. The merry-go-round had not yet identified a unit to replace us, and like a hot potato the SFRG lead commitment was thrown around



D (Sp) Company soldiers can't wait to get to grips with their new pride and joy!



CSgt Simpson (2IC Milan Platoon) explains why Yellow Goddesses have to be green on the mainland.



Green Goddess crews undertake cohesive training with their BART teams at ATR Glencorse.

The Poachers

between anyone foolish enough to stick their head above the parapet - and many who didn't! It ended up in the hands of our historical cousins and old friends from the PFRG, 1 WFR, who disappeared on leave before we could hand over and were almost caught short by a 'snap strike' called ahead of schedule by the Fire Brigades Union.

Overall the SFRG was an enjoyable and successful commitment. Having been largely on the sidelines at fire incidents in Northern Ireland on security duties, the troops were pleased to get involved with the hands-on firefighting though, whilst fire stations in Glasgow were kept busy, those out in the sticks found life a little tedious. For those of us in the JOCC we received a very warm welcome from police and senior fire officers, and by all accounts we were a dream to work with in comparison to our predecessors - those notorious Poacher qualities clearly in evidence again!

D (Sp) Company: Towering Inferno - Sauchiehall Street Fire

Capt GB Foden writes...

On the evening of 30 January D (Sp) Company were hoping for a quiet night as they covered for the striking firemen in Glasgow, as part of the Poachers' ongoing commitment to Operation Fresco. The Company was deployed across three locations in the heart of Glasgow and as such had been kept reasonably busy, although the majority of the callouts had been to extinguish bin fires or help locals put out their burnt toast (which accounted for an amazing six callouts!).

It would be safe to say that thoughts were turning to home and the epic 12-hour coach journey that would get us there. But, as ever, things were not going to be quite so straightforward. At approximately 1940hrs Jardine Street TSFS (Temporary Service Fire Station - TA Centre to you and I) received the call to deploy two Green Goddesses to the city centre. Details were somewhat sketchy as the two Green Goddesses raced (or should that be spluttered) out of the gates with Sgt Clarke of the Recce Platoon in command.

A fire had broken out in a large empty building on the corner of Sauchiehall Street and Garnet Street. For those of you not familiar with the geography of Glasgow, Sauchiehall Street is a busy road in the centre of Glasgow and is full of shops and apartment buildings. There were a number of problems confronting the crews - the sheer size of the building, its proximity to a student hall of residence, and its prime location, which ensured considerable interest from the press and local residents. In all 300 people had to be evacuated before the real business of fire-fighting began. As the fire took hold a request was made to the striking firemen for assistance as there was a real fear that the fire might spread, thereby devastating the commercial heart of the city.

Unfortunately this request was turned down leaving the Poachers and their attached BART crews on their own.

Water was rapidly directed onto the fire but, as the fire spread, Sgt Clarke soon realised that the Green Goddesses' pumps were not able to reach the top floor of the building. Luckily Pte Mason of the Mortar Platoon provided a solution which involved attaching the hoses to the roof of the vehicles. By his quick thinking and the reactions of the crews the extra range was achieved, thereby preventing the fire from spreading. Admittedly his solution was not pretty, the hoses being directed by a whack from a pick helve, but it worked.

By this time the company command team, led by Maj Carver, had arrived. Their speed in deployment was undoubtedly a result of Capt Dingle's pastoral concern for the well-being of those poor, homeless, female students! With the OC now valiantly dealing with the press, attention was given to trying to locate a platform that would enable the crews to pump water onto the fire from above. Eventually a hydraulic platform was found, the only problem being that it was in Dundee! Under police escort it duly arrived, admittedly somewhat late.

Despite the problems caused by falling masonry the fire was eventually brought under control and began to subside. With no further threat to life or surrounding buildings the crews were eventually pulled out, leaving behind Cpl Cruddace's team to damp down the smouldering embers into the wee small hours. The crews had performed magnificently in what had been a difficult and dangerous situation. The fact that there was no loss of life and that the fire did not spread bear testament to the skill of all those involved. After this fire all that burnt toast seemed a bit of a let down!

Poachers' BART Training

*Maj JCJ Wright, OC B Company,
writes...*

It was while we were in Strathclyde providing fire cover on Operation Fresco in



Practising ladder drills into a burning building.

January that we learned we were to replace 2 PWRR as the Army's Breathing Apparatus and Rescue Team (BART) Battalion. This coincided with the sad news that Exercise Mayan Warrior was to be cancelled because of the continued dispute between the firemen and their employers, and was rightly thought to be a source of dismay to the men. As it turned out it was met with the typical Poacher 'can do' attitude that has developed during this year of change management. Furthermore, some of the men relished the idea of five weeks steady training and viewed it as a natural progression from fire crew escorts in Northern Ireland to Green Goddess duties in Scotland to this, the more offensive form of fighting fires. The reason we were selected was because 2 PWRR had to start their Northern Ireland training in April and the prospect of the strike continuing looked likely.



BART crews experience a flashover.

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The BART training was to be held at RAF Manston in Kent, home to service fire-fighting, and was to last about five weeks for the individual. The Battalion was screened to nominate those eligible, which was everyone less key battalion and company staff. For my company this meant, much to my CSM's disgust, that both he and I were precluded. Those eligible were subject to a medical where sight, hearing, height and breathing were checked. The blind, deaf, asthmatic dwarfs were duly sent back to the loving arms of their CSM and those barrel chested giants with keen hearing and sight were sent to Manston to start their training.

BART training groups were selected and were 20-strong, and closely matched manning from our platoons. The start of training for 15 crews was staggered over 10 days. Crews were either on a day or night shift and worked from Monday to Friday. The shift pattern alternated between days and nights each week to ensure that no-one was subject to five weeks of nights. From what I saw and heard the crews were wary of their directing staff at first and almost certainly the staff were unsure of 200-odd Poachers of all ranks - something they had not confronted before. As the course continued the infantryman's ability for

flexibility and resourcefulness became apparent to the staff and I believe quite a rapport developed.

The accommodation at Manston was for half the crews reasonable in dedicated living

quarters, but the other half were residing in a gym. There were frightening flashbacks for some of Girdwood, and attempts were made rapidly to provide Portakabins as gym overspill accommodation. After the initial



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shock the problem seemed to go away. I was reliably informed, however, that the food was good. It was, and this further contributed to a happy stay.

While the men were training the Battalion struggled at the operational level to meet the BART commitment. BART trained personnel are required in Northern Ireland (D(Sp) Company), South Yorkshire and Humberside (C Company), Wales (HQ Company) and West Midlands, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Hereford and Worcester, and Hertfordshire (B Company). Attachments from 23 Pioneer Regiment and 16 Regiment RA have been called in to make up the shortfall for such a large commitment. These attachments all took part in the training and have been assigned to Poacher companies to ensure they arrive at the right place at the right time prepared and in good order like the rest of us. The deployment of 272 BART personnel across the country to a number of holding centres is yet to be tested. Let's hope it isn't, but of course The Poachers are ready to meet this challenge head on.

Impressions of BART Training

Lt SR Poulter, B Company, writes...

Instead of deploying to the hot and humid jungles of Belize. The Poachers were chosen to become the Army's Breathing Apparatus Rescue Team (BART) Battalion. Over the course of five weeks Poachers found themselves up ladders, in tunnels, facing real fires, attending road traffic accidents and generally doing all things fireman like!

The five weeks of training was progressive, starting with the now-dreaded Green Goddesses, and after various assessments it culminated in a series of exercises that included car crashes and rescues from house fires. There were several milestones on the course, a good one being the 'live carry-down'. This involved carrying another person down a ladder from a second storey window. On paper this seems like a straightforward enough exercise but negotiating a window sill with a person on your back is definitely hard work!

There are a lot of skills that are transferable between firemen and soldiers. The most obvious is being able to work in teams in hazardous situations. The reliance that is placed on your buddy in, for example, a real fire is similar to the relationship that would exist in a section during a live attack. Then there is the need to be robust and act decisively, both traits of a good soldier. But perhaps the most over-riding traits that link the two professions are those of adaptability and flexibility, the watch-words of an infantry soldier.

The course was approached with typical cheerful attitudes - it wasn't the jungle but the course was still taken on with the same gusto. Whether it was a dislike of heights, confined spaces or a general concern about being in close proximity to a raging fire, most of us had an area that worried us.



However, The Poachers cracked on with the determination that our soldiers are renowned for.

Operation Fresco (ZULU) BART Training

WO2 R Beswick, CSM HQ Company, writes...

On a cold, wet day in February the Commanding Officer asked if I would like a trip to the seaside. Well, I thought, he has my welfare at heart, and readily accepted his most generous offer. Consequently a week later I found myself at MOD Fire Service Central Training Establishment

Manston; one problem though - no sea! Not to be perturbed I got to grips with the real task in hand of establishing a Training and Admin Cell for the breathing apparatus and rescue team training that the Battalion had been tasked to complete as part of Operation Fresco (Zulu). A total of 300 personnel were to be trained by a mixture of MOD Fire Service and RAF instructors, the basic fire-fighters' course being condensed from 14 weeks to five. It was to run from Monday to Saturday 24 hours a day on a two-shift system, and a number of hurdles had to be overcome prior to the courses commencing. These included lack of accommodation, course loading, transport and general admin



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points.

The G1/G4 group consisted of 20 personnel drawn from HQ & D (SP) Companies. The head of G4 was Sgt Mutch, who was instrumental in arranging the accommodation, including the setting up of 160 beds in the gymnasium. At this point sandbags were pulled up, lanterns swung, and we were regaled with tales of Girdwood 2002! The G4 party achieved in one morning what for the RAF, by their own admission, would have taken three days! The courses were loaded onto day or night shifts based mainly on company groupings; due to a shortage of numbers the Battalion was back-filled by personnel from the Vikings, 16 Regiment RA and 23 Pioneer Regiment RLC.

The main purpose of the G1 group was to ensure that the soldiers' welfare was maintained, and to liaise closely with the RAF and MOD Fire service personnel who were in overall charge - until the Poachers arrived. It was at times an enlightening experience completing tasks the RAF way! The Station Commander, Wg Cdr Kennedy RAF Regiment, was thrilled to have all these personnel from a similar background on his station.

Once the groups had all arrived and commenced training, which in itself was strung out over two weeks, the courses took to the training with great gusto and the instructors were soon praising the students on how well they were reacting to the training. The main concern was that they were producing 300 pyromaniacs! The training was extremely intensive, and at times physically exhausting. The Battalion only lost 17 personnel during the training, for various reasons, which was less than the RAF expected.

After seven weeks everyone was fully trained and had returned to Chepstow, so the G4 party handed back the equipment, and the author and Sgt Mutch had an emotional time saying farewell to many new friends and acquaintances. Since returning to Chepstow they have both been heard to quote 'That's how the RAF do it, we need three days at least!'

The Poachers' Poem

by Cpl M Walton, Details Clk, MT Platoon

*Well I'm the Poachers' Poet, and here I am again,
To tell you about the goings on, the what, the where and when.*

*Someone on our chat list,
A man called Andy Gilchrist...*

*After an all night loss at the casino, he woke up in the night,
And had a dream involving money, he said 'I'll put things right!'
He rang the union leaders, said 'Let's put plans together.
Let's ask for a 40 percent pay rise, my wallet's as light as ever.'
So the fire-fighters went on strike while the war loomed in Iraq;
Talk about a union that stabs you in the back.*

*'No!' said Andy Gilchrist, 'We need more cash than most,
Lets give the Forces the run around whilst we have tea and toast.'
But we're more than a match for anyone, you put us to the test
We will show the fire union and the public we're the best.
So a six-month tour of Ireland finished with a Fresco bang.
Then a month-long leave in Skegness, in clapped-out caravan.
Welcome back, Battalion, just had Fresco on the phone.*

*There is good news for one of you - Pte MacNamee's going home!
Alarm bells ring in Scotland, a fire in a tower,
A ten-minute drive to the end of the town took the Goddess half an hour!
These beasts came out of hiding, ready for the road,
Being overtaken by a one-eyed German redback 40-year-old toad.
Scotland wasn't easy, I think some guys were shocked;
Here's a sentence from a conversation that I heard and clocked:
'I'd rather be back in Ireland taking cheek from a Paddy,
than walking past the psychos on the streets of Polymadie.'
The Scotland job was done, only a week to go.*

*Then a five-week course in Manston - another string to each man's bow.
Although most things were difficult we managed in the end,
Like most of 2 Royal Anglian we're all on permanent send!
Now whilst all this was happening, we must not forget the rest.
Once again Poachers fighting around the world are the very best!*

*A few Poachers in the Gulf, fighting wars in Iraq,
Waiting calmly in the heat for Saddam's gas attack.
Basra has been taken, Baghdad has followed too,
Our boys are doing every bit they possibly just could do.
The battle was won in 20 days, but the clean up will take many.
Billions in for human aid, and they need every penny.
A Coy in Afghanistan carrying out various patrols,
Taking on their tasks in every different role.*

*A 40-man group from D Coy called the Afghan Training Team,
Teaching Afghan front line army to fight fair, fast and clean.
The Taliban are still hiding, among the rocky caves,
I bet there's hair everywhere - as Bin Laden never shaves.
Saddam has done a runner, we've shattered all his homes.*

*But who the hell is Saddam? He has 40,000 clones!
Now where is Andy Gilchrist? When he's not on strike
He's bartering in a cycle shop for forty percent off a bike!!
Well I have to sign off now, I hope you've had some fun
Listening to the goings on in 2 Royal Anglian.*

United Kingdom Afghan National Army Training Team (UK ANATT)

Capt R J McNeil writes:

On the 4 March 2003 the first elements of the United Kingdom Afghan National Army Training Team (UK ANATT) arrived in Kabul. The party comprised the lead command element of a 17-man training team, provided by D (Sp) Coy, 2 Royal Anglian. The training team had been given a specific mission: to deliver sustainable NCO training to the Afghan National Army in order to create a host nation Army, capable of conducting stabilising operations at Battle Group level on a pan-national basis.

The ANA NCO Course was to be run from the Kabul Military Training Centre (KMTC) which is situated on the Jalalabad Road, fifteen minutes drive from HQ BRITFOR. Having received heavy bombardment in 2001 the KMTC is full of the scars of war, but is a functional military training centre none the less. It plays host to an Afghan headquarters, a US Army compound including a French training team, and a South Korean Medical Centre. Accommodated within the KMTC at any one time are two full Afghan Battalions undergoing training, each with around 700 recruits.

On the arrival of the Poachers, the KMTC was training the 7th and 8th Battalion of the Afghan National Army (ANA). Training the ANA is funded by the Americans who also provide the ANA with the equivalent of our basic training. The French contingent is composed of a 60-strong training team devoted to training the officers of both ANA battalions. The specific training of NCOs is a new concept in Afghanistan, and Major Stuart Carver's D (Sp) Coy training team had its work cut out on arrival to set up the first course of its kind.

The main body of the UK ANATT arrived in country on 14 March 2003 and began a three-week build up to the start of the course. The training team applied itself to the process of planning and coordinating the training which was to begin on 29 March. Initially, the main focus was to ascertain what the American and French training teams were teaching their recruits. Once this had been established the training team set about learning to use the various weapons in the Afghan armoury and compiling detailed lesson plans.

The Afghan National Army currently has



A question of leadership.



Four destroyed BTR 60s.

8 fully trained battalions and is based on standard NATO tactical doctrine. Our job was to bridge the gap between the American-taught recruits and the French-taught officers. Concurrently, the training team began the cumbersome task of 'squaring away' the NCO course accommodation in true British fashion.

After three weeks the UK ANATT had managed to beg, borrow or steal itself a course office, three platoon classrooms, 9 furnished squad dormitories, 4 Toyota Land cruisers, training areas, ranges and its own accommodation in the French compound.

On 29 Mar 03, 145 Afghan soldiers arrived for the pre-NCO course selection, and with only 108 places up for grabs competition was fierce. The aims of the selection were twofold. Initially to ensure that the students that attend the ANA NCO Course were of a suitable standard and were able to respond positively to the training they would receive on the course. Secondly, to establish the ANA NCO Course as an achievement-based, not just an attendance, course. Both of these aims were achieved.

Over four days the soldiers were tested in their command, initiative and teamwork through the use of three 'Brecon-style' command tasks. They were given lessons on which they were tested in order to ascertain their ability to assimilate information. They underwent reading and writing tests and a 'Kim's game' to assess their retention of information. Each student was also assessed on his public speaking ability, and PT was a regular early morning feature.

The selection complete, all 108 students arrived for the opening brief by Maj Gen Asifi, the commandant of the KMTC, and after a reading from the Koran, Maj Carver and CSM Rainey MC took the stand to introduce the students to the NCO course.

The course had been split down into three platoons commanded by SNCO instructors. Within the platoons nine squads were formed, all led by Cpl instructors from the training team. This established the student/instructor ratio as 12:1.

Over four weeks the students will be taught leadership, how to give orders and also how to administer their men. The whole concept of NCOs has, up to now, been alien to



Firing the RPG 7.

Afghans at this level of command. They will be instructed in the duties of an NCO both in the field and in barracks, with the emphasis on how to look after their men. Their own personal soldiering skills will be developed and tested from individual up to company level. Conventional and internal security tactics will form the basis of their operational training. Specific skills such as map reading, communications and first aid will also be taught.

A progressive range programme will be run to enhance and develop their application of the marksmanship principles and the employment of their fire support assets, the PKM, RPG 7, SPG 9 and the 82mm and 60mm mortars. By the end of the course the aim is for the students to be running live ranges for themselves. They will undergo a progressive PT programme with the emphasis being on 'train the trainer'.

Aside from the specific military training, the importance of teamwork will be stressed continuously. Regardless of whether they were a Sgt Major or a Pte soldier in their previous units, they will be treated the same. Pashtuns, Tajiks, Hazaras, Turkomans, Usbees and Bashees will all be encouraged to integrate, and have been placed in mixed squads accordingly. An inter-squad and platoon competition will be run throughout the course to enhance teamwork and instil pride in their achievements.

A key requirement of the course is to select suitable Afghan NCOs to be instructors at the KMTC, with the ultimate aim being to hand the course over to an Afghan training team by the end of September 2003, after 5 complete courses.

As a lasting legacy of our time here, agreement has been reached with the Afghan

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Ministry of Defence that all successful students will be allowed to wear an enlarged version of the Beds and Herts Flash to signify their attendance on the course. In this small way the Poachers will be contributing to the culture and tradition of the new ANA.

In conclusion, the Poachers have now fulfilled their requirement to provide a training team to select and instruct NCOs from the Afghan National Army. For each member of the training team it is a unique experience and should prove to be an extremely rewarding job. Not ignoring the fact that the operational environment is far from stable, each day produces a new challenge and so far the tour has been both interesting, and up to this point, successful.

The ANA Training Team consists of the following Poacher officers and NCOs: Major Carver (OC), Capt Dingle (2IC), Capt McNeil, WO2 (CSM) Rainey MC, CSgt (CQMS) King, Sgt Waghorn, Sgt Berridge, Sgt Clarke, Cpl McColm, Cpl Baird, Cpl Potter, Cpl Waqairoba, and Cpls (local) Marshall, Holvey, Fawcett, Turner, and Perry.

Afghanistan - The Final Frontier

Sgt F Berridge writes:

The tour started as our charter flight dropped about 500 ft and we started to spiral in to Kabul Airport on the 10 March 2003. On looking out of the window all that could be seen was a dusty bowl of ruined mud brick buildings surrounded by huge snow tipped mountains.

Our first destination was Camp Souter, where on arrival we received the normal in-theatre brief, after which the OC (Maj Carver) welcomed us. He gave a quick brief on the ANA Training Team set-up so far, which at that point did not amount to much, but it was soon clear that there was a lot of work to be done. The remainder of the day was personal administration and a golden opportunity to get some sleep which was certainly needed.

The first days consisted of visits and planning of lessons in and around Kabul Military Training Centre (KMTC). Once this was complete a 'shopping list' of kit requirements was compiled and then the equipment was either begged, borrowed or locally purchased. The second week we received a total of sixty interpreters which, after a day of interviews, were finally whittled down to sixteen. The remainder of the week consisted of foreign weapons training, and the training of the interpreters, which involved going through the lessons and educating them about military terms and equipment.

In week three 145 potential students paraded outside the ANATT office ready for the NCO selection. The selection ran over four days and the students were assessed on their ability to lead by way of command task, observation and memory tests, talking to a group on a given subject, reading and writing exam, and, last but not



Cpl Fawcett points out how it is done.

least, fitness. Each student was awarded points for each assessment and once the scores were compiled the top 108 were accepted on the course. The following day the course was paraded and the failures were read out first and then sent back to their relevant Kandacks (battalions). The remaining students were then told they were on the course which was followed by a round of applause and cheering as they all congratulated themselves and one another. The students were then briefed to parade outside the Training Team office at 0800hrs on Saturday 5 April ready to start the first NCO course in the Afghan National Army for more than twenty years.

Before we arrived in Afghanistan I expected the soldiers to be poorly trained

and ill-disciplined, even though some of them had combat experience, and I was surprised to find some very good soldiers with high standards. However, most of the NCOs had been appointed rather than selected on merit and the ANA had not had freshly trained NCOs for the last twenty years. Now that we have started training the NCO course and getting to know the soldiers, it is becoming clear that they are very proud and professional people and we are expecting a very high standard at the end of the course.

The job satisfaction is very high because it is a lot harder training Afghan soldiers than British recruits as you have to use an interpreter, and also we are improving the Army to make the country a safer place.



The Poachers

A Company 2 Royal Anglian Football Team vs Kabul United 1st XI - Saturday 5 April 2003

Lt PD Connolly writes...

When Lt Connolly's Patrol Report on 1 April 2003 included the recommendation that A Company should produce a team to play Kabul's number one football side in the city centre, many thought it an 'April Fools' joke. Four days later on a Saturday afternoon, as 13 soldiers from A Company were being driven out of the gates of Camp Souter on a four-tonner in football kit, body armour, helmets and armed with rifles, many thought the joke had gone too far!

When the team arrived at the pitch (or local equivalent) they were greeted by the same players Lt Connolly had met four days previously doing shuttle runs up a mountain - only this time they were bizarrely wearing German national football shirts. Around 200 locals crowded the sidelines waiting to see if the rumour they had heard was actually true. To their surprise they were about to get another chance at hammering the British on ground of their choosing. Fortunately, this time it would only be on a football pitch.

With most of the Company providing security around the local area the ceremonies began. A Company, led by the team captain, LCpl Rawdon, seized the first victory with an unplugged rendition of 'The Lincolnshire Poacher' that caused the bewildered Afghans to launch into an impromptu team talk. Both sides composed themselves, the ref's whistle blew, and the game was off.

Straight away the rock hard pitch was causing the Poachers problems. In contrast the local team - dubbed Afghan United - were in their element. Their number 10 made several darting runs through the Poachers' back four, and had one shot saved by the post. The hard work done by Cpl Hills and LCpl Wilkinson in the Poachers' experienced defence finally gave way, and after 15 minutes of continued pressure the Afghans caught 'The Cat' napping and scored one past LCpl Estwick. The crowd, which now included most of the Kabul rush-hour traffic, had reached about 1,000. The feeling among the locals was one of quiet but confident annihilation.

Fifteen minutes of hard graft in the midfield, mainly by Pte Burgess and LCpl Rawdon, eventually supplied 'The Cone Head' (Pte Thompson) with a well-timed pass that was rifled into the back of the net. All of a sudden Afghan United were looking a little shaky. As half-time approached the Poachers continued to apply the momentum and just five minutes after Thompson's goal, Pte Goldie struck the ball from nowhere to put his side 2-1 up.

The ref blew for half-time and Sgt Donovan, the team manager and water boy, called his team over for a quick insight into an alternative version of the English language. After their short but enlightening debrief the players gave the oranges back to

their manager and the game continued.

Within two minutes the Poachers (mainly Pte Wilson) clumsily conceded a penalty which the popular Mullah Majhal Mohammad easily converted to tie the game at 2-2.

Twenty minutes of near misses passed until finally the better acclimatised Afghans eventually scored a well-worked sitter to put the Poachers 3-2 down.

What followed was gritty football. The British ref was working hard to keep up with the intensity of challenges from both sides as well as interpreting quite what his locally employed linesmen were talking about. As the game was drawing to a close many of the onlookers began to head home cheerfully with stories of sweet victory over the British. With just minutes left Pte Burgess was tripped up in the area leaving himself a dubious carpet burn - but also a penalty in the dying seconds.

The spectators at the Afghan end, who had obviously not been to a serious football match in some time, began to crowd around the sides of goal and onto the pitch. They thought it was all over - it was now - as Pte Thompson stepped forward and struck the ball into the bottom left corner beyond the diving reach of the short Afghan goalie.

Confusion then descended on to the pitch. With Afghan United (in their German strip) in disarray, spectators all over the pitch and a scene that seemed like an enactment of the 1966 World Cup, the ref's whistle blew for full time. The final score: 3-3.

As the A Company players were bundled into the team bus with the sides rolled up, both players and spectators alike cheered them away into the Kabul traffic. The 3-3 draw was a good result for both sides and left Sgt Donovan, who was posted a week later to Bassingbourn, with an unbeaten global record as A Company's team manager.

The Team was as follows:

Goal - LCpl Estwick; Defence - Cpl Hills, Pte Stow, LCpl Wilkinson, Pte Davidson; Midfield - Pte Goldie, LCpl Rawdon, Pte Burgess, Pte Williams; Attack - Pte Thompson, Pte Richardson; Subs - Pte Wilson, Pte Anderson; Manager - Sgt Donovan; Tactical Advisor - Lt Connolly.

Patrolling Kabul The Platoon on the Ground

Lt MC Melia writes...

The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission: Assist the transitional authority in the maintenance and security within the AO in order to enable the reintegration of Afghanistan as a responsible member of the international community in accordance with the Bonn Agreement and as agreed in the Military Technical Assessment.

As far as mission statements go, this one leaves a fair bit to interpretation. The Vikings will be familiar with the implications and the execution and, thanks to their efforts in

2002, the reputation of the Regiment in particular and the British Army in general, was still very much intact on the streets of Kabul in 2003 when A Company arrived. Each of the five Patrol Platoons had been reminded of this fact throughout both the build-up training and the OPTAG package, prior to deployment.

For the uninitiated reader, Kabul is split into Police Districts (PDs) with each of the districts being looked after by a specific nationality within Kabul Multinational Brigade (KMNB). For our part we had been briefed that both PDs 8 and 9 would be our patch in the east of the city. The UK Engineer Squadron, who had been the caretakers of Police District 9, had been doing an admirable job considering their lack of infantry experience in the short time that they had been patrolling the area. The familiarisation extended to the Multiple Commanders on arrival was outstanding and allowed us all to get our heads around what we perceived as being a difficult and challenging environment, prior to the main body arrival some week and a half later.

For the Patrol Platoons, the initial priorities were simple: go forth and find out as much as you can and don't come back without the names, pictures and vital statistics of every Malik, Mullah and military commander (the three Ms) in the district. So this we did, battling through more cups of dubious tea, bowls of sweets and even more suspicious vats of cheese. ('Are you sure it's not yoghurt with WD40 Boss?'). This aspect of the patrols proved to be an almost endless but highly enjoyable task. The warmth and hospitality of the Afghans is legendary and has to be experienced to be believed. It is once again thanks to the reputation and respect afforded to the British Army, which made this task so much less of an up-hill struggle for us all.

The ongoing task of reassuring the public, joint patrolling with the local police, locating and reporting mines and unexploded ordnance, deterring crime of all natures and the myriad of other security assistance tasks, such as vehicle control points and both overt and covert OPs continues. This gives the small but substantial UK Kabul Patrols Company the flexibility to operate and cover an area the size of north Belfast with a good degree of confidence - confidence that we are making a difference in the every-day lives of the ordinary people, from the urban tower blocks of the Makruion area with the wealthier echelons of Kabul society, to the humble abodes of Qal-eh-ye-Hashmatkha, which has been twinned with Chepstow.

As the OC is often fond of saying after a successful operation, 'you will very rarely know how much you have deterred or prevented.' Even when all seems quiet and benign there is always the ever-present risk of becoming complacent and every once in a while, someone reminds the rest of us why we are here by firing 107mm rockets at the home of KMNB in Camp Warehouse to our east, or at HQ ISAF to the west in the city. Whether this is the private

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fundamentalist army of a certain Gulbadin Hekmatyar known as Hezbi-Islami Gulbadin (HiG) or a pro-Taliban local, or even the elusive Al-Qaeda, is a matter for the J2 boffins to work out.

For the soldier on the ground it is a timely reminder that under the quiet surface there is still an element that wishes to disrupt and destabilise the peace of a city whose population is starting to believe that the future can be brighter for all of them. There is still a long way to go, and at a political level, much that needs to be done. For the man on the street, he wants to know that he can leave his shop at nights without worrying about finding it ransacked the following morning. Parents want to see their children grow old without worrying about them being maimed or killed by mines and other various litter left by irresponsible armies of the past.

This is where we in the Regiment come in to our own, at a grass roots level continuing to lead the way for the other nations in ISAF to follow. The vast experience of the Regiment, born out of Northern Ireland, Bosnia and Sierra Leone has, and continues to show through. The professionalism and adaptability of the soldiers never ceases to impress visitors from all nations, proving once again to those that know, that you don't need a maroon or green beret to be a highly professional force to be reckoned with.

On a final note, it is with much relief that the Kabul Fire Brigade has not required our assistance as of yet, despite not having been paid in months and various reported sightings of Osama bin Gilchrist. Now that's something everyone can get behind!

Tactics Cadre 01/03

Capt RJ McNeil, OIC Tactics Cadre, writes...

The Tactics Cadre 01/03 took place between 15 January and 5 February 2003. The aims of the cadre were twofold. The first was to



The Poachers' tactics cadre - from left: LCpls Kirk, Davies, Fawcett, Cass and Long.

train the Battalion's LCpls in the fundamental aspects of conventional warfare in preparation for the Section Commanders' Battle Course (SCBC). The second aim was to select those who displayed the qualities required to attend and pass SCBC.

The concept was very simple - spend as much time in the field as possible! The training team had three weeks to get the cadre up to the required standard and achieved this through a series of classroom and field-teaching periods combined with test exercise conditions.

The first exercise focussed on medical training, signals revision and navigation. After consultation with the Junior Division at Brecon it was found that navigation is traditionally an area in which students are weak. All the students on the cadre improved their navigation through a series of navigation exercises, tests, TEWTs and command appointments.

The second exercise focussed on the section attack and patrolling. We felt it necessary to achieve a balance between instruction and test exercising, and the rapid improvement of the students proved that we had got the balance right. Fitness was a regular feature during the cadre and included log runs, stretcher races, hill sessions, and battle PT on the training area. Sennybridge has a habit of providing arduous conditions for any exercise and we were not to be disappointed. Blizzards, freezing rain and sub-zero temperatures were a regular feature and assisted the Directing Staff in the assessment of the students operating under adverse conditions.

The third exercise in Sennybridge got the pick of the weather and as the students deployed into a defensive position on Day One I could tell that this would be a good week. Having fought the defensive battle, they deployed on a platoon advance to



Firing the 51mm on the tactics cadre.

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contact, which for some proved to be 'emotional'. After further recce patrols a deliberate attack was conducted on to a known enemy position; this went well and marked the end of a hard week.

The opportunity to conduct live firing does not come around often enough, and we took full advantage of ours. Up to this point the cadre had taken its toll on the students and we were down to 15, which ruled out a platoon attack. We set up a section attack lane, which was supported by two flanking fire guns, 51mm (smoke and HE), hand grenades and a good dose of appalling weather. All involved worked extremely hard and it was a very satisfying day. The following day saw us conduct hand grenade and 51mm mortar battle exercises.

The opportunity to run a Tactics Cadre should be grasped by platoon commanders and it was extremely satisfying to conduct good hard training with junior NCOs. I express my thanks to Sgt Oldenburg, the cadre 2IC, Sgt David, Sgt Vasquez and Sgt Townsend for all their assistance and instruction throughout the cadre.

Drums Platoon

Dmr Stephens writes...

Busy - that's what it's been for the last six months! One minute we were recruiting around the Dunstable, Cambridge and Luton areas - which was very successful - the next we were off to Northern Ireland for the fire strikes.

We came back from Ireland, where we then had a week or so to rehearse for the Sergeants' Mess Christmas Dinner Night. This job was a little different though, as we had lads from the The Viking's Drums Platoon and the King's Own Scottish Borders Regiment with their pipes and drums. It was a good experience for all that took part. That engagement went really well and gave the platoon a good boost just before leave.

Anyway, along came Christmas leave, four weeks solid of getting fat and being lazy (and loads of fitness of course). Can't complain I suppose!

After leave we went off up to Scotland to cover the fire strikes (more hose and ladder drills). We were busy but everything went well and the platoon got through it all unscathed.

A couple of weeks later we were back in Chepstow for a bit, then off to RAF Manston to take part in the BART training, which turned out to be a highly enjoyable course - shame about the stinking gym we had for our accommodation!

Now here we are back again in sunny Chepstow, living under a bridge! Ah well, another week in camp and then Easter leave. Then on the horizon after leave we've got a drums concentration with The Vikings and The East of England Regiment, some GPMG (SF) training and, hopefully, we can look forward to a two-week music package in Gibraltar.

Inter-Services White Water Canoe Championship

Pte C A W Warren (B Company)

writes...

I had been interested in kayaking for some time and had competed prior to joining the Army in 2002. However, due to the Battalion being very busy, I had found it difficult to get out onto the water.

During the first fire strikes of this year B Company was providing cover in Strathclyde on the West coast of Scotland. Towards the end of the cover period I received a message from my Platoon Commander that he had found out about a race only an hour away. After a few enquiries I had some more details. It would be a full week of kayaking on the River Nirth, north of Dumfries, and would entail three days of intensive training, getting to know the river and culminating with two days competing in the Inter-Services championship. Transport and accommodation were all booked for me and the Company subsidised my expenses.

It was the first opportunity I had had to kayak with the Army and I was determined to prove myself. The river was extremely fast flowing and the water was freezing, ice formed on the banks and I had to contend with heavy snow storms. My hands were constantly numb but I kept warm through sheer exertion. Each day involved a great deal of hard work on the water but at night I was able to socialise and relax with other competitors from a wide spectrum of the Army and the Services as a whole. After the first three days I was selected to represent the Army in the competition.

On the morning of the first event, the river had swelled and was even faster flowing than previously. I felt a mixture of anticipation and excitement but I was confident that I could do well. The training had been progressive and allowed me to keep the correct line down the river. It was



Pte Warren.

a fast race and the competition was tough. Everyone worked their hardest and we were all exhausted afterwards. When the scores were announced I was surprised to have come 21st in the Men's Kayak 1 race, 8th in the Team event and 4th in the Army team selection. Now I have a place in the Army team I am hoping to compete more frequently and also encourage more people to have a go. It was a hard week but immensely enjoyable at the same time and I would recommend it to anyone.

The Poachers and Army Rugby

2Lt R J Coppard (GYC) writes...

Members of the Battalion have represented the Infantry and Army in rugby matches this season, although there have been no Battalion matches. The Infantry season started with a warm-up match against



Inter-services canoe championships - Pte Warren (B Company) in full flow.

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Bedford RFC which was narrowly lost. The only Poacher present in this game was Cpl Felstead. In the Inter-Corps Cup, back in December of 2002, Capt Newmarch, Cpl Felstead and myself all contributed to the winning of the Bowl Cup, with Cpl Felstead leading the team as captain for a game. The next match involved LCpl Styles and I, as Capt Newmarch and Cpl Felstead were unavailable; LCpl Styles scored the first try of what became a landslide victory. Continuing this winning streak, we narrowly defeated the Royal Artillery. But this rich vein of form was not to last, with the winning try conceded during injury time against the Royal Logistics Corps, despite an early try by myself. The next Infantry game will be against the Royal Signals; hopefully 'The Poachers' will be represented.

I have also been representing the Army Under 20s team. Our season started with a victorious warm-up game against the Royal Military College Shrivenham. This gave us a positive start to our County Cup challenge group matches, which were against Kent, Surrey and Sussex. The team was confident despite the fact that the Army U20s had never previously won a county match. I was named captain after the first match, and with the team winning all our county matches we now go through to the quarter finals. Due to our success two further fixtures were arranged: against the U.S. Military Academy Westpoint, which we won, and against Natal Sharks, which is yet to be played.

Both teams, the Infantry XV and the Army U20s, have benefited from the inclusion of players from the Battalion and shall undoubtedly continue to do so in the future. We are especially looking forward to the tours later this season, to South Africa (Infantry) and Prague (Army).

Poachers' Marriages and Births

Marriages

LCpl and Mrs Steel 7 December 2002.
 LCpl and Mrs Potter 14 December 2002.
 Pte and Mrs Councill 21 December 2002.
 Pte and Mrs Wyper 21 December 2002.
 Pte and Mrs Mayes 5 February 2003.
 LCpl and Mrs Seaton-Norton 25 February 2003.
 Pte(63) and Mrs Brown February 2003.
 LCpl and Mrs Cooley 22 March 2003.
 Pte and Mrs Waite 29 March 2003.

Births

To Sgt and Kerstin Gadsden a son, Yannic.
 To Pte and Lynn Borrill a son, Cody.
 To Cpl and Jennifer Blower a daughter, Teigan.
 To Cpl and Toni Potter a daughter, Alex.
 To LCpl and Helen Somerton a son, Wesley.
 To Cfn (REME) and Clare Tooke a son, Alan.
 To LCpl and Lindsey Blanchard a daughter, Lucy.



Sgts Vazquez and Bannon ('Pops') fight to stave off insanity in the bowels of Bessbrook Mill TSFS.



The IO, Capt Haden, surfs the net for the latest hot int on FBU intentions. He was later spotted in mufti infiltrating an FBU rally in central Glasgow.



The Colonel of the Regiment congratulates LCpl Fleming on passing the NCO Cadre.



Top money raiser Sgt Bannon presents a cheque for £500 to Offa's Mead Primary School (to pupil Sean, his son), where it will be used to buy new games equipment. The money was raised by the Sergeants' and Corporals' Messes on a 30km bike ride across the Brecon Beacons.

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Commanding Officer's Introduction

As I sit here writing this introduction American tanks are toppling statues of Saddam Hussein in the centre of Baghdad and the military conflict phase of Operation Iraqi Freedom is drawing to a close. It has been a remarkable operation in both its scale and its lightning speed and the Territorial Army, alongside the other Reserve Forces, has played its part in that success.

Operation Telic has finally brought the intention of the Strategic Defence Review to make the Reserves more credible, capable and usable to reality. Eighteen soldiers from the Regiment were compulsorily mobilised and although some were unable to fulfil their commitment due to either medical failures or employer appeals, LCpl Bunn and LCpl Colledge from A Company, LCpl Sibbons and Pte Ruddlesdin from B Company, CSgt Waiton and Cpl Develin from D Company and Cpl Pugh, LCpl Stratton and Pte Brett from E Company have all served in one capacity or another. We look forward to welcoming them home sometime in the hopefully near future and hearing of their tales of far off lands no doubt suitably embellished for all those who had to stay behind.

There may yet be the need for more mobilisations for the post-conflict Phase 4 of Operation Telic, although this remains uncertain. What is certain is that the 'mobilisation culture' has well and truly arrived and that the Territorial Army of the 21st Century is already a very different one from that of the 20th Century. To their credit this has been almost universally warmly embraced by our soldiers, but the fallout in terms of the impact on employers remains uncertain and there will need to pay close attention paid to this area as the reality (and desirability) of having employees with a mobilisation liability hits home.

One of the fallouts from the mobilisations is that HQ Infantry is now looking seriously at the way forward for the TA Infantry Battalions to see if they can not only be given a more positive role and mission, but also what establishment changes might be necessary to make them more effective in both training at company and battalion level and in their ability to mobilise formed sub-units for operational deployment. This is a most welcome development but it will remain to be seen in the post-war economy whether any additional funds will be available to turn any aspirations into reality.

On the home front the development of the new Civil Contingency Reaction Force (CCRF) continues to progress. The Op Order has been written and the initial training weekend is due to take place in May as a first step towards achieving full operating capability by 31 December 2003. As the threat of significant terrorist activity to the home base grows ever stronger so does the importance of the CCRF and the need for it to be trained, tested and ready to deploy. In addition to Op Telic, March saw 15 soldiers



Pte Hacker training at Pirbright before deploying to Kabul.



Lt Richard Thompson, C Company EER and Patrol Team - Operation Fingal.

led by Lt Richard Thompson mobilised for Afghanistan under Op Fingal as part of 2 Company of the Poachers. Their pre-training went extremely well and they even managed to beat the Regulars at shooting, but then they did have the new SA80 A2 rifle, which the Regulars did not!

On the personalities front there have been a number of changes. Maj Frank de Planta has, with effect 1 April 2003, been promoted to lieutenant colonel and posted as Chief Instructor of the 49 (East) Brigade Specialist Training Team. However, he has just been mobilised for Operation Telic to run a demobilisation centre in theatre in Kuwait so his new job will have to wait a few months. He takes with him not only the officer training package, which he had been running as the Battalion 2IC of EER, but also our congratulations and best wishes for the future.

Changes have abounded within the Royal Anglian companies with four new Company Commanders: Maj Bob Rogers for A Company, Maj Ian Sackree for B Company, Maj David Sommerville for C Company and Maj Simon Watson for E Company. In addition we welcomed the following officers into the Regiment, 2Lts Efstratiou, Hawes, Summers. Farewells were said to Maj Mike Google who moves to become the Training Major for Cambridge UOTC, Maj Godfrey

Shaw who is off to Brigade Headquarters as the SO2 G3(V) and Maj Rachel Sutcliffe RAMC, one of our RMOs.

A (Norfolk and Suffolk) Company

Maj RG Rogers writes...

Since the last entry the company has seen itself very busy on training, mobilisation and attachments. Across the spectrum of endeavours, the company continues to participate and has started to produce some notable successes.

Ptes Steward and Fitt attended camp in the training year with the 52 Highland Regiment in Estonia where they integrated well with the chaps from north of the Wall and gained the distinct impression that they were not all oatmeal savages.

Pte Lake has been deployed in Kosovo with 1 Welsh Guards serving in the catering platoon where she gained City and Guilds Level 2 qualification in catering and hospitality. She now leaves us to join the Regular Army as have Ptes North and Allen.

Currently LCpls Colledge, Jones and Galea, along with Pte Sanders, are on Operation Fingal deployment training and will deploy in the 3 PWRR Platoon in support of 2 Royal Anglian.

The company continues to train in a wide spectrum of military subjects concentrating on patrol skills, offensive operations and range-work. The Mortar Platoon also has profited from the opportunity to live fire on two separate occasions on Salisbury Plain.

A great effort is also being placed on recruiting with the last recruit selection day reaping the benefit of nine enlisted recruits and with another three in the pipeline. It is with some satisfaction that we are starting to begin to see an improvement in manning figures.

EER Mortar Platoon provided a detachment and two safety staff on Exercise Sharpe's Strike with the London Regiment, Royal Rifle Volunteers (RRV) on Salisbury Plain.

The day consisted of Part One (Non Tactical) Shoot in the morning for those new members of the platoon who had not fired before with the afternoon giving the opportunity for the platoon to fire on missions received from RRV Milan and Recce Platoons to practise Arty Tgt and recorded DFs.

The evening took the form of a Part Two Tactical Shoot with the MFCs recording a series of targets which included smoke and illumination climaxing in a Company Fire Plan.

East of England Mortar Platoon would like to take the opportunity to thank the RRV for allowing us the opportunity to take part in Exercise Sharpe's Strike.

B (Lincolnshire) Company

The last six months have seen a very busy and successful period for B Company. Starting with a change of company commander we said farewell to Maj Robin Atkinson, posted to East Midlands UOTC

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following two years of sterling work, to be replaced by Maj Ian Sackree, on promotion from Company 2IC. As with all command changes, some new ideas, mixed with some old have been centred on recruiting and retention; the latter through a strategy for the development of our junior soldiers and a demonstrable emphasis on career planning and hanging on to the soldiers that do complete Phase One training. This has had noticeable success with the company consistently leading the way in the Battalion with attendance and being the first to achieve the Commanding Officer's directive of 100 per cent manning. Life is good in B (Lincolnshire) Company.

We also said goodbye to Capt Charles Sayers-Pratt who bowed out of the Army as our long-standing PSAO, following in excess of 40-years service. Characters like 'Charlie' are so few and far between and he is missed. Notwithstanding, we welcomed Capt Paul Smith as PSAO, another seasoned campaigner whose infectious enthusiasm for all things work has invigorated the company at every level.

On the training side, the company continues to enjoy high quality, challenging, demanding and fun training under the watchful eyes of WO2 (SPSI) Slater and Sgt (PSI) Hope. With the company 2IC slot currently vacant, we could not be in more experienced hands as it cements retention by giving the Territorial soldier what he/she wants - hard training and plenty of it!

In November the company trained locally, completing a circuit of rifle and pistol shooting, security, NBC and ICFT training and paraded a total of 60 personnel at Grimsby and Lincoln Cathedral for Remembrance Day. In December the company played hard at the Battalion's Christmas party, continuing the long established tradition (don't ask where it started) of St Trinians fancy dress, to rise early and emerge victorious to win the Battalion Orienteering Competition by some margin - our first trophy under new management.

January saw the company deploy (in blizzards that swept the country) to Leek where we worked hard revising section and platoon battle drills, culminating in a demanding platoon attack prior to dispersal and some well-earned sleep. The troops were delighted to see the Commanding Officer on this weekend having self-driven all the way from Cambridge in appalling weather - having generously given his driver the weekend off!

February and March saw the company again in the field building on lessons learned in Leek as well as preparing for the forthcoming Battalion skill-at-arms meeting where we set out to win back the Champion Shooting Company, held for too long now by our neighbouring D Company.

Recruiting has seen unprecedented growth, largely down to the determined efforts of Capt Smith and the Recruit Training and Administration teams. Helped, in no small way by events in the Gulf, new potential

soldiers arrive weekly to attempt our selection process. De-centralised Recruit Selection Days now allow the company to respond flexibly to local demand and numbers allow us for the first time in a long time to be a bit choosy about those who we decide to accept. Greater choice at the selection phase, coupled with good, continuous quality training is surely the way to improved retention and we look forward to increased numbers still.

The social side remains buoyant also. In February, WO2 (SPSI) Slater and WO2 (CSM) Redhead organised a superb all-ranks Sobraon dinner and disco. We were delighted to host Maj Simon Etherington (OC A Company 2 Royal Anglian) who found time to take a brief break from pre-deployment training for Afghanistan. He commented on how good it was to see more than 70 of the company personnel and partners in formal dress enjoying a wonderful evening. It really was a good night and we look forward to doing it again next year.

Forging links with our local community continues to take a high priority. The OC has embarked on a demanding round of ACF inspections (the summer season) and 10 members of the company completed the prestigious Lincoln 10km road race carrying 50lb of CEMO in under 70 minutes! This was a creditable achievement and saw us raise £1,200 for the local Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire Air Ambulance Appeal.

On a final note regarding personnel we saw three soldiers mobilised and deployed under Operation Telic and look forward to receiving them back safe and sound.

In summary, we have had a very busy, successful and most enjoyable period for B (Lincolnshire) Company. We look forward to an equally busy next six months - the company would be disappointed if it were any different!

C (Leicestershire and Northamptonshire) Company

Maj GB Shaw writes...

At this time when my appointment as OC C Company draws to a close, I feel that it is worth reviewing the events which have occurred throughout this period, and granted that I may leave myself open to calls of swinging the lantern, this could very well be the last opportunity for a valedictory. It is in this spirit that I exercise the right and privilege of doing so.

When I took over command of C Company in September 1999, I was faced with the immediate and urgent task of turning Leicester from Battalion HQ into a Company HQ, Rifle Platoon and Assault Pioneer Platoon and Northampton from a Company HQ into a Rifle Platoon outstation. If that was not enough, I was told that I also had to look after the Corps of Drums, no mean feat when considering I am tone deaf, tuneless

and have the rhythm of a broken cuckoo clock.

With a certain amount of pain, we managed post-SDR and moved things forwards. It all felt if it was going the right way, when the foot and mouth crisis stopped most of our field training. This was very disappointing, but Brigade Camp in Sennybridge allowed the company to practise and keep its skills current. My favourite memory will be co-ordinating the company's preliminary attack from the hillside above the farm, prior to the attack on the main defensive position by the rest of the Battalion, and watching the sunrise breaking over the hills through the mist. This romantic image was soon dispelled by our speed march up to the cut off position for the Battalion attack.

The Drums Platoon has done well increasing numbers, completing all of its ceremonial duties and managing to get a couple of the boys trained as assault pioneers, a military role they seem to enjoy. Despite their efforts I am still tone deaf, tuneless and unable to hold the beat, but never mind. As the Drum Major, WO2 Bradshaw hands over the platoon to Sgt Clarke and I hope that their success will continue and as a platoon they continue with their evil ways.

Following foot and mouth we had just started training again when the dreaded budget constraints, with which all of the Army suffers, hit home and we had to curtail our activities and bring them in line with ever more stricter budgetary constraints. However, after a certain amount of hesitancy, we bit the bullet and got into the hang of one weekend a month. Camp in Barry Budden was a cadre camp and in the main the boys enjoyed themselves, taking full advantage of the delights of Broughty Ferry.

If anything, the last year has seen an increase in tempo and opportunity for the Territorial Army in general and for the TA infantry in particular. Operation Telic withstanding, the company has seen a strong contingency support the wider Army. Of note, ten members of the Company got to deploy to the USA with the Bermuda Regiment on Exercise Seminole Warrior this spring and thoroughly enjoyed themselves. As a company we have Lt Richard Thompson, Sgt Kiwi Coleman and six soldiers from the company serving with 2 Royal Anglian in Kabul. Capt Somerville and Pte Parker have spent time in Bosnia with 1 Royal Scots, Pte Boyle is serving with 1 Para in Northern Ireland and many others over the last three years have provided support to the Regular Army all over the world as part of FTRS. It is with pride and some well-earned confidence that I am content that C Company EER is fulfilling its mission to support the Regular Army.

I have seen many changes, in fact when you reel it off it sounds like a litany and like the 12 days of Christmas, one OC, two PSAOs, three SPSI, four CSMs, five platoon sergeants etc therefore without a doubt it is

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time I handed over. I go with mixed feelings. The acceptance that it is time to move on and face new challenges is muted by a degree of regret for leaving the company. It is with a little envy that I wish my successor, Maj David Sommerville, all the very best and good fortune. He has probably one of the best jobs ahead of him and I wish both him, the company and the Regiment as a whole, every success over the coming years. As for myself, I move onto a staff appointment at Brigade and in my new capacity will be able to work alongside and fight for the Regiment.

E (Essex and Hertfordshire) Company

Maj SR Watson writes...

At the beginning of October I took over as officer commanding the company upon the posting of Maj Mike Googe as Training Major CUOTC. He was given a proper send-off with our Honorary Colonel being present and where Maj Mike was made to play a guitar and serenade the company. He did very well in spite of a few howls from his attentive audience. If the company believes he has established a precedent of Company commanders singing for their supper, they may very well be disappointed. Saying that, however, I have started to take one or two lessons from the more musically minded of the company, so we will have to wait and see.

Almost immediately upon appointment, I was given the opportunity to step forward and command the company on the Commanding Officer's Defence Exercise. It was an opportunity to relish, particularly after the constraints of foot and mouth, to get the company shaken out for meaningful



Lt Coulson issuing orders.

Battalion level training. The three-part exercise consisted of the setting up of defences and establishing routine followed by an extensive patrolling phase culminating in an ambush with forced extraction.

November came and the company paraded in Hertford to honour the fallen. The presence of the company was very well received by the town and many kind words of appreciation were spoken. The year ended with the usual Battalion smoker in December with the usual soldierly shenanigans going on! We entered the New Year with three of our young soldiers - LCpl Collinson and Ptes Needham and Hacker - being mobilised and going off on Operation Fingal. They were later joined by Pte Byron who is on FTRS with the 2nd Battalion. They are all serving under the ex-Adjutant 6th Battalion, Maj Simon Etherington. February passed



Maj Simon Watson, OC E Company EER coming to terms with yet another article for *Castle*.



Lt Adrian Coulson E Company EER on patrol with 14 Platoon, Company Attack Weekend, February 2003.

with not much to report only the finishing up of the tests to qualify for bounty and FFR and the looming war in the Gulf.

March was to see three members of the Company mobilised for service in the Gulf on Operation Telic - Cpl Pugh, to serve with 3CS Med Regiment, LCpl Stratton, to serve with The Normandy Band (which played in the unveiling ceremony in Bayeux) and Pte Brett who is serving with the Black Watch as a Minimi gunner.

Members of the company have been in constant contact with all of our soldiers on operations and so they have not wanted for anything. Our PSAO, Capt Paul Thurston, has been boxing up the various goodies to be despatched by Colchester Garrison staff.

At the time of writing we have also despatched the replacements for the first batch of soldiers on Operation Fingal; Cpl Kelson, Ptes Breese, Parkhouse and Neal, which brings the total number of those serving to 12 out of a company strength of 84.

I feel incredibly proud and fortunate to be in command of the Company during this busy and challenging year.

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HQ Company

Maj GW French writes...

Throughout this period, the company has seen a busy programme and beyond has seen new demands placed upon it.

The usual cycle of inspections and administrative support to the rest of the Regiment continues apace. While everyone works hard to ensure a high standard is achieved, of notable comment is the hard work and efforts of CSgt Cummings, SSgt Smith and the rest of their team. SSgt Stoker and his team also continue to produce excellent results in a variety of different locations and under different conditions. The MTWO, WO2 Bailham continues to make a good recovery, and in his absence WO2 Shand and LCpl Frost are working hard at keeping the Battalion on the road. All are to be congratulated on their hard work and efforts.

Pte Lanaway has been notably industrious during this period. Not only has he been busy working in support of Operation Fresco at Brigade HQ, he is currently deployed as a member of the permanent support team in BATUS.

Along with the rest of the Regiment we are starting to identify and provide the requisite support for the Civil Contingencies Reaction Force. This coupled with the Whole Fleet Management trial certainly adds flavour to our daily work.

These recent months have seen some notable departures from the company. Capt Gary Hitchings has unfortunately been forced to move onto RARO. While this marks the end of his time with the company and the Regiment, I am confident that he will keep in touch and closely follow developments with interest. Capt Bob Rogers has left for the command of A Company, and as his accompanying article suggests, he is busy enjoying the challenges and demands of sub-unit command. We say a fond farewell to Maj Rachael Sutcliffe RAMC(V) who left the company at the beginning of April and welcome her colleague, Maj Adrian Hamilton RAMC(V) upon his appointment as RMO.

500lb for £500

Maj IM Sackree writes...

On Sunday 6 April 2003 10 members of B (Lincolnshire) Company took part in the prestigious Lincoln 10km road-race. Following up an original idea by LCpl Kelly (Recce Pl) to 'beef up' the Company's 2003 Cambrian Patrol training, and under the watchful gaze of Sgt (PSI) Hope, this idea was developed to:

- Raise a significant amount of money for Charity (Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire Air Ambulance);
- To keep the local Army in the local public eye; and
- To reinforce recruiting links with the already obliging younger population of Lincoln.

In order to give the event some emphasis OC B Company, Maj Ian Sackree, promoted



SPSI WO2 Slater: 'Sir...stop waving to the crowd and get a move on!'

the challenging theme of carrying 500lb (between the team) for £500 in sponsorship. The challenge on a warm, sunny morning was to complete the course in around one hour and 20 minutes.

The presence and interest of the local media, pre. during and post-race, coupled with the £1,200 of sponsorship committed, pending a successful outcome and the no-little spice added by the surprise presence of a 10-man Royal Air Force team (carrying a poor man's 25lb individual load!!) had an unplanned, yet most positive effect on the team. In spite of the restraining actions of WO2 (SPSI) Slater, largely ignored by OC B (until it was too late) the team passed through the first mile in full CEFO, under 10 minutes, overtaking many a more appropriately dressed runner! The race with the RAF went on for some 3 miles with a number of under-hand overtaking manoeuvres displayed by both teams. Eventually their lighter load showed and they finished a credible 3 minutes ahead of us. An initial pace that could not to be sustained, the B Company team finished in a very respectable time of 69 minutes - well under target.

The day was a pleasure to participate in. The Company showed its physical strength in depth to an adoring local public that was high on the emotion of events going on at the time in the Gulf; we started and finished in perfect order having fully achieved its aims. We look forward to doing it all again next year!

News from the Gulf prior to Invasion of Iraq

Cpl I Pugh 13 Platoon writes...

I am an Arab now, so much for six weeks work up training! In just 10 days from mobilisation I am now in the Gulf! There is a shortage of everything but we have been promised 'it's on its way'. Spent whole day digging a 'Scud pit'. As for accommodation,

sleeping on the floor of a tent I am lucky I have a piece of carpet to lay on. We are currently the closest British unit to Iraq. The guys here are looking after us and we are getting a better deal than most other Reservists.

Second letter reads...

Was issued 100 rounds today and had to sign for them - does that mean I am not allowed to use them? We have been issued antibiotics and combo pens at last. Some strange Medic NBC drills here, if you hear 'gas, gas, gas' you only have to mask up - sod that! Weather is getting hotter, but sunbathing is not permitted due to the risk of sunburn. The Defence force we are supposed to be part of never materialised, there are just 3 TA NCOs and 27 Bandsmen who haven't a clue about infantry tactics! Might see you soon as the unit I am with will be one of the first out as they are due back here in August.

See you soon - All the Fours

Pug

Pte S L Brett 14 Pl writes...

(Oh he is our resident Poucher turned honour's Pompadour!)

There is nothing big about this lads - to be honest it's been and will be a test of my emotions and ability. When you train at the TA - take it in because one day you could be where I am (last known address in the thick of it with Delta Company, 1st Bn Black Watch), alone and all you have is what your instructors taught you!

In a later letter he writes...

Not driving a Warrior now I am in a section and I am now the Minimi Gunner, ace what a piece of kit - it's the Para version with a short folding stock. We have all our kit now, never seen so much Desert 95s grenade launchers the lot (can you send me some goggles? The sand gets everywhere, cannot

The East of England Regiment

get them over here the shops are shut!). We are in theatre and pumped up ready to go - we know when it comes down to it we will all do our best.

Sean

LCpl RJ Stratton 14 Platoon writes...
Well things were going great I was in slipper city for a while although in and out of NBC kit at least 10 times a day. We have had a few Scud attacks and the Patriots have shot most down, we never found out what happened to the ones they missed! Things have all changed now we are 1km from the border surrounded by Challenger 2s and Warriors of the 7th Armoured Brigade. I am now doing PoW handling and security of the camp. Have seen lots of nasty stuff including casualties and friendly fire. It was OK until the kids started to come in.

I have been armed escort for the RAF as well. At first light the tanks open up, the first shot always makes you jump then you get used to the noise. My family don't know where I am at present, but we had a visit from Sky News that broadcast our location. Hope the missus didn't see it on TV! The guys I am working with have no experience of Infantry stuff, so myself and the other two Infantry guys are teaching them what to do before each duty. They do listen, even the higher ranks. I have given weapons lessons to them, even Sunray needed a lesson on the Browning 9mm! It would be a good idea to get some NBC training for anyone else coming out here.

Well that's all for now will be in touch.

Cheers

Ricky

Pte SL Brett 14 Platoon writes...

Cheers for the bluey, mail is very infrequent here, once it arrives it does arrive the morale goes up a bit. After crossing the border in support of the MEF (Marine Expeditionary Force) we engaged our first objective as Warrior-based Infantry, the town of Al Zabyar some 30-40,000 Iraqis. We trained in Kuwait for everything except street fighting, which as you know is not easy as defence and local knowledge is on their side! They take a shot and go. I am first out as the Minimi gunner. First attack was 'billing box' type attack.

The Company deployed surrounding militia in two houses while the SAS (C/S Bravo Two Zero would you believe!) went in and snatched a General. We hit them with everything from 30mm to LAW94s to section weapons. I will never forget how I felt getting out, with green tracer everywhere and close until I opened up to support my section. We have done probing attacks since, I never lose that fear, it's a real motivator! We lost one guy on one of the teams, a lance corporal, though we hit back with everything we had.

I miss the simple things, very little time to sleep and I miss my daughter. Don't miss the beer as we are too focused at present on the job in hand. It's hard to explain the day-

to-day stuff. Been told that as a Reservist I am putting my section to shame with my efforts!

Bye for now

Sean

News from the E Company boys on deployment News from Afghanistan

LCpl Collinson 13 Platoon writes...

The first month has passed so its time to bring you all up to speed on events so far!

The tour started on Monday 24 February when we said our final goodbyes and left for Brook Barracks in Reading for the final administration. We left via RAF Lyneham.

Flight was by C-130 all the way, the journey being split in two legs. The first was to the Romanian capital of Bucharest! The night was spent in a five (yes five!) star hotel at the taxpayer's expense, we had a three-course meal then set out in true Essex boy fashion to sample the night life. I'll leave you to your own conclusions as to what we got up to!

The next morning was up and shower at a leisurely hour, for our 1300hrs flight to ensure we landed in Kabul in darkness. It took us about eight hours to get to Kabul Airport. We arrived at 2300hrs local time and boarded four-tonners for our trip in to Camp Souter - home for the next three months. The trip gave us a chance to see the city for the first time and for it to finally hit home that this was real as we were escorted by a WMIK that was armed with a GPMG mounted and everyone was carrying loaded weapons, except us!

Once we arrived at camp after a 20-minute trip there was more administration, this time getting our four-man rooms allocated and our kit returned after the flight. Also this



Lt Richard Thompson C Company EER on Operation Fingal - patrolling above and below with 'friends'.



was the time to issue weapons, our operational rounds, body armour and morphine, again more confirmation that this was no TA weekend!

The next morning we were up early for our theatre brief, only it wasn't brief and took all morning. After that it was time for



5 Platoon in sunny Kabul.

The East of England Regiment

us to crack on and get about doing our job!

The first few days were simply getting out on the ground with the Royal Engineers to learn our way around the city and get an idea about what the situation was! From there we started our own rotation, my our platoon got screwed around and ended up doing 13 days of guards and Quick Reaction Force (QRF), not fun...it drove everyone mad!

Once A Company, 2 R Anglian arrived the situation changed and the platoon is now on a rotation of six days patrols, 3 QRF, three guard and then followed by three days rest and training. The patrols are by far the hardest, owing to the weapons and ammunition carried per multiple, plus personal kit. So as you can imagine we are carrying a lot of kit. The patrols are mainly on foot with the odd mobile one thrown in, so we spend a lot of time out on the ground with the locals. They are all friendly and seem pleased that ISAF are out in the area. The QRF is fairly easy as it's all vehicle based and is split in to three phases of callout;

Five minutes, on stand-by to react to any incident, 15 minutes QRF that carries out escort tasks for multiples on patrol and the final is escort for administration moves to places such as the airport. Guard is well guard! The training is good and the ranges out here are laid back. We get to fire a lot of rounds through different weapons!

The final task that is carried out is the Bagram ammunition guard; this is up at the US airbase at Bagram about 30km north of Kabul, where the British have an ammunition dump. All the infantry do is provide the night guard as the loggies who run it are scared of the dark! It was during this guard that I got shot at! They fired off five rounds and all five hit the sanger wall about a metre or so away to my left, very

scary! I now know what a Fig 11 target feels like!

That is our first month, so far we are all still having fun although can't wait to see home again! All the fours...

Si

East of England Regiment supports the Bermuda Regiment in Florida

Lt S Davies writes:

On 28 February 2003 ten members of The East of England Regiment flew out to Camp Blanding in Florida to assist the Bermuda Regiment on Exercise Seminole Warrior, their two-week annual camp.

Hopes of enjoying the lovely Florida weather were dashed during our first week thanks to severe lightning storms and heavy rain. However, much improved weather during the second week and RandR on Daytona Beach helped to keep Ambré Solaire in business.

The East of England Regiment helped form 3 (Composite) Platoon of A Company, The Bermuda Regiment, with the assistance of nine members of the Royal Gibraltar Regiment and ten members of the Bermuda Regiment's Support Company. I was fortunate enough to command the platoon and its sections performed extremely well throughout the exercise's numerous phases, achieving many top three places and significant praise from the Bermuda Regiment's Command Team.

During the initial weapons training phase, Pte Urwin took the highest APWT score trophy and came second in the overall scores ranking. Pte Jenkins was ranked third ahead of over 100 firers. Congratulations to both of them, especially considering that neither of them had fired the iron-sighted Ruger

beforehand. In the 30-hour inter-section patrols competition, the East of England Regiment came second (of 12), just beaten by the Royal Gibraltar Regiment's (half Regular) Section. That order was repeated in the assault course phase, with the East of England Regiment coming 3rd just behind The Royal Gibraltar Regiment.

Exercise Seminole Warrior drew to a close with a four-day internal security operation in the FIBUA village. Due to 3 Platoon's performance in the run up to the final exercise, we were tasked with setting up and securing the A Company line of departure for the dawn move into the village. The different riot control tactics employed by the Bermuda Regiment resulted in 3 Platoon being tasked with providing building security and overwatch duties during the final hours, while the other two platoons dealt with the civilian population. We had no arguments with that as 100 per cent charged baton rounds were being used to disperse the crowds!

Key memories include OC A Company being captured by terrorists during the final exercise while on a solo toilet run in the early hours...being shot at by an over-zealous Bermuda Regiment soldier on the vehicle search stand of the inter-section patrols competition...the gospel church parade and Pte Macaulay's dinosaur barbecue spare ribs in Daytona Beach.

I would like to thank every member of the platoon for their professionalism and determination throughout this physically demanding and occasionally frustrating trip. You represented your respective countries very well.

We look forward to hosting a contingent from the Bermuda Regiment on our annual camp later this year, albeit in less exotic climes.



3 (Composite) Platoon A Company the Bermuda Regiment, Exercise Seminole Warrior, March 2003.

Special Features

Memorial Service for LCpl George 1 R Anglian

Capt A Biggs writes:

It is always a sorrowful occasion when a soldier is lost on operations, and when that individual is from the same Regiment the seriousness of the job we undertake is always brought that much closer to home. I was not involved in the Vikings' tour to Afghanistan in 2002 when LCpl George tragically died, but, like every member of the Battalion, I felt deep sorrow at the loss of a fellow Viking.

It was therefore a privilege to be invited as the Viking representative to attend a memorial service held by the Poachers, deployed on Operation Fingal 5, in memory of LCpl George. The ceremony took place at the British Cemetery in Kabul on 9 April 2003, the first anniversary of his death. It was arranged for a plaque to be placed in the cemetery alongside those of other fallen servicemen who had died on previous military operations in Afghanistan.

The service was a small but poignant affair attended by approximately 15 military personnel and Steve Smith, the First Secretary from Her Majesty's Embassy. ISAF Media Ops were on hand to record the service to allow LCpl George's family to share the occasion.

Following an opening address from Maj Simon Etherington, Officer Commanding A (Lincolnshire) Company, the service was conducted by the Rev Hector Wanilass, Padre to BRITFOR in Afghanistan. A minute's silence gave the opportunity to reflect, and the readings, read by JNCOs from A (Lincolnshire) Company, provided the correct focus for such an occasion.

The Regimental Collect took us to the closing hymn, an appropriate tribute to the loss of a Viking.

Untitled

*by Capt CD Davies,
SO3 J5 Plans, HQ Britfor
15 April 2003,
Camp Souter, Kabul, Afghanistan*

*Foiled, muddled, thirsty mixture of recent past,
Ethnicities, customs, colours, a cauldron of cast,
Possessiveness, hidden, prepared to betray,
An eastern adventure - no place for western stay.*

*Chased, beaten, driven away,
Yet their sons' great-great-grandsons are here again
today,
Myth, legend, heroes remembered within,
Reliance on time to erode away the forgotten sin.*

*Casualty procedures on yet another wounded state,
Plaster after plaster to clot the leaking hate,
Pop by, have a look, lots of aged goodwill and thought,
Forget all those historic lessons which this mongrel
country has taught.*

*Consent, alike allegiances, will surely sharply shift,
Seismic east/west movement will cause a damaging rift,
And then what? How much help have we donated?
When the country returns naturally to violence and the
West is once again hated.*

The Army Foundation College, Harrogate

Captain JD Inch writes...



Although the concept of Junior Leaders or enhanced Phase One training for Junior Soldiers is not a new one, its current incarnation at Harrogate is still fairly fresh. Changes in the ethos, training regime and even in the buildings occur on an almost termly basis, as best practice is established. As a result, there have been many evolutions since Capt Whitham last wrote for *Castle* in June 2002, and this article intends to update what was last written.

The Army Foundation College trains Junior Soldiers for careers in the Infantry, RAC and Royal Artillery. There are currently six Royal Anglian members of the permanent staff, and more than 30 potential Vikings and Poachers. The college is a fairly unique place to work in that it is owned and run by a civilian firm - Jarvis Works FM - so all non-essentially military activities are provided by civilian contractors.

The £80 million rebuild has been completed with the camp consisting of entirely new buildings and facilities. Unfortunately, nature has yet to run its full course, so the benefits of the landscaping are yet to be seen. The provision of sporting, recreational and educational facilities is superb - a fact that is sadly unappreciated by the Junior Soldiers who are yet to experience the field army. A huge range of sports are catered for within the college and equipment is available for a large number of adventure training activities that take place further afield. There is a superb swimming pool, squash courts and gymnasium in the confusingly titled P&RTC - Physical and Recreation Training Centre in civi-military speak!

The VE (Vocational Education) Wing is well equipped with IT suites, a well-stocked library, platoon and section size classrooms and hobby rooms. The education is provided by a civilian teaching organisation, covering numeracy, literacy, communication skills and IT. Any military training and teaching remains the domain of the platoon staff and ETS educators.

The Junior Soldiers' accommodation is very good with section



Special Features



rooms partitioned off to provide a degree of privacy without compromising the need to foster a section *esprit de corps*. The Junior Ranks dining facility is the best I have seen in the Army and with a selection and quality of food to match. The Naafi resembles a West End night club that would turn Peter Stringfellow green with envy (although it does lack the dancing girls). Sadly, the JNCO instructors seem to have been forgotten about when this was all being built and are poorly catered for. This appears to be the next priority for improvement.

The output of all this is approximately 1,200 Junior Soldiers trained in the CMS(R), with the addition of having gained NVQs, Duke of Edinburgh's Bronze Awards, leadership and initiative training, and a range of other experiences such as battlefield tours, sports tours and community service. Instructors at the college quickly discover that not only must they be experts in skill at arms and section tactics, but must also be competent and enthusiastic in whatever extra activity is foisted on them, which could be as diverse as American football, guitar playing or Spanish language skills. Moves are afoot to ensure that instructors leave the AFC as qualified as the Junior Soldiers they have trained.

It is easy for instructors to feel that all the niceties of life at Harrogate detract from the core purpose of military training, and to become frustrated with the extra demands put on their time playing youth club assistant to the recruits. It is hardly surprising that the marksmanship principles are forgotten when the soldier is also trying to master spreadsheets, a presentation on Nato and the techniques of fencing. I would agree with these sentiments, and believe that the balance needs adjusting to provide robust Junior Soldiers fit to survive Phase Two training and beyond. However, there is no denying that the AFC is a superb facility and will, when fully evolved, provide very well rounded and competent young soldiers to the Infantry, Armoured Corps and Royal Artillery.

Recruiting

The Regimental Secretary writes...

The full manning of our two Regular Battalions is a goal that many, over the last few months, have been striving to achieve. Both Battalions have managed to significantly improve retention while at the same time the recruiters on the ground have had a very successful year. At the beginning of 2002 a goal of 260 new recruits was set for the Regiment. By March 2003 we had managed to exceed this by enlisting 295 new recruits, which means that both Battalions are forecast to be near to their establishment by September of this year.

At present officer recruiting throughout the Army is buoyant with all intakes at Sandhurst being full. We as a Regiment require about 10 newly commissioned officers each year. We just met that target for 2002 and the prospects for this year look very promising with a total of 24 sponsored cadets presently at Sandhurst.

We must not forget the part played by the East of England Regiment. The Regiment continues to provide a steady stream of soldiers who decide to join our Regular Battalions and, as you will read elsewhere, many members of the Regiment are at present deployed on operations

in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In summary, recruiting within the Regiment is going well and all those involved within the Battalion and in the recruiting offices are to be congratulated. However, we must never become complacent. Our aim now must be to ensure that both Regular Battalions are over establishment by the beginning of 2004.

Recruiting

WO2 RA Hill, RCMO, 1st Battalion, writes...

Continuation of Sustained Ethos

The approach the Vikings have adopted towards recruiting is to work as a Regiment in partnership with both Battalions with the aim of sustaining future manning. All those, both inside and outside the Battalions, will be aware that a great deal of time and effort is invested in recruiting. This article provides you with an update on recent recruiting activities.

Recruiting Group

Changes within Recruiting Group have played a significant part in the way the Army now conducts its marketing for potential applicants. The adoption of a Pan Army approach splits all the employment opportunities into nine main career product groupings: combat, engineering, logistics, IT/comms, healthcare, HR/admin and finance, specialist, further education and officer.

As a result of this change, it is even more critical for us as a Regiment to maintain a Regimental focus even under the remit of combat (where all the other teeth arms are embraced) so that we do not lose our identity. Added to this, Recruiting Group are enabling more Corps to launch recruiting teams in support of Critical Employment Groups which are now moving through our recruiting areas to absorb potential applicants.

However, in light of the above changes Recruiting Group has now provided a vast array of assets to assist us as a Regiment to take forward our recruiting initiatives for the foreseeable future. These have been the provision of a 4X4 vehicle, recruiting trailer, laptop, mobile phone, video TV combination and a portable generator, including financial support for the mobile phone and soldiers' travel claims. The teams that utilise these assets are now referred to as Regimental Recruiting Teams RRTs (formerly known as the Viking Mobile Recruiting Team VMRT and the Poacher Mobile Recruiting Team PMRT).

Headquarters Infantry has further assisted us to purchase a Regimental Flyer that is now no longer available through Recruiting Group.

Regimental Recruiting Steering Committee

The committee remains responsible for the formulation of the overarching recruiting policy for soldiers and officers. It meets twice a year and is chaired by a Deputy Colonel of the Regiment. In attendance is the Regimental Secretary, Commanding Officers of both Regular Battalions and the East of England Regiment. The



Regimental representatives at ATR Bassingbourn, AFC Harrogate and ITC Catterick attend to provide current information on Royal Anglian recruits in training and to ensure the Regimental recruiting policy is being applied consistently to assist retention in training.

Commander Regional Recruiting attends the committee to provide advice on recruiting activity in the Regimental counties, marketing the Regimental image, media planning and recruiting trends.

Recruiting Activity and Methods

Domination

A new initiative being implemented is to appoint company commanders to oversee recruiting operations within their affiliated county recruiting area of responsibility. This in turn has placed the regimental recruiters under operational control during recruiting operations and heightens focus for the chain of command within each of the Battalions.

First Contact

These are still conducted frequently by soldiers working individually, in pairs (Satisfied Soldier Scheme) or in four-man teams to attract potential applicants into the Regiment from our recruiting region.

Fusion

Fusion Exercises, a youth development programme sponsored by both Battalions, are designed to target the many football academies in our recruiting area. The exercises provide opportunities for personal development, team building and leadership activities. The aim is to provide a safety net for those who do not progress through to the senior teams. The emphasis is on a sporting career in the Army. The Vikings have conducted successful programmes with Peterborough Town and Norwich City and the Poachers are taking on Scunthorpe United and Leicester City during this year.

Encounter

Encounter is the cornerstone of our recruiting activity. Once 'first contact' is made with the potential applicant who is considering joining the Army, the aim is to get him on to an Encounter Exercise as soon as possible to cement the relationship with the Battalion.

Encounters are run by the AYT's and provide a two-day look at Army life focusing on the Regiment. The potential recruits take part in military activity and leadership exercises designed to develop teamwork and a sense of belonging. Encounter Exercises are fun and rewarding and the feedback from students is always positive. Approximately 1,800 personnel have attended exercises in the last three years, many of whom are in the Regiment today.

The Best Recruiters

Experience has shown that a happy soldier is the best recruiter there is. At home on leave, attached to recruiting offices, or employed on recruiting activities he can identify with many of the target audiences, and can sell his satisfaction in a tangible and understandable way. He stands to benefit from recruiting the right calibre of individual in two ways. Firstly, by financial reward through the committed recruit card bounty scheme. Secondly, a fully manned section and hence less guard duties! The Satisfied Soldier Scheme allows a Viking to spend a week back in his home town attached to a recruiting office from where he visits schools, cadet detachments and local careers fairs.

Buddy-Buddy Scheme

We espouse the use of the Committed Recruit Card to encourage soldiers to get friends and family to join. Besides the financial reward of £183, the soldier is taking part in the recruiting effort and this helps cement the ethos of a close, family Regiment. To remain at the leading edge we are further implementing the buddy - buddy scheme where we encourage each soldier within the Battalions to provide the name and address of a potential applicant who they know in order to pursue a new market of potential applicants.

Rallying Call

An important part of the recruiting effort is the link with the ex-serving members of the Regimental family. Most join the Regimental Association and many regularly attend the many reunions that take place annually throughout our counties. The Regimental Day at Bassingbourn is always well attended and at battalion level the Felixstowe and Spalding reunions go from strength to strength. There is a long family lineage in the Vikings and we have at least eight soldiers whose fathers have served and countless others with family ties to the Regiment. We rely on our ex -serving soldiers to continue to exhort the Vikings to as wide an audience as possible. Also of great value is the opportunity for serving soldiers to interact with the Regimental Association.

Regimental Website

The website has been refurbished recently and is now online. You can access the site by logging on to the British Army Website www.BritishArmy.co.uk or www.vikings.uk.com. You will find the site very easy to use and full of up-to-date information on the Regiment today, its history and personalities. The site also has battalion pages where future events, news and information is published.

Summary

At the time of writing this article, even though both Battalions have been heavily committed to recent operations, we as a Regiment, have exceeded beyond our annual recruiting target of some 260 personnel. Our recruiting strategy requires constant development and it is invariably the people on the ground who provide the conduit by which we gauge the mood of the target audience. If you have any ideas, please do not hesitate to get in touch with Regimental Headquarters who will refer you to the relevant person in the Vikings or Poachers.

Cpl L Beardsley, 2nd Battalion, writes:

After the successful recruiting operation, Operation Poachers' Strike, which was the Battalion's main recruiting focus during 2002, the Battalion's manning has substantially increased and will continue to do so throughout 2003. Overall Poachers' Strike seems to have been a huge success.

With the Battalion encountering a busy start to 2003, there have been no more Battalion-organised recruiting activities, but the Poachers' Mobile Recruiting Team (PMRT), 127 AYT and 161 AYT continue to recruit with great success. There are plans to carry out Battalion recruiting activities in the latter part of the year involving all the companies. The PMRT continues to work very hard and, to assist them with their workload and to build on their achievements, a second PMRT has been established commanded by 2Lt Coppard and assisted by three Poachers. This now sees the PMRT divided into two teams. Team 1 covers the day activities such as the Poachers' Encounter Exercises, 'Look at Lifes' and personal development activities, and visiting the schools and colleges within our counties. Team 2 covers the evening events, visiting youth clubs and all affiliated ACF detachments, and also assists the AYT's during Encounter Exercises.

The RCMO's office has been busy with Regimental gatherings to ITC Catterick, ATR Bassingbourn and the Army Foundation College, and we have even travelled as far north as Barry Buddon in Scotland where at present we have an intake of 13 potential Poachers undergoing training. These visits are to talk to potential Poachers, offer encouragement and advice and keep them updated on the Battalion's events while they conduct their training.

A visit was organised for Haileybury CCF to see the Battalion and conduct some low-level infantry training prior to them deploying to STANTA on Exercise Combat Cadet. The visit lasted for 24 hours and was a huge success, with a number of the cadets showing an interest in joining the Army.

Lt TJ Irwin-Parker, EER, writes...

Under the CO's directive for the Battalion to aim at 110 per cent manning by April, all companies have continued to actively recruit

Special Features



Capt Dennis listens to the hard sell.

throughout the period. WO2 Kelly and LCpl Holmes have taken the EER recruiting caravan all over the many counties that comprise our catchment area, in support of local company efforts. As well as setting up 'camp' in various high streets up and down the country,

the recruiting teams have also attended certain specific KAPE events, in support RFCA East Anglia and Midlands.

One of these events was the last Duxford Air Show of the season on Sunday 13 October. RFCA East Anglia was running an employer liaison event. Not only were hosts required for the employers, but troops were also required to set up display stands. Never one to miss an opportunity to market ourselves to the public, a team was put together by Lt Irwin-Parker from three companies in the EER. A Company provided an 81mm (APL) and two hosts, C Company provided the Battalion Caravan and staff and E Company provided a GPMG SF, tent, stand and the all the rest of the required kit and personnel. On a freezing cold morning after various problems were overcome such as vehicles that refused to start, the personnel all managed to RV at Duxford and a great day was had by all. Even more so as the atrocious weather to the south held off and didn't reach us until we were packing up.

Troops from EER have also taken part in some joint KAPE events with our Regular counterparts. Following a request from the curator of the Essex Regiment Museum at Chelmsford, men from E (Essex and Herts) Company, EER met up with a Saxon load of troops from C (Essex) Company 1st Battalion, Royal Anglian Regiment on 28/29 September. Led by Lt Delf, the Vikings had also responded to the call from the museum to lend a hand at an open day event to promote the museum. Sporting 'Afghanistan Viking' T-shirts they showed off their Minimis and other assorted kit including the Saxon they had arrived in. The E Company boys, meanwhile, under the able leadership of CSM WO2 Brazier, set up another static display consisting of weaponry and a GPMG SF - having arrived by ambulance! Expecting trouble? The various other vehicles such as Land Rovers and TCVs were parked discretely where ever they could be squeezed in.

As a result of actively marketing ourselves on the streets of the east of England in the last period, a number of keen and eager recruits came forward to volunteer for joining the Battalion. Due to year-end and block-leave, the last Phase 1 training cycle was fed by two Individual Selection Weekends (ISWs). The first of these was held on 30 November, at the Battalion's Christmas weekend at East Wretham Camp, STANTA, and the second on 25 January at the more usual venue of the WTC (Weekend Training Centre), STANTA.

Both these ISWs were run by Lt Irwin-Parker and the rest of his staff, who put the new recruits through their paces with BPFAs and the assault course. The ISW also has the purpose of informing the recruits about what their obligations will be once they actually join up, such as compulsory mobilisation and military law. The physical side of life in the TA is always stressed to them as well, and I think some of the recruits came to dread the sight of the PTI! LCpl Jenks,



Potential recruits outside AFCO Lincoln.

Special Features

(B Company) made it look too easy as he demonstrated the individual obstacles on the Assault Course. However, the recruits went home tired, but enthused. These recruits have now all completed their Phase 1 training programme having passed the RT4 test weekend. Among this number is an ex-Poacher who has seen the light and decided to get back in green!

This last cycle culminated at STANTA, where it had all started, on 28/30 March. The RT4 weekend is the recruits' battle exercise test before they are cleared for Phase 2 training at ITC Catterick with the Regulars. Twenty-eight passes were achieved on this, their final weekend of Phase 1 training, and it was very rewarding to see the 'civilians' that had walked through the door on the last two ISWs in November and January, now looking more like infantry soldiers after only four weekends training. WO2 Bevin and his RTT staff have done a great job at getting them up to speed, ready for their Combat Infantryman's Course at Catterick.

The two ISWs were the last ones before the Battalion switched to the new Recruit Selection Day (RSD) format. This new one day format allows each company to run their own selection day without the need to travel to a centrally run ISW, saving much needed time on a weekend which is short enough to begin with! The RSD also gives each company more freedom to process its new volunteers ready for Phase 1 training as and when the numbers in each company dictate.

B Company, at Lincoln, ran the first of these on 15 March with eight new recruits in attendance. The next one, in the south, was held on 5 April with A Company at Norwich, although recruits also attended this from HQ, C and E Companies. At this second RSD 27 fresh recruits joined up. With the addition of further ex-Regular recruits and others who are exempt from RSD, plus those who did not successfully complete the last cycle, the next Phase 1 training cycle is looking to be a monster!

Sgt S Taylor, ACIO Northampton, writes...

Recruiting in the Northampton area has been going well. We have been concentrating on local schools and cadet detachments. Our new recruiting vehicle has attracted considerable interest when we have visited schools and I have become involved in training the more senior cadets in the local ACF detachments. At present I am planning a competition for this year's annual camp.

Sgt C Headland, AFCO(A) Lincoln, writes...

Recruiting in Lincoln has gone well over the past year with, at the time of writing, a full Lincoln platoon being recruited into the Regiment. The City and the local area have traditionally been a strong recruiting area and the Regiment remains a popular first choice with many applicants. This has been enhanced by the recent operational tours undertaken by both Battalions.

I think for anyone entering the recruiting world it takes some time to adjust to life in an AFCO. It certainly is a great advantage being a 'local boy'.

We have recently recruited two Fijians into the Regiment; Ptes Lewaices and Wara, both of whom are now serving in C Company of the Poachers. Both, as former members of the Fijian Police rugby side, should help strengthen the Battalion's rugby team. Another soldier with a sporting pedigree whom we recruited is Pte Glen of Gainsborough. He is a Great Britain Taekwondo team member, of Commonwealth standard. He looks destined to have a bright future within the Army's Martial Arts Association.

WO2 S Davis, ACIO Ipswich, writes...

It is logical to think that, given the size of Suffolk, recruiting personnel for the Army, and in particular the Vikings would be a fairly straightforward business, but for those of you reading this now who have had experience of the 'recruiting world', we know different!

It is widely recognised, certainly across Recruiting Group (RG) that Suffolk is a challenge and always has been. I will not bore you with statistics. However, when you consider the fact that technically there is no unemployment in Suffolk (less than three per cent of the national average) and more people than ever go into further education, hopefully, you start to get the picture as to what we are up against.



Bury Enlistment Day.



Cadets learning skill-at-arms.



Look at Life in the field.



Potential recruits tackle the assault course.

Special Features

I have a team of three recruiters to support me in my task, namely, Sgts Chillli Kulkarni (R Anglian), Rob Arnold (AAC) and Pete Robinson (QRL). Each have their own areas within the county and it is their responsibility to maintain the vital links with all the various organisations that we deal with that provide us with a source of potential recruits. By keeping in regular contact with these people, we tend to find out what events are in the pipeline and we try to get involved where we can.

As always, we are forever on the lookout for new opportunities to exploit in order to recruit. One such event that recently took place was the 'Suffolk Technical Week' at the County Upper School in Bury St Edmunds in November 2002. This event was driven by Maj Alan Licence MBE (ACA(S)) whereby all the technical corps were represented, along with Cpl Jones (VMRT) and his display boards. This was an ideal opportunity for those present to promote their respective Corps and in general the Army. To say that the response was favourable is a bit of an understatement.

Carrying on from that, it was apparent that after all the hard work that we were putting in to promote the Army in the Bury St Edmunds area and the west of the county, potential applicants were heading to either the Cambridge or Norwich offices. It was for that reason that I decided to 'reinvent the wheel' and try to establish a permanent presence in the Bury area in order to capture potential applicants. This had to be done at a minimum cost to RG and the only way that it was going to work was to 'piggyback' onto an existing organisation that could, and would, be willing to have us on board. I duly approached Lt Col Dixon, the Regimental Secretary at RHQ, who was delighted to accommodate us. We had our grand opening on 6 February when we enlisted Ben Spanton from Bury into the Regiment and ultimately the 1st Battalion on successful completion of his training. The Bury Office is open on Mondays and Fridays only at present due to manpower and logistic restrictions, but it certainly seems to be busy right now and long may it continue.

I have been in post now for four years, and during that time there have been many changes to the way that we recruit. Suffice to say, it has been an interesting four years and I'm sure that the remaining years that I have left to serve will be just as challenging.

Recruiting Statistics

The number of recruits enlisted into the Regiment by ACIOs/AFCOs during the period 1 April 2002 to 31 March 2003 was:

Ipswich	8	Peterborough	16
Luton	31	Boston	18
Northampton	9	Lincoln	30
Cambridge	31	Chelmsford	26
Leicester	30	Grimsby	16
Norwich	16	Southend	12

Participation in the Infantry Alpine Ski Championships 2002/2003

(Exercise Frosted Blade)

Maj AG Grinonneau writes...

In December 2002 and January 2003 I was fortunate enough to be able to take a team from ATR Bassingbourn to Val D'Isere for Exercise Frosted Blade, the official name for the Infantry Alpine Ski Championships.

A total package of six weeks was broken down into three parts. Two weeks of technical training, three weeks of race training and then race week. ATR Bassingbourn was fortunate enough to secure sponsorship by Coca-Cola (it helps being the only non-alcoholic camp in the Army!) and Vodafone and so were well supported throughout.

Although we were located in the superb surroundings of the French Alps and were lucky to have excellent snow, the build-up period was hard work. Training for six days a week and completing a Joint Service Ski Instructor (JSSI) Course alongside meant for long days. The exercise caters for all standards of skier and there were at least 10 soldiers participating who were absolute beginners.



The team after the downhill race. (The author is back left).

With all of the training out of the way, the race week (5-9 January) was a fitting climax to the exercise. I missed the first two races (the slalom and giant slalom) due to returning to UK for the Christmas and New Year period but competed in the super giant slalom (super-G) and the downhill. Running on a course parallel to the one used for the World Cup only three weeks before, I was seeded 39th for the super-G but finished a somewhat disappointing 46th (out of 101 racers). As a result of this, I was dropped to 42nd seed for the downhill the following day. A better run and good selection of ski for a tricky downhill course meant I finished 41st.

As a team we finished 13th out of 21 and we were second of the minor units. From a personal point of view, I achieved a JSSI qualification as well as passing my advanced ski proficiency. The entire exercise was challenging, demanding and rewarding.

It was encouraging to see fewer officers and more other ranks there and I would encourage any prospective skiers to approach unit ski representatives and try to plan attending the exercise at the end of this year. ATR Bassingbourn is already planning the next campaign.

The Regimental Museum

Events at the Museum have been completely overshadowed by the sudden and tragic death of George Boss, the museum attendant, which is reported elsewhere.

Work is now underway on an Afghanistan display which will depict the tours of both the Vikings and the Poachers. The 'What is a Battalion' project is also making progress and it is hoped that work may start in May 2004. Finally, under the leadership of Col Nick Kelsey, the Museum website is being well on the way to being completed.

The Regimental Day on 14 September 2003 will provide those attending with an opportunity to visit the Regimental Museum, which is based in the Land Warfare Hall. If anyone has items of historical interest that they would like to donate to the museum please bring them along with you. Photographs, interesting press cuttings, unique items of equipment and clothing, or anything else you think should be displayed or held for future use will be very welcomed and appreciated.

Operation Signet

CSgt Brownlie 2 R Anglian writes...

Since joining the Operational Training and Advisory Group (OPTAG) in April 2002, my eyes have been opened to the number of different operational theatres that British troops deploy to and the countries that the United Kingdom assists with training. In the past 12 months the Peace Support Operations (PSO) Training Team has taught more than 48,000 soldiers, sailors and airmen for operational deployments to Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Sierra Leone, East Timor, Middle East, Spearhead Lead Element and Cyprus, to name but a few.

One of the biggest shocks was the size of the groups undergoing training. It is not unusual to be training more than 250 troops, from a vast array of capbadges, who vary from the youngest soldier straight from the ATR to the newest BRITFOR commander. As with all training establishments we strive to deliver the very best package for troops under training. All the lessons are constantly monitored by the training teams' SO3, Chief Instructor and, in the case of weapon awareness, the SASC.

What has also come to my attention is the vast amount of positions within OPTAG that are currently being held by Royal Anglians which currently stands at eight (at present only one Poacher, soon to change).

Since my arrival to the Peace Support Training Team I have managed to return to Bosnia and see many of 'The Poachers' old locations from Operation Grapple. Some locations, like Jelah, have managed to pick up the pieces and recover. I can report that 'The Poachers' Ice Cream Parlour is still open in Jelah and is currently owned by the son who was 12 years old during the time of the Poacher's deployment. He still recognises and remembers the Bedfordshire flash and nickname. After much sandbag swinging and free coffee and cakes I managed to push on to Maglai down route Dobin which, in a 4x4, was a lot more comfortable than previous methods of transport. Although Maglai now has a bridge, it still carries all the scars of a war-torn town.

Within the 12 months that I have been in OPTAG I've had the opportunity to be a part of the first four-man British Army Training Team to travel to China and train members of their Police Force for operations in Sierra Leone. While there we also trained engineer and medical assets for an operational deployment to the Democratic Republic of Congo under the command of a South African Battle Group.

After a punishing flight in Club Class we arrived in Beijing to be met by a member of the British Embassy and a load of Jackie Chan look-a-likes reading newspapers with observation holes (or am I paranoid?). After much de-confliction between the team and the Chinese Peace Support Office, under the close direction and assistance of the British Defence Attaché, the training programmes were finalised and reconnaissance of training areas conducted.

Certainly the first big surprise was the number of video cameras and photographers at the rear of all lessons. Most students were in possession of a digital video camera or dictaphone (whatever happened to the note book and pen?) Although most lessons took three times the normal allocated time because of translation I found the students, who ranged from young lieutenants to lieutenant colonel, very responsive and very inquisitive. As a mark of gratitude and



Briefing the Defence Attaché Corps in Beijing.



thanks for the instruction, the team were invited to a number of banquets with the students. These normally lasted about two hours and were a real test for the taste buds (fish head soup and a whole host of strange things from the depths of the sea). On one close inspection of my dish I noticed what I thought was a mushroom in my soup. Under the watchful eye of a Chinese Major General and, not wanting to destroy international relations, I placed the black soft object into my mouth and after some considerable chewing and strange tastes I quickly swallowed this foreign body and started to quiz the Lieutenant Colonel at my side as to what the object was. To my sheer shock and horror I discovered I had just eaten a slug. After much flushing with red wine I continued to taste more Chinese cuisine.

No one goes all that way without doing the tourist thing and since the opportunity was there we took it. We visited the Great Wall of China, Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City. As well as visiting these fantastic locations I can now say I've had pizza at the Great Wall, seen a five star toilet in the Forbidden City and observed area cleaning in Tiananmen Square.

If anyone is considering a two year post with the PSO at OPTAG and you can handle living out of a case and being more flexible than my bank manager then this is a post for you. The post is still new and is suffering minor teething problems however OPTAG has given me the fantastic opportunity to travel the world.



Affiliated ACF and CCF Detachments

Lincolnshire Army Cadet Force



The briefing before the start of the County Cross Country Championships.

Cross country running has played a major part in the programme of Lincolnshire ACF. On 23 February 64 competitors competed in the annual County Cross Country Championships at the Lincolnshire Showground. The winner of the senior boys' event was J Richards from Skegness, with Stamford College winning the team event. T Bale of Crowland won the junior boys with 4 Company winning the team event. S Wheeler of Skegness won the senior girls' event with N Sommers of Bourne winning the junior event.

Twenty two cadets participated in the Eastern Counties Region Competition held at Waterbeach on 2 March. Again J Richards performed well achieving second place and subsequently being selected for the National Championships at Warcop. The Junior Girls were placed second.

Cambridgeshire Army Cadet Force

Training over the latter part of 2002 was disrupted somewhat due to Operation Fresco. In November the Cadet Centre was taken over by RAF personnel who were to be stationed there to man one of the Green Goddesses. By the second strike in November they were withdrawn to Coldhams Lane and we were able to get our centre back. Both No 2 and 3 Companies were able to hold their Christmas dinner camps with some 180 cadets enjoying a weekend of competitions, star training and of course their Christmas dinner. Only No 1 Company missed out during November.

The Corps of Drums of No 1 Company were invited to take part in the Lord Mayor's Show as part of a massed Corps of Drums of 120 musicians. In fact, with members of the Air Training Corps, they were part of the Guard of Honour at Mansion House before joining the Lord Mayor's Show which involves a one and half mile march.

Cadets from No 2 Company had the honour of performing at the Festival of Remembrance in the Guildhall Cambridge as a silent drill squad.

Recruiting is progressing slowly. The rules governing the age of recruits has now been changed, allowing us to recruit from the school year eight. We will see in the future if this decision proves to be successful or not. With Cadets now joining at the younger age we are looking carefully at our planned training for the coming year. The Easter Camp will be based at Waterbeach and will be aimed at Recruits from all three companies.

They will be trained in drill, turnout and military knowledge, weapon training, map and compass, fieldcraft and first aid, country code and physical recreation. All the subjects required to qualify for the first level of the Army Proficiency Certificate (APC).

We shall also be running a two-star expedition for the more senior cadets, this will take place around Grafham Water and after Easter we will be running a Crossed Flags Signal course to train cadets to be radio operators. This course will be for about 30 cadets across the county. The successful cadets will receive a nationally recognised badge and certificate.

Adult recruiting is progressing well with 10 new adults recently completing the county induction course, a 12-week period of training and information. It will be over a year before these adults have completed training courses and become in the official term a qualified instructor. We continue to have difficulties in finding instructors who can spare the time to undertake courses in climbing, canoeing, hillwalking etc.

All our detachments are busy preparing for the annual inspections by Regular or Territorial officers and it is a good opportunity to impress and show these officers the good work the ACF contributes to the community and to the Army.

Annual camp this year will be from 26 July to 3 August at Ripon and will include nine days of activities such as field training exercises, shooting and sports. We hope to take 300 cadets this year.



Corps of Drums from 1 Company.

Affiliated ACF and CCF Detachments

Norfolk Army Cadet Force



2Lt Gary Bagge receiving his cheque from the High Sheriff.

The High Sheriff of Norfolk, Mr Richard Gurney, while visiting Cadet Norfolk Artillery Battery took the opportunity to present the Aylsham Road Troop, Norwich with a cheque for £150 as the overall Norfolk ACF Champion Detachment. The cheque had been provided by Col AC Taylor, the Area Secretary the Royal Anglian Regiment (Norfolk).

Exercise Viking Cadet: The View From Felsted School

Cdt WO1(RSM) Josh Collins-Fisher writes...

Exercise Viking Cadet from 14-16 March 2003 provided a wonderful opportunity for eight members from Felsted School CCF to experience the rewarding life that the Vikings lead and to have some serious fun!

The weekend included many different activities and stands. There was training from an anti-tank section which taught us how to use the Milan, which I especially enjoyed ('tank action!'). An assault course that makes standard PT look tame. A confidence course



including an underground maze (almost lost a few cadets in that one). Plus we got the chance to fire the SA80s, LSWs, GPMG and sniper rifle on the ranges, although I don't think any of us are sniper material.

The weekend also gave us the opportunity to use equipment we have never used before like the CWS, night vision binoculars and MIRA in a battlefield scenario. The cadets really enjoyed the adrenaline surge from the night CTR.

The highlight was the outstandingly well planned platoon attack. We moved in and out of rivers, ditches and woodland assaulting numerous enemy positions, adrenaline pumping all the way. With Saxons providing the transport to and from the battlefield, Royal Anglian NCOs leading the sections and an ample supply of smoke grenades and blanks, needless to say the cadets had a great time.

It was an action packed weekend and all who attended enjoyed it immensely. The cadets learned a lot of new skills and gained a great deal of experience from the 1st Battalion and this has left a lasting impression on the cadets. Many thanks from Felsted to all the many soldiers who created such a well organised and thrilling weekend.

Felsted waits in great anticipation for our next encounter with the Vikings!

Editor's Note: More Viking and Poacher Cadet weekends are planned for 3-5 and 10-12 October 2003. Any CCF Contingents who have still to book places should contact the Regimental Careers Officer at RHQ.

King Edward VI CCF



The Associations



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

War Memorial Cottages

The transfer of the Royal Norfolk Regiment War Memorial Homes (18 in Norwich, four in King's Lynn) to Haig Homes will now take place on 1 July 2003. This is later than planned because the legal requirements took longer than expected but the changeover should go smoothly and the occupants of the properties will not be inconvenienced by the change. Haig Homes is a major National Charity with considerable expertise in managing former Regimental Cottages and the Trustees are confident that this change will safeguard the future of the homes so that they will be available to future applicants from the Royal Norfolk Regiment and its successors the East Anglian and Royal Anglian Regiments.

The properties will continue to be known as the Royal Norfolk War Memorial Homes and annual Remembrance Day Services will continue to be held at the war memorial there.

Benevolence

Sadly the number of ex-members of the Regiment needing help remains far too high. We do our best to ensure that deserving cases receive all the help they need. We are helped enormously in this by the Royal Anglian Regiment (who provide £2,000 per year), the Royal British Legion, SSAFA and the Army Benevolent Fund in particular. Last year 60 ex-members of the Regiment or their widows were helped with grants and a number of widows receive ABF annuities.

The Association

About 150 attended the Association Dinner in September 2002 and we are grateful to Lt Col Paul Garman and his band of helpers who ensure that everything runs smoothly. Numbers have held up well over the years and it is pleasing to see some ex-Royal Anglians beginning to play an active part in Association affairs.

The fortunes of the branches fluctuate. Some are thriving while others are struggling. We therefore plan a local advertising campaign this summer in the hope of attracting ex-members who have lost touch over the years.

The Norwich Branch lunch was very well attended, as was the Gorleston and Gt Yarmouth Branch Christmas Dinner held at the Cliff Hotel. Sadly, the King's Lynn Dinner did not take place because of the sudden death of their President, Capt Arthur Hammond, who had been their guiding light for many years. The Dinner is back on for 2003 - it will be held on 31 October at King's Lynn town hall and details will be available in due course from Britannia House, 325 Aylsham Road, Norwich.

The North Elmham Cyprus Reunion goes from strength to strength. It started in 1995 at the instigation of Mrs Ruth Grimmer who had been struck by the sense of comradeship shown by those who had served with her late husband in Cyprus 1955-56. News of the event has passed by word of mouth and brings together people from far and wide, and this year's event, held on 26 April, attracted about 120. Maj Andrew Athill, who commanded C Company in Cyprus, thanked Mrs Grimmer and her family for all the work they had put in to ensure the success of the evening.

Museum

The museum has not escaped the economies forced on the Norwich Museum Service by the local authority and it is now closed on Sundays and on Mondays out of the school holidays. We hope this will be a temporary measure. The new silver display, funded by a generous donation by the family of the late Maj Freddie Crocker, has been completed and the Trustees are to introduce new equipment which will enable the archive photographs to be projected onto a blank wall in the museum for the benefit of visitors.

Waynes Keep Cemetery Nicosia

Mr John Moore and his wife recently returned from a visit to Cyprus. They report that the Regimental graves in Waynes Keep are being well maintained and that visits can be arranged by contacting the local UN unit. (The cemetery is in the UN controlled buffer zone between the Greek and Turkish sectors).



The Royal Lincolnshire and The Royal Anglian Regimental Association

Benevolence 2002/03

The General Committee of the Association during 2002/03



Waynes Keep Cemetery Nicosia.

The Associations

considered 38 cases for benevolence. With the assistance of the Army Benevolent fund, the Royal British Legion and many other ex-servicemen's charities, a total of £33,731 was disbursed by the Association to ex-members of the Royal Lincolnshire Regiment and their families who have fallen on hard times.

Poacher 2003

Over 300 veterans of the Royal Anglian Regiment and former Regiments gathered at the Springfield Exhibition Centre, Spalding, Lincolnshire for the Poacher 2003 Reunion.

The President of the Royal Lincolnshire and Royal Anglian Regimental Association, Maj Gen REJ Gerrard-Wright CB CBE DL, gave the opening address in which he welcomed all the comrades present and thanked those responsible for the excellent arrangements for this year's reunion.

After a splendid buffet meal the evening continued with musical entertainment from the CS Big Band which treated us to a wide variety of both modern and the more traditional dance music and it wasn't long before the dancefloor was full of budding Fred Astairs.

Plans are already underway for next year's reunion, which will hopefully include a church parade on the Sunday and as soon as the dates are confirmed they will be published in the *Castle* journal. We look forward to seeing you all in 2004.

Regimental Reunion 2003

As the Royal Anglian Regimental Gathering will now take place at Duxford on Sunday 14 September 2003, the Royal Lincolnshire Regimental Reunion will now be held at Sobraon Barracks over the weekend of 12/13 July 2003. It will follow the by now familiar format of:

Saturday 12 July 2003

1400 hrs AFM
1900 for 1930 hrs Regimental Dinner

Sunday 13 July 2003

1130hrs Drumhead Service followed by a March Past (Sobraon Barracks)
1300hrs Picnic lunch and families day (On Sobraon Barracks sports field)

Everyone is most welcome to attend (attendance for the Regimental Dinner has to be booked in advance). For further information please contact the Regimental Area Secretary on 01522-544886 or Mr C Key on 01522-530762.



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

Museum

The Museum at the Keep is now open from 1000-1300hrs on the first Wednesday of the month. This opening is attracting mainly those with a genuine interest in the museum and the Regiment, and some have brought in useful additions to the collection. The curator is assisted by two members of the Bury Branch who act as attendants to answer enquiries and ensure security.

Old Dozen

Sales of *The Old Dozen* have gone well but not as well as Capt Trollope, the treasurer, would like. The book will be available at the

Minden Reunion. The cost is £17 or £21.50 by post to Association members.

Hillman Pilgrimages

Forty attended the 2003 pilgrimage from 4 to 7 June, following a similar programme to previous years but with the addition of a ceremony to unveil a descriptive plaque at the Chateau de la Londe.

Plans are well in hand for the 2004 trip which will be one day longer - 4 to 8 June. This will be the 60th anniversary of D-Day and the last formal commemoration. The national plan for this is not yet firm but the plan is for the Suffolk Regiment group to take part in the various nationally organised events. It will be a particularly poignant reunion for the veterans attending and because of the significance of the event the numbers attending from across other regiments is likely to be much higher than in recent years and this has affected prices. The Hillman Committee will do their best to keep the costs of the trip as low as possible.

In 2004 there will also be a trip to the Low Countries - the dates are 20 to 23 September and the programme is likely to include Hamont, Weert, Overloon and Venray.

St Mary's Chapel

The Regimental Chapel is very well cared for by a team of volunteers and always looks tremendous. It is sad that it is not used more regularly. Canon John Hayden, the vicar, is happy to take services, so if you are planning a service, why not consider using the Regimental Chapel?

Lady Goodwin

Anthea Goodwin, the widow of Gen Sir Richard Goodwin, died on 14 April. She was a regular attender at Regimental functions for over 50 years and more recently a stalwart of the Bury Branch of the Association. We extend our condolences to the family.

St Mary's was crowded for a Thanksgiving Service on 25 April - a measure of the respect and affection in which she was held.

The Branches

The fortunes of the branches fluctuate - with some clearly thriving and others struggling to maintain their numbers. The future will depend on the ex-members of the Royal Anglian Regiment picking up the reins, and it is pleasing that this is happening in some areas.



The Cambridgeshire Regimental Association and The Royal Anglian Regiment Association

The Cambridgeshire Collection

Winter is usually a quiet time for the museums, and there have been no new initiatives to report.

Our displays, particularly at Duxford, where Martin Boswell has recently been 'refreshing' the exhibits, remain in good order. He also has recently received a request from a good publishing house, Shire Books, for details of the 'History of the Cambridgeshire Regiment' for inclusion in a forthcoming publication of the UK infantry. We have sent a copy of our history for their information, and look forward to seeing the book!

At Ely the new curator is 'sympathetic' as she was previously employed at Duxford. While local enthusiasm ensures our display at the Wisbech Museum is well looked after. The new museums at

The Associations

March and Soham have contacted us, and we have offered our co-operation in any display they may wish to develop.

Sales of the Christmas Cards last year were disappointing, while the 'Guide' also goes very slowly. However the financial position remains strong, and currently stands at £4,468.

Dedication of Bench



The Regiment now has a memorial bench on Ely's riverside. It was dedicated on Monday 17 March by the Rev Nicholas Woodcock, Precentor of Ely Cathedral, at a ceremony attended by members of the Cambridgeshire Regiment Association. The bench, outside Ely Maltings, was paid for by the Cambridgeshire Regiment Chapel Trust and various branches of the Association. The site was provided by East Cambridgeshire District Council.

Among those attending the ceremony were Association President Lt Col WF Badcock MBE, Ely Chairman Mr P Legge, Secretary Roy Hitch and Trust Fund Chairman Freddy Grounds and representatives from branches at Cambridge, Peterborough and Whittlesey, Wisbech and March. Also Mr W Rooke, Standard Bearer.

Pleas for a bench were published in the Ely Standard last November when it was pointed out that the Regiment was not among Second World War forces and organisations honoured on benches sponsored by Waitrose along Pegasus Walk.

Cambridgeshire Regiment Memorial Chapel, Upwell St Peter



The Trustees of the Cambridgeshire Regiment Chapel Trust were approached by the Revd Alan Jesson, Rector of Upwell St Peter, for a grant to enable a pair of candlesticks to be purchased for use in the Church's Memorial Chapel. It was intended that the candlesticks would be suitably inscribed to commemorate both the Golden Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth's accession and the memory of those parishioners who served with the Regiment and who fell in the

First World War.

The Trustees were happy to make a grant and the candlesticks were formally presented to the Church on the 29 June 2002, by Major M A Jarvis, Hon Secretary of the Regimental Association, at a special Evensong which also celebrated the Church's Patronal Festival.

Due to other commitments, The President of the Association, Lt Colonel W F Badcock MBE and the Chairman of the Chapel Trustees Mr Freddie Grounds DL, could not be present on that occasion but both attended a service at the Church the following day.

The photograph shows the Memorial Chapel at Upwell St Peter with the candlesticks standing on the Altar.

Cambridgeshire Regiment Obituaries

We are sorry to report the following deaths and express our deepest sympathy with families:

Asbee: Pte LW Asbee (5933915) died 2002, 2nd Battalion.

Bennington: Pte LB Bennington (59335870) died 23 November 2002, Signal Platoon HQ, 2nd Battalion.

Blower: LR Blower, (5933660) died July 2002, Signal Platoon HQ, 2nd Battalion.

Farrow: Martin Farrow of Humphreys Road Cambridge (ex 2nd Battalion) died on Thursday 9 January. He joined the Cambs TA in 1926 aged 17. In 1941 he was posted to the 8th Battalion Suffolk Regiment at Hill Hall, Epping and placed in the Signals Platoon. Drafted to the 2nd Battalion Suffolk Regiment in India and served in the Burma Campaign.

Foot: Brian Victor Foot died on 15 November 2002 aged 86. A former headmaster of Girton Glebe Primary School, he was in charge of the village school for more than 30 years from 1946 until his retirement in 1980. Born in Ipswich, he was educated at the Cambridge and County High School and went on to study at the College of St Mark and St John. Commissioned into the 2nd Battalion Cambridgeshire Regiment in 1939, he was called up in 1939, a week before the outbreak of the Second World War, and saw action in Malaya before being taken prisoner at the fall of Singapore in February 1942. He was a PoW for three and half years. After the war he helped to reform his Regiment as 629 LAA Regiment in which he served for six years becoming Battery Captain based at Ely. He was awarded the Territorial Decoration. The funeral was held to a packed church at Girton on 27 November 2002.

Ince: Pte T Ince, (5831008) Died 4 December 2002, 2nd Battalion.

Stallard: Canon Stallard died 12 March 2002.

Woods: Cpl T Woods, died 2002, Carrier Platoon, HQ Company, 2nd Battalion.



The Royal Anglian Regiment and Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment Association

The Chairman of the Association, Brig AFFH Robertson, is pleased to announce that SC Whitbread Esq, Lord Lieutenant of Bedfordshire, has agreed to become the new President of the Association in place of the late Maj Gen JA Ward-Booth.

The membership of the Association, despite the sad loss of older comrades, seems to get more members to its ranks and all the branches continue to thrive.

The Governor's Parade and Church Service at the Royal Hospital Chelsea

On Sunday 29 September 2002, 42 members of the Association attended the Royal Hospital Chelsea Governor's Parade and Church

The Associations

Service. The coach for this trip left Kempston at 0600hrs on a cold and foggy Sunday morning picking up members at Luton, Hemel Hempstead, St Albans and Hertford. Members from Hitchin and Letchworth made their own way to the Luton pick-up point which helped the travel arrangements considerably. The fog persisted until we were well into London before the sun broke through and for the rest of the day it was brilliant sunshine. We arrived at the gate of the hospital right on time at 1000hrs, debussed and had a little time to look about the grounds before the parade and meet in-pensioner 'Snowy' Fisken, who had served in the 5th Battalion the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment during the Second World War.

At 1030hrs a drummer's roll was played by an in-pensioner and on the orders of the Royal Hospital's RSM, the in-pensioners fell in on the left of the parade ground and the Association members fell in on the right. There were two Association Standards a few paces in front.

The Governor of the Royal Hospital inspected the in-pensioners and then the Association detachment, speaking to each member in turn. After the inspection the parade did a right turn and a short march to the Hospital Chapel, giving an 'eyes left' as they marched past the Governor.

After the two Standards were received by the Hospital Chaplain the service began with some good hymn singing by the congregation and some great singing by the choir. During the service the Regimental Prayer was said.

After the service members dispersed to the in-pensioners' lounge and bar for a well-deserved drink and here members mixed with the in-pensioners and were joined by our chairman, Brig Angus Robertson. Our own in-pensioner, 'Snowy', was very much in demand.

The Royal Hospital put on an excellent buffet lunch for our members and made us very welcome. There was a little time to visit the Royal Hospital Museum and buy presents from the well-stocked souvenir shop and thank our hosts for a great day out, before boarding the coach for home.

Association Annual Wreath Laying Ceremony and Reunion

The arrangements for both the parade and the reunion were basically the same as in previous years. From 1000hrs members arrive at the TA Centre at Kempston from all over the country to attend this event which takes place on the site of the Regimental War Memorial, opposite the old barracks, on the Sunday morning after National Remembrance Sunday. The weather on 17 November 2002 at the start of the parade was cloudy with a slight drizzle in the air. Thankfully this cleared by the time the wreath laying party and the

Standard Bearers had marched to their places at the Memorial behind the Corps of Drums of the East of England Regiment, who then marched the main marching contingents out to halt and face the memorial.

The Association Vice-President, Maj Robin Medley and the Chairman, Brig Angus Robertson, with the Mayors of Bedford and Kempston, took up their positions and a short service began. Wreaths were then laid by the Vice-President, Chairman and the Mayors of the two boroughs.

The Act of Remembrance was recited and wreaths were then laid by branches and individuals while the Corps of Drums played appropriate music. Last Post, silence and Reveille were observed. Prayers and Regimental Collects were said followed by the Grace, the Regimental March, *Mandolinata*, and the National Anthem.

The Corps of Drums marched the detachments back to the Keep by the side gate giving an 'eyes left' as they passed the saluting base, the salute being taken by 93-year-old Mr Edward Osler, the Association's oldest member. The units halted in a square in the car park and the Vice-President of the Association, Maj Medley, thanked everyone for a good parade. He then handed out Certificates of Merit to the following members for their devoted service over many years. Mr JA Bowen, Mr FJ Gorton, Mr DE Randall, Mr LJ Springett and Mr R Wareham.

The Standards were then marched off parade with the Corps of Drums playing *Mandolinata*. The parade dismissed, members either going into The Keep or the TA Centre for lunch, during which the Corps of Drums played in both locations which was greatly appreciated.

A raffle was held on behalf of the Bedford Branch which had many good prizes. It was nice to see old friends again, and also nice to meet new ones. A good day which went far too quickly before it was time to leave for home.

The Association wishes to thank the Corps of Drums of the East of England Regiment for their hard work and patience in learning to play on fifes, our old Regimental March *Mandolinata*, and playing it for this parade not once but three times. Much appreciated.

Suez Canal Veterans Annual Dinner

Over 80 members, wives and guests attended a very enjoyable dinner at the 'Sun Hotel' Hitchin. The Vice-President of the Association, Maj Medley, the Chairman of the Association, Brig Robertson and Maj Parker also attended. A very good raffle was held during the evening with a special prize of a framed Regimental badge carved out of wood, with two miniature medals, one Suez, one National Service to mark the Queen's Jubilee. These annual



The Standards prepare to march to the front of the marching contingent at the wreath laying parade at Kempston on 17 November 2002.

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dinners, this being the seventh, have gone from strength to strength and the organisers hope to keep them going for many years to come.

Deaths and Obituaries

Maj JA Girdwood OBE

Maj Girdwood, who was affectionately known to all in the Association as 'Donald', died on Wednesday 2 October 2002, aged 85. He was commissioned from the Royal Military College in January 1937 to the Northamptonshire Regiment (48th/58th).

He joined their 2nd Battalion in Northern Ireland and was posted to its 1st Battalion on the North West Frontier of India in 1937. Returning to the UK in 1941 he joined the 5th Northamptonshire Battalion TA in the Middle East and was a PoW from December 1942 to April 1945. He saw further service with different battalions and on the staff until joining the 1st Bedfords in July 1950 and remained with them until 1955 after which he held appointment in BAOR, Hong Kong and the UK before retiring in 1966.

After retiring he was an Assistant Regimental Secretary at Bury St Edmunds until 1972, Appeals Office the British Red Cross (Suffolk) 1972/75 and Regimental Secretary the 16th Foot until 1983. He continued to work tirelessly for the Old Comrades organisations, helped form 'Golden Days Senior Citizens Club' in Bury St Edmunds and was its welfare officer. He was also welfare officer and Secretary of the West Suffolk retired civil servants. He worked for the Army Benevolent Fund in Suffolk and Bedfordshire.

As a young man Donald was an enthusiastic athlete representing his school and Sandhurst in cross country and long distance running. He listed among his interests welfare work in the community.

It will be seen that Donald had an interesting career and his CV shows a deep Christian interest in his fellow beings. He became a staunch 'Bedford' and never missed Association meetings right to the end. He had strong opinions and was never afraid to air his views. He loved ceremony and was in his element on Remembrance Day parades and the Association Wreath Laying and Reunion. He was deeply respected by all who got to know him.

It was a source of delight to his many friends when his unstinting welfare work over many years was recognised by the award of the OBE last year.

His funeral took place on 8 October 2002 and although a family occasion the Association was represented. A memorial service for Donald was held at St Mary's Church, Bury St Edmunds on Saturday 23 November 2002 with many members of the Association with the Branch Standards in attendance.

Deaths

Mr Ron Major died on 12 December 2002, aged 89. He served with the 2nd Battalion from 1931-41 being in France and Dunkirk.

Mr ECR Sorrell died aged 89 on 6 December 2002. He joined the Regiment in the 1930s, with the 1st Battalion in India and Palestine. Returned to UK and posted to the 2nd Battalion in North Africa. Captured and was a PoW in Italy and Germany. In 1946 he was a CSgt at Bury St Edmunds before being posted to the 1st Battalion in Greece and UK and finished his service as CSM at Depot, Kempston.

The Hertfordshire Regiment Association

On the 21 September 2002 a fish and chip supper was held in the Mess in the TA Centre at Hertford and some 50 members and friends attended. A bingo session and a raffle was organised and everyone enjoyed themselves.

The Hertfordshire Regiment Association Annual Reunion Lunch was held at the Mayflower Place, Hertingfordbury on 3 November 2002 attended by 96 members and friends. Lt Adrian Coulson, platoon commander, Hertford Platoon, East of England Regiment, was our guest and gave a short talk on the roll of the Territorial Army. Col Nick Kelsey, our President, presided over an excellent meal. We also had an excellent raffle. The Association's annual lunch this year will be held on Sunday 2 November at the same venue.

The Association Standard was on parade with members on Remembrance Sunday at Hertford and again on the following Sunday at Kempston for the wreath laying and annual reunion of The

Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment Association and at the memorial service to Maj Girdwood at Bury St Edmunds.

A three-day tour of World War One Battlefields is being organised for May 2003, possibly visiting India and Portugal Memorials, the Cot, Armentiers, Loos and Vimy. Hopefully to include Festubert, a Hertfordshire Regiment Honour.



The Royal Tigers' Association and The Royal Anglian Regiment Association (Leicestershire)

Retirement of Col FAH Swallow OBE

Col FAH Swallow OBE retired as Area Secretary for the Association in Leicestershire and Northamptonshire on 14 March 2003, after seven years in post. Through and through a Tiger and devoted to his Regiment, his service to all members, whether Tigers, Northampton or Royal Anglians has been universally regarded as a model of punctilious fairness, dedication, industry, competence and immense knowledge. Lately he has been increasingly involved in the plan to re-house and reorganise the Royal Leicestershire Regimental Museum in Leicester, and this he intends to continue on an almost full-time basis until the planned reopening in 2005 (see below). For this continuing personal support we are all very grateful, and hope that he and Mrs Swallow will have the happiest of retirements.

Royal Tigers' Weekend 21 and 22 June 2003

The Annual General Meeting of the Association will take place at Devonshire Place, 80 London Road, Leicester at 6.30 pm on 21 June 2003. This will be followed by the 78th Annual Dinner at 7.15 for 7.45 pm. The Regimental Parade Service will be held at Leicester Cathedral at 12.00 noon on Sunday 22 June followed by a March Past with the salute taken by the Lord Lieutenant of Leicestershire, and a Reception and buffet lunch in Devonshire Place.

This Reunion will be a special event since the Service will include the dedication of a memorial to the 17 Tigers who lost their lives during operations in Cyprus 1956-58, and of individual memorials to two former commanding officers, Col M Moore MC TD DL and Lt Colonel JED Watson DSO. All the families of all these 19 Tigers will be guests of the Association, so an especially large turnout is expected.

Entry to the annual dinner on Saturday and the Reception on Sunday will be by ticket only, so please apply to the area office.

1st Battalion (50th/8th/1st) Reunion

This will take place at the TA Centre Ulverscroft Road Leicester on 27 September 2003. Further details can be obtained from Mr J Dean on 0116-2125932.

Cyprus Veterans' Reunion

The seventh annual 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 25 October 2003. Please make a note in your diary. Further details can be obtained from Mr Bob Freeman on 0116-2335716.

Other Events

11 October	Royal Leicestershire Regiment TA Annual Dinner Leicester
1 November	Hindoostan Dinner Club Leicester

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5 December Association Christmas Reunion Leicester
6 December Officers' Dinner Club Luncheon London
Details from the Area Secretary

Regimental Museum

An application has been submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund for £1,000,000 in partnership with the Leicester City Council Museums Service, for a new Regimental Museum to be established in the Newarke Houses Museum in Leicester. The application reflects much hard work by the Regimental Trustees, our consultants and the Museums Service staff in preparing all the papers for this mammoth task, and we are very grateful to them all for their impressive efforts. A project implementation team is in place, and the National Army Museum has agreed to act as advisers. We now await the result of our application, which should be received by 30 September 2003. The Regiment will have to raise £250,000 of 'matching' funding before receiving the HLF grant. A Regimental Fundraising Campaign to do this will be launched on 20 June 2003, with advance publicity, and every member of the Association will receive more details then.

There are two vital tasks to help this extremely important project. First, please let the Area Secretary know of any bright ideas you may have on how to raise money, so that you can contribute once the fundraising campaign has been launched. Second, please turn out your cupboards for items which might be of interest: if in doubt, let us know!

Was Your Grandfather a Soldier?

This is the title of a project funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund to record biographical details of former soldiers, including photos, on a new touchscreen computer in Royal Tigers' Gallery in the New Walk Museum, Leicester, and launched by the City Council on 28 March 2003. It is an extremely exciting project, and already has over 26,000 former members of the Regiment recorded on the database. However, every former Tiger needs to be on it, some existing details are sketchy, and not enough have photographs. Contact the Area Secretary to ensure your relatives' and your own details are recorded - do not be modest, in future years your family will be very proud of your service in the Regiment. We also need a few volunteers who can offer a few hours of their time each month, at their convenience, to help input the information received onto the computer; again, contact the Area Secretary if you can help.

E-Mailing List

The Association Office does not have an E-mail capability but thanks to a general committee member, urgent news may be passed on by contacting royaltigers@supanet.com. Communication with the Area Secretary still normally needs to be made by letter or telephone.

Regimental Benevolence

During 2002 the Royal Leicestershire Regiment Charitable Fund disbursed £7,253 of Regimental money, and also £3,265 from the ABF, to ex-Tigers and their families. In addition £1,800 was distributed as ABF annuities to ex-soldiers or their widows.

Deaths

Capt J Graff on 23 June 2002, Maj GR Westmoreland on 6 October 2002, Mr TJ Marston on 10 November 2002, Capt AT Buckle on 22 November 2002, Maj RA Wain in February 2003, Mr GA Boss on 30 March 2003, in-pensioner D Wells on 18 April 2003.

Obituary - Mr TJ Marston MBE MSM

Tom Marston died on 10 November 2002. Sometimes in our lives we are lucky enough to meet someone we instinctively admire, someone who makes us feel that life is worth living. Such a man was Tom Marston and all of us who served in the Royal Leicestershire Regiment count ourselves lucky to have soldiered alongside him.

He was born in Loughborough in 1916, the son of one of the Regiment's most famous warriors, also Thomas Marston, who had won no fewer than three Military Medals in the First World War.



TJ Marston MBE MSM.

Tom's father died, undoubtedly as a result of being gassed, when Tom was only six. For his funeral Tom's mother pinned his father's medals on young Tom's chest and one cannot help feeling that this had a life-long effect on Tom. It was, however, a lasting sadness to Tom that he never had a real chance to get to know his father.

Tom joined his father's battalion at the age of 15 and by 1934 he was a Regular. In 1937 he married Ethel, also a child of the Regiment. Tom first saw action in 1938-1939 in Palestine during the Arab Rebellion, and in 1940-45 he was in North Africa fighting in the early desert battles of the Second World War. In 1941 his battalion moved to Crete where Tom and his comrades, all fit young soldiers, found themselves directly under the now famous German parachute landing. Of this Tom said: '...and down came these aeroplanes flying really low, it was awe-inspiring - then somebody shouts 'Look here', and out jumps these paras and they come down so slowly none of them lived, I mean we couldn't miss them. They never got up to sort themselves out.'

From hard fighting in Crete the Battalion was soon back in North Africa, digging in, where they fought in the defence of Tobruk, a battle which changed the course of the desert war. Then via Syria to Ceylon where after almost a year the Battalion was warned for operations as part of Wingate's Chindits. Their task would be to operate far behind Japanese lines to disrupt supply and communications. The training was tough, operations were tougher, but these Leicesters were tough and it was Tigers' columns that led the advance to the River Chindwin behind the Japanese lines, across 5,000ft jungle-clad mountains without tracks. It was a magnificent achievement and drew from Gen Wingate his admiring signal: 'Well done the Leicestershire Regiment, Hannibal eclipsed'. These jungle operations forged a sense of comradeship, a closeness of shared experiences, and an intimate knowledge of comrades which the passing years could not extinguish. These wartime experiences helped to make him the man he was.

In 1944 after much active service Tom Marston was sent back to England to train young soldiers. After the war he was posted to the 1st Battalion with which he went to Hong Kong and Korea when he again saw action, this time as CSM of Support Company. In 1953 Tom was appointed RSM, that year attending the Queen's Coronation Parade. A little later the Battalion was in the Sudan, the last British regiment there, and Tom was responsible for a series of ceremonial parades to mark the handover - all highly organised of course. From Sudan, Tom (his family with him, as always, following the drum) went in 1955 to Cyprus to take part in two and a half years of internal security operations. For his outstanding contribution Tom was appointed a member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire. Then back to England and to Germany for a final tour of duty. Tom's Commanding Officer of that time, Col Mike Pallot, said of him 'Tom Marston was simply splendid, he was the most efficient, competent RSM that any regiment could have had.'

Tom retired from the Army in Germany after 29 years of service with the Tigers, for seven of which he was RSM, and was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal for his unblemished record.

It was men like Tom Marston, whose outstanding wartime service

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led to the Sovereign granting the title 'The Royal Leicestershire Regiment', and it can be no accident that Tom fought in no less than five of the battles and campaigns for which the Regiment was awarded Battle Honours: Sidi Barrani, North Africa, Crete, Chindits and Korea.

In retirement Tom became the landlord of the Loughborough House in Leicester and then the Three Horseshoes in Willoughby on the Wolds, but he remained totally committed to the Regiment. He joined the British Legion and was made a life member in recognition of his services. He became a member of the General Committee of the Royal Tigers' Association in 1968 and its Vice-Chairman in 1977. He also delighted in carrying the Regimental Standard and for 25 years never missed a reunion parade service in the Cathedral. At the time of his death, he had been Vice-Chairman for 25 years. His knowledge of the Regiment's soldiers was encyclopaedic: he could remember not just a man's name and face but usually his company and often his regimental number. As a result Tom made an invaluable contribution to the welfare of our Old Comrades and their families.



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

From: Col GCP Morgan OBE DL, President of the Essex Regiment Association

Maj Dave Gilchrist has now established himself firmly as the Area Secretary at Warley and, as a result of the considerable interest he has taken, the appearance of the headquarters has undergone a complete metamorphosis since his arrival. Much of the building has been redecorated and it is in better order than it has been for many years. Blenheim House is now a credit both to the Army and to the Royal Anglian Regiment. It provided an excellent setting for the Essex Regiment Association to entertain the new Lord Lieutenant of Essex, Lord Petre, the Vice Lord Lieutenant, Mr John Norris, and the High Sheriff, Mr David Boyle, to lunch on 16 January 2003. Prior to lunch our guests had visited the Regimental Museum at Chelmsford and the chapel at Warley. We were very pleased that Maj Alex Beart, Officer Commanding C (Essex) Company of the 1st Battalion, was also able to attend the lunch.

The Colonel of The Regiment spent some hours at Blenheim House in October 2002. His visit was much appreciated by Maj Gilchrist and the staff who would be delighted to welcome any other Royal Anglians who might be in the vicinity.

The appearance of the chapel grounds has been greatly enhanced by the provision of new fencing. A service continues to be held in the chapel at 11am on the first Sunday of every month (except in January when it is on the second Sunday). The services are well attended and members of The Regiment and their families would always be welcome to join the regular congregation.

We were especially pleased to welcome Maj Simon Etherington and all members of A Company of the 2nd Battalion when they visited the Chapel on 10 February 2003 prior to their deployment to Kabul.

Arrangements are in hand for a wreath laying service at the memorial to the Pompadours at Bayeux on 7 June 2003. Maj the Rev Martin Franks has agreed to conduct the service which will be a much lower key occasion than last year when the memorial was unveiled and dedicated. It is anticipated that attendance by members of the Association will be limited to one coach party.

We now have a new in-pensioner at the Royal Hospital at Chelsea, Mr Jimmy Reddell, and it is hoped that he will be able to accompany

the Association party to Bayeux in June. He fought with the Pompadours in Normandy. Mr Alex Colquhoun, who until recently was an in-pensioner, has now left the Royal Hospital for family reasons.

The Essex Regiment Reunion will be held at Warley on Sunday 29 June and the Chaplain General has accepted an invitation to preach at the annual Service of Remembrance on that date. We are looking forward to our annual Salamanca Lunch in the County Hotel at Chelmsford on Friday 18 July and to the 1st Battalion's open day at Pirbright on 14 June.

Gordon Wren is to be congratulated on an outstanding edition of our Association Journal this year. Under his editorship *The Eagle* has gone from strength to strength. We are also indebted to Maj John Hutchings who makes a most valuable contribution as obituaries editor. We are delighted that Gordon, who was a lieutenant in 1 Essex in India, has made a good recovery from heart surgery.

Thurrock Branch

Since my previous article in the December 2002 journal, when we had in June of that year unveiled our Pompadour memorial in Bayeux, things have seemed rather quiet. However, we do not hibernate! In the same month we had our reunion which was well attended and makes you wonder where they all come from. It is great to see everybody.

In July we went to Bassingbourn, which provides an excellent opportunity to meet comrades from other Associations. This year we shall be going to Duxford, which should be a good venue.

We all enjoyed our Salamanca Lunch at the County Hotel in Chelmsford and again it was well attended. The idea of having a mid-day lunch has proved to be very successful and we in the Thurrock Branch have followed suit. Our guests this year were the Mayor of Thurrock, Mr Gordon Barton, and our AO at Warley, Mrs Pauline Goode.

Several of the branch members attended the 4th Essex Comrades Association dinner/dance held at the Warley drill hall and, as always, this was a very good evening. Dinners and socials of other associations in our Borough were also attended.

In November, Remembrance services were attended by some members of the branch. At our Regimental Chapel, two wreaths were laid, the first by Col Geoffrey Morgan OBE DL for the Essex Regiment, and the second by Maj Dave Gilchrist on behalf of the Royal Anglian Regiment.

At the Garden of Remembrance, Westminster, the security was very strict this year, but the garden was packed with comrades. The Queen visited all the Regimental plots. Services were also attended at Orsett and Grays in our own Borough, and Essex Regiment



Our members were delighted to see the newly refurbished bar in the TAC at Warley named the Salamanca Bar by 124 Petroleum Squadron - RLC, to honour the association of the Essex Regiment with the depot at Warley.

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wreaths placed on both war memorials. Our Branch Standard was paraded at the Orsett service. Some members attended their own local memorials.

Our monthly branch meetings bring good numbers and for April we have been invited by the Mayor of Thurrock to have our meeting in the Mayor's Parlour. Also in April the Mayor will be paying an informal visit to the Regimental Museum at Chelmsford and the Regimental Chapel, followed by lunch at Blenheim House.

The month of March has now arrived and the events for the year look very much the same. On the first Sunday, 16 March, the 4th Essex Comrades Association held their Remembrance Service in the Chapel followed by a short march to the drill hall. A number of members of our branch were on parade, together with TA and Cadet personnel.

We are looking forward to 14 June, 'Open Day' with the 1st Battalion the Royal Anglian Regiment at Pirbright. We are grateful for the invitation.

4th Battalion Association

Members and officers have been busy over the last six months attending a variety of functions, commencing in September with a meeting of the Essex Branch of the Royal Anglian Association.

In October we visited E (Essex and Hertfordshire) Company of the East of England Regiment at Chelmsford. The 4th Battalion dinner and dance took place at Warley, followed by a visit to the Royal Hospital, Chelsea. On Wednesday 23 October a party, led by Capt John Youles and including Ted Hazle DCM, Mick Chapman and G Skinner, attended the Service of Thanksgiving to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Battle of El Alamein at Westminster Abbey.

We were at Chelmsford Cathedral for the Service of Remembrance for the Essex Regiment on 5 November followed by the Field of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey. Sunday 10 November saw our annual Parade Service at St Mary's Church, Ilford, followed by

a lunch at the TA Centre at Gordon Fields, provided by 36 Signal Regiment.

The Association actively supports the Regimental Association and we constantly try to strengthen ties with all organisations that support us. Our journal, *Knife, Fork, Spoon*, is issued three times a year and is an important means of communication with our members. The two highlights of the year were certainly the El Alamein Service at Westminster Abbey and our dinner and dance at Warley when 130 people sat down to an excellent meal and a most convivial evening.

We are very grateful for the support of the 124 Petroleum Squadron, Royal Logistics Corps, 751 Troop Royal Corps of Signals and A Company, the Royal Anglian Regiment, Army Cadet Force, all units based at Warley. Our special thanks also go to HQ Squadron, 36 Signals Regiment, our hosts on Remembrance Sunday at Ilford, and to members of 3 Group, North East London Army Cadet Force.

All our activities have come under scrutiny by our committee over the last 12 months with a programme of review in place to ensure their viability in their current format. Changes have been made where necessary and more may well be made in the future to ensure that all functions are financially viable while continuing to retain their originality. It is important that all our members are given the opportunity to meet.

Maj John Lipscombe MC

Maj John Lipscombe MC was awarded a Certificate of Merit, signed by the Colonel of The Royal Anglian Regiment, in recognition of his outstanding service to the 5th Battalion the Essex Regiment. The presentation was made by the President of the Essex Regiment Association, Col Geoffrey Morgan OBE DL.

His wife, Dorothy, was at the presentation together with Old Comrades William 'Buster' Swan DCM, Jack Westwood, Gordon Wilby and Charlie Meakins.



The 4th Battalion's Comrades Council monthly meeting around the table at Blenheim House with Capt John Youles in the Chair and Col Morgan present as guest.

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John Lipscombe originally joined the King's Royal Rifle Corps, (60th Rifles), in 1938 but when commissioned joined the 5th Battalion the Essex Regiment in Italy. Post war he set up a most successful catering business in Essex, still run by his family, and he became deeply involved with the activities of the Essex Regiment Association.

The Royal Anglian Regiment Association (Colchester Branch)



After a most successful first year, the branch moves with confidence into its second, with continuing strong membership and full involvement with Regimental and local events.

The second AGM on 7 March did much good business, the main issues arising being that the present committee would continue (except that Kevin Brett would replace Tony Jones); that the accounts were in good order - sufficient, with external grants, to fund the new Standard and accessories, and also to subsidise events; that the annual subscription would be reduced; that participation in Regimental and branch events for 2003 was discussed and agreed, and finally the announcement that the Branch Standard would be ready from the makers in April.

The design and style of our Standard was the subject of much intense discussion by the committee; all members were most anxious to initiate an emblem which properly mirrored what we are and would be - and something we would be proud to march behind. The committee believes it has achieved those aims, and the illustration shows the Chairman and Secretary with the Standard at its collection from the makers at Skegness on 29 April.

Events for 2003 are:

14 June	Visit to 1st Battalion at Pirbright
12 July	Branch summer function
18 July	Salamanca Lunch at Chelmsford
3 August	Minden Day at Bury St Edmunds
14 September	Regimental Day at Duxford
Sat in October	Branch autumn function
9 November	Remembrance Sunday; Colchester Civic Service
6 or 13 December	Branch Christmas function
Date to be arranged	Consecration Service for Standard

Anyone who would like to join the branch should contact the Secretary, Lt Col (Retd) Brian Davenport, at 36 Catherine Hunt Way, Colchester CO2 9HS, 01206-564919, davenport@colchester1737.freemove.co.uk

Officers of the Branch: Chairman Tony Downes; Treasurer Colin Ladley; Secretary Brian Davenport; Assistant Secretary Alan Swaep; Members Kevin Brett, Winston Browne, Mick Henson, Geordie Pattison. Bob Potter: Ex Officio Rod Allen.



The Northamptonshire Regiment Association And The Royal Anglian Regiment Association (Northamptonshire)

Retirement of Col FAH Swallow OBE as Area Secretary

Col FAH Swallow retired as Area Secretary on 14 March 2003, after seven years serving the Association in Northamptonshire and Leicestershire. Fittingly his last day coincided with a meeting of the management committee, at which he was presented with a farewell gift by the Association President, Gen Sir John Akehurst KCB CBE on behalf of all members.

A Tiger through and through, Col Swallow's secretaryship was universally recognised as the epitome of even-handedness between the two former Regiments, of hard work and of unstinting dedication to all members of the Association whatever their background. We wish he and Mrs Swallow many happy years of fruitful retirement.

Officers' Luncheon

The Officers' Dinner Club held their Annual Lunch on 8 May 2003 when 34 members enjoyed a splendid meal at the Duke of York's Headquarters in London, with Gen Sir John Akehurst presiding. The happy family atmosphere made it another memorable occasion.

Association Annual Reunion

The Annual Reunion will take place on 12 and 13 July 2003. The Annual General Meeting of the Association will be held at the TA Centre, Clare Street, Northampton at 6.30pm on Saturday 12 June, which all members are welcome to attend. This will be followed by the Annual Reunion Dinner at Clare Street at 7-for-7.30pm. On Sunday 13 July the church parade will assemble at Gibraltar Barracks at 10.15am and march to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at for the service at 11am, followed by lunch at Clare Street. Applications for tickets should be made to the Secretary, with return and remittance completed by 4 July at the latest. This will be the last time the Annual Reunion will follow the two-day programme. Members old and new are asked to make every effort to attend.

Peterborough Branch

Peterborough Branch has pursued a full programme. Over 100



Maj Tim Warr with a replica of the railway nameplate.
Picture courtesy Northamptonshire Evening Telegraph.

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members attended the Branch Annual reunion Dinner in October, when the Corps of Drums of the East of England Regiment entertained. 158 (R Anglian) Tpt Regt (V) hosted the AGM in March, and Maj Colin Bingham gave a talk about his Regiment and Squadron. The new CO, Lt Col Simon Dixon, a former Royal Anglian officer, promises to help the branch in every way he can, as his predecessors always have.

Members have enjoyed going to the dogs at the Peterborough Greyhound Stadium and a joint supper evening with the Cambridgeshire Regiment Association. Forthcoming events include a Royal Anglian Day at the TA Centre in London Road on 7 June (1pm to 5pm), a fish and chips barbecue at Whittlesey on 18 July, and the 50th Reunion Dinner on 18 October at which the Band of the East of England Regiment will play.

The branch's Secretary is Mr Noel Muncey, who can be contacted on 01733 205120 or noelmuncey@steelbacks.org.uk.

Finedon Branch

Finedon Branch also goes from strength to strength. The branch paraded for Remembrance Day at Wellingborough in November under command of the Chairman, Maj Tim Warr; Muri Asbrey laid the wreath on behalf of the Regiment; and ladies joined for lunch at the Hind Hotel.

The Hind was also the venue for the Annual Reunion Dinner on 30 November, where the Corps of Drums of the East of England Regiment entertained in addition to a disco and an imaginative performance by the Finedon Branch Ballet School (John Behan, Dave Thornley and Paul Hale), and a presentation made to Maj Warr (see also below). The branch has forged some good relations with Montague Detachment, D Company Royal Anglian ACF, visiting the unit on a drill night, attending a drill competition and presenting a framed picture of all the Former Regiments which make up the Royal Anglian Regiment.

The Branch website - www.poachers.net - went live in November and is generating a great deal of interest, promising a healthy future for branch membership. The next Annual Reunion Dinner is at Wellingborough on 13 December 2003. The Secretary is Mr Ray Ogle on 01933 681525.

'Chuffed' to Bits

Maj Tim Warr, Chairman of the Finedon Branch, retired from the railways on 30 November 2002 after 49 years and 11 months' service. Maj Warr started with British Rail as a cleaner and had a long and varied career, finishing as a manager with Silver Link and on his last day fulfilling a dream by driving a train down to London at 100mph - but the rest of the day caught him unprepared. He was invited to Northampton Station for a Rail Users' Association meeting, during which there was to be a presentation to one of the members. However, the presentation was of course actually for him, and he was duly awarded the great and rare distinction of having a Silver Link train named after him - the Maj Tim Warr - a signal honour indeed for Finedon Branch and above all for Maj Warr himself. The unveiling was carried out by the Mayor of Northampton, Cllr Michael Boss. The train is an electric EMU (three-coach train), number 321427

Benevolence

During 2002 the Northamptonshire Regiment Benevolent Fund disbursed £5,603 of Regimental money and a further £3,565 from the Army Benevolent Fund. In addition, £1,400 was distributed to ex-soldiers and their widows as ABF annuities and £936 as ABF nursing home fees.

Deaths

Maj JA (Donald) Girdwood, 1 October 2002
 Maj Victor Harding TD, 20 March 2003
 Maj R Pike, 22 November 2002
 Capt John H Reddy, October 2002
 Maj Eric P Sharman MC, 2 December 2002
 Capt EF Smith, December 2002
 Capt John H York, 23 December 2002

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- Visit our web site www.rfea.org.uk
- Alternatively contact Head Office at 49 Pall Mall, London SW1Y 5JG or ring 020 7321 2011 or fax 08700 940795.
- Or better still contact our Branch nearest to your Regimental Headquarters - call Ken Ruston in Bury St Edmunds on 01284 700530.

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Finally why not visit our web site?

www.rfea.org.uk

Deaths and Obituaries

WO2 GA Boss



WO2 GA Boss died 30 March 2003 aged 58. George Boss enlisted into the Army as a Junior Leader in August 1959 and then joined the Royal Leicestershire Regiment. He eventually joined the Pompadours, leaving the Army in May 1987.

In November 1995 he was appointed museum attendant of the newly established Regimental Museum at Duxford. With his vast knowledge of the Regiment and his infectious enthusiasm he soon became well known not only to members of the Regiment but also to the

thousands of visitors to the Imperial War Museum. Officially, he was responsible for maintaining the Regimental Collection but in practice he did so much more. He became an expert on all aspects of our Regiment's history and spent hours in his small office collating archives and answering queries on Regimental matters from members of the public, many of whom lived abroad. Nothing was too much trouble for him and he soon became something of a 'legend' within the Regiment. To George it was not just a job, it was his hobby.

His funeral service took place at Little Gransden Church on 8 April. The great number that attended was testimony to his popularity and the esteem in which he was held by members of the Regiment.

We extend our sympathy to his wife, Patricia.

Lt Col KJ Hoile MBE

Keith Hoile was born in Singapore. As a soldier's son he was schooled in England and Egypt before completing his education at what was then the Nautical College, Pangbourne. He left the college and entered the Merchant Navy as a deck apprentice in oil tankers in 1944 at the tender age of 16. He served in Shell tankers for nearly two years before becoming disillusioned with the sea as a career.

Ineligible for National Service as a result of his war service, he enlisted as a regular soldier in the Essex Regiment in 1946 and was commissioned to the Regiment from Sandhurst two years later. He left the Regiment in Minden and served for two years with the 1st Battalion the King's African Rifles in Malaya before rejoining the Regiment for Korea. He remained with the Battalion in Hong Kong for a short time before taking up a staff appointment in Singapore during the troubles of 1956. Rejoining the Battalion in BAOR he became a 3rd East Anglian on amalgamation and later a 3rd Royal Anglian. With these battalions he served in Berlin, Tidworth and Aden.

He served in a number of staff appointments before entering the public relations field in the early sixties. This took him to Cyprus, Naples where he served on the AFSOUTH staff, Hong Kong where he was responsible for turning Army PR into a Joint Services organisation and Singapore covering the ANZUK force. He was made an MBE in 1972 for these services and later served as GSO 1 at HQ 1st British Corps where he was responsible for planning the coverage of the Queen's Silver Jubilee review of the Army in Germany.

He retired in 1979, moved to Scotland, and worked as a public relations Officer for the National Health Service in Aberdeen. During his retirement he spent much of his time sailing on the west coast of Scotland, visiting his small pueblo in the south of Spain and touring in his camper van.

He leaves Pauline his beloved partner for the last 22 years of his life, his son and daughter Martin and Carol, his extended family of Nick, Simon and Tim, four grandchildren, four adopted grandchildren and his former partner Gerti, who was with him during his military service.

LCpl Matt Saunders



LCpl Matt Saunders was tragically killed in a hit and run accident in the early hours of Sunday 3 November 2002 while returning home from a party in a local pub. Matt, who was 23, was enjoying an unexpected weekend at home following the last minute cancellation of the latest firemen's strike.

Matt was born in Cambridge on 8 March 1979 and from an early age expressed an interest in the armed forces. He enlisted in to the Army in April 1996, and after completing his initial training in October 1996 he joined the Vikings while they were based at Oakington. The majority of the Battalion were deployed on a six-month tour of Belfast and it no doubt frustrated Matt, with his enthusiasm for his role, that he remained on rear party and missed the deployment.

It was not long before the Vikings returned and Matt settled fully into life with the Battalion. During the next few years he took part in exercises in Kenya and Canada, as well as a two-year operational tour in Londonderry. Over this time Matt gained a reputation as a keen, committed soldier who was completely dedicated to his job and to the Regiment.

It was while in Londonderry that he was selected to attend a potential NCOs' cadre, which he successfully passed. As well as this Matt had gained good passes on several signals courses that also qualified him for promotion. He was duly promoted in early 2002, shortly before he deployed on his second operational tour with the Vikings, to Afghanistan. In these most testing of conditions his ability as both a soldier and commander were consistently displayed, and his courage and compassion were evident throughout the tour. Matt's passion for photography meant that a camera was never far from his hands, and he managed to compile an outstanding visual record of Kabul.

LCpl Saunders will be remembered by both friends and colleagues as a trustworthy and reliable individual who wasn't afraid to defend his or others' principles. Like all young soldiers he wasn't faultless, yet he never failed to rise to the challenges placed before him with the determination and interest that characterised his time in the army. As well as a professional soldier, he was a solid friend and loving son and brother. For such a promising young life to be cut short is a sad loss to all who knew him.

Raymond Benjamin Watts

Raymond Benjamin Watts died 18 January 2000 in Pengelly, Western Australia. He joined the Royal Norfolks in August 1944 and subsequently served with 1 East Anglian Regiment and the 1st Battalion the Royal Anglian Regiment in Aden at Celle.

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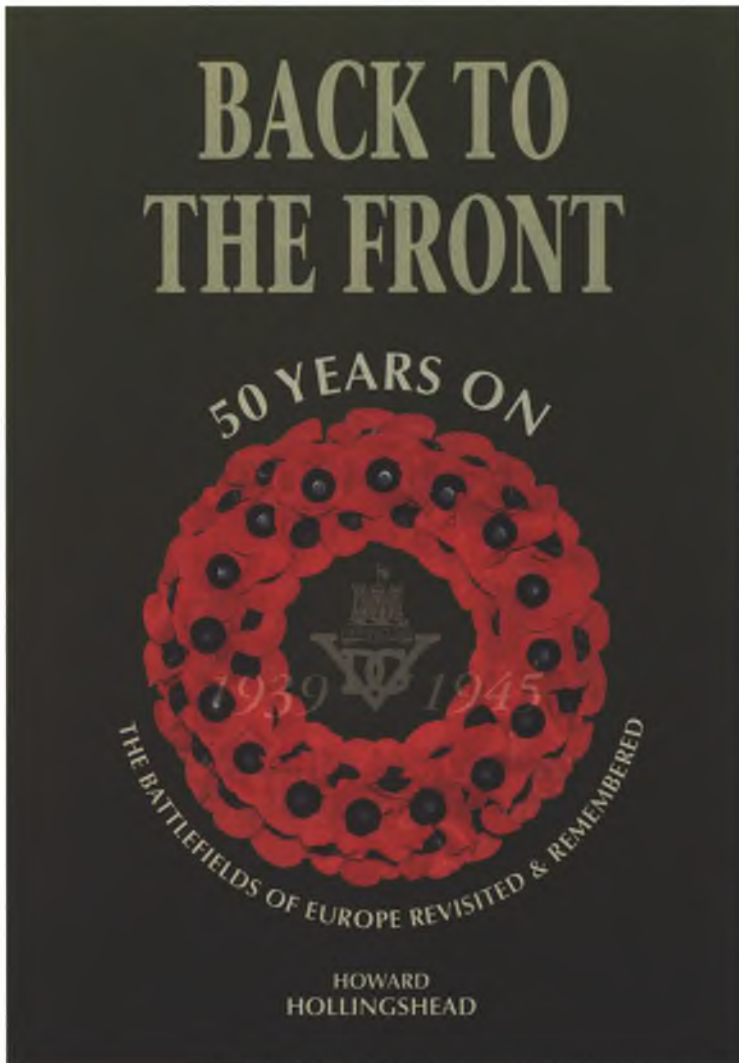
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