



03/08

ROYAL ANGLIAN NEWS

MAR 08

CAPTAIN DC HICKS MC: MEMORIAL SERVICE

1. The Memorial Service for Captain David Hicks MC is to be held at 1130 Hrs on Sat 19 Apr 08 in Oundle School Chapel. The Regimental Family are most welcome and those who plan to attend are requested to inform the Regimental Point of Contact (Adjt 1st Battalion, Capt Andy Wilde (Tel: 01483 798255; Email Andrew.Wilde850@mod.uk) of their intention to do so soonest. Dress for serving members will be Service Dress / Leathers / Medals. For others, dark suit and Regimental / Battalion tie is deemed appropriate. Any queries should be addresses to Captain Wilde.

APPOINTMENTS INCLUDING A PROMOTION

2. The Regiment is delighted to note the following appointment / promotion:

- Maj (to Lt Col) R F L Lyne from HS Course ACSC 11 to SO1 G3 Ops Sp 1(UK) Div(UK) wef Apr 08

APPOINTMENTS

3. The following appointments have been announced:

- Maj S C Worthy from Coy Comd 2 R ANGLIAN to SO2 G3 Media Ops HQ 5 Div wef 08/08 tbc.
- Maj J D Carnegie from Trg Maj BUOTC to SO2 Trg(B) BPST, South Africa, wef 07/08 tbc.
- Maj J D Hughes has been extended in the post of SO2 BOWTAG(G) Land Warfare Development Group, Sennelager.
- Maj (LE) D McCrum from SO2 J4(MAC Proj Man) HQ BF Cyprus to Permanent President, Army Boards of Inquiry, DPS(A) Edinburgh, wef 08/08 tbc.
- Maj A W Price from Trg Maj Bermuda Regt to COS Individual Capability Gp, DGLE, Abbey Wood wef 09/08 tbc.
- Maj A J Wadman from SO2 G7 Trg Plans HQ LWCTG(G) to SO3 G3 (GLO) 13 Sqn RAF Marham wef 07/08 tbc.
- Capt (for A/Maj) P C Moxey from Ops/Trg Offr 1 R ANGLIAN to SO2 MA2/MGO DCI(A) MOD wef 02/08 tbc.

- Capt A K Dart R ANGLIAN from OC 615 TACP(FAC) to ADSO ASDC(P) Pirbright wef 10/08 tbc.

BATTALION ACTIVITIES

4. 1st Battalion

The focus for the month has been the Driver and Commander cadres for Bulldog and CVR(T). The two week Bulldog courses are being run by the DMIs at Mons Barracks in Aldershot and have been successful. We are now very keen to use the vehicles on exercise to see exactly what they can do and how they may be employed throughout the training year, especially on TESEX.

The Battalion has hosted some high level visits, notably the new Brigade Commander, Brigadier Cullen, for his first look at the Battalion, and ACGS, who wanted some grass roots opinion. The Battalion continued with the post tour public events, with several company level parades and presentations. Several members of the Battalion went to the launch of the Regimental Museum Appeal. The Commanding Officer gave a presentation to the invited guests and memorabilia that was captured during the tour was handed over to the Museum. Over 80 all ranks have also been invited to lunch with the Poulterers in Armourer's Hall, London, to discuss their experiences in Afghanistan and to watch Pte Woollard being presented with the annual Poulterers' Prize.

There was still time for Inter Company orienteering and rugby competitions. Both events generated great competition, unearthing some real talent which had not previously been tapped. The hope is that there will be time to develop both Battalion teams before pre-deployment training starts for 2009. A Company won the orienteering and D Company won the rugby. Next on the sporting calendar are the golf competition played in Colchester (including a match against the Viking Veterans), boxing, athletics and cricket.

A (Norfolk) Company

The highlight of this month has been the Freedom Parade in King's Lynn, where the Company was very warmly welcomed by the people of the Borough. All ranks of the Company have especially appreciated the support of the Royal Norfolk Regimental Association and enjoyed the chance to exchange stories with our predecessors. Every soldier savours such opportunities which serve to reinforce our immense pride in the history and traditions that we continue today.

On the sporting front the Company has had success in both orienteering and rugby. In the Inter Company Competition, some sterling performances led to a convincing victory in orienteering whilst on the rugby field, although the tournament was eventually won by D Company, the Company did beat both of the other rifle companies: a moral, if not total, victory.

This month has also seen the majority of the Company rotating through Bulldog Driver and Commander courses. This has been the first time that the crews have had hands on the vehicles which, after some initial difficulties, seem to be performing well. One anecdote from a recent course did raise a smile: on a road move, whilst stuck in traffic in Frimley, Lt

Harry Willies looked down from his Bulldog and noticed an elderly gentleman with a walking stick hobbling past. When he saw Lt Willies he stopped and said 'You know I was trained to drive one of these in 1962, didn't know that you still had them'. Lt Willies assured him that although it looked like an FV432 it was, of course, a completely different vehicle...

B (Suffolk) Company

While there has not been any major activity this month, the CSM, WO2 Self, has been keen to have the Company training at all opportunities and so early morning runs and circuits of ever increasing intensity have been the order of the day. The JNCOs and officers have been ensuring that basic skills are not forgotten. The Company has been out on the training area honing their map reading skills in anticipation of their annual tests (this also allowed Lt Howes the opportunity to pick out his elite team for the Inter Company Orienteering!). In addition to this our signallers have been running insight and revision periods and the Skill at Arms instructors have been keeping the Company's weapon drills sharp.

The Company has also been preparing for Battalion sports. CSgt Shand had his rugby team out training in the mud and the rain in preparation for the Inter Company competition on 19 March. Despite the limited training time the Company produced some pleasing results, even if we were not able to stop D Company from snatching victory. The Company boxers, under Lt Driver, Capt Seal-Coon and Cpl Blackley, are slowly becoming accustomed to the 0600 hrs starts and the hard work and conditioning involved.

March saw the first of the Company's drivers and commanders undertake the new Bulldog courses. These upgraded AFV 432s will be the Battalion's new battle taxis and so the Company is keen to ensure as many of the soldiers as possible are trained before TESEX begins. Undoubtedly new tactics and Standard Operating Procedures will need to be developed, but B Company will be at the forefront.

The Company was also pivotal in running Exercise Viking Spirit with help from D Company. This was an 'open day' where recruits from Catterick and potential recruits from the Armed Forces Careers Offices spent time at Pirbright. They had the opportunity to meet the soldiers, to look at our kit and equipment and to have a go on the ranges with the SA80A2. The day was a success and, hopefully, we have gained a few new recruits to join the Viking ranks.

C (Essex) Company

Since the last newsletter the Company has continued its focus on Bulldog conversion and career courses which has split the vast majority to the four corners of the Earth. The Company has also taken part in a number of ceremonial events: firstly, in Thurrock, a Welcome Home Parade was conducted on 28 February which included a short march past and inspection followed by a reception. There was a touching moment after the inspection when the Councillors assembled and welcomed all ranks into the Council Chamber to a standing ovation. After a few short speeches accompanied by a slideshow from the tour, the beer and wine taps were opened and the food laid out for the men of the Company to join the Councillors for a buffet meal. Despite the short nature of the parade, the Company seemed to have worked up an enormous appetite and a good time was had by all.

A similar reception was laid on by Brentwood Council on 1 March after the Company exercised its Freedom of the Borough, with drums beating, Colours flying and bayonets fixed. Our thanks to both towns for making us feel so welcome. The month has not been without its sadness however and it was an honour to have been invited to the memorial service of Mr Jimmy Reddell at The Regimental Chapel Warley before the parade. Jimmy was the oldest surviving member of the Essex Regiment and had served during World War One. He was also an active member of Brentwood Council until he retired and moved into The Royal Hospital Chelsea. He will be sorely missed by many and the thoughts of the Company are with his family.

The last event was a Presentation on OP HERRICK 6 by the Commanding Officer to Essex County Council in Chelmsford, to which all ranks of C Company were also invited. Again a buffet was arranged with plenty of fluids to accompany the food and the soldiers did their very best to re-hydrate their bodies with the ample quantities provided, while engaging the councillors with stories of far-off places. The reception was very warm indeed and again, our thanks to the Council for organising it.

A few farewells this month: the CSM, WO2 Pete Ramm, is due to leave very shortly, being replaced by WO2 Clark. Lts Tom Clark and Sam Perrin are also coming to the end of their tenure and are off to ITC (Catterick) and A Company respectively. Lastly, Sgt Matt Waters is off to a recruiting post in Cambridge.

D (Cambridgeshire) Company

March has been a busy time for the support weapons platoons; training new men in their support roles during the cadres, re-balancing for the training year and, of course, March means MATTs. The Mortar Platoon spent a week on Salisbury Plain with 19 Regiment, Royal Artillery conducting joint live firing. It was a very good opportunity for the new members of the Platoon to experience firing all types of ammunition whilst confirming the strong bonds formed over the last few years. The Machine Gun Platoon travelled to Otterburn for some practice drills in a cold climate. The Javelin Platoon moved en masse to the Javelin Wing at the Support Weapons' School in Warminster where, as there was not a course running, the Platoon used the Wing for a two week cadre, using all of the facilities available to great effect. The Recce Platoon have continued the CVR(T) Driver and Commander cadres throughout the month, ensuring that the likes of the Mortar and CIS platoons have enough qualified personnel when training begins.

Many potential JNCOs from D Company have also completed the NCOs cadre and are waiting to find out what the results are. With some quality training conducted and many soldiers involved in courses and cadres, D Company should be well prepared for TESEX.

Headquarter Company

The Company has been at the forefront of the sporting activities this month. Despite a weakened team and with limited training, the Company put in a fine performance in the orienteering competition. Special mention must go to the QM(T), Capt Tim Jones, who won the overall event, showing that experience still counts for a lot. The rugby team was also relatively successful, coming third in the competition. They had the beating of all the companies, but age and a lack of mobility told in the end, with the final game against C Company being "a game too far".

The Company has remained busy with everyday work. The LAD and MT are working flat out to keep the vehicle fleet on the road, while moving to the new JAMES system. The CIS Platoon has been busy with communication cadres and supporting Battalion training. Throughout all of this the OC and CSM have been keen for everybody to complete their MATTs, even if this did include taking over other Companies' range days and blistering them onto PFTs and BCFTs.

5. 2nd Battalion

The training and preparation for our forthcoming tour to IRAQ has now gathered pace. The Poachers have continued to build on their individual and subunit training carried out in February. The Battle Group has spent much of March in Sennelager (STC) on our Confirmation Test Exercise (CFX), run by OPTAG Germany and coordinated and planned by an ex-Poacher, Major John Wright.

The two and a half week period in STC started with a two day period practicing convoy drills and planning at Battle Group level in the Combined Arms Tactical Trainer. The computer generated environment, unencumbered by resource limitations of kit and equipment, allowed the Battle Group to practise for the first time road moves and Standard Operating Procedures at sub-unit level.

The Battle Group then began a five day range package. The aim of this was to field fire up to and including multiple level, fire specialist weapons specific to Theatre and conduct a sweep up of mandatory shoots. Many of the ranges were supported by external Permanent Range Teams from across Germany, whilst the remainder were self supported. 2 Logistical Support Regiment also joined us for the live firing phase; this produced some novel training experiences, such as having to fire an APWT with 75 soldiers who had never used a SUSAT before!

The facilities at STC are excellent; the field firing opportunities allowed soldiers to conduct complex, difficult and demanding live shoots. Many of the scenarios were designed specifically to test commanders in situations that have been faced in IRAQ. This was coupled with other training practises such as grenade throwing, the employment of the red phosphorous grenade, baton gun shoots and practise on the new 'Sig' pistol. The Battle Group also had the opportunity to conduct night live firing up to multiple level.

The third phase of the training exercise was the CFX, designed for the Commanding Officer to test and train his Battle Group sub units. The exercise began by moving into Theatre Barracks, an area designed to replicate the Contingency Operating Base in IRAQ. This allowed us to test procedures that we will employ on deployment, such as immediate action to indirect fire and sentry and gate drills reacting to suicide bombers.

D Company has continued to prepare for their role as the Brigade Surveillance Company and have now deployed back to Lydd and Hythe in the UK for their six week course. Preparation for this included numerous other courses, including photography and search. This was coupled with more traditional training to improve fitness and shooting. These courses built on the long tradition of expertise in surveillance within D Company, with the veterans of the Close Observation Platoon in Northern Ireland providing depth of knowledge to the task ahead.

The middle of the month saw most of the Battalion fallen out on their Easter leave, which may also become their pre-deployment leave as well. Most of the soldiers have taken this opportunity to return to the UK to see family and friends. Some more adventurous types used the time to explore Europe a little more...

6. 3rd Battalion

March began and ended with BOWMAN Conversion Training. The Battalion is now fully trained in BOWMAN VHF and has used the system on a Battle Group FTX, which was observed by BOWTAG. However, if it were not for the extra equipment loaned to the Battalion by the Vikings, it is unlikely that the CO's plan would have been achievable.

The FTX mentioned above was Ex STEELBACK DEFENDER II, which was a Battle Group FTX based in Imber Village over 14 – 16 March and focused on Urban Ops. The exercise started with the Battle Group preparing Imber for defence; then defending and withdrawing from the village under heavy attack from MCTC inmates. Following orders, the Battle Group conducted a 12 Km night insertion and retook the village at dawn on Sunday. The most memorable part of the weekend however, was not the training but the exceptionally wet weather, with constant rain for the whole deployment and most of the re-entrants on the Plain turning into rivers.

The Battalion entered a team into the 49 (East) Brigade SAAM and with little training came away with the Runners Up Medals. All credit should go to Major Mark Scaddon, who was the non-firing Team Captain and to Lieutenant Tom Wopat who was the Team Leader. Congratulations also to Cpl Bunn and LCpl West who won the LMG Match.

On 8 March, the Battalion played host to the annual TA Past and Present Officers' Dinner Club in Bury St Edmunds. This proved to be a most enjoyable evening and there was an excellent turn out this year from serving officers. Next years' Dinner is already being planned for 14 March 09.

On 10/11 March the CO and Adjt visited the 21 soldiers deployed with the Poachers on OPTAG training in Sennelager. To a man they were having a great time and had been made extremely welcome by the Poachers. All were fulfilling worthwhile jobs with the soldiers deployed as follows: 9 to A Company, 6 to B Company and 6 to C Company. They are now on well deserved Easter Leave and when they return they will be joined by a further 3 volunteers.

March has also seen all companies come under the microscope from Battalion HQ in the guise of the CO's Inspections. These consist of a one day visit with Battalion Staff who examine all G 1 – 9 areas. There were a number of minor points in most companies, but on the whole there were no disasters. Battalion HQ itself can now look forward to the 49 (East) Bde AAU Inspection on 8 April.

Finally, sport, and in particular TA Football. In late February, Pte Partridge, of E Company, attended trials for the TA Football Team. Not only did he get selected, but he was appointed Team Captain and is now leading the team on a one week tour of Germany.

The key event in April will be the start of the COIN training period, which begins with a Train the Trainer weekend in Swynnerton on 4 - 6 April and concludes with Annual Camp in September.

Editor's Note: The last edition of the Royal Anglian News was incorrectly numbered and dated. It should have been numbered 02/08 and dated Feb 08. Apologies for any confusion.