



03/12

ROYAL ANGLIAN NEWS

MAR 12

## **APPOINTMENTS**

1. Regimental Headquarters has been informed of the following officer posting:

Lt Col ACE Marinos from SO1 Cap Core ACQ HQ Inf Cap to SO1 Ops/MST Comd and Influence at DLW Warminster wef Jan 13.

Capt JA Perring from SO3 G7(A) SWS to GLO RAF Marham wef 1 Oct 12

Capt AK Luff from 1 R ANGLIAN to RMAS wef 1 Aug 12

2. **1<sup>ST</sup> BATTALION**

After the blur of activity that February seemed to be during the final phases of Mission Specific Training (MST), March has seen the Battalion very much focussed on the business of deployment. The Quartermaster's teams have been working exceptionally hard behind the scenes, making sure that while the final training was ongoing, boxes were being packed and freight sent on its way. Their considerable efforts have made for a seamless transition from a period of fast paced training to an operational deployment within a matter of days. Notwithstanding this level of activity, we have been fortunate within 12<sup>th</sup> Mech Bde to have maintained a clear two week block of pre-tour leave in early March, during which all but one of the companies have been able to put work to one side and spend time with family and friends. C (Essex) Company are on a slightly delayed timeline, but will still enjoy two weeks of leave.

After consecutive operational deployments in 2005, 2007 and 2009-10, one could easily fall into the trap of thinking that the Battalion has been through this several times before and therefore this is now run of the mill activity. This is true for the NCOs and most of the officers, amongst whom there are certainly some salty characters, but for 45% of the Battalion Op HERRICK 16 will be their first experience of operations. Moreover, the statistics reveal that over 95% of the privates in the rifle companies will be deploying for the first time; indeed for many this will be their first extended period away from the UK. This is quite remarkable and says much about the current turnover in the Army; but it also reminds us that for many soldiers and their families March has been a particularly stressful time. Investing in the preparation of our families to mitigate against this has been a key part of our collective preparation and, with the well attended Battalion Open Day, outreach briefings, briefing packs and the fantastic work of the Viking Family Support Group ([www.VikingFSG.co.uk](http://www.VikingFSG.co.uk)), this has been achieved to a level that we have not seen before. The Unit Welfare Officer, Capt Lee Jay, should rightly take the credit; he has worked tirelessly to make this happen. However, while we are away, I would ask that the families left at home are kept in mind by the wider Regimental Family as much as those who are deployed.

As the companies filter into theatre through the end of March and beginning of April, the final polish on their training will be added by RSOI. The Camp Bastion Training Centre is a far cry from the desert ranges we knew in 2007. The Camp is now so large that, as well as encompassing an airport busier than London Stansted, it includes a full mock up of an Afghan village and surrounding training area – all behind the wire! Nothing could beat this for realism; especially when added to this are the actual conditions, temperatures, sights, smells and in-theatre only equipment. It all makes

for a valuable final training opportunity to make sure the team is ready when it hits the ground.

At the time of writing our handover from 3 SCOTS in Nad-e-Ali is well on track and, more broadly, Op HERRICK 16 has been set up very well by the efforts of its predecessors. By the middle of April all of the Viking elements will have taken their place in the Line and Nad-e-Ali will be under the Battalion's watch.

### 3. 2<sup>ND</sup> BATTALION

The Poachers have enjoyed an active period over March in which a colourful range of objectives and events have ensured that no-one has been found lacking of things to do or activities to take part in.

A Company continue to provide the security of the British Forces Cyprus communication and radar installations at RAF Akrotiri and Mt Troodos. With their hand-over to B Company coming at the end of the month, they are excelling in their consistent and reliable delivery of a hard working and diligent security force that the island can rely on. Although temperatures in Dhekelia are now steadily rising back towards a Mediterranean spring and summer (the die-hard sun-bathers have already been spotted on the beaches), sufficient snow and ice still remains on top of Mt Troodos to give the skiers of the Company their last opportunities to enjoy the sport whilst in Cyprus.

Following their success on Ex PROGRESSIVE TIGER, B Company have taken the lead on military education for the Battalion by providing a dynamic and well choreographed Battlefield Study Day to expose members of all ranks, from LCpl upwards, to the challenges that the modern day Infantry Company faces to replenish itself in the field. Taking the audience through the different techniques of supplying troops on foot, by vehicle and in buildings and showing them the scale of such operations with life-sized demonstrations, the day was an eye-opening and well received presentation. B Company have since continued their educational quest and run a battlefield tour following the Royal Leicestershire Regiment's exploits in Crete in World War II, which they will be on until the end of the month.

Once again C Company have been called on to assist in the development of the wider British Army, this time by headlining the Battalion's support to Ex GRIM WARRIOR, a gruelling four week long test exercise for new platoon commanders joining the Infantry. On the Western side of the island, C Company soldiers have swollen the size of this exercise and undertaken variously roles as individual soldiers in the new platoon commanders' sections, conventional and irregular enemy forces and even civilians caught up in the battlefield. With the Poachers' natural enthusiasm for inspiration and originality, the men of C Company are doing a fine job of making the young officers' training as varied, colourful and memorable as possible.

The Falkland Islands Resident Infantry Company (FIRIC) has been held by D Company for some weeks now and they are rapidly building up their knowledge and good reputation in the Islands. As well as the very successful live-fire training that each weapons platoon is working their way through, the Cpls and LCpls are also taking their men out on long-range patrols across the island lasting several days. These patrols are seen as the real test of the soldiers skills as they call for a level of determination and robustness that is rarely demanded in routine training, with soldiers living for the entire duration on just what they can carry in their 80kg bergens.

In Headquarters Company, the Signals Platoon enjoyed their first major run out of the year when they built the Battlegroup Headquarters complex from which the Battalion Second-In-Command will run the Battalion in Kenya. With all the communication and IT equipment working, they are looking forwards to using it for the first time in the upcoming Ex POACHERS PLUNGE in May.

The Battalion's sporting spirit has been kept buoyant by our triumph in two outstanding events. The Dhekelia Station Charity Dinner Boxing night gave the champions of the Inter-Company competition the opportunity to demonstrate their fine talent against fighters from around the island. Meanwhile

the Battalion Football Team won the Cyprus FA Cup final against RAF Akrotiri in a resounding 3-1 victory. Looking wider, the support and welfare provided to the Battalion and Garrison reached a milestone this month when the Dhekelia Garrison Church celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

Throughout March, the soldiers and families of the Poachers have remained happy and upbeat that the steps they are taking in preparation for the Unit Move and our deployment to Kenya are gaining momentum and achieving results. As the temperatures continue to grow in Cyprus, so do our hopes and enthusiasm for next month.

#### 4. **3<sup>RD</sup> BATTALION**

##### **Operations:**

March has seen the deployment of the 30 man Steelback cohort with the Vikings on HERRICK 16, and I am sure I speak for all when I wish them an interesting tour and a safe return. The Bn have arranged a number of open days whilst the troops are away in which families will be able to ask questions and seek any support they require. We have been further helped by Capt Lee Jay, Welfare Officer 1 Royal Anglian, who very kindly came and briefed families during this month.

In response to a short notice trawl and with a turnaround of less than 2 weeks, the Bn mobilised a further 3 individuals to deploy onto Op TOSCA - from Norwich to Nicosia in less than a month! These fortunate individuals will provide the instruction on the AT package run by 29 Regiment - so not only will they garner some great tans, but also a wealth of AT qualifications to boot.

Further clarity over the Bn role in Op OLYMPICS has now been found and, with our names on the list for the access-all-areas passes, it is only a matter of time before the QM is found camping out on Horse Guards. On a serious note, the Bn has now mobilised the lion share of both a 1 and 3 month commitment and, including permanent staff, the burden is almost on a par with TOSCA; a sterling effort for what is currently the most mobilised unit in the Reserve. We are also in the fortunate position of being able to provide the commanders of both commitments and, in majors Dickson and Rushmere, we have individuals who are setting an example as Reservists who are willing to step up to the mark and be judged alongside their Regular counterparts.

##### **Training:**

With spring firmly sprung and the first days of March feeling more like the end of May, the Battalion has been enjoying some quality activity in the great outdoors. The LAD / REME section took part in EX POLAR BLUEBELL, a skills competition designed to test both their technical and soldiering ability. On a more cerebral level, the Bn held a study day at Grantham which was both well attended and saw some genuinely good ideas as to how we need to tailor training to remain competent in the contemporary operating environment.

The training highlight of the month was the Bn exercise, STEELBACK HORIZON, held on STANTA training area. Inside a Battle Group construct, two composite companies were put through their paces in a demanding exercise looking for confirmation of CT 1 training. The weekend involved a high tempo of operations, against an agile and proactive enemy, designed to replicate the more kinetic end of the spectrum of conflict. After a number of recces, ambushes and a sequenced withdrawal, it would be fair to say that team, section and platoon level patrol skills had been comprehensively tested. All levels of the chain of command were involved in the training and A1 Echelon, the RAP and LAD were also deployed forward to ensure that they could fulfil their role in field conditions.

The final training event of the month was the 'Zen Challenge' - brainchild of LCpl Edwards - a 42 mile, two day, march from Bury St Edmunds to Chelmsford. The event was an excellent way for HQ Coy to say goodbye to LCpl Edwards and for E Coy to welcome him into the fold and it saw a large

amount of both public interest and support. We did, however, suffer one injury - with WO1 (RSM) Hopkins' little toe being the casualty.

**People:**

March saw us bid a sad farewell to Capt Chris Tate, PSAO HQ Coy, whose time as a Royal Anglian has been briefly and very definitely temporarily interrupted by employment for 6 AAC. We wish him the very best in his future employment and look forward to his return.