



4. The 1st Battalion, accompanied by the Band of the Prince of Wales Division, will conduct Homecoming Parades over the period 5 - 9 November. Each day the parades will take place at around 1230 hrs (TBC) and the broad outline programme is as follows:

- Mon 5 Nov: Ipswich
- Tue 6 Nov: Havering
- Wed 7 Nov: Diss
- Thu 8 Nov: Basildon
- Fri 9 Nov: Peterborough

5. **1<sup>ST</sup> BATTALION**

May has been a busy month for the Vikings with the tempo of operations remaining high in the District of Nad-e-Ali. As the labour intensive and lucrative opium harvest comes to an end in late April, the month of May has traditionally featured a large spike in insurgent activity as the fighters return to work.

In the insurgent world this increase in activity is as much about announcing their presence as the material effects of their actions and is described within ISAF circles as the 'Spring Demonstration'. For the Battalion, May has therefore revolved heavily around suppressing the 'Spring Demonstration' in order to maintain the Afghan people's confidence in security. It was no time to relax the pace and the companies, together with their Afghan Security Force partners, have continued their considerable efforts in disrupting the insurgency.

In the area of Kopak North, C (Essex) Company has maintained its very close relationship with the local Afghans which has borne tangible fruit this month. In a string of operations the Company has found and removed over 20 weapon systems, 1500 rounds of ammunition, 17 grenades and a significant quantity of IED parts. The return of *Winthrop Theory* has contributed to this success, stoking the nostalgia of the older hands with Northern Ireland experience.

A (Norfolk) Company has been all over the District as the mobile operations company and has had significant success in striking the central nodes of the insurgent network. The results of a helicopter assault on the 17<sup>th</sup> May were widely featured in the national press and included a haul of over 50kg of home made explosive and 90kg of opium with a street value of £30,000.

Meanwhile B (Suffolk) Company has been in the lead for transitioning its area to Afghan control. After the formal handover of security responsibility to the Afghan authorities, the Company has moved out of its final two patrol bases in the South - PBs SILAB and KALAANG - and into FOB SHAWQAT. The handover of PB SILAB to Afghan forces in what is now a prosperous and secure area is of particular significance for the Battalion in light of the efforts and sacrifices that C (Essex) Company made there on Operation HERRICK 11 in 2009-10. Seeing this area move from a war torn battle ground, featuring daily hard fought contacts and littered with IEDs, to the peaceful rural community that it is today, is an encouraging sign of local progress.

Back in Bulford the Welfare Officer and his team have been working hard to keep those left at home in good spirits. As well as the many varied events being run, a handful of soldiers and their families enjoyed the privilege of attending HM The Queen's Diamond Jubilee Parade at Windsor Castle. The working routine for the Rear Ops Group (ROG) has been busy as this month has featured a number of mandatory inspections as well as a welcome influx of new soldiers from ITC Catterick. These new Vikings are likely to deploy over the coming months. Finally this month, the ROG enjoyed hosting visits from both the Colonel and Deputy Colonel of the Regiment whose personal interests in their activities were very gratefully received.

To keep up with the Vikings on Op HERRICK 16 please go to the following web sites:

[www.facebook.com/1RANGLIAN](http://www.facebook.com/1RANGLIAN)

[www.twitter.com/1\\_Royal\\_Anqlian](http://www.twitter.com/1_Royal_Anqlian)

## 6. 2<sup>ND</sup> BATTALION

For the first time since February The Poachers have been back together in Cyprus this month where training and operational commitments have continued unabated and preparations for our return to the UK and 7<sup>th</sup> Armoured Brigade have continued to increase.

The first real signs of our imminent incorporation into 7<sup>th</sup> Armoured Brigade have been seen with a visit from over a dozen Royal Engineers from 39 Assault Engineer Squadron (AES) who flew in from Hohne Garrison, Germany, to join the Battalion for three weeks of training together. 39 AES will be the Engineer Squadron that joins The Poachers for our exercise in Kenya later this year and a firm friendship has already begun between all ranks.

A (Lincolnshire) Company and C (Northamptonshire & Rutland) Company both provided a strong training focus for the month by delivering two study days to the Battalion. Soldiers and NCOs from A Company delivered an engaging and eye-opening stand on the casualty evacuation procedure, from the point of wounding all the way back the field hospital; while their counterparts in C Company taught the intricacies of combined arms obstacle crossings and the incorporation of soldiers from 39 AES into a Company Advance. Both stands were informative and educational to commanders at all levels and will pay dividends when their lessons are employed in Kenya later this year.

B (Leicestershire) Company joined A Company for further training when they deployed for a week on Exercise POACHERS PLUNGE. Aimed at delivering training to the platoons in offensive operations and combined armed tactics at the lowest level, the week provided a rewarding learning curve on the demands that can be expected from such training in future. While robust and hard work at times, it was nevertheless a strong starting point to launch future exercises from for all those involved.

This month also saw the return of D (Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire) Company from their leave period after a successful tour of the Falkland Islands last month. The men of Anzio Platoon and Burma Platoon – as Fire Support Group (FSG) A Company and FSG B Company will now be know – came straight back into the thick of it by deploying with A and B Company on Exercise POACHERS PLUNGE, followed by ceremonial practice in preparation of HM The Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations. Cambrai Platoon (formerly FSG C Company) will enjoy their first exercise back with the Battalion next month.

May has also been a month of successes for individual soldiers. The Training Wing ran a demanding Fire Team Commanders Week which in fact lasted into two weeks. The aim was to select and prepare private soldiers for attendance on the Fire Team Commanders Course (FTCC) run in Brecon, Wales, which will qualify them for promotion to Lance Corporal. 15 dedicated soldiers made the grade and are now training in Brecon where we wish them every success.

Elsewhere in Cyprus, the Poachers showed themselves in the best light when they won seven out of ten trophies in the annual Cyprus Operational Shooting Competition. This tri-service event pitches the best shots amongst all service personnel on the island against one another in a week-long static range competition. Despite our many commitments to other activities, the soldiers taking part repeatedly demonstrated their aptitude as infantry soldiers and achieved winning scores in individual weapons, sniper rifles and light machine-guns.

Next month will be the last month the Battalion is together in Cyprus before we start flying back to the UK and our new home in Rutland – Kendrew Barracks, Cottesmore. There are both demanding training objectives to look forward to, including a second Exercise POACHERS PLUNGE, and further live firing, but also plenty of time to enjoy our last weeks on island and the opportunities it provides, starting with The Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations. The month is looked forward to by all.

## 7. 3<sup>RD</sup> BATTALION

May, characterised as the cruellest month by Yeats, burst into a glorious start breathing life in the flora and fauna around BHQ in Bury St Edmunds. Bathed in the warmth of the sudden sunshine, BHQ

Steelbacks continued to produce operational effect across 3 theatres and on the home front.

### **Operations:**

#### **HERRICK**

With all members of the cohort now in place, the Steelback contribution continues to add value to this demanding tour. From the reports sent back via the RSM 1<sup>st</sup> Bn, the Reservists are now fully integrated with their Regular counterparts and performing to the expected high standard. On an equally positive note, congratulations should be given to Capt Finbow on his recent promotion, backdated to March, but due to the complexities of the APC, only approved in May!

#### **OLYMPICS**

May saw the final pieces being put in place for the mobilisation of the 1 month commitment cohort for Op OLYMPICS. With commanders for both the 1 and 3 month cohorts being drawn from the Steelbacks, there is a real 3 R ANGLIAN feel to the whole endeavour. Aligned to this, the 49 Bde cycle of preparedness continues to test the Military Liaison Officers with various scenarios being enacted throughout the local area.

### **Training:**

The Battalion partook in a number of varied training events over the course of the month with good results all round. OC LAD led a REME team in Ex GRIFFIN SPANNER and Capt Garbuja, seconded by Sgt Abbot, took a well prepared shooting team to the Bde Shooting Competition at STANTA. At the company level a number of joint exercises occurred with a continued focus towards the next Bn Collective Training Package at the end of June. Planning for the Annual Deployment Exercise continued with the Training Major producing the ORBAT for the two opposing company groups, in what is shaping up to be a challenging and enjoyable overseas training exercise.

A focal point for the entire nation saw a high level of involvement from the Steelbacks. The Queen's Diamond Jubilee Parade held at Windsor Great Park had a Regimental marching contingent containing a high number of Steelbacks; the highlight of the parade was the guest star appearance of Maj Tim Irwin-Parker, briefly seconded from CUOTC

### **Social:**

The highlight of the month was the annual Regimental Representation Event, this year held at Loughborough Grammar School. With a mixture of hosts from across both the Bn and Regiment, the event was both exceptionally well attended and enjoyed a high level of support. An excellent performance from the Band of The Royal Anglian Regiment and the Steelback's Corp of Drums, followed by presentations from the Colonel of the Regiment and Commanding Officers 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Bns, capped off a brilliant evening.