



1/10

ROYAL ANGLIAN NEWS

JAN 10

## **BATTALION ACTIVITIES**

### 1. **1<sup>st</sup> Battalion**

**30 Dec – 6 Jan 2010**

#### **A (Norfolk) Coy**

This week has been dominated by two key events: a joint operation with the ANA to clear several legacy IEDs and the planning for Operation MAR BARCHA 7. On New Year's Eve, 1 and 2 Platoon provided the cordon in order to allow the Counter-IED Team to clear two double IED positions. The operation turned into a fire-fight, with the enemy contacting the cordon positions. The co-ordinated use of the firepower of the platoons, the ANA, indirect fire and air attack resulted in four IEDs destroyed by the end of the day and a successful outcome against the enemy. The second event is Op MAR BARCHA 7. It is a BG operation that has resulted in the establishment of a new Patrol Base with Company HQ and a Platoon co-located with the ANA Company HQ. The result will be that the A Company Group will be responsible for Woqab, Roshan Tower, Himlal OP and the new Patrol Base. Although a G4 burden for the CQMS in MSQ DC, it will provide the opportunity for joint operations and framework patrols.

1 Platoon conducted a joint reassurance patrol in the area south of Woqab this week. The intention was to allow a large group of locals to gather and then for OC A Company and the Military Stabilisation Support Team to conduct a shura. The meeting was a success and two further small shuras were conducted on the patrol back to Woqab.

#### **C (Essex) Coy**

This week has proved to be a difficult one for C Company, with the loss of Pte Robert Hayes, killed in action on 3<sup>rd</sup> January whilst conducting a security patrol south of Check Point Paraang. Private Hayes proved himself to be a hugely professional soldier. He was courageous, thoughtful and well liked by all those that served alongside him and without doubt had the personal attributes to have a successful career in the Army. The thoughts of Company go out to Pte Hayes' family back in the UK. Three other soldiers were also wounded on the same patrol, but the importance of the Check Point has become clear as it continues to produce results. It appears that more local are returning home and the security bubble that C Company have been instrumental in creating is furthering this effect. This has also increased the Company's understanding of the community, history and infrastructure in the area – all of which is contributing to the ability of the Company to help the population. The enemy have tried to respond through increased intimidation, but this is backfiring against them. The Company continues to push the enemy hard in Nad-e-Ali and in spite of the hardships it is undergoing it is pleased with the success achieved this week.

#### **D (Cambridgeshire) Coy**

Maj Olly Brown continues to draft his letter to AG about allowing juggling balls to be included in the free gifts for the troops at Christmas – he thinks I saw at least 100 being thrown at the Company Headquarters during the festivities last week! In spite of this it has been a busy week in FOB Keenan during which a number of patrols went out. Operation TUFAN FESCHAAR II also took place, seeing the Company Group mounting a night attack to seize and destroy NALUR Bridge, a location that the enemy were using to move in and out of the green zone and intimidate the locals. The operation has proved to be a massive success, with locals openly coming and thanking the

Company for reducing the ability of the Taliban to tax and intimidate them. Should the Taliban now wish to move into the Green Zone they will have to cross a bridge controlled by ANSF, a significant difficulty for them.

### **Battalion HQ**

The Headquarters is now well established in Lashkar Gah in its Police mentoring role. The Commanding Officer has begun to establish a strong rapport with the Chief of Police and his Headquarters, whilst the remainder of the team are working in their different cells supporting the ANP. The Headquarters consists not only of the R ANGLIAN personnel but also a healthy dose of individual augmentees who made up the organisation before we arrived.

The last week has seen visits by President Karzai, William Hague MP and George Osborne MP, ensuring that the CO has kept a high profile both nationally and internationally! The main focus of the work at the moment is driving ANP recruitment and setting up the interim Helmand Provincial Training Centre. At present the Centre passes out 150 recruits per 8 week course, but the uplift we are creating should enable 3 courses to run concurrently, passing out 150 every three weeks.

### **12-18 Jan 10**

#### **A (Norfolk) Coy**

The period since the last SITREP has been a busy one for A Company. The recent high tempo of patrols has continued and ramped up significantly since the start of the operation to establish a new Patrol Base (PB) north of Woqab. Wed 6 Jan 10 saw 1 Platoon and 3 Platoon depart Woqab to establish the new PB. The plan was to use an area of high ground approximately 1500m north of Woqab. The Taliban resistance was more dogged and organised than the area around Woqab and patrols originally planned for 2 hours lasted for 8. Throughout the day the Company Group was in multiple contacts, with Apache used in support. While moving into defensive positions for the establishment of the new PB, the area came under accurate automatic grenade launcher fire from the North West and Apache was tasked to assist in its destruction. After the firing point was identified 30mm from the HCR Scimitar and JAVELIN engaged the position and broke the contact. The Apache finally used a hellfire missile to destroy the weapon system. Fire was also received from the North and an RPG almost hit an HCR MASTIFF. During the Operation A (Norfolk) Company Group has shown its fighting capability and flexibility to be of the highest order and has, in partnership with the ANA, achieved quite an effect on the Taliban. It is with great regret that we received our first serious casualties and our first fatality in the IED strike on ATO Capt Dan Read. Despite these unfortunate and very testing incidents, the professionalism and morale of the Company has not faltered. The part played by all members of the Company Group has been vital, with HCR attachments adding formidable fire power, Engineers making fast work of building a new PB from scratch and BRIMSTONE IEDD teams clearing a total of 20 IEDs in the immediate area, with Capt Dan Read clearing 14 himself before his death. The fast work at point of wounding by LCpl Thomas undoubtedly saved Pte Allen's life after his injury in an IED blast and our thoughts are with him and his family in this difficult time. The nature of the enemy threat has changed. A more determined force is in place, perhaps due to us taking away their freedom of movement. The IED threat has dramatically increased, with particular attention being given to the no metal content IED defused by BRIMSTONE 32. The partnering of the ANA and ISAF forces has been a great success. Although they may not soldier the way we do, they do bring great benefits in the fight against the insurgency. Their ability to cover ground and identify the enemy is at a level no UK soldier could achieve. They are however more vulnerable to the IED threat and require our fire power to support them when in contact.

#### **C (Essex) Coy**

C Company are finding themselves fighting more professional insurgents in their AO than previously, and recently had to use 81mm mortar fire to extract from a firefight. Crops are now starting to grow in Nad-e-Ali, which means the Company have a great opportunity to speak to local nationals as they go about their daily business. The Company has been continuing to patrol aggressively against the enemy, scoring notable successes against them, which is keeping up the morale of the platoons. Although the Patrol Bases are spartan the troops are keeping themselves

busy trying to improve their standard of life. General McColl also visited the Company in FOB Silab this week during his whistle-stop tour of Afghanistan.

### **D (Cambridgeshire) Coy**

Since our last sitrep, the Coy has completed both Phases 1 and 2 of Op TUFAN FESCHAAR 2. The tempo of ops has been high throughout the Upper Gereshk Valley since 4 Jan and we are now moving back to a more 'steady state' period of framework operations.

Recent security shuras have highlighted the success of TUFAN FESCHAAR. The action was universally applauded by locals as it has delivered an instant impact within the AO, improving security dramatically. One of the village elders stated he had visited the river during the day and had spoken with many farmers all of whom felt safe and able to work peacefully in their fields. The remarks offered by the elders reflected the comment of a local to one of the patrols 2 days ago: "the new Patrol Base is a greater gift from God than my 2 sons". Their only concern was that ISAF might close the base. OC D Company assured the meeting that ISAF will be retaining the PB! The meetings have been highly successful and have offered a tangible measure of the effect of D Company's actions.

### **Battalion HQ**

Battalion Headquarters continues to mentor the ANP. Recent events have seen the acceleration of the drive against corruption with the arrest of the Deputy Chief of Police in Gereshk for alleged possession of 90Kgs of opium. The Helmand Police Training Centre also continues to grow, with a new intake of 180 recruits joining the 140 currently in training. The QM's department (consisting in its entirety of the QM, an SO3 ANP G4 and RQMS Self) continues to take onto account ISO containers full of pistols and AK variant rifles for use at the Training Centre. Preparations have begun for the graduation ceremony for the first course and, whilst training the ANP remains frustrating, real progress is being made with the recruits, to the extent that most are now safe to work with on the range! The 2IC attended the Pass Out Parade for a Gereshk militia that has been recently brought into the ANP and trained by the US Task Force Leatherneck, further professionalising the police force.

Other strands of work include the inspection of the Lashkar Ghar prison, the biometric registration of the all policemen across the province and the mentoring of the ANP G2 staff.

### **25 Jan – 2 Feb 10**

### **A (Norfolk) Coy**

This has been another week of full spectrum COIN Ops at Patrol Base HABIB: we have conducted several Shuras, in which 28 elders arrived to discuss their security status having found themselves firmly in the area of insurgent influence; we hosted Director Future Plans RC(S) and two BFBS reporters; we cleared several legacy IEDs near previous insurgent firing points with the IEDs being pointed out to the ANSF by local nationals. There have also been 3 domination patrols up to the north continuing to take the fight to the insurgent and ensuring that he does not push southwards into a position to threaten the local area security or the Patrol Base. All three patrols were significant acts that have seen successful fire fights against the enemy. They were joint patrols between the ANA and ISAF with occasional ANP attachments. With 3 Platoon as the constant at Patrol Base HABIB, they have been used to provide 2 liaison teams with each of the ANA squads. The primary team has been commanded by Sgt Daniel, with the other 3 Platoon section commanders rotating through the role as secondary Team Commander.

The last patrol of the month was the most significant of the patrols. It was an advance to contact along three fronts designed to drive the insurgents from their firing points. Tac HQ initiated the contact, but it was during the ANA push north in contact that Sgt Daniel and an ANP became casualties. Both received gunshot wounds. The remainder of the morning was spent continuing the advance, with LCpl Garner stepping up to take over from Sgt Daniel and 1 Platoon pushing hard against a determined enemy. The day was highly successful, and having left at 0530hrs all call signs were back in some 10hrs later.

Overall, January 2010 has been a tough month but this has been balanced against the significant achievements we have made as a Company Group. The establishment of, according to

Commander International Joint Command, 'the best partnered Patrol Base in Afghanistan', a secure local environment for the nationals and a highly successful month against the enemy, I think that the Company shares my feelings that this month we really have made a difference.

### **C (Essex) Coy**

C Company has enjoyed a dynamic week. Existing relationships with key local nationals have tightened and new ones have been forged as locals recognise an improving security situation and weakened Taliban. The capture of a local insurgent has brought his father, an Elder for Khowshhal Kalay, out of the woodwork and into the patrol base. Although his son remains a topic of interest and potential friction, the father's aspirations for Khowshhal Kalay involve ISAF/GIRoA and are in line with our perceived end state, which is promising for forthcoming operations. In the last few days there has been an unprecedented amount of insurgent activity southwest of patrol base SILAB, between the desert and the Trikh Zabur Canal. The insurgents who seem to keep attempting to attack the patrol base and the bridge construction site next to the patrol base have suffered significant casualties within a 4 day period. However they do now understand the awesome capabilities of the Javelin missile, 3 of which the FSG have fired in a 4 day period! We have noticed that selective use of the Javelin has an immense psychological effect on the insurgents. Two IEDs caught a MASTIFF from SILAB and a RIDGEBACK belonging to the CO of the Grenadier Guards' Tac party, but no one was hurt, proving again that these vehicles are invaluable.

### **D (Cambridgeshire) Coy**

Framework Operations are an enduring routine as we consolidate the gains made by Op TUFAAN FESCHAR 2. Several incidents took place this week. A CWIED was initiated against 8 PI as they patrolled Route BRITANNIA. This consisted of a 120mm Mortar blind, packed further with HME, and a cannonball from an unidentified era! The patrol suffered no casualties and continued on with its patrol. Two IEDs were experienced by the convoy returning down Route BRITANNIA from PB BDR. Thankfully there were no personnel casualties, though the patrol suffered a vehicle with a wheel blown off, last seen rolling down the road like a scene from a stereotypical western!

D Company used their Counter-IED team to some effect this week, destroying 6 IEDs. This helped to increase influence by destroying IEDs restricting local freedom of movement. Due to the pace of operations, sadly communal welfare events have been thin on the ground over the last 3 weeks. Now that the pace has re-settled, the chefs have instigated a theme night every Saturday evening and the plan is to re-introduce the Saturday night quiz as of next week. A rumour has surfaced that wireless internet will be installed in FOB KHAR NIKAH in the next 3 months – the troops await with baited breath.

### **Battalion HQ**

The last week has continued to be busy, with the CO making his continued move to the Police Headquarters for lunch with the Chief of Police. The headquarters has now passed out 150 new recruits who are off to bolster the checkpoints around Helmand. The graduation parade was attended by several high profile guests, conducted entirely in Pashtu and, if not actually run by the ANP, certainly conducted by them. Gifts were handed out to the ISAF instructors by the Chief of Police, and LCpl Green is now the proud owner of a handmade marble plate. The course graduation was a significant moment in Helmand, not only the first course graduating out of the school, but the first step in the professionalisation of the ANP and the uplift of the size of the whole force.

The RSM and SSgt Waddell are now the proud owners of two brand new PANTHER vehicles. The CO's rover group had previously been using two VIXEN (definitely not Snatch) and were in need of an upgrade. Having completed a quick conversion in Bastion, they were driven back to Laskar Gah, stopping on route in the desert to check fire the remote weapons platform (Welfare Officer, stop biting your lip!)

After the inspection of the Lashkar Ghar prison, the Lashkar Gah Ops Company (The Queen's Company 1 GREN GDS, working under 1 R ANGLIAN) helped the ANP move a bus load of

prisoners up to Kabul. Not hugely dissimilar to the film 'Con-Air', but with fewer escapees, 'Con-Bus' saw the dawn move of the prisoners from the prison and away by helicopter.

## 2. 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion

With the second week of January bringing Christmas leave to a conclusion, The Poachers are now fully back into the swing of training and preparation for what guarantees to be an eventful year. The focus for the Battalion is now unmistakably on Afghanistan and the various pre-deployment courses and upcoming exercises. At the moment this is centred on individual skills and has seen Poachers spread to the four winds on a multitude of activities. In addition D Company has been running a number of ranges and exercises, including Sniper Platoon which is currently training in Canada. The Battalion has also dispatched a strong group to the current Queens Division Fire Team Commanders' Course, with the latest batch of Junior Non-Commissioned Officers due back shortly.

Despite the tempo of training, the Poachers have also enjoyed particular success in the second round of the British Forces Germany novice boxing, with a win over 1 PWRR. There were a number of very impressive fights, with Corporal Isaacs again taking a very convincing win in the heavyweight class. The Battalion will now box 35 Engr Regt for the British Forces Germany title, with aspirations of further progressing within the wider Army competition.

As The Poachers rapidly approach the end of the Battalion's time in Germany, the winter continues in full force, with heavy snow falls throughout January. Trenchard Barracks now lies under an impressive layer of snow and ice. While the German winter and hospitality have been enjoyed, particularly over the Christmas period, the beaches of Cyprus are now starting to look more and more attractive!

February promises to be another busy training month with, in addition to the kinetic training, a number of Afghanistan specific presentations, debates and study days planned. Finally, the Poachers hope to end the month as the British Forces Germany boxing champions.

## 3. 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion

The New Year started with both 11 Platoon and 12 Platoon in action in Afghanistan. The CO and RSM had visited 11 Platoon just before Christmas and were given a brief on the seven Suicide Attacks that had taken place in Kabul; however these were only a prelude to the complex attack which took place in the City Centre. 11 Platoon were deployed and used to seal the main square, while the Afghan Forces dealt with insurgents. Meanwhile 12 Platoon continue to patrol the "Green Zone" around Musa Qalah and have been involved in contacts with the Taliban. They have also been used extensively as QRF for other operations in the area. The CO and RSM hope to visit 12 Platoon in early February.

On 4 January, a further 11 soldiers, under Corporal Roach, started training, in order to join 1 MERCIAN on Op HERRICK 12. These soldiers volunteered at 4 days notice for this deployment in December, when the Battalion was asked to generate a section due to extra Infantry being required. They are likely to form the MASTIFF Group, along with other TA soldiers, mainly from 2 R IRISH, deploying to Camp BASTION in March/April.

The first full Battalion Training Weekend since October, due to Austerity Measures, was held on 16-18 January. Ex STEELBACK PATROL I was an Escape and Evasion Weekend planned for Kent, but moved to the Colchester Training Area on the Thursday before execution owing to the heavy snow in the South East. The exercise involved a SERE revision period in Colchester TA Centre, before soldiers were searched, blindfolded and bussed to the Fingeringhoe FIBUA houses for conditioning. Groups of 4 then escaped and for the next 18 hours or so evaded a hunter force of a mix of MCTC Instructors and inmates, Military Dogs and Battalion SNCOs, whilst making their way

to a series of Agent RVs manned by SPSIs. At the end of the evasion they were finally betrayed, caught and underwent Tactical Questioning, The CO managed to join most groups during the escape and evasion and can vouch that in addition to the SERE Skills, the exercise brought out good practice in navigation, use of ground and personal admin. Only one group commanded by 2Lt Finbow evaded capture and received an award of chocolate from the CO at the final debrief.

The CO, QM, Adjt and RSM attended the Dining Out of the Brigade Commander, Brigadier Jim Richardson MBE at Chilwell. He was presented with a silver Polar Bear by all the units in the Brigade. In addition, the Battalion gave him a 3 R ANGLIAN Presentational Flag. The CO visited him in his new office in Glasgow and was pleased to see both proudly on display. The new Brigade Commander is Brigadier Andrew Williams OBE, who will visit the Battalion in early February.

February will see a return to more normal activity levels, despite the continuing Austerity Measures. The weekend 5-7 February will be busy with Company Patrols Training, the first of the Combat Signals Cadre sessions and the resumption of the Battalion's Recruit Training. In addition, the Adjt has organised the Battalion's Rugby 10s Competition on the 21<sup>st</sup> at Bassingbourn. However the main training event will be Field Firing at Feldom Ranges on 26-28 February, which will include a visit from the Colonel of the Regiment.