

1 R ANGLIAN Update 2 Feb – 8 Feb 10

A (Norfolk) Company Update:

OC A Company writes: 'Another week has passed that has seen the Coy operate across the full spectrum of Counter-Insurgency Operations. There have been further patrols that have seen the Company Group dominate the insurgent areas of influence. Most significant of these was Op MAR BRUS 6 which saw a joint ANA / A Company patrol into a village on the west side of the Musa Qal'eh Wadi some 4kms north of Roshan Tower. The platoons were supported by the CSM with our integral FSG (Javelin, Sniper and GPMG SF) and the 2 MASTIFFs positioned in a Fire Support position from a ridgeline west of the village. It was the first time that ANA / ISAF had been into the village so a successful Shura was conducted with locals.'

'During the extraction the Company came under accurate AGS 17 and small arms fire from multiple firing points. 1 Platoon and the CSM's group provided fire support and a JDAM was used to try to destroy the AGS 17. This allowed the OC's Tac, 3 Platoon (in their ANA liaison role) and the ANA to begin their extraction. During the last bound towards the safety of cover, the small arms fire was pretty accurate – the FST Commander's daysack now has a bullet hole in it! Thanks to the impressive fire support from the CSM's group, the platoons got safely to the home bank of the Wadi before the CSM's group began their extraction. At this point it became apparent that one of the MASTIFFs would not move due to mechanical failure. Not only did the HCR QRF have to deploy to tow away the MASTIFF, but they had to resupply the CSM with .50 and 7.62 link because he was at ammo state 'Red'. Obviously ammo conservation is no longer taught on PSBC, or perhaps he spent too long training PI Comds at RMAS!'

'There has been a new ANA Company Commander at Patrol Base HABIB and 3 Platoon have taken on the role of 'Liaison Team' with the final withdrawal of the OMLT. Today sees the change round of Platoons with 1 Platoon taking over at Check Point WOQAB and 2 Platoon at Patrol Base HABIB as Ops Platoon. There have been significant preparations today in order to ensure that the security is water tight for the Musa Qal'eh District Governor's Shura at Patrol Base HABIB tomorrow. Simon Broomfield has reluctantly handed back the Company 2IC reins to Martin Driver who has returned with a vengeance this week. With Simon now covering the ANA liaison task, Tim Hearne has been handed the Company 2IC role. Sgt Johnson is now 'lording' it as Officer Commanding Check Point WOQAB!'

C (Essex) Company Update:

A full update from C (Essex) Company is not available as they are currently involved in Operation Moshtarak.

In the southern edge of Nad-E'Ali insurgent attempts to probe into a perceived weak flank to the West of Patrol Base SILAB ceased at the beginning of the week whilst intensifying to the south of Check Point PARAANG. In spite of the heavy insurgent activity the balance of the successes has lain squarely with C Company. Local nationals continue to return to Noor Mohamed Khan Kalay (including a Mullah) and have stated that there has been a significant improvement in the security situation. A local elder and leader for Nad-E'Ali visited Check Point HAJI ALEM this week and also commented on the improved security situation. C Company will soon begin embedded partnering with the Afghan National Army & Afghan National Police. This close working relationship means that further improvements in the ANSF can be developed.

D (Cambridgeshire) Company Update:

OC D Company is due back from R&R, meaning that Capt Clarke, King of Northern Gereshk, will soon have to hand back his crown. Whilst he still commands the AO he writes: 'Framework operations endure as we consolidate the gains made by Operation TUFAAN FESCHAR 2. The security situation here in the Upper Gereshk Valley continues to improve, and continued engagement with the local population in the area is providing us greater gains than patrolling and fighting. There were no major incidents this week, however the enemy attempted a Heavy Machinegun shoot on the FOB.'

'A security shura was held in the local village this week, with the main theme being ANP recruitment, via the discussion of a number of issues. The locals expressed that the feeling of security in the area had improved and that more locals had moved back to their compounds from outside of the AO. It was a successful meeting which raised the profile of a key issue; the need for locals to take responsibility for the collective security of the area.'

'The reason for the intermittent power supply and distribution problems has been sought out by a hunter-killer mission by the engineers here at FOB KHAR NIKAH. They found a cubic metre of cabling and several 4-way adapters which were overloading the system. The offending power-hoggers have been suitably disciplined. The chefs laid on a BBQ on Saturday, though due to the inclement weather this was an indoor BBQ after the charcoal became soaked in a random Afghan downpour. Cpl Martin, of 8 Platoon 3 RIFLES, will continue 'The Best God-damn Quiz In The World - Ever' this Saturday, which with the return of OC is likely to be a one-horse race providing no questions are taken from the girls' magazines in the med centre. A 5-aside football tournament was held this week which was won by the engineers, who had various accusations thrown their way after they designed and built the pitch. Banned from leaving camp or staggng on, they were also the only grouping with any time on their hands to train.'

Battalion Headquarters:

The last week has been frenetic, with a concerted effort to engage with and mentor the commander of the Afghan National Civil Order Police, the commander of a Brigade's worth of policemen who will be vitally important to provide security to areas to be cleared under Mostarak. The Commanding Officer still mentors the Provincial Chief of Police daily, and he must be warming to the team as he even gave the Adjutant a bristly kiss on the cheek when he arrived for a meeting.

This week the staff have been working on the arrival of the new course at the Helmand Police Training Centre. The course has been loaded with 160 new police recruits from across Helmand who will complete 8 weeks of training before joining their checkpoints. Once at the checkpoints they will be mentored by their Police Mentor Teams and by patrols from the Battle Groups. Those ANP that graduated from the previous course less than two weeks ago are already working in Nad-E'Ali, fully partnered with C Company, as part of Op Moshtarak. This close partnership between the ANP and British Army units will continue as Op Moshtarak progresses.