



Serial 10/07

## ROYAL ANGLIAN NEWS

Nov 07

### **FREEDOM PARADES: A FINAL REMINDER**

1. The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion will exercise their right to the Freedoms of Norwich on 22 Nov (1400-1515 hrs) and Bury St Edmunds on 23 Nov (1130-1245 hrs). The Area Secretary Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire, Colonel Tony Taylor, is responsible for the organisation of both events. We thank all those who have made such an effort to date and ask that individuals continue to spread the word which is as follows:

- Norwich.
  - Date: Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> November
  - Timings: 1400-1515 hours
  - Route: Parade City Hall. March Gaol Hill, London St, Queens St, Tombland, Cathedral West Porch.
  
- Bury St Edmunds.
  - Date: Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> November
  - Timings: 1130-1245 hours
  - Route: Parade Angel Hill. March Churchgate St, Guildhall St, Abbeygate St, Angel Hill, Abbey Gate.

### **APPOINTMENTS/ CONVERSION OF COMMISSION**

2. The following Royal Anglian officers have been selected for Command:

Maj (for Lt Col 08) CS Calder – 2 RRF in Nov 08

Maj (for Lt Col 08) RW Wooddisse MBE MC – 2 R ANGLIAN in Mar 09

Lt Col DG Vincent MBE – 3 R ANGLIAN in Apr 08

Maj DW Dawber TD – EMUOTC in Apr 08

3. Brig AJK Calder's term as Honorary Colonel of 3 R ANGLIAN has been extended until Oct 08 and Col NA ffitch has been appointed Deputy Honorary Colonel of HQ Coy 3 R ANGLIAN.

4. The following Royal Anglian officers were successful in obtaining Intermediate Regular Commissions:

Capt PR Steel – 1 R ANGLIAN

Capt DF Haggart – 2 R ANGLIAN

## **FREE TRAVEL WITH FIRST EASTERN COUNTIES BUSES**

5. In recognition of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion's outstanding achievements in Afghanistan, First Eastern Counties have announced that all members of The Royal Anglian Regiment will be permitted unlimited free travel on its buses throughout Norfolk and Suffolk. This generous offer starts on 22 Nov and finishes on 31 Dec. It is valid for serving members of the Regiment on production of a British Army ID card.

## **BATTALION ACTIVITIES**

### **6. 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion**

The Battle Group handed over North Helmand to 40 Commando on 8 Oct after a busy final month of Op HERRICK 6. The hand over of the companies was phased over 3 weeks to allow a seamless transition to the incoming unit. When each company returned they were welcomed back by members of the Rear Party and a bottle of Viking Beer, courtesy of the Red Rat Craft Brewery. B Company was the final company to land on the 16<sup>th</sup>; they were greeted by a large media turn out and Ross Kemp. After a brief period of leave, everybody was back at work on 29<sup>th</sup> October.

With the Battalion home it is time for a period of consolidation and reflection. It has been a very intense 6 months and now we have time to remember the Vikings who have made the ultimate sacrifice and a duty to support our wounded. The first such occasion took place in an Act of Remembrance at the Aldershot Garrison Church on 9<sup>th</sup> November. The families of the deceased attended a Remembrance Service before witnessing the dedication of the new Battalion Memorial at Elizabeth Barracks. It was a time for the families to meet the friends and comrades of their sons and husbands and share the experience with the Battalion.

The Medal Parade on 15<sup>th</sup> November will be a family affair, with the presentation of medals, followed by a charity auction. The auction will be a key fundraising event for the Memorial Fund. Already there have been some very generous donations, and they will hopefully add to the £70 000 raised so far.

The culmination of the Battalion's welcome home will be a number of parades in Guildford (20 Nov), Norwich (22 Nov) and Bury St Edmunds (23 Nov). This will be an opportunity for the Battalion to stand out in public and receive the appreciation for the hard work and sacrifices they have made over the last year. The Battalion will depart on 6 weeks post-operational tour leave on 29 Nov 07, returning on 16 Jan 08 ready for a fresh set of challenges.

### **A (NORFOLK) COMPANY**

A Company was the first Rifle Company to handover to 40 Commando. Their advance party came to Sangin and, after ground and intelligence briefs, conducted familiarisation patrols around the local area with A Company. While things were generally quiet in Sangin, there was the ubiquitous threat of Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) which necessitated several clearance operations conducted in the main by the Afghan National Army, with A Company providing outer security and force protection to the IED Disposal Team.

When the Royal Marines had arrived in their entirety, they quickly took over responsibility for the area, with guidance and tips from the Company Commander and Operations Officer.

Once the handover was complete, the Company flew out of Sangin to conduct administration before flying to Kandahar and the UK. A stop-over at Cyprus was enjoyed by all which was a good opportunity for the whole Company to unwind on the beach before sharing a few beers and stories about the tour.

There was a 'welcoming committee' awaiting us when we arrived at Pirbright and the feelings of the Company on seeing their families and loved ones again cannot be overstated; they were also very excited by the presentation of a bottle of Viking beer each! After what seemed like a very quick week of leave, the Company is back at work sorting out administration and dealing with several personnel changes within the company. We are now looking forward to the Freedom Parades and then Christmas leave.

### **B (SUFFOLK) COMPANY**

For B Company, the difference in tempo between early and late October could not be greater. At the start of the month the Company was based in Kajaki, Helmand Province, maintaining a high tempo of operations right up to the handover point with C Company, 40 Commando. The high point of the month was a heavy contact on 7 Oct involving upward of 20 firing points. This contact resulted in the Company returning fire with all its weapons as well as 2 missiles and 19000lb of ordinance from an American aeroplane, emptying the aircraft of its' payload! The highlight of the month was, of course, returning home to the wives and loved ones who have supported the Company so well during the tour. The return to the UK provides a time of reflection for the Company both on our heavy losses and great achievements. The morale of the Company remains high, especially considering the warm welcome home received by all. On 27 Oct Ipswich Football Club hosted the Company during a home game against Wolves. The welcoming crowd gave a standing ovation to the Company for their achievements over the past 7 months.

### **C (ESSEX) COMPANY**

The last month saw a drastic transition for the Company starting in the Green Zone of Helmand Province, moving to Cyprus for decompression and finally back to Elizabeth Barracks. Having two weeks left at Patrol Base Inkerman was certainly no excuse for the Company to slow down; in fact we increased patrols to counter the increasing indirect fire attacks from Taliban rockets and mortars. 40 Commando's HQ element arrived in Afghanistan and began the handover process by accompanying us on our patrols; they were warmly welcomed by the Taliban who ambushed us on our last patrol! The Company then moved out of Inkerman and Nowzad, back to Camp Bastion for a chance to have a proper wash and a much anticipated pizza. The next leg of our homeward journey took us to Cyprus for decompression where we stayed at Bloodhound Camp and had the use of the Army's beach. We enjoyed all the facilities including kayaking, swimming, volleyball and a banana boat. For the evening's entertainment, three excellent comedians performed for us at the camp and we had a barbeque and a few beers. The next day saw the Company flying back to the UK and starting their much deserved week of leave.

Having been back at Battalion for a week, the Company has been doing a lot of admin, including getting everyone onto the Army's new administrative computer system. Alongside this the Company Cambrian Patrol Team led by Lt Sam Perrin has been training hard since the first day back and are looking for a good result in the forthcoming competition. The JNCO's who are attending the January Platoon Sergeants' Battle Course (PSBC) are still on leave, anticipating a pre-PSBC cadre in the coming weeks.

**Editor's afternote:** Lt Perrin and his Cambrian Patrol Team are congratulated for being awarded a coveted Gold Medal.

## **D (CAMBRIDGESHIRE) COMPANY**

As the Company was the first to arrive in Theatre it was also the first to leave. The Company Commander left before the start of the month to continue the planning for the training year next year. Recce Platoon had stripped their vehicles of the extra armour, cleaned them out as much as possible and passed the cleanliness inspection. They were then packed away into large containers, which was a particularly tight fit' before being transported back to the UK. Upon their return the Platoon has been settling back into UK life, taking the opportunity to clear out the recce sheds and prepare everything for the receipt of the vehicles; when they might return is anyone's guess!.

The Mortar Platoon extracted with the rifle companies that they were supporting, but the pace of firing did not slacken, with the section in Kajaki maintaining its impressive rates of fire. The detachments in Patrol Base Inkerman concentrated on counter battery fire as indirect fire, directed at both Sangin and Patrol Base Inkerman, intensified during the handover. All the mortar men are now back at work and the Platoon is looking forward to reconstituting again as well as getting some new recruits. We are all also very keen to catch up with and visit those members of the Platoon who were injured and now need our support.

Snipers, Machine Guns and Anti Tanks are slowly reforming after the Fire Support Groups (FSGs) have been split up. There has been lots of comparisons of who did what and a healthy rivalry between FSG's; they are now keen to harness the different experiences that were gained across the Battle Group and look towards to next years training and D Company's concentration.

## **ECHELON COMPANY**

The majority of the Company's work was completed in September with the administration handovers completed by the end of the month. This allowed the key players of the Company to return to the UK and prepare the Battalion for its return to Pirbright. It was a busy period taking over the accounts from Rear Party and ensuring that all was in good order for the companies returning.

A handful of the Company remained in Camp Bastion; this included the chefs, and the CIS Platoon, who maintained the communication infrastructure until the hand over of authority. CSgt Neal (MTWO) worked especially hard, ensuring that everybody got a flight in an ever changing world of flight manifests and delays. The MT Platoon ensured that everybody was picked up on time from Brize Norton and then brought back to the reception committee at Pirbright.

It has been a busy tour for Echelon Company with many soldiers being used to backfill the companies. It is now time to take stock and ensure that the Battalion is in good order before conducting the Freedom Parades and dispersing on some well earned leave.

## 7. 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion.

October has been another busy month for the Poachers with the integration of the Battalion into 7(Armd) Bde very much in full swing. The focus this month has been on Ex UHLAN EAGLE, a three week exercise just across the border in Poland. This was the first chance the Battalion has had to operate in an all arms environment for nearly a decade. It was interesting to see how people at all levels reacted to the various arms and attachments that arrived to make the integrated Battle Group. However, any suspicions the soldiers had were quickly removed when the Royal Engineers demonstrated what they were capable of for the defensive stages! The exercise itself and particularly the culmination, where Brigade HQ tested the newly formed Battle Group, was a good run out for the Battalion. Even under some testing weather conditions that one would expect in Poland in winter, soldiers at all levels pulled out the stops and gave the right impression of the Battalion to the Brigade. Although the past few months have been at full pace for the Battalion, after Poland we feel that we are now fully integrated into the Brigade.

October has also seen elements of the Battalion split to the four winds with commitments at BATUS still ongoing, but with the observer controllers sent in August nearly on their way home. We still continue to support the American pre-deployment training in Southern Germany and driver training for our MASTIFF role in Iraq next year is ongoing.

The Battalion is now fixing its ORBAT for TELIC 12, which should be completed by the end of November. This will permit us to start on the pre-deployment package in January in good order after a well deserved Christmas break.

## 8. 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion.

Following Annual Camp in Kazakhstan, October has been a somewhat quieter month with the most significant event being the return of our troops serving with 1 R ANGLIAN. Training has been based around two events: a Battalion Cadre Weekend and the Cambrian Patrol Competition. It has been a great success for the Battalion to have a Cambrian Patrol Team that completed the course, something that has not happened for a while. WO2 Coupe, the SPSI at C (Leicester and Northampton) Company, took the lead and did a good job steering and guiding the team. The team worked extremely hard, training whenever they could, in addition to attending routine battalion training and deploying to Kazakhstan. It is hoped that their achievement will encourage others to participate in the future.

Ex FAM TRAINING saw us deploying to West Tofts Camp on the evening of the 9<sup>th</sup> October. The weekend was a chance for members of the Battalion to conduct training different from their normal role, thus giving them an appreciation of the capabilities that exist within the Battalion; the training choices being Assault Pioneer, Machine Gun, Mortars and Bowman.

The Saturday started with the four groups moving off to the selected training areas and starting in earnest. The Machine Gun training was headed up by Capt Coulson and entailed everything from Light Role GPMG lessons to SF drills firing blank ammunition. The Mortar training was organised by Capt Summners and contained lessons on all aspects of the Mortar, building up to dry deployment drills with the Mortar on Sunday morning. The Assault Pioneer training was led by Lt Swift and involved the troops in mine recognition, minefield construction, various wiring obstacles, watermanship on the lake and how to gauge the dimensions and depth of a stretch of water. The Bowman Training was organised by CSgt Beard and involved the introduction of two new radios, the 354 & 355.

Troops were very receptive to all the training and every individual thoroughly enjoyed the weekend. A NAVEX was available for anybody who wanted to take part in the evening but it was made optional as the Rugby World Cup was also on (no prizes for guessing how many volunteered).

As part of the Battalion's developing relationship with our affiliated cadets, we also had with us 13 cadets and 3 adult instructors from Essex ACF. They had a great weekend learning new skills and got to participate in all the training apart from Bowman. They were also the only ones to conduct the NAVEX which they did with no difficulties. In addition there were almost 100 Cadets from Suffolk ACF on the training area at the same time; they asked if they could be included in our activities which we were happy to facilitate. The exercise proved a success not only in terms of training delivered to our own personnel, but also in the inclusion of over 130 cadets from our Regimental area.

Sunday morning arrived and training continued until lunchtime, at which time we all congregated back at West Tofts Camp prior to departing back to respective TA centres, having had a thoroughly enjoyable training weekend.

Our Individual Reinforcements that deployed with 1 R ANGLIAN returned from Op HERRICK with the rest of the Vikings and we are now looking to support the Regiment as they capitalise on the media coverage of the return. Simultaneously we are looking forward to 2008 when we will be supporting the Poachers on Op TELIC.

Following Annual Camp the Battalion is now fully engaged in the next training cycle and November will see companies conducting build up training as well as participating at the Armistice Services and Parades throughout the region. In addition, elements from the Battalion will continue to work with 2 R ANGLIAN in anticipation of providing operational support in 08.