



Serial 9/07

## ROYAL ANGLIAN NEWS

Oct 07

### **FREEDOM PARADES: WARNING ORDER**

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. Shortly, a campaign will be launched to ensure that the Vikings, who have done us all so proud in Afghanistan, are welcomed home in a manner befitting both their deeds and their sacrifice. At this stage the Regimental Family are requested only to diary the dates and consider how they can personally contribute to ensuring that both parades will be truly memorable for our soldiers. A Regimental Call to Arms will follow.

### **CAPTAIN STEVEN WORMALD SERVICE OF RE-DEDICATION – 3 NOVEMBER 2007**

2. Captain Steven Wormald was killed by a landmine explosion on 29 April 1994 whilst serving with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The plaque marking his sacrifice has recently been removed from its site in Hrasnica and returned to the UK.

Following consultation with Steven's family, it has been decided that the plaque will be housed in the Regimental Chapel at Warley, Essex, CM13 3BN. Consequently a Service of Re-Dedication will take place at 2.30 pm on Saturday 3 November 2007, followed by tea in Blenheim House. Dress will be suits. Car parking is available in the TA Centre between the Chapel and Blenheim House.

The invitation to attend is not just for those who knew Steven. The Regimental Family are most welcome and, as such, RHQ would be most grateful if this notice could be passed on.

Those wishing to attend are requested to inform RHQ of their intention to do so by 20 October.

### **POSTINGS/TRANSFERS**

- |    |                                  |   |           |
|----|----------------------------------|---|-----------|
| 3. | Maj (for Lt Col 08) RW Wooddisse | from SO2 DS 19 Ops Plans 3 ICSC(L) to<br>SO1 L8 DS JSC ACSC JSCSC | in Nov 07 |
|    | Maj APR Bowman                   | from R ANGLIAN to Int Corps                                       | in Nov 07 |

## **BATTALION ACTIVITIES**

### **4. 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion.**

The two main events of September were Op PALK, and the arrival of our replacements, 40 Commando (40 Cdo). Op PALK was the Brigade's final operation, a series of sequential Battle Group operations to maintain the pressure on the Taliban in the Helmand valley. It began with the Battle Group conducting a clearance of the Upper Sangin Valley. This was the third time that this had happened. This time it was a clearance from Sangin up to the village of Kang, approximately 12km to the North. Screens were placed out to the East and, more importantly, on the West side of the river, preventing the enemy's extraction to their strong hold at Musa Qalah. The operation was successful, with the clearance receiving little resistance, but the pockets of enemy that fought were dealt with by both the companies on the ground and the Apaches flying in support. This was followed with A Company conducting a sweep to the South of Sangin, again with the aim of clearing any Taliban out of the area and proving that we can rapidly project force wherever we want to. Other aspects of this operation was the employment of the Sniper Platoon in Nowzad and Sangin conducting anti sniper ambushes in Nowzad and anti mine laying ambushes in Sangin.

The Relief in Place (RiP) is now in full swing with the majority of the Quarter Master's domain having already been taken over by 40 Cdo. Ramadan started in the middle of the month, which saw a reduction in enemy action but has not prevented us from maintaining the initiative and keeping the enemy on the back foot.

### **A (Norfolk) Company**

The Company spent the first week of the month heavily involved with Op PALK. We left the security of Sangin in the hands of the ANA and OMLT and a platoon of B Company guarding the District Centre (DC). This allowed us to deploy three platoons and the majority of the Fire Support Team (FST) in a dismounted role for the clearance North and South. The Company were involved in significant contacts and yet again the close support of the Apaches proved decisive. The Company Group also conducted an air assault across the river to search a village that was used by the Taliban as a staging post. Some very successful key leader engagement provided valuable, low-level, intelligence and consent winning money proved again to be a successful tool of the campaign. A search of the surrounding area was completed with the denial of caves which were obvious firing positions and OPs. Upon return there was a quick turn around before the Company cleared to the South of the DC. Whilst there was no subsequent action it was a good chance for more engagement with the locals and CIMIC projects.

The highlight of the month was the receipt of the Humanitarian Aid Money (\$100,000) which was handed to the District Governor by the Commanding Officer in the weekly shura. As a result of this the Company provided depth protection whilst the District Governor and the ANA went to the poorer areas of Sangin handing out the money and flour. This was another example of major consent winning activity which is slowly winning the population of Sangin over. The remainder of the month has seen a down turn in enemy activity due to Ramadan. The Company Group is looking forward to returning to the UK and a well deserved rest.

## **B (Suffolk) Company**

The Company has continued with the task to push the enemy away from the dam complex. Our support to Op PALK was to send 2 platoons to backfill A and C companies. The platoon that went to Sangin DC conducted force protection to free up the A Company force elements. The platoon that went to C Company was the third manoeuvre element for the Company and played a major role in the clearance of the Upper Sangin Valley. We were limited to the Force Protection of COP Zeebrugge; fortunately it was only for a matter of a few days so we did not lose the initiative to the Taliban.

Once the platoons returned we have continued the fighting patrols to the North and South of the dam. The enemy has not dampened its resolve to offer stiff resistance and Ramadan has not affected their fighting capability. There have been several notable contacts, especially to the South, where we experienced the use of a recoilless rifle against us. As normal we had air in support which attacked the assessed firing positions. There has also been a noticeable trend of trying to establish firing positions within range of the COP with the intent of launching attacks.

As with the remainder of the Battle Group the advance party of 40 Cdo has arrived. But, as the last company to RiP, we know we still have four weeks remaining and cannot lose focus.

## **C (Essex) Company**

Patrol Base (PB) Inkerman played host to the CO's Tac HQ, as well as A Company's main HQ during the clearance phase of Op PALK. The clearance was ultimately successful, but it was slightly disappointing not to have had more contacts. Despite this the operation gave us the opportunity to get into the Green Zone and permitted us to conduct some detailed searches of the area and specific compounds.

The rest of the month has been spent keeping the pressure on the Taliban and preventing their reinfiltration across the river. We have continued to use the troop of Vikings as our manoeuvre element with fire support and a mobile reserve being provided by the Mastiffs. This has been coordinated with the efforts of the Estonian Company and Recce Platoon working to the North. There have been indications of enemy being in the area but they seem unwilling to decisively engage us whilst the Mastiffs are supporting us.

We managed to rotate platoons out of Nowzad so that 9 Platoon could get a taste of the Green Zone and 11 Platoon the relative quiet of Nowzad. The platoon in Nowzad has been busy protecting themselves from mortars and 107mm rockets, as well as the emerging threat of some sort of sharp shooter. As a response to this the Sniper Platoon was deployed to Nowzad to find and destroy him. Since then the number of small arms engagements has fallen, whilst the good use of air has meant that several more enemy mortar base plates have been destroyed.

## **D (Cambridgeshire) Company**

The Mortar Platoon has kept busy supporting the companies and has maintained its impressive rate of fire, needing a re-supply after each engagement. Sgt Duggan's section was moved out of Sangin to support the Estonians who were working in the

desert to the North of PB Inkerman. They were certainly much busier away from Sangin. Throughout the tour the Mortar Platoon has proved that it can quickly and accurately engage enemy forces to support the rifle platoons.

Recce deployed for the final time in support of Op PALK, with five vehicles out of eight arriving in the Upper Sangin Valley. They were kept busy by a number of long contacts, lasting several hours, whilst attached to the Estonians. They returned to Camp Bastion on 23 September, making it back in record time with no mechanical difficulties. They are currently stripping down the extra armour and packing up the vehicles preparing them for the journey back to Pirbright.

Sniper Platoon has been used as a platoon for the first time this tour. They have conducted two operations in Nowzad and Sangin. The first was an anti sniper operation. This saw the Platoon deploy into three OPs overlooking possible movement corridors the sniper may have used to infiltrate into firing positions. Whilst we did not find him, the deployment of the OPs would have restricted his freedom of manoeuvre through the town. The second operation was a series of ambushes in the vicinity of a major vulnerable point to the South of Sangin. This area is a high threat IED area. The aim was to interdict any IED parties. Again there were no contacts but, by dominating the ground, the enemy's freedom of movement was reduced. It was a good opportunity for the Platoon to have a run out and collectively put into practice everything we have learnt over the tour.

### **Echelon Company**

The focus of this month was supporting Op PALK and handing over the accounts to the J4 advance party of 40 Cdo. The majority of helicopter hours were used to re-supply the FOBs to ensure they have got enough rations and ammunition for 40 Cdo whose advance party arrived towards the start of the month. The hard work of all the J4 chain, from the QM in Camp Bastion to the storemen in the outstations, ensured that the handover was relatively smooth. 40 Cdo have now taken over the support of the Battalion Group, with the Vikings shadowing them and offering them the gems of advice 6 months hard graft develops.

The MTO and other key enablers are back in the UK ready to receive the companies as they return home and permit a quick turnaround for everybody to go on their initial week's leave.

As we begin to return home, there is plenty to look forward to. The Battalion Medal Parade will take place on Thursday 15 November at Pirbright which will be followed by a Grand Charity Auction, conducted by Ross Kemp, in aid of the Memorial Fund. Freedom Parades follow at Norwich on 22 November and Bury St Edmunds on 23 November where we hope many members of the Regiment, past and present, will join us.

### 5. **2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion.**

The Battalion returned at the beginning of September fresh from a thoroughly deserved Summer leave. As well as the usual holiday stories it is refreshing to note that many soldiers managed to spend some time exploring Europe.

The pace of work has, as predicted, increased and already the companies have been moving around Germany conducting various Regular Army Assistance Tasks. This has

included assisting the US Army prepare for Public Order operations as part of their OPTAG package. Some looks of amazement from our Allies were noted when we explained that in order to demonstrate properly we had to petrol bomb our own demonstration troops. The US Army were intrigued by this and the demonstration, which was conducted in front of a US General, led them to conclude that Brits are, indeed, crazy.

Battalion Headquarters has just returned from Sennelager after exercising in the Combined Arms Tactical Trainer (CATT) and Command and Staff Trainer (CAST). All training objectives were more than successfully achieved but there were some interesting moments for a newly formed joint Armour/Light Role Battle Group. This led Maj Alex Hawley to comment that some of the issues faced were down to the fact that we were writing the planning doctrine as we went. However Battalion Headquarters left CAST with a good report and the satisfaction that it was achieved after a major arms plot move, whilst most offices were still being unpacked back at camp.

The rifle companies are now focussing on training for next year's deployments, with driving qualifications being high up on the programme. Permanent Range Teams are assisting various OPTAG packages that are happening throughout British Forces Germany, for which all our companies are providing troops as well as conducting their own training.

The Battalion is now turning its attention to Ex UHLAN EAGLE 07 which will see us deploying at the end of October for three weeks; in anticipation, questions are still being asked regarding arctic weather clothing packs.

## 6. **3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion.**

September has been dominated by annual camp, Ex STEPPE EAGLE 07, in Kazakhstan. Despite the best efforts of the RAF and movers the Battalion deployed on 8-9 September with most of its freight from RAF Brize Norton. The flight was about 8 hours plus a delay for refuelling in Bucharest and the 150 R ANGLIAN and attached personnel arrived in Almaty Kazakhstan by mid morning. After a surprisingly quick customs inspection and check of documentation, the Battalion was loaded onto some Soviet era trucks and, with a police blue light escort, trundled its way through the congestion of Almaty and out onto the training area.

The tented camp was on the edge of the steppe and the Battalion soon settled in. The first key timing was the opening ceremony in the presence of the Kazak Deputy Defence Minister and their CGS equivalent. Once this was over training began in earnest. The bulk of the Battalion took part in a progressive build up of training from section to company level during the first week, whilst the Machine Gun Platoon conducted its own training, as did the Cambrian Patrol Team. In addition, a training team delivered Peace Support Operations Training to two KAZBAT companies whilst others assisted in the training and development of the Kazak Battle Group HQ staff. This was a broad remit but all personnel stepped up to the mark and delivered a good training package.

The Company Group was made up of personnel from across the Battalion and commanded by Maj Mark Scadden of E Company. The purpose of the training during the first week was to enable commanders at all levels to practise battle procedure and conduct training without the time pressure of a normal training weekend. The commanders and the company flourished during this week. The extended time in the

field allowed rapid training progression and rusty skills were soon polished. The progression from Section, to Platoon and Company went well and the end result was a tightly knit sub unit who could work to the Commander's intent. Of particular note was the performance of the 6, 1 R ANGLIAN, attachments who had been offered places on the exercise. Despite being straight out of the Infantry Training Centre (ITC) they demonstrated skill and determination and were a credit to the Regiment and the Queen's Divisional Company at ITC.

The mid-camp weekend filled the international relations element and was a chance for the soldiers of three nations to mix. Friday night was set aside for a full Regimental Dinner in the field in mess kit with silver and the Colours. This was a great success and left the US and Kazak reps at a loss for words, but very appreciative. Saturday saw a sports competition (with some very questionable rules lost in translation). Events included arm wrestling, kettlebell lifting (a heavy cannon ball with a handle), tug of war and football. For the first time a British team won an event, much to our hosts annoyance, as we secured a strong victory in the tug of war. The importance of the football match escalated to international match proportions and was attended by various mayors and the press. The Battalion lost a hard fought game 3-2 and the subsequent pitch invasion by an enormous number of Kazak children also ensured that we lost our footballs as well.

Following the sports day, Sunday was given over to a short remembrance parade in the old capital Almaty and a few hours of seeing the sights. The parade took place in a large park dominated by an enormous Soviet style war memorial and eternal flame. The military band struck up a medley of Abba hits which did not exactly fit the sombre mood, before launching into the national anthems. Wreaths were laid and many pictures taken before the parade concluded and the 3 R ANGLIAN personnel were split into groups, allocated an interpreter and unleashed on Almaty.

The second week saw the FTX written to meet joint needs by 3 R ANGLIAN in which two KAZBAT companies conducted low level Peace Support Operations whilst we conducted higher intensity war-fighting. Simultaneously the KAZBAT Battle Group HQ were being exercised by a joint UK/US High Control and the Kazak self-evaluation team were being evaluated by NATO observers. The UK Company operated from a Forward Operating Base and then pushed forward onto the steppe to conduct escalating operations against an enemy provided by a platoon from the Arizona National Guard. Again a realistic pace of activity was used and a number of valuable lessons learnt.

In addition to the training, the exercise saw a number of visits and this manifested itself in a demonstration to visiting NATO officers. The Battalion's Cambrian Patrol Team acted as a Quick Reaction Force to a spectacular demonstration of a convoy ambush. This resulted in BTRs, a very old HiP helicopter and 3 nationalities all unleashing themselves amidst enormous demolitions. Of particular note was the visit of Derek Twigg MP, Defence Under Secretary, who wished to speak to the soldiers and get their view of the exercise. He was accompanied by the British Ambassador on what was deemed a successful visit by all. In addition Lt Gen Whitcomb of ARCENT visited and took time to visit the UK contingent, congratulating us on the performance of our troops and the conduct and running of the exercise. Comd 49(East) Bde, Brigadier J E Richardson, spent a number of days with the Battalion and this was his first visit since recently taking up his appointment.

The final Friday was set aside for the closing ceremony and admin whilst Saturday was closing down the camp and preparing to recover to the UK. The closing ceremony was a lengthy affair with speeches and numerous presentations including 15 to 3 R ANGLIAN personnel from a representative cross section of the Battalion.

The recovery was in the hands of the RAF and movers and went better than expected! But the Battalion did not arrive back in the TA Centres until 0500 (and in some cases later) on the Monday morning.

The troops who acted as training teams or were being exercised had a hard, rewarding and challenging exercise – some even asked to return next year! Those involved in the planning and co-ordination found it to be an education in patience and flexibility! Ex STEPPE EAGLE 07 was a great Overseas Training Exercise for this Battalion and it enabled all personnel to improve their skills and experience a culture they would never otherwise see.