



Riflemen's News

The Royal Green Jackets

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Issue No: 11

MESSAGE FROM THE REGIMENTAL COLONEL COMMANDANT

As I write I imagine the vast majority of the Regiment is involved in some way in Operation FRESCO. I am well aware of the inconvenience this has caused, particularly where it has affected leave plans and involved the cancellation of various Christmas activities but we all know that such tasks are part of life in the Army and I know that all Riflemen are tackling them with their customary gusto and good humour.

Now FRESCO is over, 2 RGJ will return to the outstanding job they are doing as the Warminster Battle Group, while 1 RGJ will have much to look forward to in Kenya, followed by a spell as Spearhead Battalion. Our TA Companies also have exciting opportunities of camps overseas, in addition to the excellent support so many individuals are giving through FTRS commitments.

The traditional purpose of this Newsletter was to keep all those serving at 'E' updated on what lies ahead in the next six months, so that we can all keep in touch. This activity may well be taken on by the ever improving Swift and Bold magazine as well perhaps as the revamped and increasingly popular website. In any event it is always our purpose to bring Riflemen ever closer together, wherever they may be.

I hope you all had a very Happy Christmas and that the New Year gives you the opportunity to catch up on leave lost.

NEWS FROM THE BATTALIONS

1RGJ

1 RGJ ended a successful tour as NIBAT 3 in North Belfast at the end of October, a week earlier than originally planned to allow early preparation for Op FRESCO fire fighting duties.

After 2 weeks well earned leave we returned to Weeton

Barracks, with Green Goddess drivers being the first group to undergo training. They then joined their vehicle commanders and crews for a one-day fire-fighting package at Donnington. Meanwhile, Fire Fighting Group and Fire Station commanders completed recesses of

Strathclyde, where the Battalion will be supporting 1 HLDERS from 30 November. The commitment is scheduled to end in late January and developments in the Fire Brigades Union strike will be watched with interest as Christmas and the New Year approach.

Despite the distractions of fire fighting, plans for Exercise GRAND PRIX in Kenya are going ahead. The exercise will form a critical part of 1 RGJ's preparation for a new operational commitment that sees the Battalion being the Spearhead Land Element (SLE), at reduced readiness for world-wide deployment from mid April to the end of July.

Possible tasks that the battalion must be prepared to accomplish include the evacuation of non-combatants, the security of overseas territories, peace support operations and disaster and humanitarian relief. Indeed, there appears to every chance that 1 RGJ may be required to deploy in the current climate of a world-wide terrorist threat, political instability overseas and increasing risk of famine.

We deploy on Exercise GRAND PRIX 2/03 from mid February until early April supported by 6/36 Battery of 40 Regt RA, a troop from 36 Engr Regt and a Lynx detachment from 9 Regt AAC. The exercise will include jungle training on the slopes of Mt. Kenya and both live fire and dry tactical training in the Kenya bush, with opportunities to see big game and experience the culture of this fascinating region. Adventure training will take place on the spectacular Indian Ocean coast near Malindi, providing opportunities for sub-aqua, canoeing, sailing, windsurfing and mountain biking. Those with an interest in mountaineering will be able to make an ascent of Mt. Kenya, the second highest mountain in Africa at 5199 metres.

We will continue to develop our 'difficult terrain' capability during 2003 and two rifle companies will participate in mountain warfare cadres, while individual instructors will be trained in cold weather

warfare in Norway during January and February. We are also undergoing a re-equipment programme to provide the Battalion with the new SA80 A2 rifle and personal role radio, with the ultimate aim for 1 RGJ to be a Light Battalion capable of world-wide deployment that is trained and equipped for service in any environment.

Our programme in 2003 will undoubtedly be both challenging and rewarding, in the knowledge that the Battalion will have a key role to play in the UK's military capability both home and abroad.

2 RGJ

2 RGJ is now in the second cycle of supporting Land Warfare Centre exercises on Salisbury Plain.

No one anticipated quite how busy the Bn would be in this new role. As we head into October the BG will be employed in almost its entirety every weekday this month. The highlight of the last six months has been the two TESEX against the QLR and the KOSB both of whom fought bravely!!

The Bn having put its best exercise foot forward during the first cycle is now entering a cadre period. The JNCO cadre includes sections from 1 RGJ and both the TA battalions. With the JNCO cadre about to pass off the Bn will run a Recce and Atk cadre during the autumn with the other Support Weapons training in the New Year.

2 RGJ continues to work on its Armoured Infantry Skills with B and R Company going to Castlemartin on a Live Firing Camp, whilst a myriad of driving courses continue to feed our driving requirements.

On the sports field 2 RGJ won the Army Major units Cricket Cup. Aply led by Lt James Fulton who also played Combined Services cricket this year. The Rugby league team has made the semi finals of the Army Cup and we eagerly await the start of the novice boxing season were we face 1 PWRR in the first round.

In the next six months we hope to assist 1 RGJ with their training in Kenya. We deploy on another three TESEX using the new Area Weapons Effect Simulation kit. We are now individually tracked round the Plain. Not only that, but a chip in your canister can tell if you are taking a sneaky breath of "fresh" air and then kills you disabling the laser in your weapon. It is no longer that much fun ... for the opposition.

RRV (RGJ)

It seems that A (Royal Green Jackets) Company at Oxford are indeed "Chosen Men" having had a hectic but exciting previous six months, there seems to be no let up in the opportunities open to the Riflemen in the next.

Over half of the RRV team entering the Army Ski Championships in January are from the two RGJ Companies in Oxford and Milton Keynes. We look forward to some good press.

The RRV has been asked to provide 44 Soldiers of mixed rank and Cap Badge for Op Fingal: a deployment to Kabul from March to June 03. A (RGJ) Coy have provided Soldiers for Voluntary Mobilisation for this Operation. Captain John Leever will lead the HQ element and Lt Xavier Griffin will be the Platoon Commander. The bulk of the Soldiers in the composite

platoon will come from A (RGJ) Coy.

Also in the planning stage, is the new role for the TA that we will be part of. A Civil Contingency Reaction Force to be committed to help the Blue Light services in the event of a 9/11 style attack in the UK.

If that is not enough, we are to lead the RRV involvement in Exercise Amber Hope in Lithuania in June. We hope this will be as interesting as Cossack Express in Ukraine was in Sep 02 where A (RGJ) Company appeared on Central TV News on two consecutive days.

To sustain these tasks recruiting has been the main priority and has been successful making the Coy some 30 soldiers over strength.

We look forward to a visit from The Lord Mayor of Oxford in February that will be linked in with a presentation of SaBRE certificates by our Hon Col, Brig Nigel Mogg to supportive employers.

We at A (RGJ) Coy are always looking for ways to promote the image of the Regiment in Oxford and given the tasks before us we will have little trouble in doing this. The Company is strong, in good heart and training to a new standard of professionalism needed by today's TA.

If E Company thought that 2002 was an exciting year, with a cracking live firing exercise in the Ukraine, then 2003 looks set to be even better!

A composite RRV Force Protection Platoon will mobilise in January, to deploy to Kabul for three months on Op FINGAL. Training for those Volunteers deploying is well under way as this edition of Riflemen's News goes to

press, and will gather pace through the early part of the year before we deploy in February.

Needless to say, both RGJ Companies of the RRV, and E Coy in particular are well represented amongst those going to Afghanistan. Apart from the chance to participate in the most current operation that the Army is involved in, the FPP are looking forward to the firm leadership of Capt John Leever. Fortunately CSgt Andy Ansell will be on hand to advise on misplaced procedures.

A local girl band have become the "FPP mascots" and have already made their first visit to our training. Hailing from Milton Keynes, Erica and Elizabeth have a background in modelling, and are breaking into the music business. We are looking forward to seeing much more of them over the coming weeks.

The training for the FPP is the RRV's main effort, and will incorporate a challenging live firing package in Brecon and CPTA before the OPTAG phase fine tunes their skills for theatre. Troops who have served in Kabul in the past have often found the harsh, wailing cries of the muezzin strangely disconcerting, as he calls the faithful to prayer - but of course the E Coy lads are fully inoculated against this having grown used to Strangler's demented yelling over the years.

The Afghanistan deployment is due to finish in late May, and E Coy will then "turn on a sixpence" and deploy to Lithuania as part of the RRV Partnership for Peace Exercise AMBER HOPE. This will see us operating as part of a multinational Battalion in a Peace Support Environment.

Behind both these two significant deployments, though, the Company is going

to be busy developing its capability as part of the new Civil Contingency Reaction Force (CCRF) in line with SDR New Chapter. Several Riflemen will also deploy to the Falkland Islands and Kenya in support of the Regular Army, while Rfn "Jock" Brown and "AWOL" Martin are already serving in the FRY on FTRS.

The annual Champion Rifleman competition was held in October, and congratulations are due to Rfn "Ankles" Clarke and LCpl Marc Hairsign for their excellent performance in winning their respective categories, and also to Pte Harris the champion female soldier.

There have been several comings and goings over the past few months. After 4 years with E Coy, the OC Maj Roger Smith is to move on as he is relocating to Pembrokeshire. In the meantime he is "double-hatted", as he is filling the vacant RRV Training Major's slot on FTRS. WO2 Shuv Dove has taken over as CSM from Pez Ryan, who is now growing his hair in emulation of Maj Mike Foster-Brown, and bought a tweed suit, brogues, trilby and monocle as befits a pink-cheeked young Subaltern of Rifles. CSgt Tony Cousins has jumped the counter and been "born again" as a Greenjacket to take on the CQMS appointment, while we have welcomed Sgts Sav Saville and Rucksack Hrycak into the Sgts' Mess. Congratulations are also due to Ruckers and Cpl JJ Johnson on their recent engagement. On the permanent staff side, CSgt Fred Cowan will move to Bn HQ in December to join the Training Team, and we look forward to welcoming CSgt Proctor as his replacement MPSI.

So an excellent start to 2003 is in prospect - watch this space for further news from "the 6th Bn".

LONDONS (RGJ)

F (Champion) Coy are happy to report that we remain at our full establishment with fresh recruits turning up at Davies Street on a weekly basis.

After nearly two years of stability in the SNCO plot the New Year sees some important changes. WO2 Andy Coyle has succeeded WO2 Jim Bewley as CSM, with Jim moving off to the RRV as RQMS. CSgt Martin Smithson has moved across from Mortars as CQMS and CSgt Perry Tuson has taken on RRTT following WO2 Chris Percival's move to HQ Coy as CSM.

Following a very busy second half year of 2002 - Battlefield Tour to South Africa, Annual Camp in Sennelager, Diving in Cyprus, plenty of Ceremonial including 30 soldiers on Parade at The Cenotaph under the command of Capt James Shackleton - the first half of 2003 should be a good deal quieter.

Financial pressure in London District has had a major impact on our training time with the net result being only one training weekend scheduled each month: Company training weekends in January, March, April and June and Bn FTXs in February and May. The London District military skills competition that Green Jacket Companies have won so often, The Courage Trophy, has been cancelled next year along with the training time allocated to prepare for it.

Our soldiers continue to support the regular army on

Operations with Rfn O'Gorman and Leveratt off to Afghanistan in January with the Royal Rifle Volunteers.

Reference is made above to F Company being the London Regiment Champion Company for 2002. The Competition consisted of: Athletics, Tug of War, Rugby, Skill-at-Arms, and an arduous march and shoot. We are pleased to report that F Company won just about everything in sight and the OC, Maj Ray Rock, took pleasure in banging his heels in in front of the CO, Lt Col James Cunliffe, to collect a rather fine trophy. Well done us.

G (RGJ) Coy are pleased to inform our fellow Riflemen that we are recruiting well, and are close to full establishment.

Our recruiting team under Sgt Kibble have had a busy year, and have been extremely successful in ensuring a steady stream of willing bodies into Phase 1 training, then onto CIC, and ultimately into the Company Platoons.

The New Year of 2003 will see G (RGJ) Company taking part in Company and Inter-Company Training, with the CO's focus of Defensive Operations continuing during these months. These are a great source of rivalry, as for every defensive force, there has to be an aggressive OPFOR, which is always seeking to exploit every opportunity!

The month of May will be filled with a selection of support for Ex Executive Stretch (an opportunity for selected employers to gain a "hands-on" experience of training and circumstances that may be encountered whilst serving in the TA), a

KAPE opportunity with The London Regiment RHQ Open

Day, and a Regimental FTX Big Match 6 to round May off.

Throughout June, our focus will be on shooting, and our riflemen will provide a strong contribution to the London Regiment Shooting Team's preparation for TASAM.

This year may see a change of the Regiment's training focus, as we say farewell to Lt Col JR Cunliffe, and welcome our new CO Lt Col J Mooney who will ensure that the London Regiment are ready to support the changing and challenging roles and responsibilities for the TA of the future.

The Company welcomes back Lt Chris Sykes on his successful completion of his mobilisation tour in Bosnia, as G2 officer to 1 Welsh Guards. Also LCpl Duffield returns from Kosovo, where he has been employed as a MT driver to the Engineers.

G (RGJ) Company currently has 5 members supporting the regular Army on FTRS:-

Cpl Little in Yugoslavia, Rfn Aylett, Hickey and St Luce in Bosnia, and Rfn Purvor serving with 2 RGJ in Warminster.

HONOURS AND AWARDS

Queens Birthday 2002

MBE

CSgt M Pashby

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