



**LEICESTERSHIRE & DERBYSHIRE
YEOMANRY
(PRINCE ALBERT'S OWN)
B SQUADRON
THE ROYAL YEOMANRY**



From Colonel R.E.J.Boyle DL the Honorary Colonel



This year I must undoubtedly begin by telling you that at present fourteen members are away on Operation Herrick 14 in Afghanistan and a further two on Operation Tosca which is guarding the blue line in Cyprus which divides the Cypriot Greeks from the Turkish quarter to the east. Those serving represent a greater number than any other squadron within the Royal Yeomanry which is testament to the magnificent spirit in Tigers Road which is infectious to all those who visit. The deployment is on-going and all members will return in the autumn.

Thereafter there will be a series of homecoming parades which I hope will be well supported in Leicester and Derby. Prior to going overseas there was some intensive training in this country but also some very realistic training in Cyprus last summer which gave a true flavour of the heat and dust to be expected in theatre during a summer tour for all those who anticipated being selected. I had the good fortune to visit the overseas exercise to see for myself the rigorous training which was considered to be thoroughly worthwhile.

As ever the Frezenberg celebrations were very moving and there was a greater support than in recent years which I hope will continue to grow. More recently I attended the Pass out Parade at Pirbright in Surrey in early August and was able to present Trooper Pointon with the prize for Best Recruit of his intake which was a huge achievement as he was one of 120 who attended the course. The course content is such that the attendees are expected to absorb the information in two weeks that regular army recruits do in fourteen weeks which is no small expectation.

Meanwhile those not deployed are making their mark and recently as part of the regiment were part of a team that came second overall in the London District Military Skills competition again at Pirbright which was no mean achievement. It should also be said that the recent announcement in the House of Commons about the future of the reserve forces is very welcome and we can all look forward to greater impetus in our training and role in support of the "One Army concept". The future looks bright for us and with the greater integration with the regular army as their numbers fall we will play an ever more demanding part which will mean that there will be a greater commitment asked of all ranks.



Finally I would like to draw your attention to the appeal which was launched earlier this year. Until now there was no means to assist with the welfare of those committed to operational tours should it be necessary with the increasing demands and risk placed on them. I would like you to know that there has been a huge wave of support and currently the total is very encouraging for which I thank all who have contributed so generously. It will mean that we will be able to support our members as necessary not just now but in the future as they get older. There will be further opportunities to make a contribution and I know that we will get the support from the general public which is very satisfying as indeed we already have done so on several occasions when we have had collections at local hunts and Point-to-Points. For those of you who would like to support the Welfare Fund please either contact the Squadron offices or visit the website www.ldywelfareappeal.co.uk

Finally I know you will all wish to join me in wishing those currently deployed God speed and a safe return later in the year.

B (LDY) SQDN, THE ROYAL YEOMANRY

TA CENTRE, TIGERS ROAD, SOUTH WIGSTON, LEICESTER LE18 4WS 0116 277 9768

It has been a time of considerable upheaval within the Squadron. June 2010 had the regiment warned off to provide the main element of support to Op CORTEZ (the provision of Forward Operating Base Surveillance equipment) in Afghanistan. This was a cross regiment trawl of circa 50 personnel, all to be done in conjunction with our normal training in CBRN (Chemical Biological, Radiological and Nuclear) Formation Recce.

As a precursor to the deployment, the Annual Training Exercise (the new phrase for Annual Camp) was conducted in Cyprus to aid some environmental training and theatre specific training on patrolling and tactics; aside from the very pertinent training aspects of the trip to Cyprus, it was a great opportunity for the Squadron to enjoy what Overseas Exercises are all about.



Patrol ex near RAF Akrotiri Cyprus

The SDSR (Strategic Defence Security Review) had an affect on the Afghanistan deployment in that the places earmarked for Regimental personnel were taken by 5Regt RA who were looking for new roles. As a result the deployment went into a state of flux for a number of weeks, eventually popping out the end of the Big Green Army Machine as us supplying augmentees to the 9/12th Lancers and Scot's Dragoon Guards mainly, and a number of other units.

Training then rapidly took the guise of ensuring every man had the correct driving licences as all vehicles in theatre require an HGV licence as minimum and we wanted to be as useful as possible. This was coupled with a concentration on improving fitness as some would be being used in ground holding, light infantry roles.

During the manic preparations the Sqn was sorry to say "see you soon" to Major Legh-Smith who's new civilian employment took him to Afghanistan to aid the Australian Army in support of one of their new armoured vehicles; questions were asked if an ex landscape gardener with degree in history was adept enough at vehicle maintenance and knew enough about electronics and radar theory to aid them sufficiently, but a crash course in A Level physics seemed enough to get him up to speed. Capt Jim Graham took the reins stepping up admirably from the 2i/c's slot to lead, before he too volunteered for Afghanistan leaving a newly promoted Capt Julian Harris to conduct the quickest field promotion in peace time from Training Officer to OC in 6 or so weeks.

Very sadly after leaving his job ready for mobilisation in November and just before being mobilised Sgt Douglas Gallagher was involved in a car accident that left him in a coma for a number of days. I'm pleased to say he's made a fantastic recovery, and in true form he was making the lives of the nurses hell in no time. He's currently still off work, but all signs are looking good that a full recovery will be made and we look forward to welcoming him back to the Squadron as soon as possible.

Since the deployment of those on operations the Squadron has become a quieter place with regard to numbers, but not with the amount we are being asked to do. We busy ourselves with the requirement of getting those qualified for the next deployment (HERRICK 18 in Nov-Dec 2012), ensuring that the ever expanding number of instructors required is at least somewhere approaching that required of us by RHQ, and try to fit in the bread and butter of our work; being adept Reconnaissance Soldiers. Something that we are doing well at with Tpr Pointon achieving Best Recruit at his CMSR (Common Military Syllabus (Recruit) – Basic Training), the Squadron coming a credible 2nd in the military skills competition at London District's GOC's challenge cup, with the regiment also coming 2nd overall.

Shortly after Major Richard Legh-Smith's return to the UK he informed us with regret that the offer of a job had enticed him and his family to Cyprus and he would be leaving the squadron; we will miss him and thank him for the huge contribution he has made over the years.

We have had with some fantastic reports coming back from our guys on Operations, currently 16 of the Squadron are deployed as follows.

Operation HERRICK (Afghanistan) – 13

9/12 Royal Lancers (Brigade Recce Squadron) – 5

Royal Scots Dragoon Guards (WARTHOG squadron) – 4

5 Reg Royal Artillery (CORTEZ Operator) – 1

Quartermaster's Stores Bastion – 1

Liaison Officer to the US Marines (Camp Leatherneck– 1

2i/c at the Afghan National Army Officer Training School (Kabul) – 1

Operation TOSCA (UN mission to Cyprus) attached to 3 Royal Anglian - 2

Post Operational Tour Leave after 3 month tour of HERRICK - 1

In looking forward to the next few months clearly of note is the safe return of all those deployed, the first of whom is SSgt Hall due at the start of August, with the rest due back around October – November. After last year's high point of EX LION STAR (The Cyprus OTX), one was hoping that the experience would be trumped with the promised trip to the USA on this year's camp; in true army style though hopes have been dashed and the USA replaced with Garelochhead, Scotland. Renowned for it's year round midges and proximity to the Faslane nuclear submarine base. We then have the usual post camp lull which as ever is punctuated by the Annual Equipment Care Inspection, a mammoth task in ordinary years, so I am expecting that this year will be somewhat more of a challenge to make sure all the Squadron's vehicles and equipment are administered correctly and have the correct paperwork and service histories.

Running in tandem to all of this is the recent news that the manning of the TA is to increase from a trained (ready to deploy at 180days notice) strength of circa 19,000 to 30,000; how this happens in detail is up to discussion, but it will clearly have some large and hopefully positive ramifications for the Squadron and Regiment as a whole.

Captain Jim Graham

(Liaison Officer; Forward; TF Helmand to TF Leatherneck):

“Notes from the front; well nearly!

I am now 2 ½ months into a 6 month tour of Afghanistan and have been asked to write a few notes on my tour so far. It is actually lovely to look back on all that has happened in the time I have been here, and hope you will forgive the meandering memories recalled in the missives below.



**Camp BASTION Capt Jim Graham
greeting the PM**

I can still remember the evening of my initial departure very clearly, which in real time is not that long ago I suppose, but seems to me an eternity. My wife Jo dropped me off at Chilwell to pick up my weapons and say the dreaded goodbye. It was getting near dusk and I was desperately trying to fathom the military system there, being a professional soldier now I was reticent to be my usual doddering self. Being a Sunday night the camp was deserted, and there was no one to receive us, there was however a lone transit van in the corner of one of the car parks, and a casual enquiry to the driver proved I was in the right place. So after much messing around I got myself sorted out and said a nervous goodbye to Jo. It was a relief to finally be on my way after many months of mobilisation, and in truth many years of mental preparation for something I have always wanted to do.

We then set off for Brize Norton in a minibus with 2 others, all bound for Afghanistan. We arrived at RAF Brize Norton at about 11pm, ready for the flight at 5am (probably due to a culmination of many 5 minutes before 5 minutes before, all the way down the command chain). Thankfully my baggage was about 5kg below my limit of 64kg, more by luck than judgment, which was a relief. In preparation for being significantly over I had put 3 or 4 heavy items at the top of my bag to be ditched should I exceed the allowance. I then assumed military waiting mode in the corner of the departure hall. There is one thing I love about the military system, and that is the lack of stress in transport. Once you are in the cradle of the military system, especially travelling to somewhere military, certain things cease to matter; time for one. As I sat in the departure hall I reflected on how frustrated I would be to waiting for 6 hours in Brum airport whilst going on holiday, and how much a delay would be disheartening and annoying. This issue does not arise in the military system; if I were delayed it would be 1 or 2 more hours pootling about on my laptop, with nothing to miss when I got to theatre. I didn't need to worry about food, money or connections as, one way or another that would all be sorted out for me. As it happens the flight was perfectly on time, indeed my connecting flight got pulled forwards (something I will not expect on my R&R flight back to the UK). [Editors note: It did not, and was delayed 1 day and counting]

The first week in theatre was integration training, very good by all accounts. It did leave you staggered by the difficulty of spotting an IED, and putting on a tourniquet with hands covered in faux blood, but that aside, confident about the tour ahead. The lack of safety training on the use of staplers and dangers of RSI more pertinent to my role, were an obvious omission to many but quite understandable none the less.

I was soon moved to my permanent base, Camp Leatherneck a sprawling US metropolis, quite stark in its difference to the homely comfort of Bastion, but still plush by comparison to most. Accommodation came in the form of two man ISO containers, each with individual air con although, alas, no en-suite. The ablutions are situated in ISOs 100m or so away from the accommodation, reinstating that genuine camping feel. My roommate is a Royal Marine called Will, an intelligent chap with a penchant for work, so we balance each other out well. I am still trying to demonstrate through my actions that economy of effort is the main principle of war, although the marine philosophy does not readily recognise this. Will has managed to make the can very homely, a Hooters calendar has been used as wallpaper to spruce the place up a bit, and various items such as tables, hanging wardrobe, rungs and bedside lamps have all been accrued in a 'don't ask where it came from' manner.

My role in theatre is Liaison officer between Task Force Helmand (The Brits) and Task Force Leatherneck (the USMC), based with the USMC in their Combat Operations Centre; this has now been augmented with the addition of liaising to Task Force Bellau Wood. All three task forces combined cover the entirety of Helmand province. The role itself is very interesting, I am tasked with understanding what is going on in detail in every task force, their priorities, operations, concerns and constraints, so that I can brief each commander on the intentions of the other. The briefings are mainly to the Task Force Helmand commander and his staff, but also works the other way. The upshot of which means that I have access to every operation going on in the AO, and have the mandate to dig in to any area in more detail. It is my job to ensure I have good contacts in all the headquarters so that I can find out information quickly and completely should it be required.

There is a small British contingent on camp, about 110 strong. We now have our own little common room, which was completed about 2 weeks ago. There is a quiz every Thursday night which gets a good number of us together, usually about 40 or so, with prizes and plenty of non-alcoholic Becks. Integration with the USMC continues and is as fun as ever. They are a superb bunch of people, very focused and motivated. I can see why their motto is Semper Fidelis (always faithful), I think it sums them up very well. There are of course the amusing cultural gaps that get exposed every now and then between us. Some of the simple ones are the best, for example they can't seem to grasp that my teapot is purely for brewing tea, so far I have had 4 of them come up and ask me whether it is battery powered and where the heating element is. When I say you need to add hot water they look very confused and ask what the point of it is, and then remind me that there are tea bags in the chow hall..... It is the same both ways round of course, and I have unwittingly put my foot in it a number of times, mainly using slang British words that are very rude in translation. Most things seem to be forgiven though, and as a last resort assuming a Hugh Grant style bumble seems to rescue a situation. The cavalry ethos of economy of effort, flair and panache seems to be new to most around here, but by the end of my 6 months they will be converted!"



L/Cpl Payne (JACKAL driver A Sqn 9/12th Lancers)
At the time of writing I've been doing a lot of foot patrols into local areas where the Taliban take a shine to us with small arms fire and some RPGs, plenty of escorting the HumInt [Human Intelligence] teams and providing close support for them while they conduct shuras with the local leaders

Cpl Brassington (Watchkeeper D Sqn Scots DG)
I am one of the watchkeepers with the Sqn Ops room based at Camp BASTION. War stories: 0, Massive excitement: 0, Food: Average. One of the S Sqn guys and myself have managed to streamline some of the Ops room procedures and hopefully will be really useful when back in the Sqn to help run SHQ (Having helped run one on Ops). To the lads on the ground: No matter how bad the comms are, we WILL find a way of getting through to you and getting spares and equipment to you.

L/Cpl Coombes (Base ISTAR Operator – Attached Lima Coy 42Cdo RM PB FOLAD)
I run the base surveillance equipment, an integrated suite of day / night cameras and some listening devices.

Life is pretty quiet at the moment, there's been a few contacts where the surveillance equipment has been really useful as it sits high up with some great optics. I've also been out on a few foot patrols, the most notable of which was a 9 hr one where we found and IED factory with parts to make 54 devices, lots of ammo and a brand new type of pressure plate initiator.

Tpr Bailey (BARMA Team D Sqn Scots DG)
My job is to BARMA [Use a metal detector in order to identify] suspicious ground to ID any IEDs that the WARTHOGs may initiate. We've been playing 'Battlefield Taxi' to the marines and BRF [Brigade Recce Force], providing overwatch on Taliban positions and provoking the Taliban into starting engagements with us.



**Tpr Yates desert leaguer
'En suite' with Warthogs**