



FUSILIER NEWS

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INTRODUCTION

I had hoped to say that 2010 should be a comparatively quiet year for the Regiment now that both Regular Battalions are back in the UK and that all the TA Fusiliers contributed significantly to operations in 2009. You will see in this Newsletter, however, that the Regiment is again supporting operations in Afghanistan with deployments from our TA Battalion and Coys. We wish them good luck and a safe return.

Most, if not all of you should also have received the 2009 Journal. Can I please have constructive comment on the Journal in terms of content and what you would like to see included or indeed removed? I ask the same for the Newsletter.

1 RRF

December 09 saw activity on Salisbury Plain slightly reduced prior to Christmas leave. X, Y and W Coys deployed to harass 1 R IRISH BG prior to their deployment to Afghanistan. The Fusilier insurgent forces certainly kept 16 Air Asslt Bde on their toes with plenty of IED, RPG and small arms attacks throughout the area. The Mortar Platoon, as ever, carried out live firing pretty much right up to the last day before leave, and provided much needed safety staff to ensure other units could gain valuable experience before deploying to Helmand Province.

Simultaneously, the WARRIOR specialists were busy in the garages as X Coy took-over the Z Coy WARRIOR fleet, leaving Z as the Light Role Coy for the coming 4 months. The HO/TO went smoothly thanks to the watchful eyes of WO2 Leech and CSgt Stephenson. The Company also deployed to Castlemartin Ranges for a week of WARRIOR ranges and dismounted field firing, culminating in an integrated night ambush.

In the final week before Christmas leave Z Company ran the Battalion's own selection for the upcoming Queen's Division Fire Team Commander's Course. Fifty three Fusiliers stepped-forward to be tested in a variety of events, and the top 25 are now at Brecon – hoping that the worst of the winter snow is over! (Ed; *as I put this together it's snowing!*)

Time was also found during the final week to reward the men of X Coy with a day off paintballing, pitting members of the Coy against one another, with all tactics and regard for rank going out of the window! There was also a chance for the Coy to practice in its new football kit in preparation for the Battalion's Newcastle Cup competition in spring 2010. Sixty five Members of the Battalion were also invited to the Coventry City vs Newcastle United match in Coventry, and were well looked after by the club, and welcomed by the fans.



X Coy's paint balling day

Battalion Christmas Day began with the usual early morning gunfire being distributed throughout the Coy lines. The WO and Sgts Mess entertained the Officers with an amusing Christmas poem reviewing some of the highlights of 2009, before both Messes marched to the Cookhouse – accompanied by a rather suspect, rag-tag bunch of drummers in unusual scarlets. 2Lt Darling (yes, that really is her name) also proved to be an accomplished percussion player.

Christmas Dinner was distributed, beer and port drunk, and a good performance from the Corps of Drums thoroughly enjoyed. The CO then said a few words and presented his Commanding Officer's Medals to the three Fusiliers in each Coy whose hard work during the year had merited particular recognition. Special mention must also go to Fus Clough who, after almost 25 years service and numerous “holidays” to almost every continent in the world, has now left the Regiment.



Fus Nixon and Hill (W Coy) enjoying Xmas refreshments



*WO2 Hunter, Capt Cooper and Capt Hall at Xmas Lunch
(they must be related)*

Numerous deserving members of the Battalion (WO2 Ed Rutherford, WO2 Darren Wilkinson, Sgt Rose, Sgt “Cheeks” Pearl, Cpl Evans, Cpl Fuller (AGC SPS), LCpl Spuhler and Fus Nicholson) were also presented their Long Service and Good Conduct medals by Brig Allen (Comd CTG). Finally the Chefs auctioned a number of their well-decorated and undoubtedly delicious cakes for the Fusilier Aid Society.



WO2s Rutherford and Wilkinson and LCpl Spuhler receive receive their LS & GC medals from Brig Allen

Having recovered from the New Year’s Eve celebrations the commitments resumed, with Recce, JAVELIN and Mortar platoons deploying to Lydd as demonstration troops and assisting in Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape training for Joint Force HQ in Northwood. X and Y Coys supported Ex TEAM SPIRIT along side Challenger 2 tanks and RE support vehicles such as Titan and Trojan, whilst Z Coy revised their low-level dismounted and FIBUA skills.

Y Company said goodbye to Sgt Andy Andrews, who leaves to take over the London Regimental Support (recruiting) Team, after a very successful 18 months as PI Sgt and acting PI Comd. In his place they welcomed Sgt Hopcroft from 2 RRF who looks forward to getting to grips with his WARRIOR!

Cadres and training continued apace as each of the Manoeuvre Support Coy Platoons taught their new members the key skills required to carry-out their tasks, whilst WARRIOR, BULLDOG and other courses continued in the Training Wing. WO2 Rutherford (CSM Z Coy) has also been passing on his expertise on the drill square as he prepared thirteen members of the Battalion to deploy to Fromelles, France to re-bury the bodies of Fusiliers killed in the first World War that were recently uncovered in an unmarked grave.

Looking forward, February contains plenty to keep the Battalion busy. Away from Salisbury Plain the boxing squad will deploy to Bolton to compete against a successful local team. In Tidworth Exercise PASHTUN RAT (a 2 week exercise providing both OPFOR and CIVPOP) is quickly followed by Exercise LIONS STRIKE (a conventional ‘green’ role BG task), and in the blink of an eye March will be upon us.



Fus Bannon (Y Coy) Sporting the Latest in Taliban fashion



The chefs show off one of the cakes for the Fusilier Aid Society Raffle

The Corps of Drums play at Xmas lunch for the Fusiliers



2 RRF

On return from OP HERRICK 10, the Battalion conducted a number of Homecoming Parades, received the freedom of a new borough, celebrated Christmas, trained a crew to take part in some very arduous adventure training sailing and started preparing for a return to Public Duties.

Parades. On the Battalions return from Afghanistan all of the Regimental Areas wanted to welcome home the Second Fusiliers and show their appreciation. The Battalion conducted homecoming parades in Warwick, Ashington, Morpeth, Newcastle, Bury, Salford, Rochdale and Hounslow. Everywhere the Battalion went people turned out in their thousands waving union flags, cheering and shouting their appreciation. In Morpeth the tables were turned when Alan Shearer, The Deputy Lord Lieutenant for Newcastle turned up to support the Battalion and not the other way round! The individual local Councils arranged terrific receptions, with a ready supply of beer and food for all. School choirs, groups of saxophonists, brewers, public speakers and even the Blues Brothers turned up across the country to entertain the Fusiliers. All of this activity saw the Second Battalion featuring widely in National and local media; The Sun, The Daily Mail, The Times, The Manchester Evening News (twice) to mention but a few, and on television they featured on ITV London Tonight, BBC London, ITV Central, BBC Midlands today, Look North, Granada, and M News.



The Battalion Marches through Newcastle City Centre

Battalion Christmas Day. Due to the long and well deserved Christmas leave for the majority of the Battalion, Christmas was celebrated in traditional military style on Friday 3 December. The troops were woken by members of both the Warrant Officers' and Sergeants', and Officers' Messes accompanied by the Drums Platoon. To lessen the blow of seeing the senior members of the Battalion up before them the troops were forced to drink Gunfire, this really set the tone for the day. After a proper Christmas dinner of

turkey and all the trimmings it was out into the cold for a friendly game of Officers v Seniors football which the Officers graciously allowed the Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' mess to win for the second year running.

EX TRANSGLOBE. Seven soldiers from the Battalion have been selected to embark on an exciting adventurous training expedition that will see them crewing the Army's Challenger 67 Adventurous Sail Training Craft. The crew will embark on a six week voyage from Auckland, New Zealand to Montevideo, Uruguay. The trip is part of a Tri-Service expedition called EXERCISE TRANSGLOBE. The Fusiliers are involved in the most demanding leg, crossing the Southern Ocean, far enough south to be in the iceberg belt and rounding Cape Horn before heading north to their final destination. All those taking part in the expedition have had to complete sea survival training gaining vital life-saving skills before their departure; this expedition is adventure training at its most demanding.



*The TRANSGLOBE team training
(Ed: I think the waves will be bigger in the Southern Ocean!)*

Public Duties. Looking forward to the Spring, the Second Battalion will be returning to Public Duties, guarding Her Majesty's Palaces and Castles across London, in particular Buckingham Palace, Windsor Castle, St James' Palace and The Tower of London. The whole battalion is out practicing marching up and down the square, a far cry from patrolling in the Green Zone. Those who were with the battalion last time are all being re-measured for their uniform dependant upon how much PT they have conducted since returning from Afghanistan, and those new or returning to the Battalion are being fitted for the first time. The intensive drill programme and tailoring is to ensure the battalion is ready for the General London District Inspection prior to the Commanding Officer carrying out the role of Captain of the Queens Guard on Buckingham Palace Forecourt for the Battalions first duty on 1 March 2010.

5 RRF

The main training event of the period was the traditional Battalion weekend at Warcop Training Camp. This included an orienteering competition around the frosty Cumbrian hills to blow the cobwebs away before the junior ranks sat down for their Christmas dinner served by the Senior Ranks and Officers. The Battalion's Catering Platoon, lead by WO2 Middlemiss, delivered an excellent traditional feast with all of the trimmings, very much maintaining the good food the Battalion had become accustomed to in the field when in Kenya a month previously. Col Catesbury (Rifles Hon Col for Durham) took this opportunity to present 8 members of the battalion with their Volunteer and Reserve Service Medals (VRSM) for 10 years of loyal and unbroken service with the TA. This was followed by a joint Officer's and Sergeant's Mess function allowing for a few drinks and the chance to finish off what was left of the Christmas Dinner.



CO 5RRF watches on as Col Catesbury presents OC HQ Coy Maj Paul Blaney with his VRSM



5 RRF Chefs await the start of the Christmas Dinner (L to R: LCpl Goodfellow, Sgt Johnson, WO2 Middlemiss and Cpl Currey)

During the weekend there was also an informative presentation from CGS's briefing team bringing the Battalion up to speed on some new issues and allowing for feedback on what was liked and disliked in today's Army. This was delivered with a TA slant and made use of a rare opportunity of having the whole Battalion together in one place.

The Sunday Morning started with gunfire for the weary looking junior ranks before breakfast, followed by a Fusiliers Vs Rifles football match. The readership of this newsletter will be delighted to know that the Fusiliers thrashed the Rifles 7 – 1 on a difficult and partly frozen pitch.



CSM X Coy WO2 Dixon (in blue) in his capacity as Referee conducts a last minute pitch inspection as the teams wait for kick off

The start to the New Year was, like much of the country, hampered by the snow and ice. However, this did not prevent eight volunteers from the Battalion making it to RTMC Chillwell for their 2 week mobilisation

training prior to deployment on Op Herrick 12 (Afghanistan). The Regimental Operations Support Officer (ROSO) Capt Graham Preston-Pacey deployed with the troops and has reported back that all is going well. The men will fill gaps in the 1 LANCS orbat as part of 4 Mechanised Bde when they deploy to theatre in late March 2010.

Finally, it was outstanding to see so many of the Second Fusiliers and the wider Regimental family up in the North East for the welcome home parades in Ashington, Morpeth, and Newcastle. This has certainly wet the appetite for the forthcoming County Freedom Parade in Morpeth on the 24th April 2010 where all three Battalions will be represented on parade. The Colonel of the Regiment will be present as will His Grace Colonel The Duke of Northumberland.

C (City of London Fusiliers) Company The London Regiment

The Coy has been concentrating on operational commitments during the last 3 months. Maj Richard Celm has been deployed to Afghanistan as OC NCOTT (NCO Trg Team), Lt Richard Kelly and seven ORs have also deployed to Afghanistan working in various roles from NCOTT, to Force Protection RE IED teams, to Force Protection in general. They are expected to return in Oct 2010. The London Regt is also providing a Platoon + for Herrick 13 and C Coy is expecting to provide 6-8 NCOs and Fusiliers for this Tour. Training for all of these soldiers has begun already and they will mobilise in June 2010. Altogether a very busy time operationally for the LONDONS and C Coy. These deployments will amount to 5 Op Tours in 5 years for Coy and Pl size groupings from the Regiment.

Personalities. Lance Cheese has taken over as the OC of C Coy and has recently been promoted to Major. As stated above Maj Richard Celm and Lt Robin Kelly have been deployed, the CQMS CSgt Kev Tester has also been mobilised and Sgt Wayne Wright is acting as CQMS in his absence. 2LT Alex Morris is leaving the TA due to heavy work commitments, Lt Chidi Nwanou is still performing most ably in the outstation at Blackheath. It is hoped that in the very near future we will gain 2 Officers (ex Regulars) who have joined the TA. WO2 Paul Seymour remains as CSM, WO2 (SPSI) John Kelly is on his final few weeks with the Coy as he leaves the Army at the end of May. WO2 Kelly has been an enormous asset to the Coy and it is with sadness that they say farewell.

The other main personalities within the Coy are the permanent staff - Capt Steve Kentish (PSAO), CSgt Geff Smithers (QPSI) and Steph Milsom (AO) who are still providing excellent work in supporting the Coy.

Training. As previously mentioned (last edition of the news) the TA had huge financial cutbacks imposed on all areas of Trg, this was rescinded slightly in Nov/Dec 2009 and the Coy were able to provide more paid MTD (Man Training Days) to the Soldiers. It was not, however, at the level required to Train and sustain a TA Coy that was deploying on back to back Op tours, but it at least provided resources to enable Recruit Trg to be properly financed. There is, however, light at the end of the tunnel and it is apparent that MTD budgets will be reinstated during the next financial year.

Events. Due to the lack of 'Green Trg' the Coy Officers and staff have had to explore other avenues to ensure that the Coy camaraderie and team spirit was maintained, this included becoming members of the BMF (British Military Fitness), Paintballing events, Adv Trg in Wales (Mountain Biking), and a planned Battlefield Tour to the Somme. The Coy has one paid centralised Drill night per month and the rest are paid C1 Trg (expenses only). Weekend training was stopped, but has now restarted and a recent MATT's weekend ensured that all Soldiers receive their annual 'Bounty'. There are other training weekends planned during Feb and Mar 2010.

AREA HQ NORTHUMBERLAND

December was a very busy time with the North of the Tyne preparing to host the 2nd Fusiliers after a very arduous tour of Helmand Province. The planning had started in April and the Civic authorities were more than supportive and this helped with the smooth running of the Welcome Home Parades.

The morning of Tuesday 8 December saw the parade muster at Ashington TA Centre before stepping off towards Station Road where more than a thousand people thronged the small town centre, showing their support for the Battalion's bravery in Afghanistan. Many former Fusiliers were seen wearing the hackle and Union Flags were very much in evidence. The parade then moved to Morpeth where the troops met both the Lord Lieutenant, the Duchess of Northumberland and, Mr Alan Shearer. Many of the Fusiliers made good use of the time before the parade started by frequenting the local pubs and getting to meet the locals before marching through the town! Once again, the people of the area showed their support for the troops by turning out in strength and as in Ashington, making donations to FAS.

The Fusiliers mustered at the Civic Centre in Newcastle on Wednesday 9 December and received a fantastic welcome from the people of the city where they were only just able to squeeze through at times on the parade route. This was followed by an excellent Lunch Reception provided by the Lord Mayor which took place in The Banqueting Hall and where the Fusilier families were able to join them. The local Fusilier Geordies were able to go home and the remainder made the long trip back to Hounslow. This Headquarters is most grateful for the time given by 2RRF in making the trip and for showing the Hackle in the NE.

The Heavy Cavalry Band from Catterick must be congratulated for their very professional support to the parades where the standard of music was excellent.

The people who supported the 3 parades were very gracious with their donations to FAS, and the Area Headquarters was able to send more than five thousand pounds to RHQ.

During January and early February the final touches will be made to arrangements for the Freedom of Northumberland which will take place on Saturday 24 April in Morpeth. All Infantry Regiments have the Freedom of Cities, Royal Boroughs and Towns. In Scotland they also include Districts. The Fusiliers will be the first to be granted the Freedom of a County which in the case of Northumberland is one of the largest Unitary Authorities in the UK. The day will comprise of a Drumhead Service at County Hall followed by a parade through the town centre where The Freedom will be granted. This will be followed by a Civic Reception in the Riverside Leisure Centre for the marching troops and members of the Association.

The Fusiliers Officers Club St George's Ball will take place in the Assembly Rooms on the Saturday evening and it is hoped that as many Officers and Sgt's Mess Members can attend as possible.

AREA HQ WARWICKSHIRE

Fund raising for the Fusilier Aid Society has been the main effort in Warwickshire & the West Midlands since the last edition of Fusilier News. Central Branch of the Association has raised £3000 by way of bucket collections at Sainsbury's in Leamington Spa with the Warwickshire Band in support. Murray Richards, Chairman of Nuneaton Branch climbed Skiddaw suitably dressed as Father Christmas during leave and so far has raised £250. The Leamington Spa Branch in conjunction with the Home Guard Club held a very successful Tea Dance which raised £400. The Area Secretary took on the challenge of the Coventry Half Marathon completing the run in 2 Hours 6 minutes raising £2500 for FAS.

The first 5th (Warwickshire) Battalion reunion was held at the Stoney Lane TA Centre on Saturday 16 January which attracted around 120 former members of the Battalion. The reunion was superbly organised by Sgt Jo Wilkins formally of A Company and he must be congratulated for running such a successful and

memorable event. Amongst those present were a former Commanding Officer, four Company Commanders and five Company Sergeant Majors. Both Sheldon and Central Branch were in evidence and as always had an eye on increasing their membership. Events on the horizon are:

4 -7 March	Sheldon Branch Battlefield Tour of Normandy.
5 March	Officers' Club Dinner& Past Officers of 7 th RWR, and 5RRF – Officers Mess 30 Signal Regiment, Bramcote.
20 March	Central Branch Annual Fund Raising Dinner, Royal Court Hotel, Coventry.
21 April	Kenilworth Welcome Home Parade – 2RRF

AREA HQ LONDON

Since returning from the Christmas break the workmen have been completing the finishing touches on paintwork around the building and more of the HQ furniture is being repaired and refurbished.

Having successfully achieved round two of the Heritage Lottery Grant for the refurbishment of the London Museum, a 'start up' meeting was held with a Heritage lottery team on 18 January and the HQ is now in a position to continue beyond the development stage. A mentor has been appointed who will monitor progress throughout the life of the project. A short article is in the 2009 Journal together with gift aid certificates. It is hoped that those who are not 'donated out', will contribute to the project.

An agreement has been reached with Historic Royal Palaces (the organisation that runs the Tower) for the Museum to be an integral part of the Tower of London and covered by the overall charge for entry to the Tower with effect 1 Apr 2010. This agreement was signed formally by the Governor of the Tower and the Museum Chairman, Major Maurice French, on 28 January 2010. From 1 April the museum will be staffed by Tower personnel on a rota between the White Tower and Jewel House and the front kiosk will be permanently removed.

On 19 January the HQ held a successful London Fusiliers Cadet coordinating conference attended by most of the adult instructors from the seven CCF's and twelve Detachments in London. The CO 1st Fusiliers and his support and recruiting staff also attended and he gave a most useful presentation to the gathering. The meeting also voted to form a Cadet Branch of the Association and Major Mark Lloyd-Williams from Haberdashers' Askes' Boys School CCF was voted as Chairman. It remains now to recruit members and arrange activities.

AREA HQ LANCASHIRE

The New Year started in a dramatic way with a heavy fall of snow that caused chaos throughout the Northwest, and it goes without saying that it had a significant impact on visitor numbers to the museum. Nevertheless work carried on even though the option of staying overnight in the museum was considered because of the poor conditions on the roads.

The HQ were pleased to welcome Bob Keating who stayed for two days to carry out an audit of Regimental silver and property. The exercise threw up more questions than it answered and there is still more work needed.



*Bob Keating during the property check
(Helen Castle thinks he is a new Exhibit)*



The half inch of snow that brought Bury to a standstill

WO2 Lee Snelling has been attached to the HQ to work in the Museum as part of his resettlement package. He will be focusing on promotion and marketing of the museum's services and he has already made an impact.

Looking ahead, the next temporary exhibition will be on Afghanistan. The museum is starting to collect now. All members of 2RRF are urged to dig out all those souvenirs and interesting items that could be used to illustrate their story in Helmand Province.

NOTICES

Employment.

Throughout 2009 RHQ has made contact with a number of firms and organisations who are keen to employ Fusiliers of all ranks who are leaving the Regiment or who have recently left the Regiment. Employment opportunities are in all of our traditional areas but predominantly London. Personnel who are in the process of leaving or have been out for no more than 6 months should contact the Regimental Secretary for details of vacancies.

Officers' Annual Dinner.

The Officers' Annual Dinner this year will be a traditional Summer Ball in Tidworth, organised by the Second Battalion and will include the ladies. The date is 3 Jul 10. Officers wishing to attend are to contact Capt John Davis at RHQ. There will be a limit on the numbers attending so book early to avoid disappointment. Costs and a full programme of events will be issued in the Mar Newsletter.

FAS

In 2009, FAS alone has contributed in excess of £120,000 in benevolence to Fusiliers both serving and retired and to the families of our Fusiliers killed in action and those Fusiliers wounded in action and their families. We can be justifiably proud of our achievements and there will be a requirement to continue to support Fusiliers and their families who are in need for many years to come.



I R Liles OBE
Brigadier (Retd)
Regimental Secretary