



ERE SPRING 17 UPDATE

Commanding Officer's Introduction

Since the last update was sent out there has been the announcement about refinement of Army 2020 which has seen some significant changes for parts of the Army. From a RTR perspective there will be little change; we will continue to be a CR2 Regiment based in Tidworth and will move to 12 Armd Inf Bde some time in 2019. The area where there is most uncertainty is with regard to FALCON and our assumption is that there will be no change until at least September 2018 – thereafter there are a number of options and we will wait to see what happens.

We are currently heavily committed to providing training support (which has provided some excellent opportunities for us to train ourselves) and readiness (including a trial to move armoured vehicles through the Channel Tunnel). At the moment we are one of three UK Standby Bn HQs with BADGER also held at readiness for this task. Members of the Regiment are also deployed on operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, Ukraine and Estonia.

Cambrai 100

From the Regimental Colonel:

I am very conscious of the 'radio silence' from HHQ RTR about the Centenary. The main reason for this has been the selection of an affordable event management company to run the social events. Prior to Christmas, an English company quoted just under £200k. Subsequent work revealed another English company at £150k and a French company, local to Cambrai at around £100k. The French company has now been selected, not least because they know the local area and were recommended by Cambrai Town Council.

Now that a major part of the planning has been settled, we would expect to have the final Admin Instr, cost of events, final programme and return proforma out to everyone by the end of April.

Also of note on hotels, the French company will shortly provide a website for hotel reservations outside Cambrai. There will be three dormitory towns, in order: Arras, Douai and Valenciennes. A coach transport service will be available to collect at the town squares of those towns and take people home after events. In order to make most efficient use of that service, the aim will be to use the Arras hotels first, then move onto Douai and Valenciennes if needed. It is known that accommodation currently exists in those towns for 1500+ people. The website will enable people to view hotel choices and make reservations direct with the hotel. This website link will follow shortly.

For now, I'd be grateful for your confirmation please on these questions: have you booked hotel accommodation privately and, if so, which hotel; please let me know if you are still waiting to book a hotel?

Please send the information to Mrs Debbie Solomon at bencoord@royaltankregiment.org.

AJAX (CR2 Sqn)

AJAX have returned to their A Sqn roots by taking on the role of the Armd Sqn for the UK Trg Sp BG (think LWC BG). As such the Sqn has been busy supporting numerous courses such as the Tp Ldr and Crew Cmdr course on Ex COMBAT TEAM and TEAM SPIRIT alongside Urban Ops Instructors courses, Anti Tk courses and such like. In order to fully support these courses the Sqn now holds 14 CR2 and a large slice of the echelon packet so it is really heartening to see full hangers and a busy tank park very reminiscent of pre Whole Fleet Management days! Away from SPTA the Sqn has managed to send a number of soldiers on AT including skiing in Austria and the AJAX Shield competition is up and running with a day and night navigation exercise kicking off proceedings for 2017. Following Easter leave the Sqn will move to the 1RRF BG to continue their Trg Sp task and we look forward to supporting the British Racing Drivers Club in Silverstone for the F1 GP, marching in Liverpool as part of Armed Forces Day 2017 and returning to Lydd & Hythe Ranges for advanced small arms and pistol ranges. So whilst we won't be deploying to BATUS this year the Sqn has a varied and fulfilling FOE to keep us busy back in the UK!

BADGER (CR2 Sqn)

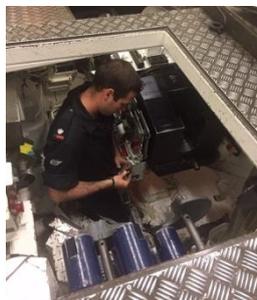
After welcoming in the new Sqn Ldr (Maj Curry), BADGER have had a fast-paced start to the year. As the RTR BG has taken on its role as Training Support BG, the Sqn has played its part in supporting some of these tasks. For some, this has included a SERE course where those involved were responsible for the training of RAF personnel.



Meanwhile, back on tanks, 5 Tp have been supporting AJAX on the crew commanders' exercises and have managed to hone their skills to a high standard. As the year has moved forward BADGER deployed on a new-look CT1 where the crews were put through their paces and managed to tighten their skill set in more demanding scenarios. They also trialled the use of alternative night imaging systems, where the FIST sight came through strongly and greatly increased the ability of the commander to command at night. The Sqn also welcomed back former SSM Graham Wilding who brought along the ACF to act as enemy for the exercise.

As well as work, there has also been some play with the Sqn holding a successful dinner night where the Tprs got their chance to experience a formal occasion and over the course of the evening do the inevitable chest poking of the chain of command.

After an offset Easter leave, the Sqn returns with the focus being back on gunnery. With 2 weeks in Telford scheduled in and a limited time in camp, the Sqn will soon find themselves back in Castlemartin. Aside from the military training, BADGER completed its inter-Tp competition with 6 Tp reigning supreme and had huge success at the Regimental boxing night where they won the competition. In the boxing Tpr Harding deserves a mention for his valiant effort throughout.



CYCLOPS (CR2 Sqn)

CYCLOPS have been slowly building up towards the highlight of their committed year: BATUS OPFOR Tank Coy. The hardest part so far has been consolidating the manpower in one place to be able to conduct our own squadron training. This is largely due to the wide variety of tasks the squadron is supporting either on exercise or in support of readiness – but we do so uncomplainingly and have looked to take advantage of all opportunities. All Commanders, Drivers and Operators have now completed our temporary conversion to CVR(T) for the OPFOR fleet. CYCLOPS tanks have learned some harsh lessons from supporting the JAVELIN PI Comd's cses on SPTA and will now look to implement these procedures across the Corps. Cpl Teece and Tpr Simpson recently returned from visiting the 12e Régiment blindé du Canada in Quebec and conducted Op NUNALIVUT 17 with them in the Arctic Circle. Temperatures regularly reached -70 degrees. They came back with some very astute observations, not just on tactics but on how the Canadians deal with the same day to day issues experienced by all Tank soldiers. We have been invited to attend in greater numbers next year. CYCLOPS have been getting hands on with the new VIRTUS kit and equipment to try and Sgt Bannister has been trying to identify the best loadout for Tank crewmen. Tpr Larty recently finished 1st in the PNCO Cadre run by Lt Boland and has now been promoted to LCpl. We have had personnel take part in Battlefield Tours in Berlin and the Urban Ops Study in Glasgow, as well as deploying with the Cycling Team in Cyprus. Next up we are conducting some Sqn level training in the new Unit Based Virtual Trainer (UBVT) operating on T90 against CR2, and are practising our advanced pistol firing on local ranges. We will deploy to Canada in May for Ex PRAIRIE STORM 1 and 2 with the 1 MERCIAN BG before handing over to BADGER in July.



Cpl Teece in the Arctic



CYCLOPS Tp Ldrs at the House of Lords

DREADNAUGHT (Command and Reconnaissance Sqn)

Fully refreshed after Christmas leave, DREADNAUGHT returned to the Committed Year. It began by conducting a Personal Development week, with JNCOs and Tprs being educated on research, presentation and briefing techniques. The week culminated with the JNCOs and Tprs delivering presentations on current affairs and sqn history, of note was LCpl Hinton's team who delivered an excellent presentation on: 'How did Lt Col H Foote VC win his Victoria Cross?'

Following this, the squadron enter the Training Support Battlegroup phase of the year. This included supporting numerous Reconnaissance & Armoured Tactics Division and Specialist Weapons School exercises. In particular, for Ex TEAM SPIRIT (Armd Crew Comds course), the squadron took the opportunity to deploy Step Up in order to provide a Battlegroup 'wrap': issuing Operational Staff Work via data, acting as the higher HQ on the net and receiving SitReps/Reports & Returns. Deploying Step Up was a success and added a further level of detail and realism that hadn't been seen before on the course.

DREADNAUGHT then quickly shifted its focus to the Potential NCO Cadre (photos below), with Lt Boland (CYCLOPS) and Recce Troop delivering Ex BLACK GRIT. The first week consisted of basic skills and lessons, taught at Westdown Camp, swiftly followed by a 6 day exercise on Salisbury Plain. OC DREADNAUGHT and the RSM watched the Final Dawn Attack, which was not simply a deliberate attack but included defence and counter-attack.



After Easter Leave, DREADNAUGHT looks forward to deploying to Castlemartin for Firing Period 1 and then to BATUS as the OPFOR Headquarters for Ex PRAIRIE STORM 3.

EGYPT (Support Sqn)

Almost immediately after returning from Christmas leave the Regiment was subject to the full range of Audits and Inspections in a Combined Assurance Week (CAW). Although the new assurance regime for the army is in its infancy and the direction and information available prior to the CAW was limited, the outcome from all the visits was acceptable given the tempo the regiment is currently operating at. More importantly, the CO is now fully aware of the risk he is carrying and what measures are in place to ensure we remain compliant.

EGYPT has been heavily involved in Training Support Battle Group tasks for the last 3 months. This has seen, predominately MT Troop, providing support to training exercises on Salisbury Plain and further-a -field. EGYPT have also been supporting the sabre sqns, DREANAUGHT, and the Attached Arms as they complete their elements of what has been the main effort for The RTR Battle Group for the first quarter of 2017. Although in support of

training exercises this period has proved invaluable for practicing low skills and for planning and executing the deployment of the manoeuvre elements of EGYPT.

Concurrently the RTR Road Cycling Team deployed to Cyprus to conduct a pre-season training camp, 11-18 Mar. This was planned and executed by WO2 (RQMS) Johnson. Based in Episkopi Garrison the Team completed 5 days of varying intensity riding covering 236 miles with 22,400ft of elevation gain, including an ascent of Mt Olympus. The team will now attend the Army Cycling Union pre-season training camp in Wales 27-31 Mar prior to competing in the Army Road Race Series for the RAC. WO2 (RQMS) Johnson has also planned and will deliver the RAC Road Cycling Team training camp in Ripon, 8-13 May 17.



Looking forwards, EGYPT will be on readiness Apr-Jun 17. We have a Land Equipment Assurance visit schedule for 24 Apr, which is the first day back from Easter leave to look forward to. And finally, EGYPT will also support the regiment at Castle Martin Ranges in Jun 17 and conduct the Annual Crew Test on our own vehicles.

FALCON (Area Survey and Reconnaissance Sqn)

FALCON has rapidly adopted a flat readiness structure of R5 (30 days NTM) for 2017 in support of the Vanguard Armoured Infantry Battlegroup (VAIB). This change has been welcomed by the squadron and has allowed us to re-distribute manning, vehicles and create a culture of ownership and accountability down to the lowest level. Part of this re-balancing saw an initial period of postings in and out of FALCON which has served demonstrate rapid adaptation, either back to CR2, or for some their first exposure to FUCHS and C-CBRN.

FALCON continues to lead on a programme of experimentation with Route Proving & Clearance (RP&C) and Explosive Ordnance Disposal & Search (EOD&S) sub-units. The next phase of experimentation is a series of analytical war games that pitch the three capabilities against specified threats with a view to physically experiment, hopefully on an OTX, towards the end of the year. The focus throughout will be on establishing the best way to use and synchronise a combination of the three capabilities to deal with a CBRN-E threat. Concurrently FALCON has received FUCHS DMI, VM and Tech Elec training in Germany and Defence Live Agency Training at Dstl Porton Down thus allowing us to sustain readiness and deliver crew training throughout the year.

Capt Mcilroy deployed on Ex KEY RESOLVE 17 as a CBRN advisor to the HCRBG on an annual Exercise held by the United States Forces and the Republic of Korea Armed forces. Additionally members of our DECON teams, headed up by Cpls Lane and Ferrier have supported decontamination trails of the AJAX AFV and have assisted Dstl in the delivery of Chemical and Radiological training across the squadron. Ever committed to the moral and physical component the squadron has had 4 soldiers represent 22 Engineer Regiment in Nordic skiing at the Inter-service championships in Ruholding Germany. The Artificer has headed up a team of 6 who completed the 10 day SF2 qualification in Sonthofen Germany and Lt Chandler and Sgt Creese deployed on Ex SNOW SAPPER 17 at the Corps of Engineers annual Ski camp in Goldegg, Austria.

Finally, the future of C-CBRN and the role of FALCON within it continues to develop and Capt Nairn Chisholm (Sqn Ops Offr) has recently returned from a secondment to AHQ where he played a key role in the development of a cross-DLOD capability paper for CGS, thus allowing FALCON to inform the debate. Furthermore the squadron have worked hard to educate the wider Army on the AS&R capability and have hosted successful visits from Comd 1AI Bde, Comd ES (FTC) and SO1 CBRN FP from 2Gp.

In sum it has been a busy yet productive quarter for FALCON which has set the conditions for success in 2017; more to follow next quarter after some well-earned Easter leave!



1. Ex SNOW SAPPER 17.
2. FUCHS DMI, VM & Tec training.
3. FUCHS training in Germany.
4. 1X Commander visit to FALCON.
5. Defence Live Agent Training at DSTL.