

"OUT & ABOUT"



**HOME HEADQUARTERS
THE ROYAL DRAGOON GUARDS
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December 2009

Commanding Officer's Notes

Lieutenant Colonel J S A Carr-Smith

I wrote to you last in June; this newsletter aims to bring you up to date with events of the past 6 months.

Training

Having returned from Iraq in June 2008 and spent the latter part of last year recuperating, 2009 has been a year of 2 halves. To use the current military jargon, we spent the first 7 months of this year conducting Hybrid Foundation Training in other words generic warfare training. We are currently conducting Mission Specific Training (MST) ahead of our deployment to Afghanistan in March 2010.

The Regiment returned from Summer Leave in late August 2009 and commenced MST immediately. Whilst the organisation for our forthcoming tour was - at the time (i.e. in August 2009) - still very much TBC (more of which later) it became obvious that we would have to fold four sabre squadrons into three. And so (sadly) we did; the majority of the deployable manpower from A Sqn was 'folded' into B, C and D Sqns.

The MST 'conveyor belt' is now a tried and tested period of training. For the Regiment it included the following activities, all of which had to be completed during Sep-Dec 09 (in chronological order): Command and Staff Trainer - 1 week; Combined Arms Tactical Trainer - 1 week; All Ranks Briefing - 2 days; Tactical Commanders' Cadre - 1 week; Cascade Training - 5 weeks; Confirmatory Exercise - 1 week; and Live Fire Tactical Training - 2 days. Additionally, there have been significant periods of individual training, the most burdensome of which has been a myriad of driving related courses (e.g. conversion to Viking, Mastiff, Ridgeback, Husky, WMIK, Vixen, Vector, Springer etc). And as well as driving courses there have been countless language, Team Medic, weapons, intelligence, search, cultural awareness, communications, ECM, helicopter handling and Theatre IT courses.

I won't go into the detail of all the above activities but I will just say a few words about the confirmatory exercise we conducted in Nov-Dec 09. The aim of the exercise was to confirm that we had conducted our Cascade Training correctly and learned the relevant (essentially Infantry) drills and techniques. The exercise lasted 1 week and was conducted at Thetford in Norfolk. It consisted of the following 4 x 36 hour stands: compound clearance, explosive method of entry and site sensitive exploitation; framework patrolling based out of a Forward Operating Base (FOB); cordon operations, casualty evacuation and reaction to Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and Indirect Fire; and finally clearance of the 'Green Zone' - i.e. Close Quarter Battle (CQB) along a 2 km stretch of river surrounded by crops, trees, bushes etc. The exercise was conducted in the dismounted role and was very well resourced. For example, all Sqns interacted with GR4 Tornado, Apache Attack Helicopter, Chinook, Merlin and Sea King helicopters; and an organisation known as 'Amputees in Action' (consisting of individuals who have lost legs/arms in motor bike accidents etc) was utilised to add genuine realism to casualty evacuation incidents. And - much like Canada back in May-Jul 09 - significant numbers of Afghans were involved in the exercise to give it a more authentic feel. All in all it was an outstanding week's training.

OPERATIONS IN AFGHANISTAN IN 2010

Turning now to next year, and specifically the Regiment's imminent deployment to Afghanistan. Despite deploying there in less than 4 months time, the 2 x RAC Regts (RDG and QRL) and 6 x Inf Bns (40 Cdo, 1 SG, 1 SCOTS, 1 MERCIAN, 1 LANCS and 1 RGR) who are due to contribute force elements (FE) on Op HERRICK 12 (Apr-Oct 10) are still unclear on exactly where in Helmand Province they are going and what they will be doing. My fellow Commanding Officers and I find this deeply unsettling. Nevertheless, I am confident - based on what I know today - that about 400 members of the Regiment will deploy to Afghanistan.

The breakdown is currently due to be as follows:

- B Sqn (about 80 soldiers) will deploy in Mastiff armoured vehicles in the protected mobility role - Apr-Oct 10.
- C Sqn (about 100 soldiers) will deploy as a Police Mentoring Team - that is to say they will mentor the Afghan National Police - Apr-Oct 10.
- D Sqn (about 125 soldiers) will deploy in Viking armoured vehicle (which will be replaced by Warthog in the protected mobility role - Jun-Dec 10).
- Recce Tp (about 25 soldiers) will deploy to Kandahar (i.e. not Helmand) in Ridgeback to form Commander Regional Command (South)'s Tactical Group (i.e. they will provide a Protected Mobility function for the 2-star General (currently British) who commands all ISAF troops in Southern Afghanistan).
- Battle Group Headquarters and the Echelon is training generically to deploy in whatever role the Brigade Commander deems fit.
- And finally, we have about 25 soldiers spread across the Brigade Reconnaissance Force and Task Force Helmand's Light Aid Detachment.

This will be the Regiment's first deployment to Afghanistan. I sense the soldiers and officers are genuinely hungry to deploy, to help the people of Helmand Province make their country a better place, and to further develop the Afghan National Security Forces. But it is a daunting task and our soldiers are only too aware of what it is that is being asked of them. Many have friends who have returned from Helmand with truly harrowing stories. Some are scared. Many are anxious. But everyone is focused and we are investing significant time in preparing the Regiment emotionally for the tough times that inevitably lie ahead. But we do so safe in the knowledge that we are truly blessed in having such a supportive wider Regimental family.

Regimental Secretary's Notes

I can't believe its time for my second newsletter, here at Home Headquarters we have a new Colonel of The Regiment; Brigadier Johnny Torrens-Spence, for those of you who don't know him he was the first Commanding Officer of The Royal Dragoon Guards, which just goes to show how far we have come since the amalgamation. In addition we have had a change in the museum, Trevor Johnson has retired from the museum attendant job and has been replaced by Meredydd Jones in the upgraded museum assistant post, which makes him the assistant curator. While I'm on the topic of museum, there are great changes in the offing, many of which are dependant on funding. It is planned to create a York Military Museum, to achieve this we will join forces with Yorkshire Regiment to create a museum that will hopefully endure for years to come. It will serve to consolidate the links the regiment have with the city just as it has in Enniskillen, which in turn will assist with recruiting. And lastly a plea, if you do move or change your email address please keep us up to date if you want to be kept up to date.

OBITUARIES

We regret to inform members of the following deaths and offer sincere
Condolences to all relatives and friends

Mrs P Haslett (Peggy) Wife of John Haslett 5INNIS DG
Who died 20 May 2009

Mr R Willetts (Roy) 4/7DG 1942-46 125 Parkfield Road, Stourbridge, West Midlands
Who Died on 13 June 2009

Mr J Cunningham (Joe) 5 INNIS DG 1960-66, 120 Wood Park, Ludgershall, SP11 9NT
Who died 22 June 2009

Major WP Riley MC (Bill) 4/7DG 1937-53, Fritcham House, Kings Lynn, Norfolk
Who died 5 July 2009

Mrs C Dolan (Carol) Wife of Capt. John Dolan 4/7DG
Who died 13 July 2009

Lt Col L Curtis MC (Leslie) 4/7DG 1942-63, Cranham house, Vyse Rd, Boughton, Northampton. Who died on 16 July
2009.

Mr P Williamson (Peter) 5INNIS DG 1948-53, 39 Ronald West Court, Langdale Ave, Loughborough, Leics. Who died
17 July 2009

Mr W Gordon (William) 5 INNIS DG 1958-80 14 North Sperrin, Belfast
Who died 18 September 2008 (Belated entry)

Mr James Gardiner (Jimmy) 5 INNINS DG 1950-52 49 Gateside Ave, Cambuslang Glasgow
Who died 25 July 2009

Major JPA Welch (Peter) 5INNIS DG 1954-67 Washers Farm, Raddington, Somerset
Who died on 28 July 2009

Mrs ER Vigors (Rosa) The Stable House, Brill, Aylesbury
Who died 25 July 2009

Mr D Herd (Dennis) 5INNIS DG 1947-49 1 Brunson Rd, Newcastle Upon Tyne NE13 8AF
Who died 30 July 2009

Mr D English (Derek) 5INNIS DG 1941-46, 4 Sycamore house, Woodland Court, Avon
Who died 12 Jan 2009 (Belated entry)

Bishop Mark Green MC 4/7DG 1944-45, Lingfield, Surrey
Who died on 2 August 2009

Mr R Calver (Dick) 4/7DG 1944, Liberton Hospital, Edinburgh
Who died 4 August 2009

Mr A Taylor (Spud) 5INNIS DG 1943-50 2 Bluebell Drive, Cirencester
Who died 10 August 2009

Mr J Miller (Jack) 4/7DG during WW2 38 Queen's Avenue, Seaton, Workington Cumbria
Who died 25 August 2009

Mr G Horne (George) 5 INNIS DG 1947-53, 41 Myrtle Avenue, Halifax, HX2 8HS
Who died 9 September 2009

Mr F Cluer (Frank) 5INNIS DG 1946-48, 6 Georgian Villas, Omagh, Co Tyrone, BT76 0AT
Who died 15 September 2009

Mr L Palmer (Lenny) 5INNIS DG 1967-60, 87 The Crofts, Silloth, Cumbria, CA7 4HB
Who died 17 September 2009

Mr R Spruce (Reg) 4/7DG 1941-46 15 St Helier Place, Lordshill, Southampton
Who died 7 October 2009

Brigadier WFA Findlay OBE (Allan) 5INNIS DG 1949-86, Petworth, Sussex
Who died 16 October 2009

Mr F Baker (Frank) 5INNIS DG 1942-46, 26 Marlow Ave, Upton by Chester, Chester
Who died 7 November 2009

Lt Gen Sir Anthony Mullens KCB OBE 4/7DG 1956-92 Sloane Ave London
Who died 27 November 2009

Did you know.....

Redundancy & Pensions

.....The number of people made redundant continues to grow, one problem, among many others is that the contributions to your pension scheme end. The pension fund with your name on it remains. What can you do with it? And when you do get a new job should you transfer the fund or not? The answer to these any many other questions can be found in a new leaflet from the Pensions Advisory Service called *Pensions and leaving work*. Further details from:

www.pensionsadvisoryservice.org.uk or call 0845 601 2923

Healthcare

Meeting healthcare needs... A new leaflet is available help regular Armed Forces personnel, their families and veterans to understand how to access the health services they need, and what to do if things go wrong. The leaflet applies to health services in England and is available to download by visiting:

www.dh.gov.uk/en or from your local NHS Health Centre

Veterans are defined as:

'Anyone who has served for at least one day in HM Armed Forces (Regular or Reserve) or Merchant Navy seafarers and Fishermen who have served in a vessel at a time when it was operated to facilitate military operations by HM Armed Forces'.

Bereavement Allowance

.....There are benefits available for wives, husbands and civil partners who are below the state pension age when their spouse dies. Each year thousands of bereaved spouses who could get financial help simply do not claim. The benefits are not means tested and are paid for by the National Insurance contributions of the person who has died. They have to be claimed within strict time limits, so it is important to claim as soon as possible. Further details from:

www.dwp.gov.uk/advisers/claimforms/bb1_print.pdf or from your local Job Centre Plus.

Funeral Expenses

.....Not something we want to think about, but as the recession bites funeral expenses are on the up. A basic, one coffin, one car, one vicar/priest ceremony costs in the region of £3,000, double that if you want a burial plot

Topical Interest

Remembrance - The Two Minutes Silence

'The two minutes' silence to commemorate the first anniversary of the ceasefire of 11 o'clock on 11 November 1918 was almost as much of a surprise to the general public as the ceasefire itself had been. The decision to mark the first anniversary of the Armistice with a silent pause in the life of the nation was taken very close to the anniversary itself. The origins of the silence can be found in a minute dated 4 November 1919, submitted to Lord Milner for the consideration of the War Cabinet by Sir Percy Fitzpatrick, former British High Commissioner to the Dominion of South Africa. His son had been killed in France in 1917. He wrote: "In the hearts of our people there is a real desire to find some lasting expression of their feeling for those who gave their lives in the war. They want something done now while the memories of sacrifice are in the minds of all; for there is the dread – too well grounded in experience – that those who have gone will not always be first in the thoughts of all, and that when the fruits of their sacrifice become our daily bread, there will be few occasions to remind us of what we realise so clearly today. During the War, we in South Africa observed what we called the "Three minutes' pause". At noon each day, all work, all talk and all movement were suspended for three minutes that we might concentrate as one in thinking of those – the living and the dead – who had pledged and given themselves for all that we believe in ... "

Reaching Veterans in Prison

It is important that those veterans who sadly find themselves in prison are aware of the advice and support available to them as ex-Service personnel and the arrangements being made to better reach them. Prison In-Reach (PIR) is an initiative that aims to ensure all veterans that are prison or probation offenders, their families and resettlement services are fully informed of the forms and levels of support available to them whether from the SPVA or the ex-Service charities. This includes the help they can get before as well as after release. The work of Prison In-Reach is designed to contribute to the wider Government goals of reducing the risk of re-offending.

If you know any veterans in prison or their families, please draw the work of Prison In-Reach (PIR) to their attention and the main sources of advice and support described above. The more veterans in prison that are aware of the advice and support on offer, the more we should be able to help.

Elizabeth Cross

Her Majesty The Queen has given her name to a new form of recognition for the families of British Service personnel killed while serving their country. The Elizabeth Cross will be granted to the next of kin of Armed Forces personnel killed on operations or as a result of terrorism in a mark of national recognition for their loss. Next of kin will receive the Elizabeth Cross plus a memorial scroll signed by the queen, which will bear the name of the person who died. This memorial cross will not just be granted to families who have lost loved ones in recent operations, it will also be available to the families of those who died in conflicts dating back to 1948, including the Korean War, the Falklands War and operations in Northern Ireland. Further information is available from:
www.mod.uk/Defenceinternet/DefenceFor/Veteransmedals or by contacting HHQ

Useful Websites

www.armylibraries.mod.uk

Access to full text online information resources including Jane's. Has a catalogue to search for and request articles, books, CDs, DVDs. Details of specialised information services and locations of all library and information services.

www.armedforces.co.uk

Over 2000 pages of defence information, including defence projects and equipment, technology information, military books and defence suppliers details.

www.tnauk.org.uk

National talking newspapers and magazines.

www.veterans-aid.net

A self-explanatory site dealing with all veteran enquiries.

www.erskine.org.uk

Caring for ex servicemen and women. The charity is currently caring for over 1000 veterans, young and old throughout Scotland.

www.nivets.org.uk

The Northern Ireland Veterans' Association, providing advice, support and assistance to veterans and families of those affected by the troubles.

www.nhs.uk

NHS Choices

www.dh.gov.uk;

NHS Direct Tel: 0845 4647

Department of Health Tel: 020 7210 4850; Text phone: 0800 169 34 58 (UK Only)

www.veterans-uk.info

Service Personnel and Veterans Agency

Tel: (free phone): 0800 169 22 77 (UK Only), +44 1253 866043 (Overseas); Text phone: 0800 169 34 58 (UK Only)

Replacing Campaign Medals

Medals for campaign service are supposed to be treasured possessions, reflecting service to one's country and awarded by The Sovereign on behalf of a grateful nation. While their market value is often only superficial (though some can be quite valuable, particularly awards for gallantry), the recipient is expected to treat them with care and be mindful of their security.

In view of this, once medals are issued they become the sole responsibility of the original recipient, or his/her next of kin. They will not, therefore, be replaced by the MOD if they are lost. The only exception to this rule is if the medals are stolen or accidentally destroyed beyond the control of the owner, for example in a house fire. In these cases the MOD may replace the medal if proof of the loss is provided in the form of a Police Report or a claim to an insurance company. A charge is made for medals that are replaced to cover the cost of manufacture and a nominal charge for administration. It should be noted that in many cases the replacement medals will be stamped as such to avoid confusion with the originals should they ever be found. For those who have lost their medals in circumstances other than this, please do not apply to the MOD for replacements. In these cases it is recommended you approach a reputable medal dealer to obtain them (look in Yellow Pages). In most cases you will be surprised at how reasonably priced campaign medals are. Some people have suggested that second hand medals from a commercial supplier are less original than replacements bought from the MOD. This is not necessarily so. It should be borne in mind that the MOD does not hold vast stocks of new, un-issued medals dating back 50 years. The Royal Mint is still manufacturing medals for Second World War campaign service and supplies the medal offices in batches. Replacement medals will probably be of very recent manufacture, rather than date back to the late 1940s, so medals purchased from a commercial medal dealer may be, in fact, no more or less "original" than those supplied by the MOD.

Do I need to register my mobility scooter with the DVLA?

The DVLA (Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency) recently confirmed that all Class 3 vehicles (which include some powered wheelchairs and scooters) must be registered for road and licensed in the exempt 'disabled' taxation class. This does not apply to Class 2 vehicles.

Class 3 vehicles are generally larger than Class 2 vehicles and they are capable of exceeding 4mph, but not exceeding 8mph. They are required by law to have lights, indicators, a horn, rear view mirrors and rear reflectors, but they are not allowed to travel on motorways, cycles lanes or bus lanes. Class 2 vehicles are not allowed on the roads other than to cross them.

To register and license a Class 3 vehicle you need to complete Form V55/5 (for used vehicles) and take or send the form to your local DVLA office. You can find your nearest office by telephoning 0870 243 0444, by looking in the V100 information leaflet which is available from post offices that issue tax discs, or by visiting the website www.direct.gov.uk/motoring. To get the form you need you can either ask your dealer for the appropriate form or call the DVLA on 0870 240 0010 and someone will send you the form you need.

You will need to provide evidence of the vehicle's age (if available) and this will need to be submitted with the application together with documentation confirming the keeper's name and address. You will be given a nil duty vehicle licence (tax disc), which you will need to display on your vehicle.

Junior Leaders Old Boys Association



In recognition of our long association with Wareham and the Purbeck District, the council has graciously confirmed it is to bestow the highest possible honour on the Old Boys' Association with the Granting of the Freedom of the District in a ceremony to mark the occasion on Sunday 23 May 2010. The Armour Centre will also be granted the Freedom of the District in the same ceremony. We will be having a Reunion Dinner Night with our ladies in the Garrison Sergeants' Mess on Saturday 22 May 2010 after the golf and AGM. The parade the next day will start to form up from 1100hrs ready to step off at 1130hrs sharp from the Quay Side in Wareham (off South Street next to the River Frome). This will be followed by a curry lunch in the Garrison Sergeants' Mess with our ladies.

The Armour Centre has very kindly agreed to allocate the OBA up to 100 transit bed spaces (males only) in Montgomery Block, Stanley Bks, if required. Cost £7 per person for four nights 20-23 May 2010. Meals will be available in the cookhouse on a Pay-as-you-Dine basis. The rally field for campers opposite Hobart Block will also be available once again for motor homes, caravans and tents. £7 per pitch for four nights 20-23 May 2010. Those wishing to make a long weekend of the occasion will not want to miss The Light Cavalry Band – Russian Themed Concert & Firework Display at the Tank Museum on the evening of Thursday 20 May 2010. In what promises to be the most explosive band performance of the year, The Light Cavalry Band will perform a Russian themed concert; which will include Tchaikovsky's 1812 overture set to fireworks. An outdoor concert, focusing on the Music of Russian Composers and pieces from Russian folk culture, members are encouraged to bring warm clothes and chairs. Feel free to bring a picnic, although refreshments will be available from the restaurant.

Ticket Options: Single tickets purchased directly from the Tank Museum are available for £7.50, but why not make an evening of it? For £20, you can have a two-course self-service meal in The Tank Museum Restaurant and enjoy the concert. (Booking for a meal in advance is essential as places are strictly limited).

The concert commences at 1930hrs and Museum doors will open at 1800hrs, giving you an hour or more to browse through the Museum.

Please note that restaurant tickets are allocated on a first come, first served basis.
Refreshments are also available from the Museum Café.

The Keith Zambelli Memorial Trophy 2009

The Winner of the Keith Zambelli Memorial Trophy 2009 was Steve Eyre with 41 points, in second place on count back with 34 points was Dick Sealey, and in third place was Andy Robinson. The Best Guest with 32 points was Peter Elliott. Graham Haigh won the Longest Drive and Ben Gunn won The Nearest the Pin. Matt Rowley won the Booby Prize and the Damcon Prize was awarded to John Torley. Thankfully no one won the Two's or indeed the Putting Competition and all the monies went into the charity pot.

Thank you to everyone for taking the time and the effort to attend this year's Zam's Trophy, many travelled great distances and it was very much appreciated. John Torley travelled on the day from the Middle East and Jim Bowie delayed his holiday to Portugal to play after

getting a leave pass from his good lady. We would like to thank Catterick Golf Club for hosting the competition, especially the Secretary, Mairi who went that extra mile to ensure we had a good day, the catering team, Pauline and Geoff along with their waiting staff who provided a first class service. On your behalf gifts and flowers were presented to the staff mentioned. The presentation of the inscribed Dettingen framed print accepted on behalf of Catterick Golf Club by Jock Rowan was gratefully received and is hanging in a prominent position.

Thanks to all the sponsors of various prizes that have ensured a healthy amount of money entered the charity pot. Over £600 was raised on the day for Cancer Research UK. The generosity in this economic climate is truly humbling. It was good to see Colonel Nick and Eddie Theakston who put off busy schedules to visit us. I think the photographs taken by Geoff Armstrong shows that everyone had a good day even though some were less than flattering and we thank Geoff who came up trumps at short notice.

A big thank you to RSM Billy Kelly and his Mess Members who ensured that our evening ended with a bang and indeed ensured our heads received a bang in the morning. Some people did not get back to their hotels until 5am, well done.

There are many people to thank and I know some wish anonymity and we respect their wishes but on behalf of the Dettingen Golf Society we wish to thank them all and all who attended for making this year's ZAM's TROPHY a huge success, QS.

<http://gallery.me.com/geoffarmstrong/100090>

Next Year's Zam's Trophy will be held on Saturday 26 June 2010 at Catterick Golf Club.

Balkerne Hill, Colchester

SJ Todd

Balkerne Gate is the oldest recorded surviving Roman gateway in Britain and formed part of the main entrance to the town of Colchester at that time, the remains of which can be clearly seen today and sits on what is known as Balkerne Hill. It formed part of the triumphal arch built to celebrate the entrance of Roman Emperor Claudius into Camulodunum (the present Colchester).

In 1976 Balkerne Hill was cut through to form the present dual carriageway, one of the main arterial routes into the town. Along one side of the carriageway are displayed the Cap Badges of the Regiments that have been connected with Colchester and a magnificent sight they are.

Joining them now and proudly shining like a beacon is the 5th Royal Inniskilling Dragoon Guards.

Folklore has it that Balkerne Hill is connected with two nursery rhymes. The Grand Old Duke of York marched his men to the top and down the other being Humpty Dumpty, that was not an egg but a cannon that fell from the Balkerne ramparts and could not be put together again as it was so badly damaged.

Branch Notices

West Yorkshire Branch

All has been quiet on the West Yorkshire Branch front since our last function was the fourth function held under the new management with another full house and their guests on parade all enjoying a great evening of entertainment and hero's way back when. Brigadier Clendon Daukes our Colonel of the Regiment was guest of honour, and it will be sad to see him hand over the post later in the year.

The Committee have decided to hold a major annual function as close to 17 March each year mainly in the Leeds or Bradford areas, which is convenient for most. In addition a second more relaxed function will be organised **every other October**. Details have to be confirmed; first one will kick off in Huddersfield next October.

The proposed Branch visit to the Theakston Brewery at Masham near Ripon is postponed until the New Year. Once this has been confirmed, the full details will appear on the letters to inform all those registered on our Lazy Dragoon List. Should you wish to be included on this list which now consists of over 200 names, please get in contact with the **Secretary, John Speers on Tel: 01274 652345**. Everyone on this list will share their contact details with like-minded Old Comrades in order to keep in touch.

Our next annual function will be held in April next year again at the Leeds Irish Centre. Details will be circulated in the New Year.

Finally, from all the hundreds of Yorkshire based Old Comrades, I would like wish every one a very Happy Christmas as well as a Healthy and Prosperous New Year.

Quis Separabit JM

Fermanagh Branch

Saturday 24th October 2009 will be a date that will be remembered for a long time to come. The Balaclava ball was held for the first time in Enniskillen, it marked the 155th anniversary of the charge of The Heavy Brigade in 1854. The evening was a huge success and was attended by 116 old comrades from near and far; an even bigger and better event is scheduled for 2010. On Remembrance Sunday wreaths were laid at Enniskillen War Memorials and The Regimental Chapel in St McCartin's Cathedral by Bill Brown and Tucker Love, Sean Gallogly and Ron Tiernen on behalf of the Skins and by Sergeant Dave Pulford on behalf of The Royal Dragoon Guards. The next event is the Association Christmas dinner at the Moorings Restaurant on Friday 18 December at 8.00pm.

Oxford Branch

Our Guest of Honour for The Blenheim Dinner this year was Col Nick Freemann RDG along with his good lady Susie. Also The Vice Lord/ Lt of Oxfordshire John Harwood and The Garrison Padre Rev Mike Thomason CF.

We also invited a group of vets who parade regularly at The Final Turn here in Oxford they included Jim Lewendon Vice President of B/Legion Oxfordshire a young Police Officer who represented Thames Valley Police and many others.

We had an in house Piper a young Officer Cadet (Oxon OUTC) who piped us into dinner playing The Regt March (what else).

After the meal Col N Freeman gave a speech bringing us all up to date with The Regt activities and future plans and an update on the Mod in general. After which our oldest member Arthur Vincent (former 4th/7th) and WW11 Vet presented Col Freeman's Susie with flowers (complete with Regt colours). We then had a very interesting speech from the Vice Lord/Lt on his role in Oxfordshire and his involvement with the repatriation parades here in Oxford. We then asked the young police officer (Jon Shaw) to speak on behalf of Thames Valley Police. Which he did very well. A credit to his force.

The evening was followed by a good raffle (must add here one of the top prize was a large bottle of whiskey kindly donated by *Brian (Batco) Kershaw*.)Who could not make it on the night.

We thank you Brian. Happy to tell you It went to one of the vets .A great evening that went on till late. We plan next year to bring it forward to Friday 19th Nov (one for your diary). All those reading this that attended we (The Oxford Branch RDG) thank you and hope to see you all again next year and for those who did not make it we hope to see you next year. And to all old comrades wherever they may be the branch wishes you a Happy Christmas and New Year.

Blind Skiing

Next years Blind Skiing trip is taking place from 27th February to 6th March 2010 in Bavaria. Although still called Blind Skiing it has grown to include adults with a range of disabilities that has included wounded ex service personnel. I think it's the 25th consecutive year that this has been held and involves a number of old comrades as guides and instructors. They give of their time, skill and expense to provide the opportunity to take part in the sport without having to pay over the odds for specialist instructors and equipment. New instructors and guides are always welcome, if you think you can help in any way please get in touch with the Regimental Secretary at HHQ.

CAPTAIN OATES MEMORIAL SERVICE SUNDAY 21 MARCH 2010

This years Memorial Service will be held once again in the Royal Hospital Chapel, Chelsea. Members wishing to attend, and all are welcome, should plan to arrive at 1030 hrs We are planning to parade with the Pensioners at 1040 hrs prior to the Church Service which will begin at 1100 hrs. Medals may be worn. There will be ample car parking in the Royal Hospital grounds. Following the service, there will be a cash bar in the 'In Pensioners Club', followed by lunch, at a cost of £7.00 per head. Please book in for lunch with HHQ.
Please make cheques payable 'HHQ RDG'

COMBINED CAVALRY REUNION LUNCH 9 MAY 2010

The Combined Cavalry Memorial will take place on Sunday 9 May in Hyde Park. This year it is the turn of The Royal Dragoon Guards to lead on the parade. As you know The Regiment will be away over this period so it falls to those serving at ERE and The Regimental Association to ensure there is a large turnout marching past our Colonel in Chief; The Prince of Wales. Lunch afterwards will once again be a buffet affair held in The Victory Services Club, Marble Arch.

