



Mail from Mali

C Squadron QDG OP NEWCOMBE Newsletter

C Squadron, 1st The Queen's Dragoon Guards, is deployed on OP NEWCOMBE 2 alongside the 2 Royal Anglian Task Force to provide a Long-Range Reconnaissance Group to the United Nations Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), which is attempting to establish and maintain a peace process in Mali.



Welcome to the second edition of 'Mail from Mali,' covering our second month deployed on the United Nations Peace Keeping tour in Mali. The month of June has been fairly busy as we have conducted the initial few patrols whilst also servicing all the vehicles, kit and equipment which we received when we arrived. Thankfully, all of C Squadron have now arrived into Mali and it is certainly good to have the Squadron together after a long time apart due to the quarantine and flight delays.

The Squadron is in high spirits and enjoying the challenges and opportunities that being deployed presents. One of the challenges is certainly the unrelenting heat but everyone is becoming well versed in understanding ways to mitigate the effects and how much water to drink just to keep hydrated. The month of June has also seen us settle into a rhythm and a routine, thereby allowing us to enjoy some of the other aspects of living in Camp Bagnold.

The gym facilities are excellent, with the majority of C Squadron making good use of this facility. In addition, there is a weekly volleyball tournament which is proving to be a real highlight: whilst currently not topping the

leader board, C Squadron has a number of good teams which are in the higher echelons of the table! Watch this space for hopefully some good news on future tournament victories.

Our camp is next door to a German camp which hosts a small supplies shop and a larger military shop, both of which provide a few basic essentials to make our lives easier. Despite this, morale is certainly improved when the flight eventually land and the backlog of parcels and post arrives – a few weeks ago over 650 parcels were delivered on one flight. I will take this opportunity to thank you all for the parcels you are kindly sending to the deployed personnel from C Squadron, they are all very much appreciated. As we head into July, the wet season begins but the temperature does begin to slowly reduce (thankfully). We will aim to keep you updated of our progress and any other updates from Camp Bagnold. We hope you are all enjoying the warmer weather in the UK.

Major Bryn Williams
Officer Commanding C Squadron



JUNE

The month of June has seen all of the remaining QDG personnel arrive in Camp Bagnold and C Squadron is all present and correct, ready for the challenges ahead. The delayed soldiers had to complete the RSOI (reception, staging & onward integration) package and also prepare to deploy on the LRRG's (Long Range Reconnaissance Group) first 5 day patrol. Time was limited and everyone needed to muck in to ensure the Squadron was ready to roll out of the gates in good order. With such a great team this was possible.

After the first patrol, the Squadron now understands how to operate in the harsh conditions of the desert. Cold water is a luxury and luckily there is a way to cool the water down using a wet sock! We will be getting fridges for the vehicles in a month or so, which we are all very excited about.

The Dragoons of C Squadron are slowly becoming masters of desert manoeuvre. Navigation and route selection are vital to success. It is very clear that the maintenance of the vehicles is more important than ever. Luckily we have the best Royal Electrical & Mechanical Engineer team out here with us to keep us going on the long missions ahead.

The weather is starting to turn and there is more and more rain. We haven't seen the worst of it by a long way which is worrying as it's been substantial at times. However we are planning for bad weather ahead and will be ready for it this time!

Please enjoy the pictures which should give you an idea of what C Squadron has been up to in June.

Captain Bertie Lewis – 3rd Troop Leader



The vehicles being fixed out in the desert



The Sqn complete had to zero their rifles



The heavy weapons being check fired



LCpl Whiteing chatting to nomadic children



Waterloo Day – 18/06/2021



A Word From C Squadron Sergeant Major WO2 Rhys Davies

The month of June marked the reunion of the squadron following a period of delayed flights and extended quarantine. The Dragoons of C Squadron have settled in with minimum fuss and Jackals have been renamed after Welsh towns and cities as a reminder of our roots; even if the weather is somewhat different in Cathays!

The troops have spent time rehearsing techniques and procedures in the sub-Saharan heat, ensuring each member of the team knows exactly what they are doing in any likely situation. Troops rarely congratulate themselves when they get it right but continue to practice until they can't get it wrong. Admittedly this logic was not applied in a recent volleyball competition, where we narrowly missed out on first place (we should've known we couldn't win when we put Captain Cooper in the team..).

Although each vehicle crew now operates like a well-oiled machine it is evident that the environment alone will pose its own unique challenge. The soldiers of C Squadron have found new ways to ensure their kit and equipment remains in good order, namely a four-inch paint brush at arm's length after a sandstorm. Recently the rain caught us off guard and for many of us it was like nothing we'd ever seen, including those from South Wales, which should paint the picture!

As the second month of the tour draws to a close the troops are looking forward to the challenges that lay ahead. The environment is demanding, but this is Light Cavalry country, and we are comfortable being uncomfortable.



SSM - WO2 Davies



The Sqn experienced driving on the Malian roads during a normal day. It was amazing to see how health and safety is certainly not a consideration for the people of Mali. It is common to see up to 5 people on a motorbike with no helmets. The roofs of cars are piled high with luggage and people sat on top! Everyone is friendly and give a big wave as they drive by.

The Sqn has new technology to enhance our capability. One of these is a quad-copter drone. This gives the Sqn an amazing ability to get eyes onto an area before sending manpower in. The camera on these is very high quality, so we are able to take some great photos which is a bonus!



During the first 6 day patrol, the Task Force rehearsed equipment resupply via UK CH-47 Helicopter. This was great to see just how quick these helicopters can reach us. Everyone had their cameras out until the dust from the rotors forced them to take cover!



THE GREAT SANDSTORM



The Task Force was hit by an almighty sandstorm out in the desert. At its strongest point we could hardly see the vehicle in front. We all learned lessons about how to protect ourselves and our equipment for next time.

WALES IN THE EUROS



The Welsh boys got to watch Wales in their first game of the Euros. The welfare facility has a big TV which is perfect for sports games. Hopefully Wales can up their game going forward.. Or is it coming home?



Look Forward To...

Sports and Activities

There is lots of sports coming up which we will be following and watching if we are in camp. The weekly volleyball competition is gathering momentum and over time the C Sqn teams are improving. Touch rugby and football are being organised for July also. Lots to look forward to!

Sqn Social

Captain Lewis is organising the next Sqn social which will be towards the end of July. This is going to be a competition based social. Each team will put forward contenders to take on a variety of fun challenges. There will be plenty of fizzy pops, non-alcoholic beer and pizza.

Quote of the month

A quote from *The Men Who Made The SAS* by Gavin Mortimer for you to enjoy.

**“..In the great sand sea, the Cavalry is King”
Colonel Bagnold (1943)**

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