



1ST THE QUEEN'S DRAGOON GUARDS

@THEWELSHCAVALRY

#FIRSTANDFOREMOST

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I do hope that this newsletter finds you in good health and heart. After some summer leave, I thought I would take the opportunity to update you again on what your regiment has been doing and what lies ahead.

Operation CABRIT (Poland) – B Squadron and The Royal Yeomanry

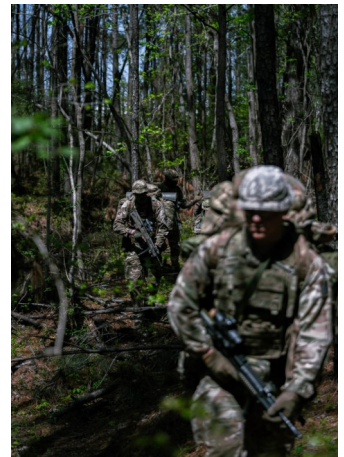
By mid-April Cassino Squadron had handed over the operational theatre and returned complete from Poland reflecting upon on a job particularly well done in some testing conditions. The hybrid regular and reserve team (and their families) had performed brilliantly as COVID-19 disrupted life both at home and on operations. The squadron recognises how fortunate it was to gain the experience of operating together as a hybrid unit and with our NATO allies in a unique environment that had a persistent threat be it the weather, COVID-19 or the state and non-state actors.



Our relationship with our paired regiment – The Royal Yeomanry – is now closer than ever. It is not something we can take foregranted however and, like all relationships, requires continual investment. We are currently supplying 4 SNCOs as instructors to Royal Yeomanry squadrons as well as WO2 Smith as Training Warrant Officer and Major 'Bongo' Davies as Quartermaster. In Cardiff, the Welsh Troop continues to grow. In an army with a smaller Regular component, we must identify every opportunity to work with The Royal Yeomanry, to develop their reconnaissance skills and integrate them into our deployments. Cassino Troop stands as evidence of the benefit – both ways – of such integration. It remains far better to think of ourselves as a Regular and Reserve pairing of 900 soldiers than to sit in splendid, but small, isolation.

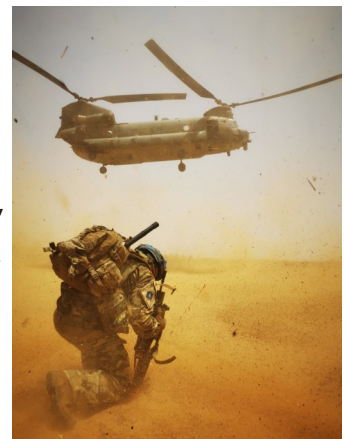
Exercise RATTLESNAKE – A Squadron overseas training in USA

Exercise RATTLESNAKE is an US Army Brigade testing exercise that takes place in the swamps of Louisiana. Undoubtedly one of the most demanding training areas in the USA, it was used to train forces to deploy to Vietnam. A Squadron's role was as part of a light role Infantry Battlegroup as their reconnaissance element, handing off targets onto the US artillery, air assets, or the infantry companies as they closed on the enemy locations. The Squadron inserted via aviation beyond the enemy front line. Establishing an observation post network, remaining covert whilst reporting and even managing to resupply via aviation drop, A Squadron added significant value to the US Army battlegroup and brigade it served -if only they had listened! The Opposition Forces were particularly impressed with how close the A Squadron soldiers had been able to get, including occupying the attics above Opposing Forces! At the end, A Squadron soldiers had a few days to explore the local area, mostly spent on swamp tours trying to spot alligators and aquatic pigs.



Operation NEWCOMBE 2 – C Squadron deployment to Mali

Following pre-deployment training in Thetford and Lulworth, and a two-week quarantine in the UK, C Squadron deployed via Brize Norton and Gibraltar to Mali and immediately entered another period of quarantine. Operating as one of two manoeuvre sub units, C Squadron is the reconnaissance force for the 2nd Battalion Royal Anglian Regiment-led Task Force. At the end of May, 15 members of the Squadron deployed on a handover patrol with A Squadron Light Dragoons in the vicinity of the regional capital, Gao. Since then, they have conducted another week-long patrol and three further 17 day operations in the Ansongo Cercle to the South. The Squadron is helping to understand the human terrain by conducting patrols and local leader engagements. It routinely finds routes for the Task Group and, using recce pull, gets them to an area of operations and then begins a coarse-grain find. Thunderstorms, temperatures in excess of 50 degrees and tough going tested the vehicle fleet and soldiers to their limits. The wet season is nearing an end and the Squadron is relishing the challenge. Their 'Mail from Mali' updates have more detail.



Operation NEWCOMBE 3 – Generating and preparing the Long-Range Reconnaissance Group

QDG is currently preparing its headquarters, A Squadron and A Company 1st Battalion The Royal Irish, for our deployment to Mali at the end of the year. The first big ticket item in the pipeline was ranges, a combination of dismounted firing in Thetford, and mounted firing in Lulworth. From there we conducted a road move to Braunton Burrows to learn more about driving on sand. Self-recovery remains a critical skill for reconnaissance soldiers, only surpassed by the expertise of a crew who can avoid getting into such a situation in the first place. The training team ran an excellent package building confidence on steep inclines by day and by night, including particularly challenging recovery serials. Since then, our soldiers have conducted a raft of bespoke training courses – languages, search, counter-improvised explosive device – as well as mandated all ranks briefings and some conceptual training. It is fair to say that those deploying are champing at the bit. Next stop, a Mission Rehearsal Exercise on the exercise area in Thetford.



F Squadron

In early September we invited back to Regimental Duty (RD) all of our soldiers and officers who are serving away at Extra Regimental Employment (ERE)—F Squadron. Our aim in so doing is to ensure that all QDGs, no matter where they are serving, feel connected to what the Regiment is doing and part of the team. We spent an afternoon conducting cross-briefs, hearing about what QDGs are doing in Army Headquarters, Defence Equipment and Support, Headquarters Royal Armoured Corps and commanding brigades. We also managed to find time for an inaugural F Squadron versus RD cricket match. We spent a pleasant evening in respective messes catching up with one another prior to some career interviews the next day. A hugely useful format and event, we will hold one each year; it would be great to see you at the next one.



Recruiting and Retention – The Regimental Engagement Team

Finally, a quick line on recruitment – my Main Effort for 2021. The Regimental Engagement Team headed up by Sgt Scott Grills has been increasingly busy since the last article. The 4x4s, trailer and new pop-up stands have been rolled out across Wales, with plans to continue visiting our recruiting heartland for the rest of the summer. The Farrier Major and LCpl Jones have joined the RET in Pontypridd for Armed Forces' Day, supporting the local Armed Forces Careers Office in Cardiff, as well visiting multiple QDG cap-badged Cadet units.

Our social media growth is continuing to increase, with some talented young photographers and content creators really starting to highlight our activity in the best light. We continue to work closely with our Reserve partners in the Royal Yeomanry, having learned some great lessons from Op CABRIT. We have posted some of our brightest and best Senior and Junior NCOs to AFC Harrogate, ATR Pirbright and Bovington to nurture our future Dragoons, and we continue to ensure a greater proportion are drawn from Wales and The Marches.



In sum, your regiment is: on peacekeeping operations now in Mali; training for a second operational deployment there at the end of this year; conducting demanding and exciting training; institutionalising its relationship with The Royal Yeomanry; and actively engaged to improve the number of QDG soldiers drawn from Wales and The Marches.

Commanding Officer

We are the Cavalry Regiment of Wales and the Border Counties. We are a close-knit regimental family forged in combat over three centuries of service. As reconnaissance soldiers, we are trusted to operate out in front to find the enemy and understand the environment. To be worthy of that trust, we strive for everyday excellence and professionalism in all we do. Inquisitive, independent and resilient, our soldiers are our edge. On foot or on vehicle they are #firstandforemost.

Ni yw Catrawd Marchfilwyr Cymru a Siroedd y Gororau. Rydym yn deulu catrodol clos sydd wedi'i ffugio mewn ymladd dros dair canrif o wasanaeth. Fel milwyr rhagchwilio, mae gennym ymddiriedaeth i weithredu allan o'n blaenau i ddod o hyd i'r gelyn a deall yr amgylchedd. I fod yn deilwng o'r ymddiriedaeth honno, rydym yn ymdrechu am ragoriaeth bob dydd a phroffesiynoldeb ym mhopath a wnawn. Yn chwifrydig, yn annibynnol ac yn gydnherth, ein milwyr yw ein hymyl. Ar droed neu ar gerbyd maen nhw'n #firstandforemost.