

WELSH GUARDS NEWSLETTER

Summer 2009

Issue No 76

Welsh Guards In Afghanistan

REGIMENTAL HEADQUARTERS

Regimental Lieutenant Colonel: Colonel A J E Malcolm OBE
Regimental Adjutant: Colonel T C S Bonas
Assistant Regimental Adjutant: Major K Oultram
Regimental Quartermaster Sergeant: WO2 W J Williams

1ST BATTALION WELSH GUARDS

Commanding Officer: Major C K Antelme DSO
Second in Command: Major A P Speed (Scots Guards)
Adjutant: Captain J W Aldridge
Regimental Sergeant Major: WO1 M Monaghan

As all of you will know, this last reporting period has been extremely busy for the Battalion as they continue their tour of Helmand, Afghanistan. Despite deploying to Helmand in April 2009, their pre-deployment training was rigorous, having commenced in early 2008, and by January 2009 the Battalion were completing the final intensive stages of the bespoke training package to prepare them for the challenges ahead. Their training culminated in the extremely demanding Mission Rehearsal Exercise on Salisbury Plain where the Battalion performed to the highest standards, earning the respect and trust of the rest of the 19 Light Brigade. All members of the Battalion were notably impressed by the training package, feeling prepared and confident for the tasks ahead. Furthermore, they had successfully integrated the numerous attached arms and specialists into a highly capable and multinational battle group.

Their exemplary performance during their pre-deployment training is reflected in the Welsh Guards Battle Group's missions and tasks. This Battle Group is responsible for Nad e Ali and its surrounding area, while 3 Company and X Company are detached to other Battle Groups within Helmand. Nad e Ali is an extremely demanding and hostile area to operate in, due to the influence of numerous insurgents, opiate producers, criminals and corruption. Even so, the Battle Group, with its attachment arms, is making significant progress in the run up to the Afghan elections in August. The Welshmen are steadfastly taking the fight to the enemy whilst crucially winning over the hearts and minds of the diverse population. The complexity of fighting with one hand and shaking hands with the other is not to be underestimated, and the Guardsmen are characteristically adept at working in such difficult circumstances. The Welsh Guards are continually applauded by all who work alongside them, and have earned considerable respect in Helmand and back home.

Sadly the Battalion's successes in Afghanistan have come at enormous cost in terms of injuries and particularly those killed in action, namely to date: LSgt Tobie Fasfous, Lt Mark Evison, Maj Sean Birchall, Lt Col Rupert Thorneloe, Pte John Brackpool, LCpl Dane Elson and Gdsm Christopher King (Coldstream Guards). These are appalling losses to the Welsh Guards and its wider community. However, it is very clear that the Battalion's resolve is only strengthened in adversity and their moral and focus is as sharp as ever. It comes as no surprise that the whole Welsh Guards community has rallied around the families of our fallen and casualties, and the level of support is humbling.

As the Battalion moves into the later stages of its tour, it does so with great confidence and pride. There is still much for them to accomplish in Helmand and the Battalion is facing its challenges head on. Some very well earned leave will follow their return before starting the Christmas celebrations and the start of the next training cycle.

REGIMENTAL BAND

Director of Music: Major S Barnwell BBCM PSM
Band Master: WO1 E E Frost MUSB (Hons) LRFM
Band Sergeant Major: WO2 R J Kirk

The majority of January was scheduled for some good old military training followed by an opportunity to go skiing in Andora during a week adventure training. The trip was a success and the Director of Music was pleased as it was injury free – unlike previous years! The members of the Band who had missed the skiing trip did not miss out on the snow since the first two days of our fortnight providing music for Kneller Hall was cancelled as the country ground to a halt due to a major snow fall.

The Band travelled to Merthyr Tydfil for St David's Day celebrations, a well tested venue from previous years, and played during the church service at St Tydfil's Parish Church. Following this, there was time for a quick change into

Great Coats as the Welsh Guards Association fell in at the rear of the marching Band. The original plan was for the Association to celebrate with the Battalion at Aldershot, but this was cancelled at short notice due to the Battalion being deployed to Afghanistan later in the month. The parade stepped off in brilliant sunshine, where the Mayor of the town took the salute before we all retired to the new Leisure Centre for a buffet lunch.

The Band then travelled to Aldershot to provide a marching and church Band for the Battalion before they left for Afghanistan. They formed up on the Drill square in Aldershot Barracks and marched the Battalion through the streets to the Cathedral Church of St Michael and George. They then played during the service which was conducted by Padre Deiniol Morgan, CF, Chaplain of the 1st Battalion Welsh Guards. The march back to the Barracks gave us all time to reflect on the mission facing the Battalion in Afghanistan, and we wish them all the very best. The Band then returned to London to complete its annual Spring Drills.

We said farewell to Bandmaster WO Class One Justin Matthews, who had only arrived in the autumn of 2007. He was commissioned in January 2009 into the Army Air Corps at a rank of Captain, and we wish him well for the future.

In April, the Band said farewell to Colour Sergeant Ralph Brill, who had given 24 years of service to the Band. He was promoted to Band Sergeant Major of the Scots Guards Band. Musician Emily Barker, a former winner of the Household Division Young Musician of the Year, also said goodbye. She started her training at the Royal Academy at Sandhurst in May after successful selection to join the Training and Education Branch of the Adjutant General Corps. The Band also said farewell to Musicians Mathew Ashment, Matthew Hanks and Pete Hamilton, who all left the army to pursue different careers. Incoming personnel has been our new Bandmaster WO Class One Evin Frost from the Prince of Wales's Division Band, Musicians Lucy Judd, Kim Easter and Dave Jones (all from Kneller Hall), Simon Loach, an ex member of the Irish Guards, and Pete Kowalenko from the Scots Guards Band.

WELSH GUARDS ASSOCIATION

President: Colonel T C S Bonas
Vice Presidents: Brigadier J F Rickett CBE
Mr R E Lewis
Treasurer: Major K Oultram
Secretary General: Mr B Keane
Welsh Guards Association
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Cardiff CF14 3YE
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DARTS AND SHOOTING COMPETITION

To be held on Saturday 26th September at Nesscliffe Barracks, Shrewsbury. There will be overnight accommodation available on Friday and Saturday night at a nominal charge of £5 per night, plus £5 for the cost of lunch, tea and sandwiches on the day. As in previous years at Nesscliffe, the Shooting competition will take place on the improved computerised range, where, if time permits, we can participate in a 'mock battle' after the competition has concluded. Bar facilities will be available throughout the competition as well as the Friday and Saturday night, with prices very competitive. Please contact your local Branch Secretary before the end of August, to register.

ASSOCIATION GOLF SOCIETY

Martyn Griffiths now runs the Association Golf Society.

Outstanding meetings for 2009, are;

Thursday 27th August: Alice Springs Golf Course, Usk (01873 880708)

Thursday 24th September: Chirk Golf Club, Wrexham. (01691 774407).

If you are interested in joining the Golf Society then please contact Martyn Griffiths, Tel – Home: 01792 298279 Work: 01554 891882. Mob.: 07764 531125.

Or email: griffithsfam88@tiscali.co.uk

REGIMENTAL CALENDAR & DIARY

The 2010 edition of the Regimental calendar will cost £7 and will be available from RHQ towards the end of the year.

The very smart green with gold embossing pocket diary for 2010 will also be available at £5. Cheques should be made payable to: Welsh Guards Lt/Col Central Fund. You can also order by email:

rhq@welshguards.army.mod.uk

REMEMBRANCE SERVICE

The Remembrance Service at the Guards Chapel will take place on Sunday November 8th

Tickets must be applied for in writing to RQMS Warren Williams no later than 30th October.

Lunch is a hot meal with a choice of lamb or beef, and should not cost more than £10.

AFGHANISTAN FUND

A 'fund raising' walk up Pen-y-fan (Brecon Beacons) is being planned for October 3rd 2009, to raise funds for the Afghanistan Appeal. To date there are 45 participants, with over £300 being pledged.

The event is being called, 'WALK THE WALK', and anyone interested should contact Chris Duggan, Tel: (Home) 01792 416794, (Mobile) 07958 109962

Further details can be found on 'facebook'.

There are many fund raising events taking place, including the Mark Evison Foundation (details from Branch Secretaries). 'Welsh Guards in Afghanistan' bracelets can also be purchased from RHQ.

ELIZABETH CROSS MEMORIAL SCROLL

The decision to introduce a new national award for the families of those who died in operations in a medal earning theatre, or as an act of terrorism, in recognition of their loss and sacrifice, was announced by the Secretary of State for Defence on 10th June 2008, with Her Majesty the Queen giving her approval of the scheme on the 30th January 2009. The award will consist of a silver cross and parchment-type scroll, signed by Her Majesty, to be known as the Elizabeth Cross and Memorial Scroll, and will retrospectively recognize deaths from 1st January 1948. Details of eligibility and implementation were announced on 1st July 2009. Further details will follow.

ASSOCIATION WEB PAGE

The Association Newsletters, Memorabilia and relevant information regarding Branches can be found here. If any member wishes to include an item then please contact the Web Master.

The address is:

www.welshguardsassociation.com

Do not forget the other interesting sites – www.welshguardsonline.co.uk where you will find old Squad photos and other interesting things about the Welsh Guards. This is a good site for retired and serving members of the Regiment to keep in touch.

As well as – www.welshguardsreunited.co.uk Again, this is an excellent site to communicate and share information with fellow Welsh Guardsmen.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Sept

- 11-16 ASSOCIATION BATTLEFIELD TOUR (Belgium/France)
- 24 Pembrokeshire Branch Reunion Luncheon, Cleddau Bridge Hotel.
- 26 ASSOCIATION DARTS & SHOOT (Nescliffe Barracks)

Oct

- 16 Cardiff Branch 90th Annual Dinner, St Peters' Hall Cardiff
- 24 Swansea Branch Reunion Dinner, Red Lion Hotel, Morriston.
- 31 Monmouth Branch Reunion Dinner The Angel Hotel Abergavenny

Nov

- 8 Remembrance Day

Dec

- 5 London Branch Lunchtime Christmas Party
- 11 Cardiff Branch Ladies Night St Peter's Hall Cardiff

BRANCH SECRETARIES

ABERDARE

Mike Williams, 33 Tre Gwilym, Cwmbach, Aberdare, CF44 OAA
Tel: 01685 877786

CARDIFF

Bill Morris, 39 Gareth Close, Thornhill, Cardiff CF14 9AF
Tel: 02920 611241

CARDIGANSHIRE

Nigel Owen, Station Chambers, Alexandra Road, Aberystwyth SY23 1LH
Tel: 07712 883927

EAST GLAMORGAN

Ken Haines, Trevone, Duffryn Road, Rhydfelin, Pontypridd CF39 5RU
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LLANELLI

Alan Cunningham, 197 Cockett Road, Cockett, Swansea SA2 0FH
Tel: 01792 554151

LONDON

Jeff Heenan, 27 Mount Gardens, Harrogate, N. Yorkshire HG2 8BS
Tel: 01423 879326

MERTHYR TYDFIL

Jim Manning, Flat 5, 108 Haydn Tce, Penydarren, Merthyr Tydfil CF47 9UX.
Tel: 01685 383567

MIDLANDS

Keith Bartlett, 6 Athelstan Road, Battenhall, Worcester WR5 2BW
Tel: 01905 355233

MONMOUTHSHIRE

Alan Mountjoy, 6 Beechfield Ave, Hengoed, Gwent CF82 7NF
Tel: 07841 633312

MONTGOMERYSHIRE & SHROPSHIRE

Ben Parry, 10 Grangefields, Off Roman Rd. Shrewsbury, Shrops. SY3 9DE
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NORTH AMERICA

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NORTH OF ENGLAND

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Tel: 01513 362762

NORTH WALES

Dave Webb, 2 Arran Drive, Rhyl LL18 2NS
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OGMORE

Mike Jones, 40 Garfield Avenue, Litchard, Bridgend CF31 1QA
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PEMBROKESHIRE

Trevor Warr, 11 Shakespeare Close, Priory Estate, Haverfordwest, Pems.
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SWANSEA & WEST GLAMORGAN

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