From Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) JC St J KILMISTER
REGIMENTAL HEADQUARTERS
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All Members of the Regimental Family

RW Update

28 July 2017

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the back of this letter is an updated list of dates for the remainder of 2017 and for next year's (2018) diary.

Introduction

RHQ organised a trip to London for our Bereaved Families to visit and lay wreaths at the new Iraq and Afghanistan Memorial on the Victoria Embankment on 13th July. The Padre of the 1st Battalion, Amy Walters, kindly officiated. Our Bereaved Families were very well represented from both theatres of war. The Colonel of the Regiment, Major General James Swift OBE laid a wreath on behalf of the Regiment. The serving officers were represented by Lieutenant Colonel Owain Luke MBE, CO (Des) 1 RWELSH, and the Regimental Adjutant, Captain Paul Rumming and the Padre.

The Colonel of the Regiment with the Bereaved Families at the Iraq & Afghanistan Memorial in London

1st Battalion

The Commanding Officer of the 1st Battalion will change over by the end of August this year. Lieutenant Colonel Owain Luke MBE will take over from Lieutenant Colonel Paul Clayton MBE. Paul Clayton is off on a UN Tour to South Sudan we wish him well after an extremely successful tour in command. Early 2017 saw the First Battalion assume the responsibility of Operation TEMPERER Standby Battalion, part of the Army's response to a major terrorist attack, at the same time as being the Regional Standby Battalion ready to assist the civil authorities. With a close eye on the news for both flooding and terrorist attacks, the companies and headquarters began collective training in preparation for exercise PRAIRIE STORM in BATUS, Canada.

1st Battalion training in BATUS

In February Gun Camp was conducted in Castlemartin and whilst the weather was not kind, it rarely prevented firing. Immediately after Easter Leave the Battalion began to deploy to Canada for the biggest collective training exercise the Army conducts; Ex PRAIRIE STORM. The exercise was the biggest and most ambitious in over ten years with more live firing and night operations than had been seen over recent years. The Battle Group was pitted against a technologically and numerically superior enemy, tested to the point of failure and performed excellently, whilst all the while keeping an unprecedented number of vehicles in the fight.

This year the Battalion won the GOC's Cup, awarded not only for our various sporting and adventurous training achievements, but also for wider participation in those fields amongst the soldiers of the battalion. Rugby was a highlight as always, but sadly the Battalion were knocked out of the Army Rugby Union Premiership Cup semi-finals by a very strong 12 Regiment Royal Artillery team who went on to win.

This winter the Battle Group will deploy to Estonia as the lead NATO force in that country. They will have command of a French Foreign Legion company, to be replaced by Danes in the New Year. A vital and nuanced role, the Battalion will look forward to working with their

Estonia partners in deterring Russian adventurism in the Baltic States. As well as interoperability training and maintaining readiness with the Estonian Brigade, the Battle Group will also conduct arctic survival and tactical training. Whilst the Royal Marines have been most helpful on this front they have little to offer as to how to fight armour in extreme cold weather, but the Battalion has turned to vast experience of our sister Regiment, the Van Doos (The Royal 22nd Regiment, Canadian Army) for advice. The harsh winter will also provide opportunities to develop an excellent Nordic team this year! The operational tour is currently expected to be eight months long, finishing in summer 2018.

3rd Battalion

This year has seen the re-focus of the 3rd Battalion following our major involvement in Ex WESSEX STORM, where the Battalion's consolidated company (X Company) performed very well in testing conditions and certainly encountered the frictions of exercising at Battlegroup level. Over 130 reservists, including the full range of support weapons and enablers, and supported by 10 soldiers from the 1st Bn, deployed to a wintery Salisbury Plain with all three Welsh Combat Units (QDG, WG and R WELSH) exercising together. X Coy received a pass at CT2 and the OC was awarded a GOC's commendation for his leadership of the company,

The training focus is now towards the Annual Deployment Exercise which this year will be a live firing camp in Sennelager. With weekend training seeing many of the Battalion passing their individual training tests and transitioning to field firing. The RSM's leadership weekends have been well received, with our affiliated RN Ship, HMS DRAGON sending a section of her sailors to join in a demanding but enjoyable weekend in SENTA. Leadership development is being expanded with the re-launch of the 3rd Bn Corporals' Mess in August. Adventure Training trips have included skiing in France and a demanding expedition walking the GR20 in Corsica.

The Battalion's time conducting Defence Engagement with the Philippines is coming to a close, but finishing with a crescendo. The RSM and Training Warrant Officer have been deployed as a Short Term Training Team assisting the Philippines Armed Forces select and develop the first team from South East Asia to participate in the Cambrian Patrol. The Battalion looks forward to hosting them in October and introducing them to the unique weather conditions Mid Wales has to offer.

The Band and Corps of Drums of the Royal Welsh have been involved in a highly successful R WELSH sponsored Gun Salute in Cardiff, they featured strongly in the Armed Forces Day South celebrations and look forward to their annual camp supporting the Royal Welsh Agricultural Show and Op REFLECT activities in Passchendaele.

Recruiting remains strong despite difficult recruiting environment and we are reaping the benefits of the joint Regular and Reserve focused R WELSH Recruiting Group. Trained strength continues to grow and we look forward to the next challenges of being introduced into 12 Brigade and re-affirming our strong links to the 1st Battalion through partnering.

Dinners / Lunches and Reunions 2017

- **The RRW Officers' Luncheon at the Army & Navy Club.** The turnout for the Annual RRW Officers' lunch on 28th April was very good with an excellent number of different Regimental ties on parade! The date for 2018 has already been booked. Please see below.

The RRW Officers' Luncheon at the Army & Navy Club

- **Brecon Reunion**. This took place on **Saturday 22nd July** in Dering Lines Brecon. Unfortunately the weather prevented the Regimental Band and 3rd Battalion Drums from Beating Retreat on the square they did give the comrades an excellent display in the Sergeants' Mess. 210 comrades sat down to a delicious meal of paté, roast lamb and apple crumble. The Colonel of the Regiment presided and presented medals and certificates to a number of comrades.

The Colonel of the Regiment presenting Association Medals and Certificates at the Brecon Reunion

- **Wrexham Reunion.** This will take place on **Saturday 2nd September** in the Memorial Hall.

- **Friday 13th October** – Officers' Society Dinner – will take place in the Principality Stadium Cardiff. Gathering in the St David's Suite at 1900 hrs followed by dinner in the President's Lounge.

Ceremonial & Visits 2017

- **Saturday 6th May**. The Annual church service and parade to commemorate the Service and Sacrifice of the Monmouthshire Regiment in the First World War took place this year in Abergavenny' s St Mary's Church after which the Regimental Representatives laid wreaths at the Memorial to 3rd Battalion The Monmouthshire Regiment. The event was very well supported and Colonel Van Rees gave a rousing speech in honour the fallen and service of the Monmouthshire Regiment.

- **Tuesday 11th July**. HRH The Prince of Wales visited the Regimental Museum in Brecon. He was met by the Lord Lieutenant and the Commander 160 Brigade and of course Shenkin (accompanied by Sgt Jackson!). Colonel Tim Van Rees and a number of members of the Executive committee were introduced to HRH as he toured the museum. Mrs Dorcas Cresswell introduced HRH to her very successful project "Never Forget your Welsh Heroes".

Commander 160 Bde chats to HRH The Prince of Wales. Colonel Tim Van Rees waits to welcome HRH into the museum flanked by ceremonial pioneers.

- **Saturday 15th July.** The reaffirmation of the granting of the Freedom of Monmouthshire place in Abergavenny took on Saturday 15th July. This was preceded by a presentation by Brigadier Philip Napier to thank Mrs Dorcas Cresswell for all her superb work in raising money for the Brecon Museum.

C Company marches through Abergavenny

The 1st Battalion's C Company commanded by Major Mark Adams and CSM Pask MC escorted the Colours through the town with drums beating and bayonets fixed. On the saluting dais was the Mayor of Abergavenny flanked by brothers-in-law Brigadier Philip Napier OBE representing the Colonel of the Regiment and Brigadier Robert Aitken CBE the Lord Lieutenant for Gwent.

- **Saturday 2nd September**. The Regiment will be exercising its freedom of Denbighshire in Ruthin. The Parade will form up in Ruthin at 13.45 outside the Council Offices on Wynnstay Road before marching to St Peter's Square where the Reaffirmation Ceremony will take place. Following the Ceremony, the Parade, led by the Regimental Goat of the 3rd Bn will march around Ruthin Town. Colonel Nick Lock OBE will represent the Colonel of the Regiment on the saluting dais with the Mayor of Ruthin. The Regimental Band will then go straight on to perform at the Beating Retreat for the Comrades Reunion in Wrexham.

- **Saturday 9th September**. The dedication of the R WELSH Memorial will take place at the National Memorial Arboretum. This event will be open to all components of the Regimental Family and I would like to see cadets, comrades and personnel from the 1st and 3rd Battalions involved. Major General Morgan Llewellyn will officiate. I would like to see as many Branch Standards and comrades at this event to represent our comrades and our antecedent Regiments.

  Outline timings for the Dedication Service will be:
  - 1200 – 1230 hrs Memorial Service
  - 1230 – 1315 hrs Chance for Bereaved Familiers visit Basra or Bastion Wall
  - 1320 – 1330 move to the Royal British Legion
  - 1345 – 1500 hrs Lunch
  - 1530 - 1830 hrs Return journey

- **Saturday 9th September**. Lt Gen Riley CB DSO PhD will represent the Colonel of the Regiment at the commemoration of the 1917 Royal National Eisteddfod of Wales in Birkenhead Park (Hedd Wyn and the 'Black Chair').

- **Saturday 16th September**. The Royal Welsh will be granted the Freedom of Pembroke. The Parade will form up outside the Town Hall at 10.45 hrs before marching to the Castle where a short ceremony will take place at approx 1100 hrs. Following the Ceremony, the Parade will march up Main Street complete a 'u' turn at St Michaels Square to enable the Parade to march back down Main Street where a salute will be taken by the Mayor of Pembroke and the Lord Lieutenant and Colonel Didi Wheeler, representing the Colonel of the Regiment at Chain Back. The Parade will disperse outside the Town Hall. Entry to the Castle will be waivered for the duration of the Ceremony.

WW1 Commemorations 2017

- **29th July-1st August**. The Centenary of the Passchendaele Commemorations**.** A battlefield tour will take place to Passchendaele, Flanders in Belgium to coincide with the official Welsh Commemoration Service which will take place on the 31st July 2017 at the Welsh Dragon Memorial at Langemarck. Coaches and accommodation have been booked in Lille for 29th July-1st August 2017. This will give us a three nights and four day trip to the area, with the main event being the Service of Rededication and Remembrance at the Welsh Memorial on the 31st July 2017.

- **VC Commemoration Stones**
    - **30 Jul**: VC Commemoration Stone to be Unveiled for Corporal James Llewellyn Davies VC Royal Welsh Fusiliers. The ceremony will take place at 12 noon on Sunday 30 July at the Nantymoel Shelter/War Memorial, Nantymoel, Bridgend, CF32 7NB.

    - **31 Jul**: VC Commemoration Stone to be unveiled for Sergeant Ivor Rees VC South Wales Borderers. The Ceremony will take place at 14.00 hrs Monday 31 July at Town Hall, Llanelli, SA15 3AH.

2018 Dates

- **Sunday 14 January** - Rorke's Drift Church Parade & lunch – Brecon Cathedral & Dering Lines.
- **Sunday 4th March** – the Regimental Officers & Ladies St David's Day Lunch in the Officers' Mess 1st Battalion in Tidworth. RHQ will put out more details in the autumn.
- **Friday 27th April -** RRW Luncheon in the Army & Navy Club, 36 Pall Mall, London.
- **Wednesday 9th May** – Branch Secretaries Meeting Monty Club, Newtown
- **Saturday 30 June -** Armed Forces Day – North – Llandudno**.**
- **Saturday 21st July** – Brecon Reunion date still TBC
- **Saturday 1st September** - Wrexham Reunion.

Regimental Journal

Contributions for the next edition of the Regimental Journal are required by **Friday 29 September 2017** in order for the next edition to come out by St David's Day 2018. The Regimental Journal comes out each year by St David's Day.

New Comrades Branch

The Warminster Branch goes from strength to strength with more than 16+ on its books already and the word is spreading in the immediate area. If interested please contact Secretary Ex WO2 Simon (Biff) Williams - **ps.jm.williams@btinternet.com** **01985 217 777**

The Inaugural Meeting of the Warminster Comrades Branch

Benevolence

In the past 12 months the Regiment has helped out **186 cases** spending about **£40,000** of Regimental funds. Captain Des Williams DCM has also been very successful in securing money from the Army Benevolent Fund, Help for Heroes and other military charities to the value of a further **£74,000**. If you know of a member of the Royal Welsh or any of its antecedent Regiments that may need help, please contact Capt Des Williams on **01978 316 188**.

2019 Dates

Looking well into the future, 2019 will see some major Regimental anniversaries:

- 140th Anniversary of the Battle of Rorke's Drift.
- 75th Anniversary of D Day.
- 300th Formation of the 41st Foot at the Royal Hospital Chelsea. We will run an event at the Royal Hospital Chelsea on **Tuesday 10th September 2019.**

Have a very good summer and I hope to see you all in the autumn at the NMA Service or one of the reunions or dinners.

Yours sincerely

Chris Kilmister

Dates for 2017

Saturday 2nd September - Freedom of Denbigh in Ruthin
Saturday 2nd September - Wrexham Reunion

Saturday 9th September – Dedication of the RWELSH Memorial at the NMA
Saturday 9th September – Rededication of Hedd Wyn Memorial in Birkenhead

Saturday 16th September – 1st Battalion – Granting of the Freedom of Pembroke Dock

Friday 13th October - Regimental Committee Meeting & Officers' Society Dinner Cardiff

Dates for 2018

Sunday 14th January – Rorke's Drift Service in Brecon Cathedral and lunch in Dering Lines

Sunday 4th March – Confirmed date for the Regimental Officers & Ladies St David's Day Lunch in the Officers' Mess 1st Battalion in Tidworth

Friday 27th April - RRW Luncheon in the Army & Navy Club, 36 Pall Mall, London

Wednesday 9th May – Branch Secretaries Meeting Monty Club, Newtown

Saturday 30 June - Armed Forces Day – North – Llandudno

Saturday 21st July – *Provisional date for the Brecon Reunion (Date TBC).*

Saturday 1st September - Wrexham Reunion

New Email Addresses from 1 April 2017:

Regimental Secretary	**INFHQ-SWI-RWELSH-RegtSec@mod.uk**
Maj Derek Adams	**INFHQ-SWI-RWELSH-RegtSecAsst2@mod.uk**
Capt Paul Rumming	**INFHQ-SWI-RWELSH-RegtAdjt@mod.uk**
Capt Des Williams	**INFHQ-SWI-RWELSH-WRE-RegtSecA@mod.uk**
Richard Tuffney	**INFHQ-SWI-RWELSH-RegtSecAsst3@mod.uk**
Debbie Martin	**INFHQ-SWI-RWELSH-RegtSecAsst1@mod.uk**
Rachel Hill	**INFHQ-SWI-RWELSH-AdminOffr@mod.uk**
Judy Gater	**INFHQ-SWI-RWELSH-WRE-AdminOffr@mod.uk**