



**From Lieutenant Colonel JC St J Kilmister**  
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*All Members of the Regimental  
Family*

RW Update

6 December 2016

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*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

**At the back of this letter is a list of dates for your 2017 diary.**

The excellent news is that the Colonel-in-Chief, Her Majesty The Queen will visit the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion in Lucknow Barracks, Tidworth on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> March to present leeks to selected members of the entire Regimental Family.

I would like to offer our sincere congratulations to Dewi Hitchcock and Garry Blewitt on their appointments as Officers of the most Excellent Order of the British Empire. A super achievement and both with a Ghurkha connection. You may have heard the sad news about the various barracks being closed in and around Wales. The Barracks in Brecon will close by 2027. This is where Headquarters 160 Brigade is based. This HQ will be moved elsewhere in Wales. This closure will **not** affect the Infantry Battle School at Dering Lines. The other barracks closing in and around Wales are Cawdor Barracks, Brawdy, Beachely Barracks, Chepstow, Clive Barracks, Tern Hill and the Dale Barracks, Chester.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Battalion**

Since the last update A Company deployed to BATUS for Ex PRAIRIE STORM 1&2 as enemy forces against the Royal Lancers Battle Group. B (Rorke's Drift) Company deployed to Kenya, and on return completed a number of months on Public Duties in London. C Company has been tirelessly committed to supporting RAAT within the UK. D Company deployed to Turkey for Ex EFES. The Battalion has begun conceptual development and CT1 in preparation for the Training Year. Gun Camp 1 at Castlemartin was completed in September. Ex ALPHA saw 55 Royal Welshmen conduct adventure training in California, USA. Training over the next 6 months sees the Battalion in preparation for BATUS continue on a steady trajectory. Companies continue to meet Collective Training objectives, and will conduct Gun Camp 2 in early 17. Once complete, 1 R WELSH BG will deploy to BATUS to conduct Ex PRAIRIE STORM 1 in 2017. B (Rorke's Drift) Company will deploy to BATUS as part of the King's Royal Hussars Battle Group on Ex PRAIRIE STORM 3 2017.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion**

This has been a very busy period with a number of exercises, Adventure Training and Civil- military engagement activity. The Battalion's Main effort has been continued build up to Ex WESSEX STORM with Company level activity with 1WG conducted in September.

The Battalion is on track to deliver a Company Group to the 1WG Battle Group in Feb 17. On this year's Ex CAMBRIAN PATROL the Battalion Team achieved a fantastic Silver Medal: no Reserve unit achieved anything higher. Arduous trekking took place in GREENLAND. Defence Engagement activity has seen CO and Intelligence Officer deployed to Philippines and Bn hosted a CAMBRIAN PATROL scoping visit. Recruiting remains a key activity with numbers in the training pipeline continuing to grow steadily; the Bn is also more deployable. The Ceremony of the Keys and Beating Retreat went well despite the atrocious conditions and the Battalion has given considerable support to Armed Forces Days both north and south. The Royal Welsh Band remains extremely busy with Op REFLECT and Royal Welsh Agriculture Show.

## Reunions in 2016

- **Brecon Reunion.** The Regimental Reunion took place in Dering Lines Brecon on the 23<sup>rd</sup> July. 220 comrades sat down to Dinner. The Band of the Prince of Wales' Division played during dinner as unfortunately our Regimental Band was involved in the reaffirmation of the Freedom of Conwy which took place on the same day in Llandudno. During the meal the comrades very generously raised £500 for Blind Veterans UK and in support of Fusilier Shaun Stocker who despite losing both legs and being blinded in Afghanistan has now, quite amazingly, managed to walk over 100 Kilometres in his fund raising effort for Blind Veterans UK.
- **Wrexham Reunion.** The Wrexham Reunion took place on 3<sup>rd</sup> September. The Colonel of the Regiment attended and spoke at the AGM and at the Comrades Dinner in the evening. Unfortunately bad weather prevented the act of commemoration at the RWF War Memorial although there was a moving ceremony in the Memorial Hall. The Colonel of the Regiment and the Mayor of Wrexham took the salute at the Beating Retreat performed with their usual very high standards and panache by the RWELSH Band. During dinner attended by 160, which included Fusilier Shaun Stocker, a figure of £550 was raised for Blind Veterans' UK.
- **Regimental Officers' Ladies Day (at Dorney Lake)** Peter Kerruish and John Watkins again ran this event on 16<sup>th</sup> October. This year's splendid event which was attended by 75+ was run at Queens Eyot, just up-river from Dorney Lake due to the latter being refurbished.
- **Royal Welsh Officers' Society Annual Dinner.** Annual Officers Society Dinner was held on 4<sup>th</sup> November in the Principality (Millennium) Stadium. 144 sat down to dinner presided by the Colonel of the Regiment.

## Public Duties, Freedom Parades & Community Engagements in 2016

- B (Rorke's Drift) Company, 1 R WELSH under command of Major Richard Arden, had a very successful period of Public Duties in London. Guarding the Royal Palaces and Her Majesty The Queen, our Colonel in Chief, had a most memorable summer. Marching out of Wellington Barracks to change the guard in front of 60,000 people was a unique and thrilling experience. As the Guard crossed the threshold and took their first steps on the Forecourt the Band would break into the Regimental Quick March and every Royal Welshman would feel the hairs prick up on the back of their necks. It was the essence of inspiration. To march along the Mall to see the Queen Victoria Memorial set against the backdrop of Buckingham Palace with the Royal Standard flying was equally memorable. It was a summer to remember and one that will be talked about for many years to come.



- The last Freedom Parade in 2016 was held on 8<sup>th</sup> October – Rhondda Cynon Taff in Pontypridd. A Company, 1 RWELSH under the command of Major Nick Zorab provided the marching contingent with the Regimental Band providing the music. Colonel Chris Barry OBE represented the Colonel of the Regiment and took the salute with the Mayor of Rhondda Cynon Taff. S’Hertogenbosch in Holland was represented by the Chief Executive of the City Council, Mr Jan de Wit and Mr Pierre Kisters the Chairman of the 1944 Committee.



## 2017

Looking ahead to next year 2017

### Dinners / Lunches and Reunions

- **Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> January.** Rorke’s Drift Service in Brecon Cathedral and lunch in Sergeants’ Mess Dering Lines.

- **Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> March.** A St David's Day Curry Lunch has been organised by the RWF Officers' Association to be held in the Officers' Mess 1 Royal Welsh, Lucknow Barracks, Tidworth by kind permission of the Commanding Officer. This is open to former Regimental officers and their ladies from any of our antecedent regiments. The cost is £25:00 per head £12:50 for Ladies Associate members. Payment through RHQ RWELSH Wrexham Office either BACS or by cheque.
- **Brecon Reunion.** This will take place on **Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> July** in Dering Lines Brecon. Captain Williams will put out the attendance profromas in due course.
- **Wrexham Reunion.** This will take place on **Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> September** in the Memorial Hall. Captain Williams will put out the attendance profromas in due course.

## Ceremonial

- **Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> March** – The Colonel-in-Chief, Her Majesty The Queen will present leeks to *selected members* of the Regimental Family; Cadets, comrades, Reserve and Regular officers and other ranks in Lucknow Barracks Tidworth. More details to follow.
- **Friday 21<sup>st</sup> April.** Royal Gun Salute in Cardiff sponsored by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion but with support from the entire Regimental Family. More details to follow.
- **Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> May.** The granting of the Freedom of Monmouthshire in Abergavenny will take place on Saturday 6 May. This will coincide with Commemorations for the Battle of Frezenberg where all 3 Battalions of the Monmouthshire Regiment fought. The parade will take place in the morning followed by a service of Commemoration. More details will be published in due course.
- **Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> September.** The Regiment will be exercising its freedom of Denbighshire. Location to be confirmed. The Band of the Royal Welsh will perform for the march through the town and will then go straight on to perform at the Beating Retreat at the Wrexham Comrades Reunion.
- **Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalions involved. We will invite our bereaved families to join us. More details to follow.
- **Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> September.** The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion will be granted the Freedom of Pembroke Dock. More details to follow.

## WW1 Commemorations 2017

- **29<sup>th</sup> July-1<sup>st</sup> August.** The Centenary of the Passchendaele Commemorations. A battlefield tour is planned to Passchendaele, Flanders in Belgium to coincide with the official Welsh Commemoration Service which will take place on the 31<sup>st</sup> July 2017. Coaches and accommodation in Lille, France will be booked to cover the dates 29<sup>th</sup> July-1<sup>st</sup> 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 in Passchendaele on the 31<sup>st</sup> July 2017. Details can be obtained from Captain Des Williams DCM in Wrexham.

### **Digitalisation Project**

All the RRW and Welch Regiment Regimental Journals have now been digitalised and we are now moving onto producing digitalised versions of the South Wales Borderers' journals. These digitalised journals can be viewed in Regimental Headquarters or in our Regimental Museums.

### **The Elizabeth Cross**

We continue to whittle down the list of families eligible for the Elizabeth Cross. We have halved the list from well over 45 to around 20.

Details can be obtained from RHQ. On the evening 18 October 2016, Mrs Chrissie Campbell spouse of the late Lance Corporal Michael Campbell was presented with The Elizabeth Cross and Memorial Scroll by The Lord Lieutenant of Clwyd, Mr Henry Fetherstonhaugh Esq OBE FRAGS, on behalf of Her Majesty The Queen. The ceremony took place at The Blind Veterans UK Centre at Llandudno and was attended by friends and family of Mrs Chrissie Campbell as well as Lance Corporal Campbell's comrades from D Company, 3 R WELSH. Michael died on 23 July 2015 from wounds sustained during Operation HERRICK 16, Afghanistan.

On the 10 November 2016 close family members and representatives from the Regiment attended The National Memorial Arboretum naming ceremony to see LCpl Campbell's name inscribed on the Armed Forces Wall and the Bastion Wall.



## R WELSH Memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum



I am pleased to say that the next phase of work on The Royal Welsh Memorial has been completed. I am very grateful to the large number of R WELSH Comrades Branches and the Associations of the Royal Welch Fusiliers and the Royal Regiment of Wales that have contributed towards the costs. I am also grateful to **Mal Ball** and **Shaun Jones** for keeping an eye on the project as it progressed in October - November. Richard Tuffney has been tireless in the coordination of all the work between the Regimental Committee, the NMA and the masons. Much of the success of the project is the direct result of his personal involvement.

As you have already read there will be a Service of Dedication for the Memorial on **Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> September** at the National Memorial Arboretum. This will commemorate 10 years since the last R WELSH soldier was killed in Iraq. We will of course invite all out bereaved families. More details will be released in due course.

We have also sponsored a pavior in Heroes' Square at the NMA. Over 190 paviers representing the Royal Navy, the British Army, the Royal Air Force, and many Livery Companies, Organisations and Clubs associated with the Armed Forces have been engraved and are laid in Heroes' Square. The R WELSH is one of them. The area looked magnificent and well worth a visit.

All at Regimental Headquarters would like to wish you and your families a very Happy Christmas and a prosperous and healthy New Year

*Yours sincerely*

*Chris Kilmister*

## **Dates for 2017**

**Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> January** – Rorke’s Drift Service and Lunch. Brecon Cathedral and Sergeants’ Mess Dering Lines

**Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> March** - HMQ visits Lucknow Barracks and presents leeks to members of the Regimental Family in Tidworth

**Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> March** – 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion combined Officers’ Mess St David’s Day Dinner in Caerphilly Castle

**Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> March** - RWF Officers’ Association St David’s Day Curry Lunch – Officers’ Mess 1 RWELSH, Tidworth.

**Friday 21<sup>st</sup> April** - Royal Gun Salute – Cardiff

**Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> May** – 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion – Granting of the Freedom of Monmouthshire in Abergavenny

**Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> May** – Branch Secretaries Meeting – Newtown

**Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> July** – Brecon Reunion

**29 July – 1 August** – Battlefield Tour of Passchendaele

**Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> September** - 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion – Exercising the Freedom of Denbighshire. Location TBC.

**Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> September** - Wrexham Reunion

**Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> September** – Dedication of the RWELSH Memorial at the NMA

**Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> September** – 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion – Granting of the Freedom of Pembroke Dock