



TELIC LIKE IT IS

August 2008

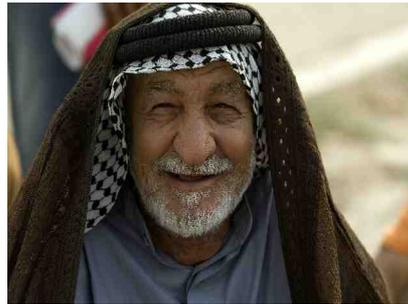


From the Commanding Officer

Last time I wrote a third of the tour had just passed, but as I consult the chuff chart today the total is 53.5%. I only hope the time is passing as quickly for all of you as it is for us! With 13 weeks or thereabouts for most of us left to push I think we can say we have just about started the downhill part of this particular journey. Also with the R&R cycle now in full swing, hopefully many of you have had your men home by now, listened to all the war stories and then wondered what you are going to do with them for the next 13 days, 23 hours and 59 minutes!

As for what we are doing, well not much has changed on that score. The outlook in Iraq remains relentlessly positive. The Poachers are still doing a quite exceptional job, in all my time in the Army, and all the tours that that has brought I cannot remember a feeling of making so much difference. It is a real shame that the media haven't really caught on to this because there is a great story to tell here, the British Army at its best helping a proud nation to grow again. Unfortunately, as we all know good news does not necessarily make good news. Take it from me; you should be really proud of the guys. I see them grafting every day in pretty unforgiving

conditions, but always with a smile on their faces and always with an eye on how to make things even better.



A delighted local during a clean up Operation.

I am beginning to get bored of being told how well A Company are getting on in Baghdad, and amazingly it isn't always them telling me. Recently the senior British General in Iraq, who is based in Baghdad, told me that they were "doing me proud"; praise indeed. B Company continues to live and work alongside the Iraqis, making a difference quite literally every minute of the day. C Company have developed their role training the Iraqis far further than I think anyone thought possible and D Coy; well they have become so good at hiding behind things I cannot tell you how well they are doing! The HQ Company guys are also doing what they always seem to do, looking after us magnificently with minimal fuss and never seeking the limelight. The QM hasn't been on the television for at least a week, so a low profile indeed by his standards.

It definitely feels as if we are entering a new phase of the tour now. The weather is changing, it cannot make its

mind up at the moment, not knowing if it wants to be very hot and dry, hot and wet, or just hot, but there is a sense that the worst of the summer is now coming to and end. The various targets we have been set to achieve are suddenly looming very large and unbelievably planning for handing over to the next unit is in full swing. It isn't quite time to be looking forward to the end of the tour and what is to follow, but that is not far off. In the next edition I might just allow myself a brief look forward, so until then, enjoy what is left of the summer holidays and I look forward to seeing you all again very soon.

All the best

Simon



CO's TAC



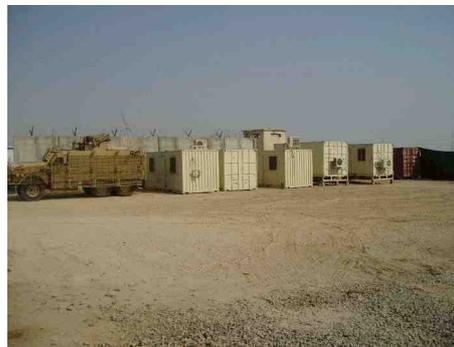
52X MiTT Current Accommodation

As far as joint Ops are concerned it has been a quiet week at camp Sa'ad. Unfortunately the same can not be said for life in general in camp. We are presently going through a period of change. Over the last few weeks we have been evicted from the accommodation which we were living in. I should imagine this will be to the delight of those in our other MiTT groups who used to refer to our camp as TDA 118, although this as the CO corrects them should be PDA (Permanently Deployed Accommodation) as we rarely go back to the COB unlike some!

The delight will be short lived and the last laugh will be ours because the Civvie contractors who are now in our old rooms are building us our own accommodation. Even as I type there is a bulldozer levelling the ground ready for the last couple of portacabins and there are workmen busily wiring in aircon units and the like.

Unfortunately we still have a couple of days before we can move in but by the time we do there should be plumbed in showers and wireless internet.

The only down side to the whole thing is that we have had to empty all our stores out of the rooms they were in and place everything into the additional ISO's that we have just received, with the humidity going through the roof over the last few days this has been even more of a chore than it would have been.



The new accommodation is prepared.

Apart from that life goes on, with all the things that need to be done such as picking up and dropping off people for R and R and taking people out on development visits. Next week we should become legends within the lower ranks of the Poachers who insist all we ever do is area clean.

We will, under the ever watchful eye of Capt Rich Bredin, be assisting the Iraqi Army over see the biggest area clean the British army has ever taken part in (Some claim to make) as local contractors area sweep from Ad Dayr to Basrah. You never know if all goes according to plan we could see an entry into the Guinness Book of Records!

FOCUS ON

SIG DANIEL PAPA



HOME TOWN - GOSPORT, HAMPSHIRE

JOINED THE ARMY - 9TH JANUARY 2005 AT AFC HARROGATE

HOBBIES and INTERESTS

SNOWBOARDING, SQUASH, RUNNING

I am part of 207 signal squadron based in Hohne, Germany. I am currently the rear link detachment attached to 52 brigade MiTT, CO's TAC The Poachers. My job here is to work with the signals platoon and provide communications support to the mitt team. We are located at camp Sa'ad which is north of the cob, and have been on Ops to various other camps including camp Al NASAR and camp stables, also we assisted the Iraqis in a 4 C's Op.



CO's TAC



Sgt Nick Stubbs on Milkshake withdrawal

IntRep

Multiple Source Corroborated reporting suggests that Sgt Nick "base-rat" Stubbs missed a trip to the luxury of the Basra Air Station base. It is reported that Nick missed a COB run this week, further evidence to support this event has been submitted by LCpl Smith RAMC who, despite his Hippocratic oath, said.

"He came to see me complaining of head aches and dizziness. At first I put it down to being a heat related illness so I gave him two Paracetamol and sent him packing. I then had a bit of a think about it and thought it cannot be heat related as he lives in the only air conditioned room we have, in fact it is that cold in there that they have to take their boots off when they enter and don ice skates so they can move around more easily. So then I thought that it was maybe smoke inhalation from the fire that Fred has constantly burning in their room to firstly keep the air temperature just above freezing and secondly as a tribute to Broke Back Mountain, his favourite film of all time. Finally however, I realised that it was depression after missing a run back to the COB so I booked him a Trauma Incident Management Session with Capt Paul Davies. Once he heard this, his symptoms started to clear as he realised he would

have to go back to the base for the treatment."

We tried to get a comment about the incident from the Camp Sa'ad Commandant (UK FOR) Capt Rich Bredin. Unfortunately it was before 0900 so he was not available for comment!

This report comes as a surprise as it was thought that TDA Nick would not miss a COB run until he was on R&R.

52X MiTT goes Air-borne



Sgt Batty helps the Iraqis Buckle up.

A key achievement of the tour passed over the last 2 weeks. The Iraqi Army and Iraqi Air-Force have begun working together and have proceeded from drills and skills to full blown Helicopter borne operations.

This is a significant success for the Iraqi Army and reflects how far 52 Brigade IA have come since the start of the tour.

The use of Helicopters will allow the Brigade freedom of movement around their huge Area of Operations and allow quick effects to be felt on the ground.



The Iraqi Army practice their helicopter drills.



TELIC LIKE IT IS A (Lincolnshire) COMPANY



Sheraton Hotel viewed from the Rear Sangar

What have we been up to in Baghdad?

It has been another few weeks of successful patrols and guard duties for the members of A Coy in Baghdad.

With nothing significant to report operationally (no news being good news) here are some other issues that have been keeping us occupied in Albert Lines.

Is it a bird? Is it a plane? Can't tell? Neither can C- RAM

The quiet calm of camp has been shattered over the last few mornings as the siren of the C-RAM early warning system reverberated from the rooftops. The frequency of these early morning wakeup calls has come as a surprise due to the recent reduction in indirect fire (IDF) activity in the city.

However, no sooner have we been diving for cover than the all-clear has been sounding. These alerts have been a result of false alarms where C-RAM has been tracking objects other than incoming rockets. What these objects are is uncertain, however we are happy to forgive the over-keen system in

the knowledge that the C-RAM is not only working well but it is operating far better than expected!

Power Cuts Finally Finished?

KBR engineers claim to have fixed the generator problems that we have been experiencing. Perfectly timed over the hottest part of the day, the daily power cuts have prevented the OC from watching Historical War Films to conduct research and consider doctrine. The power outages have also denied the use of the internet computer in the guardroom which has left the Platoon Commanders & sSgts lost without their daily fix of 'Facebook'. However the future is not without hope. The camp QM has assured us that the generator is now fixed "for good" due to the arrival of the correct spare parts. However, only time will tell.

Camp Chat Continues to Comfort Chaps

With the 7th issue of Camp Chat ready to go to print the Company's fortnightly paper continues to be a source of good humoured (and at times slightly bizarre) morale for the residents of Albert Lines. With the US Liaison Officer Capt Matt Lambert as Editor-in-Chief it is small surprise that many of the stories that make it to print are of a dubious nature.

Stop Press: Softie challenge completed

2Lt Will Rackham has just won a day's pay from the Coy 2IC, Capt Andy Hopper, by wearing a 'Softie' quilted jacket for a full 24hrs. This rather brave wager was agreed upon in Germany before deployment when the young officer

argued that Iraq was 'not all that hot'. With temperatures reaching 48 degrees in the shade and with no aircon for the day, it was an uncomfortable 24 hrs for him. Well done that man!



The "Rave"

VECTOR has incident free first patrol



A brand new Vector in use by A Coy

A Company's 3 Platoon took the new Snatch replacement along Route Irish to the Airport for its first run out a few weeks ago. Top cover sentries had to get grips with the GPMG swing mounts when previously they only had rifles or light machine guns. It's more complex than it sounds and it all got a bit too much for reservists Ptes Pusey and Robinson who simultaneously got stuck under the Platt mounts mid-route. Thankfully Pte Knight was on hand to release them from captivity. Drivers and commanders have got to know and love the



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malfunctioning air-con. 2Lt Otridge has ordered some wood panels to complete the sauna effect for his vehicle. Disregarding some minor points and teething issues, we are very happy with new vehicles. Vector is a bit less agile than Snatch but we've gained extra firepower, better armour and more space.

Farewell to Snatch

On 3rd August Sgt Hume commanded the last PROFOR patrol using Snatch vehicles before we converted to Vector.

This is probably the last time that Snatch will be used in Iraq as the primary patrol vehicle outside base areas. Some Snatch are being held in reserve at our camp, so this may not be the last time we use them.



The out-going Snatch II on patrol

Officers' rooms get Stonehenge treatment



Crow Corridor

The Royal Engineers have finally begun fortifying individual bedspaces, starting with the officers' part of camp. This means that although the OC is afforded greater protection from indirect fire, the arrival of 2 bunkers in his room means Major Birch can no longer hold lavish tea parties and games of giant twister in his single room! We have not had any rocket attacks for several weeks so this is just a precautionary measure. Fortunately the Company's SNCOs have occupied one of the few solidly built buildings in camp and they will not need to sleep in a 'coffin'!

Messages Back Home

"To all friends and family back in BFG and UK (and my wife Jude) - many thanks for your support. The boys are doing everyone proud and have definitely made their mark up in Baghdad. See you all soon."
WO2 Donovan (CSM A Coy)

"Hi Kate, missing you lots. Really looking forward to our week away when I'm on R&R."
Pte Dean Glover (3 Platoon)

"Mauhal !! Kumistdicar hope you are all ok and keeping well. Things here are still ok, only a few days till my return, make sure you stay malibog!!! mahala Makita"
C/Sgt Ron Hills



Al Faw Palace, Camp Victory

Focus On:



Cpl Adam Marshall

Hometown: Borehamwood

Age: 32

Joined the Army: Feb 1995

Interests: Running, boxing, football & ammo states

Cpl Marshall is a new arrival to A Company to replace Cpl Seaton-Norton in 3 Platoon. Settling in quickly, he has been acting as Platoon Sgt in Sgt Rawdon's absence on R&R and has established himself as a popular figure within the Company which has benefited from his arrival.

Pte Glover

Hometown: Grimsby

Age: 19

Joined the Army: Aug 2006

Interests: Rugby, poetry, long walks on the beach, dancing in the summer rain

Starsign: Gemini

Pte Glover is a driver in 3 Platoon. He has adapted well to the new vehicles and also to life on operations. He would like to complete a potential NCOs cadre or even the Officer Selection Board. His interests are certainly akin to that of an officer. More importantly, he plans to get married when back from Iraq and move into a Pad with his partner Kate.



TELIC LIKE IT IS B (Leicestershire) COMPANY



Company Update

Since the last well sculpted paragraphs were crafted detailing the exploits of B (Leicestershire) Company, a month has passed and each Platoon has experienced another hot and testing 4 weeks with temperatures rumoured to have hit 60 degrees Celsius on some occasions. If anyone wishes to replicate such conditions, it is best to purchase 100 or so hairdryers from Argos, code 352/4788 at £19.99 each, employ 50 people to hold them about an inch from your face then kindly ask them to switch them on. For added value, the purchase of a 60lb jacket and helmet and subsequent wearing of them during the afore-mentioned experience provides an adequate man-test.

These challenging conditions have, however, been met head on by the men of B Coy in the truest of Poacher ways and everyone has excelled in performing their duties. An overview of the Coy's exploits is difficult to summarise in so few words so more detail is shown below.

Company Headquarters



OC B getting to know the locals

The OC, Maj Pete Smith is still on R and R much to the relief of 5 Platoon who normally have to pamper his every need on a daily basis. Never one to abide by the rules, he got off the plane during the trip back to the UK in order to catch another one and is currently gallivanting around South East Asia. In his typical New Zealand twang he was heard to say, 'why would I want to enjoy R and R in England when I'm so close to Thailand'. We await this intrepid traveller's return and his associated stories.

Meanwhile, holding the fort at the COB, CSgt Paul Groom has been putting up with the requests for kit and equipment being put in by the Platoons out on the ground. His little helpers, Cpl 'I'm not a Mastiff driver' Morgan, Ptes 'I have lost weight' McIntyre, Kev Inchley and Walker have also been grafting hard. The nature of this tour has made it particularly hard on the stores side of life, but with 3 Platoons spread over 100kms, Paul is performing admirably and magics up some bits of kit when you'd least expect them. An increase in the provision of fresh food and also magazines has been welcomed by all.

4 Platoon

Al Qurnah, approximately 80km North of Al Basrah is Iraq's fourth most popular tourist destination according to the 1912 edition of Lonely Planet's guide to Mesopotamia and 4 Platoon have been enjoying everything that it has to offer within the confines of their camp. Well established in their camp, they have been working hard to improve the living conditions for the people of Al Qurnah. A project even larger than one that Lt Olly Child of 5 Platoon could imagine has been completed in the form of cleaning up the dirty streets surrounding the rivers Tigris and Euphrates. Run over a 2 week period, and driven largely by the Iraqi Army and local leaders it has seen the employment of approximately 4120 people and has paid huge amounts into the local economy. After seeing some pretty impressive improvements, the only fear is now that after having paid so many people in 100 dollar bills, that there will be no loose change available in Al Qurnah for the next year or so!



Local Sheikhs with the MiTT

A useful learning point for all soldiers in the Coy that will ensure the continued safety of all men on patrol was the



TELIC LIKE IT IS B (Leicestershire) COMPANY



excellent example of situational awareness of Pte Kidby recently. On seeing a herd of goats, near a mobile patrol, he recognised that their posture was a little aggressive and brought it to the attention of the patrol commander and all of those near him. Fortunately the herd of goats moved off without attempting to attack the patrol and Kidby's swift response ensured that any threat that would have been posed by a small group of goats was negated.

Pte 'I wish I could be on time' Ian Price once again surprised everyone by missing another flight back to theatre after a jaunt back to the UK. Firstly after returning following the birth of his daughter, his flight back to Iraq was mysteriously cancelled allowing some extra time with his girlfriend and new kid. Secondly and more recently, the new car that he had purchased was apparently not in good working order and broke down on the way to Brize Norton thus providing him with a couple more valuable days. One last point from 4 Platoon is that 2Lt James Garside is now a full Lt, but no-one's really that bothered.

5 Platoon

Enjoying a spell without Maj Pete Smith residing amongst his hordes of Eastern carpets, bongos and Persian women, 5 Platoon currently only have to put up with Lt Olly Child's stories of how much more he has done than everyone else. Capt Ben Hawes has already heard of the exploits of Olly and

has offered him the Editorship of 'The Exaggerator' magazine; a biannual publication which deals with many stories of hardship and extreme conditions experienced by Poachers officers.

Highlights from 5 Platoon include Pte 'The Nose' Johnson head butting a breezeblock which led to the medical evacuation of him to the COB by 4 Platoon. A schoolboy error by young Johnno meant he got the wound glued back together rather than stitched... foolish as a couple of stitches can be claimed for using PAX insurance providing easily paid for beer!



The 5 Platoon camp has a very friendly feel to it. Open plan and based upon a renovation plan developed by Anneka Rice, walking anti-clockwise from the accommodation around the camp results in a quick gym session followed by a shower before a quick bite to eat then work.

6 Platoon

6 Platoon have had the hardest tour so far out of all the Coy. From the very beginning they had a difficult Iraqi Army unit to work with, the 2nd Battalion of 52 Brigade (2/52), but worked

hard in austere conditions to achieve their tasks. After a third of the tour, they were pulled from this and away from the Brigade that 4 and 5 Platoons were still working with and moved into the city. After a brief period of time watching their camp being built for another Platoon, they were re-tasked once again. As this newsletter is written, 6 Platoon are now working with their third unit of the tour, 1/26 based in the once notorious Shia Flats on the western outskirts of Basrah City. They have suffered the worst of all of the Platoons but consistently show remarkable fortitude and a positive attitude with the patience of a group of saints.

Now residing in a school that will soon welcome the return of it's students in a few weeks, 6 Platoon have taken over the reins from an American Marine Corps unit who were returning to America after a 15 month tour! On the plus side, some of the kit that has been left behind by the outgoing unit has made the eyes light up of some of the more kit orientated deviants. Led by Lt George Wyndham who's prolific kit purchasing is only beaten by that of LCpl Roffee, the small boxes of American kit and food will doubtlessly provide hours of interest to those who don't indulge in traditional squaddie sports such as getting massive, downing bottles of Tabasco sauce and talking to girls.



TELIC LIKE IT IS C (Northamptonshire) COMPANY



What we have been doing?

C Coy are now back to training an Infantry Company, offering everyone on the training team the chance to demonstrate what they do best for the Iraqis. Also ongoing over the last week has been the Armourers course, MOSQ training provided by our Medics, and Special Ops Coy training provided by 4 SCOTS.

Some Camp improvements have been made this week, and everyone has therefore had impromptu hands-on experience of assembling and building Hesco Bastion, sangars, and loading/unloading bays. As these builds all took place in fairly blustery conditions, most are still finding sand in a variety of places. However, on the upside, the 'Squaddie tan lines' are becoming even more defined, and it is thus hoped that we will prove even more irresistible to the opposite sex when home for R&R!

The Olympics are now underway and thus there is something for everyone to watch and support in the unlikely event that you can find the time to do so! Excitement is building also over the prospect of the Premiership kicking off on the 16th, offering some weekly football relief to those so inclined, in addition to the weekly dose of gladiators which has fast become a Camp event.

Talavera Day

The 199th anniversary of the Battle of Talavera was

celebrated by the 48th Regiment's descendant unit, C (Northamptonshire & Rutland) Company, 2 Royal Anglian Regiment amid the dust of Camp Steelback in the Divisional Training Centre.



Smiling faces at the barbeque

7 and 8 Platoons were joined by the attached 2 Platoon from A Company for the day which made the celebrations especially memorable as friends who had not seen each other since arriving in theatre had the chance to catch up with one another. 9 Platoon's presence was sorely missed but the day's activities were by no means dampened by their absence.

After the morning's training of the Iraqis was completed, the afternoon started with a friendly five-a-side football tournament which, after a penalty shoot-out between 8 and 2 Platoon, saw 2 Platoon beat Coy HQ in a well earned victory. The matches took place on the pitch inside the Iraqi Army camp adjacent to the DTC where the location of the Iraqi's outdoor toilets provided plenty of reasons for not letting the ball go too far offside. Inside the DTC an inter-platoon volley-ball competition was

capably won by Coy HQ which maintained their position as Company volleyball champions to date.

As dusk approached the men of C Company relaxed together outside with a well earned beer and an excellent barbeque dinner provided by Cpl McBride and his team of chefs.

With the beers going down smoothly, an air of anticipation fell as the eagerly awaited Platoon Skits approached. 7 and 8 Platoon Commanders were hilariously put in their place by a superbly performing cast of characters including LCpl Price as Capt Hawes, Pte Roach as Lt Simmonds and Pte Vallance as CSgt Sweeney.



'2Lt Mackness', '2Lt Needs', and 'Lt Simmonds' (Ptes Sleath, Lea, and Roach) are questioned by 'CSgt Sweeney' (Pte Vallance)

The day was a wholly successful event and enjoyed by all. With the time being taken out of a busy operational tour for today's members of C Company to reunite for a day, it was ensured that the memory of the valiant 48th Regiment was remembered for another year.



TELIC LIKE IT IS C (Northamptonshire & Rutland) COMPANY



Tesco to Hesco

By Pte Mattocks, 7 Pl, AKA
'Doughnut Boy'

My job in the real world is completely different from this. As a civilian I am responsible for running a bakery department at Tesco, where I am responsible for a bakery team of 20, ensuring they are doing their jobs properly so that the department is always ready for trading. As I am a Department Head my duties also include Store Duty Manager once a week, ensuring the entire store is running smoothly.

As a mighty C Company Poacher in Iraq however, my responsibilities are rather different. I now have a Platoon Commander, Platoon Sergeant, and Multiple Commanders to ensure I do my job! I am also aware that here should I neglect my duties, it does not simply mean that we run out of doughnuts, but I could be jeopardising peoples lives. Whether providing security for a training team or an HLS, escorting LECs, guarding the front gate or in the sangars, I always need to be sure I understand exactly what is going on.

I had no idea what to expect on TELIC 12. Having been with C Coy since January, I was aware that the bigger picture in Iraq was changing, and that we were aiming to help the Iraqi security forces find an 'Iraqi solution to an Iraqi problem', and that the sooner we could help enable them to look after themselves, the sooner our job would be done. This is my first Operation,

and I have to say I found it strange to be packing my BFA and blank magazines! It has been a good learning curve here, and I have gained many experiences which I could not have had as a non-deployed TA soldier. I shall take many of the people skills I have picked up back to me, and hopefully will be able to apply some of this experience in my role in Tesco!

Troops Receive Gifts from the Brownies

Members of C Coy, 2 Royal Anglian Regiment are eating a little bit better this week after receiving specially packed shoeboxes of treats!

The boxes were individually packed by Bristol's 26th Brownie group after their Brown Owl, Tina Housom was given the idea by a soldier's mother. They are being sent out to the Poachers through the 'Support Our Soldiers' charity based in Chepstow.

The Brownies thought this was a great idea and eagerly packed their shoeboxes with goodies for the troops, who began receiving them this week. The Brownies will, in return, receive a picture of the soldiers receiving their boxes along with thank you letters for all their hard work.

It is always a pleasure for troops to receive packages when away on tour and when they come from people they do not even know it is all the more touching. This kind gesture is appreciated by all and C Coy would like to extend their thanks to this particular Bristol Brownie group, and SOS for making it all possible.



TELIC LIKE IT IS D (Beds & Herts) COMPANY



What have we been up to?



Once again the BSC have been actively involved in a variety of tasks to disrupt and deter anti MNF groups in MND(SE).

Although the BSC does not take public credit for a lot of its work we have been involved in some of the Bde's key successes.

In the last week we have had teams spread all over MND(SE), gaining a healthy working knowledge of lots of the AO.

2Lt Garside's advice

Whilst the Company was in Al Qurnha, and having a planning session to decide what to do next due to an increased IED threat, 2Lt Garside, B Company, decided to offer his tactical input. He advised the OC "the problem you have is Al Qurnha, if Al Qurnha wasn't here.." before rambling on. Thank you James, I think we all realised if we weren't in Iraq we wouldn't need to go on the ground!

Messages to the Family back home

Cpl Chris Lang to all the Poachers Families - *"Its still warm out here and MY tan is the best in the company! Looking forward to seeing everyone on my return."*

Cpl Marc Tremain to Wendy, Megan and Lewis - *"Love you all and miss you. See you soon."*

CSgt JJ Whiteley to Emma, Molls and Becks- *"Counting the days to R and R. Love and miss you more and more each day."*

Cpl Dave Martin to Wendy, Katelyn and Charlie - *"Just back off R and R, had a really good time with you it's a shame it didn't last longer. Love you loads."*



Focus on: Pte Damien Woods



Hometown - Hemel Hempstead

Joined the Army - 2004

'Dame', 21, has been in the army 4 years, and is one of only 3 badged snipers in the Poachers.

In his time he has served in Northern Ireland, and on Op Telic 8.

He is an alumini of Longdean School in Hemel Hempstead, where his mum and dad still live.

He is particularly keen on bodybuilding and in the future plans to open a muscle gym in Miami. Perhaps he is hoping it is sunnier than Iraq and he might be able to get a tan there as he certainly can't here.



AND FINALLY..



From the Padre

On the 15th June, 1957, a brand new car was buried in a concrete vault under the courthouse lawn in Tulsa, Oklahoma. In June 2007 it was unearthed to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Oklahoma's statehood. Writing in the 'Tulsa World' a journalist said 'Now we know what 50 years in a hole does to a Plymouth Belvedere.' Water had seeped into the concrete box and turned what had been a shiny car into a rusted heap. An expert in engine restoration who was brought in to try and start the car pronounced it 'hopeless.' Spiritual, moral and social inactivity can have a similar effect on the soul, standards and cohesion of a community. If we don't use it - we lose it!

As the life of the people of Basra and the surrounding communities improves day by day, week by week, month by month during our deployment I have noticed something quite particular within our military community. The things that hold us, bind us together as a closely knit team when things are particularly difficult are not only pulled out of the bag when the unit is in its war-fighting stance. The deep-down desire to build the team, work together, watch out for, and mind the back of your comrades is a constant within 'The Poachers' and all the other units with whom I have served.

When the cool box is getting low on water, no-one needs to be told to go and re-fill it.

Someone will make it so, because that's what team-playing is about. People can leave their beds-spaces knowing that no-one is going to go and rifle through their belongings whilst they are out - because its just not done. When help is needed, help is there because doing the right thing by one another is not only for when we're under attack.

The outstanding ability of a small group of British soldiers to achieve far more than the sum of the individual parts whenever they are called upon is due in a large part to the fact that the Army keeps values, standards, faith, teamwork and solidarity alive and active every day, in barracks, on exercise and deployed on operations. And it works, and it is a wonderful thing to see.

Thank you to all of you back at home who keep what we stand for active and lively in your support of our troops out here on OP TELIC 12. The schools, the WIs, the Veterans, the individual members of the public who write letters, who send parcels, who pray, who encourage, who stand in support of our troops every day. Thank you, it is your activity that keeps the very best of who we are and what we stand for alive and well within all our communities.