



# THE e-GREEN HACKLE

## From Sangin With Luck



Rgr Verner in Sangin

**Lieutenant Paddy Bury**  
1 R IRISH

✠ **C Company has had a slightly different 2008 than the rest of the Royal Irish Battlegroup.**

Throughout 2007 the Airborne Task Force commitment meant that C Company worked closely with 2 PARA on a number of exercises and when the Commanding Officer of 2 PARA, Lt Col Joe O'Sullivan, who is an ex R IRISH officer, requested a company from 1 R IRISH to reinforce his Battlegroup, C Company was the obvious choice. To fulfil this requirement C Company expanded significantly with the welcome addition of a platoon from B Company led by Sgt Harrison and a Fire Support Group led by Cpl McAleer.

The company was commanded by Major Graham Shannon, with Captain Paul Martin in the 2IC's chair and

Frankie O'Connor keeping the boys in line as Sergeant Major.

This new, 120 strong company deployed with 2 PARA on their pre-deployment training exercises BLUE HEAT, BLUE DAL and HINDU KUSH.

BLUE HEAT and BLUE DAL proved to be excellent, testing, live fire exercises in Colchester and Otterburn respectively. On BLUE DAL the Company group had an array of assets supporting it as it stormed mock enemy positions, including support and attack helicopters, mortars and fast air.

For many of us it was the most impressive display of force witnessed in our careers to that date. These exercises left us feeling confident in our ability in the face of the enemy in Afghanistan.

On 25 March Ranger Com-

pany, as it was now known, left Ternhill for Afghanistan and the greatest adventure many of us have experienced.

By 1 April the forward elements were in Sangin, a strategic town in Helmand province, and starting to take over from the Royal Marines stationed there. As we acquainted ourselves with our surroundings, Ranger Company began to patrol in strength, often clearing areas of the Green Zone 2-3 kms North and South of our base, Sangin D.C.

9 Platoon were the first to see contact with the enemy when they foiled a suicide bomb initiated ambush a couple of weeks after arriving. However, at this stage of the tour we found the locals friendly, the scenery beautiful and the environment relatively benign. Much was achieved in winning over locals during this period by

chatting and joking with them, and with the implementation of projects designed to benefit them.

May brought with it the poppy harvest and inactivity on the enemy's part. June

Meanwhile the IED threat continued to heighten. Lucky escapes began to become

## **Blown through a 2 foot thick wall and 10 feet into an orchard, and with the vehicle torn to shreds...**

As the IEDs mounted around our compound in Taliban territory, Patrol Base ARMAGH, became known amongst the Rangers as PB BARMA.

In late July, Sgt McConnell expertly extricated 8 Platoon from a 360 degree ambush, whilst PB ARMAGH was attacked from 3 sides in a separate incident.

By now we were relying on local nationals for information on our ever active enemy, and the hard

graft we had put in in the early months paid off. Moreover, the arrival of a company of 2<sup>nd</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> U.S Marines into the D.C helped ease the strain considerably and some strong bonds were formed.

By August the IED count was

would be a different story. From mid way through the month things began to get kinetic quickly.

8 Platoon, with Lt Gavin and Sgt McConnell in command, were contacted in a compound they had temporarily taken over. Soon after 7 Platoon were hit when returning to base.

A week later, with contacts becoming more and more frequent, 7 platoon, led by Lt Bury and Sgt Coult MC, embarked on an air assault

with C (Bruneval) Company, 2 PARA into the Taliban stronghold of Sapwan Qala. They spent 12 hours in contact.

commonplace. In July, 6 members of Ranger Company miraculously escaped serious injury when the WMIK they were travelling in hit a huge IED. Blown through a 2 foot thick wall and 10 feet into an orchard, and with the vehicle torn to shreds, it was simply

unbelievable that the casualties had not been more serious.

so intense D Company, 2 PARA were flown in to help defeat the threat.

It was during this period that



**Ranger Company get stuck in...**



**7 Platoon in PB Armagh**



Ranger Justin Cupples was killed in action by an IED whilst on patrol.

Thankfully, the rest of the Company left Sangin safely in the last week of September and returned to the UK nursing nothing more than their hangovers.

Two weeks in camp were followed by a period of POTL that was as deserved as it was welcome.

Back to it again, the last month of 2008 saw us battle another beast, that of MATTs training, and go on Adventure Training (AT).

There was a change of personalities too; Capt Martin left to become Air Adjutant, Colour Potter replaced CSgt Fell in the stores and WO2 Spence became Company Sergeant Major.

For 2009 the focus is recruitment and retention, with quality of life for the boys priority. AT expeditions and battlefield tours are in the pipeline along with some pretty juicy RAAT taskings. All in all, it has been a momentous year for C Company but as our motto, 'Nec Aspera Terrent' declares, 'the harshest trials do not frighten us'.

## New CD "CLEAR THE WAY!"

Following on from the success of the homecoming parades the Band of the Royal Irish Regiment (TA), combined with the Pipes and Drums of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, have released their new CD recording 'Clear the Way!'

This is the first CD the "new" Royal Irish (TA) Band has released following its 're-branding' on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2007. It features pieces such as *Highland Cathedral*, *The Green Glens of Antrim*, *Star of County Down*, and of course *Killaloe*.

The inspiration for the title of the CD 'Clear the Way!' was not only taken from the translation of the Regimental motto; it also well describes the recent parades when the band had to literally 'Clear the Way' for the marching troops behind.

The CD was recorded at the band's brand new practice facility in Kinnegar near Holywood on January 31/February 1 2009. A combined band of 50 musicians performed the music, including 40 members of the band and 10 members of the pipes and drums.

The recording was expertly produced by Karl Walker of *Blackthorne Productions* based in Randalstown. Twenty four microphones were used to pick out each instrumental section and the recording was made possible by kind donations from the Services Sound and Vision Corporation and the Reserve Forces and Cadets Association (Northern Ireland).

The CD can be obtained by sending £11.00 (inc. P&P) to:  
**RHQ R IRISH,  
Palace Barracks,  
BFPO 806.**

Cheques should be made payable to: **Central Bank R IRISH**



## 3rd Place at NISAAM

2 R IRISH

NISAAM is the premier shooting competition in Northern Ireland and the top placed teams earn the right to compete at Bisley – the home of competition shooting. The competition took place in April this year and 2 R IRISH entered three six man teams and a command team to compete against the nine other units entered into the two day competition.

The first competition of the day, the Henry Whitehead cup, saw Colour Sergeant Wyatt and Corporal Ferguson, placing first and second respectively, enough to push 2 R IRISH into an early lead. This was followed by the Roupell Cup and another strong performance – 2 R IRISH placed second, but only after a reshoot.

Throughout the first day it was obvious 40 Signal Regiment were the main competition and, despite high individual scores by 2 R IRISH, they won out in the Urban contact match (FIBUA).

The final individual shoot of the day was the Fleeting Encounter match (Mover). CSgt Ferris worked hard to ensure

the less experienced team members were confident in their point of aim and his efforts were rewarded with high scores across the team. 2 R IRISH closed well set up for the following day's shoots.



**2 R IRISH shooting team following a credible performance at NISAAM 2009**

The first team shoot - the Pistol tiles match - was fired on the evening of day one. Strong early performances saw the Chain of Command team and 2 R IRISH team 1 pitted against each other in the semi finals, with the former emerging the victors. The Command Team ended as runner up to 40 Signal Regiment after a very tense final match, beaten only by milliseconds and a stubborn plate or two.

Day two opened with a composite team of 8 representing the battalion on the Parachute Regiment cup match. The initial phases were physically strenuous but 2 R IRISH led the pack, eventually placing second by a narrow margin after a precious few dropped points.

The remainder of the morning saw very competent performances on both the Team snap shoot and the Roberts Cup match, with the final match of the competition being the Falling plates. All four teams from 2 R IRISH saw off their opponents resulting in a final between the Battalion's Team 1 and Team

3. Team 1 was made up of seasoned Bisley marksmen, and Team 3 of inexperienced new shots. After a blistering run down which was too close to call, team three emerged the victors dispatching their

plates mere milliseconds before their opponents.

NISAAM 2009 ended with 2 R IRISH placing a close third, nipping at the heels of both 40 Signal Regiment, and 253 GS Medical Regiment. Territorial Army Skill at Arms meeting 2009, which is held at Bisley in July, will no doubt produce some very good results and I am certain that members of 2 R IRISH will excel as both a team, and as individuals.

## From St Patrick's Day to the Kajaki Dam

**Captain A W Nelson**  
1 R IRISH

As the bugles, pipes and drums faded and the last "Yo!" of Killaloe was heard on St. Patrick's Day 2008, the men of B Company 1 R IRISH prepared to set off to Helmand Province. The advance party left just a few hours later with the remainder ar-

riving one week behind.

After arriving the Company had a short period of acclimatisation and training to get used to the searing heat and the sheer weight and complexity of the new equipment we had to use and carry. We also faced a steep learning curve getting briefed on the terrain and culture of Helmand Province itself. All this was before our heads were put into a spin meeting and getting to know the Afghan National Army.

The Company was ready in a short time to fly to Musa Qal'eh, a large town in the North of the province. Once there we met our Afghan soldiers that we were to mentor and began patrolling to try to dominate ground only recently retaken by coalition forces.

Both the Afghan Army and the local people were surprising, gratifying and frustrating in equal measure. During our time in Musa Qal'eh we built up a very strong bond with our Afghan counterparts, allowing us to take full advantage of the benefits they would give us in dealing with the local people and also with the Taliban.

Development of the town's facilities was top of the list of priorities during our time in Musa Qal'eh and we began several projects involving digging wells, repairing mosques and increasing access to fields and irrigation channels.

At the end of our three months in the town we felt that we had achieved something, both by developing the Afghan Army and also with the local people. Needless to say we were frequently tested by the Taliban, which provided us the opportunity to display to them our superior Infantry skills.

Half-way through the tour we rotated out of Musa Qal'eh to the main Afghan Camp, Camp Shorabak, along with our Afghan counterparts. This allowed both the British and Afghan troops to rest and conduct much needed training, although this was often hampered by Afghan Companies being sent on short-notice operations.

Of note was the occasion when the Company deployed with almost 800 Afghan soldiers to an area previously unoccupied by troops, near the provincial capital, Lashkar Gah. The Company was then forced to live on its wits and some air support from afar to counter Taliban aggression.

To finish the tour B Company were given a great opportunity to take part in the operation that would mark the summer in Helmand Province and be the major achievement of 16 Brigade during their time on tour. The massive operation to move a new hydro-electric turbine to the Kajaki Dam in the far North of



**Captain Andy Nelson with Kandak 2's headquarters.**

Helmand was a worldwide media spectacle. The installation of the turbine will hopefully lead to a huge change in the fortunes of many people in Southern Afghanistan in due course.

B Company's role, along with around 400 Afghan security forces, was to provide route security for the last part of the turbine's journey to the dam itself. Masses of fire support and air power were used to impose coalition superiority on Taliban fighters. After a swift ground clearance to dislodge enemy fighters the turbine made a relatively trouble-free journey north.

The men of B Company had been tested like never before and had not been found wanting. Amazing experiences of the country of Afghanistan, its people, and most importantly, its soldiers had been had by all. We now look forward to some time with friends and families and enjoying some well earned leave. However, on the horizon is a testing exercise in the very different conditions of a Falklands Islands winter in August 2009. As always, B Company will be ready...

## Contact, explosion!

**WO2 "Brummie" Hagans**  
1 R IRISH

✠ Having survived several contacts with the enemy, including being shot in the boot, losing a door to an RPG attack and encountering several ambushes, I thought the luck of the Irish was with OMLT 4; how wrong I was.

On the 27<sup>th</sup> of July OMLT 4 was in contact yet again in Marjah, but this time it would be different. We were about to discover the personal hardship and cost of war; we had lost an outstanding soldier and a true friend in Sgt John Matthews. After that day I sat down and thought to myself we couldn't get anymore thrown at us, but we had it all.

In August 2008 OMLT 4 moved out of Marjah and headed south to the notorious Garmsir area, where we were to take over from our American friends. The hand-over went very well, with daily patrolling with the Yanks until we were happy with the Tactical Area of Responsibility. After we took control and the Yanks had left, me and my OC, Maj Rob Armstrong, had decided that our men did not have enough protection and needed engineer support.

On the 11<sup>th</sup> of September I took a two vehicle patrol to visit my men, joined by a captain from the Royal Engineers to complete his recce. Unknown to me, this was to be my last patrol. We had been to Stella and Alma, and all was well. About 1215hrs we headed south towards Patrol Base 1, and were about 1.5 kilometres south of Alma when suddenly - BANG!



It was one hell of an explosion. I felt an initial surge of pain in my legs, then just like the war movies show, time stood still. I moved very slowly and was floating in the air. It seemed as though I was there for ages, then I was on the floor. I sat up and looked to my right where I saw the radio had landed by me. I quickly sent an initial contact report which went unanswered, but I later found out they could hear me. I looked down, it was in slow motion.

My legs were badly damaged, the left leg below my knee was hanging off and my right leg shattered; I couldn't even administer morphine because my body armour and

I wasn't.

Then I looked up to see Sgt Boyle and Sig Townson moving towards us. I shouted: "Bring the metal detectors!" While they were making their way there, I needed to know my crew were fine. I shouted at Capt Ben Power who shouted back and told me of his injury. I was so relieved to hear his voice, but then I shouted for Cpl Carter; no response. A sudden urge of "Please God, no!" went through my mind. Then I heard his voice. I was so overwhelmed that he was there, alive.

Sgt Boyle arrived with the men; they put me on a stretcher. It was a funny

administered first aid.

I lost a lot of blood. It was flowing out of my leg. I felt my heart racing even faster and I was struggling for air - I must have been in shock. I started to close my eyes, but before I did I told Cpl Imrie to tell my kids I love them. My eyes closed. I thought that this was me, but then a smack round the face and a scream of "Brummie" woke me up and I opened my eyes. Once my eyes were open, I felt a sudden pain in my left leg. It was the tourniquet being tightened.

I could see the Apache in the sky and I knew that help had arrived. The Chinook couldn't land where we were, so a



**The WMIK in which WO2 Hagans was travelling**

helmet had been blow off me by the blast, and my morphine was in my body armour. It was mad because I should have been in pain but

feeling being put on the stretcher followed by my shattered left leg, still attached. The team then took us back to Alma where they

100 metre move on the stretcher to a new HLS was necessary. Once I was safely on board, I knew I would be in good hands.

I did not really know what was going on, it was all a blur. I take it that it was the morphine. I remember being in hospital at Bastion - loads of light everywhere. It was some time later I awoke to the thankful face of the CO and the RSM. It was good to see them, I was in pain but still alive.

I could see my leg in a mess but still there, thank God. That day I had several visitors, although I couldn't have told you who came I was so out of it on morphine.

On 13<sup>th</sup> September I moved back to the UK, to go to Selly Oak in Birmingham. I arrived at Selly Oak hospital and in the next 48 hrs I went through several operations in which doctors did an outstanding job on my legs.

After spending nearly 7 weeks in Selly Oak hospital, where the exceptional professionalism of the staff helped my fast recovery, on the 27<sup>th</sup> of October I moved to Headley Court to begin my rehabilitation. I know it's going to be a long steady process, but I will never give up, and as Arnie says: "I'll be back".

Having lived to tell the tale, I would like to say the casevac chain does work, and is very effective; and the welfare support I have received is second to none. I owe thanks to Captain Bradley and his team and to John and Elaine, for their time and effort, and also to all the doctors and nurses that have helped me to get through this.

My injuries – well, no one needs to know about that, just that Brummie is alive and well.

## Partnership for Peace

**Lt R D Graham**

2 R IRISH

✠ Soldiers from 2 R IRISH made up the bulk of a British training team recently deployed to Armenia.

Playing a key role in the NATO led training exercise, alongside soldiers from Hungary, Canada, Greece and Switzerland, 2 R IRISH aimed to help improve the interoperability of NATO and other forces.

The exercise, which engaged over 1000 people from 21 different nations, involved patrolling skills and ensuring a safe and se-



**A match for the Mastiff?**

cure environment with a focus on Counter-Terrorism (CT)/Counter Insurgency (COIN) operations to prevent the destabilization of a particular area. The motto used by the NATO staff was: *"If we want to work together, we have to train together"*.

The exercise, named 'COOPERATIVE LONGBOW / LANCER', complimented the battalion's long term relationship with the Lithuanian Reserve Forces (KASP). A Training Team has conducted annual training exercises there for the last 11 years.

These experiences should enable the various participating Nations to apply their experience on future peacekeeping missions and at the same time provide 2 R IRISH with interesting overseas training opportunities.

## The Afghan National Army from a Ranger's perspective.

**Rgr Dowie**

1 R IRISH

✠ During my tour on Op HERRICK 8 I was a member of an OMLT team. My job description was Force Protection for the mentors in my team. I personally ended up doing a section commanders job, two ranks above my own.

The ANA, believe it or not, are very capable soldiers. Their lack-lustre attitude has however created a gulf between their ability and perceived capability. Their work ethos is the absolute opposite to that of the British Army and indeed at times very frustrating.



**Patrolling the Green Zone**

Patrol programmes were often impossible to enforce, on occasion for no better reason than the ANA's unwillingness to push themselves. When we did manage to cajole them into action their skills seemed shockingly amateurish. Most of the OMLT were more than a little nervous. I soon realised though that even though they appeared unaware of their surroundings, with their weapon over one shoulder and a cigarette hanging from their mouths, they were actually quite tuned in.

Their ability to read the body language of locals and interact with them went beyond the mere language barrier we suffered from. Absence of the normal would be accompanied by wordless gripping of weapons with two hands and tactical 'switch-on'.

The familiarity of the ANA with the locals saved our lives on numerous occasions – with details of IEDs and ambushes often exposed by a supportive local population.

Whilst on my tour the ANA made a lot of progress. I know that relieving units will find that hard to believe, but it won't take long for them to realise each job requires a bespoke soldier. For some tasks it is the British and for others a more relaxed ANA approach is required. For the incoming Battle Group this will be a hard lesson to learn.

Now to the good stuff! Anytime we got into a scrap with the Taliban the ANA were more than happy to get in amongst the fight. It was always during contacts that the ANA's enthusiasm had to be reigned in. The 6x man British team would bring a sense of order to the party, more focussed small arms fire and accurate stand-off strike using Mortars, AH and Fast Air.

## **D Company Review- 2008**

### **1 R IRISH**

✘ The D Company year began with final pre-deployment training and re-orbatting into OMLT's.

Following leave, the Company deployed to Helmand Province, Afghanistan in March. Where Major Vance Crow, OC D Coy, took on the role of mentoring the Kandak Commander, the for-

midable Col Rassoul, whilst the OMLT team commanders and their men took on the role of mentoring the various companies within the Kandak.

On arrival in theatre the Kandak was undergoing a training rotation in Camp Shorabak, the ANA Bde's headquarters, prior to deployment to the Sangin District so we started the conversion of all soldiers from AK47's to the M16 rifle. Meanwhile, Capt Mehmet Shoukru took his team and a platoon of ANA to the volatile region of Kajaki to provide support to the Battle Group based there.

On April 18 the OMLT and Kandak deployed north to the town of Sangin on the banks of the River Helmand. There, our task was to enhance security to the District Centre and surrounding area. This was done from various Patrol Bases (PB's) in the area, both mentored by OMLT 3 and unmentored.

These PB's were predominantly on the fringes of the constantly changing Forward Line of Enemy Troops (FLET) and the soldiers found themselves almost immediately at the sharp end of Counter Insurgency Operations, facing the daily threat of small arms and indirect fire attacks on patrols and patrol bases as well as the dreaded threat of Improvised Explosive Devices (IED's) which caused the majority of ANA casualties throughout the tour.

The OMLT saw constant action, both in the Green Zone, the vegetated area irrigated by the River Helmand and in the searing heat of the desert on the town's outskirts.

Initially the OMLT and ANA Kandak expected to be in Sangin for up to 12 weeks but, due to the ever-changing



tempo of Province-wide operations, they ended up remaining there until the end of the tour in Oct 08, a period close to 6 months.

During this time the OMLT were involved in more than 100 major contacts with the enemy resulting in numerous enemy kills including those of designated High Value Targets. These contacts incorporated the use of D Company's own 81mm mortars and Javelin missile systems as well as support from fast-air and attack helicopters.

OMLT 3 was involved in 16 Bde's only major Air Assault operation of the tour as well as working jointly on numerous deliberate operations with 2 PARA Battlegroup and 2/7 USMC both of whom had a company based in Sangin District Centre.

These numerous deliberate operations were often conducted with the ANA and OMLT at the forefront and uncovered substantial caches of weapons and ammunition as well as being responsible for numerous enemy casualties.



**OMLT 3 "Better to ask for Forgiveness than Permission".**

ties.

In late September the OMLT and Kandak returned to Camp Shoraback and subsequently back to the UK, arriving on October 4. Then followed a 10 day period of post operational administration and various home-coming



**WO2 Mahaffy relaxing in the Sangin Canal (aka The Morale Canal).**

events finishing with 3 weeks much earned post tour leave.

After returning in November, D Company were re-united once more as a support weapons company and are now looking ahead to 2009

with the highlights including cadres for each platoon, adventurous training expeditions to Canada and Wales as well as the various battalion and Brigade level exercises in preparation for the next operational challenge!

## A Company Update

### 1 R IRISH

✠ A Company has been busy both at work and at play, with the birth of 6 babies this year on the family front, a busy tour in Afghanistan and a large change in Company personnel.

On reflection, the first part of the year was a blur of exercises, culminating in the Brigade Mission Rehearsal Exercise which saw A Company pushed from Salisbury Plain to Sennybridge to conduct operations in Celini Village with a simulated Afghan Army. The Company was then brought back to Salisbury Plain where it was used to fill numerous positions within the simulated Afghan Army for the final Brigade operation in Imber Village.

Afghanistan saw the company split between a Force Protection Platoon and OMLT 1. The Force Protection Platoon was attached to Imjin Company, 2 R IRISH to assist in the protection of Security Force locations. They rotated through various locations including Bastion, FOB Keenan and Musa Q'aleh.

OMLT 1 started off in Sangin where they quickly got to understand their counterparts in Kandak 1 and the operating environment.

Maj Simon Shirley had led the Company throughout the build up training and the deployment to Afghanistan knowing he would possibly be handing over mid-tour. The handover never happened in Afghanistan as his Land Rover WMIK hit a mine and he was returned, injured, to the UK.

OMLT 1 deployed to Camp

Shorabak from Sangin where the new OC, Maj David Middleton, joined us. The task in

the UK the handover has been completed and there is, once more, only one CSgt



### Maj Simon Shirley's WMIK post minestrike

Shorabak was to mentor the Kandak training in barracks. Not an intense task but still highly challenging.

The second half of the tour saw OMLT 1 deploy to Musa Q'aleh for 3 months. The intensity of the fighting in Musa Q'aleh had not been experienced before by the

Clark in the Company.

The return from Afghanistan also saw the CSM and the 2IC handover to WO2 Roberts and Capt Steven Swann respectively. WO2 Cronin moved to the training wing and Capt Nigel Campbell will take over as RSO in the New Year.



**ANA soldiers and UK mentors relax after a successful patrol south of Musa Qaleh. The A Company soldiers are, l-r rear, Capt Dixon, Cpl McClurg, Rgr Moore, l-r front Rgr McDowell, Rgr Stout, Rgr Manning, CSgt Wooley (2 SCOTS), Rgr Flannigan.**

## Territorial Recruiting Buoyant

**Major George McFarland**  
2 R IRISH

✂ This period in the recruiting calendar is usually quiet as Christmas becomes a distant memory and the summer holidays loom ever closer. For the 2 R IRISH recruiters however this year is different.

With a recruit training concentration planned for July and August and mobilisation for Afghanistan planned in



**Recruits on their very first 3 mile tab with full kit.**

the autumn of 2010 the need to encourage more young men to join 2 R IRISH is as strong as ever.

The battalion recruiters are working to meet the need by encouraging young men into the TA infantry at "Job and Trade Fairs". Once recruited, and as part of the recruits training, a strong Regimental ethos is nurtured with visits to Regimental museums in Armagh, Enniskillen and Belfast.

There are over 160 recruits in training with the Battalion at the moment at varying stages of their training.

Eighty of the battalion's recruits signed up in the past month planning to take part in SHAMROCK CHALLENGE—



the Brigade recruit training concentration this summer. This The Training Centre at Ballykinler will be able to form up two platoons of R IRISH recruits in July to train alongside recruits planning to join other Corps and Regiments.

The focus is not exclusively on filling SHAMROCK CHALLENGE. Over the past months the battalion has trained 32 young men to Phase 1 standard and a further 27 rangers completed the Combat Infantryman Course (CIC TA) or Phase 1C at ITC Catterick. Indeed the R IRISH contingent was so strong that ITC Catterick asked the Commanding Officer of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion to take the passing out parade. During that course Rgr Charles Gray from HQ Coy achieved best recruit.

The battalion Recruit Selection and Training Team takes a very



**The commanding officer speaks with Rangers who have just passed out of training at Catterick.**

hands on approach to training recruits placing great emphasis on getting recruits to a high standard before they enter training at the Brigade Regional Training Centre.

Running recruit training exercises at battalion level has the result that very few recruits fail the remaining phased training. It also allows the battalion team to identify weaknesses in recruits which can be corrected before attending TSC 'A'.

## UDR Day 2009



**Old Comrades of the Ulster Defence Regiment gathered for the Service of Remembrance at the memorials outside Regimental Headquarters**

## WOW what a season so far!!

**Sgt Sid Green**  
2 R IRISH

Around November last year I was asked to put together a battalion football team, so I put flyers and word of mouth around all company locations to see if anyone was interested.

On the 7<sup>th</sup> Dec last year the first training session took place and with no-one knowing each other we played Queens University Officers Training Corps in the Northern Ireland final. It was a tough 90mins with 2 R.IRISH coming away victors 1-0. That result took the team to the national competition.

The next game was against 7 SCOTS at Redford Barracks in Edinburgh, the weather was terrible with heavy rain and wind coming at us side wards. The team played very well and came away with a deserved score line 3-0, we were in the quarter final.

The quarter final was a home match in Palace Barracks against 38 Signal Regiment, it was a close game with chances from both teams to win it. On the day our irreplaceable striker Rgr Sammy McVicar scored crucial goals and we came away victors 3-0.

We knew the semi final would be a hard fought affair as Exeter University Officers Training Corps were beaten finalists last year. They proved to be a strong, fit and disciplined team but it was all about who wanted the result most on the day.

Approaching full time the game looked to be going into



extra time with both teams drawn at 1-1. But with 4 minutes left Rgr Stitt popped up at the back post to make it 2-1 to 2 R IRISH. That goal was the last goal of the match and when the final whistle went we couldn't believe we were in the final.

Preparations are going well for the final of the TA Cup which takes place at Aldershot stadium on the 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2009 where we will be playing Sheffield University Officers' Training Corps.

## Paddy's Day In Chad

**Lt Col Richard Robinson**

✠ My 'normal' posting is as a planner with Rapid Reaction Corps-France (a sort of French ARRC) at Lille. In January about 65 of us deployed from Lille to Forward HQ EUFOR CHAD/RCA, replacing a French divisional Headquarters. Our EUFOR mission was to ensure a safe and secure environment in

uty Force Commander. On 15 Mar 09, EUFOR handed



Eastern Chad, which is suffering the consequences of the Darfur crisis. Ireland contributed one battalion to EUFOR CHAD/RCA, and filled a number of staff appointments, including Dep-

uty Force Commander. On 15 Mar 09, EUFOR handed over to the UN Mission in Chad/Central African Republic (MINURCAT) and on that day 99th Infantry Battalion 'rehatted' from EUFOR to MINURCAT.



## Your Benevolent Fund needs you.

We raised thousands of pounds for different charities last year and as a Regiment we are generous to a fault. Our own Benevolent Fund spends more than £150,000 each year helping serving and retired members of the Regiment.

Every week the fund makes grants to needy members of the Regimental family. For example supplementing course fees to help unemployed former members find work and providing grants to educate the son of one of our soldiers who died in service.

Please consider your Benevolent Fund when planning fund raising activity. It needs more income to continue helping our Regimental family.

**Donations may be made to The Royal Irish Regiment Benevolent Fund at RHQ R IRISH, BFPO 806.**

The Irish contingent here has extended the warmest welcome to me. I have greatly enjoyed their company, admired their professionalism and envied their equipment (truly they have the best of everything).

This year I had the very great honour of going on parade with 99th Infantry Battalion (Officer Commanding Lt Col Joe McDonagh) of the Irish Defence Forces. Formed from 2 E Bde (Dublin), 99th Infantry Battalion is currently serving as part of the UN peace keeping mission in Eastern Chad (MINURCAT). The salute was taken, and shamrock issued, by BG Gerald Aherne, Deputy Commander of MINURCAT. In a departure from normal 1 R IRISH procedure, I did not kiss him!