



# THE e-GREEN HACKLE

## Introduction

✠ Welcome to the second edition of the new style electronic Green Hackle.

In this edition we have tried to give a feel for "life in barracks" in between operational tours.

There's a heavy focus on sporting activity as well as some assistance to training other units preparing for Afghanistan.

We have also tried to give a feel for what it's like at either end of a military career in the cadets and in the Old Comrades Association (not all are that old of course).

I hope you enjoy this edition. As ever if you have articles you'd like to see in print or have a view you'd like to share with the Regimental family please drop us an e-mail: RHQRIRISH-MAILBOX@mod.uk.

## Surfing Home

Capt T Forrest  
1 R IRISH

✠ Britain's coastal waters attract few surfers during the winter months; D Company were tamongst hat few.

With a bleak winter sun peering between heavily overcast clouds an intrepid band of soldiers crept down a coastal path to a secluded Newquay beach to commence surfing as part of 1 R IRISH's post HERRICK Adventure Training drive.

A sceptical hierarchy pooh-poohed surfing as Adventure Training; envisioning sun, sand and scantily clad females. The reality was far more arduous. D Company squeezed themselves into wet-suits in preparation and steeled their minds for the shock of icy November water.

A brief introduction to safety in the water preceded an idiot's guide to catching a wave. D Company launched into the water with much gusto, enthusiastically propelling their less-than streamlined torsos through the surf to catch the first waves. With surprising success they careered towards the beach, propelled by Mother Nature to crash and splutter in delightful disarray onto the sand. With squeals of delight D Company renewed their endeavours with increasing vigour, rising to the challenge of the Ocean. Time and again they launched themselves at the beach, growing in style and confidence as the day progressed. There is a debate raging in the quiet halls of the Adventurous Training World as to the suitability of Surfing as a recognized adventurous activity. Without hesi-



tation I endorse the sport. The soldiers of D Company grew in confidence in the marine environment, fearlessly facing waves that would strike terror into the souls of fish.

This sport challenged, fatigued and developed a group of men recently returned from one of the least hospitable environments in the world. Surfing is adventurous training at its best, removing D Company from its comfort zone and stretching their horizons. But more important than any of these DS cries was the fun. Every man grinned from his first wave to his last.

As the day drew towards an increasingly cold end the surfers retired to the safety, and relative warmth, of the beach, laying down their boards and looking instead to food. A happily exhausted group returned to camp, merrily celebrating their tales of derring do, mocking the less coordinated and crowing their success to the shadows. For a Battalion of the non-swimming Irish, surfing was an unquestionable success!



**The Highs...(LCpl Neil showing off)...**



**...and the lows (LCpl Neil shown up).**



## Combat Service Support

✘ That's me, Major Eamonn Coogan, on the left – how in the past you might have expected to see Headquarter Company Commander; a capable late entry officer spending 99% of his time getting a shiny backside behind a desk.

But things have changed significantly in the army. If you're not capable of being a soldier first don't expect to be employed in an Air Assault battalion. It doesn't matter if you're that Cpl who works in the Quartermaster's store or a driver in the Motor Transport Platoon; be a soldier first because the enemy won't make a distinction.

Of course I still need to make sure my Company works to deliver real time life support to the whole Battalion (that includes providing food, water, weapons, ammunition, transport, accommodation and so on) and that all the necessary inspections to ensure all that stuff is in place have been completed.

It would be very easy to focus on inspections and forget to prepare yourself for war, and it's my responsibility to ensure every individual in my Company is capable of re-



turning fire to the enemy without flinching.

On the right are members of HQ Company taking part in the Battalion March and Shoot competition, which involved two 12 man teams from HQ Company competing in exactly the same competition that the Rifle Companies and Support Company were involved in.

The day was an absolute scorcher. Starting at 0500 hrs with breakfast served by our beloved Catering Platoon followed by a quick kit check and two hour journey to the start.

The Stretcher Race phase of the March and Shoot Competition involved the 12 man team carrying two stretchers, each weighing 80 kg, plus 25 kg of personal kit and a rifle. There was also a GPMG and 51mm mortar being carried between the team.

Leading the teams were myself and Captain Nigel Campbell, the Regimental Signals Officer. That's me in the picture above carrying the stretcher; on my right is Ranger Rea, The Regimental Dog Handler. As you can see, long gone are the days of sitting behind your desk!



**Members of HQ Company taking part in the Battalion March and Shoot competition**



Above the teams receive a pre-start briefing on the March and Shoot competition. It's not only members of the Royal Irish Regiment in HQ Company. In our March and Shoot team were soldiers of the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, Royal Logistics Corps and Adjutant General's Corps.

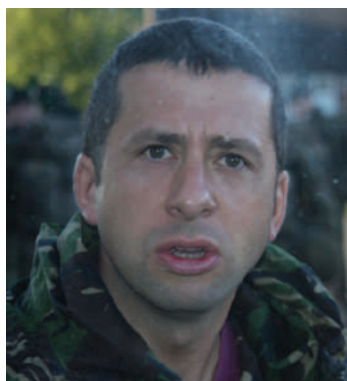
The Regimental Accountant enjoys a burger at the end of the competition. Sgt Cox is one of the few members of HQ Company who has taken part in every event during the Fox Cup and is what is meant by being a soldier first and administrator second.



Above Captain Nigel Campbell leads from the front carrying the GPMG at the beginning of the March and Shoot competition. All he and his team have left to do now is complete the 7 mile march, the one-mile stretcher race, and an extremely difficult shoot engaging targets from 100 to 300 metres.

Things have certainly changed since I joined in 1979. HQ Company is not just full of personnel that sit behind in camp when we deploy on exercise and operations.

It is full of people who are soldiers first and still provide you with the following: **administration excellence, vehicle repair and recovery, logistical convoys, combat medics, outstanding food, worldwide communications, logistical support, intelligence, welfare support, Mess**



Another team member (above), the Masterchef SSgt Clark, Royal Logistics Corps, was the Second-in-Command to Captain Campbell. Again, not your stereotype Masterchef. SSgt Clark is one of the fittest men in the Company.

## Air Assault Training

2nd Lieutenant G Muir  
1 R IRISH

✠ As part of No. 18 squadron RAF's preparations for deployment to Afghanistan, a three day air assault exercise was organised based from RAF Odiham, Hampshire.

C Company deployed to assist with the exercise by providing both friendly and OPFOR troops.

The exercise allowed Company HQ to conduct thorough preparations for single and multiple chalk air assaults; however it soon became clear that the "Bump Plan" would be the key element of all orders given.

For a variety of reasons a three chalk lift became a two chalk lift and ended with only one chalk on both nights.



## What's The Benevolent Fund For?

✠ Do you know someone who served as a soldier or officer in the Royal Irish, RANGERS, UDR, Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, Royal Ulster Rifles or Royal Irish Fusiliers who is in need of help?

Our Benevolent Fund is there to provide help. Let us know and we will make sure whomever it is gets confidential support and assistance from their regimental family. Call Regimental Headquarters on 02890 420 632.





### Gun teams getting a first opportunity to work together

Despite this the exercise still provided valuable planning preparation and those involved in the two air assaults were able to practice their low level skills before the forthcoming

meet most of the Company for the first time and also learn two valuable lessons: stay flexible to the last moment....and plan early, plan twice!

C Company's training vali-



### Rgr Hunsdale 'hanging out'.

ing Collective Training Level 1 package.

Having only arrived at battalion the Sunday night before deploying it was an opportunity for me to

dation would however provide a greater training opportunity.

From 25 May-03 June we used the surprisingly hot

and sunny Otterburn Training Area to do live firing up to platoon attacks.

Throughout the exercise junior level commanders, many in charge of their sections or fire teams for the first time, were able to develop SOPs.

An unexpected 'benefit' of the package was the work experience most got as on call firefighters as the training area disappeared behind flames and smoke on numerous occasions; fire beaters became a Company packing list SOP by the end of day one on the range!

## Mermaids at Seaview

Lt S Everett, 1 R IRISH & CSgt Baalham, 2 R IRISH

✠ So what does an Irish infantry Regiment do with itself in a period of relative calm I hear you ask?

For budding adventurers from the Royal Irish a trip to the Isle of Wight beckoned and with it the



**Team Abbots—Maurice Baalham, Gary Watson and Bob Brown**

chance to wage sailing war against the might of the rest of the infantry in

winds on the first day really giving the sailors and boats alike a good

ter still. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion experienced the reverse – a cracking start putting them in the lead but then unable to hold on to it, finishing the first day in 4<sup>th</sup> place.



**Simon Everett helms the 1 R IRISH boat away from the start.**

the Infantry Sailing Regatta 2009.

Uniquely every battalion in our Regiment entered a team – so that's two teams; the 1 R IRISH boat helmed by Lt Simon Everett and the boat from 2 R IRISH helmed by CSgt Maurice Baalham.

This annual event open to all infantry units is a two day, hard fought contest in a keel boat called a Mermaid (a motoring equivalent would be the Saab, big heavy and quite slow). A real eclectic mix turned up for the event with 3 Para, 3 Mercian and 2 Scots being amongst those represented and Southampton UOTC flying the flag for the students (albeit badly considering they live next to the sea!!).

The racing turned out to be a real treat with good

test in some very challenging conditions. The Officers' boat (1 R IRISH) started the day slowly in 8<sup>th</sup> position due largely to human error. They later managed to put some good results together and

Day two forced an even steeper learning curve on both Royal Irish teams as the alchemy of spinnaker (big balloon shaped sail) work conspired to trip them both up. In race 1 on the officers' boat Lt Whitmarsh managed to drop the wrong sail entirely in a moment of sailing madness which cost



**2 R IRISH in the "pink boat".**

eventually finished the day in second place. Had Lt Everett not managed to go the wrong way – twice – this might have been bet-

ter still. The team precious seconds, but fortunately no positions (and the Paras were as ever still behind). Team Abbotscroft suffered



the reverse spinnaker problem – a tangle at the top of the mast and all sheets flying to the wind at the bottom which took Gary Watson some time to disentangle.

**The Director of Infantry put a good bow-sized hole in one of the boats.**

2 R IRISH performance improved somewhat thereafter with a bold move at the windward mark in the second race. Courageously approaching the traffic jam at the bouy with absolutely no rights (a bit like trying to pull out into a busy roundabout, between cars, without slowing down) they snuck their way in and leapt from near last to lead boat in the space of 50 metres.

And so the Royal Irish rallied and ended the day on a high with 1 R IRISH winning the final race by some considerable margin, having unusually not sailed the wrong way and finishing the regatta as second placed infantry team and 3rd overall. 2 R IRISH meanwhile finished in a creditable 6<sup>th</sup> place overall (out of 20 teams). What really mattered for 1 R IRISH though was beating all their 16 Air Assault Brigade competitors.

This is an event contested in a very light hearted and good-natured manner – unusual for a sailing event! Next year the intent is to enter three teams (one from RHQ as well as two Bn teams) – pre deployment training allowing. We'll win it!

## Exercise SHAMROCK TELEMARK

Capt L Shannahan  
1 R IRISH

✠ Capt Shannahan organised a Ski Touring Adventure Training package to Norway in April. The aim of the exercise was to achieve a battlefield study as well as gaining skiing qualifications.

They did this by visiting one of the most inhospitable places in Europe, the Hardangervidda plateau of central Norway and retracing elements of one of the

film "The Heroes of Telemark".

Though not a ride in the park, this provided a rewarding and enjoyable opportunity to experience adventure and learn and improve on skiing and navigation skills.



At the end of the exercise 12 students gained their Ski Tour Proficiency qualification and, as Capt Shannahan put it, "the group's determination and enthusiasm had resulted



most daring raids during the Second World War, the destruction of the heavy water production at Vemork hydroelectric plant; a story retold in the

in an unimaginable improvement in ability all round".

# Exercise SUMAN WARRIOR

Lieutenant G Sample,  
2 R IRISH

✠ Two years ago I was a Home Service officer in 2 R IRISH. Almost to the day two years later, with new kit issued, I was on a flight to Tern Hill as part of a group from 2 R IRISH (Territorial Army) joining 1 R IRISH en route to Malaysia where we would participate in Exercise SUMAN WARRIOR.

Ex SUMAN WARRIOR involves armed forces from Singapore, UK, Malaysia, Australia and New Zealand training together. Its aim is to conduct cooperative training in order to ensure future success in joint military operations.



**Noodles & Fish again then...**

As the UK BG we set about planning and war gaming various stabilisation and war-fighting operations in a joint and multinational environment. Having done the planning the three day Ex

itself involved the establishment of the Ops room and a LOCON location



**The Bn 2IC finds himself on the map.**

where a Controlled Battle was played out on a large Map of the area of operational responsibility.

My role as Bde LO let me sit in on Orders and Planning Sessions. With an overview of the exercise as a whole it was impressive to see how effectively the UK contingent was able demonstrate how such an operation would work in reality, taking into account required timelines, distances, and general passage of information involved in joint military coalitions.

tions.

The exercise was not all about sitting in an ops room though. Every morning the Pipe Major roused the troops with a 0615hrs rendition of Star

of The County Down. My early pre season rugby training had done little to

prepare me for the Royal Irish Weight Management Programme (Bn PT). I was more at home with the evening sports sessions - rugby, five-a-side football, volleyball etc - played against the other exercising nations.

Malaysia, our host nation, served us well with displays of culture and tradition and sporting events for all to participate in. I must admit though, after four days of noodles and fish for breakfast, lunch (with a live Malaysian Beetles Tribute Band) and tea, I was glad the chefs we brought had found the kitchen and the supermarket!

Despite an unwanted plane delay we all enjoyed a day of R and R in Kuala Lumpur before the long flights home. It's fantastic to be back in uniform, and in my own Regiment again too!



# A Day At The Races

WO2 Clark  
2 R IRISH

✠ **There are few sporting venues that can match the rich heritage and history of Ascot Racecourse.**



**No money lost yet—still looking optimistic!**

On the 10th of July 2009, Warrant Officers from the 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalions, their wives and partners were invited to Ascot by the Hon Col of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion the Royal Irish Regiment, The Lord Ballyedmond OBE.

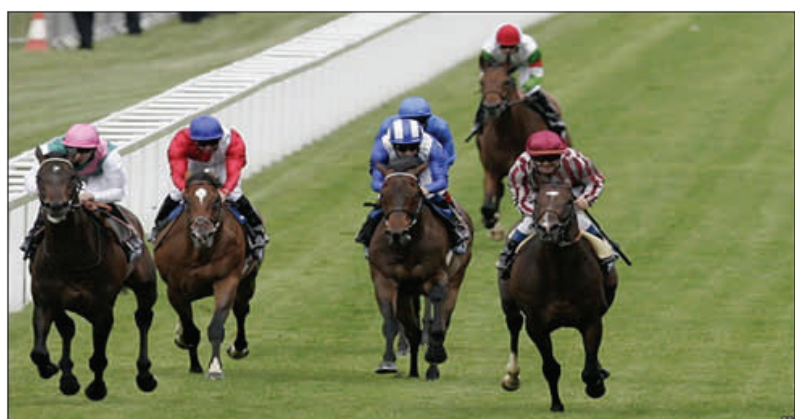
We all stayed at the Hilton hotel in nearby Bracknell. Well I say all, those of us who had booked into the right hotel did, WO2 Roberts take note!!!

After a late night discussing our betting tactics, it seemed that the method favoured by most was stick a pin in the racecard, closely followed by colour of the jockeys'

silks; some however seemed to be playing their cards close to their chest – this would become apparent the following day.

Appropriately suited and booted, we made our way to the racecourse the next morning, wanting to make the most of the day and soak up the atmosphere.

We were all impressed with the scale of the grandstand, which is almost 400 metres long and



**The RSM's Donkey bringing up the rear!**

was completed in 2006 at a cost of nearly £200m. There are 265 private boxes in the new stand, and we were fortunate to be occupying one of them.

After enjoying the hospitality in the box, and all studying the race card at great length, we got down to the nitty-gritty of the day's racing. There were six races on the day so plenty of opportunity for money to be made (and lost!). Those of us not familiar with the protocol when it comes to betting got some advice from the more experienced gamblers in the group.

Rather than watch all of the races from the box some members of the group went down to the parade ring where you can get up close with the horses and jockeys, then to the area by the winning post to watch the race itself. Down amongst the crowds you really get swept up in the atmosphere, and as we found getting very vocal as the horses came down the final furlong to the post.

We all left having had a fantastic day that we will

remember for a long time. It was not something that you get to do every day, and it was good to catch up with old friends and colleagues.

# Abbotscroft TA Boxes Clever

2 R IRISH

✠ **Sport and charity combined to provide fantastic entertainment in Abbotscroft TA centre 2 R IRISH.**



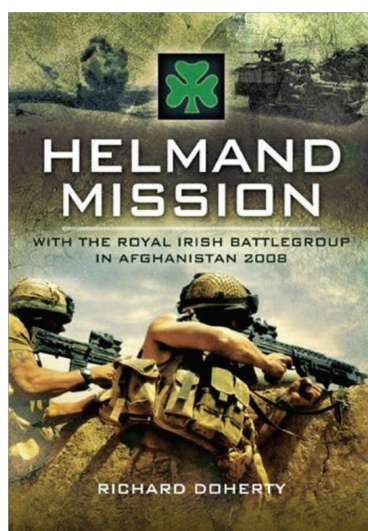
**Rgr Mulholland is from Bangor, where he works as a landscape gardener. 3 years in the TA he returned from an operational tour in Afghanistan in Oct 08. When asked about the tour he said "I loved it, it was really good and I would like to go back on another one in 2010"**

After a gap of some 20 years Capt Dee Orwin PSAO B coy organised a charity, 'Help 4 Heroes' boxing afternoon. In the presence of the Mayor of Newtownabbey boxers from 2 R IRISH got down to some tough business against local boxers from the PSNI and Abbey ABC from Bangor.

Eight boxers from A and B Coy had been training hard in Monkstown boxing club Newtownabbey where they were coached by LCpl Cris Sommerville and Rgr Billy Ball. Boxing requires high levels of courage and determination which was aptly displayed for all to see. It was the first time they had boxed competitively in the ring and although the results did not go in our favour there was no disgrace competing against hardened civilian opposition.

It was a family occasion with old comrades, friends and supporters all cheering on the boxers, backed up by the mini pipe band, but the biggest winner of all was the charity. The messes, local businessmen and the Honary Colonel all donating prizes, the raffle raised £700 for the 'Help 4 Heroes fund'

The event was a huge success and will now go down on the forecast of events!!



**Richard Doherty's book available from RHQ R IRISH (028 90 420 629)  
£13.00 incl p&p.**

## Regimental Christmas Cards

**Sold in aid of the Benevolent Fund.** Inside contains a simple seasonal greeting. Please note the price includes free postage and packaging for all United Kingdom orders.



Orders from UK by surface mail: £9.00 per dozen cards  
(£5.00 per half dozen)

Orders from Europe (airmail): add £5.00 (£2.50)  
Outside Europe (airmail): add £10.00 (£5.00)

Order with remittance made payable to "Central Regimental Account R IRISH" should be sent to: **Regimental Headquarters, The Royal Irish Regiment, Palace Barracks, Hollywood, British Forces Post Office 806.**  
Or call 028 90 420 629.



## E-mail From Afghanistan

Lt Col O Lyttle  
2 R IRISH

✠ **Just reporting in to say that all is well up here near the NW Frontier.**

So the other day I was out on one of my top secret black ops (J2 and TCG had intelligence that double chocolate chip muffins had appeared to the SW of Kabul). I was conducting a CTR on the camp (rusty recce skills last taught to me by Matt Kelly in 1987) when I met a guy in a caubeen and moustache. Ahh, I said, a cunning insurgent deception plan but then the chap began to speak in a rather posh voice. Well, I thought, if he's not the fabled long lost extra from Blackadder Goes Forth; the original Captain Darling. The chap then introduces himself as Tony – be jabbers it was Tony Maher!



**Lt Col Owen Lyttle and Maj Tony Maher at Camp Julien, Kabul on 27 May 2009. For the record Tony was attending the COIN Leaders Course - and not expanding the NIRTC. As for me, I was just "site seeing" ;- ) - that's the Queens Palace in the background. [By the way the muffins were delicious - who says that J2 never deliver!]**



## Branching out...

Seen in Dingle!

## R M A S — A Momentous Day

Officer Cadet P Pratt

✠ **Life at Sandhurst is unique within the army and yet every officer goes through the same experiences, so much so that regardless of commissioning dates there are shared memories.**

So what will make up my memories? Day one, January 5th, reveille at 0500 and a group of fresh faced cadets with varied experience 'formed up' to attention in freezing temperatures, snow falling around, with not a sound of life surrounding the square.

Passing off the square after the first 5 weeks, Exercise Long Reach and steeplechase are all memorable, not just for the fact they are 'rights of passage' but also for their effect in binding the platoon and nurturing a platoon ethos.

The bonding effect of the Sovereign's Banner competition; the better we worked together the better our results would be - a basic Sandhurst lesson with undoubted universal military application but more significant given we were complete strangers only weeks previously.

Almost daily lessons on skill at arms, first aid, navigation, signals, offi-

cership and leadership and a huge emphasis on physical fitness.

Lectures on defence and international affairs, war studies and communications and behavioural sci-

Interwoven with all the training is the drive to select and be accepted by a regiment into which one will commission. The first phase of the process took place during the junior term, when in the hog-

ries, reports on operational tours and occasional updates on Battalion news. All of this helped to increase my knowledge and understanding of the Regiment.



**Orders Prep—OCdt Pratt extreme right.**

ences; elements which contribute to our overall understanding of what it means to be an intelligent officer.

Three exercises stand out for me: Ex Crychans Challenge marked the end of the junior term and was the culmination of all our training throughout our initial phase of training. In the intermediate term, Ex First Encounter concentrating on defensive ops and Ex Druid's Ridge focusing on FIBUA helped to build and develop our knowledge of various operations the Army are involved in.

wash of the first 5 weeks I had to select two regiments to visit and in most cases take to Regimental Selection Boards.

Some of the cadets are fortunate to have had contact with soldiers and officers from their perspective choices and I was in that category. The evidence of my previous research was reinforced with material from the Royal Irish Regimental Representative at the Academy. It was noticeable how much more proactive the Royal Irish were in contrast with other Regiments with the provision of Regimental magazines, documenta-

For me the pinnacle of the selection process came with my visit to Ternhill in early June. The opportunity to mix with young platoon commanders, get a feel for the mess and most importantly interact with the Rangers and NCOs all helped to confirm in my mind that 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion The Royal Irish Regiment was where I wanted to start my career as an infantry platoon commander.

Following an interview with the Colonel of the Regiment and Lieutenant Colonel Freely I was offered a Commission in the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Royal Irish Regiment. In contrast to the bleak and dreary gloom of the morning of January 5<sup>th</sup>, 15th July will be 'the momentous day', as Colour Sergeant Walker called, it of my time at the Academy. From now on, I get to look forward to moulding and shaping my caubeen and will wear it with pride on completion of the final exercise in senior term.



# Northern Ireland Cadets

1st (NI) Battalion, Army  
Cadet Force

✠ The 1<sup>st</sup> (NI) Bn ACF returned to Knock camp near Warminster to spend their 2 week annual camp. 300 + Cadets and 80 Adult instructors enjoyed the hot weather spell and the scenic aspects of Salisbury Plain.



**Through the smoke for the 4 stars. The Cadets carried out several Section attacks against the Adult instructors. One Instructor commented that he was grateful that the Cadets did not have bayonets, their aggression was scary.**

## Combined Cadet Forces

✠ It has been an excellent summer for the Combined Cadet Forces.

**Royal School Armagh** are CCF Military Skills Champions—particularly complimented on how mannerly the contingent cadets were.



**Cadet CSM Tori Armstrong lifts the trophy of best contingent from Capt John Dunn (APTC) OC 32 Cadet Training Team**

**Royal Belfast Academical Institute** travelled to Longmoor in the south of

England for Annual Camp, where clay shooting and assault courses formed part of the training programme.



**Campbell College CCF** meanwhile travelled to Nesscliffe in Shropshire for their annual camp. The fortnight was spent doing a range of adventurous training activities, including kayaking, mountain biking and hill walking. Hill walking was combined with map reading to get the most out of the activ-

ity. Deputy Commander of 2 Div visited the contingent during their exercise.



**DComd 2 Div**

For **Foyle and Londonderry College CCF** Pan-hale in Cornwall was the sunny destination. The weather was a blessing which allowed maximum beach time.



**Life's a beach...**

# Old Comrades & Regimental Reunions

☒ So it rained – but that made no difference.

With about 300 on parade, a full house of Association Standards, Maj "Hurry On" McPeak in fine form and drink flowing until after 10 o'clock at night feedback is that this was as good a gathering of former (and some still serving) soldiers



*"Hurry On there..."*

as ever.

The Colonel of the Regiment, Lieutenant General Sir Philip Trousdell KBE CB, took the salute and was assisted in the inspection by Major General David The O'Morchoe CB CBE and the Deputy Colonel of the Regiment, Colonel Mark Campbell CBE.

What a joy it was to see former members of the



**Standards of the Old Comrades' Associations**

Royal Irish Rangers cheek by jowl with former members of the Ulster Defence Regiment, sharing the craic with each other. There were even one or two Skins seen talking in a friendly way with ex

the ranks of our Associations is Combined **Old** Soldiers Day the wrong description for the event? Thoughts on a postcard to RHQ at BFPO 806.



**Not such "Old Soldiers"**

Faughs and Stickies!

So what of the future? Next year (2010) the parade will be on 5<sup>th</sup> June; the fledgling Association of the Royal Irish Regiment will dedicate its Association Standard and we may have re-named the event.

With more and more young members joining

