

# CONTACT

## First Fusiliers

KEEPING YOU UP-TO-DATE WITH THE FIRST FUSILIERS BATTLE GROUP

www.firstfusiliers.mod.uk



### TOP TRAINING

For the Fusiliers, the past 18 months has been an intensive training period concentrating on their core role as a fast moving and hard hitting battle group, which took the men and women of the First Fusiliers from the steppes of Poland, to prairies of Canada. Once tasked for Iraq, the First Fusiliers trained for the complexities of this very different environment at one of the most advanced training complexes in the world, located in Bavaria, before RSOI in Kuwait. RS

### FIRST FUSILIERS BATTLE GROUP COMPOSITION

Battle Group Headquarters  
C Squadron, Scots Dragoon Guards  
A Squadron, 9/12 Lancers  
*From the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion,  
The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers*  
X Company, Y Company  
Z Company, HQ Company



### RECEPTION, STAGING AND ONWARD INTEGRATION (RSOI)

Prior to travelling to Iraq every person in the Battle Group attended a 9 day RSOI package run by 9/12 Lancers at Camp Beuhring in Kuwait. The purpose of the RSOI package is simple: to acclimatise soldiers to operating in a Middle Eastern environment and ensure that everybody deploying into Iraq is fully aware of the latest events and tactics and in-date with the various weapon systems that will be used in Theatre. The Brigade Commander had also stated that he wished for rest to be built into the programme in order that we did not arrive in Theatre tired.

Run at a very relaxed pace, the RSOI package did just what it was required to do. Some early morning PT, followed by a mixture of lectures and hands-on lessons and then later on in the week, live firing at the ranges.

The welfare facilities in Camp Beuhring were excellent, with most members of the Battle Group making full use of the Dining Facility. Highlight meal had to be Steak and Lobster Tails, and it was possible to have two hamburgers a day if the mood took you! After ten days, we were more than ready to deploy into Iraq and flew by Hercules directly into the COB.

Major T P D Morris, OC X Company.

### Introduction

The Battlegroup is now complete in Iraq. The 700 men and women of the Fusiliers, Scots DG, 9/12 Lancers, AGC and RLC are now settling into our new home, either in the Contingency Operating Base (COB) outside Basra City, or in Um Qasr Port. Many things have changed since TELIC 7 and our mission reflects the fact that the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) are now far more capable and able to conduct security operations throughout Southern Basra. We remain ready to support them, and 7 Brigade's Main Effort is to continue the process of mentoring and monitoring in order to allow the ISF to eventually manage security for themselves. First Fusiliers Battlegroup has the Strike task, which means we are able to provide support packages where and when they are needed. We have already conducted a number of operations and, as I write, I have soldiers deployed in support of operations on the border, providing assistance in Um Qasr Port, providing local security to the COB and as Quick Reaction Forces able to move, at short notice, anywhere in the area of operations. We are busy, which is excellent; time is flying by.

As you will read, our living conditions are good. The food is too good and our accommodation is comfortable, although there is a problem with aircon at the moment which is being rectified. I do apologise to you all for the poor quality of welfare phone connectivity. I am aware you are frustrated and it is at the top of my list to sort out as soon as possible. For those back home, I can quash the rumour that we have to share showers – I can assure you there is plenty of water!

In sum, the Battlegroup is in great shape, the boys and girls are coping magnificently in the difficult conditions and we are, as ever, eternally grateful for all the support from the home base.

Lt Col Paul Nanson MBE.  
Commanding Officer

## TAKING OVER

Taking over from the SCOTS GUARDS Battle Group was very smooth and everyone was very impressed by the first-rate, professional attitude of the Guards. Our first glimpse of things to come was back in Bavaria when their Battalion Second-in-Command and a small team came out to assist our training during the Mission Rehearsal Exercise (MRX). The two Battlegroups gelled from our first day in Iraq and the Quartermaster, Major Eddie Aldred and his team had a smooth take over of Camp.

On Flag Day, the Commanding Officers made a final inspection starting at the Sangers on the outer perimeter. The inspection was aided by the quad bikes which form a new key mobility aid, especially for air-mobile deployments into the desert areas around the Province. RS



Fusiliers from Birmingham bid farewell to the SCOTS GUARDS



'Toon' Army HQ



## FIRST PATROLS

Tearing ourselves away from the brilliant facilities within the COB, it is our job to get out and dominate the ground. The first patrol took the form of a mixed patrol with the Scots Guards who we replaced. A successful patrol, leading to an increased understanding of the ground benefitted all – even those seasoned Telic veterans, for whom the chance to see how Iraq has changed was of interest. Beneficial for all with the exception of OC 12 Platoon, who ended up with his vehicle breaking down (Ed- already!) without him even being present! Some things never change!

Lt Simon Walker, OC 10 Platoon, X Company.



## FEEDING FRENZY

Since arrival in theatre the Catering Department has been put to the test straight away with the preparation of 750 meals, three times a day. This, in a kitchen more than a little older and much more temperamental than either our normal kitchen or those used in the US Base in Hohenfels where the MRX took place in March. Despite this, we managed to provide X Coy with a BBQ for the grand opening of their Coy Area, start our Wednesday night theme night with a traditional Indian event and plan for our Friday night 'Chip Shop' which will start this week.

For a budget of just £2.89 per man per day we provide free of charge to the soldiers a total of 28 individual items for breakfast, 5 hot main meal choices, a salad bar, baguette bar and all the beverages at lunch, 5 hot main meal choices, the (fantastic – Ed) sweet counter and again the beverage bar at dinner. Added to this are the boxes for those on Guard duty! (A real feat of creativity and budgetary skill! – Ed)

WO2 Rob Fisher, Regimental Catering Warrant Officer.

Write to: Major R Shepherd, Contact First Fusiliers Newsletter, 1 RRF BG, Op Telic 12, BFPO 641 or email 1RRF-UPO@armymail.mod.uk



## CAMP DELTA, THE COB.

Both old hands and newcomers to Iraq were pleasantly surprised by the changes seen here, even since the last 1 RRF tour, which finished in May 2007. The accommodation has changed, with each person benefiting from Op Stonehenge which provides low walls around each bed-space, primarily for protection from any Indirect Fire (IDF) that might come our way in the form of rockets or mortars. However, a side benefit is that individuals have a space they can call their own and it affords a degree of privacy.

The welfare facilities are good with free internet and telephone access, a gymnasium, 'chill-out' areas and a small shop on Camp to complement the larger Welfare Village with shops, cafés, barbers and tailors. Each building has air-conditioning, which understandably occasionally struggles with dust storms and when temperatures rise above 45°C, but is generally excellent, providing a welcome respite from the desert heat. RS.



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## THANK YOU

A big THANK YOU for all the letters and parcels from friends and families and also from [www.thanktheforces.co.uk](http://www.thanktheforces.co.uk) Clinton Cards have been fantastic in providing free 'Fathers' Day' cards to all the troops here. WO2 Del Snelling, Company Sergeant Major, Zulu Company said: "these little luxuries mean a hell of a lot to us ... likewise, keep up the e-blueys, letters & parcels!" RS