

## Ex Lion Heart September 1984

### Commanding Officer's Notes

On 28 August 1984 the GOC South West District, General Barry Lane, carried out a formal inspection of the Regiment as part of the ARU. Having walked around Bhurtpore Barracks in the afternoon he crashed us out at last light! The echelon went on a 100 kilometre road march in the Hampshire/Wiltshire countryside ending up in a hide on Salisbury Plain and the sabre Squadrons linked up with tank transports, taken to a drop off point, and then motored into hides also on the Plain. After replens and a series of actions against infiltrating enemy patrols the Squadrons moved into counter penetration positions and successfully stopped the Queen's Dragoon Guards, the enemy for the day. The visit ended with an address by the General to the whole Regiment at Weather Hill Firs during which he said, amongst other things, the Regiment was fit for role.



*"I don't like it – its quiet . . . too damn quiet".  
The CO waits for something to happen.*

A fortnight later we had the opportunity to prove it when we left Southampton on 12 September for Exercise Lionheart.

Exercise Lionheart was a tremendous success story for the Fourth. We served 24 Infantry Brigade, 19 Infantry Brigade and 20 Armoured Brigade during the course of it under the overall command of GOC 3rd Armoured Division,

General Tony Walker. On deployment with 19 Infantry Brigade 4 RTR Batlegroup consisted of C Squadron, Reece Troop and B Company STAFFORDS. A Squadron was grouped with the STAFFORDS' and B Squadron with the KINGS OWN BORDER in 24 Infantry Brigade. Happily this state of affairs lasted only for phase one and in phase two the Regiment was grouped together in 19 Infantry Brigade. Having crossed the Leine and advanced to Sibbesse with them we received orders to regroup to 20 Armoured Brigade and in no time were on the move again from Sibbesse to Lampspringe, through the Bockenem bowl and finally on to Sehlde on the eastern side of the Hainberg. We reacted quickly and effectively to everything the Brigades asked us to so and I was particularly impressed and encouraged by the performance of our crews and the reliability of our equipment. Exercise Lionheart was rewarding and coming as it did so close to our move to BAOR, very beneficial. Deploying from and recovering to the United Kingdom had its interesting moments, and the procedures worked.

Prior to Exercise Lionheart the Officers' Mess had the privilege of hosting General Bob Foote and Captain Pip Gardner at a dinner night to mark the unveiling of the paintings depicting them winning their Victoria Crosses. The evening was a very special and happy one and I was delighted to see many officers at ERE present. We were very honoured with General Bob's and Pip's presence and those who attended will never forget the occasion.

Since our return from Lionheart Bhurtpore Barracks has been a hive of activity as everyone prepared for our handover to 5 INNIS DG. A 100% PRE has been satisfactorily completed and as I write the handover is almost over. It has gone pleasantly and without a hitch.

And so our tour as the UK Armoured Regiment comes to an end. We have enjoyed ourselves and many will be sorry to leave. Being away from BAOR for 2 years has done us no harm and we return to Osnabruck refreshed and looking forward to our new role in 12 Armoured Brigade.