

During our sojourn the Near East, two sabre squadrons were re-equipped with vehicles mounting 'Stillbrew' armour and the Thermal Observation and Gunnery Sight, the two other squadrons having completed the process in the previous year. Naturally, an influx of new equipment necessitated much training in its use, while the injection of many new soldiers into the ranks caused the training programme to extend still further. Additionally, the Cyprus tour had upset the constant learning processes of an armoured regiment; hence the first ten weeks of the working year became a period of intensive training. Training not confined to members of The Fourth only; we were joined by several members of the 'extended regimental family' during our administration of the RTR Corporal to Sergeant promotion course, held in Osnabruck in February.

Despite what has consequently been a fairly active period internally, the Regiment has been able to host a number of notable visitors. The first being Brigadier David Jenkins (Commander Armoured) who was paying us his first visit after assuming his current appointment. Shortly afterwards, between 3 and 8 February, the Regimental Colonel, Colonel John Woodward, and Adjutant, Major Edwin Gould, were welcomed once more to Imphal Barracks. Early February also saw the visits of the Academy Sergeant Major, WO1 Nesbitt, on the 8th followed by the GOC, Major General Roger Wheeler on the 16th.

February also included the RTR Officers Dinner, held once again in Hildesheim. This annual meeting of old and not so old regimental contemporaries proved as enjoyable as ever with 4 RTR attempting their usual feats of endurance at the bar. Meanwhile, the Pipes and Drums were preparing for competition in the Scandinavian Championships to be held on 10 and 11 February. They left for Copenhagen on 8 February, where they were able to spend a day of final preparation and practise before the competition. The day of the contest dawned and all were in high spirits and full of optimism. Pipe Major Gary Nicholson was the first member of The Fourth to perform. The hours of practising were to be suitably rewarded as the 'Ps and Ds' won most of the prizes: Drummer Willie Bell winning the March and Drum Major John McSeveney coming a close second. The string of successes continued into the next day and when the final result of the overall competition was announced it was not really surprising that the Pipes and Drums of The Fourth won; their efforts had been suitably rewarded.

The closing stages of February brought the delights of Exercises ZODIAC CHALLENGE and HURST PARK. These Command Post Exercises once more practised the Regimental and Squadron Headquarters elements in their delicate arts.

Gunnery training is now fully underway, and it is hoped that there is no significance in the fact that the Regimental range firing period this year begins on April Fools Day. Whatever the consequences, we look forward to revisiting Canada later in 1990, where the Regiment will be under the eagle eye of the present Commander British Army Training Unit Suffield, Colonel Doug Cantley - a previous Commanding Officer of 4RTR - and The Fourth will be keen to display a renewed enthusiasm for tanking after last year's break.