

NEWS FROM THOSE STILL STUCK IN THE DEPARTURE LOUNGE OF BASRAH INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

It has now been 2 months since we moved into the Airport so as you would imagine a routine has very much developed. Although within the HQ the systems remain stable there are many projects in the pipeline which, fortunately for the 1 Div G6 branch, may not be happening in our time. The Comms facilities we continue to provide for theatre remain reliable with no major problems. The headquarters is now well and truly a regimental commitment with elements from 201 OSC now part and parcel of the Headquarters. So Capt Hawkins, SSgt (YofS) Reed and SSgt Richardson are now witnessing the finer points of admin/comms support to the Staff.

Sgt Ginge McNeilly and his team in the MT remain extremely busy ferrying Staff officers around theatre as well as doing the normal runs back and forth from the airport. However now its even busier on the MT front with Capt Goodwin, Sgt McNeilly and Sgt Hounsell looking at extracting all those remaining vehicles out of theatre.

On the point of getting out of theatre it is inching ever closer, albeit very slowly, until 3 Div start arriving. Most of our workload therefore is now aimed at ensuring that all equipment that stays in theatre is accurate and accounted for. SSgt Holdroyd and his team are busy conducting full CES checks of all those Dets remaining. As well as this the QM(T) and his team are working flat out to ensure that all demand numbers and supply chains are fully in place for the handover.

The CSE show came to town providing some much needed light entertainment in the form of Bjorn Again and Bee Gees. Music for the older members of the Squadron who were here the last time and some scantily clad dancers for the first timers.

A more high profile visit saw the Prime Minister visit the airport to personally thank the troops for their role in the operation. As some of the Squadron watched from the airport roof others stayed in the cool of the rest room watching events unfold live on Sky News. Not content with this, LCpl Stanyer prepared for her close-up and was broadcast live around the world trying to coordinate the media scrum around the PM. The PM was briefed in the HQ about the operation and shook everyone's hand that was in Syscon at the time. The OC Squadron and the FofS along with the G6 staff met the PM as he was leaving, for a brief chat. He was particularly interested in the work being carried out to resurrect the local Iraqi comms infrastructure where the CO and FofS managed to comment on the existing facilities.

Another visit had the Squadron hosting the Bergermeister from Herford, who had come to 'apologise for his country's behaviour during the war'. Keen not to use the visit for political gains, the Bergermeister was given a tour of the HQ and met troops who have German partners. He was also taken into Basrah and shown some of the Squadron's out dets. Thanks go to Lt "special K (NIMDA)" Kamara for his efforts in ensuring this went of smoothly.

The provision of chips with every meal and an ever approaching BPFA has led to most of the Squadron undertaking an abnormally large amount of PT. In the early hours of the morning or the coolness of the evening, even the TA have been spotted trying to run to the main gate and back interspersed with the odd sit up and press up. To say that the forthcoming BPFA has become competitive would be a bit of an understatement. The clever money is on the 3 obvious choices of Lucas, Kamara or Scarfi but there has been a lot of late money on SSgt Trev "the snake" Allan who has been regularly whipping the SSM, FofS, Big Fin and AI "Otto" Harris during the evening "Fat Club" training sessions. This coupled with hours spent on the airport roof (for those who have the time?) means that partners can expect the return of their very own bronzed Adonis very soon.

A big well done to Sgts "Rodders" and John Ford on their recent selection for FofS training. Iraq is a doddle in comparison, and you might have the benefit of seeing your family more often but don't count on it.

Finally many a thought has gone in to how long we individuals out here are going to have to wait to get our medals out of the tailoress's, never mind, those of you with only one medal should have them out in time for Remembrance Day parade.

