



Army Basing Programme

Newsletter

Special Edition – 2016 Moves

INTRODUCTION

This 2016 Moves Special Edition of the ABP Newsletter contains articles drafted by personnel from each unit that moved from Germany to the UK in 2016.

1 REGIMENT ROYAL LOGISTICS CORPS

The majority of 1 Regt RLC commenced rebasing from Princess Royal Barracks, Gutersloh, to Saint David's Barracks, Bicester, in the summer of 2015, with 23 General Support Squadron remaining to provide 2nd Line logistic support to 20 Armoured Infantry Brigade and BFG units. By Aug 16 the Regiment and all families had successfully completed the move. Considering the magnitude of the task and the volume of personnel involved the move went extremely well. This was largely down to one key aspect - communication. From the onset of rebasing the Welfare team were consistently engaged with HQ BFG, Agility, Carillion Amey as well as the Service personnel and their families.

The Welfare team ensured that Service personnel and their families saw rebasing as a move like any other assignment. This encouraged families to take ownership of their own administration and conduct everything in a timely manner. Hugely beneficial were the family briefs provided by Carillion Amey, DIO, and teachers from two local schools. These covered information on the local area, housing, and the schools their children would be attending. This forum allowed families to ask questions and raise any concerns they may have had, allowing sufficient time for these to be addressed.

Housing was always going to be a contentious issue, especially with most families moving from large SFA in Germany to smaller properties in the UK. However, due to the briefs, and the management of expectations, most of the families were satisfied with the SFA available. One problem the unit does face is a lack of SFA in the Bicester Garrison area. This has meant 40+ families having to reside in Abingdon. Whilst not ideal, early

engagement with the families has made the situation more bearable for all involved.

The Welfare team was also fortunate to have a SNCO working in Germany supporting the families who were still conducting rebasing, providing the communication link to the team in Bicester. Families had varying circumstances which presented a plethora of challenges for the Welfare team ranging from on-going medical care of spouses to school and visa applications. Having a mal-located Squadron in Germany was always going to present frictions, however good communication and forward planning minimised problems and gave sufficient time to deal with any challenges.

6 REGIMENT ROYAL LOGISTICS CORPS

This summer 6 Regt RLC rebased from PRB, Gutersloh to Dishforth Airfield in North Yorkshire. On 23 May 16 the Regiment initiated the movement of its kit and equipment back to the UK, an operation that would eventually see 49 vehicles and trailers, 11 x 20ft ISO containers and 140 cargo transport units, and a wide variety of associated equipment safely delivered to Dishforth. By 1 Sep 16, 300 under 18 year olds had moved with their families and over 150 children have now started in local schools; between 27 Jun – 1 Sep 16 the Regimental welfare team took over and allocated 143 SFAs in the Dishforth, Ripon and Topcliffe areas.

The importance of early and focused interaction between Service families and the chain of command can't be overstated. A plethora of briefings were delivered in Germany but families must be encouraged to make sure they attend. Early consultation with local contract holders is also key, as the Regiment learned when all the civilian Sodexo staff in the QM department were sent on gardening leave at short notice, with consequences to the real life support for the Regiment.

The HO/TO of infrastructure in PRB was a huge success due to early engagement with HQ BFG and Gutersloh Garrison as was an early activation party to embed with

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the previous unit and the excellent 4 Bde Military Liaison Housing Officer. Early liaison and interaction with the local schools was crucial (they visited Germany and spoke with the BFG schools before the move) as was engagement with the local council, DIO and Carrillion Amey for mutual understanding in order to develop regimental plans. Overall, 6 Regiment's move to Dishforth has been a huge success and has set the conditions for a very bright future.

99 SQUADRON, 29 REGIMENT ROYAL LOGISTICS CORPS

In July 2016, 99 Postal Courier and Movement Control Squadron (99 Sqn), 29 Regiment The Royal Logistic Corps (29 Regt RLC), rebased from Germany to the UK. The move from PRB in Gütersloh allowed 99 Sqn to relocate alongside the bulk of 29 Regt in Duke of Gloucester Barracks, South Cerney. Being only a small sub-unit, the scale of the move and the number of moving parts was limited, although not without challenge. However, thanks to the forward leaning nature of HQ BFG, we received superb guidance throughout the process. Likewise, Agility proved responsive to our needs, remaining adaptive to any last minute changes.

Lastly, 69 Sqn (also from 29 Regt RLC), played a vital role and were supportive throughout, particularly relating to the return of Sqn weapons. Having generated a workable plan to move the weapons via Calais, a short notice change to French custom rules made this option unfeasible. However, thanks to the flexibility of 69 Sqn we were able to adjust the route through Emden Port, taking advantage of a routine maintenance sail.

In the UK, Sqn personnel benefited from Swindon Council's guarantee of school places, ensuring no families struggled to find schooling places for their children. Meanwhile, 29 Regt Welfare Department's good relationship with Carrillion Amey helped ease the housing allocation process. Whilst some soldiers have had to adjust to smaller houses compared to BFG, this is a fact of life in the UK and was well briefed by the UWO prior to the process commencing.

Overall, the rebasing of 99 Sqn was completed successfully. Whilst not without friction, thanks to the support provided by HQ BFG, Agility and 69 Sqn, and the hard work of our own personnel, the Sqn is now

firmly settled in South Cerney. The return of 99 Sqn personnel will immeasurably improve the regiment's ability to meet its burgeoning commitments.

5 RIFLES

The following are extracts taken from articles written by a range of personnel within 5 RIFLES:

'Until recently 5 RIFLES was based at Alanbrooke barracks in the centre of Paderborn, Germany. The camp was our own, only 5 RIFLES soldiers were stationed there. The accommodation wasn't to the best standard but we were right in the centre of town. We have just relocated to Bulford in Wiltshire, to very different conditions, a rural modern camp.'

'We were informed of the smaller SFA in the UK and the need for down scaling of furniture and kit was made very clear. The welfare team published plenty of information to where we would be moving. As a result the march out was relatively straight forward and painless.'

'As a spouse during the unit move, I found that we were always well informed. It was very handy to have the school head teachers and Wiltshire Council across to speak to us early. Facebook groups in the local area were a massive help and you couldn't ask for better local community support. Since moving to the UK in July my family have settled in very nicely. My two boys are enjoying their new schools and have made lots of new friends and I have a new job in a lovely local Nursery.'

'To the delight of the singlies, everyone had a single man room with en suite, a step up from the four man rooms they had in Paderborn. The direction given with regard to cancelling German contracts and applying for claims and other personal admin was simple enough for most soldiers. The support given by the welfare team and RAO department was exceptional. Upon arrival in Bulford the signing in process was simple enough with good support from the RAO department with an evening JPA clinic to help out with the submission of claims.'

'The area around Bulford itself offers great opportunities for the battalion in respect to physical training. The main difference to Paderborn being... it has hills, and the men are quickly getting used to these. We have also been blessed with a fantastic back area for ranges and exercises, and the battalion is shortly going to start making the most of having Salisbury Plain on its doorstep.'