



A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE
9TH/12TH ROYAL LANCERS
(PRINCE OF WALES'S)







A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE
9TH/12TH ROYAL LANCERS
(PRINCE OF WALES'S)

THE REGIMENTAL COLLECT

*O Eternal God, grant to us, thy servants of the
9th/12th Royal Lancers, strength, guidance,
courage, and steadfast Faith, that we may ever
serve thee truly; and finally by thy mercy attain
everlasting glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord –
AMEN.*

This Concise History is dedicated to the memory of The Fallen of the 9th Queen's Royal Lancers, the 12th Royal Lancers (Prince of Wales's) and the 9th/12th Royal Lancers (Prince of Wales's).

FOUNDATION

The Regiments of Dragoons which were later to become the 9th Queen's Royal Lancers and the 12th Royal Lancers (Prince of Wales's) were raised in July 1715 as a result of the revolt of the supporters of the Stuarts against the Rule of King George I. The King had lately succeeded Queen Anne as the Protestant heir to the Throne.

At this time regiments were not officially numbered, but were known by the name of their Colonel. However it is clearer to refer from the start to both regiments by the numbers they were later to adopt. The 9th Dragoons were raised by Major General Owen Wynne and the 12th by Brigadier Phineas Bowles. Both officers were veterans of Marlborough's Wars and had distinguished records of service.

The 9th were first in action and suffered casualties in the defeat of the rebel forces at Preston on the 11 November 1715. The 12th were initially employed in escorting state prisoners to London.

On the 25 June 1717, the 9th crossed the sea to Ireland and were followed by the 12th in 1718. Both regiments remained in Ireland for many years. In 1751 the regiments were officially styled the 9th and 12th Dragoons.

In 1768 King George III conferred upon the 12th the honour of bearing the title 'Twelfth or Prince of Wales's Regiment of Light Dragoons'. At the same time the 12th became a corps of light cavalry. In 1783 the 9th also became a light cavalry regiment, styled 'the 9th Light Dragoons'. From 1789–1791 Lieutenant the Hon Arthur Wellesley, later to become the Duke of Wellington, served in the 12th.

In 1793 Great Britain declared war on France and the 12th went on active service for the first time. They were sent to the Mediterranean and part of the Regiment were present at the taking of Bastia in Corsica. The remainder sailed to Italy where they landed at Civita Vecchia in the Papal States. The good conduct of the 12th impressed Pope Pius VI who received some of the officers at the Vatican and presented them all with Gold Medals. One of the medals is on display in the office of the current Commanding Officer of the Regiment to this day. Pope Pius also presented the Regimental Hymns which are still played by military bands for the Regiment's parades.

In 1795 the 12th returned to England, but two years later it sailed to Portugal where it stayed until 1800. Meanwhile the 9th had been involved in fierce fighting in Ireland which had broken out in 1798. They were particularly praised for their conduct at the action of Three Bullet Gate.



Pope Pius Blessing Officers of the 12th Light Dragoons

In 1801 the 12th took part in General Abercrombie's campaign in Egypt. Colonel Archdale, the Commanding Officer, was severely wounded, losing an arm in a skirmish outside Alexandria. On the march to Cairo a large French column surrendered to the 12th and the 26th Light Dragoons. In 1802 the 12th returned to England and were honoured by Royal Authority to bear on its Guidons and Appointments the Sphinx with Egypt. This was the 12th's first battle honour.

In 1806 the 9th embarked for foreign service and took part in the Buenos Aires campaign in South America, being present at the taking of Montevideo.

Both regiments embarked on the Walcheren Expedition in 1809. The 9th were the only cavalry regiment to disembark, and as a result, out of a total of just over 500 troops who sailed, 200 became casualties, most of them being victims of the deadly Walcheren fever.

In 1811 both regiments sailed for the Spanish Peninsula in order to reinforce the Duke of Wellington's Army. The 9th formed part of General Hill's Division in the Alentejo. In their first action at Arroyo dos Molinos they captured the French general, General Bron. The 12th took part in the operations which culminated in the taking of Ciudad Rodrigo, and Badajos. In 1812 they took part in the battle of Salamanca. After the retreat from Spain to Portugal under very severe conditions, the 9th were so depleted that it was decided that they should return to England to recruit. Wellington offered "his best thanks to the Regiment for their service" and regretted that "he should be deprived of the assistance of these brave troops".

The 12th took part in the operations which resulted in the great victory at Vittoria in 1813, and the subsequent operations up to the end of the campaign in the South of France in 1814. In the spring of 1815 Napoleon returned to France from Elba, and war was declared. The 12th were sent to the Netherlands to form part of the Allied Army commanded by the Duke of Wellington. At Waterloo the 12th executed a brilliant charge in support of the Union Brigade, but suffered very severely in the withdrawal, losing one third of their strength in ten minutes.

Both regiments were awarded the honour 'Peninsula'. The 12th also received the honours 'Salamanca' and 'Waterloo'.

The lancer regiments of Napoleon's Army had shown how effective cavalry regiments armed with the lance could be. In 1816 an order was published directing that the 9th and 12th Light Dragoons should be armed with the lance. In 1817 the 12th became a Royal Regiment, being styled 'the 12th or Prince of Wales's Royal Regiment of Lancers'. In 1830 the 9th provided the escorts for King William IV on his accession. On the 22 July the Regiment was reviewed by the King and the next day he directed that they should assume the title of the '9th Queen's Royal Lancers'. The monogram of his Royal Consort, Queen Adelaide, still forms part of the current Regiment's insignia.



Lt Col Ponsonby – Commanding Officer of the 12th Light Dragoons at Waterloo

In 1842 the 9th were sent to India and in 1843 they took part in the campaign against the Mahratta State of Gwalior. They were awarded the honour 'Punniar' and the men present at the battle received bronze stars made from the metal of the captured Mahratta guns. In 1845 the 9th were again on active service. They took part in the final action of the first Punjab War against the Sikhs, receiving the honour 'Sabraon'. In 1848 war again broke out against the Sikhs. At the Battle of Goojerat on the 21st February 1849, the 9th executed a very successful charge against a large body of the Sikh cavalry, capturing two standards.

For their services in the second Punjab War the 9th received the honours 'Punjab 1848-9', 'Chillianwallah', and 'Goojerat'.

While the 9th had been gathering fresh laurels in India, the 12th had been serving at home. In 1851 they embarked for the Cape and took part in the Kaffir War. A detachment of the Regiment was on board the ill-fated HMS Birkenhead when she foundered off the African Coast. Cornet Bond was one of the few survivors of the wreck. The 12th was awarded the honour 'South Africa 1851-53'.

In 1855 the 12th were sent from India to the Crimea to reinforce the Light Cavalry Brigade which had been decimated by the charge at Balaclava and the severity of the winter of 1854. For their services in the Crimea the 12th received the honour 'Sevastopol'.

Both Regiments were in India at the outbreak of the Mutiny in 1857. The 9th was the only regiment to be present at the three major actions of the campaign, the Siege of Delhi and the Relief and Siege of Lucknow, and was awarded no less than twelve Victoria Crosses, justifying the unique honour of a salute of twenty-one guns on their departure from India. But perhaps the greatest tribute paid to the 9th was the title 'The Delhi Spearman' bestowed on them by the mutineers who had reason to fear those terrible horsemen who were described by a comrade in arms as "the beau ideal of how all the British Cavalry ought to be in Oriental countries". Today the current Regiment's annual journal is called 'The Delhi Spearman' and the term is used widely by today's soldiers. The 12th formed part of the Saugur Field Force which helped to pacify Central India.

For their services in the Mutiny the 9th received the honours 'Delhi 1857', and 'Lucknow', and the 12th received 'Central India'.

In 1878 the 9th took part in the Afghan campaign. In October 1879 a squadron took part in the action at Charasiah. At Kila Kazi in November 1879 the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Clelland, was mortally wounded while leading a charge. In 1880 the Regiment took part in Lord Roberts' famous march from Kabul to Kandahar, where on 1 September, Ayub Kahn's Army was completely routed. The 9th was awarded the honours 'Charasiah', 'Kabul 1879', 'Kandahar 1880', and 'Afghanistan 1879-80'.



The Empty Saddle or Last Patrol

In 1879 Lord William Beresford of the 9th was awarded the Victoria Cross for gallantry in the Zulu War. Both regiments fought in the South African War of 1899–1902. They took part in the Relief of Kimberley, the most brilliant cavalry exploit of the war, and the operations which resulted in Cronje's surrender at Paardeberg. The 9th provided Lord Roberts' escort when he made his state entry into Bloemfontein. He said, "I know they have always been a splendid Regiment and this is the third time they have been on active service with me". Both Regiments were engaged in all the actions which culminated in the capture of Pretoria. At Diamond Hill, the last pitched battle of the war, where both regiments were again engaged, the Earl of Airlie, the Commanding Officer of the 12th, was killed after leading a charge which saved two guns of 'Q' Battery RHA.

For their services in South Africa the 9th received the Battle Honours, 'Modder River', 'Relief of Kimberley', 'Paardeberg' and 'South Africa 1899–1902'. The 12th received 'Relief of Kimberley', 'Paardeberg', and 'South Africa 1899–1902'.



Lance against Lance – 9th Lancers at Moncel 1914

THE WORLD WARS

Both regiments served on the Western Front throughout the Great War of 1914–18. The current Regiment now celebrate Mons Moy Day annually, which marks the last occasion on which both regiments charged with the lance and is used as the occasion for commemoration of The Fallen and to reunite the serving Regiment with its old comrades at the Regiment's current station.

On the 28 August 1914 C Squadron of the 12th led by Lieutenant Colonel Frank Wormald and the Adjutant Captain Charles Bryant made a most successful charge at Moy against squadrons of the 1st and 2nd Garde Dragoner (Prussian Dragoons) supported by the fire of A and B Squadron's, J Battery RHA and the Scots Greys.

On the 7 September at Moncel Lieutenant Colonel David Campbell charged at the head of RHQ and two troops of B Squadron of the 9th and overthrew a squadron of the 1st Garde Dragoner (Prussian Dragoons). This was the last significant lance against lance action of the Great War.

Earlier in the campaign on the 24 August 1914 Captain Francis Grenfell and a party of the 9th had helped to save the guns of 119 Battery Royal Field Artillery near Doubaon. For this action and the charging of the unbroken line of infantry at Audregnies, Belgium, on the same day Captain Grenfell was awarded the Victoria Cross. Captain Grenfell was one of the first gazetted VCs of the Great War. He was later killed in action in 1915.

During the period between the Great War and the Second World War, the 9th and 12th served in the Rhineland and Ireland. Later the 9th served in Egypt, Palestine, India, Scotland and England, and the 12th in England and Egypt.

In 1928, while serving in Egypt, the 12th gave up its horses and became a Cavalry Armoured Car Regiment. In August 1929 it operated in the armoured cars for the first time when B Squadron was sent to Palestine to deal with the religious disturbances. In October 1931, a section of armoured cars was sent to Cyprus to help restore order there.

In 1935 the 12th provided a composite squadron for the International Force which policed the Saar during the period of the Plebiscite. During 1936 the 9th in their turn gave up its horses and the Regiment was converted to a light tank regiment.

On the outbreak of War in 1939 the 12th Lancers, equipped with armoured cars, landed in France on the 16 October. The 9th, as a new armoured regiment in the 2nd Armoured Brigade of the 1st Armoured Division, landed in France on the 20 May, 1940. On the 10 May the 12th was the first regiment to cross the Belgian Frontier. During the retreat they covered the withdrawal of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF), at one time holding a front of forty miles between Ypres and Nieuport. In his despatches Lord Gort wrote that, "without the Twelfth Lancers only a small part of the Army would have reached Dunkirk."

The 9th were in action in the Somme area and were later all but surrounded at St Valery. Once the line of the Seine became untenable, the 1st Armoured Division was ordered to withdraw and embark for England.

Both regiments sailed for Africa with the 1st Armoured Division in September 1941. The 12th left behind a detachment which shortly after Dunkirk had been sent to act as a mobile guard for the Royal Family and members of the Cabinet.

Both regiments served with the 8th Army throughout the Desert and North African Campaigns. The 9th played a leading part in the Battle of Alamein. Corporal Nicholls of B Squadron was personally congratulated by General Montgomery for knocking out nine enemy tanks in one day.

The 12th were the first British troops to link up with the Americans in Tunisia in April 1943. Meanwhile the 9th took a leading role in forcing the surrender of the Germans in the Cap



The 9th Lancers moving on a moon lit track before the Battle of Alamein

Bon peninsula. In 1944 the regiments landed in Italy. The 12th Lancers were first in action as infantry in the Castel di Sangro area to the East of Cassino in April. In September the 9th were in action at San Savino in the battle for the Gothic Line.

Both regiments were employed as infantry during the winter of 1944. In the breakthrough to the River Po in the spring of 1945, the 9th Lancers Group formed the spearhead of the 8th Army. The 12th headed the advance of the 2nd New Zealand Division. B Squadron troops were the first to enter Venice at the end of April. When the war in Italy ended on the 2 May, the 12th was in contact with the Yugoslavs at Trieste.

After the War both regiments were employed on security duties in Palestine.

In 1951 the 12th sailed for Malaya where it was employed for three years on security duties. On its return from the Far East it was sent to Germany where it remained until 1959. It then moved to Cyprus for a year before returning to England prior to amalgamation.

On its return to England in 1947 the 9th Lancers was stationed at Edinburgh for two years before moving to Germany where it was stationed at Detmold until it returned to Tidworth in 1960. The 9th were greatly honoured when Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother became Colonel-in-Chief of the Regiment on the 1 June 1953.

AMALGAMATION

On the 11 September 1960, both regiments marched to Church at Tidworth for the last time and, as a plaque in the Garrison Church records, “Here on the 11 September 1960, 9th/12th Royal Lancers (Prince of Wales’s) was formed by the 9th Queen’s Royal Lancers and the 12th Royal Lancers (Prince of Wales’s) coming together before God. It is not the beginning but the continuing of the same until it be thoroughly finished, which yieldeth the true glory”.

Shortly after its formation the 9th/12th Royal Lancers moved to Northern Ireland where both its antecedent regiments had started their histories almost two hundred and fifty years before. In September 1962, the Regiment sailed from Southampton for Aden, equipped as an armoured car regiment and engaged in security duties in the Aden Protectorate and the Trucial Oman States for a year. On returning from the Middle East the Regiment moved to Osnabruck in Germany where it converted from an armoured car regiment to an armoured regiment. On the 15 July 1965, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, Colonel-in-Chief, reviewed a mounted parade of the Regiment on Achmer Heath outside Osnabruck.

The Regiment became the Royal Armoured Corps Training Regiment at Catterick in January 1969, with A Squadron detached to provide tank support for the Berlin Infantry Brigade. On 9 May 1970, the Regiment was once again honoured with a visit by the Colonel-in-Chief. In January 1971 the Regiment reorganised as an armoured regiment in 20th Armoured Brigade based in Detmold. The Regiment’s close ties with the City of Derby were cemented by the award of the Freedom of the City on 10 May 1972.

With troubles in Ireland once again, C Squadron converted to armoured cars in the autumn of 1972 for a four month emergency tour in Northern Ireland, where it was based at Gosford Castle, County Armagh. B Squadron followed in May 1973, and in January 1975 the whole Regiment went to Gough Barracks, in the City of Armagh, for a four month tour.

After a short spell back in Detmold, the Regiment moved to Omagh, Northern Ireland for an eighteen month accompanied tour of duty in Counties Tyrone and Fermanagh. By November 1977 it was back in Tidworth, where the new Regiment had formed in 1960, with C Squadron detached to the Sovereign Base Area in Cyprus. C Squadron was joined by A Squadron, serving in the United Nations force, for six months in 1978. While the Regiment was in Tidworth, troops served in the infantry role for six months with the 1st Battalion, the Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters in Belize and the 3rd Battalion the Light Infantry in Cyprus.

The 5 May 1979 provided the first opportunity in nineteen years to present the Regiment with its new 9/12L Guidon. The ceremony was performed by the Colonel-in-Chief, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, The Queen Mother, on the Tidworth Tattoo ground in the com-

pany of a great gathering of old comrades and a multitude of local children. The Old Regimental Guidons of both parent regiments were laid up in St Michael's Garrison Church, Tidworth. Shortly afterwards the Regiment moved to Munster as an Armoured Reconnaissance regiment, equipped with a mixture of wheeled and tracked reconnaissance vehicles, to join the 5th Field Force.

After an 18 month stay at Munster the Regiment moved to Bergen-Hohne in November 1980, to take up duties as the 1st Armoured Division Armoured Reconnaissance Regiment, fully equipped with the new tracked Combat Vehicle Reconnaissance family. In June 1982, C Squadron went to Northern Ireland to provide the Maze Prison Guard Force for three months, and in July the Colonel in Chief visited the remainder of the Regiment in Hohne.

In February 1984, the Regiment moved to Wolfenbittel, reorganising into four sabre squadrons, handing its Scorpions over to the armoured regiments and taking back the Striker, guided missile system from the Royal Artillery. The basic reconnaissance vehicle then became the Scimitar. The tour in Wolfenbittel is remembered as very successful both professional and socially.

In both 1985 and 1986 the Regiment competed in the Boeselager International Armoured Reconnaissance Competition hosted by the German Army. In June 1986 at Sontra the Regiment won the competition. Not only did the team win the Auslander competition (for all the non-German teams) but were placed first overall, the first and only time this has ever happened – a truly outstanding achievement. For his success in leading the team Sergeant David Williams was awarded the British Empire Medal.

On the sports field there were also some great successes. The regimental volleyball team won the Army Championships at Aldershot and the rugby team won the finals of the Cavalry Cup against the 17th/21st Lancers.

In January 1987 the Regiment moved to Wimbish in Essex, with three sabre squadrons and one Guided Weapons squadron. Its role then was as the Medium Reconnaissance Regiment for 3rd Armoured Division. On Friday 10 June 1988 the Regiment was honoured with a visit by the Colonel-in-Chief. A full-scale parade including a vehicle mounted drive past was held on the airstrip at Carver Barracks. On Tuesday 21 June 1988 the Regiment re-affirmed its close ties with the City of Derby and exercised its freedom to march through the City.



Operation Grapple – The Scimitar and the Hay Wagon

THE END OF THE COLD WAR

During the tour in Wimbish three squadrons were sent on separate six-month tours to Cyprus as part of the United Nations peacekeeping force, a popular posting with the soldiers. A number of B Squadron soldiers also served in Belize as the Armoured Recce Troop for six months. D Squadron, a troop from B (Guided Weapon) Squadron and all regimental assault troop trained soldiers also deployed to Saudi Arabia in 1990 and 1991 in support of Operation Granby, the operation to liberate Kuwait from Iraq. This deployment delayed the move back to Germany to change over with the 16th/5th Queens Royal Lancers which was also deployed in Saudi Arabia until August 1991. The Regiment returned to Herford where the 12th had been stationed in the 1950's prior to amalgamation. Civil war in Yugoslavia raged and the collapse of the Soviet Union was changing the old order. The British Army was about to enter an era in which not to be on operations at least every two years would be unusual.

After being in Herford for only six months C Squadron deployed to HMP Maze, Northern



Belfast 1993-1994 – Attack in Spamount Street

Ireland in early 1992. The deployment took it into the summer months with well-earned post tour leave cut short for a number of soldiers with a call back to Germany in response to a need for a squadron to deploy with the 1st Battalion the Cheshire Regiment Battlegroup to Bosnia. B Squadron complete deployed in October 1992 after carrying out an intense training package at Sennelager. For a third of the Squadron it would be the second deployment in less than twelve months, for a number of others it would be the third deployment since Operation Granby. B Squadron provided reconnaissance support to the Cheshires during the bleak winter months of 1992. On many occasions it would be the first into situations which involved ethnic cleansing and fierce civil war fighting. Nine awards were given to soldiers from the Regiment for the deployment on Operation Grapple 1.

B Squadron returned to Herford in April 1993. As it returned it found the barracks transformed into a mock up of Northern Ireland and witnessed A and D Squadrons preparing to deploy as the roulement battalion in Girdwood Barracks, Belfast taking under command a Royal Artillery battery. It was the first time in many years that an RAC regiment had taken on such a role in West Belfast and the professionalism of the Regiment led to much success and a great number of soldiers recognised after the tour for their actions. No less

than 17 operational awards were given including the Military Cross for Corporal Andrew Dynes, one of the first to be awarded to a non commissioned soldier. The deployment saw the Regiment patrolling the streets of the Nationalist New Lodge area where 30 years before it had been demonstrating a variation of the musical ride with an armoured vehicle musical drive. The Regiment was deployed at a time of intense violence as terrorists and State moved towards the first ceasefire a few months after the tour. Seven soldiers were wounded in action.

On the Regiment's return from Belfast it moved back to the UK and took responsibility as the RAC Centre Regiment based at Bovington, Lulworth and Warminster. A Squadron took on the vehicle fleet in Bovington and B Squadron were deployed to Warminster mostly in the field as a tank squadron using Chieftain and later Challenger 1 and a recce squadron using Scorpion. 9/12L was the last unit in the British Army to employ these light armoured vehicles. C Squadron controlled the training element of support in Lulworth and D Squadron looked after RAC recruits going through trade training.

During this period in southern England the Regiment also deployed a large number of personnel to Bosnia including RHQ to form a UN unit named BRITCAVBAT, based at Zepce. This deployment was codenamed Op Grapple 6. Yet again the Regiment found itself on the axis of change. The humble UN peacekeeping deployment which could do so little to control the Serb, Croat and Bosnia factions, evolved at the end of the Regiment's tour into a NATO peace enforcement mission following the negotiations at Dayton. On the sporting front the Regiment dominated the Cavalry Cup football with four visits to the final and three wins (1995, 1996 1999 and runners up in 1997) and the Regimental Cross Country team achieved a hat-trick of wins in 1995, 1996 and 1997.

In 1996 the first elements of the Regiment moved to a new post in Norfolk, the former RAF station at Swanton Morley. The station was full of proud history from the Second World War and was brought to life again by a Regular Army presence. By the end of 1997 the whole Regiment was in place and swiftly afterwards deployed to Bosnia with B and D Squadrons and A Squadron the Royal Dragoon Guards under command. While stationed in Swanton Morley the Regiment was graced with two visits from the Colonel in Chief. The first was in 1998, a day graced by stunning weather and a huge turnout of old comrades and family crowds.

In mid-1999 the Regiment deployed to Canada to provide the 'opposing force' for training battlegroups. Ample opportunity to travel around North America or complete adventure training was taken by almost every soldier deployed.

In the summer of 2000 the Regiment was honoured to host the Colonel in Chief for the second time in as many years. Her Majesty visited Swanton Morley just a few days before her one hundredth birthday and presented the Regiment with a new Guidon. As she departed at the end of a wonderful day the Regiment packed up what was left of the camp and



A BATUS Sunset

departed Norfolk for Haig Barracks, Hohn in Germany where it is based today.

Once in Hohn, C Squadron deployed on a tour of Kosovo. The tour would be marked with a number of incidents and the death of Trooper Adam Slater killed in action when his vehicle hit a mine. On C Squadron's return both A and B Squadron deployed on Exercise Saif Sareaa (Swift Sword) in Oman where rumours of further deployments added excitement to the exercise because of the now infamous 9/11 terrorist attacks in America. The exercise was a success and would be a forerunner to future desert operations in the coming years. But the world order was changing again and a long association with the Middle East was about to begin.

In 2002 the Regiment deployed for a second time to Canada to again provide the opposing force for the training battlegroups. The Regiment conducted a series of tactical weapons simulation and live firing exercises using generic enemy tactics as well as conducting adventure training and travel across Canada.

Between 2002 and 2004 the Regiment would deploy to various operational areas. Firstly B Squadron would again deploy to Bosnia throughout the summer months and into the

early autumn. Initially the plan was for A Squadron to replace them and so the training to do so started in earnest. C Squadron had already been warned to deploy on Operation TELIC 3 as part of the 1st Battalion Light Infantry Battlegroup with 20 Armoured Brigade. With less than 12 weeks to go, A Squadron was re-tasked to deploy on Operation TELIC 3 also. With a large number of RHQ also deploying the regimental rear party numbered a mere 60 men until the return of B Squadron from the Balkans. C Squadron was initially deployed to Maysan Province north of Basra, whilst A Squadron were part of the 26th Regiment Royal Artillery Battlegroup based just south of Az Zubayr and responsible for security in a large area stretching down to Safwan and Umm Qasr. C Squadron later moved to the Queen's Royal Hussar's battlegroup stationed in Basra which involved working with the border police forces around Iraq's third city.

A return to Haig Barracks for both squadrons in April 2004 was followed by a regimental deployment to southern Germany on Exercise Swabian Lance. This was an opportunity for all of the squadrons to work together for the first time in over two years and involved troop, squadron and regimental training enhanced with a troop tests the likes of which have not been seen on the same scale since. The further highlight of the year was a Mons Moy celebration graced by the first visit from our new Colonel-in-Chief, His Royal Highness Prince Andrew, the Duke of York. Excellent weather was enjoyed for the event which involved a full lance parade, squadron armoured vehicle drive past and a number of medal presentations.

In early 2005 the Regiment was again put on high alert to deploy to Iraq, this time with 7th Armoured Brigade on Operation TELIC 7. The Regiment would form its own Battlegroup with support from C Squadron, the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards and the Queen's Royal Lancers. In this year the Regiment ceased its dedicated role as the divisional reconnaissance regiment and became a full part of 7th Armoured Brigade. It also reduced to two Sabre Squadrons and a new Command and Support Squadron although in 2007 this structure would be internally manipulated to enable a return to three manoeuvre sub-units.

Operation TELIC 7 was the first full regimental deployment for many years. The Regiment returned from Iraq in April 2006. A year of courses including converting to the Bowman radio system, adventure training and time with families allowed some respite after a busy year. Highlights of the period included a cricket tour to Sri Lanka.

In mid-2007 the Regiment deployed for a second time in three years to southern Germany on Exercise Swabian Lance. This was quickly followed by deployment to BATUS. On this occasion BATUS differed from previous years because the Regiment was rolled as a Formation Reconnaissance Battlegroup as well as taking a turn as the opposing force for a rival Battlegroup. This was the first time a unit had conducted both in one training season and the first time that any FR regiment had trained in BATUS as an all arms battlegroup.



Operation TELIC

This training was a precursor to the deployment to Iraq on Operation TELIC. For many 9th/12th Lancers this was the third tour of the theatre in 5 years. At first only one squadron was deployed: A Squadron were increased significantly in numbers to go to the 1 RRF Strike Battlegroup to be based in Umm Qasr.

The Regiment also provided half of the specially trained Divisional Surveillance Company and Armageddon Platoon and a small C Squadron became a riverine unit responsible for fighting insurgent indirect fire teams using the waterways north of the main UK base at Basra Airport. The rest of the Regiment deployed Military Transition Teams to the Iraqi Army in Basra and Az Zubayr, living, working and operating alongside the 51st (Iraqi Army) Brigade as it secured Basra from the militia threat.

The reorganisation of forces to deploy into Basra in a relatively a short period of time was in itself a feat worthy of logistic note. Before deploying the Regiment had also delivered the training to 7th Armoured Brigade as it deployed into theatre in May. Stationed in Kuwait, a regimental group of 106 soldiers provided testing and dynamic scenarios to ensure that the troops were well trained during ten days of acclimatisation before moving into theatre. The Regiment was responsible for training over 3000 soldiers in less than 30 days. The Regiment also delivered a decompression phase to the Brigade after the tour and its TACP served in Afghanistan. During 2008 the smallest combat arm unit in the Brigade had the largest range of tasks.

In recent years the Regiment has maintained its high sporting standards throughout. A notable success was in March 1989 when Lt Algy Smith-Maxwell rode the Regiment to vic-

tory in the Grand Military Gold Cup at Sandown Park on Brother Geoffrey, his own horse. Other successes have included winning the Army Volleyball Championship five times and also winning the Army Judo championships, the latter with a completely novice team. 9/12L has had regular placings annually in the Army Skiing championships and a spate of wins and runners up positions in the RAC Cavalry Cup football, competition that accompanies the Cavalry Memorial weekend. Most years the Regiment's young soldiers compete in the Peto Cup boxing for novices. In 2007 over 40 boxers took part. In 2007 the Regiment secured a sweep the board victory in the 7th Armoured Brigade Skill at Arms Meeting, a demanding test of shooting, field craft and fitness attended by 26 teams, including from the Brigade's three large infantry battalions.

Rear Cover: Schloss Bredebeck, Officers' Mess, Hohne

