



**THE
ROYAL
YORKSHIRE
REGIMENT.**

FORTUNE FAVOURS THE BRAVE

**■ A HISTORY OF THE ROYAL YORKSHIRE REGIMENT
AND ITS ANTECEDENTS FROM 1944 TO 2024**

INTRODUCTION

Much that is well known of the regiment's history relates to the historical past, the two world wars (1914 – 18 and 1939 – 45) and the preceding 230 years or so, whilst hugely important this can rather overshadow the story of the more recent past. Therefore, the aim of this history is to bring the period since 1944 into the light in order to show where the present regiment has come from so that those currently serving can have a better sense of their connection to a very long story.

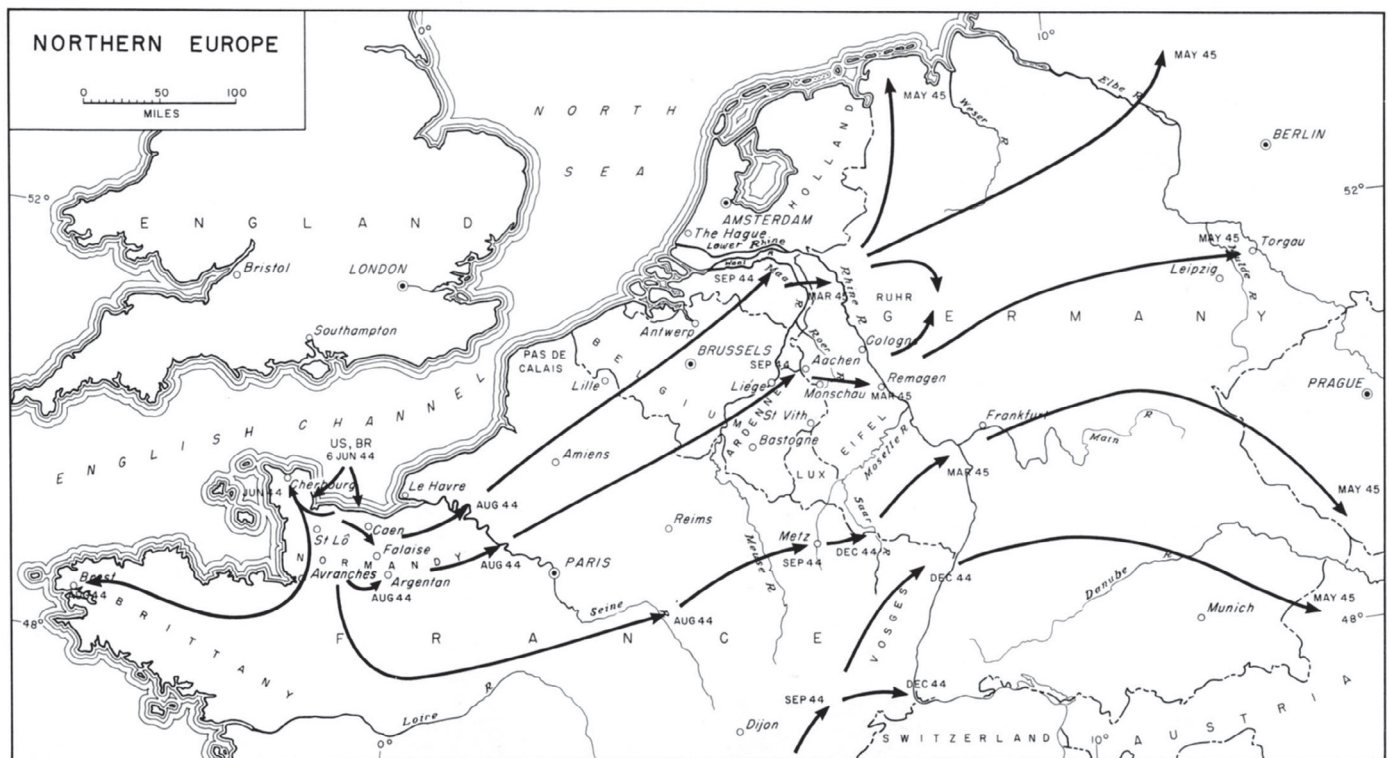
The history will start with a brief regimental resume of the end of the Second World War and its immediate aftermath, this is followed by an outline of some overarching themes and long term elements and then a resume from a regimental perspective of the operations during the last eight decades.

The Yorkshire Regiment, since 2023 The Royal Yorkshire Regiment, was formed on 6 June 2006. It was an amalgamation of The Prince of Wales's Own Regiment of Yorkshire (PWO) – itself a 1958 amalgamation of The West Yorkshire Regiment (The Prince of Wales's Own) and The East Yorkshire Regiment (The Duke of York's Own), The Green Howards (Alexandra, Princess of Wales's Own Yorkshire Regiment) (GH) and The Duke of Wellington's Regiment (West Riding) (DWR).

ALLIED VICTORY – THE LAST PART OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR

6 June 2006 was the 62nd anniversary of D Day, the Invasion of Normandy in the last full year of the Second World War. The invasion saw 2nd and 5th Bns of The East Yorkshire Regiment (E YORKS) and 6th Bn Green Howards in the first wave, with 7th Bn Green Howards landing shortly after. At the end of D Day the two Green Howards battalions had advanced further inland than any other unit, British or American, and CSM Stanley Hollis received the only Victoria Cross awarded in the landings. 1/6th and 1/7th Bns The Duke of Wellington's Regiment landed on 11 June and were soon in action, the former was disbanded in August¹. 50th Division, including 5 E YORKS and the two Green Howards battalions, was withdrawn in November, leaving 2 E YORKS and 1/7th DWR to continue the gruelling campaign in North West Europe until 8 May 1945, Victory in Europe (VE) Day, as the Germans fought tenaciously to prevent a collapse in the West. 1 GH arrived in theatre in the April.

In 1944 the other major allied ground campaign in the west was in Italy, where 1 GH and 1 DWR were engaged in the desperate fighting on the Anzio beachhead, indicative of the situation are the 129 1 DWR dead buried there. The amphibious landing in January 1944 had been an attempt to bypass the German defences south of Rome. In the subsequent fighting over the next four months until the end



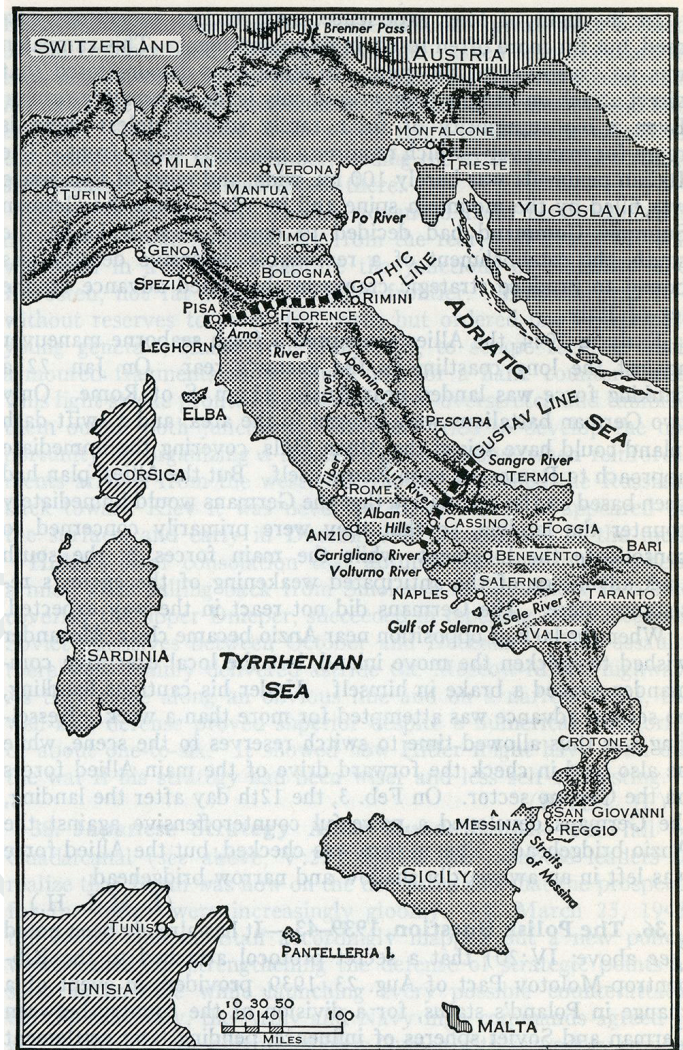
■ Allied advances from June 1944 – May 1945

1 On 6 June 2021, the 77th Anniversary of D-Day, the Normandy Memorial was officially opened and dedicated in Ver-sur-Mer. The Royal Yorkshire Regiment has a dedicated bench in the grounds.



of May 1 GH and 1 DWR played a full part, suffering huge battle casualties over the course of the operation. 1 GH and its division were withdrawn after the breakout battle. 1 DWR's reputation was such that it was selected to represent the British Army at the parade to mark the formal entry into Rome in June. After the fall of Rome the Germans carried out a skilful and methodical withdrawal to the Gothic Line, a well prepared natural defensive line running just north of Florence and across the Apennines. In August 1 DWR rejoined the battle, fighting in extremely difficult mountainous country as they pushed the enemy northwards, which once again brought a high toll in casualties. Private Richard Burton was awarded the Victoria Cross in October.

In the Far East the war was against the Japanese Empire. In 1944 the British land forces were engaged in fighting in Burma, which had been invaded and where the enemy threatened British India. The Japanese had been told that the fate of the Japanese Empire depended on the offensive and that Imphal must be taken. By April both regular battalions of The West Yorkshire Regiment (W YORKS) were deployed at Imphal, itself just within India. As part of the 7th Indian Division the 2nd Battalion had been flown north after it had held a defensive box in the divisional administrative area for 25 days. In the face of ferocious attacks the battalion held its ground and in 1948 the corps commander noted that "Never has any regiment counter attacked so successfully and so often as in that battle. It is rare in history that one regiment can be said to have turned the scale of a whole campaign." The Japanese major offensive to take Imphal lasted for two and a half months and the two battalions, along with other units, defended and held their positions, breaking up massed Japanese attacks. Sgt Hanson Victor Turner of the 1st Battalion was awarded a posthumous VC. Afterwards victory in Burma was never in any doubt, although for the



■ Italy showing Anzio, Rome and the German Gothic Line

remainder of 1944 and in 1945 both battalions were engaged in further heavy fighting close by one another, and in May 1945 Lieutenant William Basil Weston Green Howards, a platoon commander with 1 W YORKS, was also awarded a posthumous VC.

2 GH arrived in theatre from India in September and 1 E YORKS arrived in theatre in October 1944, also from India. 2 DWR had regrouped in India after the long retreat through Burma and became part of the 23rd Independent Infantry (Chindit) Brigade. The battalion was formed into two columns, 33rd and 76th Columns in late 1943 and both columns were in action at Kohima and Imphal, operating on the Japanese flanks and behind their lines, until the Japanese withdrawal in July 1944.

In total the four regiments provided some thirty or so battalions during the period 1939 – 45. Also before and during the war various of the Territorial battalions were transferred to the Royal Tank Corps, later Regiment, as tank regiments, to the Royal Artillery as anti tank, anti aircraft and searchlight units, and to the Parachute Regiment, usually retaining strong regimental identities and not infrequently



■ British India included Burma (now Myanmar)



ultimately returning to their former regiments; a number had distinguished operational service.

THE IMMEDIATE AFTERMATH OF WAR

At the war's end in the West British troops became an army of occupation in Northern Germany, the British sector of Berlin and also in Austria.

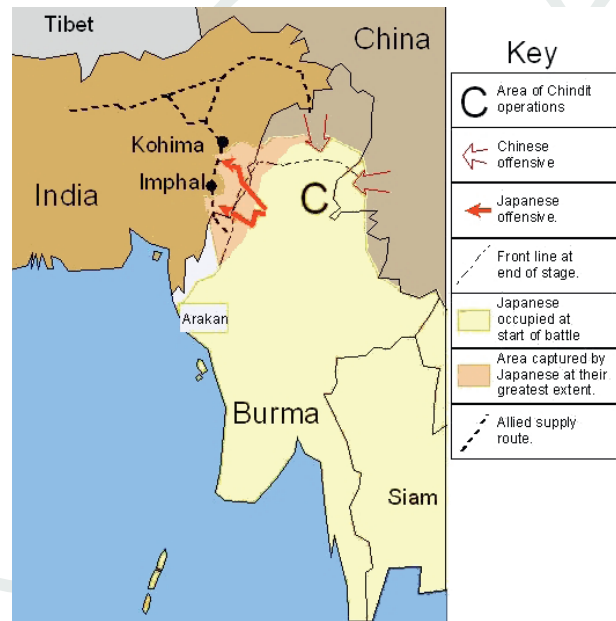
Elsewhere, particularly in India, in the colonies and the mandate territory of Palestine, the Army was closely engaged as post war readjustment and the resulting turbulence took place.

The 1st Battalions of the West Yorkshire and East Yorkshire Regiments went to Austria in 1946. 2 W YORKS went from Malaya to Indonesia on operational service in November 1945, returning to Malaya in January 1946. 2 E YORKS, having been earmarked for the invasion of Japan, went instead from North West Europe to an internal security role in Egypt, a de facto colony, and in Palestine. In June and July 1945 1 DWR was in Syria and Lebanon where there was a revolt against French rule. The main task was to provide escorts for the safe evacuation of French troops and civilians from Damascus and the surrounding countryside to Beirut in Lebanon. The battalion then went to Palestine where there was considerable unrest caused by Jewish settlers who had a military organisation in being, the Haganah, which had begun to exert pressure by acts of sabotage and civil disobedience. It stopped short of murder; but there was no such restraint among the Stern Gang and the Irgun Zvai L'eumi, which carried out a terrorist campaign against the British authorities. From December 1945 to April 1946 the battalion was in Egypt before returning once again to Palestine for further internal security duties in connection with illegal immigration and subsequently in response to the terrorist campaign. In December 1946 the battalion was flown to Khartoum in Sudan following an outbreak of civil disturbance. At the end of the year it returned to the UK.

2 GH was in Calcutta, India in 1946 during the inter communal massacres protecting where they could and



■ Occupation Zones Germany and Austria



■ Burma Area of Operations

ultimately removing thousands of rotting corpses, they then went to Khartoum until the end of 1948. 2 DWR was also in India when on 3 June 1947 plans were announced for the partition of India and Pakistan. The transfer of power was not accomplished without anti British rioting and looting in major cities. This soon developed into further communal riots between Hindus and Muslims. British battalions had to be called in to support the police. Partition into two independent states from 15 August 1947 brought to an end British efforts to control the growing communal violence and savagery. 2 DWR left India on 19 September.

POST WAR THEMES

For the British Army and thus for the regiment four key themes are clearly identifiable in the 80 years after the Second World War. Two started almost immediately, one was the end of Empire and the commitments to the Imperial residue, the other was the ideological war between the communist east and the capitalist west, though both themes were hugely influenced by each other and were often inseparable. In respect of the first, all five of the former regiments were involved in various of four campaigns, in Malaya, in Egypt, specifically Suez, in Cyprus and in Aden; there was also non campaign service in Hong Kong, 1 GH and 1 DWR, and in Gibraltar, this has been retained and 1 PWO and 1 DWR served there. After the Falklands War in 1982 various antecedent companies had operational deployments to the islands and very recently 2 YORKS was based in Cyprus. In respect of the second theme, all five regiments were involved until the end of the USSR and the Warsaw Pact in 1990. Once, in Korea, where 1 DWR played a distinguished role, this was a hot war but mainly it was the Cold War; fraught with potential global destruction it ended peacefully.

The third key theme was the internal security campaign in Northern Ireland from 1969 until 2007 in which 1 PWO, 1



GH and 1 DWR were all intensively committed. Superficially it might be viewed as a colonial type conflict, and it was certainly influenced by communist subversion, but it was perhaps really an historical anomaly, though it may point to a wider fractured future for nation states.

The fourth theme, the campaigns of the last 35 years or so, in the Balkans, Iraq and Afghanistan, initially involved 1 PWO, 1 GH and 1 DWR and from 2006 the present regiment. These campaigns may be seen as resulting from the end of the first two themes. The end of the Cold War removed the east west balance of power, and its associated geopolitical constraints. This allowed national tensions in regions like the Balkans to boil over, regional powers to interfere with weaker neighbours, as with Iraq's invasion of Kuwait – considerable numbers of the antecedents and the DWR Band served as reinforcements in the campaign that followed – and, in the absence of colonial dominion, it created space for political Islam, and thus inevitably Islamism, to grow. And no longer fearing direct conflict between them, the US dominated West and the Russian Federation have been able to take active roles wherever they have seen it to be in their interest.

THE BRITISH ARMY OF THE RHINE AND BERLIN

In 1945 in the West the 21st Army Group army of occupation in Northern Germany was transformed into the British Army of the Rhine (BAOR). The four main allies, UK, USA, France and USSR, had agreed upon dividing Germany into four occupation zones, with each victorious power assuming responsibility for their respective zone. BAOR was initially instituted with an administrative role rather than a defensive one. However, with the escalation of tensions between East and West, culminating in the Cold War and the division of Europe, the forces in the then West Germany found themselves on the front line, with the prospect of all

out assault from the Soviet led Warsaw Pact. In 1949 the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) was formed as a defensive alliance. From 1952 onwards, the commander in chief of BAOR assumed command of the NATO Northern Army Group (NORTHAG) in anticipation of active operations. Officially not part of NATO or BAOR and lasting for the whole of the Cold War there was also the Berlin Infantry Brigade, this garrisoned the British sector of what soon became West Berlin, which was also garrisoned by the US and France. Berlin had also been divided into four occupation zones and all was regulated by a four power agreement with the USSR, an uneasy relationship was maintained with the Soviet forces in East Berlin and the surrounding East Germany, through which personnel and equipment had to move or be flown over.

BAOR remained in existence until 1994, after the end of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact. Troop levels, units and formations in its successor, British Forces Germany, were much reduced. After 2010 these were further reduced and the last military base was handed back to the German government in 2020, leaving only a small training element in Sennelager. During BAOR's existence it fielded a corps HQ and four divisions, mainly armoured, and its strength, some 80,000 in the 1950s, declined to a fairly steady nominal 55,000 after the end of National Service. All the antecedent regiments, less W YORKS, were stationed in Germany as part of BAOR at various times, latterly in the Armoured Infantry role, and subsequently YORKS battalions were part of the post 1994 BFG; 1 E YORKS, 1 PWO and 1 GH were also stationed in Berlin at different times.

As BAOR lasted for the best part of five decades it is difficult to generalise but, notwithstanding the withdrawal from Empire and later the campaign in Northern Ireland, the greater part of the Army's combat power was in Germany and it very much became the main focus, particularly in respect

of the development of combined arms doctrine and manoeuvre warfare.

Every year there were long and intense exercises, usually over huge swathes of private land, unimaginable to those in the UK or Germany now. There were well established range complexes and armoured and mechanised training areas, such as at Soltau, and major training centres such as those in Sennelager. BAOR included a large number of garrisons and stations through which the RAC and Infantry units, including their families, were rotated in and out of the country on the Arms Plot, with other units being manned by the continual rotation of individuals, again with their families. Despite the changing nature over time of relations with the West German and



■ BAOR Permanent Locations



West Berlin governments and the increasing and officially encouraged community engagements, in many ways it was a quasi colonial life. Though stationed in a foreign land as they were the soldiers and their families were subject to British civil and military law and were served by an extensive British infrastructure – married quarters, schools, hospitals, NAAFI shops, welfare facilities, and recreational facilities. There was considerable opportunity for sport and adventure training, including alpine skiing on the long running winter season Exercise SNOW QUEEN. Local Overseas Allowance, duty free allowances, the wide range of facilities, usually better quartering than in the UK, the opportunity for the more adventurous to explore the continent and make local German friends – there were many marriages, and the community spirit generated within units and garrisons made it a very attractive posting for many.

AUSTRIA

From 1945 Austria, which had been annexed by Germany in 1938, was also occupied by the four victorious Allied powers, each responsible for a zone and similarly to Berlin a sector of Vienna. In return for a commitment to perpetual neutrality Austria became fully independent in 1955. During the period all the then existing antecedent regiments took a part in the British occupation forces.

THE ARMY AND THE REGIMENTS

After 1945 compulsory National Service replaced war time conscription and the Army remained at large scale, although by the end of 1948 all the antecedents had not only lost their war service battalions but also their second Regular battalions; 2nd Bn Green Howards was re-raised for a brief period in the 1950s. With the ending of National Service in sight the Army further reduced and The West Yorkshire Regiment and The East Yorkshire Regiment were amongst those amalgamated in the late 1950s. Reductions in the associated Territorial Army battalions took place in the early 1960s and in 1968 further reductions took place in the Regular Infantry, with Yorkshire losing the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, it was amalgamated into the Light Infantry, and also The York and Lancaster Regiment, the latter chose to disband rather than amalgamate and its recruiting area was divided amongst the remaining Yorkshire Infantry.

Further reductions also took place at this time in the Territorial Army and in 1967 The Yorkshire Volunteers (YORKS VOLS) was raised. By 1971 the antecedents had lost all four of their badged TA battalions and the YORKS VOLS had increased to three battalions; a fourth battalion existed between 1988 – 1992. During the Cold War all had operational commitments, either as NATO roled reinforcement battalions or as Home Defence units. There remained a close relationship as all the regular staff came from the regular regiments and the TA companies all carried antecedent regiment subtitles. The regiment was disbanded in 1993 and

from its strength three out of the four original TA battalions were reformed. These were substantially reduced in 1999 and absorbed into two multi cap badged regiments, The East and West Riding Regiment and The Tyne Tees Regiment.

The regular elements of the antecedents survived comparatively unscathed after 1958 but in 2006 The Prince of Wales's Own, The Green Howards and The Duke of Wellington's Regiment were amalgamated (The Green Howards having survived unamalgamated since 1688) as the three Regular battalion Yorkshire Regiment, the last named county regiment. At the same time a TA battalion was formed from elements of the two multi cap badged regiments. Six years later in 2013 the 2nd Battalion was disbanded and incorporated into the 1st and 3rd Battalions, with the 1st Battalion renumbered as the 2nd Battalion and the 3rd Battalion renumbered as the 1st Battalion. At the same time battalion subsidiary antecedent titles were discontinued. In 2014 the Territorial Army was renamed as the Army Reserve. In 2024, whilst two regular battalions remain, the 2nd Battalion is reducing to 250 to form the nucleus of the new Experimentation and Trials Group.

A very significant change for the Army, and thus for the regiment, has occurred in the latter part of this period, ending a pattern of large scale rotations accompanied by families at permanent bases overseas dating from the early 18th Century. With the exception of the strategic outpost of the Sovereign Base Areas in Cyprus, the expectation now is that the battalions will be based in the UK and will be overseas only for comparatively short periods on operations or training.

OPERATIONS OF THE ANTECEDENT REGIMENTS 1949 – 2006

Malaya 1949-1954

In June 1948 a state of emergency was declared in the British colony of Malaya. The Malayan National Liberation Army (MNLA) – the armed wing of the Malayan Communist Party (MCP) – had begun to attack rubber plantations, mines and police stations, derail trains and burn workers' houses. When 1 GH moved into Pahang in September 1949 it was already clear that the Communists would not win popular support, particularly from the Malay majority of the population. Although the active guerrillas, who were to describe themselves, first as the Malayan People's Anti-British Army and later as the Malayan Races Anti-British Army, usually numbered no more than 4,000 at any one time, they operated in perfect guerrilla country, sparsely inhabited – four-fifths of it thick tropical jungle astride a spinal mountain range.

As a unit fresh to anti guerrilla fighting, the Green Howards at first had little success in their unfamiliar surroundings. A subaltern at the time, Nigel Bagnall, later Field Marshal and Chief of the General Staff, remembered how, 'Nobody else had any real idea as to what we were supposed to be doing either. They had all acquired some basic jungle skills, but the operational situation was, to put it mildly, unclear...' The



police had mostly barricaded themselves into their stations, roads were open to ambush; weapons were unsuitable for such a campaign until American carbines and Australian Owen guns arrived in place of single shot .303in Mk V rifles and cumbersome Stens.

Patrols, sometimes a company strong, and rarely less than a platoon, toiled through the jungle, for as long as fourteen days at a stretch, seeking a wary and elusive enemy about whom little as yet was known. Contacts, when made, were usually a matter of chance. During the first three months the Green Howards met the Chinese only five times, killing one of them at the cost of one soldier. Just before Christmas another Green Howard died, together with an aboriginal Sakai tracker, and two soldiers were wounded in an unexpected encounter in the jungle half-light with a patrol of Gurkhas; three months later yet another Green Howard was killed when two patrols from the same company clashed. As always in war, such accidents happen, as tragic as they are inevitable.

Meanwhile, the communists were creating some twenty incidents each day up and down the country; in a single month they killed 200 people, most of them police or civilians. Nevertheless, the security forces were just holding their own. The isolated Europeans – government officials, miners or planters – stayed put, as did most of their wives, despite

the ever present danger. The police, almost entirely Malay and demoralized after the Japanese occupation, were being reinforced and given fresh European leadership. Because few of the known Chinese communists possessed local citizenship, numbers of them were being deported to their homeland, a salutary weapon.

In March 1950 the battalion was moved from Pahang to the adjoining and more northerly state of Negri Sembilan. By now its skills were improving fast. Young officers and NCOs, both regulars and National Servicemen, were developing into fine leaders; high standards of jungle craft, marksmanship and fitness were being inculcated, qualities essential to offset the hardships and frequent disappointments of a life both mentally and physically exhausting. They learned to move quietly and listen for enemy noises. Patrols were often reduced in size to three or four individuals, making for stealth and alertness. Men learned to lie in ambush on jungle tracks for days and nights on end. From Malays and the cheerful head – hunting Dyak, and Iban trackers brought in from Sarawak, men of nineteen or twenty, fresh off the streets of Middlesbrough, learned the skills of detecting traces of enemy movement. The Malayan campaign was described as ‘a long period of unceasing effort punctuated by moments of intense activity and rare success’. About half the private



■ South East Asia in the Late 1940s



soldiers and some junior NCOs were National Servicemen, while most of the regulars were equally young, recruited on three-year engagements.

The enemy were both skilful and courageous. No sooner had the battalion arrived in Negri Sembilan than a three-vehicle convoy drove into a cleverly laid ambush, manned by fifty to seventy terrorists, overlooking from high embankments a road that had been mined in seven separate places. Three Green Howards died and another was wounded, but it could have been far worse. By now, however, the smaller patrols, working just inside or on the edges of the jungle, were gaining some successes and the score of terrorists killed were starting to mount. But senior commanders were still wasting far too much effort on what were virtually large scale partridge drives that could involve half a dozen battalions at a time, tactics that had so often failed in the past. So much of what the British Army had learned in anti guerrilla campaigns fought on terrain ranging from North America to South Africa had been forgotten.

The arrival in April 1950 of Lieutenant General Sir Harold Briggs as Director of Operations, his brief to co-ordinate the operations of all departments, military and civil, had given the campaign fresh impetus. The 'Briggs Plan', put into effect in June, was aimed at denying to the insurgents the supplies which they extracted from the half million or so Chinese squatters who lived around the jungle's edge. By resettling these squatters into villages, it was possible to give them a large measure of protection against terrorist demands and atrocities. As the communist grip on them gradually slackened, the villagers discovered that it was safe to talk and the insurgents found it hard to feed and clothe themselves. At the same time, liaison among the security forces was placed upon a sound footing by Joint Local Committees, upon which the local district officer, policeman and Army company commander worked closely together. The latter, obtaining his information at first hand, was in future allowed to control his own platoons and largely run his own operational area. At the same time intelligence improved and jungle contacts depended far less on chance sightings.

A spell in Singapore had been planned for Christmas 1950 during which the battalion could absorb reinforcements, rest and retrain, and the married men see a little of the families, so near and yet so very far away. The unexpected outbreak of serious Muslim rioting in the city completely devoid of combatant units led, however, to the Green Howards and three Gurkha battalions being rushed out of the jungle and over the causeway into Singapore, some still with the jungle mud on them. But by the time they arrived the base troops had coped successfully and the trouble was almost over.

By Christmas the Green Howards could turn their attention to their families, to the traditional seasonal celebrations, and to recapturing the precision that enabled them to troop the colour on a much postponed Alma Day parade. In the words of the Malayan Broadcasting Corporation commentator

'not even the Brigade of guards could have done better'. Photographs bear this out. And a high proportion of those marching past so superbly in line were National Servicemen. But there was to be little time for that hoped for rest. Before the battalion moved back up country to North Johore in February, much thought and energy was to be spent on training for the next spell in action.

The full rewards came when the battalion was switched to the Tampin area in April 1951. There they were to remain for fifteen months, time to allow them to come to terms with the Malayan Races Liberation Army and the country in which it operated. Bagnall, who had already won an MC on Pahang and was to add a bar to it in Tampin, remembered how many of the junior leaders, both officers and NCOs, upon whom success largely depended, had perfected their tactics and developed an eye for the country. Sometimes help came from guerrillas who had been captured or surrendered (Surrendered Enemy Personnel or SEP). The first had given himself up to the battalion in October 1952 and straight away agreed to guide the troops back to his former comrades. Such behaviour was a source of wonder to the soldiers. Disillusioned by failure, discouraged by the death of friends, worn-out by years in the jungle and harried by the Army, once an insurgent gave up the struggle, he seemed to have no shame in betraying his associates. Some stayed with the battalion, developing into something approaching useful mascots.

In July 1952 the battalion moved north to Perak for the last ten weeks of its tour, after all but eliminating the terrorists around Tampin. In all sixty five had been killed or captured in forty separate actions, a further nineteen were to be eliminated in Perak, bringing the total for the tour to more than 100. One company commander and eight soldiers had been killed by the enemy; eleven had died from other causes. In thirty-eight months, seventy one officers and 1,646 other ranks had served with the battalion. Only one officer and seventy five of those who had arrived with it were there at the end of the tour. Not only had there been the normal turnover, but large drafts had also been found to reinforce the Royal Northumberland Fusiliers, fighting the more conventional and more bloody war against the Chinese in Korea. It was extraordinary that such a high level of professionalism had been achieved among the ever changing personnel.

1 E YORKS replaced 1 GH in the Malayan forces order of battle but, rather than to Perak on the central west coast of the peninsula, they deployed to the Kluang district of Johore, the most southerly of the Malay states with the most politically active resident Chinese population. Arriving in Singapore by sea in February 1953, the battalion trained hard at the Jungle Warfare Centre at Kota Tinggi in South Johore before moving to Kluang to relieve 2nd/6th Gurkha Rifles. One terrorist was captured by A Company during training.

The year 1953 was to see the intensification of food denial operations designed to starve out the terrorists remaining in their jungle hide outs, but intelligence was received that



a large gathering of communist Terrorist (CT) leaders was to be held in the Kluang area, a large camp prepared for the meeting having been found in the jungle. 26th Gurkha Brigade devised a plan to ambush all approaches to the camp with instructions to patrol leaders not to fire on CTs moving towards the camp for fear of compromising the intelligence source. Consequently, an ambush allowed a CT group through. It was not seen again and only one CT was killed in course of the entire brigade operation, probably due to the troop deployment being noticed and cancellation of the CT meeting.

1 E YORKS spent their entire three year tour of operational duty in the Kluang district, with rifle companies based in camps on the jungle edge to the north, east and south – the western area being covered by 1st Bn The Fijian Infantry Regiment. Operations were built around food denial, that is ambushing points where the terrorists were expected to enter villages to collect food and searching for their base camps in the deep jungle. On intelligence that two CT couriers were to meet at a certain abandoned sawmill a patrol of C Company lay up for three days without moving. They killed both couriers leading to a valuable haul of intelligence from documents one was carrying to hand over to the other.

In May 1955, the battalion was ordered at a few hours notice to move to Singapore where anti government rioting had again broken out. The battalion was deployed on the streets wearing steel helmets and carrying riot control equipment, but the rioting halted abruptly.

After 30 months on operations broken only by two months rest and retraining in Singapore, fifteen terrorists had been killed and two captured. Many more surrendered in the Kluang operational area in consequence of the scattering of leaflets from aircraft offering safety to terrorists wishing to give up the communist cause. Three members of the battalion were killed, and one died of wounds; a number were also seriously wounded.

1 W YORKS arrived in Malaya direct from the Suez Canal Zone, where they had served for half a three year operational tour engaged on internal security, in May 1953. They deployed to north Malaya, with battalion headquarters at Ipoh and companies in Perak and Pahang. These were not areas of significant terrorist activity, but it was considered necessary to give the local inhabitants – Malay, Chinese and Indian – confidence in their security. As with the E YORKS in Johore, operations focused on food denial and occasional brigade or battalion scale operations to squeeze a selected area of jungle, under which both Perak and Pahang are generously covered. Intelligence from captured or surrendered communist terrorists – who were almost always ready to betray their comrades still in the jungle – led to patrols in search of CT base camps or meeting points. Operation VALIANT, a deep jungle sweep launched during October and November 1953 in cooperation with the SAS, led to the killing of a group of terrorists in February 1954.

Having completed its full three year operational tour of duty in Egypt and Malaya, the battalion left Singapore in late 1954 for Northern Ireland, then a routine UK posting. The emergency itself continued until 1960.

The Korean War and the Battle of the Hook 1953

At the end of the Second World War, Korea, which had been occupied by Japan since 1905 and annexed in August 1910, was liberated by the victorious Allies in September 1945. The Western powers occupied what became South Korea. Soviet forces, which had been switched from the European Theatre to the Far East to attack the Japanese in Manchuria 'liberated' the northern part of the country and quickly installed a communist government.

On 25 July 1950, The North Korean Peoples' Army crossed the 38th Parallel and invaded South Korea. Neither the South Korean nor the American intelligence services had noted the build up of forces along the border and surprise was complete, the weak and unprepared South Korean and US forces were pushed back to the south of the country, managing to form a defensive perimeter round Pusan. General MacArthur, authorised by the United Nations,



■ Korea, Showing Location of The Hook



quickly sent reinforcements from Japan and the US, and also organised other countries to send men and materiel to bolster the South Korean (ROK) Army and help push the Communist forces back across the frontier at the 38th Parallel. A surprise amphibious landing at Inchon by US Marines opened the way to threatening the North Korean Army's communications. A headlong retreat from Pusan was quickly followed up by the rapidly strengthening allied forces, North Korea being invaded on 9th October.

Already the USSR had been warning the US that continuation of the war would lead to a widening of the conflict and Chinese Communist Peoples Liberation Army (PLA) forces were concentrating in Manchuria and had moved into North Korea by September.

Despite President Truman's intervention, MacArthur's offensive pressed on towards the Yalu River, North Korea's border with China. On 25 October a mixed US/ROK force was halted by Chinese troops south of Kojang. Following the Battle of Unsan the allied forces withdrew, under pressure from the Chinese and North Korean armies to a line broadly along the 38th Parallel where the war became static with trenches, patrols through no man's land and raids and attacks while the peacemakers met in Geneva to work out how to end the war.

1 DWR, stationed in Minden, Germany as part of BAOR, was warned off for service in Korea in early 1952. Preparations and training were carried out in Minden and Pontefract before the Battalion sailed by troopship to Korea on 22 September 1952, landing at Pusan on 30 October 1952. The battalion joined the 29th Brigade and on 16 November 1952 went into the line at Yong Dong, relieving the 3rd Bn Royal Australian Regiment. After a month in this 'quiet sector' it moved to Naechon, relieving the Durham Light Infantry just as the harsh Korean winter descended over the country, which made patrolling uncomfortable and difficult. There was much more action in this sector, with fighting patrols clashing in No Man's Land at night and a major raid to destroy a Chinese tunnel took place on 24 January 1953.

At the end of the month the Commonwealth Division was pulled out of the line and a hectic round of training and field exercises was conducted. In April the division once more went into the line and on 12/13 May 1 DWR took up positions on 'the Hook'. A feature of great tactical importance as it controlled the entrance to the Samichon valley and through that to Seoul. It was a hotly contested feature and it had been known for some time that the Chinese intended to capture it. On 17/18 May the enemy began bombarding the position and on 18 May a Chinese deserter brought information that a large attack was to be launched imminently. The brigade commander decided to leave the battalion, who now knew the position and the defensive plan well, on the feature and a great deal of preparation, including bunker construction and strengthening, wiring and mining, the reconnaissance of likely

enemy forming up points and many listening patrols, was carried out.

On 28/29 May the final enemy bombardment fell on the Hook position and a series of fierce enemy assaults managed to get into the positions held by D Company, and the entrances to many of the bunkers were destroyed with satchel charges. However, the Chinese were caught by the well planned artillery, tank and machine gun defensive fire tasks and the following waves were all but wiped out. A counterattack by the battalion reserve company restored the situation and the Hook was declared clear of the enemy at 0330 hours.

At 2200 hours on 27 July 1953, the fighting in Korea came to an end, with the formal declaration of a truce. The war between North and South Korea, though, continues to the present day, with occasional flare ups and casualties on both sides.

1 DWR left Korea on 13 November 1953, after a moving ceremony at the United Nations Memorial Cemetery to honour their dead. They arrived in Gibraltar on 10 December where the Queen and Prince Philip, during a state visit, invested members of the regiment with gallantry awards for their actions in Korea.

Officers and men from the other antecedent regiments were deployed to Korea as individual reinforcements, one officer Lt Terence Waters of The West Yorkshire Regiment serving with 1st Bn The Gloucestershire Regiment was awarded a posthumous George Cross for self sacrificing gallantry in captivity.

Cyprus 1954-1957

During this period, owing to worldwide pressure on the British Infantry additional battalions were required and 2 GH was reraised in 1952. Arriving in the British Crown Colony of Cyprus from the Suez Canal Zone in August 1954 the battalion joined its families, which were located there. A new base was to be established in Cyprus, with GHQ Middle East also transferring there. Until then the garrison of the island had consisted of a single infantry company.

This decision aroused hostility among the Greek Cypriot majority, in many of whom had been implanted a fervent desire for Enosis – union with Greece. Archbishop Macharios, in providing its political leadership, was following the tradition of the Greek Orthodox clergy of Eastern Europe. Promise of a new constitution, granting a high degree of self-government, only brought protesting crowds onto the streets of the capital, Nicosia.

At this time neither 2 GH nor the 2nd Bn Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, who had arrived the month following, detected any overt hostility amongst either Greeks or Turks. Despite the discomforts of a tented camp in winter, the Green Howards found the island enchanting after the heat and discomforts of the Egyptian desert. From a soldiering point of view it was an unsatisfactory period, with the companies employed building army warehouses under RE supervision on the



nearby airfield. On 1 April 1955, the concluding hours of a company exercise were disturbed by distant explosions. A couple of hours later a despatch rider arrived with orders for an immediate return to camp. In the background, Colonel Grivas, a regular Greek army officer, had been setting up a terrorist organisation, EOKA.

At first the rather ineffective bombings seemed no more than an isolated outburst of violence, seemingly of very small consequence, but suspicion and hostility rapidly spread: to be friendly with the British would bring unpleasant retribution. Green Howard sections had to be dispatched to protect and bolster threatened police stations. Well organised riots and demonstrations, usually by schoolchildren, proliferated. Detachments around the island multiplied. When the Greek members of the police force began to succumb to pressure platoons were given instruction in the use of police batons and shields. Searches of villages, surrounded at dawn, produced little in the way of results. Soon civilians and policemen were being murdered; a bomb was thrown into the garden of a married quarter.

More troops began to arrive to relieve the now hard-pressed Green Howards and Inniskillings. 2 GH saw no more than the opening stages of what would develop into a bitter four year campaign and lead eventually to the partition of the island. On 28 October 1955, the 1st Battalion The Middlesex Regiment arrived by lighters that were to take the 2 GH to the waiting troopship. It was a far from orthodox relief. Stone throwing schoolchildren ambushed vehicles bringing the troops down to the Famagusta quayside, access to which had to be cleared with batons. Television reporters and the battalion's families watched and listened to it all. The battalion went to England and was disbanded in 1956.

1 DWR, having been earmarked for the abortive Suez campaign, arrived in Cyprus in November 1956. After a few relatively routine operations in the Famagusta area, including the first of many cordons and searches, the battalion was deployed, at very short notice, in the Troodos mountains on Operation GOLDEN RAIN. During this operation ambush groups were established on all tracks during the night, with orders to shoot at anything that moved. At the end of the operation the battalion moved directly into Kernia Camp, near Nicosia. During December there were several other searches, including a major one in Nicosia when a large part of the town was cordoned off. Between 18 and 22 January 1957 Operation BLACK MAC in the Troodos area resulted in the discovery of a hide containing three terrorists, each with a price of £5,000 on his head, and a quantity of arms, ammunition and explosives. An even more successful operation, code named WHISKEY MAC, which started at the end of February, took place in the area of the Markhaeras Monastery. Information had been received that Afxentiou, one of the more notorious of the EOKA leaders, had for long periods lived in a hide near the monastery. The arrest of a man who knew the location of the hide led to a decision to



■ Cyprus and Suez

try and snatch Afxentiou. The OC of the company in the area where the hide was said to be located, drew up a plan which involved sending in two snatch parties at dawn on 3 March. One of the snatch parties discovered the hide and, on being summoned to do so, four men crawled out slowly, offering no resistance. From them it was learnt that Afxentiou was still inside the hide. His response to a call to come out was a burst of fire which killed an NCO: it was clear Afxentiou intended to sell his life dearly. Eventually, some six hours later, after the hide had been set on fire, he was killed. After only ten days back in Nicosia the Battalion was again in the area of Mount Troodos, this time on Operation LUCKY MAC, the aim of which was to capture Grivas. Based on the Kykko Monastery, the Battalion spent eleven weeks in and around the village of Milikouri, carrying out searches and laying ambushes, mostly in persistent rain, but all to no avail. In September 1957 1 DWR left for Northern Ireland.

Suez 1955

Israel invaded Egypt on 29 October 1955 with the primary objective of reopening the Straits of Tiran and the Gulf of Aqaba as the recent tightening of the eight year long Egyptian blockade further prevented Israeli passage. After issuing a joint ultimatum for a ceasefire, the United Kingdom and France joined Israel on 5 November, seeking to depose Egyptian president Gamal Abdul Nasser and regain control of the Suez Canal, which Nasser had earlier nationalised by transferring administrative control from the foreign owned Suez Canal Company to Egypt's new government-owned Suez Canal Authority. Shortly after the invasion began, the three countries came under heavy political pressure from both the USA and the Soviet Union, as well as from the United Nations, eventually prompting their withdrawal from Egypt. The campaign has been described as a military success but a political fiasco, which led to international humiliation for the British and clear evidence of its reduced international status.



1 W YORKS took part in the operation, being at Port Said and was involved in internal security duties, it was the last unit to reembark but an otherwise successful deployment was marred by the abduction and murder of a young officer.

Aden 1958 – 1967

Commercial and British defence policy developments during the 1950s suddenly gave the British Crown Colony of Aden increased importance. An oil refinery opened in 1951 and the labour demands of the increasingly busy port attracted thousands of expatriate workers. Politically motivated trades unions sprang up to form the Aden Trades Union Confederation (ATUC), 40,000 of whose members had come south from the Yemen. Their presence upset the uneasy coexistence between Aden and the interior and, at much the same time, external pressures began to threaten the political stability of the region as a whole. Arab socialist Egypt and Syria joined with the then Kingdom of Yemen to form the 'United Arab States'. The external voice of this inchoate union, Radio Cairo, opened a tirade of abuse against the 'colonialist' regimes of Aden, Jordan and Oman. Concurrently with all this, British defence policy switched from dependence on large overseas garrisons to a system of rapid reinforcement through a chain of bases, of which Aden was one, and the Middle East Command headquarters moved from Cyprus to Aden in 1958.

Political activity in the associated protectorates at this time had some focus through the South Arabian League (SAL), with its headquarters some twenty miles north-west of Aden, but there was little cohesion. By contrast, the Aden based National Liberation Front (NLF) comprised fervent nationalists who found a foothold in the protectorates by absorbing a radical breakaway faction of the league. Both groups demanded a union of Aden Colony and the protectorates with Yemen, a call taken up by Radio Cairo with the introduction of the term 'Occupied South Yemen' to describe South Arabia. But it was Ali, Sultan of Lahej, descendant of he who had consigned Aden to Britain in 1838, who instigated events which led to the entry of the newly formed 1 PWO into a fast deteriorating situation.

When the Yemen joined the Egyptian Syrian United Arab States in 1958, SAL demanded that South West Arabia should make up a foursome. Sultan Ali lent his support to this idea and was promptly dismissed from his post by the British Governor for breaking his treaty of friendship. Ali's followers fled to the Yemen, disturbances broke out in Aden Colony and a state of emergency was declared. The 1st Bn Royal Lincolns, calling at Aden on their way home by sea from Malaya, were disembarked in haste to strengthen the garrison. 1 PWO, preparing for an emergency tour in Cyprus, were diverted to relieve them and sailed from Southampton on 21 August.

A relatively uneventful seven month tour of duty followed. The battalion was responsible for picketing a road to allow a

resupply convoy to reach Dhala close to the Yemeni frontier and, later, for the dispersal of rioting Yemenis who were stoning Aden prison in Crater, the Arab township in the base of a long extinct volcano, for which the battalion would be responsible on return to the colony seven years later. These were the early days of the Aden insurgency, in which Aden port and its township of Crater and Tawahi were not yet plagued by grenade throwers and assassins. In April 1959, the battalion sailed for its next station – Gibraltar.

1 PWO returned to Aden for a year's unaccompanied tour of operational duty in 1965. It was trained for internal security duties and desert operations in the Western Aden Protectorate. The political situation had deteriorated significantly since 1958. The British Government had not been able to find any competent authority with which to draw up a settlement for the withdrawal of British administration and forces and the atmosphere was hot, humid and tense.

After landing at Khormaksar airport, the battalion had two hours to unpack weapons and deploy onto the streets for two cordon and search operations before taking over Crater from the outgoing battalion. Crater was by then virtually enemy territory, although the Armed Police – drawn from the up-country tribes – stood ready to deploy to quell any rioting that might break out and their base in Crater became the base for the 1 PWO duty company.

In course of the months September 1965 to May 1966, the rate of grenade attacks on the battalion's patrols increased significantly. British 36 grenades, left behind in huge numbers in Egypt, were thrown from the many narrow alleys down which the assailant could escape into a crowded street and become indistinguishable. Breeze block walls to block alleys had only a limited effect as they were easily broken down.

Techniques were developed to allow patrols to take the initiative, including obvious roadblocks with a concealed one on the route a terrorist vehicle carrying explosives would choose to escape detection. This led to the capture of three terrorists with a 20lb TNT bomb in the boot of their car, the



■ Aden and the Associated Protectorate



captured terrorists subsequently betrayed a significant number of their comrades.

In July and August, the battalion moved up country to the Western Aden Protectorate where the Haushabi and Radfan tribes attacked the battalion's outposts and sappers drilling wells to improve their water supply. All three rifle companies saw action including a night ambush battle and a determined attack on an isolated location. After returning briefly to internal security duties in Crater, the battalion flew home to Colchester in September 1966, with two men killed, six very seriously wounded and thirty six slightly wounded over a year of unbroken operational duty.

Nine months later, while 1st Bn The Royal Northumberland Fusiliers was handing over responsibility for Crater to the 1st Bn Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, a joint reconnaissance party was ambushed in Crater and killed. This led to Crater falling into the hands of the resurgent National Liberation Front. 1 PWO was the UK Spearhead Battalion, the short notice operational readiness duty, and was flown out as a reinforcement. By this time Aden was under siege, as the Western Protectorate had been taken over by the up-country tribes, Crater was retaken by 1st Bn Argylls and 1 PWO was made responsible for the security of the Aden harbour area in which was sited Government House and General Headquarters.

The familiar pattern of grenade attacks on patrols applied, as it had done in Crater, and western businessmen became the target of pistol assassins. On 14 October, a well planned attempt was made by the NLF to overwhelm the 1 PWO sector and cut the road between Aden port and the airport. All four 1 PWO rifle companies were involved in the firefight, as was one company of 45 Royal Marines Commando under command, but the attack was repulsed by 1400 hours despite the battalion control net being jammed – apparently by a Soviet trawler in the harbour.

The tempo of operations during this tour of duty in Aden is indicated by the casualties: two killed and five very seriously wounded, plus others slightly, over four months. The battalion returned to Colchester on 20 October, very shortly before the former colony was abandoned to the National Liberation Front and the Front for the Liberation of South Yemen, which then began fighting each other for political control.

Cyprus 1966-1967

Cyprus achieved its independence from the UK in 1960, although the UK retains to the present day two sovereign base areas in the country due to its strategic location. After independence inter communal violence broke out between the Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. In 1964 the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), was established as a peace keeping force to reduce the likelihood of direct conflict between Greece and Turkey, both NATO members, to prevent a recurrence of violence, to contribute to the maintenance and restoration of law and order and to facilitate a return to normal conditions. In April 1966 1 DWR

was deployed to be part of UNFICYP. It became responsible for Limassol Zone, an area of some 1,500 square miles on the west and south of the Troodos Mountains. It included much of the most rugged country in Cyprus. Apart from the main roads, which are mostly near the coast, movement between the villages was by means of narrow, stony tracks which twist and turn to match the contours of the mountain sides. Distances were large – from one extremity of the zone to the other was some 140 miles. In support of the zone was a 30 strong detachment of the United Nations' Civil Police. At first these were New Zealanders, later replaced by Australians. 'A' Squadron, 5th Inniskilling Dragoon Guards, in armoured cars, was also located in the zone, available to support the battalion in an emergency, it being the designated Force Reserve for the southern part of the island. Outside reinforcements, again at times of crisis, came from a Canadian recce squadron, and Danish, Finnish and Swedish battalions.

Life for the soldiers manning an OP could be most tedious yet once trouble between Greek and Turk occurred there was very often much to be done. Section commanders played an essential part sorting out many petty, but potentially serious, problems between the two communities. There were four large scale 'shoot ups' involving the firing of nearly two thousand rounds of small arms and larger calibre rounds on each occasion. Shooting incidents of a few rounds were commonplace, as were minor clashes between Turkish Cypriot fighters and Cypriot police or the Greek National Guard, entailing the hurling of stones and the shouting of threats and insults. Bomb incidents and vendetta killings were endemic to Cyprus and exacerbated by the politics. During such incidents it was essential to establish a UN presence as quickly as possible before it had a chance to escalate. For one of the more serious incidents at Kophinou/ Ayios Theodoros, all of nine platoons and all the armoured cars of the squadron were required for interposition between Greeks and Turks. Mehmet, a regular Turkish officer from the mainland, was the Turkish fighters' leader. He was young and most aggressive, not only to the Greek Cypriots, but also to the United Nations.

1 DWR returned to Osnabruck and its BAOR role in November 1967.

Northern Ireland, Operation BANNER, 14 August 1969 – 31 July 2007

Ireland, a country of 32 counties, and under British rule for centuries, latterly as part of the United Kingdom, had been partitioned in 1922 after a revolutionary insurgency, with a majority protestant 6 counties remaining in the UK with a permanent protestant Unionist devolved government.

In February 1967 members of the Roman Catholic minority formed the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA) to protest against institutionalised discrimination. The first march took place on 24 August 1968 from Coalisland to Dungannon. The next was planned for 5 October in



Londonderry but was banned by the Home Affairs Minister. The march went ahead and was broken up violently by the police reserve using batons. On 12 August 1969, the Apprentice Boys' March in Londonderry (an annual event to commemorate the shutting of the gates of Londonderry

proscribed. On both sides there was extensive criminality, smuggling, racketeering, extortion, intimidation, ethnic cleansing and murder, all of which polarised communities. It was a period euphemistically known as "the Troubles."

The military support to the civil authorities and the RUC, the police extensively and inevitably protestant, Operation BANNER lasted for nearly 38 years, the longest campaign the British Army has been involved in since the 18th Century. The principal task of the "Green" or overt Army was to provide a comparatively secure environment for the RUC to operate in by means of patrolling, vehicle check points, observation posts, the establishment and protection of bases, intelligence gathering and where possible community relations. At times, particularly in the earlier days, riot control took place. But it was more



■ Northern Ireland – Towns and Cities

in May 1689, by thirteen boys to prevent the former king, James II, from entering the town) took place. The march was attacked by a Roman Catholic crowd and, as a result, the Bogside – a Catholic stronghold in Londonderry – was entered by the police, The Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), using CS gas. Forty eight hours later the RUC were exhausted and the Army was brought to thirty minutes notice to relieve them. 1PWO was the first unit of the British Army to be deployed on the streets of Northern Ireland, in Londonderry, on Thursday 14 August 1969.

Out of the civil rights origins grew a long running terrorist insurgency by the proscribed Irish Republican Army (IRA), and its various offshoots and fellow travellers, supported to one degree or another by the Roman Catholic nationalist population and political parties who, in theory at least, wanted reunification with the Irish Republic, the more extreme elements being categorised as Republican. On the other side were the Unionist protestant population and political parties, the less conciliatory elements tending to being categorised as Loyalists, some of which resorted to terrorism and were also

than just a peacekeeping operation in support of the RUC, at times it was a tough counter insurgency battle against the IRA and on occasions with Loyalist terrorists. The Army took significant casualties, as an example the 1971 tour of 1 GH in the Ardoyne area of Belfast over the period when internment of terrorist suspects was introduced was the most violent since the beginning of the Troubles and resulted in 5 deaths and over 40 wounded. As another indication of its intensity, it was a tour which saw the award of a then rare DSO for the CO, a rare MBE for bravery for the RSM, an MC for a platoon commander and three MMs for corporals.

Throughout the campaign 1 PWO, 1 GH and 1 DWR rotated frequently in and out of Northern Ireland, either on accompanied resident 2 year or 18 month tours or 4, latterly 6, month "Emergency" or roulement tours in both rural areas and in the cities of Belfast and Londonderry. Deployments were as follows:



1 PWO

Apr 1969 – Aug 1969	Londonderry (first Army deployment as Spearhead Battalion)
Mar 1972 – Nov 1973	Belfast (Palace Bks – Province Reserve). Resident tour
Jul 1975 – Nov 1975	Londonderry
Mar 1977 – Jul 1977	Londonderry
Apr 1985 – May 1987	Ballykinler. Resident tour
Nov 1991 – May 1992	West Belfast
Jun 1996 – Dec 1996	East Tyrone
Nov 1999 – May 2000	West Belfast
Dec 2001 – Jan 2004	Omagh. Resident tour.

1 GH

Jun 1970 – Sep 1970	West Belfast
Jul 1971 – Nov 1971	North Belfast
Oct 1972 – Feb 1973	South West Belfast
Apr 1974 – Aug 1974	County Armagh
Apr 1975 – Aug 1975	South Armagh
Apr 1976 – May 1976	South Armagh
Aug 1978 – Mar 1980	County Antrim (Aldergrove – Province Reserve). Resident tour
Jun 1985 – Nov 1985	West Belfast
Jan 1987 – Mar 1989	Londonderry. Resident tour
Apr 1991 – May 1991	South Armagh (as Spearhead Battalion)
Jun 1991 – Sep 1992	Londonderry (3 month company attachments to 3 R ANGLIAN)
Jul 1992 – Jan 1993	South Armagh and North Belfast (split tour)
Dec 1994 – Jun 1995	East Tyrone
May 1999 – Nov 1999	West Belfast
Mar 2002 – Feb 2004	County Londonderry (Ballykelly). Resident tour.

1 DWR

Jun 1971 – Oct 1971	North Belfast, with one company in Crossmaglen
Apr 1972 – Jul 1972	South Armagh
Feb 1973 – Aug 1974	County Londonderry (Ballykelly). Resident tour
Jan 1976 – Mar 1976	Portadown (Spearhead Battalion deployment)
Jul 1977 – Oct 1977	Londonderry
Oct 1979 – Feb 1980	West Belfast
Dec 1981 – Apr 1982	South Armagh
Feb 1987 – Feb 1989	Belfast (Palace Bks). Resident tour
Feb 1995 – Mar 1997	Province Reserve Bn (based in England, company roulement tours).

During the campaign 1 PWO lost one man killed by enemy action, 1 GH nine and 1 DWR seven, with the great majority lost in the period 1971 – 1975, reflecting in part the intensity of the early period but also huge developments in training, procedures, equipment, operational deployments and intelligence.

Bosnia 1993 – 2006

The disintegration of Yugoslavia began when Serbia blocked Croatia assuming the chairmanship of the country's collective leadership council in 1991 with consequent Serb Croat armed confrontation.

Under a UN Security Council resolution of 21 February 1992 a UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) was mandated to 'create the conditions of peace and security required for the negotiation of an overall settlement of the crisis.' A UN Force was established and, so as not to show partiality to either Serbia or Croatia, its headquarters was placed in Sarajevo in Bosnia Herzegovina, hereafter referred to as 'Bosnia'.

The situation deteriorated in March 1992 when the mixed population of Bosnia voted by a two thirds majority for independence from Yugoslavia, ignoring a threat by the 32% Serbian population that they would become part



■ The Former Yugoslavia

of a 'Seamless Serbian Nation' in the event of Bosnian independence. Fighting with appalling atrocities broke out in Bosnia and, following two months of indecision, UN Security Council Resolution 758 of 1992 gave authority for the expansion of UNPROFOR to 'allow delivery of humanitarian supplies to besieged communities in Bosnia.' Op GRAPPLE was the British contribution to UNPROFOR and the first deployment was by a battle group formed by 1st Bn The Cheshire Regiment, a squadron of 9th/12th Royal Lancers and supporting units.

On completion of the CHESHIRE battle group's tour of duty in Bosnia in May 1993, 1 PWO and B Squadron The Light Dragoons were assigned to form the next UK contingent. Arrival of the 1 PWO battle group in Bosnia



coincided with a change in local allegiances. Hitherto, Bosnian Croats and Bosnian Muslims had combined to protect themselves from the Bosnian Serbs but owing to a rumour that the Muslims were about to make a separate deal with the Serbs the Croats turned on them. A three sided war of murder and pillage ensued. The first act of CO 1 PWO group was to help carry the charred bodies of a Muslim family from the remains of their house in Armici. The immediate initial tactical concern was the Turbe-Kiseljak valley where Bosnian Croats and Muslims had begun competing in ethnic cleansing, driving inhabitants of the opposite faith out of their homes and villages. The refugees looked to UNPROFOR for protection but despite its title the UN force was not mandated to protect them, only to deliver supplies to them when besieged. There followed months of negotiating local ceasefires, evacuating women and children under fire or immediate threat of fire and delivering medical aid and supplies to besieged communities of all factions. Pity and humanity had deserted the peoples of Bosnia, revenge becoming their only self-harming motive, as every atrocity brought retaliation. A report by Lance Corporal Michael Brown, attached to 1 PWO from 1 KINGS, catches the situation:

After the shelling (of a relief convoy) had stopped, we had a chance to treat the casualties. The tunnel smelled of death, limbs were hanging off, steam was coming off the blood. The dead still had their eyes open. More rounds landed. The company commander tasked us to go back and collect the dead.

A notable award during the tour was that of the MC to Corporal Paul Dobson for gallantry evacuating civilians, the first to an other rank below warrant officer.

In March 1994, 1 DWR was deployed to UNPROFOR from Kiwi Barracks, Bulford equipped with Saxon armoured vehicles. The battalion was initially engaged in monitoring the 1993 UN cease fire agreement and separating the various warring communities in central Bosnia. Meanwhile the Serbs continued to attack the remaining Muslim enclaves of Srebrinica, Tuzla and Gorazde which were then declared 'safe areas' by the UN. The UN decided to send in a force under a French lead battle group to protect Gorazde. At the last minute, as the battle group was about to deploy, the French Government withdrew its forces and Alma Company was then left to continue alone as a very much reduced force into a very hostile area. Their task was to enforce Serb compliance with the NATO ultimatum to withdraw their military forces 3km from the town and their heavy weapons 20km. Alma Company had to impose this alone for 10 days before Battalion Headquarters and Corunna Company arrived to reinforce them. They achieved the UN's mandate and their robust enforcement of the exclusion zone almost certainly prevented the 30,000 population of Gorazde suffering the same fate that befell those in the other UN 'safe areas' of Srebrinica and Tuzla where the UN forces did not act with

similar fortitude and some 6,000 men were massacred and their populations dispersed.

The intensity of the conflict is reflected in Corporal Wayne Mills being the first recipient of the newly instigated Conspicuous Gallantry Cross for outstanding leadership when commanding a patrol faced by a group of Serb irregulars, some 25 – 30 strong.

In the late October 1994, 1 GH deployed to Bosnia. It was to be part of the NATO Implementation Force (IFOR) in the Gornji Vakuf area. Known as the "Anvil", the Muslim Bosnian sector was flanked on three sides by the Serbian Republic. The NATO force task there was to monitor the clients of the Dayton Peace Accord. The Dayton Peace Accord had been signed in 1995, ending three years of savagery, with Bosnia now separated into two autonomous regions: the Muslim Croatian Federation in the centre of the country, with the Serbian Republic around it. IFOR's task was to implement this fragile peace.

Bosnia in winter can be a hostile environment with temperatures dropping to – 25°C, making driving in armoured vehicles along frozen tracks in the mountains a hazardous task. Nevertheless 1 GH set about establishing its presence, through a rigorous patrol programme to ensure freedom of movement, to reassure the population and to make sure the warring factions kept their weapons under lock and key. The presence of the Warrior vehicles was critical to this. The former warring factions had to be made aware that they would have to fight if they took the British on, at the same time the force tried to bring the various groups together and create a working entente. It was gratifying at last to see them together, talking and planning and enjoying relations for the first time in five years. Part of the Dayton Agreement was to return the country to the pre-war multi-ethnic society. This was perhaps the most complex and sensitive operation but, finally, people did return to their homes whilst the Green Howards were there, indeed they saw the roots of peace taking hold and beginning to spread.

In 2006 1 GH deployed to Bosnia again and was this time based at Banja Luka as part of the European Union forces overseeing the return of the country to normality. Whilst serving there on the 6 June, the battalion was rebadged, becoming 2nd Bn The Yorkshire Regiment (Green Howards).

Kosovo 1999

As 1999 began, 1 GH was preparing to deploy on operations in West Belfast. However, events in the Balkans took an unexpected turn as Serbia's President Milosevic began applying violent pressure on the Albanian population of Kosovo. The international community resolved to act and NATO began operations to protect the Albanians of Kosovo. Hostilities had begun in Kosovo in 1998 where ethnic Albanians had been fighting for an independent state, then the Serbs, who believed that Kosovo should be brought into



the cradle of the Orthodox Christian Church and centre of their culture, launched the tide of ethnic cleansing to keep the province part of Serbia.

Hundreds of thousands of Albanians fled across the country's border into Albania, Montenegro and Macedonia to escape the conflict. As these hostilities in the Balkans escalated, it seemed that the whole of the battalion would be deployed to Macedonia and from there into Kosovo. But in February, A (King Harald) Company was ordered to stand by to join the 4th Armoured Brigade Group already in the Balkans. The remainder of the battalion was then reinforced by a company from the Black Watch and continued to prepare for Northern Ireland. At the end of March 1999, NATO then began air strikes against selected Serb targets to force President Milosevic to the negotiating table.

For A Company there began an intense period of preparation and training in Osnabruck. On 21 May, with no improvement in the political situation, the order came to deploy to an area south of Skopje in Macedonia to join the Irish Guards Battle Group. On arrival, the company began a concentrated period of acclimatisation and live firing training in the heat and dust of Northern Macedonia. The uncertainty as to whether the NATO force would have to make a forced entry into Kosovo remained. After 72 days of non stop NATO bombing, President Milosevic backed down and, on 4 June 1999, signed a peace treaty. The hope was that Kosovo Force (KFOR) could now enter the country in peace and implement the UN Security Council Resolution 1244, signed just days before.

Thus on Saturday, 12th June 1999 A Company moved north to cross the Macedonian border, passing en-route tented refugee camps full of Kosovar Albanians who ran out cheering and shouting and throwing flowers at the armoured vehicles, whilst children were held aloft carrying placards proclaiming their gratitude. As soon as the troops crossed the border, in the vanguard of a long, armoured column, the first signs of war damage and massacre were there for all to see. Burned out houses carrying Serb slogans as a reminder of their activities. The move was laborious along the heavily congested route supporting the advance. As weather closed in and night fell, they were forced to stop just 10km south of Pristina, the capital, and their objective, to allow the Serb forces, as part of the peace agreement, to begin their withdrawal back into Serbia.

During the night a procession of Serb armoured vehicles trundled past, with their occupants making three fingered Serbian victory signs and waving their Kalashnikov rifles defiantly in the air; despite the bombing campaign, the Serbian army remained largely intact and withdrew in good order. Two days later A Company was ordered to secure Kosovo Polje, some 15 kilometres to the South West of Pristina.

From June to October the soldiers continued their roller coaster ride of uncertainty and unpredictability. They had trained for the worst case, which might have involved heavy

fighting in a forced entry into Kosovo but, for now, they were relying on the residual Northern Ireland experience and a great deal of initiative from every soldier. Demonstrations, intimidation, property destruction and looting were widespread. Operations varied from identifying and marking mass graves to the protection of life and property. In mid September 1999, as the company was preparing for its handover to the Norwegian Telemark Battalion, a two week period of severe disruption began, culminating with a grenade attack by Kosovars on 28 September, leaving three Serbs dead and over 40 civilian casualties. The Serbs had lost confidence in KFOR's protection and barricades were thrown up round their enclaves.

Due to the Serbs' intransigence the company was ordered to mount an operation to remove all barricades by force. On 5 October, A Company Group of five British platoons and some sappers, a Norwegian platoon, a section of Canadian recce vehicles and a platoon of Italian Carabinieri demolished the barricades and secured the area in 53 minutes. It was the first planned use of force by KFOR against the civil community in Kosovo. Although the good relations continued with the Albanians, the task of persuading the Serbs and NATO to talk to each other continued to be an uphill struggle.

Iraq 2003-2005

On 19 March 2003, the US and its coalition partners launched Operation IRAQI FREEDOM and invaded Iraq to disarm Iraq of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), end

Saddam Hussein's support for terrorism and free the Iraqi people. Despite a very successful invasion phase, which was declared at an end on 1 May 2003, insurgency in Iraq grew in intensity and British forces were deployed in the area round Basra, as part of Operation TELIC. HQ and three companies 1 DWR deployed on Op Telic 1 Mar – Jul 2003 and on Op Telic 5 Oct 2004 to May 2005. In 2004 DWR was awarded the theatre honour "Iraq 2003."

ROYAL YORKSHIRE REGIMENT OPERATIONS FROM 2006

Since its formation in 2006 The Royal Yorkshire Regiment has deployed on operations to Kosovo, Iraq, Afghanistan and Estonia, it has also deployed elements to the Falkland Island reinforcement task, an operational commitment. Eighteen



members of the regiment have been killed in action during these operations and over 70 have been wounded.

Kosovo

British military operations in the Balkans were renamed Operation OCULUS and the regiment deployed as follows:

March 2006 – September 2006 – 1 GH/2 YORKS
(Composite Company)
September 2008 – April 2009 – 1 YORKS (B Company).

Op ELGIN is the Strategic Reserve Force (SRF) battle group that can be deployed to reinforce NATO's peacekeepers in Kosovo, the Kosovo Force (KFOR) as necessary. 1 R YORKS provided a composite force in Nov 2023.

Iraq

Operation TELIC continued until Jul 2009 when Alma Company 3 YORKS, deployed on the Baghdad Protection Force task, was the last combat unit to leave the country. During the overall period the major unit deployment was as follows:

TELIC 9 (November 2006 – May 2007) 1 YORKS
TELIC 13 (November 2008 – May 2009) 1 YORKS (less B Company).

1 YORKS on Operation TELIC 9 took part in Operation RATTLESNAKE towards the end of the tour. The following account from an NCO of the Javelin Platoon, 1 YORKS, is illustrative of operations and describes the first use of the Javelin missile on operations:

Basra – Southern Iraq, 13 April 2007: Operation RATTLESNAKE was a Force Reserve Battle Group operation consisting of a rifle platoon from C Company, 1 YORKS, with a detachment of the battalion's Javelin equipped Anti Tank Platoon attached, a 2 LANCES Javelin detachment, Challenger 2 tanks, Warrior armoured vehicles, with air assets and 105mm artillery in support. The aim of the patrol was to establish a secure area from which the Javelin system and operators could observe a well known area used to attack British troops with roadside bombs and small arms fire, and then destroy anyone who tried to take us on.

9 Platoon, commanded by Capt Ellerby, led in the attached Javelin teams. The moon was low. The only light was from passing vehicles, the city lights well off into the distance, and the occasional lightning on the horizon. The route in was littered with large pools of water, which had settled on the ground from the previous night's downfall, creating a quagmire. It was clear from the outset that the insertion was going to be arduous.

The group patrolled on foot, to avoid detection and maintain the element of surprise, whilst the heavy armour drew the attention of the insurgents by driving down the

main route into Basra. After approximately an hour and a half we arrived at the rendezvous point. My helmet was now feeling like a lead weight on my head and the humidity sapped the energy. Capt Ellerby and I confirmed the observation area and placed out the cut off positions for security. The Javelin teams were briefed on the area and we set off to occupy the position. After only ten minutes the Javelin operators started to report unusual activity within the area. Equipment was being moved out of a number of vehicles and placed carefully into position at the side of the road. The diversion from the heavy armour had worked. The insurgents had been drawn out into the open and planned to engage the road convoy.

After further observation, it was confirmed that the insurgents were laying command wires to the roadside bombs they had just prepared. Permission to fire was requested, but as the operation was designed to have maximum effect on the insurgents, the request was denied until all assets were in position to engage. 2239 hours was designated as the time of attack. The insurgents had taken up positions behind walls and next to houses to follow up the explosion with rocket propelled grenades, mortars and small arms fire. The Challengers and Warrior vehicles grew louder as they moved closer, my palms were sweaty with anticipation, the adrenaline was pumping hard, but the teams remained steadfast and focussed.

At 2239 hours the artillery fired fifteen high explosive rounds into the target area. Authority to engage positively identified targets with the Javelin missiles was granted. There was a quiet "pop" before the night lit up as a rocket streamed upwards and away into the night, locked on to its target. It was a truly momentous occasion as the 1 YORKS Anti Tank Platoon had just fired the first operational Javelin missile on Op TELIC. Team 2 fired their missile whilst the first missile was still in the air. There was a nervous wait while the missiles streaked across the night sky before the brilliant light was seen and deafening impact heard. Both teams reported the missiles had struck the target and that it was destroyed. They then reloaded and Team 2 engaged and destroyed a second target. The tanks moved in and the Javelin teams prepared to extract.

For the Army Operation SHADER has been the ongoing British military support, mainly training support, to the Government of Iraq in its fight against ISIL. The regiment has deployed as follows:

October 2014 – 2 YORKS – training detachment
September – 2023 – March 2024 – 1 R YORKS.

Afghanistan

In October 2001 coalition forces invaded Afghanistan on Operation ENDURING FREEDOM as a result of the terrorist



attacks on the twin towers in New York on 11 September. The objective was to dismantle Al Qaeda and remove the Taliban from power. In December the International Security Force (ISAF) was established by the UN Security Council to bring security to the country and train Afghan national forces to take over the security of the country for the Afghan government. In the meantime, coalition forces were battling against the Taliban for control of various regions, particularly in Helmand Province.

Operation HERRICK was the UK operational name and the first regimental deployment was when 2 YORKS deployed on Operation HERRICK 7, taking over from 1st Bn Grenadier Guards on 21 September 2007. It was a mentoring and liaison role, guiding the Afghan National Army (ANA) units of the 3rd Brigade, working out of Camp Shorabak and deploying with the kandaks (battalions) within their battalion areas of Gereshk, Sangin and Musa Qal'eh.

By December plans were well advanced for a multinational operation, Op MAR KARADAD, to liberate Musa Qal'eh from the Taleban and protect Mullah Salaam's village. Mullah Salaam had been a Taliban commander but was now the district governor and leader of a tribal uprising against the Taliban. On 2 December, Royal Marine Commandos crossed the Helmand River and created a block to the south of Musa



■ Afghanistan with Helmand Province Highlighted

Qal'eh; on 5 December the Household Cavalry battle group established the northern block and the Afghan militia set up a cordon round the eastern perimeter. On 7 December, 2 YORKS led their ANA Brigade (less one battalion) in a feint attack from the South West, to convince the Taleban that the main attack was coming up the Musa Qal'eh Wadi, while the main assault by US Task Force 1 Fury landed by helicopter, surrounding the town in a pincer movement, supported by an air armada, ranging from spy satellites, surveillance and electronic aircraft, bombers, strike fighters, UAVs, gunships and attack helicopters.

On 11 December the ANA, led by 2 YORKS, linked up with the weary US paratroops and broke into the town centre, behind an RE mine clearance team and after a successful sweep and search of the compounds, on the 12 December, the flag was raised over the District Centre, under a desultory mortar attack. Within three weeks of the liberation of the town a new district centre had been constructed and was the first purely ANA Area of Operations (AO), mentored by A Coy 2 YORKS, in the country, with a large, white helium balloon floating gracefully over one of the newly constructed patrol bases. Altogether, twenty eight members of the battalion were commended for their actions during the operation, including the awarding of one OBE, two MCs, 11 MIDs, two QCVSs, eleven Joint Commander's Commendations and one Commander British Forces Commendation. Two soldiers were killed and 15 were wounded in action.

In all the regiment deployed as follows:

- HERRICK 7 (September 2007 March 2008) 2 YORKS
- HERRICK 10 (July 2009 – April 2010) 3 YORKS (one Coy)
- HERRICK 11 (October 2009 – May 2010) 2 YORKS
- HERRICK 11 (October 2009 – May 2010) 3 YORKS (one Coy)
- HERRICK 15 (September 2011 – May 2012) 1 YORKS
- HERRICK 16 (February 2012 – October 2012) 3 YORKS
- HERRICK 16 (April 2012 – October 2012) 4 YORKS (composite Coy).

In addition, it provided the Theatre Reserve battalion as follows:

- October 2011 – October 2012 – 2 YORKS
- November 2013 November 2014 – 2 YORKS.

Operation TORAL was the codename for the British presence post 2014 as part of NATO's RESOLUTE SUPPORT mission. This mission was a NATO led multinational mission and began on 1 January 2015 as the successor to ISAF. UK forces had two major tasks: training and mentoring Afghan Forces and providing force protection for NATO advisors via the Kabul Security Force/Kabul Protection Unit. The operation ended on 8 July 2021 with the withdrawal of US and NATO forces. However, British troops were subsequently redeployed under Operation PITTING in August 2021 to evacuate British nationals and staff following the 2021 Taliban offensive.

- TORAL 5 (August 2017 – April 2018) 2 YORKS
- TORAL 9 (November 2019 – May 2020) 2 YORKS
- PITTING (August 2021) 2 YORKS.



Estonia

In support of the Baltic states is the UK led NATO eFP (enhanced Forward Presence) Battle Group or BG EST in Estonia. Operation CABRIT is the UK operational name and 1 YORKS deployed from November 2017 to April 2018.



■ Estonia and the Baltic States

