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# Lancashire

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# With 4 LANCS Training for Action

by Andrew Harris

**T**he British Army worries about how others see it. Involvement in unpopular wars has made it – very unfairly – less heroic in the eyes of many. Yet history reminds us that from time to time a well-trained and professional army is desperately needed.

Some deployments prevent a small conflict becoming a bigger war and others aim to prevent conflict in the first place. Even the presence of troops can have a calming effect if they are feared by the strong and trusted by the weak. The British Army has a proud record

of usually achieving both but at about 80,000 soldiers it is now smaller than at any time since the Napoleonic Wars. As a result it depends upon support from what could be called a citizens army but as it is an integral part of the British Army it is called the Army Reserve.



**ABOVE: The CO of 4 LANCS – Lieutenant Colonel Justin Tancrel. TOP RIGHT: 4 LANCS soldiers with 70lbs or more of kit to carry. MIDDLE RIGHT: A conference in a field. RIGHT: Achieving arcs of fire front, rear, left and right**

Our region is home for one of the British Army's most distinguished and proud regiments. The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment was formed on the 1st July 2006 by merging the King's



**One of the tests: where are we and where are we going.**

Own Royal border Regiment, the King's Regiment and the Queen's Lancashire Regiment but it can trace its origin through antecedent regiments to July 1680 when King Charles II raised a force later known as the 4th - or King's Own - Regiment of Foot. We reported the amazing battle honours of the next 3 centuries or so in our July 2017 edition. Since the 3rd Battalion was disbanded in 2007 it now comprises 2 regular (full-time) battalions known as 1 and 2 LANCs plus 4 LANCs which is an Army Reserve battalion recruiting throughout the north west - especially north of the Mersey - where it has nine bases and its HQ at Kimberley Barracks in Preston.

4 LANCs comprises about 500 soldiers - known as King's Men - who serve in one of five companies each named after a major battle in which the antecedent regiments fought. The HQ (Waterloo) Company is in Preston, Ladysmith Company in Liverpool, Somme Company in Blackburn and Blackpool, Kohima Company in Lancaster, Barrow, Workington and Carlisle and Inkerman Company in Manchester and Bury. It forms part of the 4th Infantry Brigade and is a light role infantry battalion. It specialises in dismounted close combat operations using light vehicles and on foot and is capable of operating in different terrains. Its primary responsibility is supporting 2 LANCs with a Rifle Company. 4 LANCs soldiers tend to be deployed singly or in

small units to fill gaps in regular units when it is acknowledged that their skills and commitment match those of regular (full-time) troops. It is unlikely that 4 LANCs will ever be deployed as a complete battalion unless the UK faces an extreme military challenge.

In recent years 4 LANCs soldiers have been deployed to Italy, Australia, America, Latvia and the Falklands. The battalion has provided officers and soldiers to support teams from 2 LANCs which were training the defence forces of Burundi and Uganda. In October 2016 4 LANCs made history by being the first Army Reserve unit to lead Operation Tosca which guards the 'Green Line' which separates the Greek and Turkish parts of Cyprus.

The British Army is held in high regard around the world but this respect has been hard-won over recent years in Northern Ireland, the Falkland Islands, the Gulf, Bosnia, Kosovo, Iraq and Afghanistan plus countless other peacekeeping operations around the world. This reputation and professionalism does not come easily but is achieved by constant, thorough and tough training in realistic conditions. 4 LANCs has trained and competed in many countries. Nearer home the battalion trains at the Warcop army training area in Cumbria. Over the weekend of the 28th and 29th July teams from each of the battalion's Rifle Companies travelled further to the enormous Catterick Training Area near



**ABOVE: Troops dispersed and hard to see.**  
**TOP RIGHT: How to be targets on the horizon.**  
**RIGHT: The medevac exercise. Removing a casualty.**

Richmond in North Yorkshire – accompanied for part of the time by your columnist.

The Catterick site is amazing. It was once the site of the Roman Fort Cataractonium on Dere Street which ran from Hadrian's Wall to York. Its origins as a training area predated the First World War when at any one time 40,000 young soldiers were accommodated in 2,000 huts. The establishing of the training site followed a request from the War Office to General Lord Baden Powell who was the hero of the Boer War and founder of the Boy Scout movement. This training role continued through the Second World War. Today's Catterick Training Area covers over 9,000 acres or 3,700 hectares. This was the location for the training session of 4 LANCS in July.

The aim of this training was to conduct a challenging and demanding competition to test the ability of junior commanders and soldiers across demanding terrain whilst carrying heavy loads. The competition was designed to test a number of key features all of which are the core skills and stamina of the modern infantry soldier whether regular or reservist. These are –

- Physical and mental robustness
- The ability to operate in an austere environment yet have the ability at all times to think through complex problems whilst under pressure
- Leadership command and control
- Effective thinking

The teams had to use their professional skills of navigation, first aid, effective use of weapon systems plus tactics, techniques and procedures. From stepping off from the start-line the soldiers initially carried loads of at least 70 lbs which included rations, water, ammunition of all types, medical supplies and other essential items. The 4 LANCS reservist of today is required to be a fit, capable and intelligent fighting man – and from April 2019 this requirement will extend to fighting women.

The exercise had the four Rifle Companies competing against each other in a series of tests when they had to not only use their training as soldiers but think 'outside the box' to meet each challenge. All activities were against the clock with



each team navigating across the unforgiving terrain of North Yorkshire. After two days – during which the temperature went from a stifling 31C to a chilly and windy 14C – Inkerman Company based in Manchester and Bury were the winners being judged the most successful across all disciplines. As the soldiers paraded to hear the results the weather changed again to a torrential downpour. The Kingsmen of 4 LANCS suffered this further change in the weather with the sense of humour for which the British infantry soldier is famous.

You columnist was much impressed by the stoicism of the teams as they yomped over the bleak terrain in ever changing weather as he part-tramped and part-rode courtesy of Major Andy Holsgrove who was his escort. He carried nothing heavier than his notebook but it wasn't always like that.

A legacy of the former TA is the impression that reserve soldiers only meet on drill nights and seldom deploy if at all. As an antidote to this image consider this snapshot of the coming deployments of 4 LANCS in just the next 3 months –

- September 2018 – 4 LANCS are sending a team to the Altcar Challenge which is the International Reserve Forces Competition.
- September 2018 – The Annual Deployment Exercise at the Battalion Battle Camp in Northern England will upskill 4 LANCS soldiers across a range of disciplines. It concludes with 5 days of field firing which replicates accrual operations as closely as possible.
- October 2018 – As part of Exercise Mayan Warrior 4 LANCS will be sending a platoon (third of a company) to



spend a month in the depths of the Belize jungle which is one of the toughest environment in the world.

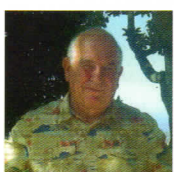
- October 2018 – 4 LANCS will have 2 teams participating in the Cambrian Patrol which is the British Army’s premier infantry competition in mid-Wales seen as amongst the amongst the hardest military challenge in NATO.

- November 2018 – Elements of 4 LANCS Battalion HQ will deploy to Kenya where they will take part in Exercise Askari Storm when they will be the main HQ element for 2 LANCS.

- November 2018 – As part of Exercise Iron Wolf, officers and soldiers of 4 LANCS will take part in a deployment to Lithuania to learn the skills of operating in extensive forest and woodland. It is part of the UK’s support for the Baltic states.

- November 2018 – As part of the Algeria STTT British Army’s Defence Engagement activity 4 LANCS will deploy soldiers to train local forces in a number of skills in North Africa.

The 4th Battalion of the Duke of Lancaster’s Regiment is committed to training as necessary and deploying to an active role when needed. The Catterick exercise was demanding and testing and 4 LANCS passed. If you have something to offer they would like to hear from you. The need is for recruits who want to learn skills and contribute. Young officer candidates are especially needed. You may have been born or live in North West England but you could be made in 4 LANCS! Call 01772 260655 if you would like to know how.



**Andrew Harris gratefully acknowledges the help of Major Andy Holsgrove during the Catterick Exercise and in the preparation of this article. Our articles about the Army in the North West, The Duke**

**of Lancaster’s Regiment, Fulwood Barracks and the Lancashire Infantry Museum can be seen at [www.andrewharris.co.uk](http://www.andrewharris.co.uk) under Published Articles.**



#### 4th Battalion, Duke of Lancaster’s Regiment

Kimberley Barracks, Preston ●

+ Sub Units/Detachments at locations ●

