



ARMY

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CAMBRIAN PATROL 2007.

- 1. Introduction.** On 13 October 2007 C (Essex) Company of the 1st Battalion The Royal Anglian Regiment returned from Op Herrick 6 and less than three weeks later had earned a gold medal at Cambrian Patrol 07.
- 2. Training.** . In short we were quite rightly ready to go after the tour and to that end we did not conduct any arduous or lengthy training only mission specific training as you would in an operational context.
- 3. The Patrol.** Broadly speaking the patrol was certainly arduous but should be achievable to every infantry soldier out there. Probably our biggest problem was the feet of some of the lads who were not used to their black leather boots as opposed to their desert boots. One team member did the last 10kms in trainers his feet were so bad. The recce itself was well thought out in the sense that the enemy conducted regular clearance patrols and made it hard to get into the position to do a thorough recce. There is nothing worse than watching two people sat round a fire playing with their mobile phones and to their credit the enemy on the position were conducting themselves correctly and this adds a lot to the training value. The other part of the patrol which made the whole experience that little bit more worthwhile was the serial where we were spotted by two attack dogs while crossing a road and the chaos that they created was comical. Maybe I should have put in an action on dogs in my orders!! **It was heartening to see that the organisers had put some thought and effort into trying to make the whole Cambrian experience as realistic as possible.** There is nothing more noteworthy to mention other than the final thought that the patrol is only as useful as the effort the agents and stand organisers want to put in. It was notable that some stands were run superbly by motivated people who wanted us to get as much out of it as possible. The minestrike/casevac, quick attack and mortar target indication stands were good examples of this.
- 4. Relevance to Operations.** There are relatively few infantry entries into what is an exercise which tests infantry core skills. That is not to say that other arms should not be involved, if anything they should be encouraged, but that it is a shame there are not more infantry entries. **Commanding Officers are missing a good opportunity to set training goals for his troops which are certainly relevant to today's operational environment, both in Iraq and Afghanistan.** The stands are all circumstances which soldiers could expect to find themselves in on an operational tour. It is notable that the mine strike/casevac stand is an exact situation my company found itself in during Op Herrick 6. The traumatic amputation to the lower leg and casevac by helicopter was the almost exact situation where Pte Matt Woolard lost his leg on 3 May 07. Pte Davitt, my patrol medic, was involved in the incident and could draw on his experience of this

when carrying out the stand. There is no better example of the patrol's relevance to current operational environments needed. **If anything you can test more core infantry skills in the 48 hour Cambrian Patrol than is achieved in a two week OPTAG confirmatory exercise prior to an operational tour.**

During my time in Afghanistan I conducted reconnaissance's, wrote countless patrol reports, had the incident involved above, patrolled for large distances with heavy combat loads, did mortar fire control and casevacs. These were all involved on the patrol and I would wholeheartedly recommend anyone about to go on Op Herrick or Telic to take part in the Cambrian Patrol.

5. **Summary.** The Cambrian Patrol is rightly respected internationally but it must not be seen as a competition with the aim to get a gold medal but rather a tool for Commanding Officers to test his best soldiers prior to operational deployments. I can certainly vouch for the patrol's relevance to today's operational environment.