

## **INTERIM REPORT ON THE COLONEL'S FUND GRENADEER GUARDS AS AT 31 DEC 12**

The Colonel's Fund continues to be supervised by a Steering Committee on behalf of the Regimental Trustees. The Steering Committee reviews the Fund's activities on a regular basis, whilst day to day management is carried out by the Director of Welfare and the Regimental Welfare Committee.

The Fund remains busy. During 2012, donations have continued to come in with many individuals contributing. Their generosity is very much appreciated. As at 31 Dec 12, the fund had raised £2,101,183 and had spent £662,228.

Since the fund was launched in 2007, the MOD has greatly improved its support to injured servicemen and the advent of the Army Recovery Capability and Personnel Recovery Units have been very welcome. In addition, the creation of the H4H Operational Fund, administered by the ABF "The Soldier's Charity", has meant that most of the needs of injured servicemen are increasingly well met. These two factors have enabled the Colonel's Fund to focus more on families of the injured and bereaved families, as well as continuing to provide support to injured Grenadiers.

In June, Andy Hill, the Regimental Casualty Officer (RCO) left to fulfil a long term ambition to become a policeman. He was replaced by Matt Ellmer, a former Colour Sergeant in the Regiment and with a background in welfare support. His responsibilities continue to be:

- To ensure that the Regiment is involved at every stage of a wounded Grenadier's rehabilitation. He monitors their Individual Recovery Pathway (IRP) to ensure that they have access to the key services and resources required to help them, either to return to duty, or to make a smooth transition into an appropriately skilled civilian life. This involves:
  - Maintaining a strong working relationship with the 1st Battalion's Unit Welfare Officer (UWO).
  - Developing a network of serving and retired Grenadiers, charities and the commercial sector in order to identify sources of support and employment.
  - Drawing on the Colonel's Fund to give financial assistance in providing advice, welfare, and benevolence quickly to the point of need.
  - Co-ordinating holiday offers, sporting and adventure training opportunities and other generous offers of help, all of which are geared to aiding recovery.
  - Effective mentoring and being a dedicated and trusted ally, who will help individuals explore new ideas for the future.
  - Constantly being alert for opportunities to upgrade Individual Recovery Plans (IRPs) with practical and financial help from either the Colonel's Fund or the ABF Operational Fund. Examples of this are the provision of funding for training courses, specialist orthopaedic beds, exercise bikes and light weight wheelchairs.
  - Providing the reassurance that wounded Grenadiers have the full support of the Regiment behind them, and highlighting the benefits that this brings. This bespoke support helps build self-esteem, mental strength and resourcefulness at times when individuals may be feeling low or depressed.
- To provide support to bereaved families. Initially managed by the Unit Welfare Officer (UWO), at an appropriate time, the families become the responsibility of the RCO to give the enduring Regimental support for as long as they wish for it. The ghastliness of bereavement and the stress for families coping with the serious injuries of their sons or husbands takes a huge toll. The RCO co-ordinates all our efforts to alleviate the stresses and strains to these families. This involves:

- Acting as a Regimental point of contact, offering reassurance, giving confidential advice, mentoring, and actively seeking opportunities for their lives to be enhanced as they recover from their loss.
- Assisting families in a myriad of ways, supported by appropriate financial assistance from the Colonel's Fund. A "nothing is too much trouble" approach from all Grenadiers has helped to build a strong connection with the families concerned for which they often express their gratitude. We are proud to have them continue as members of the Regimental family.

In addition to funding the work of the RCO and providing financial support to those who need it, The Colonel's Fund continues to offer:

- Free financial advice by professional Financial Advisers for those in receipt of large sums from compensation and insurance.
- Holidays for those who have been seriously wounded and their close families, and for the close families of those who were killed, in order to give them the opportunity to recharge their batteries.

There remains the as yet unknown toll of mental casualties. In 2012 we have seen the first cases of PTSD and the Colonel's Fund has been able to offer support to those suffering from it. The major challenge remains that of discovering who is suffering mental problems in the first place, so that help and support can be offered.

In its recent tour, the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion suffered the loss of 5 Grenadiers who were killed and 46 battle casualties of which at least 12 suffered "life-changing" injuries. The courage, dignity, stoicism and humour of the injured, their families and the bereaved families in the face of such adversity continues to be truly humbling.

In the Autumn of 2012, the idea emerged for a major fund-raising initiative, the Wellington to Waterloo (W2W) Bicycle Ride. The aim is for 300 riders, largely drawn from the Regimental Family, to ride from Wellington Barracks to Waterloo in Belgium over a three day period and to raise in excess of £300k for the Fund, net of all costs.

You can remain confident that the Regiment is continuing to provide the appropriate support whenever and wherever it is needed, and in doing so, is upholding its great traditions.