

REPORT ON THE COLONEL'S FUND GRENADIER GUARDS AS AT 31 DEC 17

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 basic thrust of this year's report remains the same as for 2016 because the work that is being done, the challenges faced and the support offered have hardly changed.

The Fund remains busy. During 2017, donations have continued to come in with many individuals contributing. Their generosity is very much appreciated. As at 31 Dec 17, the fund had raised £3,980,061 (including investment income) and had spent £1,543,100.

The Colonel's Fund continues to focus on providing support to injured Grenadiers and their families as well as our bereaved families.

There has been an increasing incidence of cases of Grenadiers with mental difficulties arising from their service, both in Afghanistan and other past conflicts; however, there are likely to be many other cases that have not yet "come to light". We have at least 4 very serious cases of PTSD, and it has become clear that the National Health Services lacks the capability to offer these individuals the complex treatment that they need to make them well again. We are continuing to use a specialist trauma consultant to help with our severe cases, whilst also trying to 'sign-post' less severe cases into the NHS system which has recently been overhauled and now needs to be made to work.

Matt Ellmer, the Regimental Casualty Officer, continues to do a sterling job providing welfare support to over 63 seriously wounded Grenadiers and 16 bereaved families. His responsibilities remain:

- 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. The 16 bereaved families are 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.

The Regiment continues to provide the appropriate support to its wounded and bereaved whenever and wherever it is needed, and in doing so, is upholding its great traditions.