

13 May 19

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Copies to:

CO's GSU, 33 & 35

Debden Parish Council Meeting Wed 15 May 19 - Carver Barracks Wimbish Update.

1. It is my pleasure to update you all on Carver Barracks Wimbish (CBW) on behalf of Lt Col George Cormack RE, Commanding Officer (CO) of 29 EOD&S Group Support Unit (GSU), the CO of 33 Engr Regt (EOD&S), Lt Col Sam Stuthridge OBE RE and Acting/CO 35 Engr Regt (EOD&S) Maj Chris Mitchell RE. New CO 35 Lt Col James Cackett RE is due to arrive in July
2. I am happy to take any questions at the end and to clarify any abbreviations or acronyms that I may slip in unknowingly.
3. **Operational Tempo.** All 3 Units continue to provide specialist EOD & Search support across defence to a myriad of military and Other Government departments as well as to our international allies and partners. We have Officers and Soldiers committed at varying degrees of Readiness ranging from 1 hour's Notice To Move (NTM) to 30 days NTM for the majority.
4. **UK Ops.** Are predominantly the preserve of GSU and include support to dealing with legacy Air Dropped Weapons as well as supporting the Home Office as part of the UK's Technical Response Force (TRF) by providing specialists to deal with "Dirty Bombs" and IED tasks alike.
5. **Overseas Ops.** Both 33 & 35 have their troops supporting a number of enduring High Readiness Units, pan Army, and consistently have Short Term Training Teams deployed on enduring Operations all over the world ranging from Africa, Middle East, Eastern Europe, Falkland Islands, Canada and the Americas. The tour lengths can range from 1 week up to 4 months.
6. **Firm base.** A key activity my team within the GSU carries out is the continued support primarily to the Units at CBW but also where we can to the 2 other Units within 29 EOD&S Gp, namely 11 EOD&S Regt Royal Logistic Corps (RLC), based at Didcot and to 1 Military Working Dogs (MWD) based at North Luffenham. This support comes in many guises but primarily consists of the following:
 - a. **Equipment support.** We provide the key personnel and equipment that repairs and maintains the vast fleet and array of light and heavy vehicles used across the Group.
 - b. **Personnel support.** The pay, administration and general wellbeing of our soldiers is taken care of by our Clerks and Civil Servants in order to allow our Troops to focus on their Missions in the comfort that all is well and being looked after on the home front.
 - c. **Welfare support.** The families and dependants of our troops often need our support whilst their loved ones are deployed, and we have a team that can assist in their hour of need. Notably, the Army is making great strides into the provision of Mental Health training, education and support. CBW are at the forefront of this initiative.
7. **The local shop.** Previously situated next to the Welfare Facility, the shop is now closed, and all trading takes place in the internal shop on camp. This allows better use by the single soldiers on site. Married personal and dependants can also enter camp to use the facility, though unfortunately due to security reasons sadly this option is not open to the public or local community.
8. **The Post Office.** As you will all know this has now been closed for a year or so and all CBW military personnel and their families now use either Debden village, Thaxted or Saffron Walden Post Offices instead. This is unlikely to change in the near future.
9. **New Sub-Units.** The site continues to grow in size and on 1 Apr 19, 15 Fd Sqn (EOD&S) was established which will see an increase of approx 90 additional personnel to the site. Currently CBW is established for 1,061 personnel (as at Jul 20) but with current retention and recruiting

issues we believe this we will remain around the 800 mark for the next couple of years. No new buildings are funded or expected so we are currently making efficiencies and best use of what areas and work spaces we currently have. The camp still remains due for closure in 2031.

10. **Married Quarters.** MQ's remain extremely tight within CBW and of the 216 houses available only 12 remain unoccupied, though are ready to be filled. With the extra soldiers due on site with the formation of 15 Fd Sqn (EOD&S), it is anticipated that these will shortly be filled. We still retain 40 houses at Wethersfield of which 32 are currently occupied. We have requested an increase of 20-30 houses at Wethersfield to support the anticipated increase of personnel to site over the next year. Notably, our Messes are also at capacity and we do therefore have a number of our personnel living off base in private hiring's in and around the local surrounding areas.

11. **Sports Village Project update.** The project is very much alive, and funds are available. The designs and contractual arrangements are sat with the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) who will manage the project. There is no confirmed time frame currently but there is a must for the project to be completed by early 2021. Works have already now started with some ground clearance having now taken place, which was done in accordance with the UDC planning permissions and conditions.

12. **Back Door Training Area (BDTA).** The BDTA continues to be a hive of activity with over 20 clubs/schools/organisations regularly using it. The "woodland walk" continues to be used by families and the local community alike and remains a popular pace to visit. I would remind you that due to the BDTA fencing being porous the Head of Establishment (CO GSU) is aware that members of the community do go on to it. Clearly, Health and Safety is the number 1 priority of the site and the HoE so we do ask of you that if you are unsure about what is taking place you should contact the GSU Clerk, Mrs Siobhan Farley on Tel: 01223 203652 if you have any queries or want to make any enquiries about the BDTA or the use of the gym facilities on CBW. Final plea is that you "Do not enter when Red flags are flying".

13. **Wildlife Events on the BDTA.** These below dates are open to all and if interested please contact Siobhan. Key dates are as follows:

- a. 1st Friday of the month from 1930 hrs moth trapping
- b. 5th April 1930 hrs moth trapping and deploying bat detector
- c. 3rd May 1930 hrs moth trapping and deploying bat detector
- d. 6th June [1030](#) hrs Essex Field Club visit
- e. 7th June 1930 hrs moth trapping
- f. 5th July 1930 hrs moth trapping and deploying bat detector
- g. 6th July [1030](#) hrs Essex Field Club visit
- h. 2nd August 1930 hrs moth trapping
- i. 29th August [1030](#) hrs Essex Field club visit
- j. 6th September 1930 hrs moth trapping
- k. 26th September [1030](#) hrs Essex Field Club visit
- l. 4th October 1930 hrs moth trapping
- m. 1st November 1930 hrs moth trapping.
- n. 6th December 1930 hrs moth trapping

14. **Armd Forces Day - 29 Jun 19.** Due to the significant changes still underway at CBW there will be no Open Day this year however all 3 Units from Carver Barracks will be taking part in [Armd Forces Day on the 29 June 19](#) with a parade through the town and an event on the common. We look forward to seeing you all there to show your support to our soldiers at this event.

15. **Summary.** All 3 Units at CBW remain thankful to you and the wider community for your continued support and for making us all feel very welcome within the community. We continue to look forward to working and living alongside you all and for your continued support to raising money for the "[Felix Fund](#)" which supports our injured soldiers and families alike.

Maj J Spreadborough RE
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for CO GSU