



# British and Indian Armies Work Side by Side

**B**ritish and Indian Army troops joined forces to share their knowledge and expertise in a “hugely beneficial” exercise, in order to enhance combat tactics on both sides.

Exercise Ajeya Warrior is held in the UK and India alternately every two years, with the aim of pooling together ideas, enhancing interoperability and developing army-to-army links.

This year’s exercise was held in December at the Mahajan Ranges, in Rajasthan, and involved the 20th Battalion of the Rajputana Rifles and the 1st Battalion the Royal Anglian Regiment (aka the Vikings).

The exercise began with troops participating in a series of familiarisation stands, lectures and physical training activities. From getting to know one another’s kit and equipment, to understanding each other’s experiences and tactics on operations, the exercise provided an excellent platform to learn from each other.

Integration was top of the agenda, with troops from both sides working together in mixed companies on challenging live firing tests, which tested their abilities and stamina.

Company Commander of B (Suffolk) Company of the Vikings said: “Exercise Ajeya Warrior has been a unique and hugely beneficial experience for us. The hospitality shown by our friends in the Indian Army has been first class, and we are very grateful for the opportunity to work so closely together.

“The ethos, culture and professionalism in our two armies is extremely similar, allowing us to form a very effective partnership on this exercise. I have no doubt that we would do likewise in the future if we were called upon to fight side-by-side in defence our two peoples and the democratic values we share.”

The exercise was bookended with official ceremonies, but the pinnacle was an exercise based on a cordon and search operation. Both sets of troops used the lessons learnt over the previous 10 days and from their combined combat experiences to execute a successful operation.

Both sides also played each other in basketball, football, volleyball and cricket – and, befitting of England’s current Ashes struggles in Australia, the Vikings narrowly lost a highly contested but enjoyable game.

The UK Defence Advisor to New Delhi, Brigadier Mark Goldsack CBE, said: “Our armies have shared histories, shared values and standards and common goals. We face the same sets of threats, so opportunities like this are important for mutual understanding and for developing our ability to operate together. These events are the embodiment of the living bridge between UK and India.”

The UK and India hold bilateral exercises across all three services: the Royal Navy and Indian Navy partake in Exercise KONKAN which occurs annually in alternate locations, while the Royal Airforce and Indian Airforce partake in Exercise INDRADANUSH every two years, again in alternate locations. ■

