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SOLDIER

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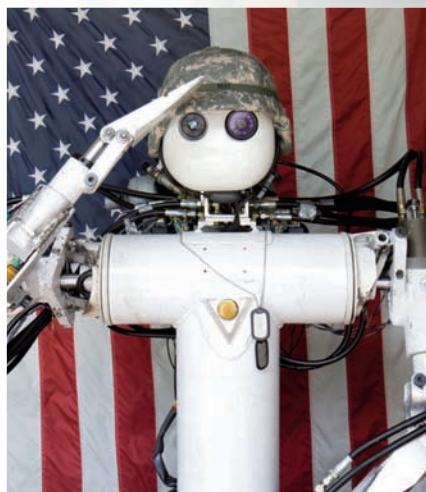
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FREE STUFF . . . get your hands on a copy of James Holland's Second World War novel *The Odin Mission*, bank yourself £100 (Page 63), kit yourself out with techno goggles and IT gadgets (Page 67), take home gambling scam flick *21* on Blu-ray – and a Sony Blu-ray player to watch it on (Page 77), wield your lightsabre on gaming consoles (Page 79), and laugh it up with Eddy Nugent's biography *Picking up the Brass* (Page 83).



Cover picture (left): Next generation of battlefield bots debut on operations as the military manoeuvres into undiscovered technological territory. See Pages 45-51 Picture: Vecna Technologies

Background image: British troops fight under the Canadian prairies to prepare for operations. See Pages 25-27

Picture: Graeme Main





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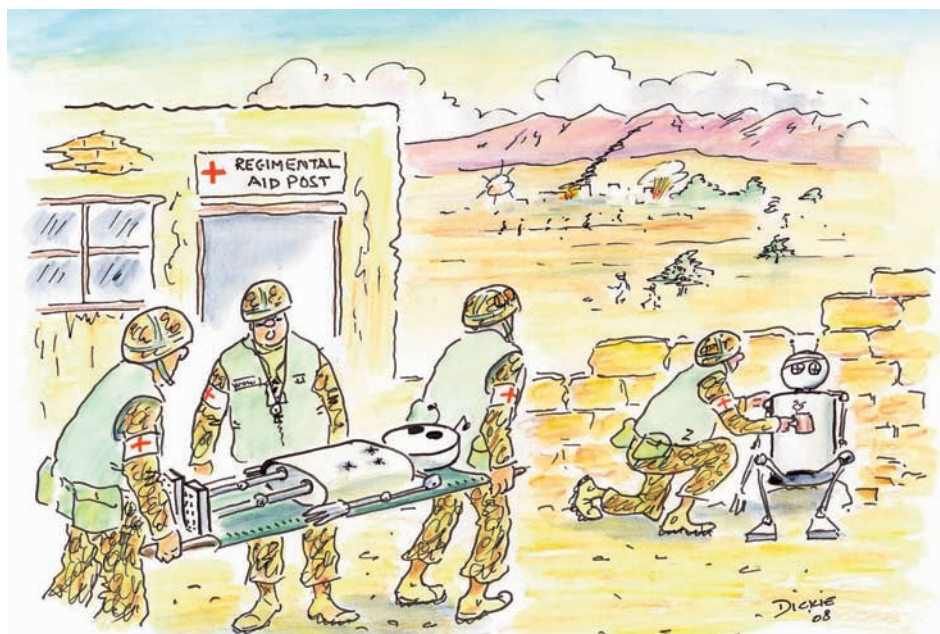
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"The second today – it's back to the drawing board for someone I fear, Jenkins."

● Bear necessities – Pages 48-51

Star innovators, not Terminators

THERE is little doubt at *Soldier* HQ that, for a few, first sight of this issue of the British Army's official magazine will have been the moment shock and awe turned to shock and horror.

Not only does this month's front cover fly a foreign flag, albeit one from a close ally, but it sports a cheeky US robot and opens its pages to the tricky, and often shunned, world of technology.

But pause your audible gasps, shut your eyes and think of England long enough to fast forward to the first feature, and you will be relieved to read that a dramatic rescue in southern Afghanistan would not have happened without the seamless synchronisation of American military technology with the depth of human skill and endeavour from a British Army pilot (Pages 19-21).

Whether technophobe or technophile, few of us can put our hands up and say we can live happily ever after without our mobile phones and HD 42-inch screen TVs. For British soldiers fighting on the front line, their lives depend on the latest innovations dreamt up by the lab rats that we all poked fun at in our dreaded physics lessons. It is the weird, not-of-this-planet dreams that seed the ideas for technology which only the bravest of boffins believe can be engineered into reality.

A young girl was so inspired by the

intergalactic adventure dreamt up by George Lucas that, 30 years after *Star Wars* blasted onto the silver screen, she develops robots to stand between soldiers and bombs (Pages 45-47).

Back to the *Stars and Stripes* adorning the cover, in the world of science and technology everyone speaks the same coded languages of engineering and mathematics. Fighting a global war on terror needs global partnerships but the Brits continue to hold their own at the top of the life-saving innovation medals table. A cutting-edge "sim city" on the Canadian prairies prepares troops for the realities of urban fighting (Pages 25-27) and a novel smart bomb that will provide super-sized top cover (Pages 28-29), drive the techno-revolution forward.

Not even Hollywood could woo footballer-turned-actor Vinnie Jones away from his proud British roots, as he was right behind his teenage son's decision to join up for Queen and country (Pages 37-39).

Of course, caution should be exercised when exulting the great god of technology. Capt Al Heathcote (HCR) trained for selection onto the eight-man Olympic silver medal-winning rowing team on just a rusty old ergo in Basra (Page 88).

Proof that sophisticated machines are still no match for human guts, resourcefulness and ingenuity. ■

**'A global war
on terror
needs global
partnerships'**

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Picture: Sgt Anthony Boocock RLC

Cold courage: British troops working from Forward Operating Base Inkerman have been enduring tense and often violent forays into Helmand's badlands

Defending the line

Para patrols turn tables on Taliban as they venture into Sangin Valley bandit zone

BATTLE-hardened soldiers based in the badlands of Afghanistan's Helmand province have been involved in daily clashes with the Taliban.

According to reports from the front line, troops from the 2nd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment at Forward Operating Base Inkerman in the Upper Sangin Valley have been engaging enemy fighters on "eight out of every ten" patrols mounted.

But despite sustaining casualties, commanders are confident that the Taliban are coming off worse, claiming that the British soldiers are inflicting heavy losses on the insurgents.

Maj Russell Lewis, OC B Company, said: "I think we are achieving our objectives and over the last two months that has become obvious.

"We lost three soldiers to a suicide bomber and immediately after the event it was incredibly hard.

"But what was amazing was how quickly people dealt with it, as individuals or in groups."

Platoon commander Lt Wes Smart added: "Fear lives in every man and

dealing with that is part of soldiering. It is a cold courage that the boys display every time they step out on patrol."

In addition to the frequent firefights, the paratroopers at Inkerman are having to endure sparse living conditions.

Although the remote outpost, where Capt David Hicks (1 R Anglian) won a posthumous Military Cross for his ac-

tions during a huge Taliban assault last year, boasts weight-training facilities and a number of games consoles, the soldiers sleep on cot beds and only have solar showers to keep clean. Pte Martin Smith admitted living conditions were tough, but said morale was bolstered by goodies sent from home by individuals, Help for Heroes and Provision for Paras.

MoD probes civilian deaths

AN INVESTIGATION is under way after an incident involving British troops claimed the lives of three Afghan civilians.

A woman and two children died and a further four people were injured when UK Forces fired rockets at Taliban fighters in the Sangin area of Helmand province.

A statement issued by the MoD confirmed that soldiers were unaware civilians had been so close to the enemy fighters they had been engaging.

The statement added that the troops from the 2nd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment had been attempting to defend themselves

against Taliban fighters who had taken cover in a compound.

Lt Col David Reynolds, spokesman for Task Force Helmand, paid his respects to the families who had lost loved ones.

He said: "This was a tragic accident. A family member can never be replaced and it is always painful when civilians, particularly women and children, are involved. While it is unclear exactly what caused their death, an investigation is under way. Taliban fighters were in the area and showed a total disregard for the presence of civilians near them."

Paras stay focused as two die in blasts

Comrades pay tribute to weapons artificer and scout killed in contacts with Taliban

SOLDIERS serving with The Parachute Regiment have pledged to press on with their mission in Afghanistan's Helmand province despite the deaths of two much-respected friends and colleagues.

Cpl Jason Barnes, of the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers and attached to 2 Para, was killed on the evening of July 22 when the ambulance he was driving was caught in an explosion near Kajaki.

Pte Peter Cowton, 2 Para, died in a blast a week later. He had been involved in a mission to push the Taliban back from Forward Operating Base Gibraltar.

According to reports, Cpl Barnes was returning to base after he had successfully assisted in the evacuation of a casualty injured in an earlier action.

While the 25-year-old armourer's main role was to maintain the company's weapons, he often drove an ambulance in support of colleagues involved in ops.



● Cpl Jason Barnes



● Pte Peter Cowton

Exeter-born Cpl Barnes joined the Army in 1999 and had already served in Iraq. He arrived on attachment with 2 Para in February and, within weeks, had deployed on Op Herrick.

Pte Cowton initially joined the Territorial Army, signing up with the Royal Rifle Volunteers in 2004 and completing two tours of Iraq, before enlisting with 2 Para last year.

Remembered by senior officers as a "lynchpin", Pte Cowton was a lead scout

in Afghanistan – a role usually reserved for much older soldiers with many years of experience.

The Basingstoke-born Para had quickly gained the respect of commanders and colleagues for his courage and had been moving to suppress the enemy when he was killed.

Lt Col Joe O'Sullivan, CO of 2 Para, remembered Pte Cowton as a loyal and highly professional soldier.

He stressed: "He was a remarkable man because he knew, as every member of the battlegroup knows, what he was risking and yet he still chose to face a dangerous enemy."

Turning to Cpl Barnes, Lt Col O'Sullivan said the NCO had behaved with selfless courage. "He died helping others when he could have taken an easier path, and in doing so demonstrated the commitment and bloody-minded determination that runs so deeply through the battalion," he added.

Afghan mission claims 'outstanding' stalwarts

FRIENDS have been paying tribute to a highly professional young soldier who was killed during the final week of his tour in the Afghan capital of Kabul.

Sig Wayne Bland, of 16 Signal Regiment, was providing top-cover on a route familiarisation move when his convoy came under contact on August 11.

The convoy was hit by a vehicle-borne IED, which injured Sig Bland and two others. All were treated in hospital but the 21-year-old died of his wounds.

Sig Bland joined his regiment in September 2006. The soldier, from Leeds, had worked for six months helping to transport VIPs around Kabul.

Leading the tributes, Lt Col Justin Hodges, commanding officer of the regiment, confirmed that Sig Bland had been in the last week of his tour.

He said: "Sig Bland was a superb soldier, full of character and highly popular.

"His death is a huge tragedy but he was a committed soldier who understood the risks and the importance of his work, as do his friends and every soldier in the regiment. We will always remember him with



● Sig Wayne Bland



● Cpl Barry Dempsey

pride both as a friend and as a professional Royal Signals soldier."

The CO of Kabul Garrison, Lt Col Charlie Lambert (Scots DG), also praised Sig Bland's dedication.

He said: "He applied all his training to great effect and was an integral part of a team that was, on more than one occasion, singled out for their professionalism."

● AN "outstanding man and excellent medic" who died in an explosion in Helmand had helped to save many lives during his tour, commanders have said.

Cpl Barry Dempsey, of the 2nd Battalion,

The Royal Regiment of Scotland, was working with the Afghan National Army when he was killed by an IED in the Gereshk area on August 18.

The team dismounted near Forward Operating Base Attal when the bomb detonated. Three other personnel, including an interpreter, were injured.

A father-of-two, Cpl Dempsey was attached to the 1st Battalion, The Royal Irish Regiment. He had proved to be an exceptional medic during his tour in Afghanistan.

Originally from Ayrshire, the NCO joined The Royal Highland Fusiliers in 1998 and spent the majority of his career as a medic at the regimental aid post.

Lt Col Nick Borton, commanding officer of 2 Scots, remembered the 29-year-old as a dedicated and skilled soldier who was devoted to his wife and family.

Lt Col Borton said: "He was a competent medic. He loved his regiment, but he was above all a dedicated family man."

The CO of 1 R Irish in Afghanistan, Lt Col Ed Freely, praised Cpl Dempsey's contribution to Op Herrick and for saving the lives of Afghan soldiers and civilians.



Picture: Sgt Anthony Boscack RLC

Fighting spirit: British Forces have been continuing to make a dent in the Taliban's capability with ongoing operations in Afghanistan's Helmand province. Senior officers are convinced that actions, such as surgical strikes against three insurgent leaders, have made a "noticeable difference" in the enemy's ability to hit Nato forces. An Army spokesman said: "It is more difficult for them to strike us and we have found them to be lacking strategic direction." Pictured are LCpl John Dippnall (right) and Pte Dean Rees of the 2nd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment, assisting in the clearing of a compound in the Upper Sangin Valley.

Soldiers mourned

Troops remember dog handler and police mentor who gave all in pursuit of peace

COMMANDERS and colleagues of a promising young dog handler killed on the front line of southern Afghanistan have described him as a "rising star".

LCpl Kenneth Rowe, of the Royal Army Veterinary Corps, had been on a search operation with canine companion Sasha during an operation in northern Helmand when there was a contact with the Taliban.

Both LCpl Rowe and Sasha were killed in the attack, which took place on the evening of July 24. The Golden Labrador was the first dog to be killed on ops in Afghanistan and Iraq.

A much-respected NCO, LCpl Rowe deployed to Afghanistan with 16 Air Assault Brigade in March and was attached to the 2nd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment. He had been based at Forward Operating Base Inkerman when he lost his life.

The 24-year-old, who was from Newcastle, joined the Army in 2005 and quickly established himself as a high-calibre soldier.

In Afghanistan the NCO had been working with patrols to identify hostile stocks of weapons and explosives and was recognised by officers as "never failing to deliver". Capt Martyn Thomp-



● Sgt Mathews



● LCpl Kenneth Rowe

son, OC Theatre Military Working Dog Support Unit (Army), described LCpl Rowe's enthusiastic and engaging personality as "infectious".

And Maj Stuart McDonald, officer commanding B Coy, 2 Para, praised LCpl Rowe's commitment and determination. The OC said: "He was scheduled to leave FOB Inkerman on July 23, but was concerned about the lack of explosives search cover and lobbied his unit to allow him to stay.

"This unselfish action epitomised his professionalism and dedication."

● A GIFTED soldier who was killed while defending Afghan forces would "go anywhere to help anyone".

Sgt Jonathan Mathews, of the 4th Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland,

was fatally wounded on July 28 helping to protect Afghan forces near the district of Lashkar Gar.

The 35-year-old NCO, who was originally from Edinburgh and married with a daughter and stepson, was hit by a single shot as he moved to investigate reports of Taliban fighters. He later died from his injuries.

Sgt Mathews was attached to the 1st Battalion, The Royal Irish Regiment Battlegroup, and had been working as a mentor to the Afghan National Army.

Lt Col Jamie Campbell, CO of 4 Scots, praised the NCO's determination to make a difference. He said: "He always led from the front, inspiring others to follow and with his operational background he was ideally suited to the demands of Helmand.

"He was courageous, reliable to the core and loyal. His love of soldiering could never be matched by his devotion to his wife and children."

After enlisting in the Army in 1993, Sgt Mathews accrued significant operational experience in Northern Ireland, Bosnia and Kosovo as well as serving as a recruit instructor at the Infantry Training Centre in Catterick.

Friend Sgt Rab McEwan said Sgt Mathews death was a devastating blow.

UNDER Big Ben

A digest of what is being said on Army matters in Parliament

Ainsworth speaks of 'uplifting' Telic tour

BRITISH soldiers on the latest Op Telic tour are operating "at their very best" according to Armed Forces Minister Bob Ainsworth.

During a busy two-day visit to Basra, Mr Ainsworth met soldiers from the 7th Armoured Brigade as well as having discussions with Gen Aziz, Commander of the Iraqi Army 14th Division.

The Minister said: "This has been my third visit to Iraq, and in many ways it has been the most interesting and uplifting. There is a level of confidence in the Iraqi military that I have not seen before.

"Basra can be what it has been at times in history – one of the great commercial centres of the Middle East," he added.

Heroin hit: British troops have doubled the number of poppy-free provinces in Afghanistan, but will prioritise fighting the Taliban over eradicating drugs. In response to a question from Islington North MP Jeremy Corbyn, Prime Minister Gordon Brown said troops would continue to fight the war on opium, but stressed that clamping down on the insurgents and Al-Qaeda remained the top objective.

Foreign fighters: The Army does not rely too heavily on foreign and Commonwealth soldiers despite an increase in their numbers, Mr Ainsworth told The Commons. Responding to a question from Pendle MP Gordon Prentice, the Armed Forces Minister said: "We have traditionally recruited from many parts of the world, including parts of Africa and Fiji – I do not think anybody thinks that we ought to pull back from them."

Getting a lift: The MoD intends to spend £6 billion to enhance the Armed Forces helicopter fleet over the next ten years, Defence Secretary Des Browne has announced. He told the Commons that helicopter flying hours had risen by a third since March 2007.

Allowance apologies

Officials use *Soldier* to brief ranks on pay issue

MILITARY chiefs have engaged *Soldier* to apologise to troops after admitting that an error in allowance payments may have left personnel from all three Services having to repay thousands of pounds.

Senior officers contacted the magazine on discovering there had been a "number of potential overpayments" in operational allowances after information was duplicated, and stressed that there would be help for affected personnel.

The input of troop details during the transition from old systems to the new Joint Personnel Administration scheme is largely being blamed for the bonus mix-up, which is believed to affect up to 4,300 soldiers.

According to staff working on JPA, out-of-date data has caused several problems within the system and last summer a team was set-up specifically to deal with this issue.

Col Danny McCulloch, responsible for JPA at the Army's Directorate of Staff and Personnel Support, admitted overpayments could vary between small amounts and as much as £2,500.

But he emphasised that those affected would not be required to repay large

lump sums, and individual terms would be agreed with the soldiers concerned.

Measures would also be put in place to stop any overpayments being repeated.

Col McCulloch said: "Details of all those who may be affected have been sent to unit human resources staff, who have been asked to investigate each case.

"If an overpayment has been made, the individuals concerned will be interviewed and the options for repayment of the amount in question will be explained to them.

"The regulations covering the Minimum Drawing Rates, ensuring individuals receive at least 50 per cent of their net pay, will apply and this will ensure that personnel are not required to repay large debts in one lump sum."

However Col McCulloch said anyone wishing to repay in full immediately could do so while unit staff would explain the appeals process to those who objected to the recovery of the cash from their account.

"This error will inevitably cause distress and this is deeply regretted," he concluded. "However the chain of command and unit staff will provide all necessary support in resolving this matter."

Basra base strikes tailing off

MORTAR and rocket attacks against British troops at the Contingency Operating Base in Basra have tailed off in the wake of successes against rogue militias.

As this issue went to press, indirect fire attack sirens had only sounded once in two weeks and that warning turned out to be a false alarm.

Commanders are now confident the situation will continue to improve in Basra city, which has been seeing increased peace and prosperity in recent months.

Speaking from the COB, British Army spokesman Capt Crispin Fordham told *Soldier* that IDF attacks had dwindled following the clampdown against insurgents during the Iraqi-led Operation Charge of the Knights.

He said: "For the moment, the incoming

rockets and mortar bombs have completely stopped, and obviously that is very good news for everyone.

"The situation in Basra city remains very positive and a million times better than before. Reconstruction projects that had stalled have now resumed.

"Work is now under way again on a children's hospital that had come to a halt and there has also been progress with work at Umm Qasr Port."

Capt Fordham added that "the bulk" of the 7th Armoured Brigade – now mid-way through its Op Telic tour – was devoted to mentoring Iraqi Security Forces.

As previously reported in *Soldier*, British troops have been embedded with counterparts from the 14th Division of the Iraqi Army in their Basra bases.



Picture: Cpl Dan Bardsley RLC

Back on the streets: Mentor Maj Bev Allen (2 R Anglian) speaks to Iraqi Lt Col Muhsen during a joint patrol of Basra city with the Iraqi Army 14th Division

Peace process

Time will soon be right for mission change in Iraq, claims senior officer

RECENT improvements to the security situation in Basra could create conditions for “a fundamental mission change”, the outgoing British commander in the region has said.

Talking to reporters, Maj Gen Barney White-Spunner said the UK was close to achieving its objectives as Iraqis made progress with their own security.

He believed a crackdown against rogue militias in Basra had paid off, and that growing peace and prosperity meant the future was bright.

But the MoD has played down reports in some quarters of the media which speculated that the British mission would draw down significantly next year.

The Department said it was too early to predict what form the British presence would take, although Prime Minister Gordon Brown had pledged “a fundamental change”.

Speaking as he handed over to his successor, Maj Gen Andy Salmon (Royal Marines), Maj Gen White-Spunner was in a confident mood about the future.

He predicted that the conditions

would be right to make changes to the mission profile.

Maj Gen White-Spunner said: “The UK is getting close to what we set out to achieve. I think there will be a fundamental mission change.

“Troop numbers will be tailored to what that mission is – as security improves, and as the Iraqi Security Forces

improve their capabilities, there is scope for troop numbers to be reviewed.”

The senior officer said that the days of militia control were over, adding: “There will always be violent extremists but they won’t succeed because, with the Iraqi forces, we’re building a counter-terrorist structure that will be proof against them.”

Border enforcers take shape

IRAQ’S increasingly confident security forces have reached another milestone with the opening of a new HQ for the Department of Border Enforcement.

The new British-funded facility in Basra is kitted out with a state-of-the-art operations room and accommodation for the border guards based there.

Opened with a parade attended by Army VIPs and Iraqi dignitaries, the base will also be linked with the ops centre at the former Shatt al Arab hotel.

The border guards, who have responsibility for the city’s airport as well as its frontiers with neighbouring countries, are key to security.

Maj Gen Barney White-Spunner, the outgoing GOC of Iraq’s Multi-National Division (South East), said the new base was a huge step forward. He said: “The Iraqi Army and Police consolidate the security of Basra from within, but it is the Department for Border Enforcement that will secure against threats from outside.”

IN BRIEF

● A ROYAL Military Police investigation has been launched into the circumstances surrounding the death of a young soldier from heatstroke. Maj Gen Andrew Gregory, the Army's Director General of Personnel, said the probe would examine whether there had been any breaches of military law relating to the incident.

Two serving soldiers and a former soldier were cleared of Pte Williams' manslaughter at Winchester Crown Court on July 31. Maj Gen Gregory said a decision would be made on whether to take action after the RMP's examination of the matter.

● AN officer who has dedicated almost half a century to serving his country retires from the Intelligence Corps this month. Maj John Hamill (3 (V) MI Bn) joined the Army as a boy soldier and began his 47 years of service as a Regular with The Middlesex Regiment.

During a career that took him to British Guyana and Northern Ireland, he was singled out for promotion and made the rank of warrant officer by the age of 27.

Maj Hamill left the Regulars in 1986 but immediately signed on with the TA. He admitted: "I'd recommend the Army as a career, as I've had such a tremendous time."

● THE CO of the Army's OPTAG training package will be the special guest at an event to raise funds for Forces mental health charity Combat Stress.

Col Richard Westley will speak during an evening of entertainment at the *In and Out* venue on London's St James Square on October 24. Event organiser Nicholas Harrison said the Support for Combat Stress function aimed to introduce the charity to a younger generation of backers and raise awareness of modern veterans' issues.

Harrison added: "The London event is part of an ongoing programme, which we hope will help bridge the gap between the civilian and military communities. For more information visit www.supportforcombatstress.com

● WOULD-be soldiers are poised to receive a golden handshake ahead of their military career with the introduction of cash incentives while they study.

The Army Further Education Bursary Scheme, which is aimed at students aged between 16 and 32 taking vocational courses including IT and engineering, will provide successful applicants with a £1,000 per year award for studying and a guaranteed job offer. The scheme, which is being launched at 200 colleges this month, also gives students the valuable services of an Army mentor.

Compassion and courage

Army angel wins Red Cross award for Telic tour

AN "exceptionally gifted nurse" who evacuated patients from her field hospital as it was hit with rockets has been honoured with a top accolade.

Maj Janet Pilgrim (pictured), of the Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps, was awarded the Royal Red Cross, first won by Florence Nightingale, for her care and compassion under fire. The medal is given to military nurses who show exceptional professional competence.

From May to September 2007, Maj Pilgrim, the OC of Basra's hospital squadron, and her staff treated a constant flow of casualties during a period of heavy fighting.

Having completed two previous tours of Iraq, Maj Pilgrim, who was in charge of the day-to-day running of the tented medical facility at the Contingency Operating Base, said her most recent deployment had been testing.

On three occasions her hospital bore the brunt of shrapnel and took a direct hit from a rocket, which cut power and water supplies to the main areas of the facility. Patients and kit had to be evacuated under fire.

"In the process of moving, rockets were still coming in and we were forced to lie down and then continue," Maj Pilgrim recalled. "There was a bomb disposal team in the midst of all this trying to dig a rocket out of the ground."

Maj Pilgrim's citation reads: "Under her charge the hospital became



renowned for compassion, no matter what the circumstances or tempo of operations. Utterly committed as a leader, loved by those she commanded, and exceptionally gifted as a nurse, she was the embodiment of what many aspire to."

But Maj Pilgrim insisted her award was an accolade for her whole team. "It's lovely to get recognition but it's recognition for everyone because you don't work in isolation in a place like Iraq," she concluded.

Troops remember Herrick dead

BRITISH soldiers battling to restore peace to southern Afghanistan took time out of their work to remember three comrades killed on a previous tour.

Troops from 7 Parachute Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery and the Household Cavalry Regiment gathered at a monument in Camp Bastion to reflect on the sacrifices made during 16 Air Assault Brigade's opening foray into Helmand province in 2006.

Capt Alex Eida (7 Para RHA) was killed alongside 2nd Lt Ralph Johnson and LCpl Ross Nicholls (both Life Guards) in a Taliban ambush on August 1 two years ago.

Maj Kevin Fitchett, who is currently in

command of the gunners based at Camp Bastion, laid a wreath at the memorial, which lists the names of all British personnel who have given their lives during the Op Herrick campaign.

He paid tribute to those lost, but stressed that their deaths had not been in vain and that British artillery was continuing to take the fight to the Taliban.

"We are firing our guns a lot closer to where our troops are involved in combat, especially with the guided multiple launch rocket system, which delivers precision artillery exactly where it is needed the most," Maj Fitchett added.



Picture: Jaap Buitendijk

Stellar effort: The winning Saturn makes use of a robot ground vehicle (pictured) plus two unmanned air vehicles to detect threats in urban environments

Robots fight it out

Defence competition prompts a new generation of electronic innovation

FLYING saucers, super buggies and mini-helicopters were among the many innovations unveiled by some of the UK's newest talent at a defence competition in Wiltshire.

Boffins from across education and industry turned out in force for the finals of the MoD Grand Challenge at Copehill Down, Salisbury Plain, showing off prototypes that would not have looked out of place on the set of the new *X-Files* feature film.

The contest, which was launched two years ago, aims to set minds thinking about the military of the future, and the kit soldiers will need serving on the front line of tomorrow.

This year's event saw more than 20 teams tasked with producing robots that could seek out dangers such as lethal vehicle-mounted heavy weapons, insurgent snipers and roadside bombs in volatile urban situations.

Of seven finalists, it was Team Stellar that took the RJ Mitchell trophy for its Saturn innovation. The detection system uses a pair of unmanned air vehicles, an unmanned ground vehicle and a control station fusing visual, thermal and radar sensors. The equipment managed to

identify a range of simulated threats in Copehill Down's training village.

Rivals Team Swarm received the prize for the most innovative idea for a flat, four-bladed helicopter called Owls, designed to be flown en masse and view areas from all angles.

Team Thales was awarded the best use of national talent title for a mini chopper supported by two ground vehicles.

The MoD is now considering if the

technologies can be incorporated into future front-line kit.

Minister for Defence Equipment and Support, Baroness Ann Taylor, said: "The Grand Challenge has proven a showcase for the wealth of talent that exists in the UK, not just in large defence firms, but in universities, schools and even garden sheds."

● Still serving – Page 98

Battling back to peak fitness

SERIOUSLY injured soldiers can now take part in specialist adventurous training and sport as part of an initiative to help speed up their recovery.

Battle Back aims to assist wounded Service personnel to get back to full fitness by encouraging them to take part in adventurous sports such as skiing and sailing.

The aftercare programme was created to help those coming to terms with life-changing injuries by helping them understand what they are still able to achieve.

Battle Back founder Lt Col Fred Hargreaves (R Signals) said he developed the

idea of adaptive sports for the Armed Forces after he saw how popular and effective they were for civilians.

He added: "When you are coming to terms with a life-changing wound, it is vital to understand what you can achieve, focusing on your ability rather than disability, which is fundamental for rehabilitation."

Injured Servicemen are already able to participate in water skiing activities in the UK and Battle Back staff are now organising events in Bavaria and the Himalayas.

● Making waves – Pages 41-43

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Picture: Mike Weston

In a class of their own: Students from the Army Foundation College in Harrogate have been mixing education with military exercises for the past ten years

Birthday honours

Proud troops march to mark Harrogate's decade of education excellence

HUNDREDS of junior soldiers showed their professionalism and polish when they formed up to mark the Army Foundation College's tenth birthday.

Up to 1,000 junior soldiers and their instructors paraded through the streets of Harrogate, where they were applauded by civilian well-wishers and tourists lining the mile-long route. The troops were accompanied by music from the bands

of the Royal Signals and 150 Transport Regiment on the parade, the largest outside of London this year.

The salute was taken outside the town hall by Harrogate Mayor, Cllr John Fox, and Brig David Maddan, who is the senior Army Officer for the northeast.

Soldiers and officers who took part in the event said they were overwhelmed with the positive response from the civilian population.

Army Foundation College Commandant Lt Col Roddy Lee said that the public show of affection had been appreciated and had made the occasion "a memorable day".

Lt Col Lee added: "Our junior soldiers are a part of the local community, often completing parts of their Duke of Edinburgh award scheme in the area, providing help to groups and working on environmental projects.

"In years to come they will also be the soldiers who deploy on operations abroad with their regiments, taking with them the skills and memories they have acquired here."

The Harrogate parade marked the beginning of a string of birthday events for the Army Foundation College, which opened in 1998 after the closure of the Army Apprentice College.

Around 1,300 aspiring soldiers take part in the acclaimed 42-week introductory course every year.

With a broad mix of military, leadership and vocational training offered, students have the opportunity to achieve NVQ qualifications before beginning their phase 2 training.

Aden guardsman repatriated

THE family of a young soldier whose body was recently repatriated to his native Ireland from Yemen were among the guests at a special ceremony to remember those who fell in the Aden campaign.

Irish Guardsman Patrick "Patsy" Corry was killed in an accident along with three colleagues in January 1967 and buried in the British cemetery at Silent Valley.

But following a campaign by his loved ones his body was flown home and reburied in his home town of Dundalk.

The 21-year-old was remembered during a ceremony at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire, when scores

of Aden veterans turned out to salute their fallen comrades.

Paddy McGowan, spokesman for the West Midlands Branch of the Irish Guards Association, was pleased that the young soldier's siblings were present for the act of remembrance.

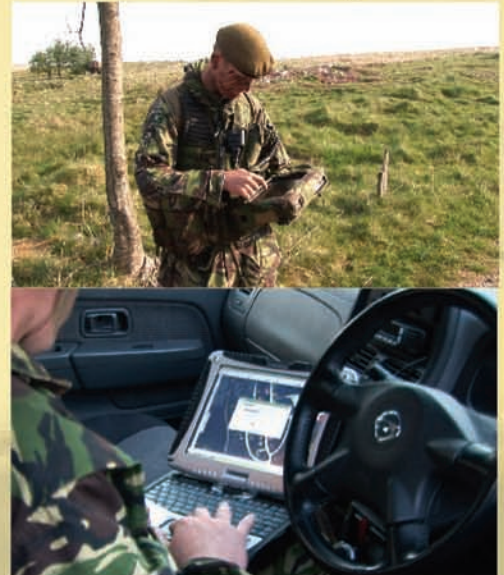
McGowan, who served in Aden from 1966-67 during an Army career spanning more than 20 years, added: "It was great to see several of his family members at our service. Patsy Corry was somebody you came across quite often. He was well liked by everyone and had an absolutely fantastic personality."

● My Army: Vinnie Jones – Pages 37-39



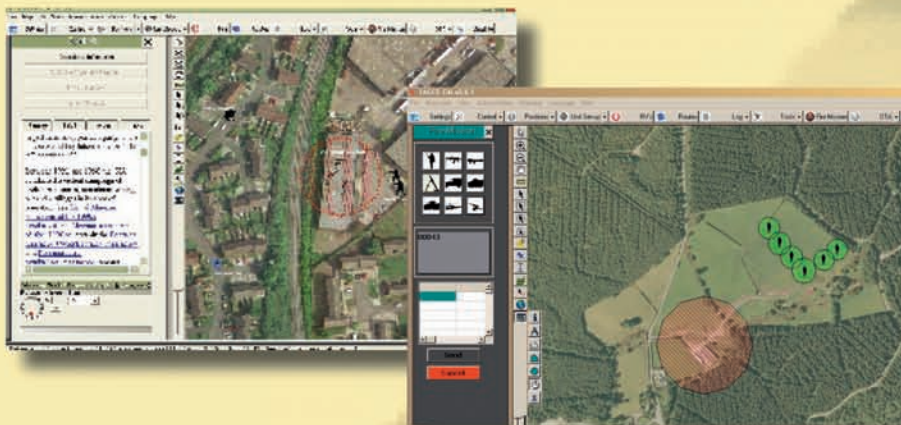
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Picture: Mark Owens

Penguin promotion: Around 130 members of the Norwegian Guard took time out from the Edinburgh Military Tattoo to pick up their highly decorated mascot and celebrate him receiving their country's equivalent of a knighthood. Nils Olav, who is the Honorary Colonel in Chief of the King's Guard of Norway, received his honour in a ceremony at the city's zoo. The mascot dates back to 1972 when Lt Nils Egelien suggested that his regiment adopt the zoo's bird.

Armed to the teeth

Huge weapons resource offers hands-on experience of enemy arsenals

SENIOR executives at the Royal Armouries collection have urged commanders to keep their troops up to speed on the latest threats by making use of one of their huge weapons resources.

The Leeds-based National Firearms

Centre features thousands of modern and historic items, ranging from Napoleonic rifles to the Grenade Machine Gun.

Crucially, the collection has weapons currently being used against the British Army on operations, such as RPG

launchers and the full line-up of AK-47 assault rifles. And NCOs and officers are being invited to bring Herrick and Telic-bound troops to visit the free resource.

Weapons expert and retired Intelligence Corps officer Richard Jones, who is responsible for looking after the collection and liaising with military personnel, stressed that the library had proven training value.

He added: "We have had people here from as far afield as Aldershot and Aberdeen and have helped provide support to pre-deployment training."

While visits can be arranged for military personnel, the collection is not open to the public and any tours must be cleared in advance.

Peter Armstrong, Royal Armouries museum director, said: "The National Firearms Centre is a fantastic library of weapons. It is well worth making the effort to come here."

For further details call 0113 220 1301.

Forces charity splashes out

A CAMPAIGN to support wounded British soldiers has reached its first big money target in less than a year.

Help for Heroes has raised more than £8 million since its launch in October 2007 and work to build a pool and gym complex at the Surrey-based Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre at Headley Court is set to begin in November.

The £6 million facility is expected to be completed by the end of 2009.

An additional £500,000 has also been donated to the SSAFA Forces Help "Homes from Home" appeal to provide relatives visiting loved ones at Headley Court and

Selly Oak with nearby accommodation.

Help for Heroes appeal chairman Bryn Parry explained that the charity had been allocating funds as the target cash amounts were reached.

He said: "As soon as the money comes in we send it out. You don't want to think that hard earned cash is sitting in a dusty bank vault waiting for a rainy day."

Parry added that the charity would continue to raise money for wounded Servicemen and women and would work alongside other projects.

● Locked on – Page 92-93

● Loitering with intent – Pages 28-29

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Mission possible

Apache pilot recalls audacious plan to brave Taliban wrath in daring rescue of fallen marine

Interview: Cliff Caswell

ED Macy will never forget the moment he first fired his gunship's 30mm cannon in anger.

During an unexpectedly ferocious arrest operation in Nowzad, southern Afghanistan in the summer of 2006, 3 Para had been greeted with a hail of bullets. Every Chinook delivering soldiers to the battle had come under contact. Pinned down by enemy fire, the British troops called in the support of the Army Air Corps' Apache.

"I could not believe what I was seeing," said Macy, then a WO1 and qualified pilot who was in the gunner's seat of one of a pair of attack helicopters. "The place was saturated with Taliban and there was tracer coming from tree lines and buildings. Smoke was pouring up.

"Sitting in a fully air conditioned cockpit and wearing my helmet, I couldn't hear any of the fighting below or even my rockets firing. But that cannon was awesome. It was like a sledgehammer coming through the floor with every round it fired – and it fires at ten rounds a second."

In contrast to the eerily silent world surrounding the Apache crews, troops on the ground at Nowzad had never heard anything like the symphony of destruction produced by the Army's deadly airborne instrument. The ordnance was so loud, and landing so close, that many believed they had come under fire from enemy fighters.

"It was surreal for us. We were firing into buildings and tree lines and we only knew the enemy was there because of the tracer rounds coming out," recalled Macy. "But we were continually firing until we ran out of fuel and went home."

The day-long fighting in Nowzad was the first of many actions in Afghanistan for the retired NCO-turned-author, whose autobiography about his time in the cockpit of the aircraft is released this month. It set the tone for an Apache flying career that culminated with him being awarded the Military Cross for his part in the rescue of a fallen comrade.

Macy, who originally joined the 2nd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment in 1985 before transferring to fly Gazelles with the Army Air Corps seven years later, was among the first crews to train for attack helicopter operations. But nothing could have prepared him for what was to happen on his second tour of Helmand province in 2007.

During an attack on a Taliban fortress, a Royal Marine,

'The Marines knew that we would pull out all the stops to go and get them if they were wounded on the battlefield'

LCpl Mathew Ford, was reported missing. When he was found lying in enemy territory, the order was given to protect him at all costs while a rescue mission was mounted.

But with ground troops locked in a battle with enemy fighters emerging from underground tunnels, and the increasing likelihood that the fallen man would be captured, Macy and a fellow Apache crew member suggested an extraction procedure in which marines would strap themselves to the side wings of their aircraft.

"We had raised this idea as a means of escape if one of our Apaches was destroyed but it hadn't been tested in the air or even with the aircraft engines on," Macy explained. "But the idea was approved and we moved to pick up the marines."

The plan, which was fully endorsed by commanders, called for other attack helicopters prowling overhead to lay down

fire. The rescue party would move after American jets provided some shock and awe with a 2,000lb bomb.

"This bomb went in successfully, but it was only when I was flying in over the Helmand River that I realised, 'bloody hell, I've got to go in there and land'," he admitted.

"But it was the mission, to go in there and bring back our man.

"There was so much dust everywhere as we landed and the marines disappeared almost immediately as they debussed. I remember waiting for 40 seconds and still seeing nothing. Then I saw they were stuck with Mathew in a ditch. I opened the cockpit, got out and helped get them back to the aircraft."

Taking off just as the enemy began to take an intense interest in the two grounded helicopters, the rescue team escaped the fortress unscathed and delivered LCpl Ford to a waiting ambulance. Tragically, the fallen marine was later pronounced dead.

"Mathew had died, but we had brought him back and the Marines knew that we would pull out all the stops to go and get them if they were wounded on the battlefield," said Macy. "That knowledge gave them such a huge morale boost."

It was a lift, he asserted, that troops in Afghanistan still felt with the appearance of an Apache. But he stressed that the gunship would never be able to leave the ground without the legion of technicians, ground crews and support staff behind it.

"In *Soldier* some people have compared the helicopter to a flying laptop, but it is more like a flying *PC World*," he said. "There are five huge processors in the aircraft, so pilots could not do their job without the teams of specialists behind them. Everyone involved with the Apache squadrons has saved lives." ■

● Arcade fire – Pages 22-23

Apache: The Man. The Machine. The Mission. by Ed Macy is published by Harper Press (£18.99).





DEFENCE NEWS IMAGERY

DEFENCE NEWS IMAGERY



→ 3A

→ 4

→ 4A

Main picture, Bird's eye view:
Panoramic scene from an Apache
during an operation in Afghanistan

Picture: Courtesy of Ed Macy/MoD

Left, Let's go: The CO looks on
as his men depart on Operation
Glacier, the mission to rescue
LCpl Mathew Ford (RM)

Pictures: Sgt Gary Stanton (RAF)

Right, Cool as ice: In-flight imagery
from the pair of Apaches during
Operation Glacier Pictures: MoD



→ 3

→ 3A

→ 4



Arcade fire

Simulation technology creates virtual combat for Apache pilots heading towards Helmand

Report: Karen Thomas
Picture: Steve Dock

SOLDIER has been told often enough that the Apache attack helicopter is just like a flying laptop and "PlayStation generation" pilots are ahead of the game with their nimble fingers and console mentality.

Strapped inside a darkened box and besieged by blinking screens, an army of levers and voices relaying instructions to my earpiece, there was a feel of sweaty, dim, games' arcades filled with pale, skinny youths fused into their machine's virtual battles.

The security around sitting in the cockpit of the innovative Apache flight simulator – or AH Sim – in Wattisham pulled the tension tighter. Aviation Training International Ltd (ATIL) don't let just anybody "fly" the Army's helicopter gunship and only MoD credentials squeezed me into the hot seat of the pod.

I went cross-eyed trying to marry the line of sight displayed by the Apache pilots' distinctive monocle attached to my helmet with my normal vision. When the 180-degree screen lit up, however, it was as if I was really looking out of the cockpit window and then suddenly I was airborne. But rather than fighting waves of Taliban, I fought waves of nausea. That's the beauty of the AH Sim. It's not the real thing, but it creates a close replica of the flying conditions and combat missions encountered on Op Herrick for experienced or novice pilots.

Sat alone in the commander's pod, it was all too easy to believe I was whipping over the countryside at 90mph seeking enemy targets. The simulator software can be booted up with a variety of scenarios for training and maintaining flying skills.

Army Air Corps pilots who have served in southern Afghanistan work with ATIL engineers to update battle sequences and improve the "reality" of the virtual world. Capt Baz Humphreys (3 AAC), a senior instructor pilot, told *Soldier* that training for ops on the AH Sim had saved lives.

"In simulating emergencies such as an engine failure it's worth its weight in gold. When we are in a contact and maybe get a round through the aircraft, we know whether it will be affecting the Apache and whether to continue to engage the enemy," he explained, describing how the simulator compared to his personal knowledge of serving in Helmand.

"We can experience similar environmental

hazards as found on Op Herrick – hot, high and not as manoeuvrable. The simulated sorties were developed using the first and second tours of Afghanistan. It's good to pass on everything and to develop the simulator training further."

As Capt Humphreys stressed the importance of prioritising the use of the controls, he claimed that being a computer whizz was not essential for pilots, although they did need to be technically-minded.

"We find that some of the younger guys are better with the switches but they lack experience and make mistakes. It's better to be able to multi-task and read body language," he said, adding that women were quicker to adapt to doing more than one thing at a time and were generally more perceptive.

The programming driving the different mission scenarios perform thousands of computations in a fraction of a second as the pilots work the controls. Paul Thompson, ATIL software engineer, said the processing speeds allowed changes in heading and roll without creating jerky – and unrealistic – movement of the aircraft.

"It is the most complicated simulator I have ever worked on because of the processing. Loads of different processes work in parallel and everything talks to everything else.

"When it breaks it can be a lot harder to pinpoint where there's a problem."

A second hi-tech AH Sim is about to join the network, generating the reality of having more than one airborne asset when coordinating air strikes with land forces. The training technology will move closer to what happens in live combat, so will there come a time when AH pilots undergo all of their battle training in the simulator?

"We will always need live-firing training. We need to experience launching a Hellfire missile to see what it does and not be shocked," answered Capt Humphreys. "There are differences with flying the actual aircraft and you can't get away from the real thing. They have got to work in harmony.

"The future is to create the big picture so the Apache simulator here will be able to 'fight' with, for example, 2 RTR in Warminster, through a wide area network. We won't have to worry about the weather as we will just know the simulator will work everyday, which is brilliant." ■

"In simulating emergencies such as an engine failure it's worth its weight in gold"

Just like the real thing: An Apache pilot gets in some invaluable training time flying virtual missions in the simulator pod

● Sim city – Pages 25-27



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Tunnel vision



**Up-close-and-personal
with new Fibua training
on the Canadian prairie**

Deep squeeze: Soldiers fight in the narrow passages of the new underground complex at British Army Training Unit Suffield

Report: Stephen Tyler
Pictures: Graeme Main

STEPPING out of the airport in the western Canadian city of Calgary, one of the first things to strike you is the sheer size of everything.

From the 4x4s heading out on mile after mile of the country's huge highways to the sky that stretches as far as the eye can see, things seem to be that much bigger on the other side of the Atlantic.

The trend continues at British Army Training Unit Suffield (Batus), the 2,690 square kilometer expanse of prairie near Medicine Hat in Alberta that has helped hone the skills of visiting soldiers every year since 1972.

Even the combined firepower of the Royal Artillery's biggest guns and the

almighty punch packed by Challenger 2 tanks fails to make more than an insignificant fleck on the surface of such an immense proving ground.

On the vastness of the Batus plains, however, battalions of British troops are undergoing fighting in built-up areas (Fibua) training to perfect close combat techniques, which will prove invaluable in the up-close-and-personal contacts of Operations Telic and Herrick.

Previous graduates of the 24-day Exercise Medicine Man will be familiar with the ISO container villages, but a new live fire area, power station, water treatment plant and underground tunnel complex have brought the training bang up to date with the realities of today's operational theatres.

"The prairie is unique in that it is in the middle of nowhere in this natural wide open space that can make us feel that we are somehow disconnected from reality," explained Batus commander Col Ben Edwards (late Scots DG). "Having said that, there are operational realities that we face elsewhere in the world and we are installing new infrastructure to try and pull those realities onto the block.

"The world is undergoing constant

urbanisation and something like 60 per cent of its population lives in cities.

"It's something of a truism to say that we will inevitably find ourselves fighting in more urban environments and we want to replicate that here with more visual stimulation."

The newest and most striking addition to the Batus toolbox is a combined arms live fire (Calf) village rivaling anything used elsewhere by the British Army. The settlement's wooden shacks, concrete barriers and depth targets allow infantry, engineers, gunners and armoured vehicles, including Challenger 2 tanks, to conduct simultaneous attacks.

Calf training gives dismounted troops the chance to launch an assault while stood alongside a tank firing its main weapon, as engineers perfect demolition techniques using mousehole charges and Bangalore torpedoes.

The extra space afforded by the prairie means that two companies of infantrymen can clear separate parts of the village at the same time without putting themselves at risk.

Col Edwards told *Soldier* that the live fire package is ideal for developing the core abilities that troops are increasingly relying on in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"It all comes down to getting back to

'It's back to the good basic soldiering skills that have always allowed the British Army to win through in the end'



Main picture, Up to the challenge: A warrior hurtling across the open prairie is the traditional image associated with Batus

Top left, Confined space: One of the huts infantrymen have to fight through in the combined arms live fire village

Top right, Going with a bang: Exercising troops lay bar mines after successfully clearing the 400 metre tunnel complex

the good basic soldiering skills that have always allowed the British Army to win through in the end," he said. "On top of that, teams at Batus develop a real strength because of the frictions they have to overcome here.

"The training is absolutely invaluable to contemporary operations. You don't need to have the Taliban attacking you constantly because there are a hundred other things that can go wrong, whether it's people getting lost or getting stuck.

"I was here in 2005 before a deployment to Iraq the following year and what we learned gave us the skills we needed to achieve success at a low cost. For a section leader or company of soldiers, fighting is fighting and those skills are as well learned here as they are anywhere else."

Buried underneath an innocuous-looking wooden shack, the 400 metre network of tunnels has also proven to be a challenging but popular method of Fibua training on Ex Med Man.

The underground warren is accessed through a single trapdoor. It provides an unforgiving test of close-quarter combat with its low ceiling, dusty atmosphere and tight corners.

WO2 Tony Burke (SASC) believed the tunnel system



helps reinforce the Fibua training's emphasis on mastering low-level soldiering combat skills.

"It's a good addition to what this package offers," he explained. "You have all the big stuff that happens on the prairie and this adds another element to it. I know that the feedback has been good and that the guys who have been through here have enjoyed

it. It's one-on-one in the tunnels so it really helps to focus their minds on soldiering as individuals or in pairs."

With further topical improvements such as an oil refinery planned for the Fibua, Batus is set to continue its proud reputation as the perfect preparation ground for an operational tour. ■



Right, Laying down the NLAW:
Spr Jack Message (RE) takes aim with the next generation light anti-tank weapon from the roof of the Batus power station



Loitering with intent

Evolving munition technology creates menacing presence in skies

Report: Karen Thomas
Pictures: Steve Dock

A NOVEL twist to precision strike rockets will soon have them acting as airborne bodyguards for combat ground troops.

Launched before a patrol or convoy leaves base, the loitering munition (LM) will hover above its allies until called upon to hit a target.

Fitted with cameras, the archetypal smart bomb will scan ahead from the skies giving those on foot early warning of any enemy activity.

And in the event of a contact, soldiers will not be solely reliant on Apache or fast jets for

air support as they will already have super-sized top cover,

capable of delivering a lethal strike, in position.

Gunners from 39 Regiment, Royal Artillery have been in on the development project to add this new weapon to their considerable arsenal from the start.

Having already hammered the Taliban in southern Afghanistan with the guided multiple launch rocket system (GMLRS), they're now working with engineers on the design and protocols for a long-range precision attack missile that can be directed to the target after it's been launched.

Lt Dave Cass worked with the GMLRS on Op Herrick 6 and immediately saw how evolving an airborne rocket that could be controlled from the ground would save lives.

"It's a shell you can pause and allows you to have a good look at the target before you go in. It will support the troops by having a lot of cameras up there and giving them more eyes in the air," he explained to *Soldier*, adding that the position of moving targets can be reconfirmed and potential collateral damage can be reduced by checking for movement of civilians in and out of the strike area.

"As well as precision, the LM offers choice at the last minute and that will also help avoid friendly fire. It can be

used in road moves and can loiter above convoys for the whole route.

"The troops can have something just for them, which can spot trouble up ahead with the cameras but won't be tasked away."

There are plenty of other applications for a suspended missile with eyes, which is essentially a weaponised unmanned air vehicle (UAV) that doesn't come back. Working towards the "one round, one hit" concept might make the LM a more expensive option but fewer will be used because they are so accurate.

And targets can be destroyed with less damage to the surroundings.

Although used to larging it up with the GMLRS, 39 Regt has rapidly taken to the ideas behind the new technology. A two-man crew will launch the LM, which is under the control of a troop command post.

They pass the LM to the ground control station (GCS), possibly located at a forward operating base, that switches on the cameras, confirms the target and directs the LM onto it.

The technology is being geared towards any soldier being able to use the LM and the gunners' strategic and operating perspectives have been the focus of the development process since the beginning of the project.

‘It’s a shell you can pause and allows you to have a good look at the target before you go in’





Compound companion: The loitering munition (LM) could be launched as soon as a patrol leaves base in southern Afghanistan Picture: Graeme Main

Below left, Mobile home: The launch pad for the LM

Below right, Computer bods: Gnr Paul McKenna (right), SSgt Robert Powell (centre) and Bdr Mark McGregor work in the ground control station

Gnr Paul McKenna was tasked as the operator at the GCS in a classroom simulation to train on the computer software and identify potential problems. His role is to "click the button" to arm and set the LM on target.

"In combat it gives you eyes on. We can track where the enemy is moving to and check the target description, clock the explosion and prove whether the target has been hit by using the cameras on a second LM in the holding pattern," he said, describing the computer-simulated scenarios where he'd been kept busy juggling 20 LM hovering in the sky.

"Using the computer is easy. Even for people who have never used one, they can get on and use the controls straightaway."

The LM is about two years from being deployed to the field and the experts are still looking at the development of processes rather than the actual equipment.

Sgt Maj Craig Wattam confirmed they had reached the stage of understanding where the LM fits within a battlegroup or brigade and had worked out the correct procedures for using it somewhere like Helmand province.

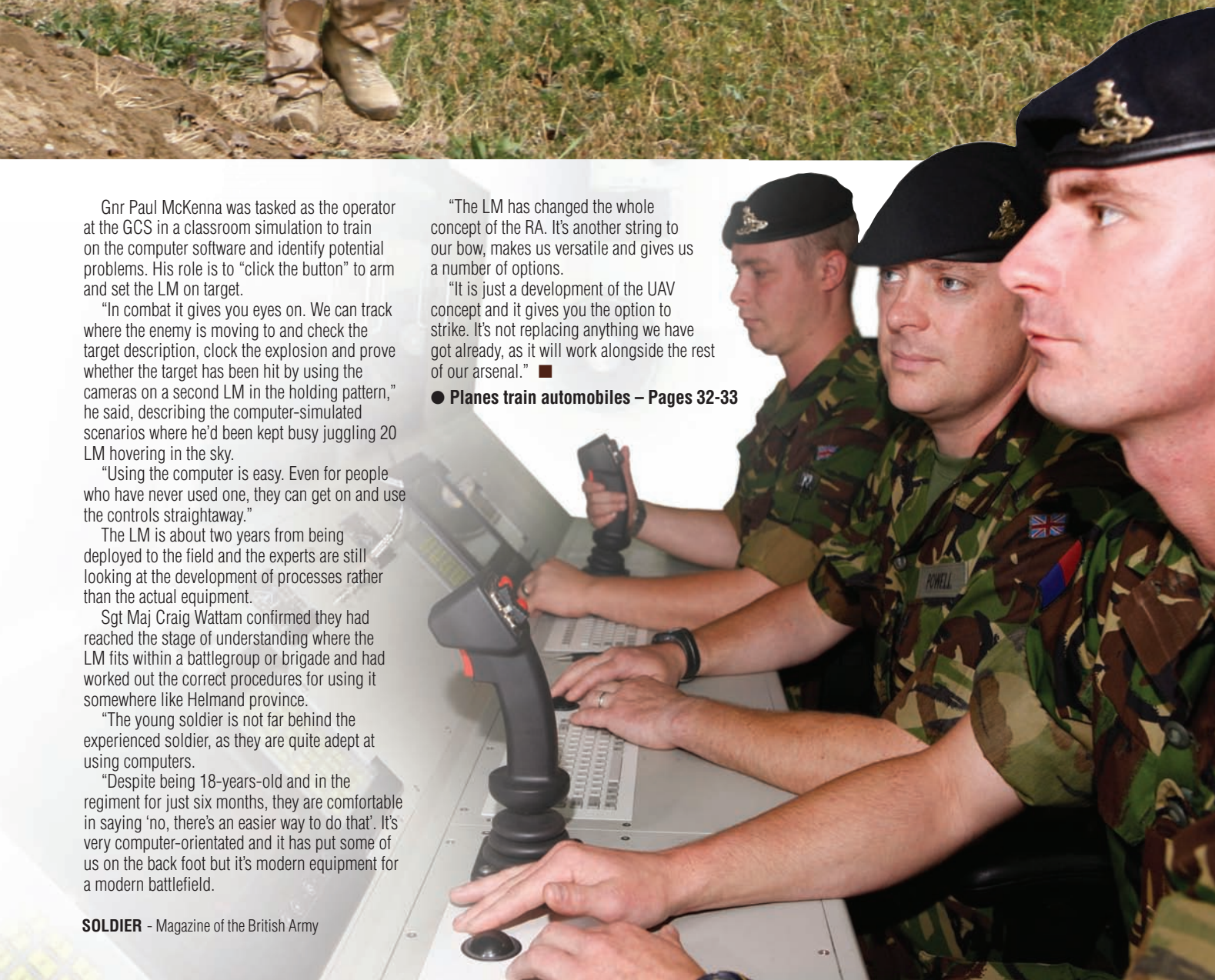
"The young soldier is not far behind the experienced soldier, as they are quite adept at using computers."

"Despite being 18-years-old and in the regiment for just six months, they are comfortable in saying 'no, there's an easier way to do that'. It's very computer-orientated and it has put some of us on the back foot but it's modern equipment for a modern battlefield."

"The LM has changed the whole concept of the RA. It's another string to our bow, makes us versatile and gives us a number of options."

"It is just a development of the UAV concept and it gives you the option to strike. It's not replacing anything we have got already, as it will work alongside the rest of our arsenal." ■

● **Planes train automobiles – Pages 32-33**





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Pedigree chum

Latest dog of war destined to become best friends with front-line troops

Report: Cliff Caswell
Picture: Andrew Linnett

TROOPS serving in Afghanistan's volatile Helmand province are poised to receive an all-new dog of war with the arrival of the Mastiff's little brother.

The MoD has ordered 160 4x4 Cougar troop carriers from American firm Force Protection and is upgrading them with a raft of sophisticated kit.

Renamed Ridgback, enhanced with the latest armour, weapons and communications, and rolled-out as an urgent operational requirement, the patrol vehicle is expected to join its kennel mates in theatre by spring 2009.

In addition to the latest purchase, MoD chiefs are also buying 14 extra Viking troop carriers and more than 70 Jackal high-speed, all-terrain vehicles.

The Ridgback already has an established pedigree. The Mastiff armoured personnel carrier, which has proved itself in both Iraq and Afghanistan, is based on the 6x6 version of the Cougar and MoD bosses are confident that the smaller sibling will have a potent bite for its modest size.

Senior officers expect that Mastiff will continue to operate in rural environments, while Ridgback will be pressed into

action to deal with urban situations.

Powered by a Caterpillar C-7 diesel engine producing 330bhp, the Cougar 4x4 platform has a 420-mile range and space for four passengers, as well as the driver and a commander.

The vehicle, which can be loaded onto a C-17 for transport to theatre, also features plenty of customisable options, including the potential for an overhead weapons station. A top-of-the-line air conditioning system is fitted as standard.

Previewed during the Defence Vehicle Dynamics exhibition at the Millbrook Proving Ground in Bedfordshire, the British Army incarnation of the vehicle impressed visitors.

According to the MoD, the delivery of the Ridgback, which is being funded by £150 million from the Treasury Reserve, means that there are now nearly 600 protected vehicles available for operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Minister for Defence Equipment and

Support, Baroness Ann Taylor, said the vehicles would undergo rigorous upgrades before being deployed.

She added: "Mastiff has been a huge success, well-liked by troops on patrol and offering high levels of protection against mines and roadside explosive devices.

"As a smaller version of the Cougar 6x6 vehicle, which underpins Mastiff, the Cougar 4x4 was the natural choice to become the Ridgback protected vehicle.

"It will give our troops a further boost in continuing the significant improvements that we have made to the protection of our Forces in Afghanistan and Iraq."

Defence Secretary Des Browne endorsed the minister's views. He pledged to do everything possible to get more armoured vehicles out to the front line of operations.

"The Mastiffs have saved lives out in theatre and we have ordered the Ridgback because it is a smaller version of the Mastiff, offering our Forces first-rate protection with more manoeuvrability." ■

‘The Cougar 4x4 was the natural choice to become the Ridgback protected vehicle’

Small wonder: Mastiff's kid brother packs a huge punch for its modest size



Planes train automobiles

Maturing UAV technology inspires robotics assault on terra firma

Report: Andy Simms

HENRY Ford may have stolen a march on the Wright brothers in the race to revolutionise transport, but it's long been a case of air supremacy in the field of military robotics.

Having earned their wings with the Royal Artillery in Kosovo and Iraq, unmanned air vehicles (UAVs) continue to prove their operational worth by providing a bird's eye view of Taliban activity in southern Afghanistan.

Used as a force protection measure for convoys and patrols, route clearance, base security, reconnaissance or target tracking, Desert Hawk has established itself as a key asset in the British arsenal in Helmand.

And taxiing into position ahead of take-off in 2010 is Watchkeeper, a cutting-edge UAV which will provide commanders with all-weather, day and night surveillance of the battlefield without

the need to deploy troops to dangerous areas.

But in sharp contrast to the hi-tech heights being hit by the Army's eyes in the sky, the pace of technological evolution on terra firma has, like the first motor cars, been progressing at something of a crawl. Despite the obvious roles for them, unmanned ground vehicles (UGVs) – with the exception of bomb disposal bots – are noticeable only by their absence from today's battlefields.

However, recent advances in robotics technology, coupled with a greater acceptance of autonomous vehicles by a generation of commanders and tacticians swayed by the operational successes of UAVs, has accelerated development and a futuristic fleet is now revving-up for action.

"UAVs are further out in front, but that's because they operate in a far easier domain,"

explained Myron Mills, a project manager with Lockheed Martin, when asked by *Soldier* why UGVs were still waiting in the procurement pit lane. "In the air, once you have done your initial mission planning and airspace deconfliction,

mountains, trees and buildings aren't going to move around.

"The ground environment is marked by continuous change and dynamics. If I plan a mission right now and execute it in just a few hours, the carefully planned mission route might be blocked – a bridge could be out or burning

vehicle hulks could have left roads impassable.

"If you are going to have UGVs charging around you also have to be sure they are not going to run over friendly troops or non-combatants and they need to be able to react to IED threats and ambushes.

‘The key issue is getting the military ready to accept the use of robots’



"Although such a dynamic environment makes operating much more difficult to do reliably than it is with an airborne platform, the Services are definitely interested in UGVs and the technology is coming and will advance rapidly."

The almost instinctive mistrust humans have of robots that operate autonomously has also contributed to the delay in UGVs progressing beyond the starting grid before now, according to Foster-Miller's Carl Evans.

"A lot of the fear comes from Hollywood, which is fond of showing mechanised robots going awry," said the senior software engineer. "As engineers we are familiar with those movies and familiar with the challenges and perceptions, which is why so much testing goes on. I would hope the public understands that robots are not sent out without going through a lot of testing and without a lot of safeguards being put in place."

"The key issue is getting the military ready to accept the use of robots. We are seeing attitudes change thanks to EOD robots being used more and more, and soldiers are becoming accustomed to having robots working alongside them. It will probably take a long time for autonomous systems [robots which can act independently] to be accepted and in that respect technology is beyond where the military is comfortable using it."

Environmental challenges and technophobes aside, the next decade is set to herald the arrival of a range of UGVs to meet needs ranging from resupply runs and convoy protection to combat operations and security patrols. With research programmes well under way for unmanned convoys, reconnaissance vehicles that scout for roadside bombs and bad guys, and even large armoured platforms, defence experts predict that as the presence of UGVs becomes common, they will prove indispensable



to a well-equipped army.

Among the advanced automobiles fighting for selection for front-line service are Gladiator, Crusher, T2, the SMSS and Black Knight.

Armed with either a M240 or M249 machine gun, grenade launcher and light vehicle obscuration smoke system, Gladiator is a rugged, lightweight unmanned wagon with designs on a career in the Infantry.

Controlled by a soldier using a head-mounted display and games console-style pad, the tele-operated UGV boasts front and rear driving cameras, an armoured hull and the ability to ford streams up to 24 inches deep.

Steve DiAntonio, a director of development at the National Robotics Engineering Centre (NREC) in the US, which is developing Gladiator, said: "This UGV has been designed to project force and put fewer soldiers in harm's way. It can go forward to look for, and maybe even deal with, bad guys."

Sitting alongside Gladiator in the NREC garage is Crusher, a fast-moving, six-wheeled robot capable of keeping pace with mechanised units and equipped with a 15-foot telescoping surveillance mast. A combination of laser radar and camera systems allows the vehicle to react to obstacles and travel through mission waypoints spaced more than a kilometre apart, and a high-strength steel skid plate allows Crusher to shrug off massive, below-hull strikes.

Less intimidating in appearance are Lockheed

Martin's SMSS (squad mission support system) and General Dynamics' T2 (tactical autonomous combat-chassis), both of which can be driven, tele-operated or move autonomously and are vying to become a loggie's best friend. The two off-road workhorses are seen as force multipliers – performing tasks such as resupply and convoy runs for warfighters.

While many of the UGVs look like extras from the set of *Transformers*, BAE System's Black Knight has an appearance in keeping with the Army's current line-up of vehicles.

Based on the Bradley armoured personnel carrier, it was developed to showcase the capabilities of unmanned combat vehicles and has already seen action on exercise with US troops. Weaponised and with an on-board perception system, which enables waypoint following and real-time obstacle detection and avoidance, future incarnations of Black Knight could one day provide added brawn and protection to patrolling troops.

But Thomas Mohler, one of the brains behind Black Knight, believes it will still be some time before such a UGV rolls out of Camp Bastion flanked by Bulldogs. "The vision we have of a robot that can drive off anywhere it wants to go, understand what is happening around it, and take any necessary action is pretty hard core," he said. "The reality is that autonomy [on operations] is likely to be gradual. When EOD robots first appeared they were essentially remote-controlled from 100 yards away, but they are now going around the corner and over the hill. It will happen, but it will take time." ■

● Send in the robots – Pages 45-51



Remote reconnaissance: Crusher – developed at the National Robotics Engineering Centre in the US – can act as the eyes and ears of a mechanised unit



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A man with short dark hair and a serious expression is shown from the chest up. He is wearing a dark navy blue suit jacket over a light blue shirt and a blue and white striped tie. His right arm is raised, with his fist clenched, and he is wearing a blue and red wristband with the words 'LIVESTRONG' and 'HEROES' visible. His left hand is partially visible, showing a silver ring on the ring finger and a silver watch. The background is plain white.

lock, stock & ready for battle

Son of football hardman Vinnie takes the Jones's fighting spirit from the field to the front line

Interviews: Stephen Tyler
Pictures: Steve Dock

AS a player, the sight of Vinnie Jones bearing down with eyes fixed, sinews strained and studs showing struck fear into the hearts of all but the most foolhardy footballers.

The former Wimbledon man's will to win and apparent disregard for danger often had painful consequences for opposing players and was a key factor in the Crazy Gang's famous 1988 FA Cup winning campaign.

But ask Jones about the physical toughness of his chosen career and the now Hollywood star insists he had it easy in comparison to son Aaron, who has just completed phase one training at the Army Foundation College (AFC) Harrogate in Yorkshire.

JS Ellison-Jones was among more than 600 teenagers to pass out from the college at a rain-soaked parade last month and Vinnie was understandably proud of his son's achievement.

"It was very emotional," he said. "I have done a few things in my life, but he is starting out in his and this is bigger than anything I have ever achieved.

"When I was playing football I was used to the training mentality. I know how difficult it can be because I did it on a smaller scale, but it was put into

time with Leeds and eight international caps for Wales throw further water on the fires started by the likes of former Spurs star David Ginola who once claimed Jones "does not deserve to be considered a footballer".

And judging from the feedback from his time in North Yorkshire, Aaron looks like he has inherited Jones's never-say-die attitude.

"He didn't ring too often and sometimes I wouldn't hear from him for a couple of weeks when he was on manoeuvres," said Jones. "If he had pulled out at any stage I would still have been proud, but really he was the one

with his arm round his mates keeping their morale up. It is a fantastic thing for him to achieve."

Since completing the 42-week military and educational training course at Harrogate, Aaron has been enjoying a well-deserved break before starting on phase two training with the Household Cavalry's Life Guards in Windsor.

His next milestone comes later this year when he embarks on ceremonial duties in London and he hopes to get his first taste of operations soon after.

JS Ellison-Jones, whose connection with the Army began aged 13 as a cadet, told *Soldier* that he found his time at

**‘ They gave us a
real drinking lesson
afterwards and I’m
still paying off the
bar bill now ’**

perspective when Aaron would ring me up after running around with a back pack on.

"I'm sure he has had the harder time of the two of us with the physical and mental challenge he has faced over the past year."

Although the junior soldier's impressive start to his military career is built on the solid foundations of his own hard work, Aaron was never likely to fail given his father's fearsome reputation for never shirking a challenge.

Jones's 15-year career took in more than 250 appearances for Wimbledon and he also enjoyed stints at Leeds, Sheffield United, Chelsea and Queens Park Rangers.

The midfielder's tough tackling style earned him no less than 12 red cards, but his achievement in helping unfancied Wimbledon to defeat Liverpool and win the FA Cup shows there was plenty of talent to match the full-blooded challenges.

A Division Two championship medal from his



Vinnie Jones – MY ARMY

Harrogate “challenging and quite hard” but is leaving with fond memories.

“It’s absolutely brilliant,” he said. “You have a whole year of training but it flies by. You adjust yourself to it and there are 800 other blokes feeling the same things that you are. I would recommend it to anyone.”

Asked about his feelings on the possibility of Aaron deploying, Jones said he would “concentrate on the pride” and was confident his son’s training would stand him in good stead if he gets the call to serve in Iraq or Afghanistan.

“He has been in the cadets for a long time, but to make the decision to come here [AFC Harrogate] for a year has made a man of him,” he told *Soldier*.

“He had good values as a lad, but he will now protect our country. I’m very proud of that.

“He was growing up anyway, but we have seen him really maturing because of the training here.”

Jones’s retirement from football heralded the start of a foray into acting that has made the 43-year-old one of Hollywood’s hottest properties.

Starring roles in *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels* and *Snatch*

sandwiched a memorable performance in car-crime thriller *Gone in Sixty Seconds* and he has played everything from detectives to football hooligans in the ensuing years.

Despite his busy filming schedule, Jones found time to welcome the touring football team of 3 Rifles for a friendly match against his Hollywood All-Stars team earlier this year.

The Army side gave a good account of themselves with a 3-2 win, but Jones said that it was during the post-match festivities that the riflemen truly excelled.

“I was very happy to be able to help out when I was told they were coming over,” he said. “The match itself was good but they gave us a real drinking lesson afterwards and I’m still paying off the bar bill now.”

Although it will be of little consolation to the many players who crumpled under his tackles, Jones almost decided to call time on his footballing ambitions in favour of a career in combats.

“I wanted to join up,” he confessed. “But a friend of mine had a criminal record so that put an end to that plan.

“Since Aaron came here I have been watching as much news as I can to keep up with what the Army is doing and I’ll carry on watching in the future.” ■



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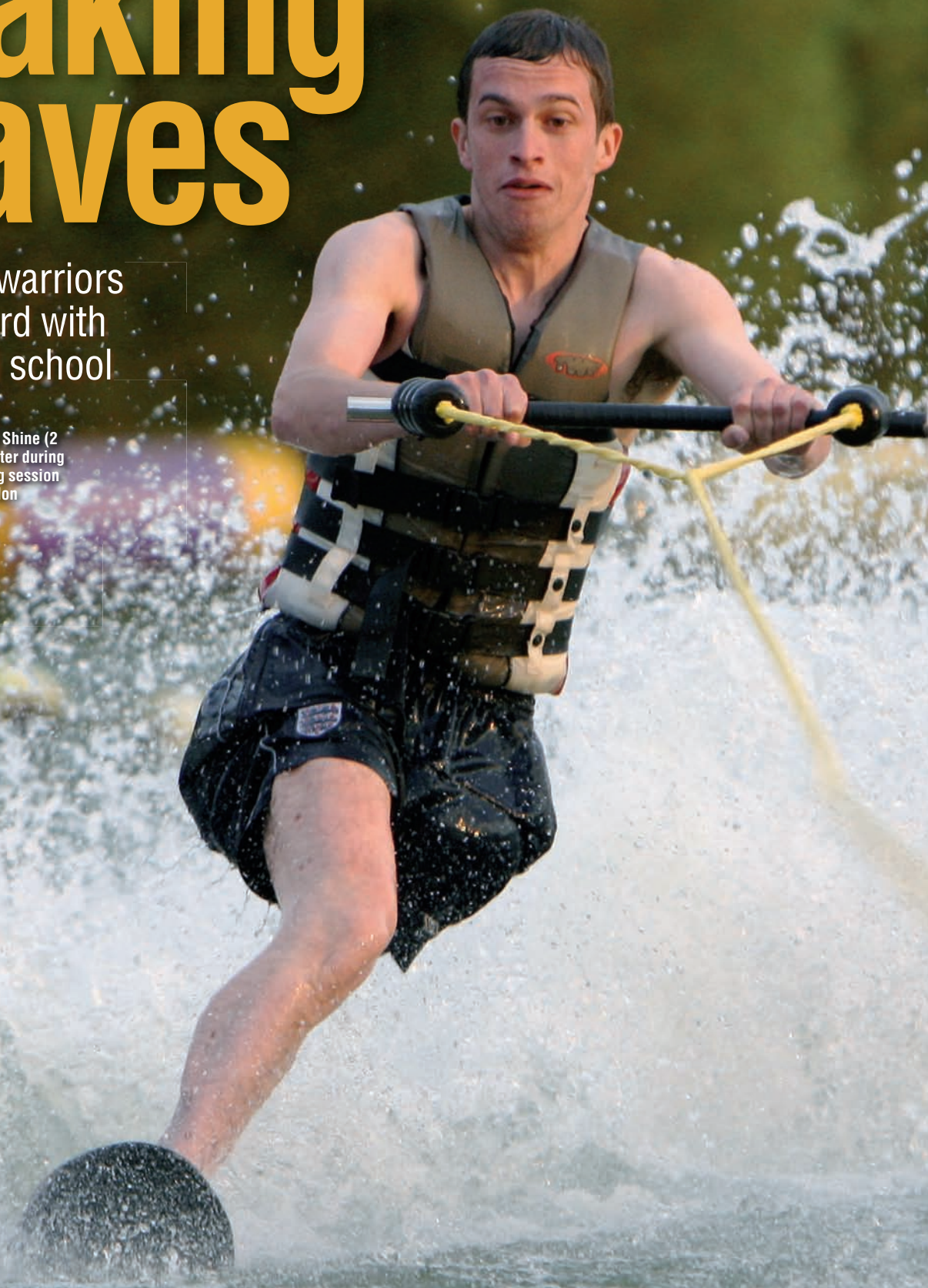
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Making waves

Wounded warriors get on board with aquatic ski school

In the balance: Tpr Steve Shine (2 RTR) cuts through the water during a Battle Back water skiing session at Heron Lake, near London

Picture: Graeme Main



Report: Stephen Tyler
Picture: Graeme Main

WITH the spray from a speedboat zipping past his face as he negotiated a high-speed turn on his one remaining leg, water skiing newcomer Fus Andy Barlow (RRF) was finally convinced that life does not end with the loss of a limb.

The Bolton native – a keen sportsman who played rugby for his battalion – had resigned himself to life in the slow lane after being injured in a mine strike in Afghanistan's Helmand province in 2006.

But while he threw himself into mastering the demanding physiotherapy sessions at Headley Court, other Army personnel were putting similar hard graft into developing sporting opportunities for injured Servicemen and women.

The result is Battle Back, a tri-Service initiative dedicated to providing adaptive sport and adventurous training for wounded troops and the reason why Barlow found himself hurtling around a lake on the outskirts of London.

"When I was in hospital I would have said that my life was over," the fusilier told *Soldier* after strapping on a water ski for the first time. "Now I know it's not. It's just starting. I've always been into sport and I'm a competitive person, so I was up for the chance to have a go at water skiing. I've only just started, but it's really good out there and if I get the chance to continue it then I will."

Water skiing's addition to the Battle Back programme came about thanks to the efforts of LSgt Bob Mitchell. The Welsh Guard's band member was already a qualified coach with the British Disabled Water Skiing Association (BDWSA) and suggested using his skills and contacts to get injured Service personnel involved.

An initial taster day at BDWSA's Heron

Lake headquarters attracted three patients from Headley Court, but as word of mouth spread so did the course's popularity and numbers were approaching double figures during last month's sessions.

Adaptive water skiing's popularity stems from its simple modified kit which opens the sport up to people with a variety of disabilities. Those unable to stand can thrash along on a "sit ski", while leg amputees are able to use a regular water ski.

Qualified instructors take to the water alongside the students to provide advice, support and a safety net and as well as being exhilarating, the sport also adds fresh impetus to Headley Court patients' rehabilitation.

"Battle Back aims to get people back into sport and adventurous training and this is a good example of something that teaches skills that are transferable to the rehabilitation programmes," explained

the man in charge of the programme, Maj Martin Colclough (APTC).

"Rehab can be quite tough, but because some of what they learn can be used in water skiing it gives them something to work towards and makes the exercises more palatable."

LSgt Mitchell, who also hopes to become an adaptive snow ski instructor, believes the quick progress that most students make on the lake is helping the sessions flourish.

Complete newcomers are able to ski without support after just a couple of hours' practice and LSgt Mitchell hopes the water skiing programme, which runs from May to October, will tie in with Battle Back's adaptive skiing training.

"We have run four or five sessions and a lot of the guys have gone from being novices to being able to free-ski and

actually enjoy themselves on the back of the boat," he said. "Not only does it give them freedom, it also helps to build self-esteem and confidence. Physically it is making them use all of their muscles as well."

"People can be quite apprehensive before trying it, but when they come off the water for the first time they are beaming with enjoyment because they have done something they probably didn't think they could ever do."

"Water skiing and snow skiing go hand in hand and it shows that an injury doesn't have to stop you enjoying sport."

Although its main drive is to get as many wounded Service personnel as possible back into sport and adventurous training,

‘It puts a smile on people’s faces and shows that they can still do sport’



Battle Back is also ready and able to help develop future Paralympic stars.

Anyone with the potential to reach the top in their chosen sport will be put in touch with the relevant national governing body and Maj Colclough expects to see Army athletes competing on the world stage as soon as 2010.

"Our aim is to help the guys get wherever they want to go," he said. "Some will want to keep it at a recreational level, but for those who want to progress we can put them in touch with the right people."

"We hope to see some of the first military personnel competing at the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver. It's not impossible for somebody to get up to the right standard before that, but they would need to

be training full time because the level is so high."

In addition to water and snow skiing, Battle Back can facilitate a host of other sports and is running a kayaking trip to Bavaria later this month.

Tpr Steve Shine (2 RTR), who lost a leg in Iraq in 2007, thinks the scheme will ensure that the physical and mental robustness of Britain's injured soldiers will not go to waste.

"It's a challenge physically and mentally, but it puts a smile on people's faces and shows that they can still do sport," he said after his second go at water skiing. "I never thought I would be able to do this, but I'm definitely going to go out on the water again in the future." ■

Battling back: Fus Andy Barlow (RRF) hurtles through a turn at the British Disabled Water Skiing Association's Heron Lake just two years after losing his leg in an explosion in Afghanistan





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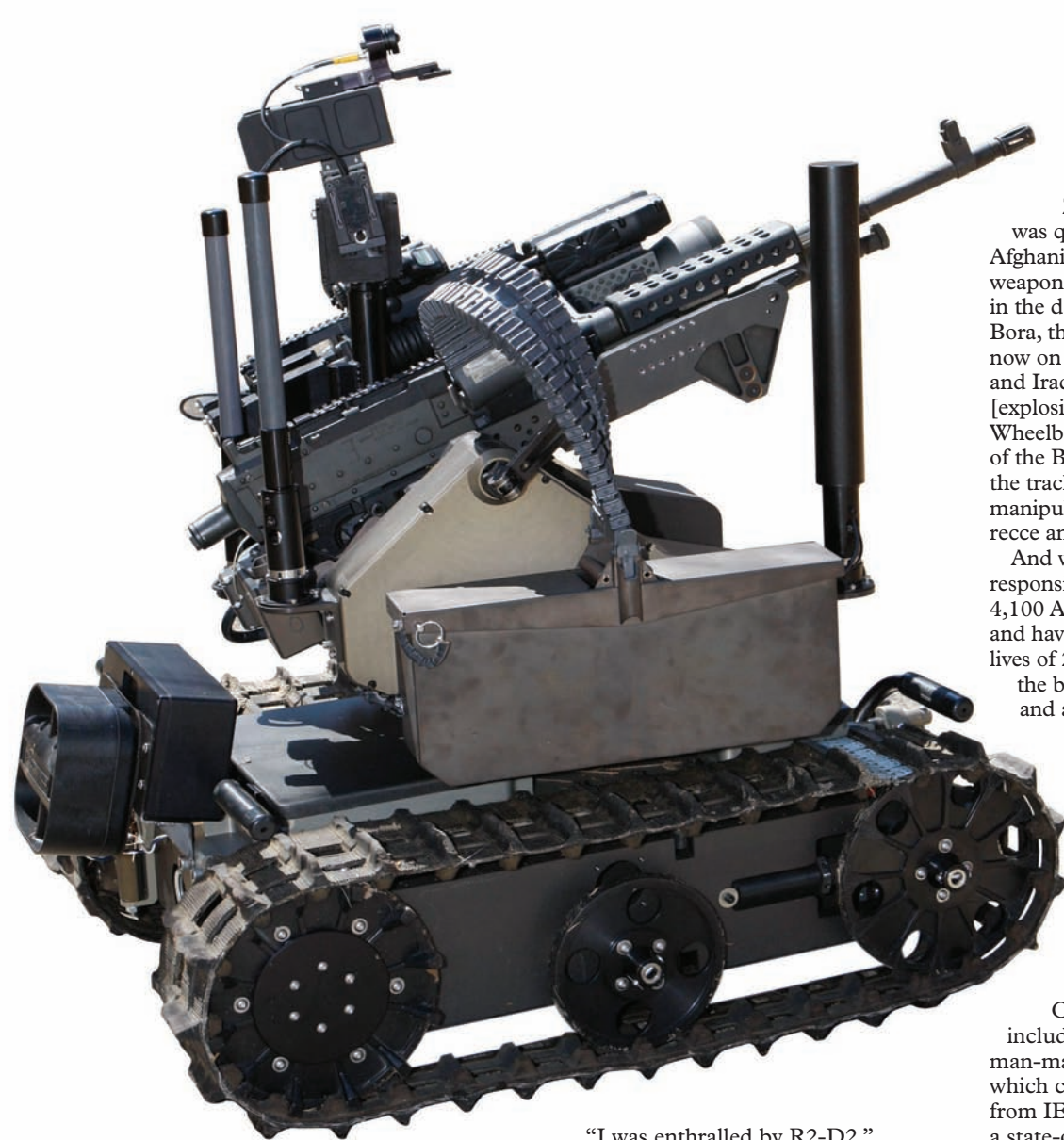
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‘You had me at bleep bleep’

Soldier discovers how a *Jerry Maguire* moment fathered thousands of military mechanoids . . .





**Report: Andy Simms
Pictures: Steve Dock**

WHILE most girls swooned over Luke Skywalker or Han Solo, it was the three-foot-tall droid R2-D2 that won the heart of Helen Greiner when *Star Wars* first exploded onto cinema screens in 1977.

For Greiner, then 11, the indecipherable bleeps and whirs of “Artoo” marked the beginning of an enduring love affair with engineering that has fast-tracked the evolution of battlefield robots and “fathered” thousands of military mechanoids.

“I was enthralled by R2-D2,” Greiner, now 42 and the president of American robotics giant iRobot, confessed to *Soldier*. “He had emotions, a personality, an agenda, a mission. He was more than just a machine. Artoo was the reason I went to MIT [Massachusetts Institute of Technology] and got involved with robotics.”

True to her inspiration, the English-born roboticist has focused her talents on being a force for good by assembling a legion of PackBots – remote-controlled mechanical warriors designed to keep soldiers out of harm’s way.

Having caught the attention of the US military in the aftermath of September 11, when they were called upon to join

the search and rescue operation at Ground Zero, iRobot’s android army was quickly drafted into action in Afghanistan. Originally used to scout for weapons caches and any Taliban lurking in the dark corners of the caves of Tora Bora, the majority of the 1,400 PackBots now on the front line in Afghanistan and Iraq are employed in an EOD [explosive ordnance disposal] role. Like Wheelbarrow, the remote eyes and hands of the British Army’s EOD experts, the tracked bomb disposal droids have manipulator arms that allow them to recce and make safe explosive devices.

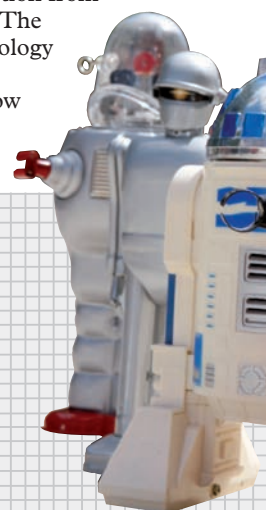
And with roadside bombs and IEDs responsible for nearly two-thirds of the 4,100 American combat deaths in Iraq and having last year alone claimed the lives of 20 British soldiers on Op Telic, the bomb bots are in constant demand and are undoubtedly saving lives.

“We have had a lot of weird and wonderful ideas along the way,” said Greiner. “They’ve not all been successful but they have all been stepping stones to where we are today. The adoption of the robots by military specialists is now driving the technology. They tell us where the biggest needs are and we cater for that.”

Catering for those needs has included giving bomb bots Fido – a man-made imitation of a dog’s nose, which can detect vapours emanating from IEDs – and developing RedOwl, a state-of-the-art sniper detector. Currently under testing, RedOwl uses acoustic direction finding, thermal imaging and an array of lasers to trace incoming fire and designate the precise location of potential threats.

“If soldiers come under sniper fire the natural thing for a soldier to do is take cover,” explained Greiner. “Robots don’t need to do that and with RedOwl they can instantaneously turn their heads to look in the direction from which the shot was fired. The advantages of such technology speak for themselves.”

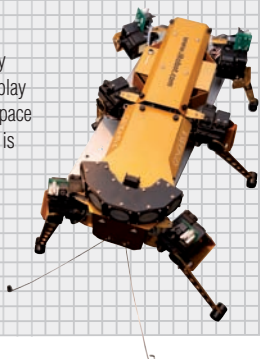
And with EOD bots now intrinsic to modern military operations,



R2-D2’s offspring . . . the evolution of the PackBot

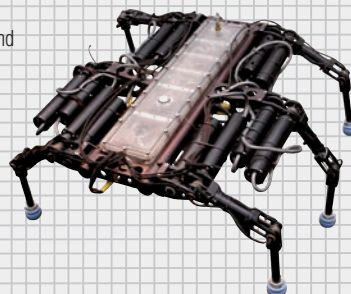
GENGHIS 1991

This groundbreaking mobility system, which is now on display at the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum in Washington DC, is based on insect-models and provided robotics researchers with a solid platform for the L-Robotic programming language.



ARIEL 1996

Designed to remove mines on land and underwater, Ariel’s crab-like legs allowed it to scramble over obstacles and crevices that traditional wheeled vehicles would have found insurmountable. Impact resistant, invertable and able to withstand moderate depths, it could carry 6kg payloads.



the evolution of battlefield robots is showing no signs of slowing. Last summer the US Army quietly entered a new era when it sent the first armed ground robots into action in Iraq.

Three Swords [special weapons operations remote reconnaissance direct action systems] – developed by Foster-Miller, a QinetiQ

subsidiary – were deployed with the 3rd Infantry Division's 3rd Brigade. While details of the exact missions of the M249 light machine gun-toting robots remain classified, it has been confirmed that the Swords joined American troops on street patrols. One year on and the US military have just taken delivery of Swords' big-brother, Maars [modular advanced armed robotic system]. Packing a M240 machine gun and 40mm grenade launcher, this latest robotic recruit would make light work of *Star Wars*' leading droids, but its designers insist that weaponising robots is not a step towards the Dark Side.

Countering prejudices fuelled by movies like *Robocop*, *Short Circuit* and *I, Robot*, Bob Quinn, a manager with Foster-Miller, whose Talon EOD robots have also been waging war with insurgent bomb-makers, said: "The Hollywood aspect assumes autonomy, a robot that can think for itself, but unless you have a human at the controls [of Maars], it is just a heap of nuts and bolts.

"The US has no interest in an autonomous ground robot, but a tele-operated ground robot that will step in harm's way instead of our soldiers is of intense interest. And the closer you are to pulling the trigger, and having a weapon on your shoulder, the more intense you are in wanting that capability. What has kept us strong [in the face of criticism in the press] is the 18- to 20-year-old trigger pullers who see this technology as an ability to put themselves in the safety of an invisible sphere without being in body armour or being in a tank," added Quinn, who was quick to highlight that Maars also had the

ability to apply non-lethal force by projecting the operator's voice through loudspeakers, or to pulse a green, eye-safe laser to dazzle people.

"The soldier is still in complete control of the weapon, only it is not his feet moving it. However, it is his brain, his hand and his eye that is controlling where

that robot goes and when the trigger is pulled. He can also make that decision to pull the trigger without the adrenaline and intense pressure of knowing that if he doesn't, he may not be around to pull the trigger."

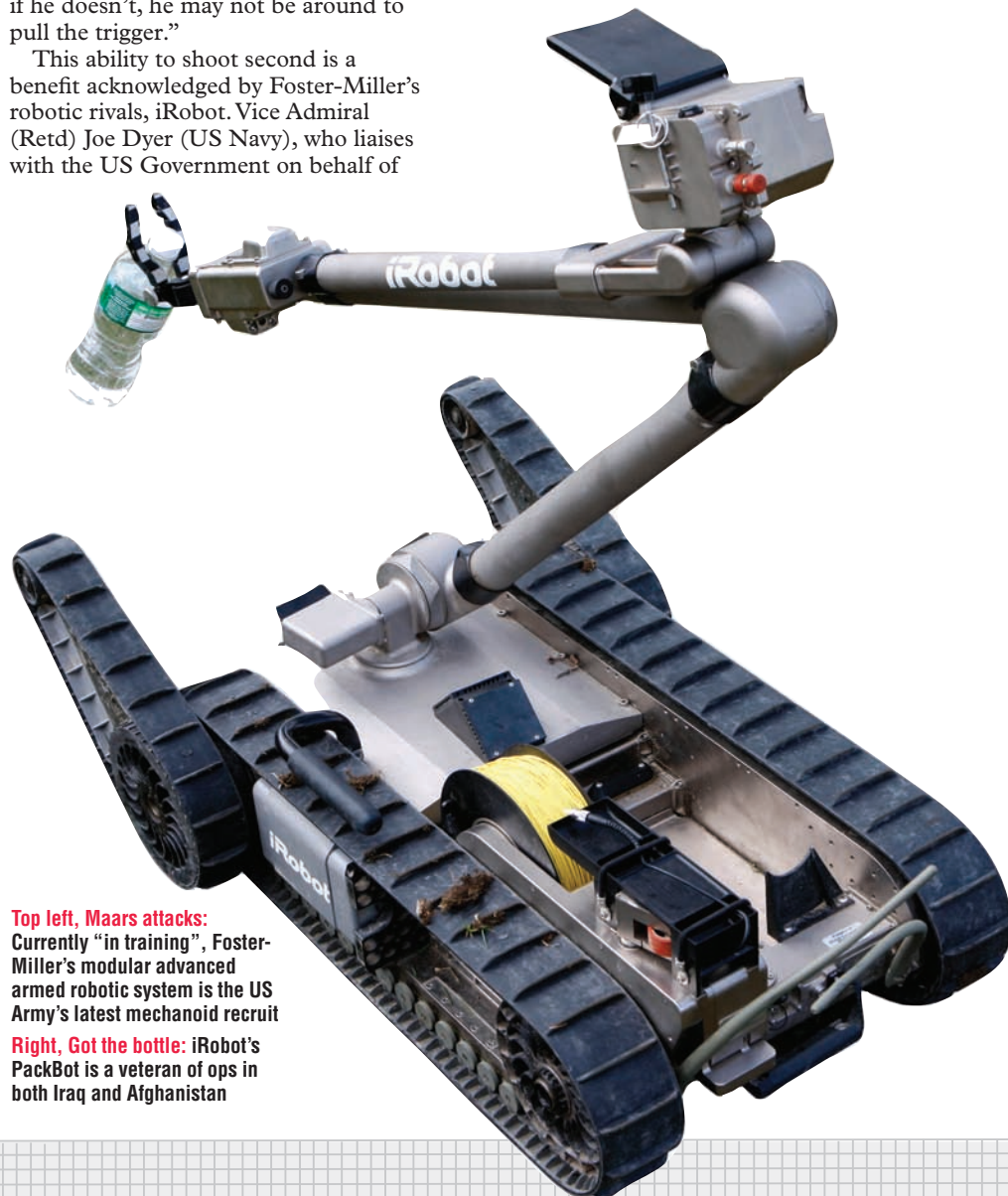
This ability to shoot second is a benefit acknowledged by Foster-Miller's robotic rivals, iRobot. Vice Admiral (Retd) Joe Dyer (US Navy), who liaises with the US Government on behalf of

the company, believes that, regardless of any ethical debate, computer-controlled combatants are an inevitable next stage in the evolution of robots. "We've seen this pattern of a system first being employed in tactical reconnaissance and then being able to strike before," he said. "Aircraft followed that mould, UAVs followed that mould and I fully expect ground robots to follow that mould."

R2-D2 may not approve, but the Taliban represent a far more wily enemy than plastic-armoured stormtroopers. ■

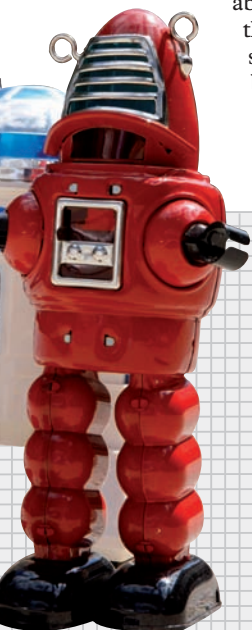
● Building Empires – Pages 78-79

"We have had a lot of weird and wonderful ideas along the way"



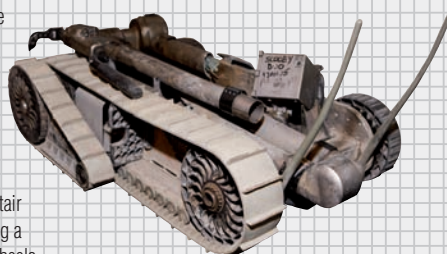
Top left, Maars attacks: Currently "in training", Foster-Miller's modular advanced armed robotic system is the US Army's latest mechanoid recruit

Right, Got the bottle: iRobot's PackBot is a veteran of ops in both Iraq and Afghanistan



URBIE 1997

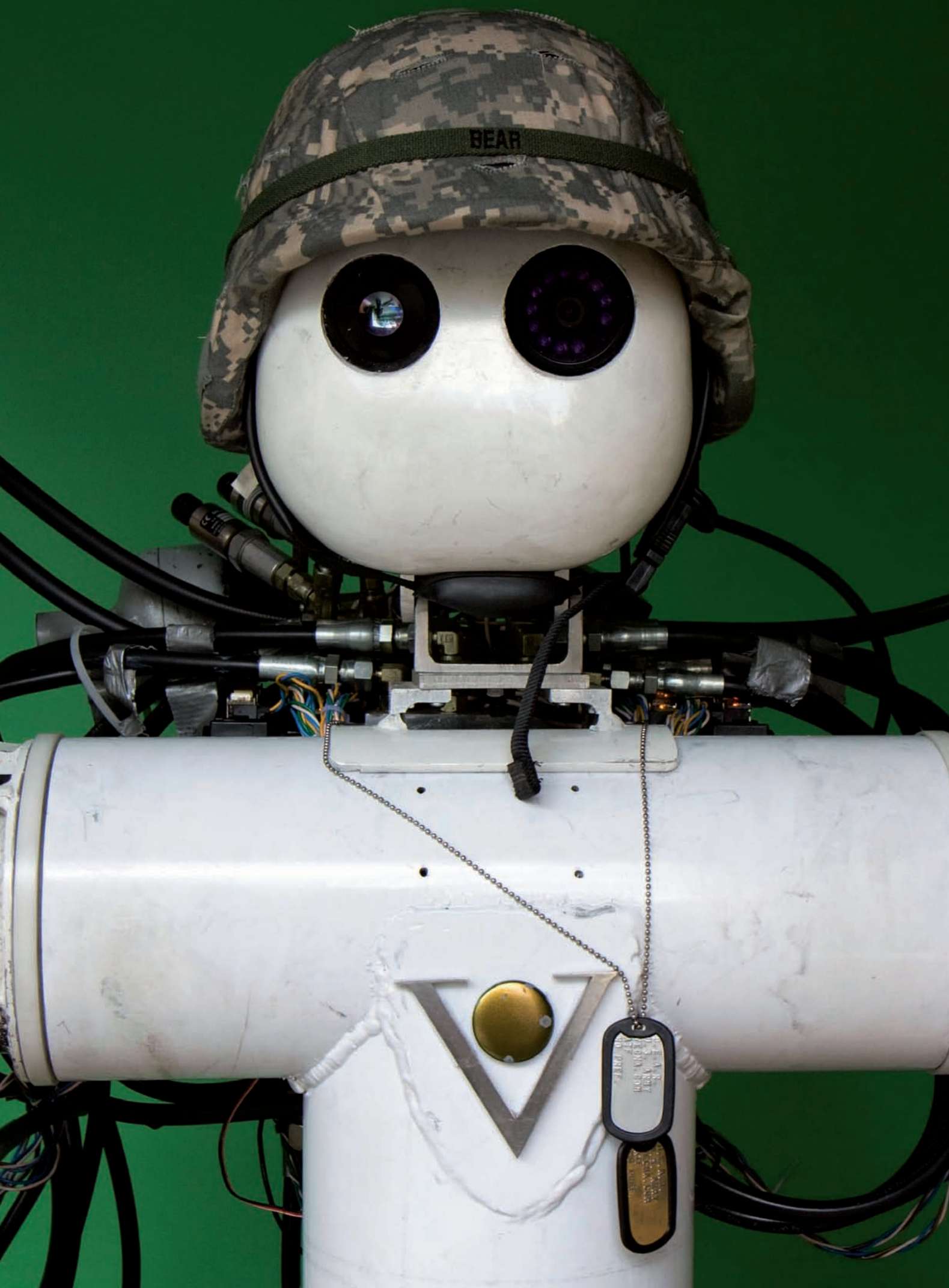
Funded by DARPA [Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency], Urbie was designed to demonstrate just how rugged and durable an urban robot could be. It answered concerns about stair climbing and curbs by using a tracked design instead of wheels.



FETCH 1997

Using behaviour-based software, these mine hunters worked in packs and were operated autonomously, directed by a distant single operator. Their advanced software and mechanical components were designed for low-cost production, so Fetch robots were easily expendable while protecting human life.

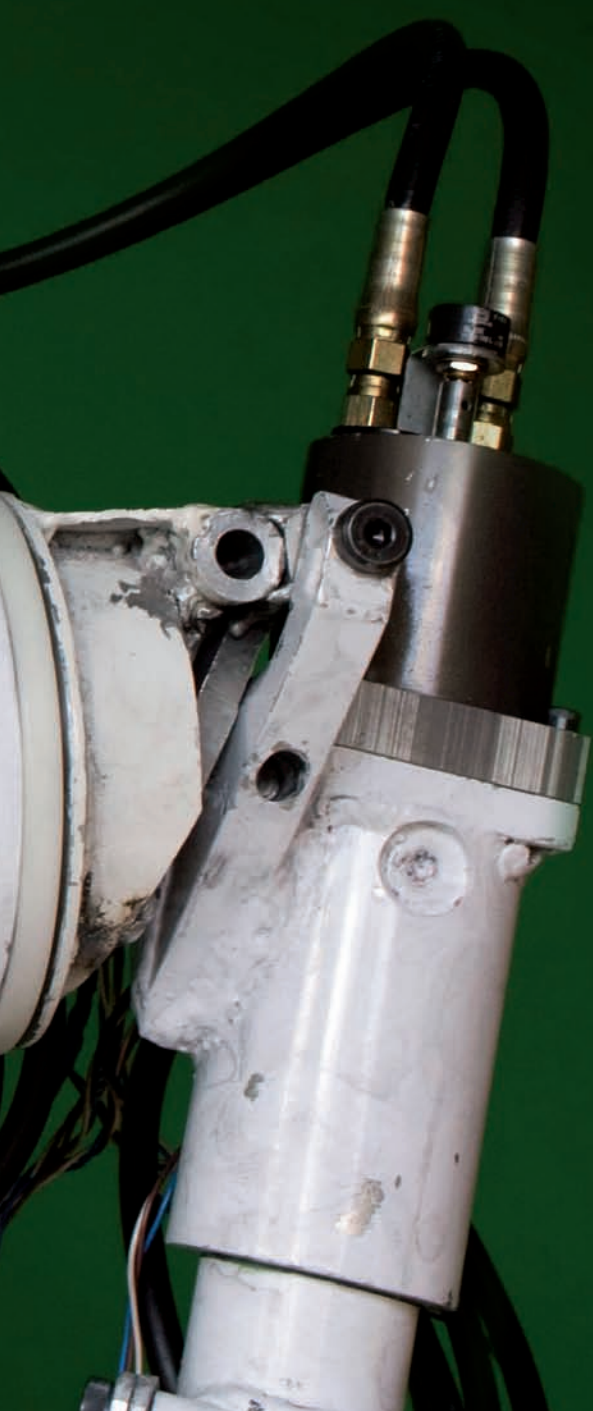




One of your patrol is down behind enemy lines, still under contact and with the Taliban closing in numbers, any rescue mission looks destined to increase the casualty count. All is not lost though, the US Army is working on a solution to provide the . . .

BEAR NECESSITIES

. . . for a successful extraction



Report: Andy Simms

LEAVE no man behind – the military mantra immortalised by Hollywood hit *Black Hawk Down* – is being selflessly stuck to by British and American troops on the front line of the war on terror.

The unwritten code among soldiers has been demonstrated to the extreme in the Taliban-plagued badlands of Afghanistan.

Early last year four commandos launched a daring and extraordinary mission to rescue the body of a comrade from an enemy stronghold in Helmand by strapping themselves to two Apache gunships.

And in September 2007, Capt Simon Cupples (2 Mercian) was awarded the Conspicuous Gallantry Cross for leading a team to recover casualties during a ferocious engagement with heavily-armed Taliban fighters in Garmsir, Helmand province.

Sadly such acts of gallantry often come at a tremendous price.

Last summer Cpl Rodney Wilson (4 Rifles) was shot and killed as he stepped into heavy fire during an attempt to rescue a wounded colleague in the district of al-Atiyah in southern Iraq and more than half of the medals of honour earned by US combat medics are awarded posthumously.

In a bid to preserve the lives of those racing to the aid of the fallen, the US military is developing a robot to help carry injured soldiers away from the battlefield. »



Standing at 6ft tall, it is anticipated that the Battlefield Extraction-Assist Robot (Bear) will be scooping up even the heaviest of casualties and transporting them to safety over long distances and over rough terrain within four years.

Combining a hybrid tracked/legged design with dynamic balancing and a high-strength upper body capable of lifting up to a 500lb load (more than twice its own weight), Bear has been developed to go just about anywhere a human can.

When kneeling the robot's tracked legs allow it to travel tank-like over rubble and when standing it can step over obstacles, go up and down stairs and even climb.

Immune to nuclear, biological and chemical agents, Bear can also pick up the wounded in areas where the threat to human life cannot be assessed.

Andreas Hofmann, a project manager at Vecna Technologies, which is developing the robot for the US Army, told *Soldier*: "You only have to turn on the news to hear an example of a soldier getting wounded or killed while trying to recover an injured colleague.

"The Bear is designed to extract those casualties without a human having to put themselves in the line of fire.

"Its mission is to get the wounded soldier to a safe location where they can then be treated by a medic.

"Although Bear is still a prototype it is fully functional," Hofmann added. "Within two years we expect to be field testing and within four years it will be ready to deploy.

"There are a lot of sceptics out there but there are also a lot of visionaries and sooner rather than later this sort of capability is inevitable.

"There are a lot of things that people said we would not be able to do that we have already done and that helps to dispel some of the scepticism.

"If we can use the Bear to reliably extract combat casualties we'll save a lot of lives in combat situations.

"But as that task is so challenging, a robot which can do that could have a lot of other applications as well."

While the existing prototype slides its hydraulic arms under its burden like a forklift before lifting in a single smooth movement, to avoid causing pain to wounded soldiers, Hofmann and the team at Vecna are busy fine-tuning Bear's bedside manner.

Future versions of the android ambulance will be fitted with manoeuvrable hands to gently scoop up casualties and although Bear is not blessed with the dexterity of a surgeon, it is being "taught" to assess injuries and based on its diagnosis adjust the way it holds an injured soldier.

The mechanised medic's teddy bear-style features have also been designed with the patient in mind and are intended to put the wounded at ease, according to Hofmann.

"It's important that Bear has a friendly appearance," he said. "There are some researchers – particularly in Japan – that are trying to make robots that look very, very human."

"They give them human-like skin and hair but the problem with them is that they look creepy because it is very hard to get it looking right."

"A better approach is to try to make the robot cute in a cartoon type of way."

"The reaction we don't want from soldiers is, 'if I saw something like that coming towards me I'd shoot it – even if it was coming to rescue me'."

There is, however, more to Bear than just good looks and it is the robot's superior intellect that developers hope will win the hearts of its human colleagues.

Although Bear is controlled remotely and

has cameras and microphones through which an operator sees and hears, the level of autonomy it offers is significantly greater than the simple remote-control driving and tele-operation common in today's established battlefield robots.

Troops deploying Bear will simply tell it what task needs to be performed and the robot will figure out the "how" itself.

"Soldiers don't have to tell Bear every little detail as to what needs to be done," explained Vecna's Patrick Sweetser.

"There will be no need to tell it go 200ft, turn left and avoid this and that."

"The soldier operating Bear doesn't have to worry about the details of

the robot's exact movements.

"Using lasers and sensors, Bear's pre-programming means that it is smart enough to realise how to navigate obstacles and smart enough not to endanger itself."

"The soldier will be more of a coach than an operator."

Despite its high IQ, Bear will of course run the same risks as human rescuers, but as the first-generation of EOD robots in theatre have shown, putting hi-tech humanoids in harm's way, rather than troops, is a price worth paying.

"One shot could hit the brain and put Bear out of action," admitted Sweetser. "We're currently developing different types of metal and Teflon to use as a shield, but will Bear be immune to everything? Obviously, no."

"However, if Bear does happen to get blown up, there will be no need for a commanding officer to send a letter home to its parents." ■

THE BEAR FACTS

- Teddy bear face designed to be reassuring

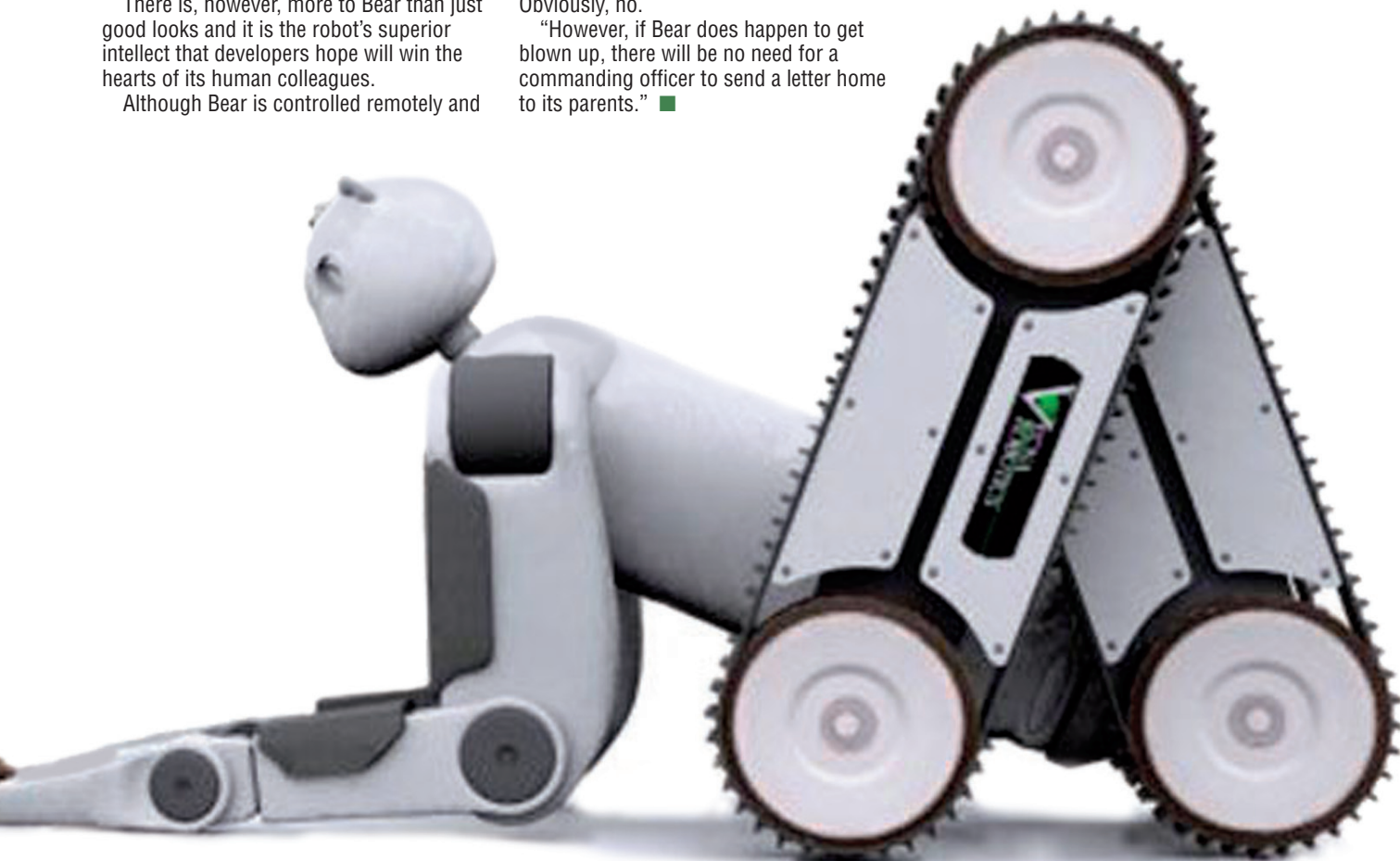
- Head contains a visible-light camera as one "eye", and an infrared camera as the other

- Articulated neck provides pan and tilt motions allowing Bear to see a wide section of its surroundings

- Hydraulic torso can carry up to 500lbs (227kgs)

- Arms have six degrees of freedom and have a flat, broad and soft surface to maximise comfort when lifting humans

- A hybrid tracked/legged design allows for a variety of modes of locomotion



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BFG troops feel bite of Euro credit crunch

AM writing to highlight that those serving in British Forces Germany have seemingly seen a decrease in their pay since December, in spite of an annual pay rise and the fact that Local Overseas Allowance has been increased on two occasions.

Why are we expected to suffer these circumstances? I will cite my own position as an example but the situation is the same for all ranks serving in BFG.

As a Level 2 Captain my pay has increased due to the annual pay rise to £37,128.60. This breaks down to £2,109 per month after tax.

If we add to that the increased LOA it gives a total monthly income of £2,618.36. After all deductions, such as quartering charges, I am left with £2,210.36. This amount is about £200 more than I was paid in December when the forces fixed rate (FFR) was 1.5 per cent and LOA was £9.95.

Yet even with the two increases in LOA and a reported 2.4 per cent pay rise (and

PRIZE LETTER . . .

one per cent on the X-factor), when my salary is converted to Euros I am left with less money in the bank.

In December I received €2,976.57 for my £1,984.34 as opposed to the €2,895.57 I now have deposited in my account – effectively a €80 cut.

I am very fortunate in the fact that my wife works and we are able to get by. Others will not be so lucky.

Someone who requires all of their wages to live and support a family are left with less money than they had four months ago. I would simply like us to be paid as we were in December and for us to receive our Government approved pay rise (I believe we have earned it).

We are serving in BFG not out of choice

and as such we should not be financially penalised.

– Name and address supplied.

Brig Jamie Gordon, DPS(A), writes: You highlight the position that affects all those who are paid in one currency but convert the bulk of it to another.

You are not being paid less, but are being affected by the fluctuations in the currency exchange rates. The two LOA increases were as a direct result of the FFR decreases, and they do go down when the FFR increases. If we were to bring in a similar mechanism to compensate you when the Euro hardened, then we would be discussing “pay cuts” when it softened.

PS . . .

I HAVE been reading with interest recent comments on resettlement issues. I retired as a WO1 in February 1991 after 26 years' service and joined the RUC the following year.

When I left the police in 2005 I received a substantial tax-free lump sum and a reasonable pension as part of my retirement package. In addition I received three months of resettlement training (on full pay).

Each officer retiring had a “pool” of £5,000 on which he could draw to pay for specialised courses. During the period of resettlement officers were considered to be retired and could not be called upon to carry out duties.

While I admit it might be difficult to compare police and military roles, I am certain that many retiring Servicemen might look with some envy at the package offered to myself and my fellow officers.

I should mention that this package was exclusive to the RUC and not enjoyed by officers of other UK police forces. – Ralph Fella, ex WO1 RAOC.

JPA pension puzzlement

THE arrival of JPA has caused considerable confusion over pension/reckonable service dates for officers.

Prior to JPA, the pension date for officers was clearly stated on an individual's UNICOM record. For those joining Sandhurst at the age of 21 or older, it was identical to their enlistment date. For those joining under the age of 21, it was their 21st birthday.

However, since JPA was introduced the pension date for all personnel appears to have been omitted from an individual's record and now the earliest record of service (referred to as “hire date”) is the date of commission.

For most officers this is a difference of almost 12 months.

From a personal point of view this is very worrying as I am due to leave after exactly 16 years of service (ie 16 years to the day that I joined Sandhurst).

However, if my reckonable service date is calculated from my commissioning date I will either not be eligible for an immediate pension or will have to serve a further 11 and a half months.

I have spoken to many organisations,

including my MS Desk Officer, my Unit Admin Office and the JPAC Enquiry Centre, to seek clarification on this issue but am still left with unanswered questions.

I would be grateful if you could confirm that an officers' reckonable service date for pension starts from the date of enlistment or 21st birthday (whichever is the later) and advise why JPA cannot be amended to reflect actual pension dates. – Maj K Cradden, PSO & Reconstruction, DSTL.

Brig Jamie Gordon, DPS(A), replies: You raise an important point. Under Armed Forces Pension Scheme (AFPS) 75, reckonable service for officers is either the first day of paid service or their 21st birthday (whichever is later), and under AFPS05 it is from the first day of paid service. JPA can be amended, but unfortunately there are currently higher priorities. But, I can confirm that CAPS (the separate system which calculates pension) reflects the correct total migrated from the legacy systems, and that JPAC are now aware of the issue and will provide the correct advice to individuals.

Can I give island life a miss?

I CALLED time on my contract with the Army in January, which means my terminal leave should begin this December ahead of an end of service date in January 2009.

The problem I have is that my regiment is moving from its base at Bournon Barracks to Cyprus. With only a few months left to serve I have been told to move with the rest of the regiment and return to the UK before my terminal leave in December. I thought that soldiers with six months left in the Army were not supposed to be deployed and that the last year-and-a-half of service was to be used to prepare for life on civvy street.

Going to Cyprus only to return in a

few months is ridiculous and will leave me with just 28 days to look for work, accommodation and take any courses.

As a Commonwealth soldier with no family in the UK, I believe that I need those last six months to sort myself out. – **Kgn Ampadu, 2 Lances.**

Maj Matthew Maynard, APC, replies: The “last six months in the UK” is not a policy – it is an aspiration to be met by the chain of command where and whenever possible or practicable.

It is common that it is granted from Germany, Northern Ireland, Cyprus and the Falklands. Clearly, the longer the

man's service, the more inclined his CO will be to grant it to him.

In this case, it seems as though the CO, probably for very good reasons, has decreed that everyone is going and that is entirely within his gift.

The correspondent should not confuse this with the rule on not deploying to an operational theatre if you have six months or less remaining of your service – a policy which ensures individuals can take their resettlement package without operations interfering.

Cyprus is not an operational theatre in that respect, unless you are employed on Op Tosca, which Kgn Ampadu will not be.

Anti-IED innovation

I'M not a soldier but like many members of the public I am concerned about the threat posed to the lives of our Armed Forces by roadside bombs.

It occurred to me that the kind of equipment used by archaeologists to map buried items could be adapted to help detect these devices.

Archaeologists use a handheld radar to find objects – whether they be metal, remnants of a building, a hole or covered

ditch – and this technology, coupled with a GPS system, could be repackaged to fit into a small four-wheeled, radio-controlled vehicle or hovercraft.

These vehicles could then be deployed ahead of patrols to scan roads and surrounding areas and transmit their findings back to the troop commander or following vehicle. I see no reason why this could not be achieved – it's got to be worth a try. – **Mr Del Cook.**



“All I seem to be getting is *The Simpsons*.”

PS...

I READ with interest the “laundered money” letter (July) and beg to differ with Brig Gordon's reply.

I work for a well known cash delivery company and wear a uniform. A year or so ago the company negotiated a laundry allowance with HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC).

I will quote a paragraph from the company letter to its employees: “The payment is being paid to reimburse you for the costs of dry cleaning/laundrying your uniform.

“The rate of £1 per day has been agreed with HMRC. The laundry payment is being administered via a salary sacrifice agreement whereby you give up a portion of salary and receive the payment. As the laundry payment is free of tax and NIC your net pay will increase as a result of receiving the payment.”

The Armed Forces pay tax and National Insurance contributions so cannot therefore be treated any differently to other payers of these charges. I would suggest the MoD task somebody to speak to HMRC. – **Victor Hunt, Belfast (ex-RAPC/AGC (SPS)).**

Difficult to swallow

HOW much longer is the MoD going to force feed us the poor diet of PAYD? It insists that the scheme is a great idea, but for who exactly – the firms operating it or their customers?

Everyone I've spoken to agrees that you get more for your money at the local fast food outlet. Soldiers are usually penniless by the first weekend of every month, so what makes the MoD think PAYD will change their spending habits? As for the credit scheme whereby a soldier pays for what he has eaten at the end of the month, if he has no money left he's going to be in hot water – after all it's against Queen's Regulations for a soldier to be in debt.

And if it is such a good idea, why are some cookhouses installing cafes providing junk food which is either cheaper or the same price as the PAYD hotplate, but offering bigger portions?

Over the 21 years of my career I have been amazed at what excellent food the chefs have been able to produce in all circumstances, but in the PAYD establishments that I have eaten it is usually a case of poor standards, poor portions, limited choice and high prices. A slice of

bread costs 70p! I can buy a loaf for that price. What's happened to our catering service? – **Name and address supplied.**

Brig Jamie Gordon, DPS(A) responds: I disagree with everything you say except the bit about the excellent food our chefs produce. PAYD was introduced to ensure that soldiers only paid for what they ate.

I've also spoken to soldiers and their answers to me were at odds with what you say. Furthermore, as far as finances are concerned, AGAI Vol 3, Chap 89 states that “formal Service action will only be taken in cases of persistent and irresponsible indebtedness”. Being put back on the Food Charge for a limited period, until the financial situation can be resolved, does not constitute persistent and irresponsible indebtedness.

If there's a problem with food quantity, or quality, this should be raised at unit messing meetings, or directly with the QM. If he or she wishes to call AD CRL on 94331 5559 he would be pleased to discuss. In particular, he would wish to know in what circumstances anyone was charged 70p for a slice of bread.

Aftercare

A LETTER in the last issue, "Thwarted by policy", expressed the frustration experienced in attempting to change an outpatient department appointment at Selly Oak Hospital.

The Defence Medical Services Department (DMSD) response provided advice on what action to take if the patient needed to complain to the NHS, but, after further consideration, I thought it would be helpful to offer information on how soldiers get outpatient appointments and how they can get help if the service does not meet their needs.

Because of the special features of military healthcare, soldiers usually have a different mechanism for getting a scheduled hospital appointment compared with their civilian counterparts. If Service personnel wish to alter their planned appointments, they should do so through their Service medical centre in the first instance.

If soldiers are dissatisfied with the appointments service they receive, military patients can follow the formal complaints procedure either through their medical centre or through the relevant Military Patients Administration Centre if the care is provided by a MoD Hospital Unit or the Royal Centre for Defence Medicine at Selly Oak. Complaint forms and procedures are readily available at Service medical centres and at MDHU and RCDM administration cells. – *Sqn Ldr Trevor Hooper, SO2 Assessment and Audit, DMSD.*



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Call 0845 241 4820 or visit www.armybenfund.org

SFA grades need regrading

IT IS time a new system was put in place to grade Service Families Accommodation (SFA). I live in a 1960s-built house graded as type 4 grade 1. No problem there – if only it met my expectations as the best the MoD has to offer.

Putting a lockable silver box in the bathroom and fitting a more modern kitchen is great but it is far from top-of-the-range. Having a utility room that is not viable as a utility room because of the water and gas pipes, taps and electric cables that stick out everywhere, but nevertheless meets the

minimum measurements for classification, does not warrant as big a plus point as it is given in the assessment. Neither does adding more plug points.

With energy bills hitting all-time highs surely there is money available to cavity wall fill all military housing, upgrade loft insulation and improve central heating. My radiators are massively inefficient, costing me and the environment. If I was a civilian I could get a grant from the government to improve the energy efficiency of my house. – *Name and address supplied.*

Brig Jamie Gordon, DPS(A) writes: I agree, which is why a new system is being developed and is nearing completion.

Criteria for the grading of housing have been modernised, duplication and subjectivity have been removed, and energy efficiency and overall estate environment will be considered.

It is too early to say exactly when the new system will be introduced, but it will not be this year as some important issues remain to be resolved, not least that we want to be sure that rent is fair.

Bad call on call-out issue

IN the July issue of *Talkback*, Lt Col (Retd) Lockyer replied to a letter from a reservist regarding eligibility for the Queen's Volunteer Reserve Medal. He stated that: "Although FTRS [Full-Time Reserve Service] personnel are employed under the Reserve Forces Act, they are under no obligation to call-out". I would like to point out that this is not true.

When I began my current FTRS engagement it was made clear to me by staff at RTMC Chilwell, and also in the relevant DIN, that I remained eligible for compulsory call-out under the Reserve Forces Act should it be deemed necessary. That said, the likelihood of call-out for those engaged on FTRS is considerably reduced compared to normal volunteer reserves given a FTRS person's "day job". – *Name and address supplied.*

PS...

I RECENTLY had trouble securing my family a house with the necessary number of bedrooms. The Army must accept one grade below entitlement if there is a shortage, while the RAF get what they are entitled to or a private let. Does this mean that airmen are more important than soldiers or that an air marshal has more clout than a general? – *Name and address supplied.*

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Equality policy misadventure

HAVE just read the Chief of the General Staff's equality and diversity directive for the Army, and nowhere does it cover the discrimination of TA SNCOs.

Let me expand. Because each TA unit has a budget, one SNCO is equal to three privates in monetary terms, so when activities like adventurous training (AT) come along, SNCOs with 20 years of service are told they can't go as it's too expensive.

It's a well known fact that the TA has a 60 per cent turnover so we end up rewarding a lot of troops who will leave within three years at the expense of those who have stuck with it. Also, by giving AT to privates and lance corporals, there is little incentive for them to progress to higher ranks as they can see they will be beaten with the budget stick. – **WO2 A Wilkins (V).**

Lt Col (Retd) A Jackson, SO2 TOS Res, replies: The Army is proud of its equality and diversity policies which promote equal treatment of all regardless of colour,

race, religion, belief, gender, sexual orientation or disability. Differences between ranks and types of engagement are inevitable products of experience, responsibility and commitment.

This particular case is one of training priorities. A TA CO will utilise his man-training days (MTD) in accordance with his own priorities. His duty is to produce well-trained, well-motivated soldiers and adventurous training is a brilliant way of showing younger members the advantages of challenging pursuits. It is an excellent aid to retention and team building.

Unfortunately resources are limited. AT costs money both in MTD and in ancillary costs, therefore the CO needs to consider who will benefit most. Is it his young soldiers and JNCOs, as an aid to leadership development, or his warrant officers who have already demonstrated their leadership qualities in order to have been promoted and who are likely to have experienced AT already?



PS...

UNA Hanson's letter, "Counselling services not in demand" (July), captures the dilemma that exists in the closed shop of the Defence Mental Health Service: the pool of therapeutic talent that exists outside; the user demand for quicker, unmedicated, non-stigmatising services; and the apparent inability of DMHS and Primary Care Trusts to use discretion and judgement to access external resources to make available the treatment choices that exist.

One hope is that past and present Service personnel increasingly recognise that they have an individual right to access any treatment they choose, but at present they have to find, assess and pay for it themselves. I am prepared to help them find and assess it. – **Col (Retd) Tony Gauvain, tony.gauvain@btinternet.com**

Not so good to talk

I TOOK out a mobile phone contract in June 2006 with Vodafone in Germany. All was well until I lost the phone and reported this to Vodafone.

After a new SIM card was delivered, I went to the Vodafone shop in the Marktkauf complex at Bielefeld to buy a new phone, but was advised by the salesman to take out a new contract. He said he would cancel the old one so I could get a second free phone. Thereafter I began receiving two bills and when I questioned this the salesman denied ever serving me.

The Vodafone offices in Dusseldorf and Berlin admitted I should not have been sold two contracts to a domestic address, and conceded that it had probably been done to gain more commission.

They agreed to terminate my new contract at a cost of €1,775 (£1,400) even

though the SIM had been in use for only one month. Army Legal Services tried to help me, but were unable to do so.

I have spoken to others who are having similar problems with Vodafone and I strongly advise anyone arriving in Germany, in any area, not to sign a contract with this company. They have no concern for their customers. – **Unhappy SNCO, Germany (name and address supplied).**

Christina Barbosa, Vodafone, responds: Our customer services have checked the soldier's files and they found that some mistakes were made by the Vodafone shop. We have now cancelled the new contracts and stopped the "inkasso" case immediately. The soldier in question has received a telephone call from us and we will also be writing to him to apologise.

Mess up in mess costs?

AS a dining (living-in) member of the WOs' and Sgts' Mess, I am forced to pay double the subscriptions of that of a non-dining (living-out) member in compliance with Queen's Regulations.

This money goes straight into the General Purpose Fund (GPF) and the living-in members get nothing extra in return. Surely this is a classic case of discrimination and the matter should be addressed with all members paying the same amounts based

on rank. – **Name and address supplied.**

Brig Jamie Gordon, DPS(A), writes: You make a fair point. The original logic underpinning this rule was that livers-in would benefit more from the GPF than livers-out because they spend more time in the mess. In view of the changes to messes brought about by PAYD and contractorisation, this rule may be due for review – **my staff will look into it.**

PS...

WHY is it that soldiers in the UK get no help with the cost of fuel but soldiers in Germany do? Having served in Germany, I found it to be cheaper than it is here.

Surely the fact that diesel has reached up to £1.40 a litre in some places means it is time for UK soldiers to get some help like the fuel coupon system used in Germany. – **LBdr Hilton, 32 Regt RA.**



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Lack of joined-up thinking

THE purpose of my letter is to draw attention to the rest of the British Army that there is very little joint about JPA.

I am a soldier serving with 3 Commando Brigade and will do so for my whole career. It has come to my attention that ranks in the Royal Navy (including the Royal Marines) and Royal Air Force do not pay for their accommodation if they are serving married unaccompanied, regardless of age.

In the Army we have the over 37 package and I am nowhere near that age.

I'm not alone. Eighty per cent of my battery's SNCOs are married unaccompanied. We live in a mess where we pay £150 more for the same facilities as someone who is a Royal Marine serving married unaccompanied.

I am sure that Army-wide there are thousands of soldiers at all ranks serving married unaccompanied suffering the same



"I'm not exactly sure what all the fuss is, but I'm guessing it's something to do with separation allowance."

discrimination. My question is this: Under JPA how is this possible? Even if the JPA

regulations are changed so all Services are on a level playing field, will I have my accommodation charges repaid? Doubtful. – Sgt J Ingleby, 7 Sphinx Cdo Bty, 29 Cdo RA.

Brig Jamie Gordon, DPS(A), responds:

The inconsistency you outline in your letter is one of a small number of allowances/charge policies which were not harmonised across all three Services when JPA was introduced.

Irrespective of their age/length of service, RN/RM and RAF personnel have their single accommodation charges waived if they choose to serve unaccompanied and live in.

For the Army the over 37 provision means that this only applies to soldiers who are 37 and over.

My team are currently reviewing this known inconsistency.

Climb in kilt-swinging costs

I WISH to highlight the ongoing saga with the issue of kit for SNCOs, WOs and officers within The Royal Regiment of Scotland.

I'm sure I'm not the only one within the regiment who has a gripe with members purchasing kit which should be issued. We are expected, or in most cases told, to pay for blue jerseys, shirts and belts (which cost in the region of £170-£250).

There is also the matter of "grandfather's rights" in relation to mess kit (worth more than £400), with the time scale for the switch to buying the new Scots' mess dress shortened from five years.

I know that the issue of kit to the front line is the priority, but we still need to recruit to sustain the soldier on ops.

Kilt-swinging during ceremonial parades helps to drive recruitment. This side of issuing equipment has been neglected and needs to be actioned quickly. I am proud to serve with the Scots, although I feel strongly that we're letting the traditions of the

antecedent regiments slip away. – Name and address supplied.

Brig Jamie Gordon, DPS(A), replies:

Some articles of clothing are not publicly funded because it is a regiment's choice to have these items in different designs and colours to those issued. The five-year term associated with "grandfather's rights" for SNCOs' mess kit is customary and designed to ensure fairness to those with little time left to serve. I understand that your regiment is urging those remaining in the Army after March 28, 2011 to make the transition sooner, but again this is an internal matter between you, your colleagues and Regimental Committee.

I agree it's important that local communities see more of us in uniform. To this end, the Army is introducing new Service and Barrack Dress uniforms across both the Regular Army and the TA, with FIS regiments as a priority.

PS...

I'M writing in response to the reply given to "Get on your bike" (July). I find it very difficult to accept that the Army cannot integrate a Government scheme tailored to major employers into JPA. The system must be under contract and therefore it should be possible to have a salary sacrifice programme written into it.

The Cycle to Work scheme benefits both the employer and employee through a reduced National Insurance contribution. In addition it would undoubtedly encourage Service personnel to build-up their fitness. This coupled with rising fuel costs set against the stagnant fuel benefits we receive from the Army underlines the case for inclusion.

Introducing the scheme should be dealt with as a priority and not fobbed off as something being considered. – Name and address supplied.

PS...

UNFORTUNATELY your article "Medal row rumbles" (July) about the wearing of the Pingat Jasa Malaysia was of no concern to those who served during the most intense period of the Emergency, 1949-1957.

We were never awarded the medal. Forgotten by our own government when campaign medals were given out and insulted by the Malaysian administration when excluded from the award. – Richard Scott, ex-Suffolk Regiment, Canada.

Medal rule hits duff note

A COLLEAGUE was nominated for the Meritorious Service Medal (MSM) for his work with the Cadet Forces and their bands.

Despite his huge efforts and many supporting his case for a MSM, because of his rank (that of lance sergeant) he doesn't qualify as he isn't considered senior enough. He has completed 28 years of service to the crown and cannot understand why he would be excluded because of a rank issue. Did this happen in Pte Beharry's case? Of course not. Maybe the ruling on this medal is out of date. Medals should be awarded on effort and

bravery and not be rank dependent. – Name and address supplied.

Lt Col (Retd) Peter Lockyer, Medal Office, writes: Personnel are eligible for consideration for the award of the Meritorious Service Medal after they have achieved 20 years' service and obtained at least the rank of sergeant. Lance sergeant is below this level.

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Issues Army must get its teeth into

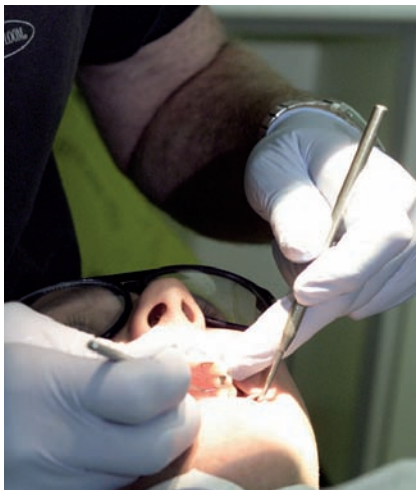
ONE of the reasons Brig Ed Butler cited for leaving the Army was “there’s no point in having a family if you’re not going to see them”. And according to the House of Commons Defence Committee’s (HCDC) report on retention in the Armed Forces, he is not alone in that belief.

The report revealed that the key threat to keeping hold of Service personnel was the impact of a life in uniform on their family and personal lives, and that married soldiers were twice as likely to leave on the grounds that the military was affecting their quality of life. I can fully accept this, as many families are spending more and more time apart – not just because of operations, but with the associated training and back-filling due to a shortage of manpower.

This report discussed welfare provision in the light of retention, in particular that welfare officers are overstretched, which should hardly come as a surprise given the current calls on the Services.

However, welfare is key to operational effectiveness. A soldier is less likely to be able to maintain their focus in theatre if phone calls from home suggest that the family is not receiving the support it should. This is not to bemoan the welfare officers, rather the funding and resources they have available and the areas of welfare that should be taken for granted, such as housing and finding a dentist.

Accessing a NHS dentist should not really be exacerbated by Service life – we are all entitled to treatment under the NHS. However, recent changes to the NHS contract mean there are fewer dentists available and so Service families constantly find that they are at the bottom of the waiting list.



‘Families are still having difficulties finding a dentist’

This issue was raised at the AFF Conference in June and we were told that dentists don’t have “lists” any more, they have “capacity”. Well, whatever the term, families are still having difficulties finding a NHS dentist.

The other arm of welfare which causes significant dissatisfaction is of course Service Families Accommodation (SFA). I am encouraged that the HCDC report cited confusion over the contractorisation of the maintenance, the lack of availability of SFA and lack of customer service provided by Defence Estates (DE). These issues reflect exactly what the families are telling AFF.

If good quality housing is supposed to be a fundamental part of the welfare package, then it is not surprising that this is a key

area of concern. The MoD expects to spend £8.4 billion on accommodation over the next ten years.

However, DE have 71,000 SFA and 165,000 Single Living Accommodation bed spaces. This is a huge estate to look after, and while such investment is welcome, how much will actually be achieved with this sum?

The availability of SFA is a real worry. Without an address for the next posting, the family cannot organise their lives – education, health and a second income all depend upon this one piece of information.

Difficulties in supplying addresses are multifaceted and not aided by the postings and moving information being disjointed. Families have a responsibility to let DE know when they are posted and to leave their SFA in good order, but with that responsibility comes a right to receive good customer care.

Comments such as “we’re not here to work around you” do not really help.

As the HCDC report stated, the MoD is wrong in its assessment that customer satisfaction levels have improved significantly over the past 12 months – in this arm of welfare there is still much room for improvement.

Good welfare support helps alleviate the stresses and strains of Service life, but where welfare is not so good the effect of overstretch will be exacerbated.

With the recent announcement that troop numbers in Iraq will be reduced significantly in 2009, we could hope that things will ease in future – except that Des Browne has hinted that troop numbers in southern Afghanistan need to be doubled.

I wonder if the welfare budget will be doubled to reflect that? ■

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This is something we need to be wary

of as banks, worried about the impact of increasing bad debt, have not only been restricting who they are lending to but are also increasing the cost to those they will lend to. It is vital that you know the rules about this type of borrowing and familiarise yourself with your bank’s associated interest rates and charges.

Any overdraft facility should be viewed as an emergency source and not used to cover repeated overspending. Like credit cards they are one of the most expensive ways to borrow money, so unless it is done for short term benefit (ie clearing your credit card balance every month to avoid charges), don’t do it. If you do use an overdraft, agree a limit with the bank beforehand and stick

to it. This should work out cheaper than unauthorised borrowing or credit card debt, where interest rates can exceed 20 per cent.

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NO. 802

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A photocopy is acceptable, but only one entry per person may be submitted. First correct entry drawn after the closing date will win £100; the second and third will receive £25 gift vouchers. The results will be announced in the November issue.

Name: (Give initials and rank or title)

Address:

July competition (No 800): First correct entry drawn at random and winner of the £100 prize was **ATpr M Sullivan** (9 AAC), Dishforth Airfield, Thirsk. Runners-up **Mr W Davison**, Aylesbury and **LCpl M J Harris**, Dale Barracks, Chester each win a £25 gift voucher.

The ten differences were: picture in frame; Mercedes-Benz badge; foot-hole in half-track vehicle; machine gun grip; 'la' on sign; badge on arm; carrot; bayonet; eye balls in tank; axle pin on track.



Winner of our July competition (inset):

A COPY of Steven Pressfield's *Killing Rommel* is winging its way to Graham Drew from the Army School of Ammunition in Warwickshire for his suggestion: **"The mileage on these Smart Cars is very good – only three pairs of boots from London to Catterick."**

The hot topics of fuel consumption and environmentally-friendly transport were at the heart of most replies. Among the best were: **"The new CO is REALLY keen to reduce the units' carbon footprint"** from Ian Goodwin-Reeves, Admin Officer, 150 Recovery Company REME; Mr C B Sherratt's **"I see the rising cost of fuel is having an impact on the MT already, Sir"** and **"With the price of fuel these**



days, pedal power is the future" from LCpl Tate (MPGS), RAF Linton-on-Ouse.

Other offerings which raised a wry smile at *Soldier* HQ were: **"The Sinclair C5 was ready to be put through FRES**



The MoD's laptop policy was creating something of a problem for Soldier staff

WIN A BOOK: Write your own caption for the photo, above, from our June 1953 issue and send it to us by September 30. The best, in our opinion, will win a copy of *The Odin Mission*, James Holland's new novel introducing Second World War hero Sgt Jack Tanner (Bantam Press, £12.99).

trials" from Mr J Dickinson, 4 Yorks, and the *Snow White*-inspired **"Why don't you come down here and ask why I'm not singing 'hi-ho it's off to work I go'"** from Mr S A Harrison, Trenchard Lines.

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MOD LINKS

www.army.mod.uk

Official website of the British Army.

www.armyaviation.co.uk

A privately-run forum dedicated to Army aviation. The forum is for ALL cap badges associated with Army aviation and all are welcome. Membership is comprised of mainly AAC personnel but we would like to see more REME faces on the site.

www.armynet.mod.uk/armysafety

Website of HQ Land Command's chief environment and safety officer.

www.armyrugbyunion.mod.uk

The latest information on match reports, fixtures, ticket and equipment sales, and contact details for all Army Rugby Union teams. See how the most popular and successful sports team in the Army is doing.



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www.rememuseum.org.uk

REME Museum of Technology.

www.armymuseums.org.uk

The Army Museums Ogilby Trust website, approved by the MoD as the definitive guide to regimental and corps museums.

www.kingsownmuseum.plus.com

King's Own Royal Regiment Museum, Lancaster.

ArmyNET always in contact
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Armed Forces Christian Union: 01252 311221; www.afcu.org.uk

Army Benevolent Fund: 0845 241 4820

Army Welfare Information Service: 01722 436569; www.army.mod.uk/soldierwelfare/supportagencies/awf

Army Families Federation: 01980 615525

British Limbless Ex-Service Men's Association: 020 8590 1124; www.blesma.org

Career Transition Partnership: 0207 766 8020

Children's Education Advisory Service: 01980 618244; enquiries.ceas@gt.net

Confidential support lines: UK 0800 731 4880; Germany 0800 1827 395; Cyprus 080 91065; Falklands #6111; from operational theatres Paradigm Services *201; from anywhere in the world (CSL operator will call back) +44 1980 630854. Lines open 1030-2230 (UK) every day.

Ex-Services Mental Welfare Society: 01372 841600; www.combatstress.com

Family Escort Service: 0207 463 9249

Forces Pension Society: 0207 820 9988

Joint Service Housing Advice Office: 01722 436575

MoD Medal Office: Medal queries to JPAC Enquiry Centre on 94560 3600 or 0141 224 3600

Mutual Support (Forces Multiple Sclerosis support group): 07962 023654, 01803 311527; www.mutualsupport.org.uk; email welfaresupport@mutualsupport.org.uk

National Gulf Veterans' and Families' Association Office: (0900-1700); 24-hour helpline 0845 257 4853; www.ngvfa.org.uk; fax 01482 808731

Regular Forces' Employment Association: 0121 2360058; www.rfea.org.uk

Royal British Legion: 0845 7725 725

RBL Industries Vocational Assessment Centre: 01622 795900; www.rbli.co.uk

St Dunstan's charity for blind ex-Servicemen and women: 0207 723 5021; www.st-dunstans.org.uk

SAMA 82 (South Atlantic Medal Association) Falklands conflict veterans: 01495 227577

Services Cotswold Centre: 01225 810358

SSAFA Forces Help: 020 7403 8783; Western Europe 02161 472 3392

Service Personnel and Veterans Agency (SPVA): 0800 169 2277 (from UK); 0044 1253 866043 (from overseas); Medical Assessment Programme: 0800 169 5401

Victim Support: Germany 02161 472 2272; UK 0845 3030900; www.victimsupport.org

WRVS (24-hr answer service): 02920 739016; general enquiries 02920 739016

Reunions

1 Royal Green Jackets/43rd and 52nd Ox and Bucks Light Infantry. Reunion will take place at Slade Park Barracks on Sept 6, starting at 1900. Open to all past and present riflemen. Contact Maj (Retd) Peter Casson-Crook on 01865 780123 or Mike Marr on 01865 780128.

Royal Hampshire Regiment: Reunion luncheon for TA battalions, Sept 27 at 1200, Southampton University OTC, 32 Carlton Place, Southampton. Contact Maj I Taylor, 4 Cedar Wood Close, Fair Oak, Eastleigh, Hants SO50 7LN, phone 02380 694771 or email ian.p.b.taylor@btinternet.com

Black Watch Band: Reunion at Queen's Barracks, Perth on Oct 4 at 1930. 7 Scots Central Band, open to all members and families, cost £10.00. Bring your instruments. Contact WO2 S Malcolm on 0131 310 8554 or email highlandbandrrs@btconnect.com

RADC: WO's & Sgt's Mess Dinner Club Oct 17 at Duchess of Kent WO's & Sgt's Mess, Aldershot. All ex-members, serving and retired are welcome. Contact WO1 Rob Pratt, DDS Complex, Evelyn Wood Road, Aldershot GU11 2LS or ring 01252 347780.

1 Troop, 23 Fd Sqn RE: 50th reunion, Oct 18, at Chiseldon, Wilts for all who served in Cyprus and Jordan in 1958. Ring Taff Harris on 01437 768668.

RMAS Edinburgh Coy WSC 921: Reunion on Oct 18 at HQ RLC Officers' Mess, Deepcut. Email Maj Lucy Giles or Amanda Hassell on lucy_nick@yahoo.co.uk or 990hasse@armymail.mod.uk

Alex Soyer Dinner: Officers' Mess, St Omer Barracks, Aldershot on Oct 30. Dress black tie. Attendees Officers who have completed the Food Service Officers'/Food Supply Officers' courses or are currently in a FS supporting role. Contact Guy Thewlis on 01252 348164 by Oct 17.

155 (WX) Transport Regt RCT (V): HQ Sqn reunion Nov 13 at the Royal British Legion, Taunton. Open to members who served at Bishops Hull TAC prior to disbandment in 1993. Contact Colin Hole with a SAE at PO Box 760, Taunton TA1 9BA.

56th Midlands Festival of Remembrance: In the Town Hall, Birmingham on Nov 2 to mark 100 years of TA. Contact F Manning, 22 Lambeth Road, Birmingham B44 9NS.

Devon Festival of Remembrance: Exeter University, Nov 6. £6 RBL members, £8 non-members. Call RBL Devon on 01392 272211.

South Notts Hussars Association: Dinner on Nov 8 at TA Centre, Bulwell, Nottingham. Past and present members with wives and partners. Ring Miss D Pover on 0115 927 2251 for tickets. Remembrance Service in St Mary's Church, Nov 9 at 1055. All ex-members of HM Forces welcome.

5th Royal Inniskilling Dragoon Guards: Southern area annual weekend at Falklands House UOTC,

Oxford. Nov 14 – regimental curry evening. Nov 15 – local military visits followed by gathering in Oxford. Ring Steven Hunt on 07823 331033 or email jwalker77@hotmail.co.uk

2009

Downside School CCF Centenary Parade: May 22, 23 and 24, 2009. Open to all OGs and families. Details WO1 R Nicholas on 01761 235163 or email rnicholas@downside.co.uk

Searchline

Janet Boyle (nee Lloyd) is trying to trace a batman **Cpl Dennis Callan**, 1st Bn Royal Northumberland Fusiliers, who served with her father Maj Derek Lloyd who lived in Yateley. Callan hailed from Newbiggin, Northumberland. Contact Victoria Boyle by email victoriaboyle@onetel.com

Searching for ex-Army Catering Corps who served with the Royal Engineers at Osnabruck or Hamlyn 1963-1966. Also with 3rd Bn City of London Fusiliers during 1967-1970, in particular **Sgt Ian Jones** and his wife April, last known address Shrewsbury in the 1980's. Contact Mike O'Brien, 12 Cowdron Road, Litherland, Liverpool L21 7GB or 0151 474 4759 or 07787 700939.

Janet Wood from Australia is trying to trace **Jeff Glen**, who joined the Royal Signals in Aldershot in the mid 1960s. Date of birth is Sept 3 or 4, 1942,43 or 44. Contact Janet at 5 Tylee Cove, Atwell WA 6161, Australia.

Vanessa Buckner is trying to trace details of her natural father, **Peter Stradling**, who was born in 1910 and in 1946 held the rank of captain. Email nessie0907@hotmail.com

The **Royal Signals Association** in South Wales invites all serving and ex-signallers living or working in the area to join the branch, which meets at the Royal Navy Club in Llanelli. Any ex-Forces personnel who do not have a local branch of their regiment or corps within easy reach are welcome to join as associate members. Contact Gerry Dean on 01792 891855 or Bert Colderick on 01792 232687.

Roadshow dates

THE Army Presentation Team wants to hear from members of the public who would like a personal invitation to attend its dynamic roadshow, which begins with a reception, is followed by a presentation and questions-and-answers session and finishes with a finger buffet. Military personnel will answer all your questions about the British Army. Call 01276 417000 or email your name and address to apt.mod@btinternet.com with the event you are interested in attending.

Sept: 23, Telford; 24, Worcester; 25, Kidderminster. **Oct:** 1, Worthing; 14, Tonbridge; 15, Camberley; 28, Liverpool; 29, Blackpool; 30, Rochdale. **Nov:** 18, Croydon; 19, Camden; 20, Chingford.



Picture: Graeme Main

Line of sight: Win a pair of Bullet Ant Tactical ballistic goggles and a Flash Survivor (pictured below)

Gadget goodies

A PRIZE that will keep troops' sight well protected is on offer from **Revision Eyewear**, who have teamed up with **Soldier** to give away three sets of Bullet Ant Tactical ballistic goggles (pictured above).

Designed to fit around the British Army MK VI helmet, the sophisticated eyewear offers protection against medium threat levels to the eye, including dust, wind and sand.

The goggles have three sets of interchangeable lenses for all light conditions. They are ideal for vehicle-based weapons operators plus fast boat and helicopter manoeuvres.

To have a chance of winning tell us the name of the nerve that connects the eye to the brain.

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Soldier has three Flash Survivor memory sticks to give away. To have a chance of winning one tell us how many bits there are in a byte.

Answers by postcard to the address at the front of the magazine or by email (comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk) to reach us by September 30.

Winners will be drawn at random from the correct answers received.

Usual rules apply.

For more information on techno gadgets go to www.corsairmemory.com

November 29-30: The 20th Birmingham Tattoo. Go to www.birminghamtattoo.co.uk for details. ■ Email diary@soldiermagazine.co.uk

Appointments

Maj Gen: C M Deverell, late RTR, to be Director General Logistics, Support and Equipment, HQ Land Forces, in Nov 08; R L Kirkland, late Green Howards, to be GOC, 4th Division, in Nov 08; A D Mackay, late King's Own Scottish Borders, to be GOC 2nd Division, in May 09.

Competitions

Long, Long, War: WO2 D Cartledge, HQ 1 (UK) Armd Div; Mrs L Yates, Sir John More Bks, Shorncliffe; Mrs S Milne, Camberley. **Answer:** The Rt Hon Peter Robinson.

Cass Pennant: K Slade, Saltford; WO2 J Davis, School of Artillery, Larkhill; CSgt C Leinster, HQ Fallingbowl, BFPO 38. **Answer:** Upton Park.

British Army Badges

By Lt Col (Retd) Robin Hodges

Cap badge

THE first badge of the Army Dental Corps, formed in 1921, had the initials ADC within a crowned laurel wreath. In 1946 the corps was made the Royal Army Dental Corps as a result of its work during the Second World War and adopted the Chinese dragon symbol of dentistry as the central feature of the new badge. Badges are worn on a green backing on the beret.



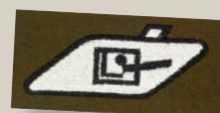
Formation sign

11 LIGHT Brigade began forming in November 2007, tasked with deploying on Op Herrick 10 in October 2009. It is planned that the brigade will disband in May 2010 on return from Afghanistan. The taurus pursuant was formerly the sign of 11th Armoured Division, which was formed in March 1941, and later worn by 33 Armoured Brigade in Germany during the Cold War.



Specialist badge

THE Royal Tank Regiment tank badge is worn on the right sleeve by all ranks, except on the black coveralls when it is worn only by officers and class 1 crewmen. The badge was introduced in 1917, by Col Sir Ernest Swinton, to identify personnel of The Heavy Branch, The Machine Gun Corps, the original unit to operate tanks.

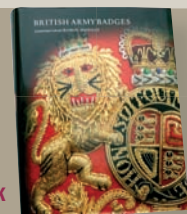


Tactical recognition flash

A CLOTH Royal Engineers' shoulder title for combat dress was introduced in the British Army of the Rhine in the 1980s. The title had spread throughout the sappers by 2003 and in 2004 it was replaced by the TRF in the same design as the stable belt.



THESE excerpts appear in **British Army Badges** by Lt Col (Retd) Robin Hodges, available from Court Hill Farm, Potterne, Devizes, SN10 5PN, tel 01380 723371. Email robinhodges@armymail.mod.uk



Defence diary

Until further notice: Helmand: The Soldiers' Story – 16 Air Assault Brigade exhibition. National Army Museum, London. Tel: 0207 730 0717.

Until September 7: The Malay Campaign 1948-1960 exhibition is on display at the Gurkha Museum, Peninsula Barracks, Winchester.

September 10: A commemorative service to mark the end of operations in Northern Ireland will take place at St Paul's Cathedral, London.

September 12: Rhythm Force, Kneller Hall, Twickenham. Visit www.army.mod.uk/music/concert/default.aspx for concert information.

September 13: TA 100 Act of Remembrance, Armed Forces Memorial, Lichfield.

September 26-28: Fundraising Royal Marine Challenge Event, Dartmoor. Visit www.dartmooryomp.co.uk for more information.

Until October 12: Free Military Pride exhibition at the Imperial War Museum North, Manchester. Go to www.iwm.org.uk/north for details.



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Applications are invited for the next Directorate of Joint Commitments (DJC) sponsored long languages courses in Arabic, Pashto and Farsi/Dari at the Defence School of Languages, Beaconsfield, which are planned to start in January 2009 and July 2009.

The DJC-sponsored courses, which last 15 months and aim for students to reach the NATO STANAG 6001 standard SLP 3 minimum professional, are run in response to the operational need for linguists in Iraq and Afghanistan and are followed by operational tours in linguistic roles.

Officers of any rank up to OF3 (Maj/Lt Cdr/Sqn Ldr) and Ratings/Other Ranks at any level may apply. The courses are open to both Regular and Reservist Service personnel of all Service branches and specialisations. Applications must be endorsed by the volunteer's Commanding Officer and personnel authority.

Selection for the courses is by interview and candidates must have completed a Modern Language Aptitude Test (MLAT) to the required standard or hold a formal qualification in a foreign language (minimum level: A Level Grade C).

For further information or to request an application form please contact WO1 Adrian Stone by telephone on 01980 615363 (civ) or 94344 5363 (mil), or by email to wo-lcg@dolsu.mod.uk or DOLSU-LCG-WO.

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Cath (48), 5', blonde, medium build and green eyes. Enjoys horses, the countryside, animals, the cinema, the theatre, reading, current affairs and socialising with friends. Works in the healthcare profession and seeking pen pals, any age group. P072

Belinda (27), 5'4", blonde with blue/green eyes. Enjoys swimming, walking, holidays, travel, pets, writing letters, the cinema, meals out and shopping. No time wasters, would like to make new friends (to keep in contact with regularly), 25-35. P073

Suzanne, ravishing redhead, ultra feminine, very pretty, ice blue eyes, lovely white smile and very shapely. Public school educated, military background, outgoing, warm, genuine, fun, playful, deep thinker with spirited nature. Enjoys fitness, running, the gym, films, music, animals, champagne, the countryside, cooking, travel and fine dining. Seeking single/divorced male officers, 43-55, based in the UK. P074

Louise, 5'6", slim blonde with blue eyes. Enjoys keeping fit, swimming, the cinema, nights out with the girls and cosy nights in with a DVD and a bottle of wine. Seeking sexy soldiers in uniform, any age group. P075

Karen (45), 5'3", attractive, slim, long dark brown wavy hair with green eyes. Bubbly, GSOH and caring. Enjoys dancing, kick boxing, cycling, travel, beach walks and keeping fit. Seeking genuine single male soldier pen pals, 30-50. All letters will be answered. P076

Dave (mid 50s), sell by date not up yet. Enjoys the countryside and animals. A very genuine bloke seeks like minded hirsute male pen pals. Genuine replies only please. P077

Female (young 58), 5'6", slim, kind, caring, personable with GSOH. Enjoys the countryside, the coast, interesting places, dancing and more. Seeking tall officer gentlemen pen pals, any age group. All letters answered, please send correct address. P078

Anna (37), 5'5", slim brunette with a happy nature. Enjoys the country, walks, watching rugby, old/new films, relaxing in front of the TV or with a drink in the local pub. Would like to write to soldiers serving in Afghanistan or Iraq. P080

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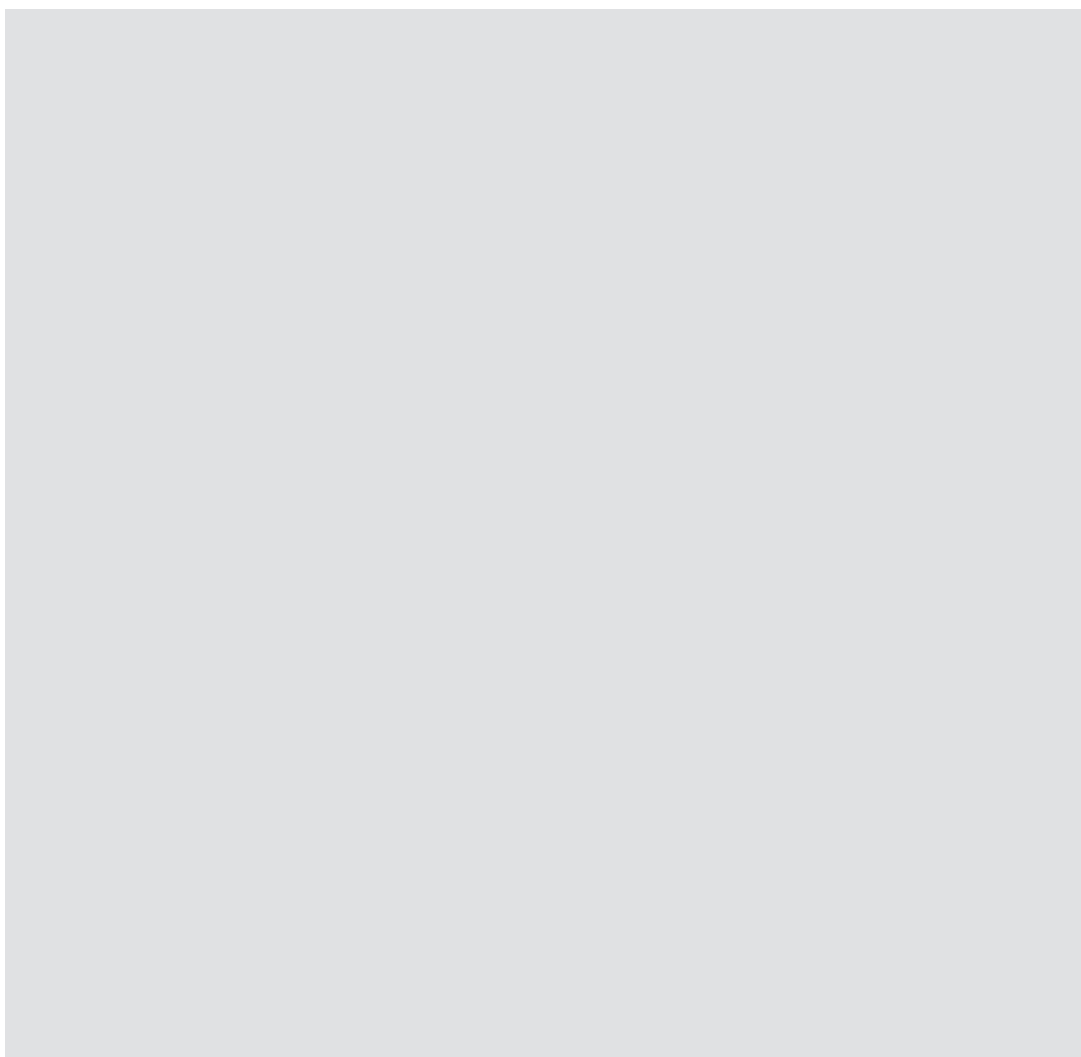
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Movies

SEPTEMBER REVIEW



Kiss me Kate: Talented Hollywood starlet Kate Bosworth needed no luck to bag the lead role of super smart, glamorous college student Jill Taylor in the gambling scam casino-caper, *21*



Las Vegas lass

Kate Bosworth's mathematics genius takes the house in gambling capital

AS ANY punter who has blown hard-earned cash on an asthmatic nag purely because it had a funny name will testify, a fool and his money are all too easily parted.

From a cheeky £10 on the Grand National to a weekly bet on the lottery, the Great British public holds onto the belief that it can strike it lucky no matter how long the odds.

But while such faith more often than not generates nothing but fatter profits for the gambling industry, betting companies do not always hold a winning ticket.

As hit flick *21* proves, even the enormous casinos lining the neon-lit streets of Las Vegas are not immune to losing money hand-over-fist to people with the brains and bravery to take on and ultimately beat the system.

The film follows the true story of a group of mathematical geniuses from an American college who use a card counting scam to extract buckets of dollars from the desert gambling oasis.

Sultry Kate Bosworth, who plays alluring student Jill Taylor and admits that maths was her worst subject at school, was amazed at the ability of the six scamsters who took the world's gambling capital for millions.

"It was surprising to see how casual they were about the whole thing now, looking back on their own experience," she said. "I would say to them 'but you scammed Vegas. You beat the system. It must have been so exhilarating', but they didn't seem too impressed with themselves. They didn't seem to see what the big deal was and I found that pretty funny."

As welcome as *21*'s six students' ever-increasing riches were, the money also had a corruptive influence and it was the greed of maths virtuoso Ben Campbell (Jim Sturgess) that attracted the attention of ruthless casino security enforcer Cole Williams, played by Laurence Fishburne.

Despite immersing herself in Las Vegas for filming, Bosworth was not

seduced by the city's gambling culture and was happy to leave town with a \$200 profit.

"I won overall, but I'm a pretty safe gambler," she said. "I was one of those people who would make 20 bucks and think to myself, 'OK, I'm going to leave for the night' and the next night I would make 40 and say, 'OK, I'm done'."

Bosworth's undeniable talent has made her an odds-on favourite for a successful acting career. Since earning a starring role in Robert Redford's *The Horse Whisperer* after attending an open audition to simply gain experience of trying out for a film part, the Los Angeles-born actress has become a familiar face in Hollywood flicks.

Bosworth earned critical acclaim as singer Sandra Dee in *Beyond The Sea*, the 2004 film directed by and starring Kevin Spacey as crooner Bobby Darin.

The A-listers were reunited two years later as Lois Lane and Lex Luthor in *Superman Returns* and *21* marks their third on-screen appearance together.



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"I went through the unique experience of working with Kevin on *Beyond The Sea* and I have been lucky enough to work with him twice since then," added Bosworth. "We have had such a laugh together. He's a true professional, but he doesn't seem to take himself too seriously. He's one of those highly intelligent, witty people who clearly love to make other people laugh. I adore him."

At just 25, Bosworth's versatility has seen her portray everything from 21's seductive scamstress to the girlfriend of a drug-dealing porn star in *Wonderland*. Her star is set to continue to rise with her next major project, Sngmoo Lee's ambitious Korean fantasy western *Laundry Warrior*.

"It's been such a strange journey," she added. "The roles I have played have all been quite different from one another and I'm grateful for being able to have the opportunity to stretch myself. It is constantly challenging, but the challenge is part of why I love the variation. I'm certainly never bored and I am continually learning."

"Sean Penn said something that resonated with me. He said that when you are in your 20s, as an actor, you should do as much as you can and play as many characters as possible." ■

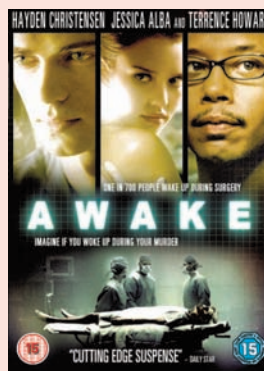
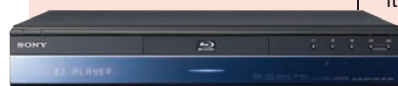


21, out to own on DVD/Blu-ray from September 8

ANYONE who took a pop at the mathematical brainbox in their class needs to see exactly how far – and how much – academic genius can get you. Inspired by an amazing true story, and with an all-star cast, *21* comes to DVD, UMD™ Video and Blu-ray from September 8, courtesy of Sony Pictures Home Entertainment. College professor Mickey Rosa (**Kevin Spacey**) leads a group of his brightest number-crunching students into the big Las Vegas gambling houses with a view to making wad loads of cash. They juggle their double lives of super-rich high-rollers lounging in hotel penthouses with that of nerdy students eeking a living in grungy halls of residence. It doesn't take long before Ben Campbell (**Jim Sturgess**), who joined the team for a noble cause, is corrupted by the money and power. Arrogance leads to mistakes and he has to deal with the brutal realities of getting caught card counting.

● To celebrate the boffins taking down the house, we've got a copy of *21* on DVD and Blu-ray – and a Sony Blu-ray player (pictured below) to watch it on – to give away. To have a chance of winning tell us what is the French name for the card game *21*. Five runners-up will receive a copy of *21* on DVD.

Answers by postcard to the address at the front of the magazine or by email (comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk) to reach us by September 30. Winners will be drawn at random from the correct answers. The usual rules apply.



Awake, out to own on DVD now

THE phenomenon of anaesthetic awareness – where hospital patients fail to be rendered unconscious during surgery – is the core of this thriller. **Hayden Christensen** plays Clay Beresford, who undergoes a heart transplant and stays awake during the procedure, witnessing surprising revelations from the team operating on him. Terrible acting and a tremendously dull story are only offset by a good plot twist. Still, watching *Awake* is a painful experience. Just don't do it. **LCpl Chris MacCallum, 242 MI Section, Int Corps**



The Producers, out to own on DVD now

THIS is a timely reissue of the original version of **Mel Brooks'** classic comedy. Two unscrupulous losers plot to make a fortune by massively overselling shares in a play so awful that it's bound to close after its opening performance. The acting is a bit over the top at times but the sheer tastelessness saves the day. Let's face it, who can resist such scenes as a theatre full of auditioning Adolfs and the jaw-dropping opening sequence to the play itself. There's something here to offend everyone and that is its charm.

Daniel King, Mod



King of New York, out to own on DVD from September 22

REPORTEDLY a rival to the likes of legendary film *The Godfather*, this 1990 cinema release now fresh on DVD just doesn't hold up. The only believable character is played by the lead actor, **Christopher Walken**, but the ensemble surrounding him, including **Laurence Fishburne**, have since made a greater contribution to the film industry. The sound on this movie is dire and could easily have been reworked. The tale of a gangster-turned-Robin Hood in modern day America does not hit the mark. A film to miss. **WO2 Andy Draper, AGC**



Botched, out to own on DVD from September 8

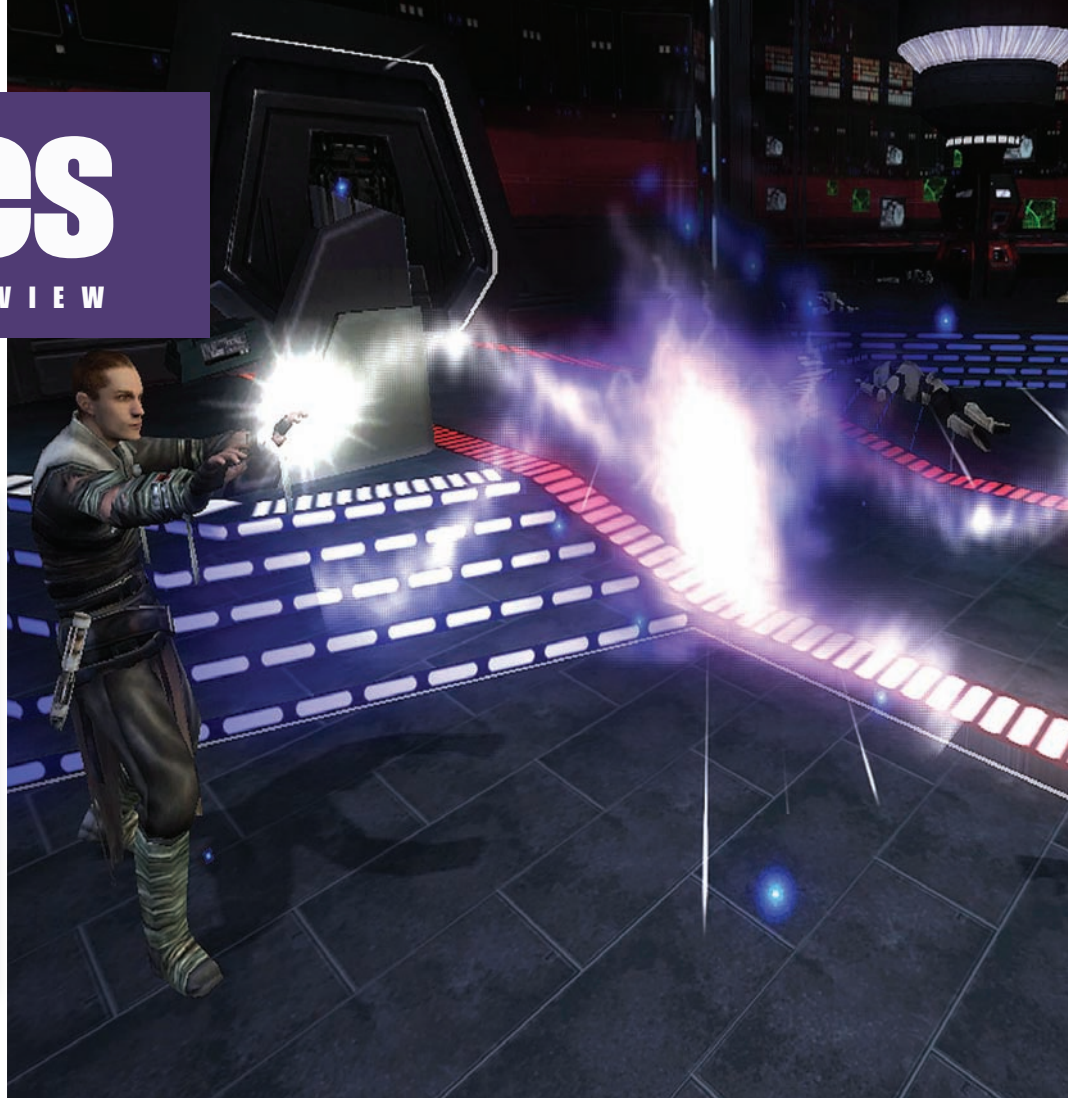
DESPITE mediocre press reviews, *Botched* is a grotesque horror movie that is also incredibly funny. Starring **Stephen Dorff** and the gorgeous **Jaime Murray**, the story follows a failed heist in Moscow where a professional thief finds himself dealing with insane hostages, serial killers and psycho Russian accomplices. Expect the usual dismemberments and grizzly deaths, as the characters provide plenty of jokes that counter the bleak concrete building backdrop. Fans of *Severance* will love this. **LCpl Paul Thomas, 233 MI Section, Int Corps**

Games

SEPTEMBER REVIEW



It is your destiny: *The Force Unleashed* puts players in the boots of a secret dark apprentice, battling the might of *Star Wars* good guys, the Jedi Knights



Building Empires

Latest LucasArts epic casts players alongside a legion of *Star Wars* baddies

Preview: Karen Thomas

STAR Wars games have been an awkward customer – much like the long running series of films, they tend to either be outstanding like the original 1977 masterpiece or fail spectacularly like *Episode I*.

On the previous generation of consoles, we were given the opportunity to fly X-Wings in the polished *Rogue Leader* and take down stormtroopers by the legion in the *Dark Forces* games. But we were also sold the dreadful *Bounty Hunter* and highly dubious *Clone Wars*.

Thankfully, the next chapter in the great George Lucas space saga, *The Force Unleashed*, is a spectacular return to form. Released on all major formats this month, the game gives players the chance to become more powerful than they could possibly imagine.

The plot follows on from the end of *Episode III*, continuing Darth Vader's genocidal quest to wipe out the Jedi Knights. But unknown to

his boss Emperor Palpatine, Vader has taken his own young padawan to assist in the killing and overthrow of his unpleasant imperial master.

Roled as the secret dark apprentice, players must perfect the ancient art of lightsabre combat and learn how to wield the Force grip, the Force repulse and Sith lightning. As your skills and power strengthen, Vader sends you to dispose of the Emperor's seditious adversaries.

Joining the iconic Dark Lords of the Sith and their army of stormtroopers is a new cast of goodies and baddies although, as padawan to the prize villain, you'll be using the dark side of the Force to strike down the good guys. The obligatory quirky character, the not-so-cute-and-fluffy droid Proxy, is your sidekick and has his own hidden talents.

Having waited 30 years to wield the Jedi Knights' elegant weapon, *Soldier's* hands had to be forcibly prised away from the Wii-mote so other reviewers could get a look in.

The newest padawans rapidly learn the life-saving skills in this Bantha-sized intergalactic adventure.

Powered by its own physics system, the Wii version of *The Force Unleashed* is not equipped with precision graphics, but who cares? Exploding lightning and Force surges are still at gamers' fingertips.

For the C-3PO-type anoraks, the PS3 and Xbox 360 games were developed using the latest technology Digital Molecular Matter (DMM), from Pixelux Entertainment, and Euphoria, from NaturalMotion. Allied with the powerful Havok physics engine, they create realistic animation.

DMM takes the properties of materials from the real world into the game. Throw a Force bolt against a window and the glass shatters realistically. However DMM takes the gamer one step closer to the action, as it calculates if and how the glass will break for each separate time that the secret apprentice throws the Force against it.



Euphoria frees players from the predictability of movement. Each character has a digital nervous system that imbues a sense of balance. If hit or moved, they might fall over, jump out of the way or regain their balance.

A stormtrooper stumbling onto an unsteady surface will begin to shift his weight and pedal his feet to try and maintain his equilibrium. This new development of artificial intelligence enables characters to react to events and surroundings with an almost human uniqueness.

The Xbox and PS3 allow an organic gaming experience. The multiple combinations for gripping, pushing, jumping and, of course, fighting the ultimate lightsabre duel at the end of each level with increasingly powerful Jedi Knights, allows the player to create their own destiny.

LucasArts developers have created a game where someone who is not the greatest player can immerse themselves in the *Star Wars* saga. Experienced gamers at the height of their powers, on the other hand, will be able to use the Force to take down starships.

But once you start down the dark path, forever will it dominate your destiny – and your view of the Rebel Alliance will never be the same again. ■



Fallout 3, Xbox 360

SET in the nightmarish future of the aftermath of a nuclear holocaust, demos of this role playing game are showing enormous promise with plenty of depth and polish. *Fallout 3*, which comes from the same stable as *Oblivion*, swaps the world of knights and monsters for an altogether darker prospect in which civilisation has been all but destroyed. Players have the opportunity to explore an enormous open world map, choosing their own allegiances as they see fit. If *Fallout 3* lives up to its potential, it will undoubtedly be a candidate for game of the year.



WIN: Star Wars games

GET ready to unleash the Force as Darth Vader's secret apprentice and cut down the Jedi Knights in the latest offering from LucasArts. We have three copies of *Star Wars: The Force Unleashed* (Wii, Xbox 360 and PS3) to give away. To have a chance of winning tell us which Jedi Knight wielded a purple lightsabre. Answers by postcard to the address at the front of the magazine or by email (comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk) to reach us by September 30. Please state which format you require. Winners will be drawn at random. Usual rules apply.



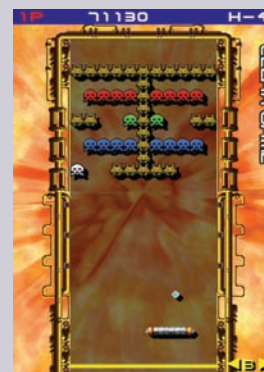
TNA Impact, Xbox 360

SOLDIER has now had some serious hands-on time with this title and can confirm that it is one of the finest fighting games that we have seen in recent times. Based around the TNA American wrestling league – the rival to the WWE series – the action is reminiscent of a classic arcade beat 'em up. Players can choose from several modes before stepping into the ring and attempting to thrash seven bells out of their opponent. The controls are simple and easy to pick up, but some complex moves can be pulled off with perseverance. All in all, *TNA* is a definite winner.



WWE: Smackdown Vs Raw 2009, all formats

THE familiar faces and soap-opera-style glitz of the American wrestling scene return for another outing. The latest incarnation of *Smackdown Vs Raw* features a host of refinements over the 2008 title, including new game modes and enhanced multiplayer options. We sampled the Xbox 360, Wii and DS versions of the game and were impressed on all fronts. The two Nintendo versions, in particular, have had some welcome improvements to the controls while the Xbox 360 offering plays as good as it looks. Great stuff.



Arkanoid DS, DS

A TITLE from the mid-1980s arcade era, *Arkanoid* was essentially an upgraded version of the early hit *Breakout* and proved hugely popular at the time. This remixed and remastered version for the Nintendo DS keeps the flavour of the original, and proves that great games do stand the test of time. Players get to move their bat using the stylus, bouncing around a ball to knock bricks out of a wall. Some of the blocks contain bonuses, which upgrade your bat, give you extra balls and power-ups to smash through the wall. *Arkanoid* remains as classy now as the day it appeared.



Space Invaders Extreme edition, PSP

JAPANESE video games giant Taito has commemorated the 30th birthday of the grandfather of arcade hits in style with the launch of this PSP gem. Essentially *Space Invaders* on steroids, players can blast away to their hearts' content at the iconic cosmic bad guys. Special features of the 30th anniversary edition include invaders that swoop at you, *Galaxians*-style, laser wielding flying saucers and UFOs that deploy reinforcements. Gamers get to fight back by picking up a host of weapon upgrades. *Space Invaders Extreme* is addictive and great fun.

Music

SEPTEMBER REVIEW



Life story: Glen Power (left), Danny O'Donaghue (centre) and Mark Sheehan (right) take the album chart by storm



Brave new word

Inspired wave of storytelling music by chart-busting Irish trio The Script

Interview: Karen Thomas

JUST as it seemed 2008 was to be the year of mediocre new bloke bands singing instantly forgettable songs, The Script rode into the top ten on a fresh lyrical sound wave.

The Dubliners' innovative debut single, *We Cry*, which deftly smoothed U2 rock into Eminem rap, took radio stations by surprise. But the UK audience was more than ready for the more soulful *The Man Who Can't Be Moved*, which sailed to the number three slot in the charts and then refused to budge.

The best was yet to come. The self-titled debut album from the three gifted – not to mention gorgeous – guys swept away the competition to chart at number one. Flowing over starved eardrums like warm honey, the diverse tones of their 11-track CD have rescued UK music from a desert of blandness.

But what set the talented trio in gold medal position is their intelligence,

thoughtfulness and grace. It's enough to make any red-blooded female swoon and the fact that they unknowingly ooze sexiness just adds to the appeal. The complete package with bucket loads of X-factor has finally arrived.

All three members hail from humble roots, which have kept them grounded in their new-found fame. Guitarist Mark Sheehan grew up in the rough end of the Irish capital and quickly realised music could lift him out of the poverty. He met fellow teenager and now lead vocalist Danny O'Donaghue in a run down area of Dublin.

Sharing a passion and talent for music, the pair struck up a song writing and production partnership. A chance invitation to go to the US led to the duo collaborating with RnB legends Teddy Riley and Rodney Jerkins. They found their musical rainbow's end in American black music.

"Danny fell in love with the vocal acrobatics and conviction of the soul legends. I liked sample-based music and

fell in love with Hip Hop and RnB," Mark told *Soldier*, adding that a youth spent submerged in the likes of Busta Rhymes and Dallas Austin, who has worked with Aretha Franklin and Pink, is clearly reflected in their music.

"We always loved the classic delivery of Stevie Wonder and loved the idea of rugged drums and bass beneath it."

Mark and Danny worked in Los Angeles producing demos for other artists until fellow Dubliner Glen Power joined them. Regarded as a prodigy on the Dublin music scene, drummer Glen clicked with the pair and the trio produced three songs in just one week.

"Danny and I had spent so many years working together that it was tough for Glen to slot in," explained Mark, when asked if three was an unworkable number of members for a band.

"Creatively we stay honourable to what we feel is moving us musically. Usually, if one of us is not feeling a song, then we don't do it. We tried loads of fourth members but no one clicked.



"We waited until we had a substantial amount of music before deciding on the band name. We noticed that there was a story theme throughout – a narrative perspective and different take on love songs and they felt like a little script. Plus, when greeting each other we usually say, 'what's the script?' meaning what's happening, so it just felt right."

Listening to the album for the first time felt right and turfed all the usual boy band preconceptions out the window. The Script's contrasting music styles deliver something new and exciting every four minutes and they are really bothered by what they sing about.

"Danny can't sing anything meaningless. He really sounds bad if a lyric is not emotionally charged and my only justification for pain is art. Music was always a way for us to vent and you can only write from your experiences. I guess we've been through a lot and we draw from that," said Mark, adding what his hopes are for their debut album.

"I believe we poured our hearts into this every step of the way. So I think there is music for the head, heart and feet on there and we take you on a real thought-provoking journey. I only hope people give us one listen – I think they will relate." ■



The Script (The Script)

BILLED as the epic journey of three young Dublin boys from the wrong side of the tracks, the debut album from **The Script** is a somewhat eclectic mix – think **Timbaland** meets **U2** with some Celtic soul and you'll start to get the idea. Shades of **Coldplay** shine through the CD, which is at times anthemic but enduringly soulful too. Every track is easy to listen to, as lead singer Danny O'Donaghue flexes his vocal cords with consummate ease and Glen Power drives some deliciously funky drumming. If you love **Maroon 5**, you will certainly enjoy this album. I defy anyone not to smile while listening to it.

SSgt Mo Morris,
3 LSR Regt, RLC



Headliners (D Ramirez)

DANCE music DJ **D Ramirez** is something of a veteran nowadays, with a history that reaches back to house music from the nineties. Awarded the best British producer and re-mixer by *DJMag* in 2007 and enjoying huge success with his remix of **Bodyrox's** *Yeah Yeah*, Ramirez is showing that advancing years are no barrier to acceptance in the club music scene. A music genre for the enthusiast rather than the general listener, the new offering of double CD *Headliners* promises to give electronica fans something they have become accustomed to from the many aliases of **Dean Marriot**. Lovers of house will find this compilation a must.

Capt David Greaves, REME



Peaceful, The World Lays Me Down (Noah and the Whale)

DESPITE being a hugely popular group rising up the charts, **NATW** won't be everybody's cup of tea. Their up-beat, modernesque folk anthems tell tales of society and the world in a harmonious and happy fashion. The only way I can describe my reaction to their music is the same as when I see a church sermon on TV. The congregation are making a joyful noise resembling stereotypical "happy-clappers" who are a bit confused and not sure what they are on about, but are really glad they're having a good time.

Bdr Luke Stevens-Burt,
5 Regt, RA



Whatisthisandwhy (Jump Ship)

I WAS expecting more from **Jump Ship's** debut album, as it was produced by **Head (PJ Harvey and Massive Attack)** and I thought it would have a similar sound. I could not have been more wrong. This six-member band has an electro-folk and trip hop sound, combined with the ethereal vocals of Louise Coady. Their influences include **DJ Shadow, Bjork** and **Lamb** so there is something for fans of all those artists on this album. Top track for me has to be *What We Sow*. Fans of **Evanescence** should definitely try *Whatisthisandwhy* or catch the band gigging this month.

Lt Jim Berry, 1 R Irish



The Holy Pictures (David Holmes)

THIS DJ/producer is probably best known for his acclaimed work on soundtracks for movies such as *Ocean's Eleven*. *The Holy Pictures*, his fourth album as an artist, is a departure from previous work. The material is concise, song-based and rock-influenced, and pays homage to bands like **Velvet Underground, Jesus and Mary Chain**, and **Primal Scream**. The theme is personal and lyrically chronicles **Holmes'** upbringing in Belfast and the relationship with his now deceased parents. It's an ambitiously brooding statement, which is testament to his talent and although the album is short on quantity, it's high on quality.

Cpl Charlie Lloyd, RLC



This Is A Fix (The Automatic)

THE second offering from the Welsh-based alternative rockers showcases a bigger and bolder sound than their 2006 debut album, *Not Accepted Anywhere*. The most noticeable difference is the absence of founding keyboard player Alex Pennie whose input was to annoyingly scream his way through his share of the vocals. Whether his departure has contributed to the more mature sound is impossible to judge, nevertheless the album has a dynamic rock sound built on great guitar riffs and pummelling drums with lead single *Steve McQueen* fast becoming their summer anthem.

Cpl Ray Kalaker,
RETDU (B)

Books

SEPTEMBER REVIEW



Double act: Ex-Royal Signals' corporal Charlie Bell, left, and lance corporal Ian Deacon pull no literary punches in airing the naughtiest squaddie secrets



The barmy Army

Everything you wanted to know about squaddies but were afraid to ask

Interviews: Karen Thomas

ABARE all, spare the Army chiefs no blushes, side-splitting book is about to blow the gaff on what really happens when spotty, gangly youths decide to take the Queen's shilling.

Set in the 1980s, *Picking up the Brass* gets stuck into lampooning the British Army as a "Heroic and chisel-jawed band of lovable rogues. Great Britain's safety, reputation and defence is its number one priority. Getting pissed up and tapping off is number two and gives number one a run for its money".

Teenager Eddy Nugent narrates a story that begins with the recruitment posters suggesting he'd spend his service windsurfing in the Caribbean. He soon discovers they don't quite tell the full story and so sets the scene for 235 pages of laugh-out-loud hilarity.

The fact that Eddy's fictional biography is based on the careers of Ian Deacon and Charlie Bell, both former Royal Signals' squaddies, just adds to the comedy. Posted

to Northern Ireland, Bosnia, Rwanda, Germany and Nuneaton, the pair met in Belize, beginning a friendship that endured beyond their life in uniform and left them as co-authors of the best morale boost troops could wish for.

Soldier let the literary duo explain . . .

Charlie: The Gulf War started when we first met in Belize. We used to joke about guarding that tricky western flank in case the Iraqi Navy, that well-known force on the high seas, looked like they might attack. I think we were doing a sterling job. It never happened but it could have.

Ian: If you had two hours' work to do a day in the Caribbean, what would you do for the rest of it? A lot of civilians think that guys sit around bulling their boots and listening to the mass bands of the Household Division. Well, it's just not the case. If you put a group of young guys in that environment, I guarantee they'll be boozed up and given over to wickedness.

C: I suppose it's important that the MoD

or chain of command don't have that constantly in the press . . .

I: OK. There are more serious sides to the Army and it's not that they aren't noteworthy, it's just that we wanted to focus on the humorous side of things.

C: Most operational deployments have long periods of boredom with short bursts of activity and I quite like boredom. I'm good at being bored . . .

I: We just thought boredom wasn't getting a fair crack of the whip. The next time we worked together was in Northern Ireland for 30 Signal Regiment. We'd compare sideburns and long hair and wonder if we looked like Elvis.

C: We decided to write the book after one of the lads who had been in the same unit as us in Northern Ireland made a steely-eyed killer story out of installing a telephone. He made a big meal out of the things which we found funny and we thought if a guy like that could get a book deal, then anybody could.



I: Everything in *Picking up the Brass* happened either to us or somebody we knew. It seems absolutely outrageous but in the book this guy went to swear his oath of allegiance and ends up getting an impromptu beating off some crazy old bloke and had to do star jumps. Well, the only difference to the truth of that story is that the guy had to do press-ups but they aren't as comedic as star jumps, are they?

C: The names have been changed but all the lads who were the basic trainees are now regimental sergeant majors. One of the lads is a QM currently in Helmand.

I: Afghanistan and Iraq, well, that's the serious stuff. A guy who had just got back from Op Herrick put a thread on Arrse [Army Rumour Service] saying our book was the only laugh he got in the whole six months. The guys are out there on their chin straps but if you're serving somewhere that's a bit tough, we hope Eddy's mishaps will give you some light relief.

C: The humour is always there. No matter what's going on or how dark things get, your average squaddie is always joking. That bit of the Army will never change – squaddies will always laugh at everything. ■



Picking up the Brass by Eddy Nugent

FORMER signallers **Ian Deacon** and **Charlie Bell** have come up with a cracker that will tickle the funny bones of soldiers and the public alike. Seen through the eyes of teenager Eddy Nugent, their fictional biography exposes the hilarious foibles and peculiarities they carefully noted after joining up in the 1980s. It's a bit like an Army version of *Bridget Jones's Diary* by **Helen Fielding** but funnier. The scrapes that Eddy and his mates get into induce convulsions, largely because they are based on a slightly embellished truth. The book deftly captures Army life in a way that will be familiar to serving personnel while giving an insight to the public. Warning: it captures the expletives commonly used too.

● The lads have kindly donated five signed copies of their "dead cert to be shortlisted for the Pulitzer Prize" biography, but to win one please tell us what was the name of Belize before it gained independence. Answers by postcard to the address at the front of the magazine or by email (comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk) to reach us by September 30. Winners will be drawn at random from the correct answers received. Usual rules apply.

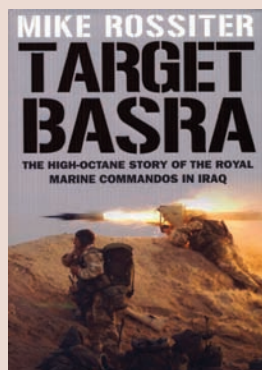
Unlucky punters can buy this classic at any good booksellers but if you log on to www.mondaybooks.com/specialoffer/specialoffer, you can purchase a copy at a discounted £6.49 and £1 will be donated to Help for Heroes. For those of you who can't wait to find out what happens next in the gangly teenager's life in green, *Eddy Nugent and the Map of Africa* is due out in spring 2009.



Battle for Sicily by Ian Blackwell

OPERATION Huskey, the invasion of Sicily in July 1943 is often overshadowed by D Day, the invasion of Normandy less than a year later. In fact the operation to seize the Italian island was a significantly larger undertaking involving greater risk. *Battle for Sicily: Stepping Stone to Victory* explains political and practical complexities encountered by the Allied and Axis commanders in a logical and readable manner. If you know nothing about the campaign and are looking for a good place to start, this is it.

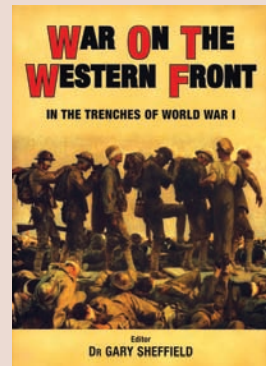
Maj Mike Peters, AAC



Target Basra by Mike Rossiter

THE 2003 invasion of Iraq probably seems like an awful long time ago to most *Soldier* readers, but this book will soon refresh your memory. I found it hard to put down. The narrative is very readable and effortlessly links decisions taken at the highest level with the subsequent actions of the Royal Marines and supporting Army units. The landing of 3 Cdo Bde on the Al Faw Peninsula spearheaded the Allied invasion. The dramatic events of those first few hours and days are vividly captured by the author.

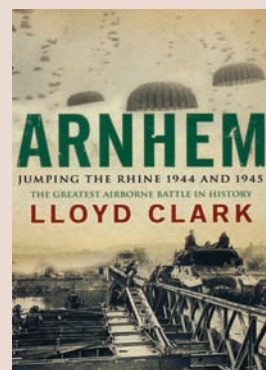
Maj Mike Peters, AAC



War on the Western Front edited by Dr Gary Sheffield

THIS comprehensive and well-written book is an excellent overview of the war on the Western Front. The combatant nations and their fighting soldiers are examined in detail, as in turn are their tactics and equipment. Illustrated with a wealth of informative pictures and maps, this is a very good one-stop shop if you know nothing about the exploits of our great grandfathers. Competitively priced at £20, it is certainly good value for money, but I do wonder how many more titles on the First World War the already saturated market will stand.

Maj Mike Peters, AAC



Arnhem by Lloyd Clark

WRITTEN by a war studies lecturer at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, this richly-detailed account of the events before, during and after Operation Market Garden makes for compelling reading. **Clark** writes both in an accessible style and with authority, using the personal reflections of those who were there to great effect. The result is an extraordinary blend of historical fact and reflection mixed with a colourful narrative. *Arnhem* should appeal to students of Second World War history, as well as more casual readers who want to find out more about the conflict in Europe.



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SOLDIER SPORT



TARGET ACQUIRED

**Reds set sights on
Services' crown**

On the prowl: Army centre Cpl Ceri Cummins (REME) hopes to cap the Army Rugby League side's successful season with victory in this month's Inter-Services championship

Picture: Graeme Main



FANNING'S 13

Player-coach backs resurgent Reds to reclaim Services' League crown from RAF

Interview: Stephen Tyler
Picture: Graeme Main

LIVING in the shadow of one of the Services' most successful mainstream sports teams cannot have been easy for the stars of the Army's Rugby League team.

While their rampant Union counterparts have rewritten the record books by claiming seven successive Inter-Services titles, the 13-a-side squad haven't completed a clean sweep against the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force since the 2003 tournament.

But with a dramatic overhaul of the backroom set-up starting to yield results on the pitch, League player-coach Sgt Sean Fanning (RAMC) believes 2008 could be the year that his chosen code makes the rest of the Army sit up and take notice.

"We have improved a lot because of the behind-the-scenes support we now have," he told *SoldierSport* ahead of this month's Services' showdown. "Getting in physiotherapists and conditioning coaches has made us a lot more professional in our approach to the game.

"We have had that in place for a while, but it always takes time to see the results and I think they are now starting to show."

Standing between the Reds and the Inter-Services crown are the reigning champions from the RAF.

The airmen took the title on points difference in 2006 and triumphed in last year's championship with a one-point win over the Army at Aldershot.

The pull of operations has undoubtedly taken its toll on the Army's squad in recent times, but Fanning believes the settled squad that the Reds have been able to field this year will make a big difference.

"In the past couple of years we have

had key people missing and it hasn't always been easy to get the same side out in each game," he said.

"This year has been different and we have been able to get the same players along on a regular basis.

"The RAF and Royal Navy have both had players away this season so I think it puts us in a better position just like they had the advantage over us before.

"With the RAF being the defending champions they will obviously fancy their chances, but they never beat us by a lot. It's very even and there isn't a dominant force like you get in some other sports.

"The RAF were probably worth their win last year but we are looking forward to showing how much we have improved this time around."

The Army's preparation for their season's major event has included a record-equalling run into the third round of the Carnegie Challenge Cup where it took the full-time players of Oldham to knock them out.

The Reds also recorded their best-ever result against the British Amateur Rugby League Association (BARLA), which features the nation's best amateur players, eventually losing by just eight points.

Matches against the England and Scotland Student sides provided further valuable practice and the Service team's preparations were completed with a comprehensive 70-0 drubbing of the Farnborough Falcons at Aldershot in July.

"That match was a little bit one-sided in the end, but it was still worthwhile," explained Fanning.

"We had a chance to run a few different combinations and looked like a strong team out there that day, so it was a good confidence boost for us ahead of the Inter-Services competition.

"It's been a very good season for us, especially because of the amount of

competitive matches we have had. The Challenge Cup run was good experience and really set us on the right path. Since then we have come through some really tough games.

"We've got a good mix of young and experienced players because we are getting people through from the academy side. It shows that the system is working and it has also helped me to have a good season because I have been able to concentrate on the coaching and staying injury free."

If getting one over on their Service rivals was not incentive enough to win this month's competition, the Army's players have the added prize of potential selection for a British Combined Services squad that will play in a tournament running alongside the Rugby League World Cup in Australia in November.

With the squad due to be picked based on the performances at the Inter-Services championship, Fanning expects to see some impressive showings.

"There will be nine or ten players from the Army side going over to Australia so there will be competition for places," he said. "It's the Australian's national sport and last time I was there we got to play in front of 30,000 at Stadium Australia so it's a big opportunity for whoever goes.

"When you bump into the guys from the other Services there's always a bit of banter about it, but it's a good laugh. I don't know if I'll be playing, but I'll be going over to watch the World Cup no matter what."

● The Army begins its attempt to win back the Inter-Services title with a match against the RAF at Uxbridge on Friday, September 5.

The game against the Royal Navy kicks off at 1900 on Wednesday, September 17 at Aldershot's Military Stadium. Entrance is free and the day also features Inter-Services matches for the Army Academy at 1500 and the Army Women at 1700. ■

'We are looking forward to showing how much we have improved this time around'

Desert oar-kid

Rower who trained in the heat of Basra blossoms to win Olympic silver on world stage as one-time Army man Campbell falls short for Britain at Beijing Games

A GUTSY performance from Capt Alistair Heathcote helped the Great Britain men's eight power their way to an Olympic silver medal at the rowing regatta in Beijing.

Heathcote sowed the seeds for his success by putting in hours of practice on a rowing machine while serving on Op Telic 5 and he reaped the rewards with a second-place finish in China.

The Blues and Royals officer played his part as the British crew set out their stall in the heats by beating 2004 winners USA and reigning world champions Germany.

But in an enthralling final, the Canadian crew were a length ahead at the halfway stage and the Brits were unable to overturn the deficit, eventually finishing just over one second behind the gold medallists.

Speaking to the BBC after the race, Heathcote said: "It came down to great force and a gutsy performance. Unfortunately it wasn't quite there to beat them.

"I'm disappointed. I thought we had the Canadians, but it turns out that we didn't have enough left in the tank."

Officer hopeful Alan Campbell overcame immense odds to become the first Briton to reach the Olympic single sculls rowing final since 1980.

Campbell's Olympic dreams looked like they would remain in the starting blocks when, just eight weeks before the Games, an infection from a tooth abscess spread to his knee which subsequently required surgery.

But the Coleraine rower dug deep

to return to fitness and reach the final, finishing fifth after leading the pack for half the race.

Campbell's performances support his decision not to take the place he had been offered at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst.

After attending Welbeck Defence Sixth Form College, Campbell started a degree at Shrivenham in Wiltshire.

As his studies progressed, so too did his rowing and the rising star was left facing a tough decision.

"I started rowing seriously at Welbeck and I made it into the Army eight in 2002," he said.

"I was also rowing for a civilian club and I reached a crossroads where I was trying to concentrate on my training and my education at the same time.

"I was doing my degree and travelling from

Swindon to London four times a week to train. I had to take one seriously and I was allowed to pursue the rowing.

"If things had been different I would have been more than happy to carry on in the Army. It was something I had set my heart on, a career path I had wanted to go down and Welbeck was the making of me as a man.

"The Army is so different from anything else and I loved it. I'm not the most disciplined person, but I learned things I wouldn't have learned anywhere else."

Like Heathcote and Lt Robin Bourne-Taylor, Campbell's rowing apprenticeship was served in the eight-man boat. After leaving the Army in 2003, he rowed in the double sculls

before focusing on the men's quad.

He made his Olympic debut in Athens in 2004, finishing 12th in the four before making the shift to the single sculls in 2005 after winning the Great Britain selection trials.

As a heavyweight single, Campbell finished top of the standings in the 2006 World Cup, beating 2008 Olympic champion Olaf Tufte in the process.

And with Olympic singles experience under his belt after this summer's exploits, Campbell is happy with his choice of boat.

"I enjoy it [single sculls] the most. It suits me best as a person," he explained. "There are no grey areas – you are first or last and that's it. You can't hide behind any teammates and say that you tried your hardest."

Campbell's future may lie on the water, but the former Army man told *SoldierSport* that he would have been every bit as proud to serve his country in the deserts of Afghanistan or Iraq.

"What soldiers do these days is unbelievable," he said. "When I talk to friends that are in the Army I sometimes feel a bit jealous and realise I would have loved to have had an opportunity to serve.

"On the whole I don't think there's enough attention paid to soldiers and what they do. I have a massive amount of respect for anyone serving and I can't imagine what they are going through.

"I hope everyone is safe, that they know they are doing a great job and that they are out there for the right reasons. I represent my country but I do it for myself. Soldiers do it for their country and I hold them in a much higher regard because of that." ■

"I thought we had the Canadians, but we didn't have enough left in the tank"



Robin retires

DOUBLE Olympic Lt Robin Bourne-Taylor has decided to concentrate on his Army career after quitting rowing following his exit from the Beijing Games in the repechage of the men's pair.

The Household Cavalry officer (left) and partner Tom Solesbury needed a top three finish to progress in the regatta, but

despite staying in contention through the opening half of the race the pair slipped down the field in the final 500 metres and crossed the line in fourth.

Bourne-Taylor, who had been expecting a place in the eight-man boat and only had weeks to prepare for the two-man race, exclusively told *SoldierSport* he is now



Solid silver: Capt Alistair Heathcote's (Blues and Royals, back centre) second-place finish contributed to Great Britain's record Olympic medal haul in China

retiring from competitive rowing to focus his full attention on military matters.

"I will not be rowing anymore," he said after the regatta. "I have been doing the sport for a long time now and I am looking forward to giving my full time to the Army."

The Household Cavalry's gain is British rowing's loss as Bourne-Taylor has been a key member of the national set-up since first breaking into the team at the World Junior Championships in Bulgaria nine years ago.

He competed in four University Boat

Races during his time at Oxford University, winning three times including once as president in 2005.

As a specialist in the eight-man boat, Bourne-Taylor was part of the crew that finished sixth at the 2002 World Championships and third in 2003.

His Olympic debut came in the 2004 Games in Athens when the men's eight finished ninth and he added a second World Championship bronze to his collection in 2007.

Despite missing out on a medal at this year's Games, the Army man is proud of

his achievements in an unfamiliar boat.

"It has been a difficult time with lots of factors affecting my performance," added Bourne-Taylor, who had previously said he would have been happy to make the final six in China. "When I was left out of the eight I came to terms with the fact that I would not be winning a medal and that I would have to judge myself in the simple terms of doing my best."

"Considering everything, and that the boat wasn't even finalised until five days before racing started, I am happy with what I have achieved." ■



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You sixty things

Strength-in-depth helps rampant Reds continue 21st century athletics dominance



Picture: Steve Dock

TOP-notch track and field performances propelled the Army's men and women to easy wins in the Inter-Services athletics championships for the sixth year in a row.

Despite being the dominant force in the contest since the turn of the century, the pull of operational commitments looked like it would make this year's event at Portsmouth a more even affair.

But as soon as Cpl John Osazuwa (3 LSR) and SSgt Mark Wiseman (AGC) had claimed the top two positions in the hammer, the Army never looked like conceding their winning run and both teams finished well ahead of the second-placed Royal Air Force.

The good start to the day's field events continued when a 1.55 metre leap from Cpl Julia Cartwright (R Signals) took the maximum six points in the high jump.

RAF star Cpl Laura McGawn tried her best to single-handedly keep the women's competition alive and excelled

with victories in the javelin, 100 metres hurdles, 100 metres, 200 metres, long jump and triple jump and a second place in the shot put.

But the junior NCO's efforts were in vain as the Army's points tally continued to tick over as the team's athletes rarely finished outside of the top three.

It was a similar story for the men, who racked up 17 of their 169 points from veteran England thrower Wiseman's performances in the shot, discus and hammer.

Pole vaulter Pte Zico Benjamin (Mercian, left) cleared 4.20 metres to finish well clear of his nearest rival, and Gnr Paul Allen (RA) added 10 points with second places in the long jump and triple jump competitions, both of which were comfortably won by the RAF's Flt Lt Nav Childs.

A disqualification in the 4x100 metres relay proved to be of no consequence as the reigning champions held on for a 30-point victory over the RAF, with the Royal Navy a distant third with 73 points. ■

INTER-SERVICES ATHLETICS RESULTS

ATHLETICS: Inter-Services championships, men – 1, Army – 169 pts; 2, Royal Air Force – 139 pts; 3, Royal Navy – 73 pts.

100 metres – 1, Cpl S Benson (RAF) 10.6; 2, Pte S Smith (Army) 10.8; 3, SAC Z Grinion (RAF) 10.9.

200 metres – 1, Cpl S Benson (RAF) 21.6; 2, Pte Smith (Army) 22.0; 3, Pte D Olusile (Army) 22.5.

400 metres – 1, Pte D Olusile (Army) 50.4; 2, Cpl S Clarke (RAF) 50.9; 3, Pte P Asenso (Army) 52.4.

800 metres – 1, LCpl F Okumu (Army) 1:59.6; 2, Cpl M Audu (Army) 2:05.4; 3, Cpl K White (RAF) 2:07.4.

1500 metres – 1, Sig S Keighley (Army) 4:05.5; 2, Cpl White (RAF) 4:07.5; 3, Cpl S Robinson (RAF) 4:12.8.

5000 metres – 1, Cfn C Williams (Army) 15:04.6; 2, Cpl M Blunden (RAF) 15:07.8; 3, SSgt D Branfoot (Army) 15:25.8.

110 metres hurdles – 1, SAC A Higbee (RAF) 15.0; 2, Flt Lt G Dunson (RAF) 15.3; 3, LCpl N Hood (Army) 16.1.

400 metres hurdles – 1, Lt R Smith (Army) 54.6; 2, POPT N Edwards (RN) 56.8; 3, Flt Lt R Barker-Davies (RAF) 58.0.

3000 metres steeplechase – 1, Capt A Witwam (Army) 9:40.6; 2, SAC L Athersmith (RAF) 9:50.5; 3, Pte D Heathcote (Army) 10:03.5.

Shot – 1, SSgt M Wiseman (Army) 16.02; 2, LOM A Dawkins (RN) 15.01; 3, SSgt M Leitch (Army) 13.74.

Discus – 1, SSgt M Wiseman (Army) 53.85; 2, SAC M Plowman (RAF) 44.26; 3, Cpl M Wearing (Army) 39.86.

Javelin – 1, Sqn Ldr T Dobbing (RAF) 60.81; 2, Cpl M Wearing (Army) 57.46; 3, Capt F Keith (Army) 50.35.

Hammer – 1, Cpl J Osazuwa (Army) 54.11; 2, SSgt M Wiseman (Army) 43.16; 3, LOM A Dawkins (RN) 42.46.

High jump – 1, Pte A Lashly (Army) 1.85; 2, Cpl F Okoye (Army) 1.80; 3, LPT J Buttle (RN) 1.75.

Long jump – 1, Flt Lt N Childs (RAF) 6.90; 2, Gnr P Allen (Army) 6.73; 3, SAC K Hibbins (RAF) 6.63.

Triple jump – 1, Flt Lt N Childs (RAF) 14.30; 2, Gnr P Allen (Army) 13.13; 3, Cpl H Thomas (Army) 13.05.

Pole vault – 1, Pte Z Benjamin (Army) 4.20; 2, Gp Capt R Gammage (RAF) 3.90; 3, WO2 S Chappell (Army) 3.10.

4x100 metres relay – 1, RAF 42.1; 2, Army DQ; 3, RN DQ.

4x400 metres relay – 1, Army 3:26.3; 2, RAF 3:27.0; 3, RN 3:40.0.

Women – 1, Army 141 pts; 2, RAF 120 pts; 3, RN 68 pts.

100 metres – 1, Cpl L McGawn (RAF) 12.4; 2, SAC C Livingstone (RAF) 12.8; 3, LCpl K Wallace (Army) 12.9.

200 metres – 1, Cpl L McGawn (RAF) 25.7; 2, LCpl K Wallace (Army) 26.3; 3, LCpl N Thompson (Army) 27.4.

400 metres – 1, SAC C Livingstone (RAF) 59.4; 2, Pte N Thompson (Army) 61.2; 3, Lt M Dachter (Army) 62.8.

800 metres – 1, Sgt S Morris (Army) 2:16; 2, Fg Off

S Kirby (RAF) 2:21; 3, Lt L Lawrence (RN) 2:22.

1500 metres – 1, Sgt S Morgan (Army) 4:45.8; 2, LCpl D Hodgekinson (Army) 4:48.0; 3, Lt L Lawrence (RN) 5:02.9.

5000 metres – 1, Sgt S Morgan (Army) 18:27.3; 2, Capt T Clark (Army) 18:45.0; 3, AC T Rutter (RAF) 20:03.6.

100 metres hurdles – 1, Cpl L McGawn (RAF) 15.5; 2, 2Lt H Barter (Army) 17.8; 3, Flt Lt J Smith (RAF) 18.0.

400 metres hurdles – 1, Cpl J Cartwright (Army) 67.9; 2, 2Lt H Barter (Army) 68.4; 3, Flt Lt J Smith (RAF) 78.6.

Shot – 1, Cpl S Tagilala (Army) 11.48; 2, Cpl L McGawn (RAF) 10.54; 3, OCdt L Rann (Army) 10.02.

Discus – 1, Fg Off E Sandiford (RAF) 38.79; 2, Cpl S Tagilala (Army) 38.35; 3, Cpl J Gunn (Army) 24.74.

Javelin – 1, Cpl L McGawn (RAF) 38.48; 2, LCpl N Latinara (Army) 36.47; 3, OCdt L Rann (Army) 33.70.

High jump – 1, Cpl J Cartwright (Army) 1.55; 2, Pte N Flaherty (Army) 1.50; 3, Flt Lt J Smith (RAF) 1.45.

Long jump – 1, Cpl L McGawn (RAF) 5.23; 2, Cpl J Cartwright (Army) 5.00; 3, SAC C Livingstone (RAF) 4.69.

Triple jump – 1, Cpl L McGawn (RAF) 11.13; 2, Cpl J Gunn (Army) 10.13; 3, Cpl N Francis (Army) 9.95.

4x100 metres relay – 1, RAF 51.4; 2, Army 52.6; 3, RN 54.6.

4x400 metres relay – 1, RAF 4:08.9; 2, Army 4:14.9; 3, RN 4:33.1.

● For a full results round-up from Portsmouth, visit www.soldiermagazine.co.uk/mag/sport



Picture: Graeme Main

Tiger tamer: Pte Apolosi Satala (Scots) brushes off the tackles of two Leicester Tigers' players during the Army's emphatic 31-7 win at the Middlesex Sevens

Locked on

Interviews: Stephen Tyler
Picture: Steve Dock

OLD rivalries will be renewed on one of Rugby Union's grandest stages this month when a Help for Heroes XV tackles an International XV in a charity match at Twickenham.

Some of the game's biggest names are dusting off their boots for one last time on September 20 in an attempt to raise £1 million for the charity.

But while the chance to see such luminaries as Jonah Lomu and Martin Offiah is worth the admission price alone, it is the mouth-watering clash between Lawrence Dallaglio and Scott Gibbs that has taken anticipation for

the game to fever pitch. The excitement is not lost on former British Lion Gibbs who expects no quarter to be given or taken during the match.

"I hope there will be an air of rivalry within the Services of people gunning for either us or them," he said after announcing his involvement in the game at the Royal Welsh's Maindy Barracks in Cardiff. "If you put the excellent cause to one side, this is still a game of rugby and the chance to renew old rivalries adds a bit of spice.

"One thing you can be sure of when Lawrence and Martin [Johnson] are playing is that they will be taking it seriously. It has to be competitive because 82,000 people in the stadium

and the rest watching on television will want to see something resembling an international game.

"This will be all about territory and possession and pressure. No-one is going out there for an easy time and the occasion deserves that."

Taking charge of the International XV is another of Wales's all-time greats, Ieuan Evans. The winger, who was capped 72 times for his country, echoed Gibbs's prediction that the game would throw up some friendly rivalry between the Army's Welsh and English factions.

And like the other big names on-board for the match, Evans expects 80 minutes of blood-and-thunder rugby.

"We are talking about great

Unlucky seven

Army side fall at final hurdle against professional opponents in prestigious contest

DEFEAT to Premiership side Harlequins put paid to the Army's hopes of claiming a third Middlesex Sevens title.

The Reds went into the Twickenham tournament as favourites following their championship-winning performances in 2001 and 2004 and the military men lived up to their billing by advancing to the final with three high-scoring wins.

But a tough championship match against a strong Quins side featuring England internationals David Strettle and Mike Brown prevented the Army from adding to this season's haul of seven trophies.

Skipper Capt Mark Lee (AGC (ALS)) told *SoldierSport*: "We didn't feel like favourites going into the tournament because although we had won seven out of seven competitions around the circuit this year, this was a big step up in the quality of players we were up against.

"You can't run out and expect to lose and we went out to win the final, but they played well and there were a couple of decisions that cost us.

'This was a big step up in the quality we were up against'

"We beat them at the Rosslyn Park Sevens tournament earlier this year and were confident we could do it again, but it just didn't happen for us."

Although the Army's reputation stems from its Fijian players, it was former Scotland international Lee that set the tone in the opening tie against Saracens.

The utility man picked his angle well to run onto a pass from South African LCpl Gerhard Wessels (39 Engr Regt) to score his side's first try, which was converted

by Tpr Semesa "Roko" Rokoduguni (Scots DG).

A second Lee try was quickly cancelled out by five points from Saracens, but Leeds Carnegie's Pte Apolosi Satala (Scots) stretched the Army's lead after the break.

Saracens touched down again to bring the score to 17-12 before a move instigated by Pte Joe Kava (RLC) and finished by Pte Malakai Magnus (RLC) secured a quarter final against the Leicester Tigers.

Lee again set the ball rolling against the Midlands team and the Army never looked troubled as Rokoduguni, Pte Filipe

Tawayaga (Scots) and a brace from Satala set up a crushing 31-7 win.

A strong Gloucester side were next to discover why the Army are so highly rated on the sevens circuit.

Satala opened the scoring after just 30 seconds and Magnus added shortly after with a deft run.

Lee touched down for his fourth try of the tournament, and another Satala score earned the Army a 24-10 win over the 2005 champions.

The final started badly for the Reds as Harlequins took an early lead, but replies from Rokoduguni and Satala gave the Army a 12-10 half time lead before scores from Brown and Strettle brought the final score to 22-12.

"I was pleased to score four tries, but that was testament to the back-up that we have because I can read the guys well," added Lee.

"The crowd also appreciated our style of play in keeping the ball away from the contact areas.

"The Army has started reinvesting in sevens because it's an exciting form of rugby that allows you to express yourself with ball in hand." ■

sportsmen and great professionals who have jumped at the chance to do this, people like Jonah Lomu who is probably the most potent attacking weapon in the history of rugby and someone who thrives on competing at the highest level," he told *SoldierSport*.

"I can guarantee that every player will give their all on the day because none of them will want to let themselves down in front of 82,000 people. The will to win is in their DNA.

"Some of the images you see of people at Headley Court are quite powerful and make you realise that the excellent care they receive there gives them back their dignity."

With tickets selling fast, match organisers are confident the event will make its seven-figure target.

Away from the 80-minute spectacle on the pitch, stars like Evans and Gibbs are just happy to be able to give something back to the Servicemen and women who have suffered injuries while proudly serving their country.

"We are asking people to put themselves in harm's way on a daily or even hourly basis in doing

their duty, so the least we can do if something happens is be ready and willing to help out," said Evans. "This match is a healthy start, but I hope we are just scratching the surface and providing the impetus for the future.

"I send my best wishes and hopes for a safe return to all of you. I'm very grateful to you for putting yourselves in danger in the course of doing your duty in difficult circumstances."

As focused as he will be on showing Lawrence Dallaglio who is boss on the Twickenham turf, Gibbs told *SoldierSport* that he plans to send a special message to the Service community on the day.

"I'm not a political guy, but I understand that soldiers have a call of duty and I personally appreciate what they do," he concluded.

"I'll make

sure I give a big thumbs up to the cameras on the day for all of the guys who are still serving overseas and can't make it to the match."

● To purchase tickets for the Help for Heroes match, visit www.ticketmaster.co.uk or call 0844 8472492. ■

Green light: Private-for-the-day Scott Gibbs (right) and Ieuan Evans announce their support for the charity match



Over-Lord's

Services sides celebrate centenary year with well-deserved draw at cricket's stunning spiritual home

LONDON'S famous Lord's stadium provided a fitting backdrop as the Army and Royal Navy fought out a draw 100 years after the sides first met.

Six thousand people turned out to see the Army set an imposing target of 265-4, but some resolute batting from the Senior Service guided the Navy to 171-8 and a tied match.

Electing to bat first on a perfectly-manicured wicket, Army skipper Capt James Fulton (Rifles) was in electric form as he handled everything the opposition bowlers could throw at him.

Fulton and fellow opener Sig Stuart Jackson (R Signals) batted with confidence to bring up a century partnership in quick order.

The officer's relentless scoring continued apace until Lt Mark Toogood (RM) became the first player to take a wicket at Lord's in a Service fixture since 1972 by dismissing free-scoring Fulton for 115.

Jackson continued his resolute innings to chalk up an inspired half century and the introduction of Gnr Muzza Heyns (RA) added further spark to the Army's engine room.

Heyns, whose explosive batting has been a key component of the Army Twenty20 side's back-to-back Inter-Services victories, helped maintain the team's momentum with a confident and

typically no-nonsense innings.

Lt Jonathan Parker (RN) took two wickets, but Fulton's century paved the way for a commanding total of 265.

The Navy needed to make an immediate statement of intent at the crease, but the sailors were cursing their luck when Sig David Wade (R Signals) picked up the ball.

Fresh from an irrepressible Twenty20 performance at Portsmouth in which the signaller took three wickets in one over, Wade claimed another three victims early on at Lord's.

Losing a hat-trick of wickets for just 21 runs rattled the Navy, but the middle order did a fine job of steadying the ship and a determined knock of 52 not out from Lt Tim Burt (RN) ensured honours were even in the centenary cup.

The Army's successful season continued with victory in this year's Inter-Services competition.

A six-run win against the Navy was followed by a last-gasp victory over the Royal Air Force thanks to a four from the final ball by Heyns.

Team manager Dave Gelling said: "There were some good performances against county and high-quality club opposition enhanced by an excellent display at Lord's.

"It was also a superb, professional squad effort." ■



SPORTS SHORTS

SIX teams braved the cold water of the world's busiest shipping lane to complete the inaugural Army cross-channel relay race.

Squads of swimmers from the RLC, RE, R Signals, AGC and REME were joined by the guest Mutineers team for the race from Saphire Hoe beach to France.

Starting in pitch black at 0100, RE took an early lead as each of the teams' six swimmers spent one-hour stints in the water among changing tides and rising swells.

After leading for much of the 32-mile course, the sappers claimed first place ahead of the signallers and third-placed REME.

● For more information about open water swimming, contact Lt Col Rob Healey (R Signals) on 01722 433693 or visit www.armyopenwaterswimming.co.uk

Tele addicts

FOUR Army skiers will be representing Great Britain this winter after qualifying for the nation's telemark squad.

Maj Andrew Clarke (RA), Maj Adrian Pery (LD), Maj Mark Perkins (RA) and WO2 Philip Maddox (APTC) will join the 11-man team for competitions across Europe after impressing at trials earlier this year.

The skiers' success comes on the back of the first Army and Inter-Services telemark championships

in Austria in January, which were contested by 67 people.

Using equipment similar to alpine skiing, telemark races include giant slalom, jump and skating sections.

The 2009 Army championships kick off with a training week from Sunday, January 4 until Friday, January 8 before beginner, novice and championship races the following week.

● To apply, contact Maj Andrew Clarke on 01258 482310 or visit www.telemark.army.mod.uk ■



House of Lord's: Marylebone Cricket Club's home provides a fitting setting as the Army rack up 265 runs on the way to a draw against the Royal Navy

Picture: Cpl Gabriel Moreno (RLC)

One in a million

Injured Packer starts marathon effort to raise seven-figure sum for Services' charity

AN inspirational officer who lost the use of his legs following a rocket attack in Basra has launched a campaign to raise £1 million for Help for Heroes.

Maj Phil Packer (RMP), who became a paraplegic following the incident in February this year, has already collected nearly £35,000 for the charity through his Phil's Million initiative.

And instead of sitting back and asking

others to do all the fundraising, Packer plans to take on a series of challenges himself, culminating in next year's Flora London Marathon.

After raising £20,000 before he had even finished receiving treatment at the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital's spinal ward, Packer is confident of reaching his seven-figure target.

To help collect further funds, he has laid down the gauntlet to members of

the Services and the wider public for any challenges, events or sports that he can participate in before the Phil's Million deadline on April 26 next year.

And he is also looking for athletes – disabled or able-bodied – to join Phil's Team for the 2009 London Marathon.

● To contact Maj Packer, email packerrmp@hotmail.com or to make a secure donation, visit www.justgiving.com/philmillion ■



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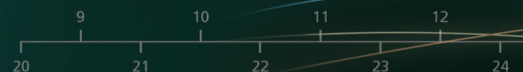
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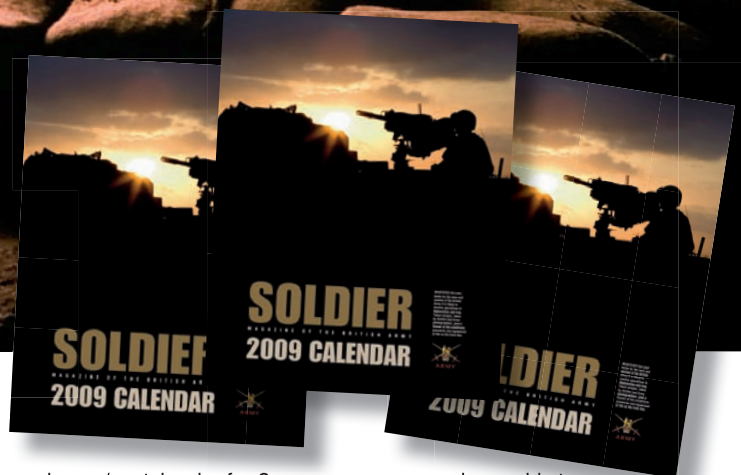
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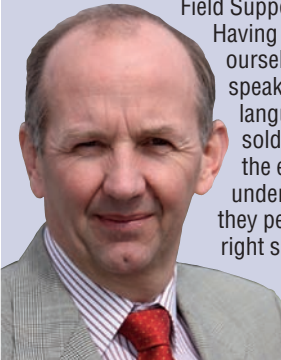
The regular feature in which we ask soldiers for their views on a hot topic

We asked soldiers-turned-defence contractors how their military knowledge and experience helps them support current Army operations

Mark Turner, Selex Galileo

I served in the REME TA and I'm currently a hardware engineer in the Selex Galileo Field Support Group.

Having served ourselves, we speak the same language as soldiers and have the experience to understand what they perceive is the right solution to problems that might arise.



Stuart McCall, BAE Systems

I am a former Intelligence Corps warrant officer with 22 years' service in Germany, Northern Ireland and Bosnia. My experience has been invaluable as I am head of security in my current role and have to make sure our people going out to theatre are trained. Ex-Army personnel know what to expect from military life.



Ola Aribisala, Selex Galileo

I served with the REME for three years as a craftswoman. I have found my military experience to be useful while working for this company. I have a decent knowledge of the Army and how it operates, as well as how soldiers might use a particular piece of equipment in the field.



Cliff Allum, Selex Galileo

I enjoyed a full and interesting career in the Royal Tank Regiment and other organisations before joining Selex Galileo as a business development executive. The qualities you bring to a defence company as an ex-soldier include being able to think innovatively and outside the box.



Mike Harrow, BAE Systems

I'm in quite an unusual position as I am still a captain in the TA, having served 22 years as a Regular with the REME. Between us, the team here has more than 100 years of military experience and that stands us in very good stead. We know what it is like to be soldiers and we will do everything possible to help our guys.



John Girvan, Selex Galileo

I'm a trials, training and field support manager having served with the Royal Artillery and retired as a WO2. Having been in the Army helps a lot because you know what to expect and what language the guys use. In my current role I have worked with troops, including the US Marines.



John Simms, BAE Systems

Having served 22 years in the Army, originally joining The Duke of Edinburgh's Royal Regiment, I have found that I have a better understanding of how to talk to soldiers and an awareness of what happens in theatre. At BAE Systems, I have been the field support manager for the Bulldog during four Iraq tours.



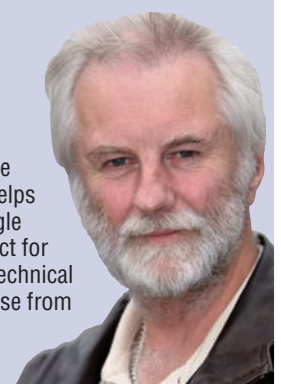
Jamie Mackenzie, Selex Galileo

I served as an officer in the Infantry for 16 years and now work in business development. With Selex Galileo I look at the available technology, talk to the customer and make sure that their requirements are met. Having military experience gives me an instinctive feeling for what the customer wants, particularly as I used to be that customer in the Army.



Bob Skinner, BAE Systems

I served with the REME in Germany, Northern Ireland and Canada. Having a military background enables me to manage our team of guys out in Iraq in my civilian role here. It also helps me as the single point of contact for security and technical issues that arise from operations.



Interviews: Cliff Caswell Pictures: Graeme Main

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| Coyote | EL324CT | £29.99 |

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Designed for SPECIAL FORCES units with mission achievement in mind.

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IR version: super bright LED

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