

SOLDIER

THE THIN RED LINE

On the beat with the
Royal Military Police

CUT ABOVE THE REST

Service style tips from
celeb hairdresser
Nicky Clarke

ROTARY CLUB

Lifting the lid on the
Army's elite aerial experts

THE LYNX EFFECT: AIR ASSETS ATTRACT NEW PILOTS

INSIDE: MEDICAL MARVELS • FENCING • WINDSOR TATTOO

VETERAN'S FUEL FOR THOUGHT

Ex-soldier's
Service skills
propel firm to
new heights



SHARP-END SUPERHERO UNVEILED

Hi-tech Cutlass
robot breaks
the bomb
disposal mould



HEROINE'S MODEL BEHAVIOUR

Miss England
attracts female
followers to
Forces' career





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Cover picture (left): Sgt Brennan Evans (AAC), who is training at Middle Wallop to be a Lynx pilot Picture: Mike Weston

Background image: With an innovative crew capsule that is suspended from the ceiling to protect passengers in the event of a blast, Universal Engineering's Ranger vehicle is showing a lot of promise in its early stages

Picture: Universal Engineering



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SOLDIER is published by the Ministry of Defence
and printed by St. Ives Roche Limited. Print
contract managed by CDS.

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those of the British Army or the Ministry of Defence.



"I think it was Col Mustard, in the conservatory with the revolver."

● Scene stealers – Pages 36-39

Air traffic control

If there is one thing that April hammered home, it was this country's – and indeed the world's – reliance on aviation.

The inconsiderate spewings of the frankly-unpronounceable volcano in Iceland left aircraft grounded amid fears that ash from the eruption would damage engines.

For many, the no-fly period meant extra time on holiday, but for those travelling on business and for the airlines themselves the delay had serious financial implications.

But even the angriest executive had to swallow their hot air and admit their problems were fairly minor when it became apparent that the same volcanic cloud was keeping Op Herrick veterans from returning to their loved ones.

Luckily for the home-bound troops, the military's logistic excellence shone through and a combination of coaches and Royal Navy ships delivered them back to British soil.

While Europe took a breather from air traffic, the skies over southern Afghanistan remained as busy as ever as the Armed Forces' aerial assets ferried troops and equipment around Helmand province and carried out missions in support of operations.

Those flying the airframes have a much tougher job than their civilian counterparts, but their training surpasses anything found elsewhere in the world.

Army Air Corps pilots wanting to fly the Lynx, for example, have to undergo an arduous series of courses to gain their wings and master the feline flying machine (Pages 24-25).

The same is also true for anyone wanting to take control of the awesome Apache (Pages 26-27). The immensity of the training can be

anticipated, but what is less well-known is that any soldier who is an NCO or higher can apply to transfer into the AAC and become a pilot.

Another potential impact of the ash cloud that was well dealt with by the military was the possible disruption to the medical chain.

Those in charge headed this off at the pass by managing supplies and even arranging to make use of the United States' system until the situation was resolved.

Closer still to the beginning of the chain, first aid experts are continually coming up with new ways to save lives before the casualty has even been extracted from the battlefield.

Celox dressings – which contain shellfish extract – are now being used to stop potentially-fatal bleeding (Page 45) and private companies set up by former soldiers, such as Prometheus Medical, are constantly dreaming up new innovations (Pages 46-47).

Elsewhere in this edition, we chat to Miss England LCpl Katrina Hodge (Page 43), meet the brains behind this month's Windsor Castle Royal Tattoo (Page 53) and ask celebrity sniper Nicky Clarke to help put an end to the Army's ongoing style debate (Pages 54-57).

Always keen to stay on the right side of the law, we also accepted an invitation to visit the Defence College of Policing and Guarding to find out how the next generation of Royal Military Policemen and women are trained (Pages 36-41).

Finally, we have to admit that we tried to pull the wool over your eyes. Last month's "exclusive" about the British Army sending warthogs on patrol with reconnaissance troops was an April Fools-inspired porky.

Enjoy the issue. ■

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Picture: Steve Dock

Plain aims: Brig Richard Felton (left), commander of 4 Mechanized Brigade, meets Afghan counterparts during training for Op Herrick

Four-midable formation welcomed

SOLDIERS from 4 Mechanized Brigade have begun their tour of Helmand after taking over from the outgoing 11 Light Brigade.

Commander Brig James Cowan handed control of British Forces in southern Afghanistan to his counterpart Brig Richard Felton during a Transfer of Authority ceremony at Task Force Helmand headquarters in Lashkar Gah last month.

Brig Felton said: "11 Light Brigade have done a fantastic job over the last six months. We will build on the progress they have made here.

"[We] are keen to start work and enthusiastic about the difference we can make to the International Security Assistance Force (Isaf) mission and to the Afghan people."

Forces deployed with 4 Mechanized Brigade include The Royal Dragoon Guards, The Queen's Royal Lancers and 4th Regiment Royal Artillery.

Further infantry support will be provided by 1st Battalion, Scots Guards; 1st Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland; 1st Battalion, The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment; 1st Battalion, The Mercian Regiment and 1st Battalion, The Royal Gurkha Rifles.

Specialist troops from 21 Engineer Regiment; 3 Medical Regiment; 12 Logistic Support Regiment, Royal Logistic Corps and the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers' 1 Close Support and 101 Force Support battalions have also deployed.

The departure of 11 Light Brigade marks the end of a tough deployment.

Sixty-one personnel lost their lives as Isaf troops and the Afghan National Army drove the Taliban out of large swathes of Helmand province in Operation Moshtarak.

Brig Cowan said: "I am immensely proud of every member of 11 Light Brigade. They have endured a difficult tour but shown courage and professionalism at every turn.

"Their success has brought security and stability to many Afghan people.

"I want to pay particular tribute to the members of the brigade who made the ultimate sacrifice. We are all deeply saddened by their loss and they will live on in our memory."

The sacrifices of the British personnel killed in action were also praised by Helmand province's governor Gulab Mangal.

He added: "None of your losses have been in vain. You have worked hard to help the people of Afghanistan and we will never forget you."

15 THE NUMBER IN THOUSANDS OF FARMERS IN NAD-E-ALI DISTRICT TO HAVE COLLECTED SUBSIDISED SEED PACKAGES FROM THE FOOD ZONE PROGRAMME, WHICH IS BEING EXTENDED ACROSS HELMAND PROVINCE

● Home advantage – Pages 48-49

NEWS IN BRIEF

MEDICAL experts will have their say on the compensation offered to injured soldiers under a new initiative introduced by the MoD.

An independent team of consultants has been set up to advise on the appropriate payments to personnel who suffer certain injuries set out in the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme.

An interim group including specialists from a range of medical fields, Service representatives and an injured soldier who has claimed under the scheme has been put in place until 2011, when a permanent replacement will be set up.

Veterans Minister Kevan Jones said: "This independent group will be able to give expert medical advice on a range of injuries and conditions and the level of compensation that should be awarded for them."

THE annual quad-Service lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender conference will take place at MoD Main Building on Friday, July 2.

The event is open to all members of the Army, Royal Navy, Royal Air Force and Ministry of Defence. For further details, visit www.proud2serve.net or email conference.2010@hotmail.com

DEFENCE contractor Northrop Grumman has launched the latest enhanced version of its Wheelbarrow bomb disposal robot.

The Mk9 variant includes significant advances in technology and performance and a range of new features that will improve its capabilities across the board.

The upgraded vehicle is also capable of climbing a 45-degree stairway; has a maximum speed of 5kph and has a lift capacity of 150kg.

SOLDIERS can gain practical English, maths and information technology skills by studying for a new qualification being introduced in September.

The Functional Skills course covers tasks such as writing job applications and communicating in the workplace and has seen 200,000 people sit its exam since it was first piloted in 2007.

For more information about the Functional Skills qualification, visit www.qcda.gov.uk/functionalskills

OPERATIONAL training will continue to go off with a bang after a pyrotechnics company extended its contract with the MoD.

Derbyshire-based Chemring Defence UK will supply a range of 52 munitions, including weapon fire and explosion battle noise simulators, for soldiers preparing to deploy to Helmand province.

The £40million deal will also provide troops heading to southern Afghanistan on Op Herrick with smoke grenades and flare markers for use on the front line.

The contract between Chemring Defence UK and the MoD runs for five years and is expected to deliver savings and benefits totalling £5million as well as securing the jobs of the company's 1,026-strong workforce.

Ash delays Herrick homecoming

END-OF-TOUR troop replacements in Afghanistan were temporarily suspended as a cloud of volcanic ash brought Europe's air network to a standstill.

Flights into and out of several nations, including the UK, were grounded for more than a week due to the danger posed to planes by particles from the eruption of Iceland's Eyjafjallajökull volcano.

The situation led to the temporary halting of the relief in place process for personnel finishing their tour, but Maj Gen Gordon Messenger said the military had been "actively developing alternative routes" to get things moving.

He added: "The disruption caused has had no impact on our ability to prosecute operations in Afghanistan."

"We are working hard to ensure that any disruption to the support of operations is kept to an absolute minimum as a result of the limitations placed on flying into, and out of, United Kingdom airspace."

Royal Navy ships were called into action to return personnel home, with troops from units including 33 Field Hospital Regiment flying into Spain

before taking a coach to Santander and sailing to Portsmouth on HMS *Albion*.

Despite the difficulties with flights, Maj Gen Messenger insisted that plans were in place to ensure that personnel wounded on Op Herrick continued to receive the best possible treatment.

The senior officer added that equipment stock levels were closely monitored throughout the no-fly period and an alternative supply route through southern Europe was able to connect with the adjusted air bridge in southern Afghanistan.

"Care of casualties remains an absolute priority," he explained.

"We have an agreement in place with the US to evacuate casualties through their medical chain if necessary."

"We have sufficient stocks and medical facilities in Afghanistan to provide appropriate care for anyone who cannot be evacuated."

"At no stage will the medical care of our injured be compromised."

In addition to HMS *Albion*, HMS *Ark Royal* and HMS *Ocean* were also deployed to the Channel to help bring back British civilians stranded abroad in the wake of the eruption.

27 THE NUMBER OF YEARS DJ NEIL "DR" FOX'S BROTHER SERVED IN THE ARMY. THE BROADCASTER LAUNCHED SSAFA FORCES HELP'S BIG QUIZ, WHICH IS RUNNING IN MAY AND JUNE. VISIT WWW.SSAFA125.ORG.UK/QUIZ

Watchkeeper asset takes flight

THE long-awaited Watchkeeper unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) platform moved a step closer to operational readiness after completing its first UK flight.

Defence company Thales UK launched the device for its maiden 20-minute voyage from Parc Aberporth in Wales last month.

The successful flight represented the first stage in proving the UAV's airworthiness ahead of its delivery to the MoD later this year.

Thales UK chief executive officer Alex Dorrian said: "This is a momentous accomplishment in the Watchkeeper programme and just one of a number of flight trials scheduled over the coming months."

"This milestone reflects the years of hard work by Thales UK, the MoD and other parties since the contract was signed."

Watchkeeper is a long-range UAV capable of remaining airborne for more than 16 hours. It features automatic take-off and landing, a deicing ability and can be fitted with optic and infra-red sensors.



Picture: Thales UK



TWO hundred soldiers from 11 Light Brigade's counter-improvised explosive device (C-IED) task force have received their Op Herrick medals. The troops, including representatives from 11 Explosive Ordnance Disposal Regiment, The Royal Logistic Corps, Royal Engineer specialists, the Royal Military Police and Military Working Dogs, were handed the gongs by Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire Tim Stevenson after a homecoming parade in Didcot. The C-IED task force suffered seven fatalities during a busy deployment which also saw the award of two George Crosses – one for SSgt Kim Hughes and one posthumously for SSgt Oz Schmid.

Boosted birds in Helmand lift-off

TEN Lynx helicopters will be upgraded to provide support on Afghanistan's front lines thanks to a new £42million contract.

The move will see the aircraft fitted with more powerful engines, strengthened frames, advanced electronics and instruments and the increased firepower of a 0.5in gun.

The contract with AgustaWestland follows a £50million deal to upgrade 12 Lynx helicopters and brings the total number brought to Mk9A standard to 22.

Lt Col Mike McGinty, commanding officer of 9 Regt AAC, said: "The regiment has

been training with the upgraded aircraft for some months and can confirm that it [is] a considerable improvement in performance over its predecessor.

"Training in hot and high conditions in Kenya has proved that it really does what it says on the tin. We anticipate that it will be a very valuable asset on operations against the insurgents in Afghanistan."

The first upgraded Lynxes deployed on Op Herrick last month where their principal role includes convoy overwatch, reconnaissance and surveillance and the movement of personnel.

Brits buoyed by new culture club

A NEW unit of military experts in Afghanistan's languages and cultures has been formed to improve soldiers' understanding of the country.

The Defence Cultural Specialist Unit (DSCU) will offer Op Herrick commanders advice on the beliefs and expectations of the people of Helmand province and beyond.

The tri-Service specialists will build on their existing knowledge by spending time in Afghanistan gathering intelligence and building contacts.

DSCU operational commander Col Nick Hubberstey said: "By continuing to develop our understanding of the people we are working among, how they think, their culture, beliefs, hopes and fears, we can do more to bring our mission in Afghanistan to a speedy and satisfactory conclusion."

Once at full strength, the DSCU, which is based at RAF Henlow, will have 42 members and will support cultural training in the wider military and other government departments.

NEWS IN BRIEF

A NEW Military Aviation Authority has been set up to manage the Armed Forces' combined aerial activities.

The group, which was formed following Charles Haddon-Cave's Nimrod Review last October, brings regulatory functions for defence aviation together for the first time.

HEADQUARTERS Land Forces (HQLF) will start the process of moving from Wilton to Andover this month.

The transition will enhance HQLF's ability to prepare for and support operations, with less duplication of staff work, more effective ways of working and improved internal communication.

Moving to Andover will allow the Wilton site to be disposed of, reducing the number of locations occupied by the Army and the associated costs.

SERVICE families posted outside of Britain can protect their entitlement to state benefits following an extension to the National Insurance credit scheme.

Spouses and civil partners of Servicemen and women based abroad can now claim the credits, allowing them to maintain their National Insurance record while overseas.

The move shields the family member's right to a basic state pension as well as contribution-based benefits including Jobseeker's Allowance and Employment and Support Allowance.

Full details of the application process can be found on 2010DIN01-076.

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VIP visitor: Prince Harry joins Army Cadets during their preparations for an expedition to Lesotho

Cadets' royal appointment

A GROUP of elite Army Cadets were surprised when Prince Harry joined them in their final preparations for a trip to southern Africa.

The 60 teenagers were on the last leg of a 25km walk in the Black Mountains in Powys, Wales, when the Blues and Royals officer stepped into their ranks.

The cadets are undertaking a three-week expedition to Lesotho this summer where they will volunteer with Prince Harry's charity Sentable, which works

with orphans and vulnerable children.

The prince, who was a cadet while at Eton College, told the specially-selected group: "You will really enjoy it, it will be one hell of an adventure.

"Once you have met them your lives will be very different because you will have an understanding of the way people have to live out there."

The expedition is one of more than 150 events being held to mark the 150th anniversary of the Cadet movement.

26 THE NUMBER OF HOURS INJURED OFFICER MAJ PHIL PACKER (RMP) PLANNED TO TAKE TO COMPLETE THE LONDON MARATHON AS THIS ISSUE WENT TO PRESS, RAISING MONEY FOR 26 CHARITIES IN THE PROCESS

Trust launches troop recruitment drive

A NATIONAL scheme which helps disadvantaged young people develop life skills is appealing for soldiers to sign up for its challenge.

The Prince's Trust's team programme sees groups of 16 to 24-year-olds conducting community projects, work placements and classroom activities to help prepare them for employment.

The 12-week sessions are led by volunteer personnel on detachment from groups including the Armed Forces and the Trust wants more troops to give mentoring a go.

"It is a personal development scheme that provides young people with the skills and confidence they need to get into the workplace," explained Maj Marianne Cursons, Service liaison officer with The Prince's Trust.

"Soldiers contribute fully to helping

the young people and it's brilliant for them because it builds up their own problem-solving skills."

Personnel volunteering for a secondment with The Prince's Trust are employed either as team leaders or assistants depending on their skills.

As well as mentoring the young people on the course and helping them to set targets for themselves, the military men and women also lead a week at an outdoor activity centre and a project in the wider community.

Maj Cursons said that soldiers' unique skills make them ideal candidates to help youngsters on the scheme to fulfil their potential.

"The programme is loosely based around military skills and I think the additional characteristics that we bring – we have a high work ethic and are

very disciplined – help the young people get more involved," she explained.

"Also, many of the soldiers who come up have experienced very similar backgrounds and serve as excellent role models.

"It's also excellent for raising awareness of the Army and for community engagement with people that are usually hard to reach.

"Doing this takes soldiers out of the operational environment into a different but equally challenging situation. For people wanting to learn new skills or for a young officer struggling with leadership, this is a brilliant scheme."

● For more information about secondments with The Prince's Trust, contact Maj Cursons by telephone on 0207 543 1328 or email Marianne.Cursons@princes-trust.org.uk

NEWS IN BRIEF

THE 65th anniversary of the end of the Second World War will be marked by two major events this summer.

To commemorate Victory in Europe Day on Saturday, May 8, politicians, the Armed Forces and veterans' organisations will lay wreaths at the Cenotaph in Whitehall.

A further event will take place on August 15 to mark the 65th anniversary of Victory in Japan Day.

The green Army is living up to its name by embracing a new policy designed to combat climate change.

The MoD's sustainable procurement strategy's action points include increasing energy efficiency and making more use of recycled materials.

The plan supports the Defence Acquisition Reform programme and aims to make sustainable procurement a key part of the MoD's processes for introducing new equipment.

A MULTI-PHASED effort by soldiers has boosted the funds of veterans' charity Project 65 by £50,000.

Members of 5th Battalion, The Rifles raised the impressive amount through a series of initiatives including a 1,000km run around their battlegroup base in Iraq, a "moustache for cash" competition and the sale of wristbands.

THE TEA served to soldiers since 1921 is to be sold in public shops with some profits going to help wounded troops.

The Navy, Army and Air Force Institute (Naafi) has introduced Naafi Break Tea to 80 branches of Spar, with 50p from every box boosting Help for Heroes' coffers.

It is the first time in the Naafi's 90-year history that its tea has been put on general sale.

NEWS IN BRIEF

REGULATIONS governing when ex-Service personnel may wear uniform have been revised.

The discretionary element previously given to retired lieutenant colonels and above has been removed and any retired personnel authorised to wear uniform must comply with the same rules as those who are serving.

The move is aimed at bringing the regulations in line with those of the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force.

TWO regiments are to be reorganised as part of the Army's plan to develop and optimise its Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) capability.

In line with Operation Entirety, 47 Regt RA, previously a dual-roled Close Air Defence (CAD) and Mini UAV (MUAV) unit, will now focus on MUAV and resubordinate from 3 (UK) Div to 1 Arty Bde in Theatre Troops.

In addition, 12 Regt RA will now concentrate solely on CAD, remaining within 1 (UK) Armd Div.

THE Royal Artillery Hunt has made two generous donations to Services' charities following a successful auction of promises.

Cheques for £386 were presented to ABF The Soldiers' Charity and The Royal Artillery Charitable Fund.

MORE than 50 Army cadets from two detachments have been handed Royal Logistic Corps cap badges by a Territorial Army Port and Maritime Squadron.

The cadets, from St George's Barracks in Gosport and Browndown Camp in Lee-on-Solent, were welcomed by 266 Port Squadron at the Territorial Army Centre in Southampton.

To find out more about Army cadets or the TA in Hampshire, go to www.serfca.org

THE UK's fleet of Hermes 450 unmanned aerial vehicles has topped more than 30,000 flight hours in support of troops on operations.

With 2,000 sorties to its name the system has played a vital role in providing airborne intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition and reconnaissance (ISTAR).

Thales UK first delivered the ISTAR contract in July 2007 in response to an urgent operational requirement from the MoD.

The deal runs until October this year but it could be extended to April 2011, when the newly-developed Watchkeeper system enters service.

THE Joint Services Publication (JSP) that lays down the scales of Defence Accommodation Stores for Service Families Accommodation has been revised.

Changes to JSP 308 were introduced on April 1 and details can be found on the Defence Intranet by clicking on the link to Joint Service Scales of Accommodation Stores – Part One: Service Families Quarters.



Picture: Crown copyright

A BRITISH Army vet dubbed the "Herriot of Helmand" has left a lasting legacy for the province's animals after completing his Op Herrick deployment. Capt Miles Malone (RAVC, pictured above left) spent seven months in theatre caring for the Service's sniffer dogs as well as running clinics to look after more than 8,000 animals belonging to local farmers. And just weeks before the end of his tour, the officer flew out to Patrol Base Shaheed near Nad-e-Ali to offer his services to a new set of livestock and provide essential training for its owners. "Some of their goats are worth \$70 each. A lot of people round here are surviving on about a dollar a day so economically they are extremely important," said Capt Malone. Patrol Base Shaheed was installed by soldiers from 1st Battalion, The Royal Welsh during Operation Moshtarak and Maj Ed Hill, officer commanding B Company, said Capt Malone's skills were well-appreciated in the agricultural area. "Having the opportunity for a vet to come down and deliver medication, treatment and also advice to the local farmers has been a real win," he said. "It displays our intent to stay here and that our actions are in support of the community." Capt Malone has now been replaced in theatre by another vet, with a second animal expert joining him to concentrate on further expanding the clinics. Non-governmental organisations including the Society for the Protection of Animals Abroad are training Afghan veterinary technicians to continue the work themselves in the future.

15 THE HEIGHT IN METRES OF A NEW WIND TURBINE INSTALLED BY THE MOD AT THE DUKE OF YORK'S ROYAL MILITARY SCHOOL IN KENT. THE DEVICE CAN GENERATE 269,000 KWH OF CLEAN, GREEN ENERGY

LEAGUE OF GENTLEMEN

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2	£20,000	MIKE BUSS The endurance athlete and former soldier has raised the five-figure sum in just eight months. His next challenge is running 320 miles from Swindon to compete in the Brighton and London Marathons	Help for Heroes www.helpforheroes.co.uk
3	£10,000	SGT MICK CLARK The Herrick veteran has organised a road trip for up to 50 vehicles from Elmpt in Germany to the Stelvio National Park in Italy	Help for Heroes www.justgiving.com/helpforheroes-roadtrip-2010
4	£500	SSGT CHRIS PENK Among the amusingly-attired athletes running through England's capital during last month's London Marathon was a pink flamingo. Inside the suit was Army recruiter SSgt Penk (RLC)	ABF The Soldiers' Charity www.justgiving.com/Chris-Penk

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IN MEMORIAM



SJT STEVEN CAMPBELL (30)
3RD BATTALION,
THE RIFLES
KIA MARCH 22 – AFGHANISTAN

A RIFLEMAN who was devoted to the Army, his family and Newcastle United Football Club died while on patrol in southern Afghanistan.

Sjt Steven Campbell, of 3rd Battalion, The Rifles, was killed when an IED detonated three kilometres south of Sangin district centre.

The 30-year-old career soldier, who joined the Army in 1998 at the age of 18, leaves behind his wife Lisa, son Brandon and his parents.

In a joint statement his family said: "He was a loving husband to Lisa and a loving father to Brandon and he will be missed by all his family and friends."

Sjt Campbell had worked as a platoon serjeant in B Company, 3 Rifles after its formation, before instructing recruits at the

Infantry Training Centre in Catterick in 2008.

He then returned to the battalion during its current deployment to Helmand province.

The senior NCO was originally sent to B Coy to serve in an intelligence role but he moved to A Coy as a platoon serjeant in March.

Lt Col Nick Kitson, commanding officer of the 3 Rifles Battlegroup, said: "Sjt Campbell was one of the Army's rarest treasures. So positive and energetic, it was truly an honour and a pleasure to know him and to have him with this battlegroup."

"Fit, capable and versatile, he was a commanding officer's dream, guaranteed to complete any task in any sphere and to do it to the highest standard."



LCOH JONATHAN WOODGATE (26)
THE HOUSEHOLD
CAVALRY REGIMENT
KIA MARCH 26 – AFGHANISTAN

A JUNIOR NCO was killed in Sangin while carrying out what was due to be the last patrol of his tour of Afghanistan.

LCoH Jonathan Woodgate, of The Household Cavalry Regiment, was operating three kilometres south of the district centre as part of the Brigade Reconnaissance Force (BRF) when he was fatally wounded by a grenade thrown from behind a wall.

The 26-year-old joined the Army Foundation College in 2001 and later deployed on Op Fresco, Op Telic 1 and Op Herrick 4, where he served as a gunner.

Lt Col Harry Fullerton, CO of The Household Cavalry Regiment, said: "This was his fourth operational tour and there are few others of his

generation who achieved as much as he had.

"Ever the volunteer, he served his regiment with pride and distinction. Everything he did proved how talented he was."

Maj Gus MacGillivray, officer commanding the BRF, added: "LCoH Woodgate was a most remarkably happy and enthusiastic man, always with a grin and never with a complaint."

LCoH Woodgate, who was born in Bury St Edmunds in Suffolk, leaves behind his parents and three sisters.

A family statement read: "We are immensely proud to have had a son, brother and friend who was so brave. He was more than just a soldier, he was a friendly young man with immense charisma, humour and artistic flair."



RFN DANIEL HOLKHAM (19)
3RD BATTALION,
THE RIFLES
KIA MARCH 27 – AFGHANISTAN

A RIFLEMAN who served his country "faithfully and with great pride" died stopping a suicide bomber from blowing himself up in a busy market in Helmand province.

Rfn Daniel Holkham was killed in an explosion when the insurgent detonated a device after being halted by the soldier outside Sangin bazaar.

The 19-year-old, of 3rd Battalion, The Rifles, leaves behind his parents Rodney and Tracy, girlfriend Nikki and brothers Andrew and Matthew, who are both soldiers with 3 Rifles.

Rfn Holkham enlisted at the age of 16, attending the Army Foundation College in Harrogate before graduating to the Infantry Training Centre, Catterick.

He joined 3 Rifles in Edinburgh in April 2008, taking part in the battalion exercise in Kenya later that year before undergoing pre-deployment training in 2009.

The Chatham-born soldier had been serving with his platoon at a patrol base in central Sangin since deploying on Op Herrick in September last year.

Lt Col Nick Kitson, commanding officer of the 3 Rifles Battlegroup, said: "Daniel Holkham was a model rifleman; robust, bright and dedicated, he was everything a commander could hope for and more."

"There is no doubt that a bright future lay ahead of this young man and it is a tragedy that he has been robbed of the opportunity to fill it."



GDSM MICHAEL SWEENEY (19)
1ST BATTALION,
COLDSTREAM GUARDS
KIA APRIL 1 – AFGHANISTAN

A GUARDSMAN who forged a vital relationship between British troops and Afghan soldiers was killed in an explosion while on patrol to resupply his comrades.

Gdsm Michael Sweeney, of 1st Battalion, Coldstream Guards, died when he stepped on an IED in the Babaji district of central Helmand province in southern Afghanistan.

The 19-year-old, from Blyth in Northumberland, had been working on complex combat operations in the area for nearly four months prior to the blast.

He leaves behind his parents Michael and Kim, brother Sean and fiancée Michelle.

Gdsm Sweeney's family said: "We are devastated by the loss of Michael."

"He was a proud guardsman and we are immensely proud of what Michael has achieved in such a short lifetime."

Gdsm Sweeney joined 1 Cldm Gds after passing out of the Infantry Training Centre Catterick and was posted to 2 Coy in May 2008 before moving to 7 Coy in London.

In a short time after joining his battalion, Gdsm Sweeney featured in two of the Queen's Birthday Parades, took part in jungle training in Belize and an extended exercise in Kenya.

Lt Col Toby Gray, CO of 1 Cldm Gds, said: "[He was] a true son of the north country; proud Northumbrian, true Coldstreamer and outstanding soldier."

"Beyond this, he was simply a super bloke."



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IN MEMORIAM



RFN MARK TURNER (21)
3RD BATTALION,
THE RIFLES
KIA APRIL 4 – AFGHANISTAN

SOLDIERS and commanders have been mourning the loss of a dedicated comrade who showed prolific talent for the job he loved.

Rfn Mark "Turtle" Turner, of 3rd Battalion, The Rifles, was on foot patrol near forward operating base Zeebrugge, in the Kajaki area of Helmand province, when he was killed in an IED blast.

The 21-year-old grew up in Gateshead and joined the Army in 2006. He was an assault pioneer and team medic and had been on overseas exercises in Kenya and Belize.

He had previously deployed to Afghanistan from November 2006 to April 2007.

Lt Col Nick Kitson, CO of 3 Rifles Battlegroup, said Rfn Turner would be remembered as a young man who took the

toughest jobs in theatre in his stride.

"Daily he took responsibility for the lives of his friends by putting himself out in front and clearing the ground of the deadly devices left by insurgents with nothing to call on but a metal detector and his own instincts," he added.

"His conduct and talents were nothing short of exemplary and he was blessed with a smile and a joke for every occasion.

Rfn Ollie Smith said: "Turtle was there for me since day one. He was a courageous soldier and an amazing friend.

"Words can't explain the devastation within the platoon.

"I owe my life to T and I just want to say thank you mate and you will be greatly missed."



FUS JONATHAN BURGESS (20)
1ST BATTALION,
THE ROYAL WELSH
KIA APRIL 7 – AFGHANISTAN

A "WELSH warrior" was killed in a gun battle as he and his comrades fought to disrupt insurgent activity in Helmand province.

Fus Jonathan Burgess, of 1st Battalion, The Royal Welsh, suffered fatal gunshot wounds after his multiple was engaged by enemy fighters in the Nad-e-Ali area.

The Swansea-born soldier, who joined 1 RW in May 2008 after passing out of Catterick, leaves behind fiancée Kelly Forrest, parents Royston and Susan, sisters Tracy and Suzanne and brothers David, Christopher and Ashley.

They said in a statement: "Jonathan was a loving and caring man who enjoyed life to the full. He had an infectious smile that would brighten up anyone's day."

Fus Burgess had completed a demanding overseas exercise in Kenya and undergone a full pre-deployment training package prior to leaving for Op Herrick 11, where he had been a key member of 3 Platoon, 1 RW.

Lt Col Nick Lock, CO of 1 RW Battlegroup, said: "He had shown himself to be a natural leader, stepping up to command when required. He was marked out for early promotion."

Fus Robert Slaney remembered his comrade as a "brilliant basher buddy", adding: "He would always lift my morale when I was feeling low.

"He was a very kind and friendly person who would go out of his way to help you.

"Jon will be sorely missed and losing a good friend has torn us apart as a multiple."

Medic recalls Op Herrick bravery

ASOLDIER has described the heroic actions on the front line of Afghanistan that saw him awarded a Military Cross.

Cpl Craig Adkin (Mercian) was taking part in a foot patrol as part of Op Panther's Claw last July when his company was ambushed by insurgents firing rocket propelled grenades (RPGs).

Several of the platoon medic's comrades were wounded in the attack, but Cpl Adkin did not hesitate to push forward and locate the casualties.

"At the end of the day it's my job," he said. "I have to get to my place of work and my place of work is where the casualties are.

"I can remember an RPG hitting the tree. As I was coming around the bund line it hit the tree directly parallel to me so I had a quick look at myself to make sure that I wasn't hurt."

Cpl Adkin, who was on his second tour of southern Afghanistan, ran to get to cover but soon heard the cries of a wounded soldier.

Realising the need to provide urgent treatment, he dashed across 100m of open ground while under enemy fire to

reach the injured Serviceman.

"We were still out in the open so I dragged him down onto the ground and carried on with the first aid," he said.

"I tried to put a drip in and as I did, two rounds whizzed in between us.

"It was then that a couple of other lads came over and helped me and we [evacuated] him back to a safe area and from there back to the helicopter landing site."

As soon as he had recovered one soldier to safety, Cpl Adkin heard over the radio that a second man had been injured and required treatment.

Again running over open ground in the face of the enemy, he repeated his heroics to extract his colleague.

Cpl Adkin became a casualty himself later in the tour, losing his right leg below the knee after his company was attacked as they built a forward operating base.

Speaking of his pride at receiving the Military Cross, the NCO praised the men he served alongside. He said: "I don't feel that I won it as an individual – I feel we won it as a troop as all the lads work hard as a group."



Picture: Steve Dock

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EAGLE-EYED snipers played a key role as British forces cleared insurgents from part of south west Helmand. The marksmen, who are serving with the fire support team of 1st Battalion, The Royal Welsh, engaged enemy fighters near Shahzad to provide protection for Army bomb disposal teams on the ground. The soldiers used the precision telescopic sights of their L115 A3 long-range rifles to accurately pick out targets without harming civilians who were being used as human shields.

200 THE NUMBER OF CANINES ASSIGNED TO THE NEWLY-FORMED 1ST MILITARY WORKING DOG REGIMENT BASED IN SENNELAGER, GERMANY. SOME 284 PERSONNEL WILL LOOK AFTER THEM

Epic test for charity marchers

SOLDIER is throwing itself into a 131-mile race across south-west England in aid of wounded Armed Forces personnel and bereaved families.

The Forces March, set up by military charity Project 65, is one of the most challenging tests in the UK, equating to five marathons in five days, and assistant editor Joe Clapson will be competing as part of the Commando Logistics Regiment (CLR) team alongside a number of Service personnel.

The aim of the event, which runs from May 27-31, is to unite civilians with members of the Armed Forces while raising cash for The Royal British Legion; British Limbless Ex-Service Man's Association; St Dunstan's; ABF The Soldiers' Charity; Royal Naval Benevolent Trust; Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund and Help for Heroes.

The winning team will be awarded the Mark Hale trophy, named after Capt Mark Hale of 2nd Battalion, The Rifles, who was killed in Afghanistan in August 2009.

Capt Hale was a key fund-raiser for Project 65 last year when his team from 2 Rifles covered 5,800km on rowing

machines while based in Sangin.

One remarkable entry to the Forces March is LBdr Ben Parkinson, who lost both legs in a landmine explosion in Afghanistan three years ago.

The 25-year-old, of 7th Parachute Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery, is a patron of Project 65 and will be taking part in the challenge's fifth stage.

"My injuries were severe but it has not held me back and I now want to do everything I can to raise money to help others," he said. "The Forces March is a great chance for wounded soldiers like me to have something to aim for in our recovery."

Project 65 chief executive Danny Greeno said he was pleased at the amount of civilians getting involved.

"There's a lot of empathy out there for the military and this gives the general public a chance to run alongside the British Forces," he added.

"What's lovely is that I have created an event that people like Ben are using as rehabilitation for their injuries."

To enter the Forces March, visit www.forcesmarch.org.uk

To sponsor Joe's team, go to www.justgiving.com/CLRforcesmarch



NEWS IN BRIEF

SERVICE personnel took centre stage as the Ideal Homes Show teamed up with ABF The Soldiers' Charity to honour the Armed Forces.

A troops' day at the major event at London's Earls Court marked the launch of the charity's Ideal Homes for Heroes appeal which aims to raise £100,000.

Military men and women were entitled to free tickets for the show, which featured speeches from The Soldiers' Charity chief executive Maj Gen Sir Evelyn Webb-Carter and General Officer Commanding London District Maj Gen Bill Cubitt.

Also present was Sgt Gavin Harvey (REME), who lost both his legs in Afghanistan last year. The NCO received a cheque for £50,000 from TV presenter George Clarke on behalf of the appeal.

He said. "It was nice to be approached by a charity and not have to ask. These people openly came to us to see if they could help."

The appeal was further boosted by a donation of £5,000 which was raised through collections by soldiers from London District, officer cadets from Lucknow Platoon, Chelsea Pensioners and other volunteers.

SOLDIER embraced the spirit of April Fool's Day for last month's spine line competition.

The likes of passive drinking, genetically-modified soldiers and supersonic Paras are all entirely-fictional stories this magazine has published to

try and pull the wool over our readers' eyes in previous years.

We have teamed up with Jelly Belly, www.jellybelly-uk.com, to offer the winner of each month's competition one of the company's selection boxes of gourmet jelly beans.

To stand a chance of winning, simply tell us the link between the names printed on this month's spine.

Answers on a postcard marked "spine lines" to the usual address or by email to comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk to reach us by May 28. Usual rules apply.

THE Defence-wide roll-out of the Joint Asset Management Engineering Solution (Project James) has been completed.

The system, which helps units across the entire Army as well as elements of the Royal Air Force, Royal Navy and Defence Support Group to manage their vehicles, was launched four years ago and is now used on a daily basis.

As well as delivering James, the team behind the scheme also provided a computer-based learning package to allow users to continue their training via the Defence Learning Portal.

The material can be accessed by visiting www.james-project.r.mil.uk/techdocs/default



A RUGBY World Cup winner has teamed up with a Lynx helicopter pilot to take on Mount Everest. Wasps, England and British Lions legend and former Army officer Josh Lewsey is joining his friend Maj Keith Reesby (1 AAC) to climb the highest peak on the planet. The pair aim to raise as much money and awareness as possible for the Help for Heroes and Combat Stress charities by conquering the 8,848m zenith. Maj Reesby, who arrived back in the UK in January after a tour of Afghanistan in which he was commanding officer of Lynx Squadron, said: "Josh and I were on the same platoon at Sandhurst in 2000 and have stayed good mates since. We always planned to do something big when Josh retired and this fits the bill." Josh added: "Both of us wanted to take on something like this before we have to become real adults in the real world. We also want to raise money for these important charities. It's not a sponsored walk we're going on here, this is the ultimate challenge." Following his Herrick 11 tour Maj Reesby unpacked his Bergen and set straight off for Argentina with Josh where they climbed the 6,962m Aconcagua as a warm-up. The duo began the Everest trek from the Rongbuk glacier in southern Tibet and planned to conduct the first-ever live transmission from the mountain's north face as this issue went to press, linking to the big screen at Twickenham for the Help For Heroes match between Wasps and Bath on April 24. Speaking before setting off, Josh said: "The Armed Forces are very close to our hearts and as Keith was injured in Iraq in 2004 we've seen the need for care and support to injured Service personnel first hand. We hope to help raise money for the increasing number of personnel and their families whose lives have been changed permanently as a result of their duties." To monitor the pair's progress, log on to www.mounteverestclimb2010.com or twitter.com/joshlewsy

NEWS IN BRIEF

THE Home Office has changed the minimum age at which serving personnel may sponsor a visa for a partner from outside the European Economic Area to enter or remain in the UK.

New regulations, which were fully implemented on April 6, mean that soldiers aged 18 and above can now sponsor a spouse, civil partner, fiancée, proposed civil partner, unmarried partner or same-sex partner who is also aged over 18. The previous age limit was 21.

THE Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers' central volunteer headquarters has been closed as part of a restructuring process.

Responsibility and functions from the centre will be transferred to 102 Bn REME (V), 103 Bn REME (V), the REME Arms School and REME TA Pol Br, HQ DEME (A).

Veteran starts gym challenge

A FORMER soldier is aiming to raise £1 million for Help for Heroes by organising a country-wide endurance challenge.

Alan Haresign, who served for 24 years, has set up Gym for Heroes, which asks members of the public to sign up to one of two gruelling trials.

Competitors can take on either a 12-hour non-stop challenge consisting of three hours on a rower, bike and treadmill or cross trainer, or a three-hour version with one hour spent on each piece of equipment.



The event can only take place in a gym or leisure centre, but with thousands of the facilities across Britain Haresign is confident of a good turnout.

"There are more than four million gym users in the United Kingdom and with just a fraction of that it would be easy to raise a lot of money," said the former Royal Signals soldier.

Gym for Heroes is scheduled to take place between July 24 and 30.

● Gyms and individuals must be registered to take part in the event. To sign up, visit www.gymforheroes.co.uk

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THE BIGGER PICTURE

A SEA of people greets British Prime Minister Winston Churchill as he heads along Whitehall in London moments after announcing that the Allied Forces had accepted the unconditional surrender of Nazi Germany on May 8, 1945.

Victory in Europe Day was celebrated by more than one million people across England's capital. The 65th anniversary of the occasion will be marked by a ceremony at the Cenotaph this month.

Picture: Soldier/Crown Copyright



ROTARY CLUB

MEMBERSHIP TO ELITE AERIAL ASSET ON THE RISE

Report: Cliff Caswell
Picture: Sgt Will Craig

WHEN aspiring pilot Sgt Brennan Evans realised his flying instructor was climbing out of the cockpit and letting him take to the skies alone, he felt more than a little concerned.

On one hand this moment was a landmark on the road to a lifelong dream – to command a Lynx in the Army Air Corps. On the other, there was a huge sense of trepidation at flying solo for the first time, decisively leaving his comfort zone.

“I just remember thinking ‘please don’t get out’,” the 29-year-old NCO, who is originally from Johannesburg in South Africa, laughed. “But in reality, I had flown the airfield circuit so many times that everything came very naturally.

“It felt different, however, when I did my first navigation solo. Then I was away from the airfield and by myself – it is an amazing thing to do. And when I started doing rotary stuff, life became very cool indeed.”

Sgt Evans has certainly come a long way in his airborne dreams after setting his heart on becoming a pilot as a young boy.

It has been a journey of highs and lows – along the way he has had to contend with the demands of a mentally and physically demanding training course as well as dealing with an injury. But he is now on the cusp of flying in Afghanistan’s war zone.

The NCO is full of praise for the Army’s system of pilot recruitment that has enabled him to achieve a dream. The only Service that allows non-officer aviators, anyone who can demonstrate that they have the potential to fly can undertake the demanding course.

Sgt Evans is a case in point. Having arrived in the UK at the age of 19, his career



initially began in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, where he specialised in repairing helicopters.

"I originally joined up as an aircrew technician, knowing that I would be able to apply for the Army Air Corps when I was on the NCO chain," Sgt Evans said. "I started my training in December 2003 before being posted to 4 Regt AAC.

"From there I did a tour of Iraq on Op Telic 6 in 2005 – I was based at Basra and Al Amarah, where we always had a couple of Lynx on standby. I loved every bit of it."

With a promotion under his belt, Sgt Evans was well on course to pursue his ambitions as a pilot and was delighted when he was selected to attend Royal Air Force Cranwell, where candidates are initially assessed for their suitability.

"Cranwell was an interesting place to be," he said. "On the first day you go through all kinds of aptitude tests along with other candidates from the RAF and Royal Navy. Then, if you pass, you are put through the medical examinations."

Having come through the initial process successfully, the aspiring pilot was sent to Middle Wallop for an instructor to assess his abilities in a fixed-wing training aircraft. "This part is well known as the grading and involves you going on a dozen-or-so sorties over a three-week period with the

instructors assessing your ability to learn," said

Sgt Evans. "You do not get told much about your performance until the end of the course but, if you pass, you then have to go through an interview to make sure you are really right for the job.

"From there you are loaded on the pilots course, initially completing three months at Barkston Heath flying fixed-wing aircraft. You are then sent to RAF Shawbury where you start to learn to fly helicopters before finally building on your experience at the Operational Training Phase (OTP) of the course at the Army Aviation Centre, Middle Wallop.

"You find out which Army helicopter you are going to be flying when you have passed the OTP and been provisionally awarded your wings. After passing your conversion-to-type training your wings status is confirmed and you gain the qualification of Army Pilot."

Having now graduated onto the Lynx, a proud Sgt Evans has been sharpening his flying skills both in the air and in the simulator to learn how to operate the helicopter in combat conditions. And while

he still relishes taking to the skies, he is the first to concede every sortie is demanding.

"I'm really enjoying everything about the conversion-to-type training and I will hopefully be beginning a tour with 9 Regt AAC soon. I always wanted to fly the Lynx and it is an exciting time with the new Wildcat aircraft coming on line."

Sgt Evans also admitted that he had no regrets about leaving his REME career. "I'm doing a job I have always wanted to do, ever since I went up on the flight deck of an airliner when I was young," he said. "My advice for potential NCO pilots interested in flying is to come forward and apply to get on the training.

"Yes it is demanding but if you are willing to put in 100 per cent effort you can pass," Sgt Evans concluded. "I'm always puzzled by people who say they want to do this course but don't. Maybe they are worried that they won't succeed, but surely it is better to try something and fail than never to have done it at all." ■

Below, Hot seat: Army Air Corps pilots carry out pre-flight checks ahead of a session in the Lynx helicopter simulator at their base in Middle Wallop

Picture: Mike Weston





MEAN MACHINE

Air aces issue call-to-arms for new Apache crews

Report: Cliff Caswell
Picture: Mike Weston

THE Taliban machine gun crew who tried to take down SSgt Nick Cole probably never had time to regret the decision to line up his helicopter in their sights.

Perversely, the insurgent fighters were most likely elated as they saw their rounds smashing into the tail section of the Apache providing fire support for British troops. But the delight would quickly have turned to surprise when the machine unexpectedly remained aloft. They did not get a second chance – the aircraft circled and dealt them a fatal blow courtesy of its devastating array of ordnance.

"We must have been at around 2,000 feet when we were hit and we could hear the

changes in air pressure as the rounds came up – it sounded like somebody had chucked a fistful of gravel at us," SSgt Cole, who is currently an Apache instructor at the Army Aviation Centre in Middle Wallop, told *Soldier*.

"Fortunately this aircraft is designed to take damage and there is good redundancy in all the systems," he added. "You can carry on flying and even fighting with it when you have been hit. In this case, our wingman came across and carried out a quick inspection.

"Nothing seemed seriously wrong so we came back and aggressively engaged the position that had attacked us."

Now a veteran Apache pilot who is passing on his experience to the next generation of Army aviators, SSgt Cole is confident that those in the cockpit are making the grade in the hot-and-

high environment of southern Afghanistan.

But he admitted that the situation facing new pilots has evolved considerably since the early stages of Op Herrick in 2006. Tackling ever more sophisticated technology coupled with a dangerous front-line role, pilots must already be pre-armed with an accurate picture of their task. Events on the battlefields of Helmand province are continuing to change British helicopter tactics and doctrine.

The appearance of the Apache at the outset of the British involvement in southern Afghanistan was a key instrument in that change. Armed with a gunship capability, the Army has been flying and fighting with this new asset to great effect against the Taliban. With a formidable weapons suite including the Hellfire missile and a variety of rocket options, the aircraft is



underpinned with a formidable array of technology, allowing it to take to the air in all weather conditions, at day and night, and prioritise and engage several targets at once.

In addition, the new incarnation of the Lynx – the Wildcat – is set to continue the digital revolution. Crews can expect similar hi-tech performance from this incoming helicopter, which promises to be a step-change from its predecessor.

The combination of these new assets and an unconventional war mean that training is being constantly re-evaluated. "I have had two very different tours with the Apache before I became a qualified instructor," said SSgt Cole. "Things have changed and we must be flexible because people on the ground are relying on us. As a crew you can expect to accrue up to 400 hours in theatre."

With such tough demands in mind, Lt Col David Meyer, commanding officer at 7 Regiment AAC – which specialises in streaming pilots onto either the Apache or Lynx airframes, said crews

now had to train for deployment to Afghanistan from the outset.

"The Army Air Corps is committed to Op Herrick and we must focus on meeting our requirements within it," he added. "Afghanistan is one of the most demanding environments in which you could be expected to operate – it is hot, high, dusty and dangerous. It means we are asking a great deal of our people and airframes."

Crews are now expected to meet these demands in training by showing a greater grasp of skills such as night flying. They must also pass Op Herrick-type serials before being provisionally awarded their wings.

"In terms of the people that we are looking for as pilots, they must not only have potential to fly the helicopter but the right attitude and situational awareness to take it into an operational environment," said Lt Col Meyer.

"What we would like to see more of is soldiers from the teeth arms coming forward as pilots – they already have a very clear understanding of

the battle space and the importance of aviation within it. All we ask is they have the aptitude, motivation, determination and persistence to get through a very demanding training schedule."

It might be a tough programme but the Army's aviation strength is underpinned by an open-minded attitude to those it will accept into the ranks of pilots.

Academic qualifications are not an issue, nor do candidates have to be officers. Any lance corporal with a recommendation for promotion who can start the course before their 30th birthday can apply and will earn their wings providing they pass each phase of the training.

Those who succeed will find themselves in the front line and potentially piloting the world's most cutting-edge helicopters.

● NCOs who are interested in applying for pilot training should contact the AAC pilot selection officer on 94329 4307 or 94329 4303 or email AACHQ-Pilot-Selection-Officer@mod.uk or AACHQ-Pilot-Selection-Officer@mod.uk

Criteria and details of the application process can be found on the Defence Intranet. ■

‘We would like to see more soldiers from the teeth arms coming forward as pilots’

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Report: Cliff Caswell
Pictures: Mike Weston

AS the black machine hovered threateningly above the runway, the awestruck eyes of the crowd betrayed a mixture of amazement and profound terror.

From the shape, you would never have believed it should be airborne in the first place. It looked like an engineer's sick joke – a model kit assembled back to front. All the lines and angles seemed wrong but that simply served to make the silhouette all the more menacing.

For me – a lanky 15-year-old hanging out with similar spotters at the 1988 Farnborough air show – the appearance of the US Army's Apache was awesome. Before the dribble had dried on my anorak, I knew that I was going to fly one of those machines into battle over the plains of Western Europe. I'd unleash Hellfire missiles and rockets into the path of the Russian hordes and then I'd fly back to base, rearm and come back for seconds. By the end of the war, every Warsaw Pact commander in Europe would respect and fear the name Cliff Caswell.

Sadly, to this day not a single Soviet tank commander has ever heard of me. But the same cannot be said of my flying instructors, who were terrorised by my lack of airmanship, nervousness and tendency to throw up during all but the simplest aerobatic manoeuvres. They were probably thankful when I abandoned my dream after failing my maths and physics GCSEs.

Nearly two decades have passed since my aviation aspirations ended. So it was with some trepidation that I accepted the Army Air Corps' invitation to join them for a grading – or pilot assessment – flight at Middle Wallop.

A regret that immediately hit home as I went through the briefings was that my exam failures need not have ended my drive to fly an Apache.

As a lance corporal with a recommendation for promotion you can put yourself forward for selection regardless of your academic achievements. Anyone who can show the required determination and aptitude needed to pass the demanding course will be promoted to sergeant and could find themselves flying the world's most advanced attack helicopters.

However, I was soon to be reminded that it was not academics alone that grounded my flying career. Arriving at the Survival Equipment Wing, the Royal Air Force unit responsible for kitting you out for a sortie, the old anxieties soon resurfaced. The nerves started kicking in after the RAF senior

aircraftsman carefully measured my head before passing me my helmet for the day. I then spent a good 30 minutes with the world sounding like the bottom of a swimming pool as he adjusted the headgear.

I was then despatched for the rest of my kit – an olive green flight suit, undershirt, long johns and flying boots. Finding that I was twice the man I was 20 years ago – in terms of fat at least – it took a couple of attempts to find a suitable set of coveralls that didn't show off my prize paunch, but eventually the *Top Gun* image was complete.

Ready to go, we drove to the flight line where my aircraft, a Grob Tutor, and instructor were waiting. After donning the final piece of equipment, a surprisingly comfortable parachute, it was time for a series of sortie briefings. This was to be a formation flight focusing on a tutorial of basic airmanship. >>

The sky's no limit

***SOLDIER TAKES FLIGHT TO DISCOVER
THE TRUTH ABOUT PILOT TRAINING***

Final check: Soldier's Cliff Caswell tightens his helmet ahead of taking on his pilot training challenge with the Army Air Corps





0900 HEAD START

The importance of a well-fitted helmet for any would-be pilot is drilled home as Caswell has the dimensions of his head measured



0930 COVER UP

The next layer to the pilot's ensemble are the distinctive olive green flight suit, undershirt, long johns and flying boots



1000 READY FOR A FALL

The final piece of equipment required – and one which most pilots hope not to have to deploy – is a parachute



1030 BRIEF ENCOUNTER

Finally fully suited and booted, *Soldier's* Caswell listens in on a series of sortie briefings ahead of getting airborne



1200 HOT SEAT

With all of the necessary kit on, Caswell takes his place in the cockpit of the Grob Tutor plane which he will be flying over Middle Wallop



Picture: WO2 Ric Dawson

1230 UP IN THE AIR

After completing a series of pre-flight checks, Caswell took to the skies and was handed the controls for some mid-air manoeuvres

By this stage the gnawing worry had developed into a serious cowardice attack. My instructor was calm, measured and reassuring, displaying every bit the qualities that a good teacher should have.

After strapping into the cockpit, plugging my helmet into the comms system and going through a number of methodical checks, we were heading for the threshold of the runway.

The muffled world of my headset now had a new clarity of radio chatter and crystal-clear voices.

As the pilot applied the throttle, the nerves began to abate and sheer exhilaration took over.

Looking below as we started to climb, I was hit by what could have been.

There were the lines of Apaches and I felt a surge of envy at the men and women who, like me, might not have proved themselves academically but had seized the opportunity.

I turned my attention back to the cockpit. Outside the canopy the views were spectacular – we could see all the way to Southampton and the Isle of Wight.

‘The appearance of the US Army’s Apache at the 1988 Farnborough air show was awesome’

I was given the controls and took the aircraft into a steep left hand bank, feeling the sense of complete freedom that comes with flying.

Twenty minutes into the flight, the years had truly rolled back. I returned control to the pilot, who gave a command to break formation. A few seconds later he had increased the throttle and we were climbing like an arrow in a left hand turn, the countryside barrelling beneath us.

Flying at 2,000 feet I realised how privileged I was. In civvy street, people can only dream of this experience, yet in the Army anyone – NCO or officer – who can make the cut can have this career.

Once we landed back on terra firma I had to admit that, as much as I still enjoy all things aerial, my chance to forge a career in and around planes had flown.

My natural cowardice meant I failed this challenge. But had the teenager at Farnborough air show known that academic prowess and being an officer do not factor into the pilot appointment process, things might have worked out differently. ■





Interview: Cliff Caswell

Picture: Steve Dock

AFTER an action-packed military career, you could be forgiven for thinking that entrepreneur Darren Foote would want to take things easy.

Having served with the Royal Military Police in a close protection role, seen action in the Middle East during the 1991 Gulf War and pushed himself to his limits as a physical training instructor, he had more than earned a quiet life on civvy street.

But in time-honoured tradition, Darren discovered that while he could take the man out of the military, it was impossible to take the military out of the man. Using the skills he forged in the Army, he has been single-minded and focused in a drive to succeed in his new profession as a businessman.

Having craved extreme sports all his life, the fitness fanatic has turned his hand to creating nutrition products for like-minded people. From humble beginnings his Mountain Fuel range is now critically acclaimed and is being snapped up by retailers.

"Without the skills the military gave me I really would not be the man that I am today," Darren told *Soldier* in an interview from his base in South Wales. "With a project like this

Peak performance: Former soldier Darren Foote credits his Army background for motivating him to start Mountain Fuel, whose products can be found at www.mountainfuel.co.uk

you have to have the strength and focus to take it through to the end and I learned both of those abilities while I was serving.

"The Army also teaches you to think in such a way that if you cannot go through an obstacle, then you find a way of going around it. You have to keep moving forward and not – as some people do – simply fall as soon as you hit a barrier."

Darren has certainly been driven since leaving the Army for civilian life. Having initially taken on security work in countries as far-flung as Brunei, he finally quit the scene to study teacher training at the University of Wales in Newport.

After successfully completing the course he went on to teach subjects including health and social care, first aid and bush craft to further education students. It was after discovering that a father of one of his pupils manufactured protein products that he came up with the idea for a new type of sports supplement.

"I ended up spending some time with him and explained what I thought an extreme sports athlete needed – we discussed different recipes," Darren recalled. "My thinking was based on the military because soldiers are the best athletes in the world.

"Unlike sports people, troops do not

have the luxury of stopping and often have to keep going for 15 hours or more. When you are involved in a firefight – and I have been there myself – your body goes through so much trauma."

Having used his military acumen to design a complete range of different supplements, Darren's Mountain Fuel line-up has been proving popular with soldiers and civilians alike and has been sold in specialist stores as well as military locations including the EFI at Kandahar in Afghanistan. He now has two directors on board and is looking to expand the company and create new jobs.

Despite now enjoying success, Darren stressed that civvy street had proved to be a long and tough road and he urged soldiers to think carefully about what they want to do before making the leap from the Army.

"When I left back in 1998, it just felt the right thing to do as there was far less going on than there is now," he recalled. "But my advice to anyone who wants to go is to talk

to your resettlement officer about all the ideas you have for what you want to do. I found the resettlement course that I was sent on really useful.

"If you decide that you want to go into business, talk to the local authority in the area you are setting up in because there is so much help that you can get there. You

will also find Service charities such as The Royal British Legion of huge assistance."

The advice has paid off for Darren, whose military mindset has given him a crucial edge in his civilian adventure. Highly motivated and with a drive to succeed

that began the day he started his phase one training, the military remains central to his ethos.

But just as assessing risk is a factor of life in the Army, a decision to leave should be well considered. When Service life has been the reality for many years, the final departure is daunting. To this end, the resettlement officer is an important first port of call before undertaking the great adventure of life out of uniform. ■

'Without the skills the military gave me I really would not be the man that I am today'

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Blade runner

Ultra-mobile Cutlass getting ready to roll

Report: Stephen Tyler

THE cunning of the insurgent IED teams in Afghanistan means that British bomb disposal experts need to be more versatile than ever.

With explosive devices being planted in a variety of well-concealed locations, the soldiers responsible for finding and disarming them have learnt to act with incredible vigilance.

But their incredible skill-set could be boosted in the future by the introduction of a space-age robot capable of tackling even the most challenging devices the Taliban can concoct.

Cutlass, designed by Northrop Grumman, is a six-wheeled robot equipped with a host of kit for probing and making safe IEDs, including a state-of-the-art gripper arm which has nine degrees of freedom of movement.

Ken Beedle, the company's director of international communications, told *Soldier* that the arm's design makes it easy to manoeuvre in confined spaces.

He added: "The operator can point the camera at a target, press a button and the arm will find the best way of reaching it and remember how it got there so it can get out again."

Created for the MoD to serve in the ranks as the next generation of unmanned bomb disposal robots, Cutlass is as able on the move as it is in delicate, high-pressure situations.

Instead of the tracked system installed on existing robots such as Wheelbarrow, the new device features six independent wheels, allowing it to creep at low

speed or accelerate to enable rapid travel.

The wheels are also capable of tackling hard and soft terrain in all types of weather, making it an ideal solution for the varied landscapes and climates found in Afghanistan.

Northrop Grumman managing director Kevin Rooney stressed that his company worked closely with the Army's explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) experts during the initial design phase of Cutlass.

The firm also drew on its experiences in building and updating Wheelbarrow, the robot currently in service with bomb disposal teams in Britain and elsewhere around the world.

Mr Rooney added: "It's our job to put a device in the field ready to use and we work very closely with the user groups to make that happen. We find that they don't hold back, but why should they when it's their lives on the line?"

"We are very pleased with Cutlass. Its ability to move across multiple terrains is important because the time to the target is always an issue."

Since winning an MoD

contract to deliver a new fleet of EOD vehicles in 2006, Northrop Grumman has progressed to the stage where it will begin production of Cutlass later this year.

The finished product's modular design means that users will be able to add or take off new kit depending on the demands of operations.

And although the software used to allow operators to control the device is hi-tech, Mr Rooney insisted that new drivers would be able to pick up the basics in a matter of hours.

"I would expect someone to achieve functionality within half a day," he said.

"The important thing from a user's point of view is that it's easy to use and we have ensured that this is, despite it actually being very complex.

"The guys who will be using this are doing a terrific but difficult job and we don't want them to have to concentrate on how the equipment works.

"This really is the next generation – nobody else is building anything like this." ■

"The important thing is that it is easy to use"

Rise of the robot: Northrop Grumman's Cutlass combines ease-of-use with a sophisticated array of on-board gadgetry

Picture: Northrop Grumman



A person in a white forensic suit and mask is operating a camera on a tripod in a wooded area. The scene is dimly lit, with a bright light source creating a lens flare on the right side. The ground is covered in grass and fallen leaves.

SCENE STEALERS

TV'S *CSI* SERIES MAY MAKE CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS SEEM IMPOSSIBLY HI-TECH, BUT MODERN METHODS MAKE EVEN THE TOUGHEST CASES POSSIBLE TO CRACK. *SOLDIER* STEPS ONTO THE CRIME SCENE TO FIND OUT HOW THE ARMY IS BRINGING BAD GUYS TO BOOK...



Report: Stephen Tyler
Pictures: Graeme Main

ANYONE familiar with the *CSI* series of TV programmes cannot fail to admit that being a Crime Scene Investigator looks like a sweet gig.

Living in glamorous locations, these modern-day Sherlock Holmes waltz into murder investigations and, with little more than the flick of a brush, a glimpse through a magnifying glass and a sample of bodily fluid carelessly left at the scene, will crack the case before anyone can bat an eyelid.

Step away from the television and take a look at the actual demands placed on the eagle-eyed policemen, however, and the reality of forensic investigations is much tougher than it is made to appear.

The training required for a detective to be able to spot microscopic evidence in chaotic surroundings is arduous, but experts from the Royal Military Police are moving to the top of the class by utilising some of Britain's best facilities at the Defence College of Police and Guarding (DCPG) at Southwick Park in Hampshire.

Tucked away in a corner of the facility is the Galton building – home to photographic studios and scientific laboratories essential for CSI training – and the recently-unveiled Locard House.

Looking like a regular bungalow complete with bedrooms, bathrooms, a kitchen and a living room, the property is used by CSI course director SSgt Jon Cooper to host elaborate crime scenes to be investigated by phase three RMP students.

Designed to keep would-be investigators on their toes, almost everything in the structure has been installed to provide a potential stumbling block.

Window sills on the outside of the building are made from PVC while those inside are wooden, creating different challenges for anyone dusting for fingerprints.

The kitchen counters are made from marble to add a further variable and computer equipment in one of the bedrooms brings hi-tech forensics into the equation.

And while students put their skills to the test, course instructors can watch their charges' investigations unfold from a control room using the in-built CCTV system and provide real-time feedback over the bungalow's speaker system.

"CSI work is exactly like you see on TV, only a lot less glamorous," SSgt Cooper told *Soldier*. "It takes a lot of training and we are very lucky to have the facilities we have here."

"Since *CSI* came along it has educated people in their front rooms about what the job entails."

The back half of Locard House provides yet more Service-related opportunities for practice. A three-man barrack room is perfect for accommodating scenarios likely to be found on the garrisons where the RMP specialists are stationed and contains authentic touches including a false ceiling where those in the wrong could potentially hide incriminating evidence.

Next door is a bar area which again allows those on the course to master their art in familiar surroundings.

The facility's back garden adds yet more depth to the training programme and houses a small crater

from an explosion as well as sand and mud pits for forensic examination of footprints and other marks.

While it is important for military CSIs to be able to cope with domestic investigations, the increased likelihood of them being deployed to Afghanistan means they have to be equally comfortable carrying out their vital work in an operational setting.

DCPG – which is the home for all three Service police forces – takes care of this by having a selection of armoured fighting vehicles and the shell of a helicopter available for training.

Serials using any of the fleet place students under much greater pressure and SSgt Cooper believes this is an important aspect of the teaching regime.

"They are in a situation where a soldier has been killed and they are told that they have 20 minutes to work in a small team and get what they need to do done," he said.

"We added it because while they might be dealing with a burglary in Germany in the near future, six months down the line they could be on operations where they have a different set of priorities."

"The amount of pressure we put on them is enormous but we have to know they are able to be fast and effective."

For the eight or so Service personnel enrolled on each of the four CSI courses run each year, learning all of the tricks of the trade is a tough challenge that is constantly drilled home through a mixture of theory and practical sessions.

As well as being taught by the best the military has to offer, outside experts including a Home Office pathologist and the lead crime scene investigator from the Sarah Payne inquiry – who oversees the final exercise and gives feedback to each candidate – provide further value through their experiences on civvy street.

All of this adds up to a package that is second-to-none.

Anyone considering committing a crime within the Service environment should know that the CSIs from the silver screen only paint half the picture of what their real-life military equivalents are capable of.

But despite their ever-increasing strengths, SSgt Cooper insists that the men and women passing through his course are anything but complacent.

"People always had a negative image of SOCOs [scenes of crime officers] from black and white films, but nowadays that image is of someone who can do everything with a magnifying glass and can deal with blood and fibres and the like," he concluded.

"CSIs are very good at what they do, but the criminals are learning just as much from the TV programmes as everyone else. No-one is resting on their laurels and this course makes sure that our guys are always up on the latest developments." ■

“CSI WORK
IS EXACTLY
LIKE YOU
SEE ON
TV. ONLY A
LOT LESS
GLAMOROUS”



Close inspection: Students on the crime scene investigation course are taught to keep their eyes open for even the smallest piece of evidence, whether it is a foot mark, a fibre or a fingerprint

ARRESTING DEVELOPMENT

College's courses provide perfect preparation for Red Cap recruits

Report: Stephen Tyler
Pictures: Graeme Main

THE British soldier's famed ability to adapt and overcome faces no sterner test than an operational deployment to southern Afghanistan.

Serving in austere conditions on foreign soil, troops have to be ready to adjust to the new environment in order to maintain their status as well-tuned fighting machines.

As well as requiring vast changes to their living arrangements, the need for flexibility extends to the job they do in theatre.

Soldiers traditionally employed in support roles have found themselves working alongside the teeth arms on Helmand's very front lines.

Included in that number are the men and women of the Royal Military Police. The Army's long arm of the law is now just as likely to be found on patrol on Op Herrick as it is maintaining order in the Service's garrisons around the world.

Ensuring that RMP soldiers are up to the demands of the provost branch of the Army is the job of the experienced instructors at the Defence College of Policing and Guarding (DCPG).

Set up in 2005 to cater for the police forces of all three Services, the facility provides a diverse phase two training package to prepare students for the realities of modern military law enforcement.

"A lance corporal going out of here can be on patrol in southern Afghanistan within three months. He is then looked up to during a contact as well as having the responsibility for taking evidence," explained Col Stephen Boyd, the outgoing commandant of the college.

"The course here is in much more of an operational context because those are the

sorts of skills our soldiers now need.

"The people here are getting stuck into a very high-pressure environment and we have six months to turn them from trainees into police officers and lance corporals with the maturity and inquisitiveness to follow things up. They also need the ability to carry the rank and hold their own on patrol.

"We have lost a lot of people in Iraq and Afghanistan and that shows that this is not a back office job. They are going directly into action on the front line and doing far better than we should have any right to expect."

The 22-week phase two course at DCPG's Southwick Park headquarters in Hampshire allows military policemen and women from each Service to train alongside one another to a common high standard.

One of the key benefits of the college's new home over the Army's previous single-Service base in Chichester is the wealth of facilities designed to provide as realistic a training regime as possible.

Trainees are immersed in life-like practical serials, including a two-week stint running a police station as part of an environmental training package.

Working shifts to cover the facility 24-hours-a-day, the Red Caps are tasked with manning a front desk, dealing with enquiries, carrying out investigations and conducting interviews – as well as completing the inevitable mountain of paperwork that goes alongside it.

The station itself contains interview rooms, a control centre where supervisors can oversee proceedings and even a mock

house and bar area that can be used to stage different crime scene scenarios.

"It is exactly as it would be in most units," SSgt Darren Davies, the course's senior NCO, told *Soldier*. "The station is the hub and the guys deal with different exercises, whether it's domestic disputes or stop-and-search around the base.

"They are responsible for building up a case file, taking statements and evidence and deciding whether to report or not report someone for an offence.

"My brother does a similar job to me with Merseyside Police and they don't have anything like this set-up. This is the main crux of the job and what we provide is as near-as-damn-it to what they will do outside.

"The real estate and resources we have available mean that we don't struggle for anything."

While the environmental training has a distinct garrison feel to it, the skills and drills taught to the students – gathering evidence and making arrests for example – have a universal application that is equally valid on operations.

RMP personnel in theatre also require the physical ability to apprehend often unwilling suspects and the DCPG course places a high emphasis on providing its charges with the necessary skills.

All phase two candidates are given self-defence training and taught how to effectively wield batons and handcuffs during intense personal safety sessions.

Instructor Sgt Daniel Griffiths explained that all Red Caps undergo the training once

“This place is state-of-the-art and that enables us to provide a realistic working environment to make people feel like they are doing the job for real”



Main picture, Thin red line: Royal Military Policeman LCpl Jay Rock

Left, Strong defence: LCpl Leanne Twidale and LCpl Chris Snow undergo personal safety training

every year to ensure they are up-to-date with current techniques should they need to use them while on duty at home or deployed abroad.

"Service police are put in situations where they don't know how people will react, whether they'll be handcuffed easily or kick off," he added. "We make sure that they are prepared for anything and show them that it doesn't matter how big someone is – the techniques we use work."

With facilities that are the envy of most civilian forces, a training system that consistently churns out high-quality policemen and women and a promotion to lance corporal straight after phase two training, it is easy to see why the RMP comfortably meets its recruitment targets.

But for all of the perks, signing up for life as a Red Cap is anything but a pass to an easy life. Several of the corps' soldiers have died serving at the sharp end of Op Telic and Op Herrick.

Despite the increased risks associated with swapping a garrison beat in the UK with patrolling the ground in Helmand, LCpl Leanne Twidale said that the challenge was part of her reason for choosing to join the RMP.

"I wanted to do something different with my life," she added. "Everybody knows it means going on operations and that is a little bit daunting, but it's a challenge and that is why the training is so hard."

Ongoing operations in Afghanistan mean that the call on the Royal Military Police's unique expertise is not likely to diminish any time soon.

But with an impressively-resourced college that is well versed in providing relevant contemporary training, Col Boyd is confident that the pool of Service police will continue to receive a frequent flow of talented soldiers.

"The college is something the MoD has got absolutely right," he concluded. "This place is state-of-the-art and that enables us to provide a realistic working environment to make people feel like they are doing the job for real."

"You don't get a second chance so we are focused on making sure they are able to get it right first time." ■

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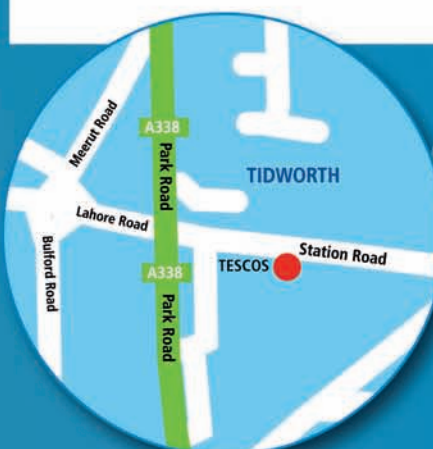
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Model soldier

Miss England praises Army roots after reaching world beauty contest final

Report: Richard Long
Picture: Steve Dock

As a serving soldier LCpl Katrina Hodge (AGC) is fully prepared for the possibility that she could be called into action at a moment's notice.

So when the 23-year-old was told she had just 24 hours to prime herself for the challenge of representing her country in the Miss World contest she was more than ready.

The NCO was crowned Miss England late last year, an accolade that saw her jetting out to South Africa to join fellow beauties from across the globe in pursuit of the prestigious title.

"It has been an absolute whirlwind," LCpl Hodge told *Soldier* during a rare break in her increasingly hectic schedule. "I entered Miss England as a joke. I saw it advertised in town and thought they would never accept a squaddie, I was expecting an email saying thanks but no thanks."

But accept her they did and LCpl Hodge – who has been dubbed "Combat Barbie" – was named the national competition's winner when original victor Rachel Christie controversially relinquished her title.

"I originally came second and was really pleased, it was a fantastic achievement and I thought it was great recognition for the Armed Forces," she said.

"Then I got a call to say I was Miss England and that I had just 24 hours to prepare to go to Miss World.

"Meeting other girls from around the world was amazing and to sample the different cultures was great.

"As a beauty queen people are pleasantly surprised that I am not a stereotypical bimbo and that I am quite intelligent. I am grateful to the Army for giving me those attributes.

"I am really passionate about the Forces and

the fantastic work we do and that has been driving me throughout this process."

Despite missing out on the Miss World crown, LCpl Hodge had the honour of meeting the South African president Jacob Zuma as well as England football star David Beckham, who was visiting the country during the draw for this summer's World Cup.

The soldier was allowed to take her full allocation of leave to compete in Miss

World and is now on an unpaid career break until September, when she will resume her Army career.

"I really enjoy my job," LCpl Hodge explained.

"They have made me what I am, modelling is a short-term thing and you soon become old news.

"I am having a really great time but the Army is a fantastic career and is still my main focus."

In the meantime, LCpl Hodge aims to use her high-profile position as Miss England to raise awareness and funds for various military charities as well as being a role model for young women considering life in the Service.

"I get around 20 emails every day from girls wanting to join the Army," she said.

"They said they were put off until they saw me on the internet and in the news. That is a great compliment." ■

‘The Army is a fantastic career and is still my main focus’





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Shell shock

Crustaceans provide unlikely solution for Britain's battlefield casualties

Report: Stephen Tyler

OF ALL the things likely to save soldiers' lives in Afghanistan, the humble shellfish might seem an unlikely selection.

But any predictions of shrimps being fish out of water in the landlocked country are premature as a medical company has harnessed an amazing secret hidden in the crustaceans' hardened exteriors.

The sea-dwellers' shells contain chitosan, a natural polymer which has been proven to produce a clotting effect, and the substance is being used by MilSys (UK) in a range of products designed to provide emergency treatment for battlefield casualties.

Known as Celox, the substance is able to stem even the most severe arterial bleed by bonding to the surface of red blood cells to produce a clot-like gel.

And the British Armed Forces have now adopted the ingenious solution in a gauze which will be deployed to the front lines of Op Herrick.

"Under a microscope the Celox granules are like tiny corn flakes," MilSys (UK) spokesman Jon Davis told *Soldier*. "If you put them into contact with blood it attracts the red cells and that, combined with directly applied pressure, can control even a femoral artery bleed."

Originally administered to a wound using a

syringe-like applicator, the granules in Celox gauze are now impregnated directly into the fabric dressing.

Medics simply place some of the material over a wound and apply direct pressure. The chitosan within the granules forms a sticky plug and this can control major bleeding within a matter of minutes.

The gauze has also been designed to make life easier for doctors further along the medical chain as it can be removed by hand. Natural enzymes found in humans break down any remaining chitosan which is then metabolised by the body.

And it is even safe for use on people with allergies to shellfish as Celox has been found not to cause any adverse reactions.

"There have been previous agents that had certain properties that weren't good," added Mr Davis. "One generated heat which damaged blood vessels, while another was fiddly and expensive.

"These generate no heat, are easy to use and are inexpensive. They can be used in situations where a victim can't get a tourniquet on and can also be applied to multiple wounds." ■

Medical marvel: The clotting properties of a substance found in shrimp shells have been harnessed for use in Celox gauze

Pictures: Mike Weston and MilSys (UK) Limited



LIFE SAVERS

ARMY-INSPIRED COMPANY DEVELOPS MILITARY MEDICAL MIRACLES

Report: Stephen Tyler

WHEN it comes to dreaming up life-saving kit for battlefield medics, there can be few people better placed than Malcolm Russell.

The retired officer spent 18 years in the Royal Army Medical Corps and gained invaluable practical experience in treating casualties on a number of overseas tours.

Luckily for those still serving, the former lieutenant colonel's skills were not lost to the military when he headed for civvy street four years ago.

Russell formed his own company – Prometheus Medical – and is applying his self-confessed entrepreneurial talents to tackling the challenges faced by troops in southern Afghanistan.

“When I left the Army I wanted to set up a business that provided medics on the ground with the best possible equipment,” he told *Soldier*.

“I got a huge amount of experience from the Army. It gave me a way of thinking about problems that you don’t get elsewhere and when I left, stepping back in to general practice didn’t make any sense.

“I’m an innovator by nature and setting

up this enterprise was a way for me to continue to have a direct impact on British soldiers.

“I wouldn’t have gone into business selling car tyres, but the fact that our products are having a positive impact on people makes it all worthwhile. I had a fantastic time while I was serving and I recommend it to anybody.”

Russell’s innovations are full of features that are of specific use for soldiers on operations.

The qualified doctor’s knowledge of the weight burden faced by modern troops means that the size of his products is kept to a minimum.

And the nature of the injuries suffered by British personnel on Op Herrick has also been taken into account to ensure the kit is as functional on the front line as it is elsewhere.

Soldier was given an exclusive preview of some of the company’s latest medical marvels...



ENFLOW IV FLUID BLOOD WARMING SYSTEM



● THE importance of temperature to a patient’s hopes of survival provided the inspiration for this palm-sized gadget.

Because cold can prevent blood from clotting, it is much better to deliver it to an injured person at a regulated temperature.

The enFlow is fitted to a line carrying blood or other fluid into a patient and can heat it up to 40C in as little as four seconds as it passes through the unit.

And because it is attached directly to an intravenous line, the blood is delivered at the exact temperature displayed on the system’s control unit.

“We are now very much aware that temperature is key,” said Russell. “We concentrate on stopping bleeding and managing chest trauma, but an injured soldier who is put into the back of a helicopter with a blanket over them can get very cold.

“We are going to great efforts to address that particular problem.”

INTRA-OSSEOUS EZ-10

● **ALREADY** in service with the British military, this handheld drill has the potential to save the life of a seriously-injured soldier.

The EZ-10 comes into play when a patient goes into shock and their veins collapse, making it very difficult for doctors to administer blood.

The drill is applied directly through a bone such as the shin until it penetrates the marrow. Clinical staff can then insert a line and begin to deliver blood.

"The marrow in bone is like a giant vein and if you get something into it, it will reach the heart in less than ten seconds," explained Russell.

"These are simple to use because you have a big target."



Picture: Mike Weston

HYPOTHERMIA PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT KIT (HPMK)

● **MAINTAINING** the heat of casualties while they are transferred from the front line to a hospital also helped to inspire the creation of the HPMK.

Vacuum-sealed into a nine-and-a-half-inch long and three-inch wide pack, the kit contains an outer shell which surrounds the casualty while still allowing 360 degree access.

The shell itself is heat-reflective and contains a built-in hood to maintain heat to the patient's head. The liner contains four self-heating elements that activate on opening and can provide up to six hours of continuous warmth.

"It's soldier-proof – there are no batteries, it's robust and waterproof and you can chuck it out of a helicopter," said Russell.

"The shell has an absorbable cover and the chemical heating pack activates once the pack is opened."

TEAM-8 STRETCHER

● **WEIGHING** in at under two-and-a-half kilograms, this stretcher has been designed to be deployable at a moment's notice.

Made out of lightweight material, the Team-8 features simple refinements such as colour-coded buckles to make it easy to secure a patient in difficult conditions.

The design also means that the stretcher can be dragged as well as lifted,

making rapid extractions possible by just one person.

"I spent too many years carrying stretchers and know just how difficult they can be to deploy and carry," explained Russell.

"You get this to the casualty, roll it out and one person can quickly get them moving. We have sold in excess of 500 of these and have had some very positive feedback indeed."

Lift off: Prometheus Medical's Team-8 stretcher can be lifted or dragged away from danger thanks to its intuitive design



Home advantage

Herrick's new team to
rely on Afghan assists

Interview: Stephen Tyler
Picture: Cpl Lynny Cash

AFGHAN soldiers and policemen will act as British forces' "tactical centre of gravity" during Op Herrick 12, according to the commander of the new brigade in theatre.

In an exclusive interview with *Soldier*, Brig Richard Felton, the officer in charge of 4 Mechanized Brigade and Task Force Helmand, said that success could only be achieved through the adoption of an Afghan plan to promote governance throughout the province.

He said: "We have to allow the Helmand Provincial Governor to go out and reach the population and be able to offer them the types of service that we expect in the UK. It's only in reaching out to them that we can make this work.

"This is done in partnership with the Afghan National Security Forces and they are essential to my plans. The Afghan National Army are officers and soldiers who have been in combat for three or four years and have massive experience.

"They understand the people and terrain and are, in effect, our eyes. It doesn't matter how much training we do, we can't hope to understand the people and culture of Afghanistan better than the Afghans themselves and that is why we are supporting them in delivering security.

"The Afghan National Police aren't so well organised, but we are working hard to improve them. They know who the insurgents are and when the atmospherics change or people are being intimidated and that is why they are so important to any operation.

"We are here to continue the work of those who have gone before us and I am seeking to make the most of the opportunities we have been given."

Brig Felton's troops arrived in theatre to take over from 11 Light Brigade, who claimed a number of key successes during a difficult tour.

Sixty-one personnel made the ultimate sacrifice as offensives including Op Moshtarak drove the Taliban out of large swathes of Helmand province.

The commander said: "We have been lucky because 11 Light Brigade handed over a really good situation. I served here in 2006 and the opportunities we have now are fantastic. That is not just thanks to 11 Light Brigade, it's thanks to all the brigades before them as well who have helped to put us in this position.

"The previous brigade achieved a considerable amount – Op Moshtarak expanded security significantly. In Sangin, 3 Rifles' achievements were extraordinary. The Grenadier Guards in Nad-e-Ali made it so that a lot of communities in the area are protected by the Afghans and ourselves.

"The Coldstream Guards distributed seeds to thousands of farmers and helped

'WE HAVE TO ALLOW THE GOVERNOR TO GO OUT AND REACH THE POPULATION AND BE ABLE TO OFFER THEM THE TYPES OF SERVICE THAT WE EXPECT IN THE UK'



the engineer regiment to build a military road to expand security right through the area in which Op Panchai Palang happened. I could go on, but it was a fantastic tour and I am humbled by the professionalism they have shown."

Soldiers from 4 Mechanized Brigade began training for the current deployment 14 months ago and have been on exercise in Canada and Kenya as well as completing testing serials across the UK and Germany.

The pre-deployment preparations culminated in a mission rehearsal

exercise for 5,500 troops on Salisbury Plain earlier this year, but Brig Felton stressed that the men and women under his command would not rest on their laurels now they are in theatre.

"I would emphasise that our training never stops," he explained. "Everyone got between four and eight days' training when they got here and that was top class, covering things you can't do in the UK.

"Counter-improvised explosive device (C-IED) training was an area I focused on very sharply and we have made sure that we go through any new tactics to remain ahead of the insurgents.

"The soldiers are also given judgemental training to make sure mistakes aren't made – it's human nature that something might go wrong, but we do as much as we can to prevent it."

With the nature of the threat to British soldiers evolving from small arms to bomb attacks, a lot of time and attention has been devoted to countering improvised explosive devices.

A raft of new technology has been deployed to theatre to assist in detecting and safely disposing of IEDs, but Brig Felton said that just as much effort has been put into training soldiers what to look for.

"I'm encouraged by the progress, but there is no room for complacency," he said. "It starts with training – training to understand the nature of the C-IED fight and training on how to find the devices.

"That is not just through technology, it is through ground sign awareness. We have the latest top-quality equipment, but one of the things we are doing much more now is preparing soldiers so that they have a good understanding of what they might face so they are not completely blind when they walk out the gate.

"We are also attacking the wider system – the network left of the bang. We are targeting the facilitators, the people who bring supplies into theatre and the people who lay the devices."

With 4 Mechanized Brigade now installed in theatre and beginning to add their mark to the successes of previous Op Herrick deployments, Brig Felton was quick to offer his gratitude to the relatives back home.

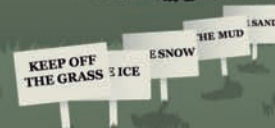
"I would personally like to thank the families," he concluded. "We have left lots of families in Catterick, Gutersloh, Abingdon, Edinburgh, Shorncliffe, Taunton and elsewhere and I want to send a message to them that we are in good spirits, morale is high everywhere I go and their loved ones are all being extremely professional.

"Everyone has trained hard and we will never be complacent." ■

Fantastic Four: Brig Richard Felton said that his soldiers' thorough pre-deployment training will ensure they do a professional job on Op Herrick

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Open to change: The Ranger project aims to deliver a highly-tuneable vehicle to meet the demands of operations

Picture: Universal Engineering

Powerpack module – engine, main gearbox, auxiliary power unit, suspension and drive units

8.16 tonne winch

Viper 30mm cannon gun system

Ballistic protected windscreens and side windows

Tuneable armour including side and belly protection

Crew capsule with energy-absorbing suspended seating; rear door and ramp

Report: Stephen Tyler

UN Dorset-based Universal Engineering set about designing a new military vehicle family, the company returned to the drawing board.

Dispensing with conventional ideas about chassis and armour, the firm stripped things right back so that all its designers started with was an image of three soldiers suspended in mid-air.

This troop-centric approach allowed the team to make the personnel's needs a priority and their first job was to design a comfortable and safe crew area.

Once that was in place, Universal Engineering's boffins bolted extra modules of kit around the seating area until they had created the blast-resistant, agile and capable truck known as Ranger.

"The challenge was to come up with one vehicle that has the mobility of the Jackal, the protection of the Mastiff and the payload of a support vehicle," project manager John Scott told *Soldier*.

"We wondered how to do that as nobody had done it before, but that is because people tend to build the truck, add the armour and then whatever the soldiers need. We turned that process on its head and placed the soldier into the equation first."

With IEDs overtaking small arms fire as

the greatest threat facing British troops in modern theatres, every aspect of Ranger has been designed with blast survivability in mind.

The personnel area is a fine example. The capsule is suspended from the Ranger's roof so that it is not in contact with the base of the vehicle in the event of an explosion.

The V-shaped hull propels the force of a blast away from the Ranger's body and the rear axles, meaning that the crew area remains safe.

And the modular approach extends to the 540hp diesel engine, which is mounted in an easily-removable power pack that again breaks clear of the vehicle's passengers.

"The power pack on the front of the vehicle can be removed using just 16 bolts," added Scott. "It can then be put back on in less than an hour. All of the gear boxes sit on one big armoured tray which can be dropped out so they are immediately ready to be worked on as well."

The chassis-less Ranger may be made up of hi-tech building blocks, but that does not mean it is short on protection.

All of the vehicle's components can be fitted with a variety of armour depending on the environment it is being used in.

The all-important gearbox and transmission modules are protected from

below by underbelly plates, while all windows are covered by bar armour.

To protect against small arms fire or RPG attacks, the Ranger's sides can be beefed up with additional plates.

"It is completely tuneable to suit the user's needs," said Scott. "[The prototype] has aluminium armour fitted, but you can very easily change that to ceramic or steel or leave it off entirely."

Despite its size – the 6x6 variant is 7.2m long and 2.5 metres wide – the Ranger is not short of a bit of poke and can comfortably reach speeds of nearly 120kph.

It is also surprisingly agile and proved its ability to scale steep gradients during a run-out at Bovington Training Area.

"I think the surprise for everybody who has been in it is its speed and mobility compared to its size," said Scott. "It's capable of doing 0-50kph in seven seconds."

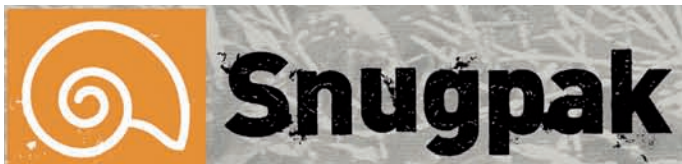
The Ranger began its journey into reality in late 2008 and is one of a number of concept vehicles currently being considered by the MoD.

Scott hopes the innovative modular design will eventually become a building block for further successes in Afghanistan.

"We are not relying on other people's ideas – we have designed it from scratch," he concluded. "We are very proud of what we have come up with." ■

LONE RANGER

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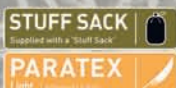


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STAMP OF APPROVAL

Royal assent for growing Tattoo

Interview: Tom Wood
Picture: Kit Houghton

THE Queen's back garden will play host to charging Scimitars, marching bands and galloping horses as the Windsor Castle Royal Tattoo returns this month.

But behind the smoke of mock firefights lies a serious message and the real reason that Territorial Army officer Col Simon Brooks-Ward is staging the military spectacle for the third successive year.

"Our mission here is to educate through entertaining the public at the event or through the media. It's not just about fulfilling my own aspirations and ambitions, it's all about providing visibility of the troops involved and what they represent," he told *Soldier* from his Windsor office.

Col Brooks-Ward is no stranger to the realities of war having seen action in Iraq in 2003 as CO of The Royal Yeomanry, the first TA regiment to receive a battle honour since the Second World War.

He has also experienced first-hand the lukewarm reception that soldiers faced when returning home from deployments during the early days of Op Telic.

"When I came back from Iraq we were swept under the carpet, it was an unpopular war with some sections of society and we weren't really acknowledged," he explained.

But things have improved since then and Col Brooks-Ward first had the idea for a military show at a time when the public were starting to get behind returning troops and developing an understanding of the challenges they were facing in a war being played out thousands of miles from home.

He decided to surf the wave of general support and organise the Tattoo to strengthen the growing bond between society and the military by showcasing soldiers' skills on a grand stage.

"It's all very well putting on a marching band, but if you don't back that up with substance which shows that the musician has other capabilities and skills, then why bother having that band in the arena?" said Col Brooks-Ward.

"The pipes and drums, for instance, are infantrymen full-time and pipers part-time so they have a job to do on operations along with everyone else."

In civilian life Col Brooks-Ward is the

managing director of the HPower Group, an events company which has been the driving force behind numerous public shows of a military and equestrian nature, so he is perfectly placed to organise the Windsor Tattoo.



● Col Brooks-Ward

But things weren't as straightforward when he was on operations. He admitted: "It was difficult to run a business from 3,500 miles away in a hot conflict zone but it provided the type of challenge I was looking for from the TA."

When back in combats, Col Brooks-Ward is in charge of TA officer training at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst where he concentrates on making a "more effective and efficient pipeline" through which potential officers pass.

His goal is to get more people into the TA so they can appreciate the benefits that a part-time Service career will give them in their civilian lives.

With the Windsor Castle Royal Tattoo now looking set to be a permanent annual fixture, Col Brooks-Ward provided a reminder of the vital role it plays in connecting the Armed Forces with the man on the street.

He said: "We can't predict what the public's attitude will be in the future. All we can do is perpetuate the goodwill that exists towards troops at the moment and use this event to strengthen that feeling." ■



● *Soldier* has teamed up with the Windsor Castle Royal Tattoo to offer a 20 per cent discount off all ticket prices (excluding top price) for active Servicemen and women on Wednesday, May 12 and Thursday, May 13. To book tickets using this discount, call the box office on 0871 230 5580 and quote the code 'TRISERVICE' or book online at www.windsortattoo.com and enter 'TRISERVICE' in the special offer codes box.

CUTTING IT

Soldier enlists celebrity snipper to tackle Service's style standards and put an end to hair-raising debate

Report: Joe Clapson
Pictures: Graeme Main

OF all the subjects to inspire a deluge of letters to this magazine in recent times, the debate over soldiers' haircuts has swamped our *Talkback* section more than most.

From frustrated squaddies arguing that hairstyles do not affect combat effectiveness to

retired RSMs bemoaning not-so-short back and sides, the calibre of contemporary cuts has seen battle lines well and truly drawn.

In an attempt to raise the white flag and stem the flow of correspondence, we decided to take a closer look at exactly what troops can and, perhaps more importantly, cannot do with their barnets.

The rules governing haircuts are laid out in the Queen's Regulations (QRs) and appear to be relatively straightforward.

For men, styles must be well cut and trimmed, moustaches must not be below the line of the lower lip and sideburns must not descend below the mid-point of the ear. Female personnel must keep their hair above the collar and wear only plain grips or combs.

All well and good, but how do the rules relate to modern-day styles favoured by soldiers when they are off duty?

To find out, we headed to Tidworth Garrison where WO1 John Coles had given four soldiers permission to craft their hair into its usual civilian state ahead of a special parade.

WO1 Coles – the garrison sergeant major – explained his willingness to take part.

"There have been comments made about the appearance of soldiers on operations with suggestions that they do not look smart enough," he said.

"But as long as their hair complies with the Chief of the General Staff's directives, it's fine. There is a policy and there are some sergeant majors who give instructions to the left and right of that policy."

To make matters more interesting, we also decided to put our own civilian locks under WO1 Coles' scrutiny – and the results do not make pretty reading. >>

AGAI 59.004 and QR 5.366

a. Males. Hair is to be well cut and trimmed, except where authority has been granted otherwise on religious grounds. Style and colour (if not natural) is not to be of an exaggerated nature. Moustaches are to be trimmed and not below the line of the lower lip. Beards and whiskers may be worn only with authority, and this will usually be granted only on medical or religious grounds, or where tradition permits. The appearance of the beard and whiskers is to be neat and tidy. Sideburns are not to descend below the mid-point of the ear and are to be trimmed horizontally.

b. Females. Hair is to be neat and worn above the collar. Combs, grips etc if worn, are to be plain and similar in colour to the hair. A hairnet (if worn) is to be of the same colour as the hair. The style and colour (if not natural) of the hair is not to be of an exaggerated nature.

Soldiers should comply with the authority but SNCOs should not expect or enforce other standards because of their own personal preferences or to portray a unit image.



One-by-one, the soldiers on our impromptu parade stepped forward to find out what fate their weekend hairdos would face when judged against the requirements of the QRs.

First up was LCpl Jayson Patmore (REME). Things did not start well as WO1 Coles labelled his uneven sideburns as “disgraceful” and declared that he would march him to the barbers if the junior NCO dared to arrive for a real parade like that.

With just one of our guinea pigs down, it was already becoming apparent what style would pass muster when put up against the regulations and it was immediately obvious that our next volunteer fell well short of the required standard.

LCpl Dave Kerr (R Signals) annoyed WO1 Coles with his long, bushy sideburns, but the senior soldier reserved special venom for the rest of his head covering.

“His hair is unkempt,” said WO1 Coles. “It’s a finger-in-a-socket haircut.”

With a trend emerging, Gnr Jordan Chadwick (1 RHA) broke the mould, receiving veiled praise for his cut, which

was criticised for sideburn and neckline length but was otherwise deemed “OK”.

Our sole female participant, Pte Jodie Murdock-Kennedy (6 REME), put her colleagues to shame by arriving on parade with a well-groomed look perfectly suited to meeting the rigours of the QRs.

“She’s got a hairnet which is the same colour as her hair and the style is fine,” said the garrison sergeant major.

Next, with carefully-sculpted locks standing to attention, it was my turn to step under the microscope of WO1 Coles’ judgement – and to say his assessment was blunt would be an understatement.

“At a parade inspection you would be marched to the barber,” was his opening salvo. “You are unshaven and your hair is too long – it is unkempt and unmanageable. The style is of an exaggerated nature and looks like some kind of road kill.”

With his words ringing in my ears, I reflected on our examination of the QRs.

Yes, all but one style was deemed in some respect unsatisfactory, but there were elements of each that passed the test and, combined, they could surely be morphed into a fashionable cut that remained within the rules.

Brig Mike Griffiths, Director of Personnel Services (Army), argued that the QRs “give adequate scope to be presentable and even fashionable – with a bit of wax or gel to help it along” and stressed the need for the rules to be followed.

He added: “With something like hair you need to be precise or anarchy will prevail as each soldier sets his own standards.”

The brigadier’s points ring true. The British Army is admired throughout the world as much for its professional appearance as its awesome fighting skills, so to dumb that initial impact down with spikes, facial hair and long sideburns would be a waste.

But I remained convinced the officer was also correct in

his assertion that it is possible to both be fashionable and follow the QRs and decided to find someone to prove it.

With the barbers near *Soldier* HQ unlikely to be able to transform my “road kill” into something more palatable, I got in touch with hairdresser-to-the-stars Nicky Clarke.

The man who styled Princess Diana, David Bowie and Liz Hurley had a read of QR 5.366 and Army General and Administrative Instruction 59.004 – the documents governing appearance – and agreed to tackle my unkempt locks.

Undeterred by the challenge, Clarke said the QRs offered plenty of scope for soldiers, although he felt they could do with being more detailed.

“They really need to be saying hair should be above the collar and clean-necked and they need to give measurements and say the sides should be in proportion with the rest of the hair.”

The celebrated coiffeur placed me in the hands of top stylist Kelly Simpkin in his Mayfair salon’s new Grooming Vault and she got to work transforming my hair into something WO1 Coles would approve of.

After arming herself with a cut-throat razor and skilfully ridding my face of any rogue whiskers, Kelly reached for the sharp scissors and set about taming my unruly tresses.

The fact that the cut was nowhere near as drastic as some would have you believe the QRs require is testament to the versatility that can be achieved within the rules.

After an hour of chopping and cropping, I was left with a couture cut tailor-made for the Army but fashionable enough for the high street.

The arguments that have graced our letters pages for and against certain styles may have made some convincing points, but the fact is that the QRs are there for a reason – to maintain the unsurpassed image of the British soldier.

And as Nicky Clarke and his stylist successfully proved, being in the Services does not require you to attack your locks with a set of clippers. Looking sharp on civvy street and keeping the RSM happy on the parade square are perfectly possible without straying outside of the rules. ■



WO1 JOHN COLES' HAIRY COMMENTS



Joe Clapson, Assistant Editor, *Soldier*

“The style is of an exaggerated nature and looks like some kind of road kill.”



LCpl Jayson Patmore, REME

“His sides are not level – disgraceful. I would get him to cut his hair.”



Gnr Jordan Chadwick, 1 RHA

“He needs his sideburns cut and his neck shaved, but otherwise he would be okay.”

"With something like hair you need to be precise or anarchy will prevail"



COMPETITION

To celebrate the opening of the Grooming Vault at his Mayfair salon, Nicky Clarke is offering a complimentary haircut to one male and one female *Soldier* reader.

To be in with a chance of winning this hair-raising prize answer the following question:

WHAT IS THE ARMY RULING ACCORDING TO QR 5.366 ON THE WEARING OF SIDEBURNS?

Answers to the usual address or comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk by May 28.



LCpl Dave Kerr, R Signals

"His sideys are too long and bushy and his hair is unkempt, a finger-in-a-socket haircut."



Pte Murdock-Kennedy, 6 REME

"She's got a hairnet which is the same colour as her hair and the style is fine."



Drinking too much?

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Picture: Graeme Main

Mark of respect: The small market town of Wootton Bassett comes to a standstill as the bodies of those killed in Afghanistan pass through from RAF Lyneham

'Our town's tribute to fallen will endure'

AS residents of Wootton Bassett, my wife Sue and I are greeted by familiar sights on our high street on the day of a repatriation.

Crowds – often a thousand-strong – gather and include members of the Armed Forces, veterans, leather-clad bikers from The Royal British Legion's riders branch, town dignitaries, dozens of journalists and hundreds of friends of the fallen.

Mourners, many carrying red and yellow roses, pass in and out of The Cross Keys public house where refreshments are generously provided by the landlady Kirsty. Those who have come to pay their

respects then congregate around the town's war memorial, itself adorned with floral tributes and tended daily by Ken, a 93-year-old Second World War veteran.

When the families of the fallen arrive from Lyneham the road through the town is closed and drivers are asked to turn off their engines. With standards raised, the bell from St Bartholomew's Church signals the cortege to move forward and absolute silence is observed. The scenes that follow are well documented.

So many times we, and hundreds of others, have stood to honour the brave soldiers, sailors and airmen passing through our town. Sue and I, or at least one of us, attend every repatriation, as do a growing number of friends and people we know. It wouldn't be right not to, that's how we feel. Personally, it is no longer enough to merely stand quietly on the roadside and watch the cortege pass before going home. I now feel the need to mingle with the visitors and offer them the gentle hand of friendship.

Many of those I have met I remember vividly, such as the young gentleman from Kent who told me that he had been best man to one of the fallen soldiers just a few months earlier.

The two lads, both members of the Combined Cadet Force who were returning home to Wolverhampton from exercise on Dartmoor when they heard that one of those being repatriated was a former classmate and who, having caught a train at the crack of dawn, had arrived at a town they'd never heard of to pay their respects.

And the many Servicemen who, before repatriation, talk about their fallen comrades with great affection. The list is endless.

There have been suggestions in the press that our town is beginning to attract "grief tourists" and has become a "media circus". I talk to many visitors and can

report that the vast majority are here for legitimate reasons and usually have a military connection, be it a son or daughter in Afghanistan, a nephew about to go there or a friend just returned.

A few admit to having taken a keen interest in proceedings on the television and want to experience a repatriation first hand. I see nothing wrong in that.

I am always surprised at the expressions of gratitude directed at the people of Wootton Bassett. It is very touching.

Our community magazine publishes letters received from all over the world. A serving soldier in Helmand wrote: "My gratitude to the people of Wootton Bassett is endless. You are truly the pride of Britain."

Katy and Derek Taylor wrote of their grandson, serving in a bomb disposal unit, and finished their letter "amid the great sense of loss for these young lives, we appreciate the dignity you show as they go to their final resting place".

Perhaps one incident, widely publicised, sums up the way we feel in this town. Mark Robins, the local milkman, began his round on the outskirts of the town early one morning and noticed a red rose lying in the road. Realising that a repatriation had taken place the previous day he stopped his float, retrieved the rose and drove back to the town centre where he carefully placed the flower on the war memorial before resuming his work.

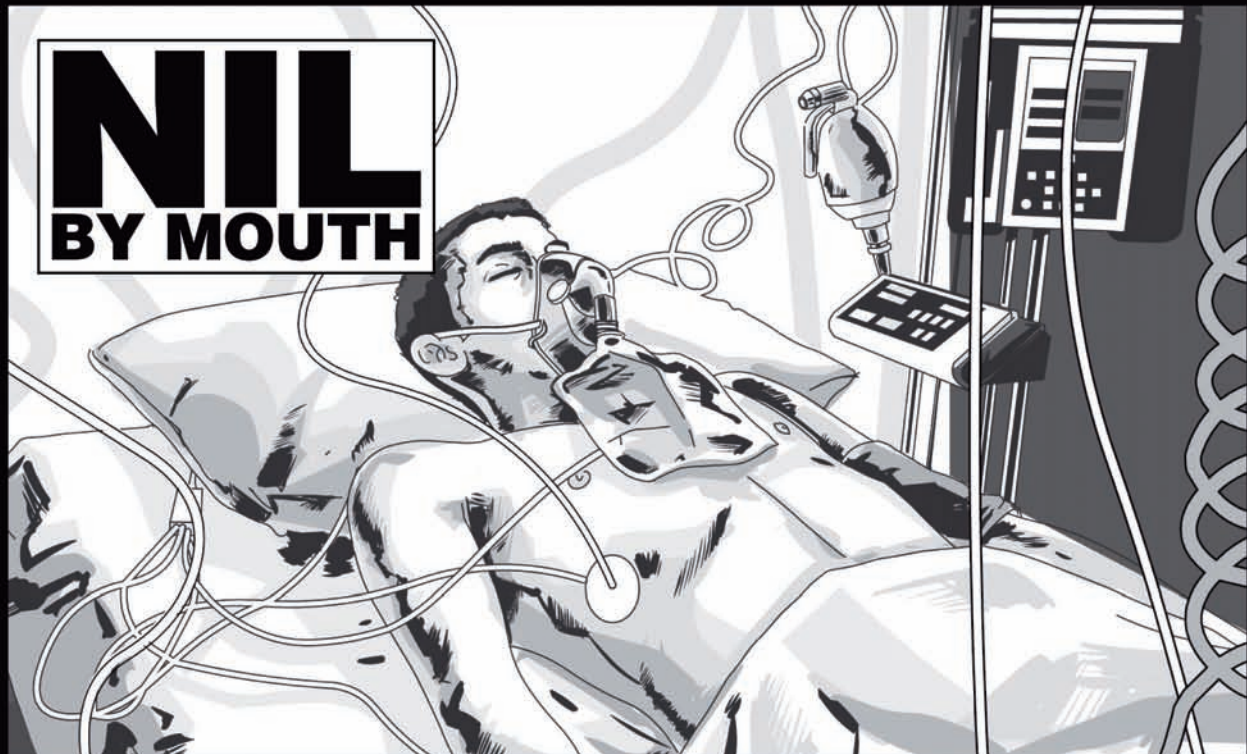
It is perhaps a forlorn hope that our presence in the high street will no longer be required, but for as long as these brave Servicemen and women continue to be repatriated through RAF Lyneham the people of Wootton Bassett will continue to honour them. We will not allow them to pass through our town without acknowledgement. To do so would be unthinkable. – **Brian Porter, ex-ROC, Wootton Bassett.**



● IN recognition of his continuing support of our fallen Service personnel, *Soldier* are pleased to offer Brian Porter a prize break for a family of four, courtesy of our partners at Pontin's. As the author of this month's prize letter he can enjoy a three- or four-night break in Pontin's Self-Catering Classic accommodation at a choice of four coastal Holiday Parks: Brean Sands in Somerset; Camber Sands in East Sussex; Prestatyn Sands in North Wales and Southport in the North West.

Terms and Conditions. 1. All places are subject to availability at time of booking. 2. Prize is for a one bedroom Classic apartment, for up to 4 persons (adult or child) to be taken by October 30, 2010, excluding dates between 31/07/10 and 28/08/10, Bank Holidays and special events. 3. Open to UK residents aged 18 or over, except employees of the Ocean Parcs Ltd and their families.

Now Showing



once he'd finished with the beers,
he was on the **COKE** all night.

Excess alcohol can lead you down many dark alleys. If you take cocaine after a night of **drinking**, the alcohol and cocaine combine to form a **toxic chemical** leading to an **increased risk of heart attack** and **stroke**. Cocaine **strips calcium** from the big bones of the body which is **deposited** in the **blood vessels** around the **heart**, **blocking** them.
High blood pressure + squad PT=Increased Risk of Heart Attack



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PS...

FOLLOWING on from recent *Talkback* letters on the issue of senior officers commenting publicly on political issues, if our generals are condemning the British National Party (BNP) for their policies then this cannot be right.

If their objections are based on the BNP using military images, then I trust this would be the case in respect of all political parties. – CSgt K Hinge, HAC, London.

Response from DPS(A)'s office:

The Armed Forces are apolitical and therefore pictures of uniformed personnel should not be used in communications from political parties.

Serving members of the Army are bound by the Queen's Regulations.

If military personnel belong to any political party, including the BNP, they may attend political meetings so long as uniform is not worn, Service duties are not impeded and their actions do not bring the Army into disrepute.

IN February's edition of *Soldier* you published my letter enquiring why I was not allowed to claim compassionate travel as a consequence of being on maternity leave.

I would just like to clarify that it wasn't the admin personnel at MDHU [Ministry of Defence Hospital Unit] Frimley Park Hospital who gave me the advice, but staff at the Army Personnel Centre in Glasgow. – Cpl Roberts.

THE "ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT"
LITERARY APPRECIATION
SOCIETY



"Dear Soldier, I would like to complain about the exclusion of *All Quiet on the Western Front* from Mr O'Driscoll's selection..."

I ENJOYED the article on the ten greatest war movies in February's issue and the letters from readers which followed. However, Corey Jordan's justification for including *All Quiet on the Western Front* in his own hit list does not stand up to scrutiny. He described the movie as "a classic Second World War film". There were actually two versions of the film [based on the novel by German veteran Erich Maria Remarque], one made in 1930 and the other in 1979. While both are classics they were set during the First World War.

My own top ten would be: 1, *Gettysburg*; 2, *Waterloo*; 3, *Glory*; 4, *Saving Private Ryan*; 5, *Ace's High*; 6, *Charge of the Light Brigade* (1968 version); 7, *The Cross of Iron*; 8, *Enemy at the Gates*; 9, *Zulu*; 10, *Zulu Dawn*. – Derek O'Driscoll, Croydon, Surrey.

Poppadom price protest

I AM based at Catterick Garrison which now boasts the new Richmond Centre. The dining facilities on offer are good but we are no longer being given the option of a core meal, which means that the cost of eating on camp three times a day is close to £10.

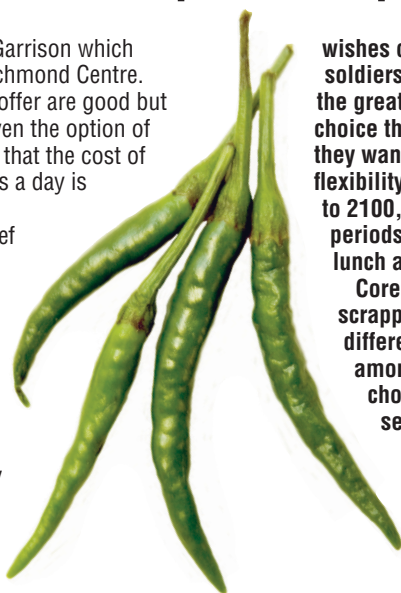
I mentioned this to a chef who told me that the core meal had been scrapped because soldiers have the option of making meals in their accommodation.

This simply isn't true. Although we have access to a kitchen, there are only electric hobs to cook on.

I have also discovered that those eating in the officers' mess are still paying core meal prices. On a recent curry night officers paid £1.60 for curry, poppadom and a pudding – a meal that would cost between £2.20 and £2.90 in the Richmond Centre. Why are officers paying less for their meals than the junior ranks? – Gdsm Mackintosh.

Brig Mark Armstrong, Director Infrastructure, responds: To set this question in context I would like to clarify that the Richmond Centre is undergoing a trial to test a different methodology of delivering Pay As You Dine (PAYD).

This programme takes account of the



wishes of the majority of soldiers by aiming to provide the greater flexibility and choice that they have told us they want. The trial provides flexibility of catering from 0700 to 2100, with two "peak" periods each day for brunch/lunch and an evening meal.

Core meals have not been scrapped, but are delivered differently; displayed among the other retail choices and not as a segregated option.

Without knowing what options were available on what days, it is difficult for me to specifically answer

your question; however, it is possible that the curry in the Richmond Centre was a retail option.

During the two peak meal periods, a choice of menus allowing people to eat to the correct nutritional and quality standards can be taken for the core meal price of £4.07 a day.

A direct comparison with the officers' mess is misleading as it is still on the traditional PAYD model and is not part of the trial. They too are offered retail options over and above the daily messing rate and also pay an extra messing charge over and above the core price.

Roadside refreshments

CAN I stop food charges being taken from my salary? I recently moved from a unit with Pay As You Dine (PAYD) facilities which was great – I was never out of pocket and the food was excellent.

However, my new job involves being on the road a lot of the time and I have found myself worse off financially, paying for meals I don't always eat.

To make matters worse I have been told that I can't claim any Get You Home (Travel) [GYH(T)] allowance to cover the cost of commuting to the property my estranged wife shares with our two young children. – Name and address supplied.

Brig Mike Griffiths, DPS(A), replies: PAYD was introduced to give Service personnel the choice to eat what they want, where they want.

Unfortunately, until PAYD has been fully rolled out some people will continue to find themselves paying the daily food charge even if they choose to regularly dine elsewhere.

Only those personnel who have been given authority to "live out" are exempt

from paying the daily food charge in non-PAYD units.

When you are on leave and absent from your unit – including sick leave, weekends (or part weekends) and stand downs of 24 hours or more – you will be eligible for a refund of food charges.

For periods of leave this will be done automatically by your unit HR staff. For weekends that you spend away from your barracks you will need to apply for a refund of the daily food charge using JPA.

Your former marital home cannot be regarded as your main residence once you have separated (JSP 752, Ch 5, Sect 2, para 05.0204 refers). As you are currently classed as living within Service-provided Single Living Accommodation your HR admin staff is correct in removing your entitlement to GYH(T).

Finally you state that you spend time on the road and therefore by implication you are suggesting that you are paying for meals that you do not receive. Depending on the nature and duration of your duties, you may be eligible either to receive Daily Subsistence or Missed Meal Payments.

like a few **BEERS?**

alcohol contains
more **CALORIES**
than you think



What should you be counting?
CALORIES or DRINKS?



Army
Health
Promotion

FIT FOR LIFE | FIT TO FIGHT

PS...

I AM unsure who allocates quarters these days, but as former commandant of the Families Housing and Welfare Service I know that the request from Miss Joanna Robson and her future husband would have once been dealt with by myself.

Having first confirmed that the house was indeed not required for any other purpose, I am certain I would have granted permission to the couple to access the property and deposit some of their effects there prior to the official takeover date.

This would have resulted, at no cost to the taxpayer, in one happy couple and strict rules being bent but not broken. – Maj (Retd) D Walker, County Antrim.

IF her whining letter is anything to go by, it seems to me that Joanna Robson is already well on her way to being a typical Army wife.

There are some Service spouses who accept their situation without complaint and get on with holding together the home and family while their husbands follow their careers, but unfortunately there are a lot more who do not recognise and appreciate all that the Army does for them.

The Service provides things that no employer on civvy street ever would – cheap housing, furniture, welfare and education programmes, assistance with finding employment, social meetings, on-camp creches and travel assistance to visit relatives to name just a few.

Maybe the soon-to-be Army wife should consider the following: Don't marry a soldier if you are not prepared to live by the rules and regulations of the Service.

Be grateful you have affordable housing provided for you and are not burdened with an extortionate mortgage or rent as you start off married life.

Be supportive of your husband rather than stressing him with your pathetic complaints. – Name and address supplied.



'Bride has reason to blush'

VERY rarely do I feel the need to respond to any of the letters which appear in *Soldier*, however the correspondence from Miss Joanna Robson [who was critical of the Army for not allowing her and her husband-to-be to move into a married quarter more than two weeks before their wedding date] has given me cause to do just that.

Firstly, young lady, do you not realise how fortunate you are to be offered housing at a rent far below that on the commercial market? How many other professions offer this benefit?

Having been married to a soldier for many years (our children are 15 and 13), I feel I must stress that it is not the Army that is responsible for marriage break ups, but the people within those marriages.

If you see your marriage as being put under pressure before it has begun because you can't move into a quarter when you want to, then I feel sorry for you.

The Army is all about rules and this is just one of many you will have to put up with.

Furthermore, the Service will throw a lot more at you than this.

On several occasions my husband

has been posted and I have been solely responsible for arranging the removals, packing up the house, cleaning it ready for march out and bearing the upheaval of moving my family to a new location. Think yourself lucky your future husband is around to help!

What has added insult to injury is that a wife of zero years is being offered deluxe hotel accommodation with all the trimmings to cope with this terrible affront to her spoiled sensibilities. What about the rest of us loyal, long-suffering, dedicated Army wives who are offered nothing? There are others who are far more deserving. – Name and address supplied.

The editor, donning his body armour in preparation for a counter-attack, writes: It is a little harsh on the team at *Soldier* HQ to say that we neglect the army of dedicated Service wives.

Last December we gave away more than 150 prizes, worth in excess of £18,000, during Op Reindeer's Hoof, our Advent calendar-style competition. A large number of Army wives – and husbands – were among our winners.

● A MONEY-saving star letter on page 63 of last month's issue?

I rushed to it only to find a PS consisting of some plagiarised information about Value Added Tax refunds – information I had read in *Sixth Sense* before Christmas and is still posted on the office notice board.

A four-day holiday just for forwarding on details that have been broadly disseminated by Customs and Immigration, HQ UKSC J1 Branch and Amazon among others.

Right then, I could do with some of that. So without further ado, here is my stunning money saver.

Stopping smoking will save you pounds. Hundreds of them.

And if you stub out now, aside from the financial savings, there are also the little-known health benefits of reduced chances of heart attacks, strokes and other respiratory complaints.

The beauty of this tip is you only need do it once, there are no forms to fill in and even leaving a tax-free posting doesn't stop you continuing to save and benefit. In fact, when in the UK you save even more!

Right, down to my prize then (with thanks to the medical centre notice board). I'd prefer Brean Sands, Somerset, please. Any chance of four extra adult places? Both sets of grandparents followed the advice above and now want a chance to demonstrate to the kids how fit and healthy they are. No idea where the money they

saved went though or I'd ask them to pay.

What about a third child place? Since I packed in the fags, it seems that there is more lead in my pencil.

Time to check the library notice board – I might be able to turn four days into a week-long holiday! – Andy Pollock, J4 S03 Log Sp (Mat), HQ UKSC.

The editor, casting aside the sour grapes from his lunch box, stubbing out a Cuban cigar and placing his tongue firmly in cheek, types: As much as I'd like to give you this month's prize Pontin's break for a family of four, your's was just one of many revolutionary money-saving tips received this month.

The pick of the bunch came from Pte Ebenezer Scrooge (AGC), who offered this never-before-heard pearl of wisdom: "Look after the pennies and the pounds will look after themselves."





"I know that in your eyes Modern Housing Solutions can do no wrong, Susie... but I do think we should give them a call about this leak, Bank Holiday or not."

HAVING served in the British Army for 12 years and now been married to a serving soldier for six-and-a-half years, I am a regular reader of this magazine.

Almost every month it seems as if there are loads of letters criticising the standard of Service Families Accommodation (SFA) and it really makes my blood boil that people have the nerve to moan about the state of their houses or the repairs carried out on them.

Do these people not realise how expensive it is to rent houses in civvy street, where properties do not always come complete with carpets, curtains and a cooker?

Those in the military community pay very low rates and if people don't like the Army's quarters they should go and rent privately and get a taste for how expensive it is.

Whenever you take over an SFA in the Army it is clean and yet I walk round the estate where I live in Chilwell and see some houses in a disgusting state.

If people insist on moaning about Defence Estates (DE), then perhaps the organisation should get tough and make their tenants keep their houses and gardens clean.

I personally don't think that DE or Modern Housing Solutions are to blame for the state of SFA – they have a budget to work to after all. Blame those who do not give them sufficient money to get the houses up to scratch.

My own quarter is fairly old, has woodchip wallpaper and my kitchen is very outdated, but I am grateful that the Army has provided my family with a roof over our heads. – **Kerry, Chilwell Barracks.**

IN response to a letter in April's issue, "Give British veterans a slice of American pie", Cdr Graham Jardine stated: "As far as recreational facilities are concerned, there are no plans to change current MoD policy in order to allow veterans routine access to Service establishments."

This is not strictly true – British Forces Germany has taken the lead in this area, launching a scheme in 2009 designed to give veterans and their families access to facilities on camps across Germany. Visit the veterans page on www.bfgnet.de for more information. – **Peter Feeney, Bordon.**

Counting cost of British break

AS a soldier serving in Cyprus who is due to attend a course back in Britain, I was amazed to learn that I will only be eligible to claim the UK rate of Incidental Expenses (IE) during my visit.

I was under the impression that this allowance was there to cover the cost of buying newspapers and to enable personnel to keep in touch with their family.

However, the cost of phone calls back to Cyprus alone will be in excess of the £5 daily allowance. If I was attending a course on the other side of the island or in Germany I would be able to claim the overseas rate of £10, so why not when in the UK? – **Name and address supplied.**

Brig Mike Griffiths, DPS(A), writes: The regulations regarding IE are in part governed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) rules. This is particularly

so with regard to the rates which are set at the current maximum allowable for payment either in the UK or overseas without being subject to tax.

While I understand fully the logic of your argument, currently HMRC makes no distinction for the location that the individual has travelled from, but rather it bases its rates on where the detached duty is taking place.

These HMRC rules apply to all organisations that reimburse their employees for IE-type expenditure.

Any attempt to raise the rates above their current level would result in a tax liability being imposed and there is no prospect of persuading HMRC to introduce bespoke rates or rules just for Service personnel. In any case the current daily rate of £5 is considered to be sufficient to meet the requirement.

Blinkered approach to refunds

DURING the early 90s I suffered a retinal detachment which resulted in an operation to remove the lens from my right eye.

I was subsequently fitted with a semi-permanent lens, which is replaced on a quarterly basis. These replacements are supplied by my ophthalmologist at a cost of approximately £52 per year.

Using JPA [Joint Personnel Administration] I claimed back this expense and was duly remunerated. However, I have since had to repay the money. I feel slightly aggrieved as I am pretty sure colleagues can claim for the purchase of spectacles. – **Name and address supplied.**

Lt Col Fiona Folkes, SO1 occupational medicine, responds: There is a contract for the provision of eyesight tests, defence spectacles and respirator lenses, but the

type of lens in question falls outside of this arrangement.

However, if the lenses are required for the individual to do their job and defence spectacles are not sufficient, a case can be made to refund them on a one-off special case basis.

I suggest that the soldier concerned contacts his local military medical centre and makes an appointment with the medical officer who can gather the specific details and if necessary seek advice from the Regional Occupational Health Team or the Consultant Advisor Ophthalmic for support in making the case.

It is probable that the lenses will have to be procured through the medical supply chain rather than going to a separate optician who may not already be contracted to MoD.

Military course's minor fault

WHY is the Army's Defence Driving Examiner (DDE) certificate not recognised as a civilian qualification?

The three-week residential course at Leconsfield covers examinations for category B (cars), C and E (HGV) vehicles, and everything taught on the programme is in line with the Driving Standards Agency's (DSA) testing criteria.

Once qualified as a DDE you are able to test both military and Civil Service personnel for a civilian driving licence.

I was led to believe that the majority of military courses related to a

civilian qualification, so why does this one not? – **Name and address supplied.**

Maj Fraser Martin (RLC), SO2 defence licensing and testing authority inspector, replies: The MoD has approached the DSA on several occasions in an attempt to have the DDE course officially recognised but without success.

One of the reasons cited was that there are elements of the civilian driving examiner course run at Cardington that deal with issues not covered by the MoD course, such as dealing with the public.

On a more positive note the DSA has indicated that it would take any previous experience an individual may have as a DDE into account and tailor the course at Cardington to reflect that experience.





Picture: Sgt Anthony Boocock, RLC

Common ground: Territorial Army personnel – such as this soldier from Imjin Company, 2nd Battalion, Royal Irish Regiment pictured during a joint British and Afghan National Army patrol in Helmand's Upper Gereshk Valley – enjoy the same pension benefits as Regular troops when deployed on operations

Pension parity for Regulars and Reserves

WORK as a civilian administration officer for a Territorial Army unit and over the course of the last few years have seen a number of our soldiers mobilise on operational tours.

Prior to their departure, I try to provide those deploying with as much information about their finances as possible.

However, I have a number of questions relating to the Armed Forces Pension Scheme 2005 (AFPS 05) and Reserve Forces Pension Scheme (RFPS). For a Regular soldier to qualify for full rights, they need to have been a member of that scheme for two years.

Does this mean that if the worst happened and a TA member with under two years of service was killed in action, their dependants would not receive the full benefits? In such circumstances, are Reservists' families reliant on personal insurance policies or are they covered under another umbrella?

If mobilised TA soldiers are not fully covered, why is the scheme offered to them? Likewise, if Reserve personnel with under two years' service are fully covered on operational tours then why is this not extended to Regular soldiers during the course of their deployments? – [Name and address supplied](#).

Brig Mike Griffiths, DPS(A), responds: New Regular Service personnel all join AFPS 05, whereas Reservists may elect to join the RFPS when mobilised and automatically become members when they begin Full Time Reserve Service.

In terms of the benefits paid under the two schemes there are no differences. As

you have correctly identified, there is a period of two years (the vesting period) before members of the Armed Forces pension schemes, Regular or Reserve, are entitled to their full benefits.

The vesting period operates in a similar fashion to all public service schemes. These benefits take the form of a lump sum and a spouse's or civil partner's pension.

For members of AFPS 05 and RFPS, their spouse or civil partner is entitled to a lump sum to the value of four times the Service person's pensionable pay for a death in service. This entitlement is earned irrespective of the length of service given and so a member with less than two-years' service is equally covered in this respect as one with more than two-years' service.

The spouse's or civil partner's pension is a different matter.

For those with more than two-years' service, their spouse or civil partner may receive a dependant pension based on the length of the member's service and his or

her final pensionable pay.

For the Service person who has not completed two-years' service, their spouse or civil partner will not receive a dependant's pension. Both, however, would receive an Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) Survivor's Guaranteed Income Payment (SGIP).

Soldiers who have not completed the two-year vesting period would receive no pension but would be covered under AFCS, offsetting the need for personal insurance to make up the shortfall.

The AFCS SGIP benefits are intended to compensate the surviving spouse or civil partner for loss of earnings (both salary and pension) incurred as the result of a Service-attributed death and its value outweighs the dependant pension from AFPS 05 and RFPS.

This results in the dependants of both the Service person with more than two-years' service and one with under two-years' service receiving broadly equitable payments. The SGIP would also be payable for life, though would be subject to tax.

● MY younger brother left the Army in May 2007 and re-enlisted last March. On rejoining the Service he lost his rank of lance corporal, however, he knows of others in similar situations who were not demoted. – [Mr W Ncube](#).

Brig Mike Griffiths, DPS(A), replies: Pte Ncube was a lance corporal in the RGBW when he left the Army in 2007. On rejoining in 2009 he was accepted by the RLC as a driver tank transporter

operator in the rank of private.

In signing back on he accepted that he would be a private because he was ex-Infantry and had not been trained in his new role.

In addition, more than 12 months had elapsed since he left the Army and former rank is not normally granted after this period. By signing this paperwork, Pte Ncube agreed to his new terms and conditions of service.



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PS...

DURING my 25 years in the Army I was always told (and consequently had it enforced) that the cap badge should always be about one inch above the left eye when wearing a beret.

Looking at photographs of serving personnel in uniform lately it seems as though most soldiers are wearing Andy Capp's headgear, with the badge seemingly between their left eye and left ear.

Soldiers should be proud of their regiment and show off their cap badge. You should be able to work out where personnel are from without having to peer at their left ear. – **Leslie Welling, ISS A&E 1b, Corsham.**

PLEASE could you pass on my thanks to the gentleman who wrote in to your magazine to whinge about the way some soldiers in my regiment wear their headdress.

I find it odd that the writer – a member of one of our forefather regiments – looked at a photo of young soldiers who, having returned from arduous tours of Iraq and Afghanistan, were marching with pride in front of their families and chose to criticise the state of their berets.

I am sorry but I won't be adopting his suggested look ["the band two inches above the eyebrow, the badge over the left eye and the beret pulled down to the left and rear"] as it will cover up the cap badge I have proudly worn for the last 18 years.

Thank you for all the support and morale your magazine gives to us soldiers of the Queen. – **Cpl N Thornton, PWRR.**

LAST year I found myself in a similar position to CSgt Martin, "Wedding dress woe" (March), who, as best man to a TA soldier, bought his own No 1 dress uniform and spent £120 on a drill hat, £80 on boots and £15 on lanyards.

Having first tried going through the official channels as suggested by Maj Allan Law in his reply to the letter writer and been told no uniforms were available, the groom and I used Medway Medals.

This company provided us with a tailored-fit uniform – complete with all buttons, lanyards and peaked caps – on a one-week hire for £120 each. My friend then borrowed a pair of drill boots from a friend in the Regulars and I bought a pair off Ebay for a lot less than £80. – **Pte T Pook, 166 Regt RLC.**

I AM writing in response to Lt Col Cassidy's criticisms of the new No 2 dress uniforms and of those responsible for its selection (December, *Talkback*).

The suit is "supply fit" – it comes in standard sizes but can then be tailored for an exact fit to the individual.

The design, choice of material and colour were dictated and approved by the Army Dress Committee in the first instance and then higher up the chain by the Executive Committee of the Army Board.

The MoD has not foisted the suit on the Army, the Army has foisted it on themselves.

I trust that Lt Col Cassidy now knows who to take out and shoot and will leave the MoD to live another day! – **Name and address supplied.**



Pictures: Graeme Main

"You are unshaven, your hair is unkempt and unmanageable – the style is of an exaggerated nature and looks like road kill": On a mission to bring a close to the Service style debate, *Soldier* reporter Joe "Jedward" Clapson failed to make the cut in the eyes of a garrison sergeant major (Pages 54-57)

Cutting remarks keep coming

HAVING read the letter from a "frustrated soldier" on haircuts, "Cut us some slack" (December), I was disappointed by the dismissive and evasive response provided by the Directorate of Staff and Personnel Support (Army) [DPS(A)].

The question raised was a very fair one; why should our soldiers feel obliged to shave their heads? What document or regulation gives company sergeant majors the authority to demand such draconian haircuts?

I note that a large number of my fellow officers are sporting sensible hairstyles that do not mark them out as "typical squaddies", yet all still seem perfectly capable of doing their jobs.

A clear case of double standards? – **Name and address provided.**

Brig Mike Griffiths, DPS(A), responds:

I think the debate has moved on from the December engagement where unfortunately both letters were pruned slightly and lost some of their context.

My most recent response in the March edition, further comments in the April issue and the article on haircuts (Pages 54-57) should have added the balance you felt was missing.

The point I make unreservedly is we have sensible standards that need enforcing by the chain of command. If these standards are over-zealously interpreted then I hope that very same chain of command steps in to apply them correctly. Finally, I think we have spent enough time on haircuts – let us move on.

Lack of follicle fairness

HAVING read with great interest the letter on the appearance of soldiers in March's issue, "Short hair, chinos and brogues – Sandhurst style does not suit all", I felt compelled to comment.

Contrary to Brig Mike Griffiths' response to the "disappointed officer", having hair that contravenes the definition of "well cut" or which descends below the "mid-point of the ear" does not allow anarchy to prevail, as proven by the many serving women across all ranks.

Why are the cosmetic considerations of women more important than those of men? – **Name and address supplied.**

ONE point not yet mentioned on the topic of haircuts is that the Queen's Regulations appear to be guilty of sexual discrimination. There is no reason that I can think of as to why a male soldier could not have long hair if they wore it in a bun like their female colleagues.

I am sure that if I were to grow my hair long and kept it neatly as per the regulations pertaining to a female soldier, a court of law would rule in my favour on the grounds of sexual discrimination if I was ordered to have my locks cut.



"These pigtails are a damn curse, Harold... a bun would make life a lot easier."

Although personally against male soldiers having long hair, I am surprised no one has ever tested this point. The same could also apply to jewellery.

This argument was raised by a friend (after a drink or two) who has left the Forces and wants longer hair so that he can better integrate with those on civvy street. Naturally he hasn't been allowed to forget this and has been given lots of hairspray and gel by his mates – and yes, he was in the Royal Air Force! – **SSgt M Baker, HQ 160 (W) Bde.**



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Picture: Chris Barker

Wing and a prayer: Julie McCarthy is calling for an end to “cuckoos” who stay in Service properties for a long time after they are supposed to have vacated them

Housing clock ticks for cuckoos

It is that time of year again: the daffodils are in full bloom, the birds are singing and the first removal van of the silly season has been spotted loading the worldly possessions of an Army family into its cavernous interior.

It represents the start for many of new postings, a new house and new challenges, friends and experiences.

I've written a lot about the issues with accommodation in previous columns and the AFF is well known for its lobbying in this area. But one thing this job has given me is a view of both sides of the story.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not about to start defending the current situation. But there are a number of things that we as occupants can do to help ourselves and others in our community.

It is really important that you inform your local Housing Information Centre (HIC) as soon as you know that you and your family are being posted.

Why? Well, for a start it is very useful for them to know as much in advance as possible which houses are becoming available and where.

Telling the HIC when you expect to move doesn't tie you to that date and definitely doesn't mean that you'll end up homeless. It will mean that the HIC can plan the allocation of quarters more effectively.

If the HIC believes it has no quarters available, it will need to issue a Non-Availability Certificate (NAC) for incoming

families to be able to get a hiring (or Substitute Service Families Accommodation (SSFA) in HIC speak).

Hirings cost Defence Estates millions of pounds a year and while some of that expenditure is justified (i.e. where there are too few houses in the right place), to allocate an NAC and then have the right house in the right place become available a few weeks later is hugely frustrating for all concerned – and costly.

In most cases, SSFA is charged at grade 1 and families can find themselves paying top dollar and living some distance from their unit, without the usual accompanying support network or facilities available to them.

Speaking of spring and the birds singing, it's time to talk about cuckoos. A wily bird, the cuckoo lays its eggs in another's nest, keeps its head down and hopes no-one notices when it should really be moving on.

Let's face it, we've all been tempted. You're settled, have a nice house, your spouse is working in a good job that they enjoy and the kids are content in the surroundings of the local school.

If your new unit is only 20 or 30 miles away from where you currently live, the thought of staying where you are and putting off the move does cross the mind.

But have you considered what the impact

of being a cuckoo is on other families?

If you are in an area where there is pressure on housing (London, Salisbury Plain, Catterick to name a few) then families coming into the area will either be put into houses needing repairs or into hirings.

As I said before, hirings cost money – millions in fact – and that money needs to be found from somewhere as there is only a very limited SSFA budget. It is upgrades and improvements that suffer.

When houses aren't getting new showers

(or any showers) or play parks are falling into disrepair and having to be fenced off then it may not be entirely down to people living in the wrong place.

But all too often it can be blamed on that and we shouldn't give anyone the chance to pass the buck on

lack of investment in housing.

So if you're tempted to become a cuckoo, please don't. Not only are Defence Estates and the chain of command now doing a lot more to identify cuckoos and giving them 28 days' notice to move on, but you would be having an impact on who knows how many other Service families.

If you can understand the frustration it would cause you to lose out on SFA in your preferred area, please don't be tempted to become part of the problem for other families incoming to your patch. ■

‘Have you ever considered the impact of being a cuckoo on other families?’

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Picture: Sgt Dan Hamer, RLC



TEN details have been changed on this photograph of Maj Gen Bill Cubitt, GOC London District, inspecting The King's Troop, Royal Horse Artillery Band. Circle the differences in the left-hand image and send the panel to **HOAY 822, Soldier**, Ordnance Road, Aldershot, Hampshire GU11 2DU by May 28.

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 July issue.

Name: (Give initials and rank or title)

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March competition: First correct entry drawn at random and winner of the £100 was **Sjt M Gibbons**, D Coy, 6 Rifles, Taunton. Runners-up **WO1 (ASM) S J Higgs**, 36 Engr Regt Wksp, Invicta Park, Maidstone and **LBdr S E Eason**, 30 Bty, 16 Regt RA, North Luffenham, each win a £25 gift voucher.

The ten differences were: letter on number plate; PSI label on front wheel arch; wheel nut; orange reflector; shackle; yellow safety signs; locker handle; hole in plate; nut assembly in hatch; GPMG fore sight.



WITH black and white stripes a prominent feature of last month's caption competition image (below right), it came as no surprise that the humble zebra, Newcastle United and mint humbugs dominated the sackful of entries sent to *Soldier* HQ.

One submission, however, stood out for all the wrong reasons. While WO2 Nigel Chapman could arguably be commended for his originality, the team here in Aldershot have serious concerns over his eyesight.

Having penned "**The brigadier had always had extravagant tastes and was delighted with the leopard-print dais**" we strongly recommend that WO2 Chapman does not consider a career as a game spotter on leaving the Army.

Among those who successfully differentiated between spots and stripes was John Dickinson (217 Tpt Squadron), who offered "**After testing their shooting skills on the local wildlife, zebra-skin**



Picture: Stuart Bingham

"I don't believe it! The girls at school are going to be so jealous. It's really him... it's Rupert Grint, the guy who plays Ron Weasley in the *Harry Potter* films."

WIN A BOOK: Write your own caption for the photo above of Prince Harry's surprise visit to Army Cadets in Wales (Page 11) and send it to us by May 19. The best, in our opinion, will win a copy of *Arnhem 1944* by Martin Middlebrook.

furnishing started to turn up everywhere".

Also sticking his colours to the safari theme was Simon Harrison of Trenchard Lines, who wins a copy of Ian Gale's new novel *Alamein* with his offering of "**A march past to the tune of *Born Free* was a first for the British Army**".



Picture: Cpl Steve Wood, RLC

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London. Starts at 2100. Massed bands of the Household Division. Tickets available from www.ticketmaster.co.uk or 0844 847 2435.

June 12: Trooping the Colour. Queen's Birthday Parade. Horse Guards, London.

Until June 13: War photographs exhibition by Don McCullin. Imperial War Museum North, Manchester. www.iwm.org.uk

June 13: 147 Field Company REME charity ball. Taking place from 1830, the event is being held in aid of ABF The Soldiers' Charity and Help for Heroes at the Forest Pines Hotel & Golf Resort. Tickets are £25 including a two course meal and can be purchased from 147 Fd Coy, TA Centre, Cottage Beck Road, Scunthorpe, N Lincs.

June 16, 23 & 30: Royal Military School of Music Concerts in the Park. Three or more bands at every concert. Bring your own blankets, chairs, picnics and wine. Refreshments available on site. Gates open at 1800, concert starts at 1950. Adult tickets £10, concessions (under 16s, OAPs, students, MoD 90 holders and TW2 residents) £8. Season, group and family tickets available. Payment in advance or on the gate. Cheques payable to the Accounting Officer MoD, Concert Secretary, Royal Military School of Music, Kneller Hall, Twickenham, Middlesex. Tel: 0208 744 8633.

June 19: RAMC Open Day: To be held at Keogh Barracks, Ash Vale, Aldershot, Hants GU12 5RQ. All enquiries to RAMC RHQ on 01276 412789 or email RHQ_AMS@hotmail.com or AMS-RHQ-EventsandFunctions@mod.uk

REUNIONS

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11 Hussars PAO: Regimental reunion at the Park Inn in Telford, Shropshire on May 14-16. For further details, contact chairman Lawson Kent on 07854 973602 or send an email to lawsontheferryman@hotmail.co.uk

The Combined Cavalry Old Comrades Association: Annual parade and service will take place on May 9. All members of the cavalry and yeomanry whether serving or retired are invited to muster at Broadwalk East, Hyde Park by 1045. Limited wheelchairs pushed by cadets are available on a pre-booked basis only. Details from individual regimental HQs or contact the chairman by phone

on 01753 555132 or email paul.stretton@householdcavalry.co.uk

144 Para Med Sqn/144 Fd Amb & 23 Para Fd Amb (PFA): Annual past and present dinner to be held on June 5 at the TA Centre, 2 Priory Road, Hornsey N8 7QT. Contact WO2 Bill Hounsborne on 0208 341 3664 or 07762 490583 or email bill_hounsborne@hotmail.com

Worcestershire & Sherwood Foresters: Reunion will be held at Worcester Rugby Club on June 5. Drumhead service and march-past. Past, present members and families of the regiment welcome. Contact Lt Col K Seddon, Asst Regimental Secretary, RHQ Mercian, Foresters House, Chetwynd Bks, Chilwell, Beeston, Nottingham NG9 5HA or phone 0115 946 5415.

Bristol UOTC: Centenary day will encompass a cathedral service and a reception at the Artillery Grounds on June 5. All former members of staff and officer cadets are invited to attend. For information email amy.thomas654@mod.uk or call 01179 733533.

251 Medical Squadron: Formerly 251 Field Ambulance. Reunion at the TA Centre, Dykelands Road, Seaburn, Sunderland SR6 8DP on June 5 starting at 1900. All ex-members welcome. Details from Graeme New on 07769 948685 or email graemenew@sky.com

The Gordon Highlanders: Waterloo lunch will be held at the The London Scottish HQ on June 19. Ladies welcome. Further details from Bob Harman on 0208 642 7192 or John Spooore on 01634 231070 or jspooorew@tinyonline.co.uk

7 (Sphinx) Commando Battery RA: Celebrating Sphinx Day on June 19. Family day at RM Condor and an evening function at the Arbroath Royal British Legion. All past, present members and families are welcome. Details from Stephen Templeton or Mrs M Jack on 01241 822156 or 93387 2156.

Airborne Logistic Officers' Club (TALOC): Annual dinner will be held on July 23. Open to all Para-trained serving and ex-serving officers, Regular and TA, of the RLC, RAOC, RCT, RASC, ACC and The Royal Pioneers. The following day is the 16 Air Assault Bde Open Day in Colchester. To receive an invite contact Maj Ash Loudon or Capt Will Ross, 63 CS Sqn, 13 Air Asslt Sp Regt RLC, Merville Bks, Colchester CO2 7SW or email ashloudon@gmail.com or william.ross824@mod.uk

Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters Regimental Association: Pre-Crich supper at the Foresters House, Chilwell, Nottingham on July 3. Admission by ticket only, price £12.50. For details contact RHQ Mercian on 0115 9465415.

The Mercian Regiment: Annual pilgrimage to the Regimental War Memorial, Crich, Derbyshire will be held on July 4. Service starts at 1500 and anyone wishing to attend should be at the memorial grounds by 1430. Further details from RHQ Mercian on 0115 9465415.

Bulletin Board will return to full strength next month. In the meantime, visit our website at www.soldiermagazine.co.uk to view a full list of Searchlines, competition winners and Army Presentation Team roadshow dates. Soldier can also be found on Facebook by logging on to www.tinyurl.com/soldiermag





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www.baff.org.uk

British Armed Forces Federation, an association aimed at representing staff in the three Services.

www.armedforces.co.uk

Over 2,000 pages of Defence information, including defence projects and equipment, technology information, military books and defence supplier's details.

www.armywivesunited.co.uk

Free community site with message boards on a vast array of subjects that affect Army wives. Offering advice, friendship and support. Army Wives United has been online for three years and has around 1,000 active members.

www.sftf.mod.uk

The Service Families Task Force website contains useful tri-Service information.

www.aff.org.uk

The Army Families Federation (AFF) is the independent voice of Army families and works hard to improve the quality of life for Army families around the world - on any aspect that is affected by the Army lifestyle.

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www.starandgarter.org

The Royal Star and Garter Homes caring for the ex-Service community since 1916.

www.youtube.com/britisharmy

The Army's official video channel with lots of videos ranging from training to equipment.

www.forcesequine.co.uk

Welcome to Forces Equine.co.uk the online Equine site dedicated to Combined and Individual Services Equestrian. Here you will be able to find the information and links you need to keep you up-to-date with what's going on.

www.nfassociation.org

The "Not Forgotten" Association for disabled ex-Service personnel aims to provide entertainment and recreation for war-wounded personnel to alleviate the tedium of their lives and give them something they can look forward to.

www2.armynet.mod.uk/armysafety

This Chief Environment and Safety Officer (Army) website provides up-to-date advice on safety and environmental issues affecting the Army.

www.facebook.com/britisharmy

The Army's official Facebook fan page

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www.squaddiewives.co.uk

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www.honour-our-troops.org.uk

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www.hive-bfg.co.uk

HIVE Information centres for the Tri-service communities.

www.hive.mod.uk

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www.army.mod.uk

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www.doing-alright.army.mod.uk

A website for soldiers, do you know about the benefits you're entitled to? Are you Doing Alright?

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.

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www.blesma.org

National charity for limbless ex-Servicemen and women, their dependants and widows.

www.army.mod.uk/welfare-support/family/default.aspx

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www.nivets.org.uk

The Northern Ireland Veterans' Association, providing advice, support and assistance to veterans and families of those affected by the Troubles.

www.veterans-aid.net

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MUSEUMS

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

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For more about the Trust and its activities please go to www.captainjim.org



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ARMY sports LOTTERY

RESULTS

20 March 2010

1st prize (£10,000); WO2 PA Phillips 1 (UK) Armd Div Sig Regt, BFPO 15. 2nd prize (£5,000); LCpl RC Wheaton 26 Engr Regt, Perham Down. 3rd prize (£2,500); Sgt M McLean LSAO, BFPO 801. 4th prize (£1,000); Cfn DD MacDonald 19 Lt Bde CSS Bn, BFPO 806. 5th prize (£500); LCpl G Welsh 10 Trg Bn REME, Bordon. 15 consolation prizes (£100 each); Cpl SJ Henderson 4 Regt AAC, Ipswich, WO2 K Galbraith 3 RSME Regt, Blackwater, Sgt Thapa 36 Engr Regt, Maidstone, Pte J Joubert 2 Log Sp Regt RLC, BFPO 47, Tpr NP Gumede Armour Centre, Bovington, Cpl C Greer 8 Fd Coy (Para) REME, Colchester, SSgt JN Attwood 205 FD Hosp (V), Dundee, Capt SF Martin 16 CS Med Regt, Colchester, Cpl AA Tod 3 Scots, Ardarsier, Cpl CL Chilton 16 Regt RA, North Luffenham, WO2 SM Girdler 9 Regt AAC, Thirsk, LCpl MS Bellars Scots DG, BFPO 38, Sgt SM Long 2 PWRR, BFPO 58, WO1 D Southwell 3 RHA, BFPO 30, SSgt KJ O'Brien 36 Engr Regt, Maidstone.

27 March 2010

1st prize (£10,000); SSgt MB Kenny 111 Pro Coy, BFPO 30. 2nd prize (£5,000); LCpl NR Calland 2 MI Bn, Netheravon. 3rd prize (£2,500); WO2 JM Taylor HQ

DRLC, Deepcut. 4th prize (£1,000); CSgt T Thapa Gurkha Trg Wing, Catterick Garrison. 5th prize (£500); Maj RM Page JSCSC, Shrivenham. 15 consolation prizes (£100 each); Cpl KT Black 26 Regt RA, BFPO 113, LT AJ Heales 26 Engr Regt, Perham Down, Cpl MJ Thomas 17 Fd Sqn (EOD) Sect (PCF), Wimbish, LCpl JA Thomas 47 Regt RA Wksp REME, Thorney Island, SSgt ST Wooler 71 Sig Regt (V), Bexley Heath, Pte VT Talemaisuva ARRC Sp Bn, BFPO BFPO 40, Sgt EA Harvey 4 Med Regt, Aldershot, WO1 D Southwell 3 RHA, BFPO 30, LCpl IN Akukalia 64 Fuel Sp Sqn RLC, BFPO 47, Bdr C McKitten 32 Regt RA, Larkhill, Capt DR Jenkins 254 GS Med Regt (V), Cambridge, Col AM Gibson HQ Land Command, Wilton, SSgt NR Ibinson 21 Sig Regt, Colerne, Sig RS Wheatland 11 Sig Regt, Blandford Forum, Capt RM Rees 36 Engr Regt, Maidstone.

3 April 2010

1st prize (£10,000); Cpl MJ Hall 39 Regt RA, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne. 2nd prize (£5,000); Maj SP Luckett 101 Log Bde HQ & Sig Sqn (261), Aldershot. 3rd prize (£2,500); WO2 PA Phillips 1 (UK) Armd Div Sig Regt, BFPO 15. 4th prize (£1,000); Cpl DJ Moffat 7 Tpt Regt RLC, BFPO 39. 5th prize (£500); Sgt MJ Simpson 30 Sig Regt, Bramcote. 15 consolation prizes (£100 each); SSgt MN Prince 2 RGR, BFPO 11, Cpl SA

Davies Donnington Sp Unit, Donnington, LCpl NM Reid 7 Sig Regt, BFPO 35, Sgt DR Williams JSSU (CH), Cheltenham, Capt M McGaun 1 Log Sp Regt RLC, BFPO 47, LCpl FM Watkinson JSAL(L), London, Spr MT Browne 28 Engr Regt, BFPO 31, Gnr B Savage-Mansaray 12 Regt RA, Thorney Island, SSgt PC Hudson 1 RHA LAD REME, Tidworth, WO2 MJ Way HQ Brunei Garrison, BFPO 11, WO2 PJ Foulkes JSFAW, RAF Odiham, Lt Col M Haddock HQ 4 Div, Aldershot, SSgt DI Ford 24 PC & Mov Regt RLC, BFPO 39, Maj R Wagstaff HQ Land Forces, Wilton, Maj PJA McDill DHU, Shefford.

10 April 2010

1st prize (£10,000); Sgt RJ Campbell 23 Engr Regt (Air Asslt), Ipswich. 2nd prize (£5,000); Sgt SD Webster 11 Trg Bn REME, Arborfield. 3rd prize (£2,500); Cfn RM Boot 101 FS Bn REME, BFPO 39. 4th prize (£1,000); Cpl PG Wylie 29 Regt RLC, South Cerney. 5th prize (£500); Pte RP Jones 1 Log Sp Regt RLC, BFPO 47. 15 consolation prizes (£100 each); Lt Col CR Marks 2 Mercian, BFPO 806, Gnr A Soulsby 4 Regt RA, Topcliffe, Lt Col JD Shirras NRDC HQ Turkey, BFPO 747, Pte GD Jones 1 Med Regt, BFPO 17, Sgt AG Kershaw 4 Log Sp Regt, Shippon, Maj JD Fenn Indiv Trg DI Trg (A), Upavon, Sgt RP Swindle Army Foundation College, Harrogate, LCpl W Botes 1 SG, Catterick, Cpl RJ Flattery 24

Regt RLC, BFPO 19, Pte DB Oxley ITC, Catterick Garrison, Sgt BK Cunningham 23 Engr Regt (Air Asslt), Ipswich, Cpl PA Smith ECM (FP) Sqn, BFPO 801, SSgt CA Wilson N Sqn, RAF Aldergrove, BFPO 808, Sig B Briggs 21 Sig Regt (Air Sp), Colerne, LCpl T Parker 7 Air Assault Bn REME, Ipswich.

17 April 2010

1st prize (£10,000); Maj C Mullin HQ BFSAL, BFPO 655. 2nd prize (£5,000); Maj SJ Foster DSDA, Bicester. 3rd prize (£2,500); WO1 MCE Lenachan 2 Mercian, BFPO 806. 4th prize (£1,000); Pte KC Kunyrimwe 2 PWRR, BFPO 58. 5th prize (£500); LCpl LC Bradley DSDA, Kineton. 15 consolation prizes (£100 each); SSgt JE Pearce 1 Med Regt, BFPO 17, Cfn AG Walker 10 Trg Bn REME, Bordon, Capt P McCarthy 2 R Welsh, Tidworth, Cpl AD Moffat 1 (UK) Armd Div HQ & Sig Regt, BFPO 15, Sgt P Moran HQ 1 Mech Bde, Tidworth, Lt RT Schreiber 25 Engr Regt, BFPO 808, Sgt GA Nelson HQ 143 (WM) Bde, Shrewsbury, LCpl C Mazarura 7 Sig Regt, BFPO 35, Name Withheld HQ Hereford Garrison, Maj MK Stuart 104 Log Sp Bde, Netheravon, CPL C Day 21 Sig Regt (Air Sp), Colerne, LBdr IV Sauliga 12 Regt RA, Thorney Island, Cpl PB Ravutia 1 (UK) Armd Div Sig Regt, BFPO 15, SSgt NJ Moreton Support Group Dhekelia, BFPO 58, Lt Col CJ Wilman Tayforth UOTC, Dundee.



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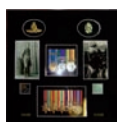
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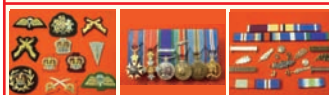
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P84 MOVIES **SCOUSE SUCCESS**

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P88 MUSIC **WINGS OF GLORY**

P90 BOOKS **TEENAGE TRIUMPH**

P92 TOP GEAR **PEACE ACCORD**

Turning Japanese: Honda's Accord Tourer hopes to convert more motorists to the ways of the estate car
Picture: Honda



Student to stardom: Stellar performances from a British cast depict the humble beginnings of Liverpool rock icon John Lennon

A juvenile genius

Biopic feature documents the turbulent upbringing that moulded John Lennon

Review: Joe Clapson

THIS debut feature film from Sam Taylor-Wood gives an insight into what turned John Lennon from an ordinary child into one of rock 'n' roll's biggest icons.

A biopic about one of the most successful singer-songwriters the world has ever known could easily fall flat on its face, with experts from numerous fields queuing up to point out faults.

But *Nowhere Boy* bravely broaches the uncharted waters of Lennon's upbringing and is utterly successful.

The film chronicles Lennon's life from 1955, when he was a rebellious and flirtatious 15-year-old living on a council estate with his aunt Mimi (Kristin Scott Thomas) while his estranged mother Julia (Ann-Marie Duff) resides down the road.

Within two minutes of the film starting we understand that the boy that would go on to found The Beatles and become an icon of pacifism was very much a typical teenager – slow to get out of bed and quick to give a cocky response to any of his teachers.

Buddy Holly's *Real Wild Child* (*I'm The Wild*

One) provides the musical backing to the opening and sets the tone for a soundtrack which does the talented British cast absolute justice.

From the moment we see the excellent Aaron Johnson's sharp-tongued Lennon respond to a stern lecture from his headmaster, we understand that he is no shrinking violet.

On being told he is going "nowhere", he responds: "Is nowhere for the geniuses, sir? Because then I probably do belong there."

Clearly the film does not and cannot chronicle Lennon's exact conversations and movements, but it gives a believable, serious account of where the music-obsessed Liverpool lad started out and it feels authentic.

With a screenplay from Matt Greenhalgh, writer of the critically acclaimed Joy Division biopic *Control*, this carefully-directed offering boasts a wealth of British talent including outstanding performances from BAFTA-nominated actresses Scott Thomas and Duff.

The focal points of the movie are two funerals, which prove pivotal in Lennon's life, while the whole drama is dominated by his austere aunt and his lively, extrovert mother.

After the funeral of Lennon's beloved uncle George, Lennon is reunited with his mother, who

returns to become a central figure in his life. The second ceremony is where he decides his destiny lies on his own, with his guitar.

Nowhere Boy shows Lennon buying his first instrument, meeting a kindred spirit in Paul McCartney and forming The Quarrymen.

It also highlights how, just as Lennon began his road to unprecedented success, the truth about his past leads to a tragedy he would never escape.

However, the film is more about Lennon's path from the family home and a troubled education to a life on the road as a musician.

The flirtatious and flamboyant Julia appears as the encouraging influence on the non-academic Lennon, fuelling his interest in music and even going so far as to protect him when he plays truant from school.

The formation of the world's most recognisable band is not overlooked, but crucially the dysfunctional background of its master is the centre of attention.

In a post-war Britain full of uncertainty, a lost teenager finds solace in music and goes on to find that he is, in fact, a genius.

● *Nowhere Boy* is out to own on DVD and Blu-Ray from May 10. ■

From young soldiers to comic-book cops, *Soldier* settles down to check out the latest DVD releases...

The Bridge out on DVD now

THIS is an English-subtitled remake of the German 1959 tale of seven young schoolboys plucked from their class during the last days of the Second World War to defend a key bridge in their hometown. As the Allied Forces approach, troops are mobilised and anarchy begins to take hold. With his superiors fleeing, Albert and his comrades are left facing death. This anti-war film highlighting the futility of battle and loss of young life is let down by the overnight transformation of schoolboys into highly-trained infantrymen adept at handling every weapon in the German arsenal. I love a good war film but this isn't one of them.



W02 Ritchie Downing, 3 AAC

Win... The Bridge on DVD

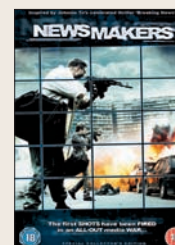
STARRING **Franka Potente** (*The Bourne Identity*) and directed by the aptly-named **Wolfgang Panzer**, *The Bridge* [better known as *Die Brücke* by German audiences] is – according to the PR blurb and in contrast to the opinion of W02 Downing – "a breathless and gripping tale of courage and heroism amid the chaos of the Second World War". Metrodome has given *Soldier* five copies of the DVD to give away. To have a chance of winning answer this question: **Which war is the film based on?** Answers on a postcard to the usual address or by email to comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk



Closing date May 28

Newsmakers out on DVD May 3

NEWSMAKERS tells two stories. The first is a classic gang vs police, hostages-and-guns type affair and the second relates to a media war. On one side we have the authorities painting a picture of a calm rescue operation in which the Spetsnaz are treated to a sushi lunch break, while the gang use their mobile phones and internet to stream the truth of death, disorder and chaos. The direction is good, the action has a little of **Michael Mann's** *Heat* about it and the acting is above par. It's not going to win any Oscars but is a watchable action thriller (if you can speak Russian or don't mind reading subtitles).



Tpr Alistair Campbell-Grieve, RY



Genius at work: Aaron Johnson captures the essence of rock legend John Lennon in an extraordinary first-time effort from director Sam Taylor-Wood

Paranormal Activity out on DVD now

PARANORMAL Activity focuses on two protagonists, Micah and Katie, who are suffering from a house-based haunting. Micah buys a video camera to document the goings-on and a series of experts are summoned to help, but most of them are too afraid to stay. The activity gets progressively worse, culminating with Katie becoming possessed and turning violent. The scares are based on shocks – don't expect any subtlety – as well as playing on your primeval fear of the unknown. A good watch, but not for anyone with motion-sickness due to the typically low-budget, first-person camera work.

Capt Jim Berry, R Irish



Funny Games out on Blu-Ray now

AFTER a sedate first ten minutes this film rapidly goes menacingly and disconcertingly weird. Set in middle-class America, a family sets off for some innocent outdoor pursuits. This is quickly thwarted by the arrival of two psychopathic teenagers hell-bent on delivering torture and terror and betting that the family will "all be dead by morning". Plenty of off-camera unpleasantness allows your imagination to fill in any gore gaps, including a surreal "rewind" scene with two endings. This movie left me with a vile taste in my mouth after only 20 minutes; surely what the director set out to do.

Capt Neil Johnson, AAC



Give 'Em Hell Malone out on May 17

GIVE 'Em Hell Malone is a comic-book-style flick which will greatly please fans of *Sin City* and *The Spirit*. The film offers a white-knuckle ride through the dark world of a private investigator starring **Thomas Jane** (*The Punisher*, *Deep Blue Sea*, *The Mist*), **Ving Rhames** (*Pulp Fiction*, *Con Air*, *Mission Impossible*) and **Doug Hutchison** (*CSI*, *Lost*, *24*). The kind folk at Momentum Pictures are offering five lucky readers the chance to win a copy of the DVD. To enter, tell us which *Pulp Fiction* actor stars in *Give 'Em Hell Malone*. Answers on a postcard to the usual address or by email to comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk



Closing date May 28



Coming home?: Gamers can guide England – or any one of 198 other nations – to glory in 2010 *Fifa World Cup South Africa*, out now

EA's web of deceit

Fifa World Cup game's online mode lets players alter the tournament's outcome

Review: Stephen Tyler

WITH little more than a month to go until the first ball is kicked in anger, predictions of English glory at the 2010 Fifa World Cup are understandably at fever pitch.

Never scared of over hyping their national team, the country's media have settled back into their four-yearly cycle of claiming the sport's golden generation are set to replicate the success of their 1966 counterparts.

But as much as most fans want to believe it, English supporters know deep down that the path to victory will be cut abruptly short by a penalty shoot-out defeat, quite possibly by Portugal in the quarter finals.

While that particular scenario will have a vast swathe of the nation crying into their pints, gamers will be able to extract some virtual revenge thanks to the tournament's official title.

EA Sports' *2010 Fifa World Cup South Africa*, out now on all formats, allows fans to pick their nation and play through the championship's group games and knockout stages.

But in a novel twist, the developer has teamed

up with Coca-Cola to provide an online mode that will feature crucial moments from the actual tournament just hours after they occur in real life.

So, if Rooney suffers a rush of blood and gets himself sent off a la David Beckham in 1998 – costing his team victory in the process – gamers can now find out what could have been through the free Coca-Cola Zero Story of the Finals option.

"This is an ambitious and completely unique feature that has never before been attempted for football video games," said the title's executive producer Kaz Makita. "The hopes and dreams of nations will rise and fall throughout the 2010 Fifa World Cup finals and within hours after the real matches have occurred our development team will recreate the storylines in our game and provide fans the opportunity to replay and, perhaps, change the outcome – virtually."

The opportunity to settle scores is a big draw, but the rest of the *2010 Fifa World Cup South Africa* experience is equally enticing.

Rather than limiting itself to just the finals, the game offers the chance to pick any of 199 teams and attempt to guide them through qualification.

Make it over that hurdle and the tournament itself awaits, complete with all ten officially-licensed stadia that will be used in South Africa.

Anyone with a console hooked up to the internet can also play through the finals against rivals from around the world.

Away from the gameplay, the presentation is all you would expect from an EA Sports title. Players bear an impressive likeness to their real-life counterparts and the animation is fluid and realistic throughout.

The developers were keen to capture the multi-cultural flavour of the World Cup and have enlisted the services of 28 musical artists from 20 countries to provide a cross-continental smorgasbord of a soundtrack.

Tracks from well-known acts including Basement Jaxx, Miike Snow and Florence and The Machine share a space with artists from countries including Ghana, Malawi and Somalia as EA captures the host continent's musical diversity.

"[This] is a landmark project in the evolution of music and its African heritage," said Steve Schnur, worldwide executive of music and marketing at Electronic Arts.

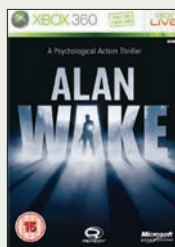
With the game's undeniable good looks and ability to virtually rewrite history, EA Sports has produced the perfect accompaniment to next month's tournament – regardless of whether the Three Lions meet the hype or not. ■

From the dusty Wild West to the streets of Pacific City, we take a tour of the latest video games...

Alan Wake for Xbox 360

BILLED as a psychological action thriller, this Xbox 360 title places as much of an emphasis on storytelling as it does on gameplay. The eponymous *Alan Wake* is a best-selling suspense author who escapes to a small town to battle his writer's block but then suffers the mysterious disappearance of his wife. Things get seriously strange as night falls and fantasy and reality morph into one nightmarish world. The episode-based action adds a further layer of gloss to the TV-style presentation and the game's plot ensures players will want to come back for more. A nice change of pace from first-person shooters.

Out on May 21



Crackdown 2 for Xbox 360

THE sequel to Ruffian Games' 2007 hit, *Crackdown 2* sees gamers once again fill the sizeable boots of The Agent as he tries to restore law and order to Pacific City. With the urban environment overrun by criminal gangs, players must use a variety of weapons to calm things down. The title's early promise is bolstered by a multiplayer mode which will allow 16 players to battle against each other or four friends to team up for a co-operative campaign. The online section also boasts complete freedom so gamers can roam the city to do some exploring or just leave a trail of destruction in their wake.

Out in July



Super Street Fighter IV for Xbox 360

THE series that brought beat-em-ups to the masses returns in this rejuvenated version of last year's critically-acclaimed *Street Fighter IV*. The usual suspects – including Ryu and Ken from the original game – have been lavishly animated and the graphics are slick throughout. The two-dimensional fights are every bit as colourful as before, although Capcom has tweaked the gameplay to make it equally accessible to newcomers and seasoned players. Online options for the game, which is also available on PC and PS3, include team elimination matches and an "endless battle" mode with a winner-stays-on approach.

Out now





Spot on: Famous faces from across the footballing world lock horns in authentically-modelled stadia in Electronic Arts' 2010 Fifa World Cup tie-in

Skate 3 for Xbox 360 and PlayStation 3

ELECTRONIC Arts' *Skate* series has done a good job in challenging Tony Hawks' monopoly of the 'boarding' genre and this summer sees the title's latest incarnation. Players get to bring a character to life in the sprawling town of Port Carverton where there is no shortage of jumps, ramps and rails to tackle on a skateboard. So far, so *Skate*, but the game's biggest innovation is in its social media-inspired focus on friends. Players are tasked with building their ultimate skating team and can design their own logos and skate parks for them before tackling rival crews in online face-offs. This is one to keep an eye on.

Out May 28



Lost Planet 2 for Xbox 360 and PS3

HOT on the heels of its 2.3 million copy-selling predecessor, *Lost Planet 2* will plunge players back onto the front line of mankind's battle with the deadly Akrid on the planet E.D.N II. Where the original game took place against a backdrop of an ice age, the sequel's environments include lush tropical jungles and harsh, unforgiving deserts. Developer Capcom promises six interconnected episodes which alter depending on the player's actions. An intimidating arsenal including machine guns, shotguns, rocket launchers, sniper rifles and grenades will also be on offer in a game showing a lot of early potential.

Out May 11

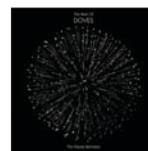


Red Dead Redemption for Xbox 360

ROCKSTAR Games – the company responsible for the *Grand Theft Auto* series – is putting the finishing touches to Wild West-themed *Red Dead Redemption* and it looks spectacular. Players take on the role of John Marston, a partially-reformed outlaw blackmailed by the government of early 20th century America to roam the western frontier looking for members of his old gang. The scale of the game world is immense and takes in everything from dusty settlements to the civilised towns of the north. Imagine *Grand Theft Auto* with more horses and revolvers and you are on the right lines.

Out May 21





The place to be: Fans of Manchester trio Doves can celebrate a decade of success in a new greatest hits album, out now

Drawn from memory

Indie heavyweights reflect on a glittering musical career in their stunning best of

Review: Richard Long

IT is hard to believe that Doves have spent more than a decade working within the close confines of the music industry without ever really hitting the mainstream.

In a career spanning four studio albums the Manchester trio have been happy to simmer gently under the surface while other bands from the iconic city hit the headlines.

But with the release of *The Places Between: The Best of Doves*, the group delivers a triumphant retrospective of their efforts over the past 12 years in an album that reminds listeners of the stunning music they have produced.

"We've always been pretty stubborn and that self belief has carried us through," explained guitarist Jez Williams.

"The thing about Doves is that we've always managed to bubble away just underneath the mainstream, which can be great and frustrating at the same time.

"But it has allowed us to follow our own path and in a funny way the fans appreciate that."

Having achieved worldwide record sales of

more than two million, as well as two number one albums and Mercury nominations for *Lost Souls* and *Last Broadcast*, Doves could be forgiven for immersing themselves in the all-consuming rock 'n' roll lifestyle.

But despite achieving such success the trio have remained true to their early ideals and have maintained a clear focus to produce a varied and impressive array of songs.

"We've always been sonically adventurous," said singer Jimi Goodwin.

"We take our musical influences and put them through a filter and the result ends up as Doves.

"There's a chemistry between us which is as strong as ever and looking back over the last 12 years I'd say it is a pretty good run of music out of three people."

And a pretty good run of music it is too.

Debut single *The Cedar Room* is easily the standout track with its haunting sound as effective today as when it was first released in 1998.

The Places Between opens with *There Goes The Fear*, which could easily be considered as Doves' most recognisable anthem, and finds room for the equally energetic *Pounding*.

There is also immense diversity to be enjoyed. *Caught By The River* offers peaceful escapism,

Black and White Town provides a kick of Motown and *Kingdom of Rust* points to the group's more recent musical direction.

But this offering differs from the traditional cash cow created by "best of" compilations.

The trio sat down to sequence the track listing to ensure their efforts were accurately chronicled and they took a cue from some of their favourite artists who have been down the same path.

"There are some that I absolutely love, like Neil Young's *Decade*, which got me into him in the first place," Williams said.

"So we deliberately set out to show both sides of Doves. There are songs people might know and then there's the more experimental side."

The album comes in single and multi-disc versions, which include the new single *Andalucia*.

The expanded format also features fresh material in the shape of *Blue Water* and *Drifter* along with a host of B-sides, rarities and unreleased tracks.

A DVD featuring videos of the band's main singles completes the pack.

While some of the bonus material may not be to everyone's taste it does not detract from the fact that Doves have produced a worthy back catalogue that deserves to be celebrated. ■

From dance floor Bullies to the new kings of country, we try the best and rest of this month's offerings...

I and Love and You by The Avett Brothers

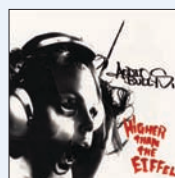
AN American trio, **The Avett Brothers** have a soulful, wistful and somewhat poetic vein running throughout their latest album, *I and Love and You*. Think American deep south **Jack Johnson** and you can imagine yourself on a porch with an ice cold beer while this plays in the background. An easy-listening sound that isn't going to challenge your senses, but do you really want to stretch yourself on a warm summers' evening when the sun is setting and you feel at peace with the world? The Avett Brothers may definitely find themselves in the sub-conscious of some but judging by the music on offer here they will not be troubling this listener any time soon.



WO2 Mo Morris, RLC

Higher Than The Eiffel by Audio Bullies

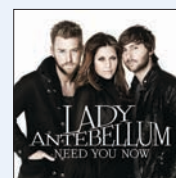
IT has been five long years since **Audio Bullies** assaulted the charts with the **Nancy Sinatra**-inspired *Shot You Down*. Dance duo Tom Dinsdale and Simon Franks make their long-awaited return with *Higher Than Eiffel*, an album that almost justifies such a lengthy absence. While this is nothing groundbreaking it certainly provides an enjoyable listen. The songs make more than a passing reference to life on the urban streets through the inevitable mention of drink and drugs, notable examples of which can be found in the tracks *Drained Out* and *Drums*. This album comes as a welcome return and is highly recommended for anyone seeking some upbeat escapism.



Richard Long, Soldier

Need You Now by Lady Antebellum

LADY Antebellum (Dave Haywood, Charles Kelley and Hillary Scott) have taken over the world of country music since they got together in Nashville in 2006. The title track from their second album spent five weeks at number one on country radio in the US, and has just been voted Song of the Year at the Academy of Country Music Awards. *Need You Now* is full of stunning harmonies, brilliant lyrics and great piano-laden songs. *Hello World* is for me the best song on the album. I honestly don't think I will ever be fully converted into a country music lover but this track almost had me. It's a very strong offering and I highly recommend it to anyone who is a fan of this genre.



Ray Kalaker, civvy

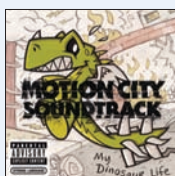


Flying high: Unsung heroes Doves have painstakingly sequenced the songs that represent their distinguished 12-year career in *The Places Between*

My Dinosaur Life

AS a band **Motion City Soundtrack** have all the hallmarks of being huge but for some reason they are not well known in the UK. Their fourth studio album *My Dinosaur Life* demonstrates this perfectly. At first you think "not another American college band" with the opening track *Worker Bee*. For the most part you would be right as songs like *Skin And Bones* and *Stand Too Close* churn along like a bad **Wheatus** comparison. It's not all bad though and one or two songs actually grip you, like *Disappear* and *Hysteria* which have a completely different direction – and that's the confusing part. Very much a mixed bag and sounds a lot like **All American Rejects** and **Paramore**.

Sgt Matt McLeish, R Signals



Dirt by Kids in Glass Houses

DIRT, the second album from **Kids in Glass Houses**, is a full-on rock affair, energetic, lively and in your face from the opening riffs of the very first track. With a sound reminiscent of **Fall Out Boy**, the Welsh quintet are sure to build a sound following on their forthcoming UK tour and they can even be found supporting **Lost Prophets** and **Paramore**. A niche sound that may not appeal to all, but the airplay and recognition from Radio One will surely introduce the band to a whole new audience in what promises to be a busy 2010. Buy this if you like a fast-paced American rock angle, otherwise you would be well-advised to walk on by.

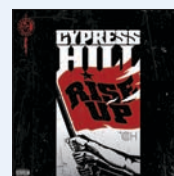
WO2 Mo Morris, RLC



Rise Up by Cypress Hill

RISE Up marks the first release from rock-rappers **Cypress Hill** in more than six years. In some quarters this offering has been criticised for not really being worth the wait, mainly due to the fact that men in their 40s should find something else to rap about other than the indulgences of marijuana. However, fans of the duo would argue differently and there is more than enough here to keep them entertained. **Tom Morello** adds a rock edge to the title track and *Shut 'Em Down* while *Light It Up* is the best song on the album. It remains to be seen if this formula can find a place in the contemporary music scene or, as some have suggested, whether Cypress Hill are over the hill.

Richard Long, Soldier





Explosive read: *Tripwire*, published by Corgi and co-authored by former Army bomb disposal expert Chris Hunter, is out now

Factual undertones

Former officer's operational experience adds authentic punch to teenage kicks

Interviews: Stephen Tyler

THERE can not be many less-likely literary partnerships than the team behind teen fiction thriller *Tripwire*.

Few eyebrows will be raised at established children's author Steve Cole's involvement in the book, which follows a secret service of young people called into action following a terrorist attack on Heathrow Airport. But sharing the credits is former Army bomb disposal expert Chris Hunter, better known for his factual accounts of counter-IED work.

On the face of it the duo's partnership should have stalled at the start – when Hunter was defusing bombs in Iraq, Cole was writing best-selling kids' books about dinosaur astronauts.

The reality is that the pair have played to each others' strengths to create a fast-paced work of fiction that appeals well beyond its teenage market.

"I think we both wanted to reach a different audience," said Cole. "I'm best known as a writer of younger fiction and Chris for adult fiction."

"We share an agent who suggested we might

get together and discuss scenarios where we could credibly combine teenage combatants and factual bomb disposal procedure.

"The ideas sparked off very quickly and the writing was a smooth process."

For a title aimed at younger readers, *Tripwire* does not pull any punches. The Minos Chapter – the book's precocious secret service – is staffed by teenagers who fight terror with terror.

Main protagonist Felix Smith is a case in point. The young recruit is out to avenge the death of his father and has to tackle the imminent terrorist threat using his specialism – bomb disposal.

The techniques he uses to defuse the deadly devices are borne from the experiences of Hunter, who used his first-hand knowledge to script the book's action sequences.

As a veteran of the Balkans, Northern Ireland, Afghanistan and Iraq and the recipient of the Queen's Gallantry Medal, the former officer has a wealth of personal knowledge to draw on.

And despite having swapped reality for fiction himself, Hunter is proud of the new generation of Army explosive ordnance disposal teams.

"The IED is one of the most dangerous and effective weapon systems our soldiers have ever had to face," he said. "In Afghanistan and in

trouble spots around the world, they have become the insurgents' weapon of choice.

"Yet in spite of IEDs being the leading cause of military combat fatalities and injuries, our soldiers have been extremely successful at countering them by adopting a multifaceted strategy designed to attack the insurgent network, train the force and defeat the device."

As Hunter's own books *Eight Lives Down* and *Extreme Risk* have proven, there is a strong appetite for tales depicting the realities of such a dangerous job.

For the former soldier, who joined the Army at the age of 16 in 1989 and retired in 2007 as an MoD senior IED intelligence analyst, *Tripwire* represents another chance to expose the nerve-jangling realities of his previous profession.

But what makes someone choose to sign up for such a testing trade?

"I think people do it for a number of reasons," said Hunter. "I know some do it for the adrenaline rush, others to seek atonement for darker episodes in their lives."

"But I think most do it out of a good old-fashioned sense of duty, just because they want to make a difference. For me, I guess it was a bit of all three." ■

From Helmand heroics to Service success in Sierra Leone, a flick through this month's literary releases...

Frontline Afghanistan by Mike Ryan

WRITTEN in a journalistic manner and accompanied by a huge array of high-quality photographs, this bang-up-to-date book is slick and to the point.

Ryan holds no punches as he offers a mix of personal opinion and comment from soldiers on the ground. Topics such as IEDs, death and serious injuries, and the treatment and rehabilitation of the wounded are handled competently and compassionately. Coalition forces are fairly covered and the title's clarity and honesty will appeal to all ranks. Part reportage and part tribute, *Frontline Afghanistan: The Devil's Playground* is a good companion for those due to deploy.

Capt Shaun Fardy, AGC



The Battle for Burma by Roy C Nesbit

FEATURING more than 200 photographs and prints of original maps, this book is an illustrated history of the 14th Army in Burma – colloquially known as the "forgotten Army". The Burma campaign was fought in dense jungle swarming with vermin and in a tropical climate. Led by commander Gen Bill Slim, 1.3 million British and Commonwealth troops took on a ruthless Japanese army. The author comprehensively describes the war from the British retreat in 1942 through to the victorious battles of Kohima and Imphal, and the advance to Mandalay, Meiktila and Rangoon in 1944 and 1945.

Lt Col (Retd) Dawson Pratt, R Signals



The Dog That Saved My Life

ISABEL George's book tells the story of five military working dogs that have achieved amazing feats on the battlefield. Simply written, yet detailed, the writer provides an insight into how the intellect, fearlessness, loyalty and obedience of dogs have helped to save lives during conflict. Highlights include Judy, an English Pointer born in Shanghai, who leads stranded sailors to fresh water and joins them in a Japanese PoW camp, ultimately earning the animal equivalent of the VC. A must for canine fanatics and younger readers, George's book refreshes the roots of how the dog has earned the title of man's best friend.

Capt Jim Vincent, RLC





Sense of duty: Bomb disposal expert turned best-selling author Chris Hunter describes IEDs as “the most dangerous” weapon British soldiers face

With the Old Breed by E B Sledge

FANTASTICALLY well written and the inspiration for **Tom Hanks** and **Steven Spielberg's** new TV series *The Pacific*, **Eugene Sledge's** Second World War memoirs recount the author's experiences from his first beach landing as a US Marine on Peleliu in 1944 through numerous other encounters with the enemy, including the battle for Okinawa. Sledge kept notes (hidden in a copy of the Bible) throughout the Pacific campaign and this first-hand record of events is reflected in the detail and honesty of the writing. This account is ferocious and without any false emotion or sentimentality. A must-read book.

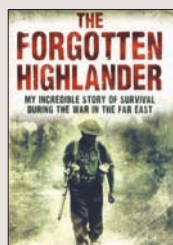
Cpl Chris MacCullum, Int Corps



The Forgotten Highlander by A Urquhart

AFTER 60 years of silence **Alistair Urquhart** finally reveals the horrors he endured at the hands of the Imperial Japanese Army during his 750 days as a prisoner of war. Living off starvation rations, the Gordon Highlander was sent to work on the Death Railway and the infamous bridge over the River Kwai. During a subsequent transfer to mainland Japan on a “hell ship” he was torpedoed by the US Navy. Urquhart – who was conscripted aged 20 – endured the unendurable and survived. *The Forgotten Highlander* reads like an adventure novel and gives a remarkable insight into the unimaginable world of conflict's dark character.

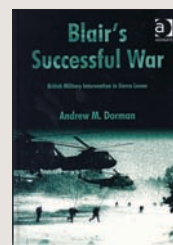
Maj Eddie Elms, AGC



Blair's Successful War by A Dorman

PENNED by the senior lecturer of Defence Studies at King's College London, this title examines the operation in Sierra Leone as a comparison with the outcomes of other British interventions since 1997. In the context of UK foreign policy, **Andrew Dorman** outlines the issues and lessons, noting the taut resourcing and geographic good fortune of the enablers, and does an excellent job of describing the tensions and tight timescales for the military planners. This heavily-structured book is a study companion and is one for the reference libraries. A thorough proofread would have spotted the numerous typos and syntax errors.

Lt Col Andy Gladen, RE





Japanese gem: The Honda Accord Tourer Estate is available from £22,115. For more information, visit www.honda.co.uk

Enemy of estates

Sporty ride and aggressive looks help Honda Accord break the family car mould

Review: John Hogan

EVEN saying Honda Accord makes me think of old people feeding seagulls chips from the front seat of their misty windowed car on a beach somewhere rainy.

And that's before you consider a Honda Accord Estate. How more boring a picture of motoring could you paint than a car for the elderly that could swallow a couple of Zimmer frames without touching the sides?

But before you write it off, take a look at the picture to your right. That car is not suitable for old people. Not by a long shot. Look at the flared wheel arches, polished 18in alloys sitting squat on lowered sports suspension. This is a car that barks attitude and demands your attention.

I'll get the bits I didn't like out of the way first. The outside edge of the mirrors is curved so as to improve your view of what can't keep up. It isn't very effective and I found myself constantly adjusting my position to see what was behind.

The front parking sensor needs to be more than just a sound you hear while you're bumping into the wall in a car park.

Neither of those minor glitches would prevent me from walking into a Honda dealership and handing over £22,115.

I think the outside speaks for itself. I loved it. That theme continues inside, though rather than going the sporting route, the interior is more like a luxury car, with heated electric leather seats.

The 2.2 litre D-Tec engine is a performer, but isn't as appealing aurally as other diesels out there. I think business-like is the best way to describe it, especially if going like the clappers is your business.

The engine only forms part of this package and when coupled with the taut chassis, communicative steering and evenly spaced six-speed gearbox, progress is unashamedly swift. There is some hesitancy if the revs are left to drop below 1,300rpm, but once above that it hitches up its skirt and belts along.

I can't talk about this car and not mention the fuel range. I picked it up in central London with a full tank and drove around the city for two days before loading it to the gunwales with family and associated clutter and heading off to see friends in North Devon for a long weekend. After four days we all jumped back in and headed home, where after a further two days of London driving I sent

the car back. Not once did I need to put fuel in.

On some stages of the journey the digital miles per gallon gauge was showing 80 plus, granted not while I was driving it like I'd just nicked it, but the range is amazing.

My children were impressed with the push button boot, but nowhere near as impressed as I was with the sensors which pre-tension the seat belts and apply the brakes if you're on a collision course with the car in front.

The same sensors also apply tiny amounts of steering to help keep you in your lane on the motorway. Both still require the input of a driver eventually but in terms of quality, useable pieces of tech fitted to cars that aren't stratospherically expensive this is leagues ahead of rivals.

The Accord Tourer is the perfect example of what the Japanese – Honda in particular – are good at. They dissect a high quality product in the marketplace, improve everything then figure out how to make it (and sell it) for less than anyone else.

Once satisfied, they churn out cars by the thousand, happy that all of them will achieve the desired result. In the case of this car, that result must have been the perfect estate car as that is exactly what it is. ■

Soldier loads up the boot and gathers the family to test the best estate cars ever made...

Ferrari 456 GT Venice

OK, so you might have to take on a few extra tags on the gate to pay for one, but we couldn't talk



about estate cars and not mention a Shooting Brake Ferrari. Leaving the factory as a standard-bodied 5.5 litre V12, the GT Venice was made in tiny numbers to special order. It's rumoured that only six were ever produced and the Sultan of Brunei is a fan. If you go to look at one with a view to buying it, wear your best watch and shoes, talk tall and blag the rarest test drive ever. If all else fails, buy the substantially-cheaper Peugeot 407 SW as they are both Pininfarina-styled and are nigh on identical.

From £1million

Saab 9-5 Aero Hot

WORKING along the same lines as the T5 Volvo, only newer and very slightly less repulsive on the eye, the 250bhp Aero Hot is the only Saab worth taking a longer look at. The 9-5 is crammed full of useful features and goes like a rocket ship. Handily, the Swedish firm's chunkily-bodied Aero Hot is one of few cars that you can actually afford to insure as everyone that owns one has kids and wears sensible shoes. If you go to look at one, make sure you put it in reverse before you twist the key, otherwise a man in a cardigan will smugly tut at your lack of Saab knowledge as he shows you how to start the thing up.



From £2,500

Peugeot 405 Diesel

STICK with me on this. If you're posted somewhere new, even if you're just moving from



one block to another, I guarantee there isn't a cheaper way to transport all your gear than in one of these. Don't buy it to love it, buy it to get some work done. It'll do anything you ask of it, taking tiny sips of diesel as it goes. This is a kick-the-tyres kind of car if you go to look at one. Chances are you'll be able to buy it for so little that the gearbox could fall out round the corner and it would cost you more to get a cab home than it did for you to purchase it in the first place. A real workhorse of a car – not to be sniffed at.

From £100



Tomorrow's world: Honda's Accord Tourer packs in a host of technological refinements to help banish any preconceptions about run-of-the-mill estate cars

Volvo 850 T5

THE Flying Brick was the nickname given to the turbocharged 850 estate when it barged onto the British Touring Car grid in the early 90s. Reliable and quick, the Volvo featured looks that only a mother could love. Built to typical Volvo levels of reliability there is very little that goes wrong with these, but they weigh 1,580kg and will do 149mph with half a section of blokes on board so expect brakes and tyres to take a pasting. Ignore high mileage when you're looking for one as high miles on a Volvo proves the example you're looking at is capable of many more to come.



From £1,000

BMW 530d Tourer

IF ever you wanted to convince the neighbours that you were better off than you really are, stick one of these on your drive. Brand new it's a fifty grand car, ten years later and with a child-like 100,000 on the clock you can pick up a clean one for £5,000. Shop around and find the right colour, spec and service history as there are plenty to choose from. The history is important as they can get expensive if you don't know a friendly dealer. Just make sure the one you buy isn't a lemon as asking the neighbours to lend you some cash to pay for parts won't quite complete the look you may be striving for.



From £3,000

Vauxhall Insignia Tourer

THE second-generation Insignia is a sure-fire hit for those that are hungry for good-quality motoring with a dash of luxury but don't have the budget to go looking for an Audi or a BMW (or an Accord for that matter). The turbo version is peppy rather than outright fast, but for a car that's as big as this is, it definitely offers practicality as well as performance. If you're going to look at one, gen-up before you hit the showroom as the options list is long, shiny and pricey. Know what you want before you speak to anyone otherwise you'll spend a fortune. Consider the petrol versions as well as they are incredibly economic.



From £17,120

 JOINT HELICOPTER FORCE (AFGHANISTAN) OP HERRICK 11 2009/2010	 AVN SUP GP Where's My Durka-Durka State? OP HERRICK	 1 REST AAC WKSP REME OP HERRICK 21 AFGHANISTAN SEPTEMBER 09 - FEBRUARY 10	 OP HERRICK 10 Mar-Oct 09 FOB DELHI RAP BG (S)	 INTENSIVE CARE UNIT OP HERRICK 10B CAMP BASTION 2009	 IEDD 5 REST 5 OP HERRICK 10 THE FAMOUS 5 EOD UNDER CONTACT
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 9 BUCKFAST Tp ATR WINCHESTER 29 Mar - 28 Aug 09					 HERRICK 10 NAD-E-ALI FOB SHAWQAT
 CAMP BASTION BG INDI Demand-Distance-Duration-Destruction OP HERRICK 10 MAR-OCT 09	 21 SIGNAL REGIMENT AIR SUPPORT 220 SIGNAL SQUADRON OP TELIC 13	 FORCE PROTECTION AFGHANISTAN AUG-DEC 09	 EGYPT FTR SECT 24TR VIKING GP BORN SURVIVORS OP HERRICK 10/11	 FP & TPT COY ISAF XI(8) KABUL AUG'08 - FEB'09	 PANTHERS CLAW PANCHAI PALANG THE BLACK WATCH LAD

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Debut cup win for
2 Para footballers

Champions' trophy: LCpl
Gaz Houldsworth leads
the celebrations as 2
Para win their first Army
Challenge Cup title

Picture: Steve Dock





Leading the charge: Ex-Serviceman and former England star Matthew Fleming has helped develop cricket in Afghanistan as part of his work with the MCC

Minnows set for world stage

Interview: Richard Long

WITH operations in Afghanistan continually hitting the headlines few would expect to find success stories from the country surfacing on newspaper back pages.

But this month the nation's cricketers will be going head-to-head with the game's biggest hitters in the World Twenty20, an event that will see the side make its major tournament debut after a meteoric rise in the sport.

Afghanistan became an associate member of the International Cricket

Council in 2001 and has made unbelievable progress in just nine years.

After swiftly moving through the lower divisions of the World Cricket League, the country secured one-day international status last year and only narrowly missed out on qualification for the World Cup.

The razzmatazz of the Twenty20 showpiece in the West Indies will propel the Afghans to the global stage and while many fans will undoubtedly be cheering for the underdogs, there is one ex-

Serviceman who will be keeping an even closer eye on the newcomers.

Former Kent and England all-rounder Matthew Fleming has been

helping to develop cricket in the country as part of his work with the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) and believes there could well be a few upsets in store when the tournament gets under way.

"These guys are very, very talented young men," the 45-year old told *SoldierSport*. "The World Twenty20

'They have some exciting and brave cricketers'



Picture: Clive Mason/Getty Images

is their best chance of success and Afghanistan has one or two exceptional players with real potential.

"They have some exciting and brave cricketers who are incredibly aware of their role within their country.

"I think they will play with a lot more passion and heart compared to some of the other teams."

Fleming, who served for four years with The Royal Green Jackets before embarking on his playing career, forged links with Afghanistan when he joined the MCC Committee.

The first seeds of the association were sown in 2006, when a team that included former England star Mike Gatting took on the national side.

"The MCC got slaughtered in that match and we had a decent team," the former Forces man recalled. "We all sat up and paid attention.

"I arrived at the MCC with a military

background. I thought that while our soldiers were on the ground we should make a contribution to cricket as it could help win hearts and minds.

"I have made one or two trips to Afghanistan and have met some fascinating people.

"They have a clear idea of how investing in cricket can help the fight with drugs while improving education, health and a range of other areas."

In searching for ways to offer assistance, Fleming was introduced to Afghan Connection, an organisation aimed at providing new schools and health facilities in the country.

Working in partnership with the charity the MCC has been able to build new pitches while promoting the game through a series of training sessions.

"The money will help broaden the pyramid and build on the momentum of the national side," Fleming said.

"With the support of the Afghanistan team we have been able to run MCC Spirit of Cricket camps, which are all about fairness, competition and respect.

"We did the first one last year for 150 children who had never played before.

"It was incredibly evident how cricket can have an amazing effect on people."

The visit attracted vast media coverage and Fleming later received a £500,000 donation from an anonymous benefactor in support of the project.

Such a generous pledge will pay for more pitches, schools and training camps as the partnership continues.

"The local politicians have seen the difference it makes and domestic budgets are now being allocated to sport. That was not the case under the Taliban," Fleming said.

"If the game can become a positive, motivating factor, that can only be a good thing." ■



Flying forward: Back row star Sgt Darrell Ball (RE) blasts his way through the RLC defence during a nail-biting Inter-Corps Rugby Union final at Aldershot

Pack engineers cup win

Report: Richard Long
Picture: Steve Dock

ASCINTILATING display of attacking rugby steered the Royal Engineers to victory in a thrilling Inter-Corps final at Aldershot.

The sappers ran in six tries to secure a 35-25 win against the Royal Logistic Corps in a match that saw Army stars in both camps showing fine form ahead of this year's Inter-Services campaign.

Powerhouse forwards Sgt Darrell Ball and Cpl Ben Hughes provided the platform from which the Royal Engineers were able to play their free-flowing game and coach Capt Andy Sanger was delighted to end a challenging year in fine style.

"We have had a bit of an upside down season, losing three matches after coming off a three-year unbeaten run," he told *SoldierSport*.

"We knew this was going to be a difficult game and we made a number of basic errors that did not help.

"Our guys really stood up and in the

end it was a relatively comfortable win.

"Our pack really dominated things, both in the scrum and the line out and that gave us the ability to work the driving maul.

"Our forwards were a big plus but I thought we lacked a bit of composure and control at times. They had some great players and were able to take advantage of our mistakes.

"I thought Darrell Ball was outstanding, as was Ben Hughes as skipper, and the replacements who came on had a really positive impact."

The loggies made a blistering start with Army wing LCpl Malaki Magnus crossing in the corner following a rampaging run from LCpl Joe Kava.

They doubled their advantage in the 17th minute when a stray pass was intercepted for a simple try before LCpl Chris Ramwell kicked the extras.

But the sappers established a foothold in the game courtesy of some superb

work by 2nd Lt Ken Davey.

The skilful fly half danced his way round would-be tacklers to complete a fine solo score and produced a similar moment of magic just minutes later to cross under the posts.

Ramwell replied with a penalty for the RLC but centre LCpl Gerhard Wessels restored the advantage with a try just minutes before half-time.

The second period started with the Engineers on the front foot as they touched

down to extend the lead, but the loggies hit back in style.

Ramwell and Magnus added tries either side of a well-struck penalty to level the scores but the sappers found the strength to come storming back.

Wing Spr Tanielia Bakoso edged his side in front with a breathtaking score before replacement forward Capt Gareth Libby settled any nerves with a late try to seal a dramatic win. ■

'Our guys really stood up and in the end it was a relatively comfortable win'

SPORT SHORTS

ARMY kitesurfers will be taking on their Forces rivals in an 80-mile race from Alderney to Poole to raise money for Services charity Help for Heroes.

The finishing touches are still being added to the event but the following dates have been proposed for the race: June 1-4; June 10-18 and June 24-30.

Anyone interested in taking part or making a donation should visit www.kite4heroes.co.uk

SERVICE boxers will be stepping into the ring against a Midland Select squad at Newcastle-Under-Lyme later this month.

The event is being staged by 159 Supply Regiment, Royal Logistic Corps at the TA Centre in Liverpool Road to raise money for ABF The Soldiers' Charity and Help for Heroes.

Tickets for the eight-bout event on May 28 (1900 start) cost £40 per person, which includes a four-course meal and table wine.

For more information call 01782 615364 or 94462 8813.

UNDEFEATED world boxing champion Joe Calzaghe has staged a glittering testimonial dinner to support the Help for Heroes fund-raising campaign.

The event at London's Grosvenor House Hotel featured a riveting retrospective on the Welshman's career, which saw him retire undefeated after 46 professional fights.

Pte Johnson Beharry, who was awarded the Victoria Cross for bravery in Iraq, was among the many Service guests while musical entertainment was provided by the Band of the Coldstream Guards.

Calzaghe said: "As a boxer I understand what it can mean to fight and to fight against the odds.

"But in all my 23 world title bouts, I can honestly say that I never had to show the courage and sheer guts that these injured guys need to draw on in their everyday life after the battles they have fought."

TOP-flight netballers got lessons in attack and defence during an afternoon of training with Service personnel.

Players from the Northern Thunder visited the Territorial Army Centre in Failsworth, near Manchester, to pick up some tips from the soldiers ahead of their clash with the Surrey Storm in the Co-operative Netball Superleague.

The Army has forged a strong link with the team and Maj David Cook, of 42 (North West) Brigade, said: "We have a great opportunity through the Northern Thunder to spread our message among a predominantly female audience.

"It was good to meet the team at Failsworth and hopefully the players have picked up some useful tips for their next match."

French deny Services' stars

Report: Richard Long
Picture: Steve Dock

A RMY football protege Sig Sam Agar (R Signals) continued his fine form in front of goal by scoring in the opening minute of a highly-charged Combined Services clash with the French Armed Forces.

The flying forward's effort was aided by a wicked deflection but the strike was deserved reward for an afternoon of hard toil in torrential conditions at Aldershot's Military Stadium.

Agar's goal helped the Combined Services team to a 1-1 draw in what proved to be a heated contest against a French squad that tested the patience of Dutch referee Hans Wossink on numerous occasions.

After making an electrifying start the home side settled into a steady rhythm and both teams were able to play some decent passing football in far from ideal conditions on a heavy pitch.

Agar was a constant threat throughout and the livewire striker almost created a second Services goal when he intercepted a weak back pass from Jean-Marie Toullec before teeing up skipper SAC Neil Thomas, who saw his shot creep agonisingly wide of the far post with the keeper stranded.

The French had a glorious opportunity

to level the match on the stroke of half-time but Ali Attoui headed straight at Royal Air Force goalkeeper Cpl Baz Whitelam from a free kick.

The save prompted an incisive counter attack from the Combined Services with the unlucky Thomas denied by the post at the end of a flowing passing move.

Agar came close to doubling his tally shortly after the interval, cutting inside following some good work on the right only for visiting keeper Cyril Pujol to deny him at the near post.

As the half progressed tempers began to flare on both sides and the game almost boiled over when one of the French players appeared to spit at RAF playmaker Thomas.

Despite looking solid throughout, the Services succumbed to a late goal from Romain Magnier, who capitalised on a defensive slip to emphatically fire home and secure an unlikely draw.

SSgt Glenn Davidson and Cpl Keith Emmerson – pictured below – (both AGC (RMP)) were superb in defence and fullback Cpl Barry Rizza (R Signals) gave a determined performance on the right, where he linked well with the midfield.

The match was the first fixture in this year's Kentish Cup and the Combined Services were in action against the Dutch Armed Forces as this issue went to press. ■



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Captain fantastic: SSgt Claire Ryding (REME) puts the Army on the front foot against the Royal Navy

Ladies take Services title

Report: Richard Long
Picture: Graeme Main

THE Army women hit the goal trail to record impressive wins over their Forces rivals and retain their Inter-Services hockey crown.

With just six days of preparation going into the tournament the Reds made a cagey start to their opening clash with the Royal Navy at Aldershot.

But the defending champions soon found their feet and went on to build a commanding lead.

Capt Anne Vickerstaff (AMS) opened the scoring following a superb solo run and the officer doubled her tally just moments later when she latched on to a fine pass from playmaker Maj Paula Nicholas (AGC (SPS)) to fire home.

With a 2-0 interval lead the Army were in total control of the contest and their pressure continued in the second period as they produced a further three strikes to seal an emphatic win.

Musn Annabel Lamb (CAMUS) was a constant threat throughout and her fine form was rewarded when she converted from a penalty corner.

Capt Liv Rotheram (RA) also profited from the Reds' well-drilled corner routine while Nicholas capped an excellent performance with a late goal to complete the scoring.

After recording a comprehensive victory over the Navy the Army faced

a much sterner test in the shape of the Royal Air Force.

The Light Blues assembled a strong squad for this year's tournament and took the lead in the opening minute as the hosts looked on edge.

But with the experience of Nicholas, SSgt Claire Ryding (REME) and Capt Nic George (R Signals) shining through the Army were able to impose themselves on the game.

Cpl Naomi Robb (Int Corps) equalised from a well-worked penalty corner before the RAF came storming back.

However, the visitors failed to make their dominance pay and goals from George and Capt Kate Surman (REME) secured a 3-2 win.

Speaking afterwards, team captain Ryding said: "To win was a great achievement. The RAF were very confident this year and they had a very strong squad.

"Our grit and determination won us a very difficult game. I am very proud of the team, every player played their heart out and gave 150 per cent which is all the coach asked from us.

"It shows just how much it means to us to represent the Army and retain the Inter-Services title."

The Army men suffered a 4-1 defeat in their opening match with the Navy before drawing 2-2 with eventual champions the RAF, who also won the men's under-23 tournament. ■

'Our grit and determination won us a very difficult game'

SPORT SHORTS

ARMY boxers pitted their wits against a select team of fighters from Northern Ireland to help raise more than £10,000 for military charities.

The Service squad travelled to Thiepval Barracks in Lisburn to compete with athletes from various local clubs under the watchful eye of ex-boxer Scott Welch.

All of the bouts were keenly contested and the money raised will be divided between Help for Heroes and to assist in funding a memorial at the barracks to honour the Servicemen and women who have died on operations.

W02 Willy Wilson (APTC), who helped organise the event, said: "I was delighted with the turnout. The guys gave it their all and provided a great night's entertainment for two very worthy causes."

A WELSH Army select team will lock horns with the Crawshays touring side in a charity match at Cardiff Arms Park later this month.

The Rugby Union clash will feature players from The Queen's Dragoon Guards, the Welsh Guards and The Royal Welsh and will be raising money for the operational welfare of each regiment.

The match will be played on Friday, May 21 (kick-off 1915) and entry costs £10 for adults and £5 for under-16s.

To book tickets call 01252 347695.

ENDURANCE athlete W02 Simon Lamen (REME) is leading a team of runners in a unique challenge to raise money for new Services charity Hounds for Heroes.

The 40-year-old is tackling the Forces March later this month, an event that will see him complete five marathons in the space of five days.

For most athletes this would be a significant challenge on its own but Lamen, along with wife Cushla and friends Nicky Hutchinson and Mark Dunbar, will be running alongside a team of canine companions.

Their fund-raising efforts will help buy and train assistance dogs for disabled Forces and civilian emergency services personnel.

"Three of us will be running with huskies," Lamen explained.

"It is unlikely that huskies would ever make the grade training as assistant dogs but what they can do is run, so it is their way of helping both the human and canine heroes."

Lamen and his team also hope to take part in the European Canicross Championships later this year.

Forces March will take place on May 27 to 31 and will follow a route from Ilfracombe to Bulford.

To sponsor the dog runners visit www.virginmoneygiving.com/canicrosstrailrunners

www.hive.mod.uk



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Dress Code: Lounge Suit

Norman "Pete Yer Legs" Hunter played a remarkable 724 times for Leeds United, scoring 21 goals in a career which spanned 22 years. He also played for Burnley and Bristol City. He went on to play 28 times for England and was a squad member of the famous 66 World Cup winning squad.

Norman and the great Jack Charlton were a defensive partnership that clearly laid the foundations of what was to be a great Leeds United era at the late 60s and early 70s under Don Revie. In 1998, The Football League to celebrate their centenary produced The Football League 100 Legends, of which Norman was inducted into. A hugely popular figure on the after dinner circuit, come and enjoy some of the anecdotes and stories of a footballing great.

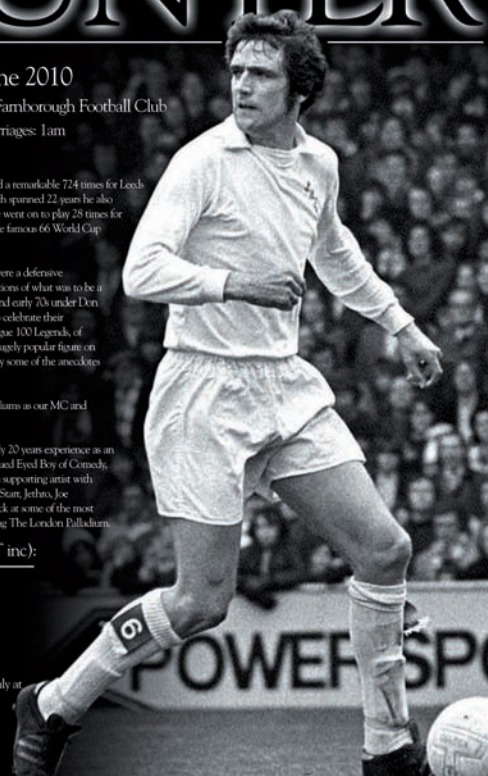
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For any enquiries contact Steve Daly at
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or call 07922 666621





Holding firm: The 2 Para defence repels an attack from the 6 REME strike force to help their team to a 3-1 win in the Army Challenge Cup final at Aldershot

Paratroopers take top prize

Report: Richard Long
Picture: Steve Dock

ALATE goal from Pte Paul Rutledge sealed a comfortable 3-1 win for footballers from 2nd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment in the Army Challenge Cup final.

The substitute fired home in the dying minutes of an energy-sapping clash with 6th Battalion, Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers to secure a memorable first win in the tournament for the Colchester-based Infantry soldiers.

After taking an early lead, 2 Para conceded on the stroke of half-time but they emerged rejuvenated for the second period and ruthlessly ended any hopes of victory for the 2005 winners.

"We made a quick start and dominated for the opening 20 minutes but they gave us a really tough test

from the half-hour mark," 2 Para coach Cpl Paul Wilmin told *SoldierSport*.

"However, our fitness took over in the second period, we got the ball down, started to pass it and in the end we really enjoyed ourselves.

"Pte Paul Brady and LCpl Gaz Houldsworth were outstanding and all three substitutes made a positive impact when they were introduced.

"We were confident coming into the match. We didn't really know a lot about the opposition, but we have been taking each game as it comes and to win our first final is amazing."

After a slow start the game came to life on the quarter-hour mark.

Brady took full advantage of some slack defending on the byline to pull the ball back for Pte James Drinkwater, who had the simple task of smashing it into an empty net.

But 6 REME gradually found their way into the match by playing some

decent passing football.

Cfn Will Rowell threatened the 2 Para goal with a dipping effort from long range before LCpl Craig Gornell fired just over after cutting inside and shooting from the edge of the area.

They got their reward after 40 minutes when neat work inside the box by Gornell created an easy tap-in for strike partner Cfn James McKenzie.

However, their good work was undone just moments after the interval as goalkeeper Cfn John Green sliced a back pass to Pte Marcus Wray, who gratefully accepted the opportunity to restore 2 Para's lead.

The second half was dominated by strong defensive play with 2 Para skipper Houldsworth looking particularly assured alongside Army star Pte Sam Lake at the back.

With time running out, 6 REME pushed forward in search of an equaliser but they were punished on the counter-attack by Rutledge, who found the space to finish neatly and cap a memorable season for his side. ■

'We have been taking each game as it comes and to win our first final is amazing'

SPORT SHORTS

THE Combined Services sitting volleyball team has completed a hectic first season on the court and is now appealing for new players ahead of another busy campaign.

After competing in four grand prix events, the Battle Back squad has shown real improvement and is hoping to continue the progression during a US tour in June, with summer tournaments also on the diary.

Disabled and able-bodied personnel are invited to join the squad for a training camp at the Kettering Conference Centre on May 8 and 9.

For more information call Sqn Ldr Masawi on 95461 7552 or email MasawiS594@mod.uk

A TEAM of cyclists from the Military Provost Guard Service will be raising money for the Chelsea Pensioners' Appeal by completing a 126-mile charity challenge this month.

The six-man squad, which is being led by LCpl Martin Harkus, will travel the route from RAF Digby in Lincolnshire to the Royal Hospital in Chelsea on Sunday, May 16.

Donations can be made at www.justgiving.com/martin-harkus

PERSONNEL from K Battery, 5th Regiment, Royal Artillery are marking the end of a tough operational tour in Afghanistan by tackling the National Three Peaks Challenge.

The five-man team, dubbed the Helmand Rams, will start their quest at 0600 on May 21, when they will climb Ben Nevis before driving to the Lake District to conquer Scafell Pike.

Their attempt continues a day later in Wales, where they will set out to scale Mount Snowdon.

Proceeds from the challenge will go to Help for Heroes and donations can be made at www.bmycharity.com/V2/NationalThreePeaksChallenge

THE British Olympic Association (BOA) has decided against plans to base the Team GB headquarters in Aldershot ahead of London 2012.

Fresh proposals for the pre-Games preparations have favoured Loughborough University as the central hub for athletes, with the military town being named as a satellite partner.

Brig Neil Baverstock, commander of 145 (South) Brigade, said: "As a partnership the Army, Rushmoor Borough Council and Aspire Defence are committed to supporting Team GB and the BOA.

"We are happy to make available our facilities, as required by the BOA or sport governing bodies as part of the overall strategy for the Games.

"We are pleased that the potential of Aldershot has been recognised."



Rapid reaction: Pte Max Weedon (165 Port Regt, RLC, left) takes evasive action in the epee event

Masters at arms

Report: Richard Long

Picture: Graeme Main

FENCING is a sport that is very much on the front foot within the ranks of the Army.

With three competitors earmarked for this year's Commonwealth Fencing Championships and a further two included in the Olympic Pathway Scheme it is easy to see why it is moving in the right direction.

This year's Army championships provided further evidence of the sport's growing success as more than 50 personnel went head-to-head in the week-long competition at Aldershot.

Capt Jamie Metcalfe (1 Yorks), the men's team captain, told *SoldierSport* around 20 newcomers took part in the tournament, a number that points to a bright future for the discipline.

"We are trying to promote fencing and make it more welcoming. The committee is now a lot younger than before and people feel more comfortable," he said.

"It used to be an officers' sport but now we have a lot more junior soldiers coming along and getting involved.

"You do not have to be a conventional sportsman. Athletic

stamina is not important and you can pick up the basics very quickly."

Metcalfe eased his way to a fifth successive sabre title while LBdr Lee Spiers (RA) excelled in the epee.

As members of the Olympic Pathway squad, the skilled duo hope to push for a place at the London Games in 2012.

Capt Naomi Lee (REME), Capt Jenni Goodman (RADC) and Capt Navine Rahman (Int Corps) are also set for international action at the Commonwealths later this year.

Col Niall Campbell (late RHF), chairman of Army Fencing, has been delighted by the progress being made.

"When I started we set out a plan to get a certain amount of fencers within the top 100 nationally," he said.

"We also wanted to win two major competitions a year and we have achieved that.

"A lot of minor sports struggle to maintain interest but our numbers are up on last year. I think that is fantastic."

After a hectic week Pte Paul Heslop (Int Corps) triumphed in the men's foil while in the women's competition there were wins for Lt Hannah Adams (REME) in the sabre; Cpl Emma Sandercock (QARANC) in the foil; and for Goodman in the epee. ■

Ring warriors

Report: Richard Long
Picture: Graeme Main

FIGHTERS from 3rd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment were in devastating form as they recorded a stunning 6-3 victory in the Army Inter-Unit boxing final.

The Colchester-based soldiers powered their way to wins in four consecutive bouts during the second period to break the dogged resistance of 2nd Battalion, The Royal Anglian Regiment and retain the trophy, their fifth title in seven years.

Pte Earl Sears gave the Poachers an early lead, recording a 13-6 win in an explosive opening bantamweight clash with Pte Adam Martin.

But 3 Para soon restored parity courtesy of featherweight Pte Luke Brewer (pictured), who stormed to a 10-0 victory over Pte Jonathan Tanner, before Pte Anthony Stanley put them ahead with a narrow 7-4 triumph against Pte Daniel Brewer.

Light-welterweight Pte Cory Dickson ensured honours remained even at the halfway stage as he completed a 6-2 win in a close fight with the unlucky Pte Joel Mitten.

However, 3 Para started the second period in determined mood and Pte Jamie Ainsworth and Pte Thomas Barry put them firmly on the front foot with back-to-back victories to stun their opponents.

The highlight of the evening came from the hard-hitting Pte Jack Marshman, who produced a devastating display of power in his clash with Pte Kirk Morgan.

The light-heavyweight landed a barrage of blows on his rival before the referee stopped the contest in the second round.

Cruiserweight Dean Banawich extended 3 Para's advantage before Cpl Derwin Isaacs delivered a stunning first round knockout in his heavyweight clash with Pte Anthony Flynn to ensure the night ended on a high for the defeated Poachers.

Maj Matt Cansdale, the officer in charge of the 3 Para boxing team, was thrilled to retain the title in what proved to be a bruising encounter with their Germany-based opponents.

"The 2 R Anglian team was very fit and very determined but on the day we managed to overcome them," he said at the end of an exhausting evening.

"There was a vociferous crowd on both sides and it really made the occasion as the atmosphere was electric. It was fantastic.

"By winning two bouts before the break we were still confident as we had been 3-1 down in the semi-final and came back to win.

"To use a cricketing metaphor we know we have a strong tail.

"Our victory means we've now won the Army championships five times this decade, which is every time we've entered the event, and we are very proud of that record." ■



SPORT SHORTS

BOXING pundit and journalist Steve Bunce examines the murky world of deals, fights and fighters in his debut novel, *The Fixer*.

Set during the Ricky Hatton vs Floyd Mayweather fight in Las Vegas the story revolves around Ray Lester, a fixer in the boxing business whose life is turned upside down when a girl knocks on his door asking for help.

After agreeing to assist in the search for her father Lester soon becomes the target for some dangerous villains as they join him in the hunt for the missing man.

This fast-paced thriller takes the reader beyond the glitz, glamour and glory of the fight game as the unwitting hero finds himself scouring the streets of London and Blackpool for his target, the girl and six million dollars.

SoldierSport has teamed up with Mainstream Publishing to offer two lucky readers the chance to win a copy of the book.

To enter, tell us the name of the lead character in *The Fixer*. Answers on a postcard to the usual address or by email (comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk) to reach us by May 28.



ARMY fighters continued their fine form in this year's Amateur Boxing Association championships by securing four wins at the tournament's quarter-final stage.

Team captain Spr Adam Whitfield (RE) led the charge with a convincing 13-1 victory over Western Counties' boxer Bradley Watson.

Cpl James Allen (REME) booked his semi-final place by defeating London fighter Victor Jennings 7-2 while Great Britain international LCpl Martin Stead (RLC) secured a confident 5-0 win against Marlon Mellish.

Rfn Emmanuel Izonritei (Rifles) ensured further success for the Service by winning his heavyweight clash with London's Wadi Camacho.

The semi-finals will be held on May 2 ahead of the tournament final on Friday, May 14.

THE Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers are appealing for players to take part in their 2010 corps' tenpin bowling championships.

Past and present bowlers are welcome to compete at the event on September 26, as are spouses, partners and eligible children.

Entry forms for the competition are now available from Maj (Retd) Dr Phil Stout on 01276 514540 or by email at phil.stout@dft.gsi.gov.uk

final word



We asked soldiers from 104 Force Support Battalion, REME about their experiences on Op Herrick 11 and the varied roles they performed

INTERVIEWS: RICHARD LONG
PICTURES: STEVE DOCK



Cpl Francis Morrison (REME)

As a metalsmith I found it to be very busy. I was involved in the manufacturing of mine roller brackets for Mastiffs. It was a difficult task but with the skills we had it worked quite well. I was also responsible for manufacturing crosses for the repatriations. It was emotional work and you wanted to do your best so the families were happy with them.



W02 (BSM) Sandy Hines (REME)

Everything that moves in theatre, we fix it – from vehicles to weapons systems and cameras. It was our job to give equipment support and we also formed the recovery section. It was a tough operational tour for the guys and they put in a lot of hard graft. We had a few sleepless nights and we were supporting Op Moshtarak, so it was very busy.



Sgt Scott Wallace (REME)

I was attached to D Sqn, 1 RTR and was working on the Vikings. We deployed on various operations, providing depth protection and disruption ops, keeping the insurgents away from lines of communication. It was my first deployment to Afghanistan and I was only in camp for three weeks. The rest of my time was spent out on the ground so the tour went quickly.



Cpl Shelly Dixon (REME)

The vast part of my tour was spent on inspections and checking the new kit. A lot of my time was focused on JCBs so I got to know them quite well. I also helped out with the Jackal rehabilitation, which was a lot different to the inspection work. The running of a rehabilitation line was something I had not done before so it was a good challenge for me.



LCpl Will Stokes (REME)

I was a vehicle mechanic in the Mastiff fitter section. It was one of the busiest sections out there as we were working on vehicles that were damaged by IED blasts. It was my first tour and it was hard work but the time went so quickly as we were always busy. I had never worked on Mastiffs before and I now have a good idea of how the vehicle operates so I learned a lot.



Cpl Max Payne (REME)

I was permanently stationed at Forward Operating Base Price looking after the intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition and reconnaissance kit. I also went out on foot patrols and on convoys where I was providing top cover. We clocked up so many miles up and down the area of operations. It was a hectic tour but I loved every minute of it.



Sgt Tom Basford (REME)

This was my first tour of Afghanistan and I was a technician responsible for the camera systems at forward operating and patrol bases. It was an important role as these cameras are the main source of surveillance and they save lives. Out of the six months we were away I spent two months on the ground travelling around, which included patrols with the Infantry.



Sgt Steve Parish (REME)

I was working with the combat logistic patrols. We travelled all over Helmand province and it was our job to bring back vehicles. There were plenty of things to keep us occupied and it was definitely a serious learning curve in terms of my trade. I also got to work with the new recovery vehicles being used on the ground, which was very good from my point of view.



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