

# SODIUM

# MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH ARMY

# ELECTRONIC EVOLUTION

# TROOPS IMMERSED IN NEW TECHNOLOGY

# GAMING GLORY

# VIRTUAL BATTLEFIELD BOOSTS OP HERRICK



MARCH 2012

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# SOLDIER

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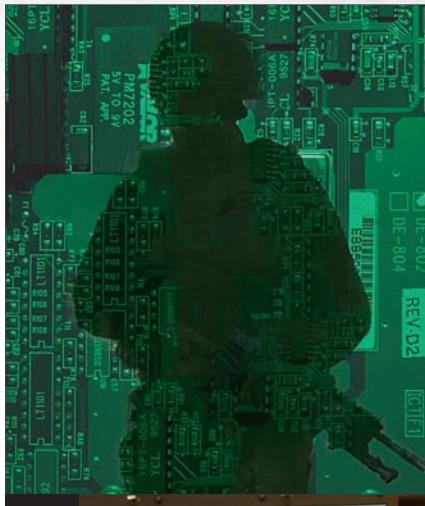
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**Cover picture (left):** Continued advancements in defence science and technology will see soldiers increasingly interact with cutting-edge systems (pages 7, 28-30, 33, 35-37 and 38-39)  
Picture: Chris Sell

**Background image:** The King's Troop, Royal Horse Artillery perform the royal salute to mark the accession of the Queen and formal start of the Diamond Jubilee year (page 44-45)  
Picture: Steve Dock

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Est 1945 – incorporating the  
Territorial Army Magazine

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ARMY



**SOLDIER** is published by the Ministry of Defence and printed by Wyndeham (Roche) Ltd. Print contract managed by Corporate Document Services (CDS).

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Views expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the British Army or the Ministry of Defence.



"I'll wager it's young Perkins again... a promising Army scholar with an adventurous and inventive scientific bent... read something encouraging in this month's *Soldier*."

● Top military technology protected – page 7

## Taming technological advances

**G**ADGETS, gizmos and all things electronic were on our minds as the *Soldier* team put together this month's edition of the British Army magazine.

With the government's recent announcement that cutting-edge military equipment will be significantly developed for future generations (page 7) and publication of a fascinating study into the potential for brainpower alone to control weapons (page 33), the years to come suddenly seem very intriguing.

Members of The Light Dragoons who have benefitted from the evolving Joint Combat Operations Virtual Environment simulation software ahead of Op Herrick 16 (pages 38-39) are unlikely to need enlightening on the potential for technology to bring crucial assistance to soldiers on and off the battlefield (page 98).

The scope for gadgets to boost troops more personally as we move further into the 21st century is also palpable in a tour of the six-month-old personnel recovery and assessment centre Tedworth House (pages 28-30), where full use is made of the latest IT programmes and gym technology to improve soldiers' lives.

A new start is similarly on the horizon for Cpl Andrew Garthwaite (QRL), who has become the first ever military amputee to receive a prosthetic arm with gadgetry that will allow him to control it using his brain (page 9).

While those across the ranks begin to excitedly about soldiering's seemingly sci-fi future, those of 14 Signal Regiment engaged in electronic warfare (pages 35-37) remind us how this sort of combat brings significant dangers as well as opportunities.

This is acknowledged by the MoD in the white paper *National Security Through Technology*, which notes that "an ever increasing pace of technological change" means the already varied

threats faced by Armed Forces personnel are diversifying all the time.

Exciting innovation is not just the sole domain of multi-million pound contraptions either.

On a recent visit to the Dare to Live programme (pages 46-47), course leaders demonstrated how signals between horses and humans can relieve the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder and other illness in Servicemen and women.

And shock-absorbing material D30 may have been costly to develop, but its results are proving affordable to sports enthusiasts across the world (pages 84-85).

Of course, it can sometimes be difficult to get excited about the long-term future when many troops' minds are still firmly focused on whether they will have a job in months to come.

**'Exciting innovation is not the sole domain of multi-million pound contraptions'**

In this issue, Defence Secretary Philip Hammond acknowledges the difficulty faced by personnel and the select committee offers its perspective on the changes (page 25).

What exact stage in its technological evolution the British Army will have reached by 2020 remains a mystery to many of us.

But one guarantee does appear to be that Regular and Reserve forces will be more integrated than ever, as outlined by Brig Sam Evans in an interview on page 19.

"There are certain skill sets which the Service would like which are held uniquely in the civilian world," he explained.

Personnel on the rough end of changes to the British Army undoubtedly feel that we are in a continuing period of decline but this issue shows how our future – and hence war-winning advantage on the battlefield – has in fact never been more promising.

Enjoy the issue. – Sarah Goldthorpe, Editor ■

# THE TEAM BEHIND THE TEAM



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# THE **informer...**

BRITISH TROOPS' GLOBAL INTELLIGENCE ASSET

news@soldiermagazine.co.uk



Picture: Graeme Main

**Forward thinking:** The MoD says cutting-edge kit, such as the Future Infantry Soldier Technology night-vision system above, is key to defending the UK

## Top military technology protected

THE government's budget for defence science and technology has been safeguarded to ensure troops maintain their battle-winning edge, the MoD has announced.

In a new white paper, *National Security Through Technology*, the department reveals that it intends to keep investing 1.2 per cent of its total annual budget on next-generation military techniques and equipment.

The document explains how the UK will continue to provide the best kit for Armed Forces and security services personnel while achieving value for money for taxpayers.

Setting out the case for sustained investment, the paper states: "Technology underpins most equipment and support arrangements.

"Its global availability combined with an ever-increasing pace of technological change means that, in delivering the UK's defence and security, we face an increasingly capable and diverse range of threats.

"These are likely to include not only sophisticated military weapons systems, but greater innovative and

ingenious application of readily available civil technologies."

The MoD describes principles that will underpin its relationship with industry as the government invests more than £150 billion in equipment over the next decade.

Minister for Defence Equipment Support and Technology, Peter Luff, said: "Our Armed Forces must continue to have innovative, cutting-edge kit to give them a battle-winning edge, so we will support the development of defence technology directly and protect the amount we spend.

"We had to take tough decisions to tackle the £38 billion black hole this government inherited, but we are now close to achieving a sustainable and balanced budget for the first time in several decades.

"This will mean we can start ordering new equipment for the Armed Forces with confidence."

The white paper was developed jointly by the MoD and Home Office after wider consultation.

It includes plans to:

- protect the essential science and

technology budget

- help all UK-based suppliers to obtain export orders and promote their products abroad

- encourage small and medium enterprises, making it easier for them to compete for government tenders and helping them to develop new products.

Mr Luff commented: "We will strongly support responsible exports, increasing the market opportunities for all defence and security companies and encouraging them to invest in the UK.

"If we can save money and get the capability now rather than later, our budgets will go further and the country will be better defended."

The spending plan, along with the MoD's equipment proposal for the next decade which is due to be published later this year, sets out in detail the direction military kit will take in future.

It explains how international acquisition programmes will be set up, reflecting the government's preference for bilateral work wherever possible.

The paper also examines prospective science capabilities and how technological skills will be developed.

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**Fit to fight:** Sentry LCpl Denis Larubi (2 Mercian)

## Double escape

THE Army's array of protective kit and equipment has saved a Serviceman from serious injury twice in as many days.

LCpl Denis Larubi of 2nd Battalion, The Mercian Regiment was shot at by insurgent fighters while on sentry duty at Checkpoint Langar in the Nahr-e Saraj district of southern Afghanistan.

The first bullet struck ballistic glass in the guard tower in front of his face but the round was unable to penetrate the toughened window.

The next day he was shot at again but the missile ricocheted off his weapon and hit the shoulder of his body armour.

“I saw a splash of fluid and thought it was blood but we found the bullet had pierced my drink container,” the relieved soldier explained.

“I could not have asked for more when it came to the support I received from the rest of the team, and thank God for the decent equipment.”

Platoon commander Capt Andy Bell added: “This was definitely a close shave but Larubi dealt with it in his usual laid-back style.”

## NEWS IN BRIEF...

### APP AID TO OFFICERS

■ A NEW smartphone application has been developed to improve the way officers apply the combat estimate process.

Produced by the Army's Directorate of Training, the “Seven Questions aide memoire” is being trialled by those on the captains' warfare course and troops from 3 (UK) Division.

Lt Gen Paul Newton, former commander of Force Development and Training, said: “This is another good example of the way the Army is modernising its training and education.

“Using the app on career courses,

# Mind control marvel

A BRITISH Serviceman who lost his right arm when he was hit by a rocket-propelled grenade has undergone revolutionary surgery to enable him to control his prosthetic limb using his brain.

Cpl Andrew Garthwaite (QRL) was injured in Afghanistan in September 2010 in an attack that left one of his comrades dead.

But now the 24-year-old has become the first UK patient to receive Targeted Muscle Reinnervation (TMR) surgery at a hospital in Vienna.

The operation to rewire his nervous system is part of a process that will see him controlling his new arm via the power of his mind.

Prior to the procedure, Cpl Garthwaite had to learn how to carry out everyday tasks with one arm, before being fitted with a high-tech bionic limb that allowed him to do basic jobs.

A technician then designed a prosthetic, which requires the soldier to flex his back or pectoral muscles to achieve a single, robotic movement.

After successful progress, he was deemed eligible for the remarkable TMR surgery.

Experts at the hospital are working closely with medical technology company Otto Bock to create one of the most intelligent bionic systems in the world.

In an operation lasting six hours, surgeon Prof Oskar Aszmann and his team worked to discover which of the mass of tiny nerves

from his shoulder joint operated his arm and hand.

Once they isolated the specific nerves, they rewired them into his chest.

Speaking to the BBC after the procedure, Prof Aszmann said: “It went extremely well. It was a surprise to me because he had a shrapnel injury, there was a rocket wound, so normally you have to expect a lot of scar tissue, but in this instance that was not the case.

“It was a difficult surgery, but we could identify all the nerves that we wanted to and transfer them to the appropriate targets.”

According to Prof Aszmann's plan, Cpl Garthwaite's nerves will grow in the next few months and his brain will work out how to control them.

It is hoped the soldier will soon be able to control his bionic limb in such a way that it will become intuitive.

He will be able to think about several moves and his arm and hand will react in a normal fashion.

Prof Aszmann said: “For the first four to five months he will be very numb and not feel anything.

“But after around six months, he will feel his own index finger and thumb in his shoulder.”

Before travelling to Austria, Cpl Garthwaite described his emotions about his injury to the news organisation.

“I still have my down days and I have flashbacks and memories that will never leave me, but you just learn to crack on,” he explained.

“But this is keeping my mind occupied. I'm now looking to the future and thinking about how much this surgery is going to benefit me.”



Picture: Shields Gazette/ North East Press

### REJOIN REVAMP

■ SERVING and recently discharged Regular personnel can apply to join the Territorial Army more simply and quickly.

Improvements to the process include a new form to facilitate an early offer of Reservist service while still employed as a full-timer.

Changes have also been made to medical selection criteria.

● For more information read DIN number 2012DIN01-018, which is available on [www.armynet.mod.uk](http://www.armynet.mod.uk)





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**“THERE ARE NO DISTRACTIONS; THEY GET UP, HAVE BREAKFAST AND AN HOUR LATER THEY ARE OUT TRAINING ON THEIR BIKES”**

**- SSGT MARTIN SMITH SETS THE BAR FOR CYCLING CAMP, PAGE 90**



Picture: Sgt Ross Tilly, RAF

**Top transporter:** Deployed troops will benefit from a new £200 million aircraft this July, which will allow critical deliveries to be made to Helmand province

## Globemaster to boost battlefield deliveries

**T**HE MoD will spend £200 million on another C-17 Globemaster aircraft, it has announced.

The new addition, which is being built by Boeing in America, will help to transport Service personnel from the UK to front-line operations and is expected to enter service in July.

With the ability to fly directly from the UK to Helmand province, the C-17 will be based at RAF Brize Norton and

operated by 99 Squadron. It takes the unit's total fleet to eight.

Defence Secretary Philip Hammond said: "The C-17 has previously shown its worth in Afghanistan ensuring that our troops are given the fastest, most efficient passage home."

"It is a vastly impressive aircraft that can carry three Apaches or take a whole Chinook helicopter."

"This latest addition will further

strengthen the vital air bridge between Britain and Helmand province, ensuring that critical deliveries are made to the front line."

As well as transporting troops and equipment, C-17s can be quickly converted to offer on-board intensive care provision.

One aircraft is on standby 24-hours-a-day to fly seriously injured personnel back to the UK at short notice.

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### TRANSFER OPPORTUNITY

■ THE Intelligence Corps is seeking personnel between the ranks of private and sergeant for transfer to the trade of military intelligence operator.

The opportunity is open to all Regular and Reserve soldiers – particularly those who have completed courses at the Defence Intelligence and Security Centre in Chicksands or who have an aptitude for foreign languages.

In exceptional cases colour sergeants and staff sergeants will be considered.

For more information visit [www.army.mod.uk/intelligence](http://www.army.mod.uk/intelligence) or contact the corps' recruitment and selection team on telephone 01462 752339 or military 94649 2339.



## Fierce firefight defeats struggling enemy

BRITISH troops have taken the fight to insurgents during high-tempo operations in Taliban territory.

Working alongside members of the Afghan National Police, soldiers from 1st Battalion, The Yorkshire Regiment deployed for more than five hours in the Green Zone with an Apache gunship overhead.

Insurgents retreated in the face of the patrol, allowing Afghan police to search several compounds of interest.

But they later launched an attack using machine guns and rocket-propelled grenades.

After a fierce firefight, one of the insurgents was killed and the other fled.

"This was a great example of how when working with our Afghan National Security Force partners we can out-think, out-maneuvre and ultimately defeat an insurgency

that is struggling to match us," explained patrol commander Lt Steve White (pictured below).

"The effect the Afghan police have had in our area of operations has been dramatic. They have helped to turn their villages from areas littered with improvised explosive devices into places that can be patrolled relatively risk-free."

Cpl Ryan Kirkbright said: "It was good to get to such close quarters with the enemy."





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# Afghan-led operation takes on the Taliban

OME 1,000 British and Afghan soldiers have conducted a major operation to increase security surrounding a town in Helmand.

UK troops joined forces with around 700 local police and military personnel to clear insurgents from the Nahr-e Saraj district.

Operation Rozi Roshan – or “Bright Day” – was planned by Afghan National Army (ANA) staff and led by Brig Gen Sherin Shah, commander of the 3rd Brigade, 215 Corps.

It saw sappers from 35 and 38 Engineer Regiments advise locals as they built six new checkpoints to protect a transit route between Gereshk and the town of Rahim Kalay.

Personnel from 2nd Battalion, The Rifles acted as mentors for the mission and joined their counterparts on the ground along with troops from 1st Battalion, The Yorkshire Regiment, The Queen’s Royal Hussars, the Royal



**Left:** Afghan National Army members were closely advised by British troops during the mission



Picture: Sgt Mark Nasbil, RLC

**Joint success:** British and Afghan soldiers worked together during the planning of Operation Rozi Roshan

Engineers and the Danish Army.

Brig Patrick Sanders, commander of 20th Armoured Brigade and Task Force Helmand, commented: “This was the second major operation led by Afghan forces in the space of a month and follows the success of Operation Zamestaani Peerozi.

“Local forces are applying significant pressure to the insurgents throughout the winter.

“The checkpoints built will increase security in the local area and pave the way for Afghan forces to take full responsibility for security in the future.”

Personnel on the ground were boosted by counter-IED teams, military search dogs and intelligence and

surveillance capabilities.

Capt Edward Willing (2 Rifles) added: “This mission was well planned and executed and has expanded the security buffer north of Gereshk.

“It has yet again shown the ANA’s ability to conduct large and complex independent operations along with the Afghan National Police, with only limited support from the International Security Assistance Force.”

Nahr-e Saraj is one of the three districts in Helmand where British troops are deployed and the last in which Task Force Helmand retains the lead for security.

Rozi Roshan, the third major mission there in as many months, is part of the larger Operation Shamali Kamarband.

## Soldiers walk miles in blind troops' boots

MEMBERS of 1st Battalion, The Royal Welsh drew crowds in North Wales when they trekked 50 miles wearing blindfolds.

Thirty personnel from the unit marched from their home barracks in Chester to Llandudno to raise awareness of the difficulties faced by those who lose their sight.

They collected more than £1,000 in public donations along the way which will go to Blind Veterans UK – formerly known as St Dunstan’s.

Organiser Capt Stephen Healey (R Welsh) said: “The charity has given so much help and support to our soldiers over the last few years that we wanted to do our bit and give something back.”

Andrew Jones, director of fund-raising and communications at the organisation, explained the recent

name change.

“We have rebranded for two reasons,” he said. “Firstly, we need more people to know about the life-changing services we provide. Secondly, if we are going to meet our commitment to providing life-long assistance to all blind veterans in the UK we need to attract fresh sources of income.”

The walk ended with a visit to the charity’s new state-of-the-art rehabilitation centre, which boasts en-suite bedrooms, lounges and a dedicated nursing facility.

● Royal Welsh raring to go – page 17





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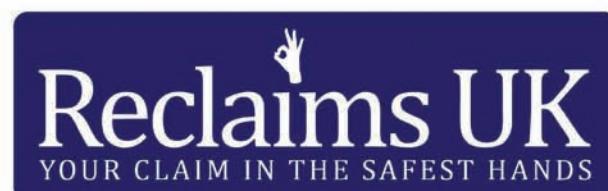
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“IT WAS MY FIRST TIME BOXING AT 60KG AND I FELT A LOT FASTER ON MY FEET AND SHARPER WITH MY PUNCHES”

— LCPL ALANNA MURPHY REFLECTS ON RING SUCCESS, PAGE 93



Picture: Lt Harry Mossop, QRH

**Showdown:** British troops run under fire during the intense two-day conflict in Pupalzay, Lashkar Gah

## Lion's Rage sparks fierce battle

**A**FEROIOUS fight between Taliban members and British and Afghan forces has taken place in Helmand province.

Op Zamary Takhta – or “Lion’s Rage” – saw Royal Engineers bomb disposal personnel tasked with removing deadly improvised explosive devices from the village of Pupalzay in Lashkar Gah.

Troops from The Queen’s Royal Hussars, 1st Battalion, The Princess of Wales’s Royal Regiment and the Afghan Uniform Police were flown into the region by helicopter to protect their military colleagues.

But soon after the mission began, soldiers were met with strong resistance and a violent two-day battle ensued.

“Pretty quickly it became evident that the insurgents were going to put up a determined fight,” Cpl Gavin Roberts (QRH) recalled.

“Following our dawn insertion into the village, the women and children there began to flee so the place was left eerily quiet and we sensed that we were

being watched.”

Tpr Daniel Ghundoo (QRH) added: “The ground shook as the engineers blew bomb after bomb.

“Suddenly a burst of automatic gunfire whined and cracked overhead, kicking up the dust and tearing the bark off trees. Then the battle began.”

The contact continued until nightfall, when the soldiers withdrew under cover of darkness and a flaming smoke screen was laid down by artillery guns.

But fighting intensified the next day.

British personnel and their Afghan partners finally extracted from the area along a deep irrigation ditch, waist-deep in dirty water.

Covering fire was provided by snipers and a Jackal armoured vehicle equipped with a .50-calibre heavy machine gun.

Capt Jerry Kearse (QRH) said the mission had been a success.

“We wanted to strike at the heart of the insurgency [in this region] and this operation certainly gave them a bloody nose,” he commented.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### REWARD SCHEME STARTS

■ SERVING personnel are being offered discounts at a number of major high street stores under a new initiative called Rewards For Forces.

Hundreds of outlets are already on-board and soldiers can save up to £1,000 a year with deals not available to the general public.

The scheme is also open to veterans, Reserves, cadets, MoD civil servants, members of The Royal British Legion and Service widows or widowers.

For more information on the discounts available visit [www.rewardsforforces.co.uk](http://www.rewardsforforces.co.uk)

### ACCOMMODATION OVERHAUL

■ A NEW system for allocating Service Families Accommodation will be introduced later this year.

Existing application forms on the defence intranet will be improved to allow troops to obtain more information about available dwellings, including photographs and floor plans.

Eight housing information centres will also be replaced by one centralised service.

The changes will be introduced by the MoD this spring in a bid to make the process more efficient and transparent.

## GOOD DRILLS

### SCHOOL START-UP

BRITISH soldiers and their Afghan National Army partners have helped a learning institution open its doors for the first time in Helmand province. Teachers at Khorgajat School in the Nahr-e Saraj district commenced lessons after 18 months of building came to an end. The project was coordinated by the British Military Stabilisation Support Team, a tri-Service collective that oversees reconstruction.

### LANGUAGE LESSONS

A RIFLES officer is helping a top Afghan soldier to learn English in Helmand province. Lt Roz Ashworth (2 Rifles) is assisting Brig Gen Sherin Shah, commander of the country’s 3/215 Brigade. “The general is very keen and picks it up quickly and he’s at the stage where he can easily hold conversations without an interpreter,” said Lt Ashworth.

### X-RATED RADIO TIMES

MAGAZINE staff were left red faced after accidentally publishing an image in which a member of the Royal Marines was exposing himself. The *Radio Times* let a publicity picture for the Channel Five documentary *Royal Marines: Mission Afghanistan* go to press uncensored. The publication later issued an apology for the oversight.



### DODGY DUNGEON

TWO aspiring officers at a military training centre in west Sweden were reprimanded after building a “horror dungeon” to frighten younger recruits, a Swedish news website reported. The cell was created using items including animal bones and faeces. “This was a totally short-sighted and foolish prank,” said Col Mikael Claesson, head of the Land Warfare Centre in Skovde. The pair had their pay docked as punishment.

## BAD DRILLS

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Picture: Col Paul Morrison, RLC

**Pashtun progression:** Fus Mike Harris attends to a casualty during the demanding exercise in Wales

## Royal Welsh raring to go

**M**ORE than 300 troops from 1st Battalion, The Royal Welsh have been put through their paces ahead of deployment to Afghanistan next month.

Exercise Pashtun Tempest saw the soldiers tested in a variety of battlefield scenarios on Castlemartin Range in the south Pembrokeshire countryside.

In sub-zero temperatures, troops were faced with some of the most demanding training situations found outside theatre.

One episode involved the extraction of casualties while trying to avoid enemy IEDs.

Realistic supporting elements also included the aid of an Apache helicopter.



Lt Col Steve Webb (pictured below), commanding officer of 1 R Welsh, said: “The soldiers are equipped with the skills they need to prepare them for the forthcoming tour and I’m very pleased with the way the serial has gone.

“We’ve already undergone individual training and our time here has further focused teamwork in platoons.

“Afghanistan is still a dangerous place to be and when we deploy we need to recognise that.”

A final battlegroup exercise will follow on Salisbury Plain before the unit departs for Op Herrick 16 as part of 12th Mechanized Brigade next month.

Lt Col Webb said the pace of the serials meant troops would arrive in theatre in top form.

## Underwater assurance for Service divers

A NEW test facility has been opened in Haslar to ensure Army diving equipment is fully functional and safe to use.

QinetiQ is operating the centre in support of the Ministry of Defence and will provide a rigorous assessment of all life support systems and decompression procedures.

The specialist kit has been moved from Alverstoke to the newly-refurbished site near Gosport, which includes some of the UK's leading hyperbaric testing chambers and tanks.

“QinetiQ will be involved in the proving of equipment to see how it performs and to determine if it is fit for purpose,” said Gavin Anthony, the firm's technical manager of maritime life support.

“We are here to protect people who will be

working in extreme environments.

“All of the Army's diving equipment comes through here. We have always had a close link but this site enhances the support we can give.

“Each time a new piece of kit comes in it will be tested by us.”

Included among the facilities at the centre is a life support systems laboratory that boasts a 1,000-metre depth capability, an experimental diving tank with acoustic measurements and a hydrostatic and



extreme temperature chamber that can assess performance in fresh and saltwater.

As well as being involved in the testing of equipment the centre will be on hand to provide rapid forensic investigations after serious incidents.

“We will look at the apparatus to see if it contributed to the problem,” Mr Anthony explained. “We can conduct forensic experiments to find the cause. If anything is discovered to be inappropriate the design can be looked at and changed.”

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### SKILLS FAIR FOR LEAVERS

■ AN EMPLOYMENT and training fair for Service leavers will take place this month.

Organised by SkillsActive, the free event will include the launch of a new programme designed to help troops find opportunities in industries such as sport, health and fitness, outdoors work and beauty.

It will be held at Surrey Sports Park in Guildford on March 8.

For more information visit [www.skillsactive.com/changegeear](http://www.skillsactive.com/changegeear)

### RIDE OF RESPECT

■ A COMMEMORATIVE bike ride is to be held for the second time in memory of Pte Martin Bell (Para), who died in Helmand province last year.

Among those taking part in the event will be members of 2nd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment and the Serviceman's friends. The group will ride 220 miles from Bradford to Colchester, collecting sponsorship along the way for the Afghanistan Trust.



For more information or to get involved visit [www.therideofrespect.org](http://www.therideofrespect.org)

### CHARITY DEMAND SOARS

■ AN ORGANISATION that helps Army personnel return to civilian life has reported a significant surge in popularity.

Since being featured in *Soldier* last year, Remount has experienced a growing number of visits to its website and increased demand for residential courses.

For information about the charity visit [www.remount.net](http://www.remount.net) or call 01451 850341.

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# Surge will signal end of Service separation

**A** “GENERATIONAL moment” is nearing for the Territorial Army, one of its top officers has said.

With plans under way to boost Reservist numbers to 30,000 by 2018, the Assistant Chief of Staff (Reserves), Brig Sam Evans, revealed that the British Army will break down many existing divides between full- and part-time personnel.

“We are looking to create an integrated force and we are investing £1.2 billion over the next ten years in order to grow it,” he told *Soldier*.

“This is the first time since the TA was constituted in 1908 that the Army has designed its structure with the Reserves as part of its core – it is absolutely a generational moment.”

The significant surge in part-time troops, planned under the Future Reserves 2020 (FR20) study, will increase current numbers by around 50 per cent.

Investment needed to bring about the change is due to commence this April, including a recruitment drive to attract the right candidates to the Service.

“We absolutely need to increase the flow into the organisation,” explained Brig Evans.

“Recruiting, training and retaining in order to regenerate the Reserves is what FR20 is all about.”

The officer added: “If you are a soldier in the TA you will understand what you are being used for and when you will be deployed.”

“You will receive appropriate levels of training that will allow you to fulfil roles and be equipped to deliver.”

While some have questioned the



Picture: Alison Basteville, RIC

**Combined in combat:** Reservists and Regulars will work together more closely on future operations

vision of a British Army made up of extra Reservists, Brig Evans said it is more cost-effective and beneficial to have an intelligent balance of part-time and full-time Servicemen and women based on their abilities.

“There are certain skill sets which the Service would like that are held uniquely in the civilian world,” he said.

“And it is more efficient to bring those people into the military while they are still in their trade.”

Senior officers say the chance of a stimulating Service career alongside civilian life will incentivise individuals of

the highest calibre to sign up.

“It is an offer of adventurous, exciting training, the opportunity to deploy overseas on a predictable basis and the development of individual leadership and professional skills,” the senior Serviceman added.

Since 2003 the number of Reservists to deploy on operations has reached 18,000 – including 22 fatalities.

“This won’t be about a numerical balance of Reserves and Regulars,” insisted the brigadier. “It will absolutely be an integrated force and will still have the full spectrum of capabilities.”

## Q&A: READERS QUIZ BRIG SAM EVANS ON THE FUTURE OF RESERVES

### ● Will the TA be well enough equipped to enter combat?

When a Reservist deploys he or she deploys with exactly the same equipment as a Regular soldier and the same level of training, which allows them to be safe in an operational environment.

### ● Why is the retirement age for Reservists lower than the usual retirement age?

This is not correct. There is a need for volunteers with experience. The retirement age is there because of a requirement for physical robustness but each case is considered on its merits.

### ● What does the future hold for TA musicians and bands? Will they continue to support the Corps of Army Music?

Military music must carry on whether it is Regular or TA – it is important for morale and community engagement. We are currently undertaking a study to look at how military music will be delivered, but bands will continue.



## NEWS IN BRIEF

### OLYMPIC DUTY CALL-OUT

■ WILLING Reservists have been identified for mobilised service as part of the MoD’s contribution to Olympic security.

A system called “intelligent selection” has been used to highlight those with the skills to support the operation and call-out notices have been issued to volunteers and their employers giving them 60 days’ notice of the requirement for their work. The department will contribute up to 13,500 military personnel at the busiest part of this year’s Games, with around 2,100 coming from Reservist units.

### SERVICE UPDATES

■ UP-TO-DATE information about continuing changes to the Territorial Army is available by visiting the Territorial and Reserves section of [www.army.mod.uk](http://www.army.mod.uk) or ArmyNet.

The Army intranet’s “transformation issues” link also directs web users to further updates.

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Up to 15 positions are expected to be offered on a temporary basis to run from 18th June to 14th September 2012.

For further details, the job description and to apply for this vacancy, please visit our new recruitment jobs pages at <https://jobs.london-fire.gov.uk>. To view the vacancy click on the "view all jobs" tab. If you wish to apply for the vacancy you will need to register with the website first.

**Closing date: Friday 16 March 2012 at 1200hrs (midday)**



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# Shura reveals insurgent arms cache

**B**RITISH personnel and their Afghan counterparts discovered two Taliban weapons caches thanks to information received at an impromptu shura.

Troops from C Company, 2nd Battalion, The Rifles were engaged in a routine patrol in Helmand province when they were approached by a resident who invited them to a meeting.

The man described how he and his family had been suffering intimidation by insurgents.

After being reassured that Afghan National Army and International Security Assistance Force (Isaf) troops would protect him, he revealed where enemy bomb-making equipment and ammunition was being stored.

The joint force was shown an uninhabited compound with two separate stores inside. The first contained improvised explosive device components including pressure pads, battery packs and detonators.

A radio transmitter and further ammunition was found in the second store, all of which was waterproofed.

Maj Gareth Davies, officer commanding C Company, said: "The finds, a result of local reporting, show the increased confidence of the



Picture: Graeme Main

**Community confidence:** By getting involved in local meetings, soldiers are gaining key information

community in the security provided by the Afghan National Security Forces and Isaf.

"This shows the true value of population-focused relationships and how the development of trust can save the lives of soldiers, partners and locals."

The success followed claims by a top US commander that the Taliban is being significantly weakened.

Maj Gen John Toolan, of the US Marine Corps, explained how "a lot of infighting" had developed among senior members of the group.

## Smoking warning to rouse ranks

ARMY units are being urged to support Military No Smoking Day this month as it emerges that the habit may be on the increase among troops.

The annual campaign has been taken over by the British Heart Foundation, which is working to encourage Armed Forces personnel to ditch cigarettes on March 14.

Lt Col Tony Rock, head of the Army's health promotion team, said: "We have the highest smoking prevalence amongst the Service population and the latest data produced in September shows the rate is 32 per cent compared with 22 per cent in the Royal Navy and 18 per cent in the Royal Air Force."

He added that medical statistics suggested the habit had increased in the past three years.

"We have concerns the smoking

prevalence in phase one and phase two training may be higher than the Service average," the officer explained.

The 2012 campaign slogan is "take the leap". Troops who wish to get on-board can contact their unit medical centre for one-to-one guidance or alternatively visit [www.nosmokingday.org.uk/military](http://www.nosmokingday.org.uk/military)

"We acknowledge that some use smoking to help reduce their stress levels," Lt Col Rock continued. "However, we are keen to ensure that soldiers fully understand the longer term effects and provide them with help and advice."

"Finding a theme that will attract Service smokers and get them to think about quitting the habit is challenging."

"The majority of smokers in the Army are young, predominantly male, basically fit and by virtue of their job, known risk-takers."

"As such, issues like cancer and heart disease do not feature on their radar."

Annie Owen, Armed Forces smoking cessation coordinator, commented: "It is a known fact that smoking affects both health and stamina."

"Our experience has been that military smokers often rise to the challenge and this day is the trigger to help them to stop."

"I hope that 2012 will be no different."

■ EVEN the equine enthusiasts among you may have struggled with the horsey theme of last month's spine lines competition.

(Jeremy) Irvine, (Emily) Watson, (Peter) Mullan and (Niels) Arestrup all starred in Steven Spielberg's recent film adaptation of the classic Michael Morpurgo story *War Horse*.

This month we are giving away two Maxpedition Jumbo Versipacks, courtesy of Heinnie Haynes kit suppliers ([www.heinnie.com](http://www.heinnie.com)).

These comfy and hard-wearing bags are perfect for those who want to access belongings on the move without breaking stride.

To be in with a chance of winning, tell us what links the words on the side of this issue.

Answers to the usual address or email [comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk](mailto:comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk) by March 30. Winners will be drawn at random and the usual rules apply.





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## IN MEMORIAM



**SIG IAN SARTORIUS-JONES (21)  
ROYAL SIGNALS  
KIA JANUARY 24 – AFGHANISTAN**

A KNOWLEDGEABLE, bright and dedicated signaller who accrued vast experience in his short Service career has died while on operations in Afghanistan.

Sig Ian Sartorius-Jones, of 20th Armoured Brigade HQ and Signal Squadron, passed away at Forward Operating Base Khar Nikah in the Nahr-e Saraj district of Helmand province.

The 21-year-old deployed as a rear link detachment operator, working initially with 3rd Battalion, The Mercian Regiment and latterly with 1st Battalion, The Yorkshire Regiment.

He joined the Army in 2007 and provided communications and mentoring to Iraqi forces as part of Op Telic 13. He also excelled on mission-specific training exercises in Germany,

Denmark and the UK.

"As a senior signaller he took his role of mentoring and developing those around him seriously, especially in the build-up to and deployment on operations," said Maj Stu Whittley, officer commanding 20th Armoured Brigade HQ and Signal Squadron.

"It is a mark of the man that he rarely took the credit for or acknowledged these actions – it was simply what he did."

Sig Sartorius-Jones was a talented footballer, passionate dance music fan and a former British national tae kwon do champion.

The Serviceman leaves behind his wife Kellyanne, son Dylan, parents Robert and Amanda and brother Alan.



**LCPL GAJBAHADUR GURUNG (26)  
THE ROYAL GURKHA RIFLES  
KIA JANUARY 27 – AFGHANISTAN**

A SOLDIER described by colleagues as "a true Gurkha in body and spirit" has been killed while on patrol in Afghanistan.

LCpl Gajbahadur Gurung of The Royal Gurkha Rifles was serving with 1st Battalion, The Yorkshire Regiment in the Khar Nikah region of Nahr-e Saraj when he was fatally wounded.

His company had been tasked with holding the contested and influential area when his patrol came under small-arms fire.

Born in Majithana in Nepal, LCpl Gurung was educated in Pokhara before being selected for the brigade.

As well as serving in Brunei and the UK, the 26-year-old completed three tours of Afghanistan during his military career.

His latest preparations for Op Herrick 15 also saw him undertake a Pashto language course to enable him to converse with locals.

Lt Col Dan Bradbury, commanding officer of 1st Battalion, The Yorkshire Regiment, said: "LCpl Gurung touched so many lives for the better; his peers in Delhi Company and all of us in the chain of command knew him as an intelligent, charismatic and inquisitive natural leader of men."

"He died as he lived, at the heart of the action, taking the fight to the enemy and resolute in the face of danger. A true Gurkha in body and spirit."

LCpl Gurung leaves behind his wife Manisha, father Gum Bahadur, mother Lekh Maya, brother Buddha and sister Junu.



**SAC RYAN TOMLIN (21)  
ROYAL AIR FORCE REGIMENT  
KIA FEBRUARY 13 – AFGHANISTAN**

AN AIRMAN described as a "shining star" has died after being struck by small-arms fire in Helmand province.

SAC Ryan Tomlin of 2 Squadron, Royal Air Force Regiment was on a patrol to interact with the Afghan population near Nad-e Ali district when he was fatally wounded by insurgents.

The 21-year-old joined the Armed Forces in October 2008 and completed his trainee gunners' course in April 2009 before moving on to the phase one field gunners' course.

He was selected to join his squadron in June 2009 before going on to complete his first tour of Afghanistan in 2010 as a specialist driver on a rifle flight, defending Kandahar Air Base.

The talented airman deployed on a second

tour with No 3 RAF Force Protection Wing at Camp Bastion in October 2011.

Commanding officer Wg Cdr Jason Sutton said: "SAC Tomlin was one of the finest men on my wing and his loss has come as a terrible blow to all of us, especially his comrades in his beloved 2 Squadron."

"Bright, gifted and an absolute master of his craft, he had the complete trust of those who had the privilege of serving alongside him."

"SAC Tomlin had the brightest future ahead and his loss has deprived the Royal Air Force Regiment of one of its very best."

The senior airman leaves behind his mother Diane, father Kevin and sister Michelle. Their statement said: "Ryan lived life to the full."



## Last First World War veteran dies in her sleep

THE LAST known surviving Service person from the First World War has died aged 110.

Florence Green (pictured left), a member of the Women's Royal Air Force who served as a mess steward at bases in Marham and Narborough, died in her sleep on February 4.

Born in London before moving to Norfolk, Mrs Green was 17 years old when she joined the WRAF in September 1918 – two months before the Armistice.

Mrs Green's youngest daughter, June Evetts, said: "She was very proud of what she did and we are too. Her death closes the book on the First World War as there are no veterans left now."

The world's last known combat veteran of the war, Briton Claude Choules, died at the same age in Australia in May 2011.

The last three Great War veterans living in the UK – Bill Stone, Henry Allingham and Harry Patch – all died during 2009.

The WRAF was disbanded in 1920.

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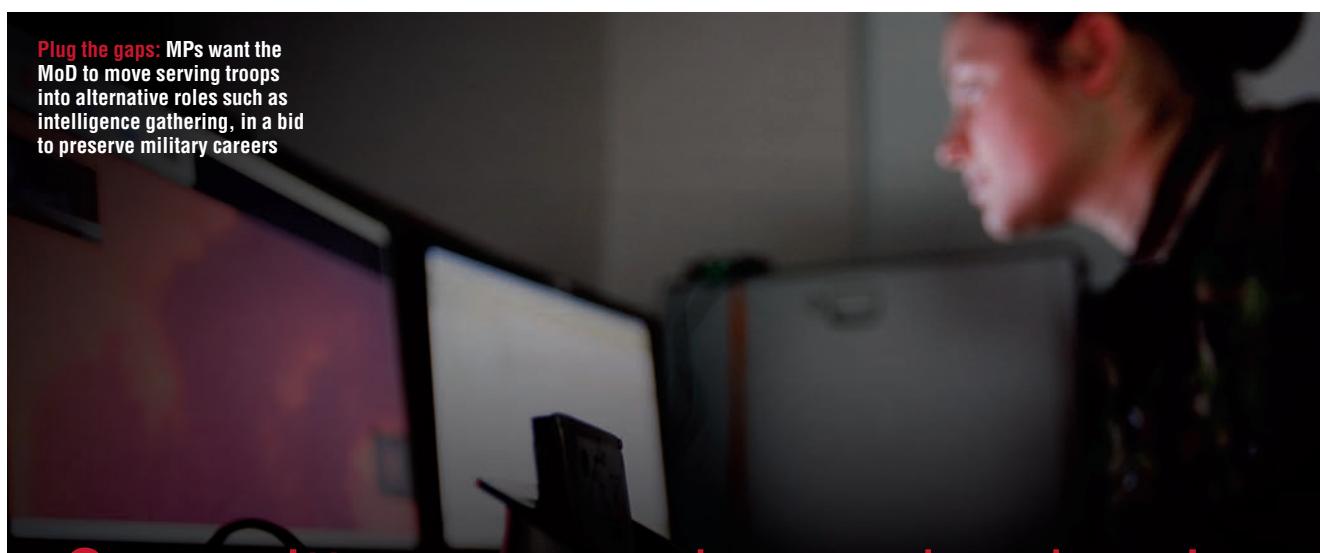
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**Plug the gaps:** MPs want the MoD to move serving troops into alternative roles such as intelligence gathering, in a bid to preserve military careers



## Committee reproaches redundancies

**C**OMPULSORY military job losses are unnecessary and grotesquely unjust, the House of Commons Defence Select Committee has said.

In a study into the Ministry of Defence Annual Report and Accounts 2010-11, the assembly of MPs states it is unfair that 40 per cent of planned redundancies will be forced upon personnel while reductions to civilians remain entirely voluntary.

Permanent Under Secretary Ursula Brennan had previously told the group – which scrutinises the work of the department – that

civilians are flexibly employable whereas the military are not.

But the group's members said this was contrary to their own experience of the breadth of skills and training demonstrated by troops on operations.

Chairman James Arbuthnot MP commented: “The stark and shocking differences between redundancies in the MoD require an exceptionally persuasive explanation, which [the committee] is yet to hear.

“Why cannot the department retrain Service personnel who face redundancy to fill those many trades

where there are shortages such as combat medical technicians or intelligence gatherers?”

The committee claimed that during 2010-11, the MoD did not comply with international financial reporting standards as laid down by the Treasury.

It also registered concern over the increasing level of theft and fraud in the department, which it said must be tackled with more vigour.

Mr Arbuthnot said: “The repeated qualification of the MoD's accounts reflects badly on its financial management. A clear plan is needed to address shortcomings.”

Picture: Steve Dolk

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### MINISTER EXPRESSES REGRET

DEFENCE Secretary Philip Hammond has spoken of his regret over ongoing redundancies in a video message to staff.

Reflecting on his first 100 days in the job, the politician also thanked military personnel for their continued commitment and hard work.

“I have seen first-hand, both at home and abroad, the dedication and professionalism with which you approach your duties,” he said. “So on behalf of the Government and my ministerial team, thank you.”

After success on overseas operations, Mr Hammond revealed that balancing the department's books and restructuring the Armed Forces were his top priorities.

“I know that all this change is unsettling and the uncertainty it brings can sap morale,” he conceded. “I regret in particular the need to make cuts in personnel – both military and civilian. And I want to do what has to be done quickly.”



### LEAGUE OF GENTLEMEN

	SWAG	FORCE FOR GOOD	QUIDS IN
1	£503,985	STAR SINGERS The Military Wives Choir, who topped the UK singles chart at Christmas, have boosted two Service charities through sales of their record <i>Wherever You Are</i>	The Royal British Legion and SSAFA Forces Help
2	£3,152	TOUGH TAB Members of 1 Military Intelligence Battalion trekked 96 miles around Imphal Barracks in York during a sponsored 24-hour tab. Each individual carried 15 kilograms in weight, including their rifles	Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham
3	£2,500	SAPPER SLOG Royal Engineers based in the Falkland Islands retraced the yomp made in 1982 from Port San Carlos to Stanley. SSgt Jonathan Law, SSgt Justin Fitzsimmons, SSgt Alex Roche and WO1 Jason Callaghan took on 75 miles with the same loads as the original soldiers in a training exercise they dubbed “sapper slog”	ABF The Soldiers' Charity
4	£1,700	MARATHON EFFORT Troops from Scottish Transport Regiment, The Royal Logistic Corps ran the equivalent of a marathon on the Forth Road Bridge to raise money for fellow Servicemen and women and veterans	ABF The Soldiers' Charity



## THE BIGGER PICTURE

SGT Jeremy Hammond keeps a look out as his colleagues from 1st Battalion, The Yorkshire Regiment enter Patrol Base Rahim in the Nahr-e Saraj district of Helmand province, Afghanistan. The job of B Company is to ensure the security of local people by conducting foot and vehicle patrols and British personnel are working closely with their partners in the Afghan National Security Forces. Picture: Sgt Wes Calder, RLC



# TAKING ON TECHNOLOGY



# KIT ADVANCES RECUPERATION OF TROOPS AT TEDWORTH HOUSE



Report: Sarah Goldthorpe

Pictures: Steve Dock

CUTTING-edge gadgetry has long been a preoccupation of British Army soldiers committed to an impressive performance on operations. But a personnel recovery and assessment centre is showing how technological advancements can also enhance troops' fortunes far away from the battlefield.

Tedworth House in Wiltshire has been open to Servicemen and women for six months and already its state-of-the-art surroundings have helped to change 150 young lives.

Speaking to *Soldier* on a recent visit to the Help for Heroes-funded facility, charity co-founder Bryn Parry explained how its success working with sick and injured personnel was in no small part down to the varied array of gizmos behind its doors.

"Most people that come here go 'wow' and all the time it is technology backing us up," he explained in an interview.

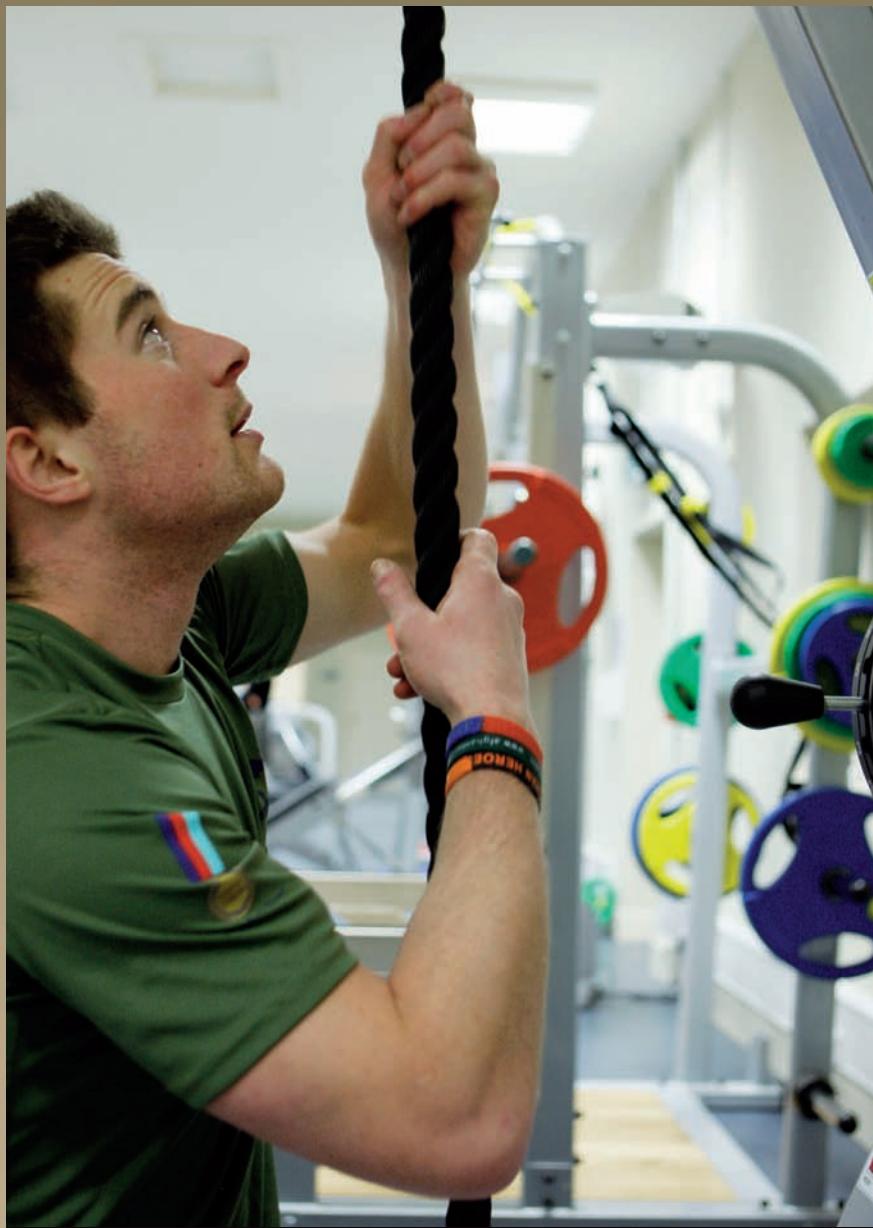
"We now have the most sophisticated structure in the area."

Inside the Tidworth-based listed building some 6,300 miles of IT cabling can be found.

Among the televisions, DVD players and music systems common to most residential centres, this extensive network also serves a computer suite (pictured), extensive Wi-Fi access, a gaming area and an array of fitness equipment adapted for use by those with various disabilities.

Later this year the £20 million facility will open one of the most sophisticated gym complexes in the UK – the Phoenix Centre. >>





Fighting fit: Ex-soldier Dan O'Callaghan regularly works out on the centre's specialist gym equipment

Kit there will include a £120,000 Skiplex indoor simulated ski slope, the second of its type in the country, and a SwimEx resistance pool.

Existing gear, such as the zero-gravity treadmill, will also be moved to the new room to improve residents' confidence in adapting to their injuries.

Martin Colclough oversees the Phoenix Programme which supports Battle Back, the MoD's adaptive sports and adventurous training initiative.

"[Our work] is about capitalising on technological advances to get the best benefit," he explained.

"We have bespoke, specialist equipment and although we started out with quite a small area for strength and conditioning we now need to space out."

"Unlike the adaptive kit used at Headley Court, this is about preparing our troops to use the gear they will find back in civvy life."

With the imminent opening of the west wing later this year, Tedworth House will be at full operating capacity and able to accommodate a total of 54 residents.

Rfn Billy Brumfield (4 Rifles) was one of those who moved in last year.

"I started doing courses and getting fit in the gym and it's amazing," he said.

"The Phoenix Centre will be great too."

"There is nothing I am having trouble with that this place can't help."

"You name it, they have covered it."

Other well thought-out technology at the house includes panic alarms, cash-free food and drink top-up cards that can locate residents in an emergency and a store of laptops and cameras that personnel can borrow to gain new skills in IT or photography.

Skype and video conferencing facilities allow guests to keep in touch with friends and family during their time away from home and Bluetooth-enabled laptops mean deaf visitors can follow a course instructor's words in text on their computer screens.

LCpl Colin Stephenson (Int Corps), who was



Sinking feeling: Bathroom kit can be height adjusted



Help: Emergency alarm systems in all bedrooms

injured by an IED in Afghanistan last year, said Tedworth's technology was "opening doors" for him and other Servicemen and women.

"I would definitely recommend that people come and give this place a go and arrive with an open mind," he explained.

"It builds confidence."

While the centre's exciting facilities are helping troops to become more self-assured in living with their injuries and gaining new skills, camaraderie is often the most uplifting experience of a stay there.

Officer commanding the centre, Maj Peter Smith, explained: "One of the things we have learnt during our first six months is that sometimes the guys just want to sit and talk and get things off their chest."

And with state-of-the-art surroundings likely to impress technology-crazy British soldiers of any rank, this centre's ambition to improve the lives of all who come through its doors is already being realised. ■

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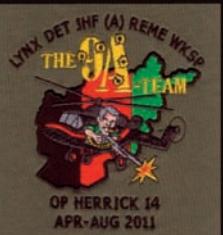
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# THE MIGHT OF THE MIND



## COULD FUTURE SOLDIERS POWER WEAPONS WITH JUST THEIR BRAINS?

Report: Joe Clapson

**N**EIROSCIENTISTS have suggested that troops could one day control military technology using only their brainpower.

A report from The Royal Society, the UK's national academy of science, outlines how advances in the discipline could impact on the work of the Armed Forces and law enforcement agencies.

As well as predicting drugs that boost performance and make enemy combatants fall asleep, *Neuroscience, Conflict and Security* outlines the potential for devices called brain-machine interfaces to connect soldiers' thoughts with unmanned vehicles and other weapons.

Professor Rod Flower, chairman of The Royal Society working group that produced the study, said reactions of troops were likely to be quicker in years to

come thanks to the technology but ethical questions would be raised as a result.

"The subconscious can perform things with accuracy and speed that we are not actually aware of and some time in the future this could be a very interesting proposition for the Armed Forces," he explained. "But there is a question over where liability lies.

"If I was controlling a plane by my thoughts you could argue that it was not me, it was my thoughts – so it's a blurring of responsibility."

The report explains how the human brain can process images such as targets much faster than the subject is consciously aware of.

It adds: "A neurally-interfaced weapons system could provide significant advantages over other control methods in terms of speed and accuracy."

Studies into neuroscience have already improved the prognosis for sufferers of paralysis, severed limbs and post-traumatic stress disorder.

Now, according to the scientific body, advances in neural-interface technologies could offer a boost to military organisations.

Prof Flower said some gadgets such as Mattel's *MindFlex* toy were already demonstrating this capability.

The game includes a technology developed by NeuroSky that allows users to power a ball round an obstacle course using only their brains.

"Neuroscience will have more of an impact in the future," the academic added.

"People can see a lot of possibilities but so far very few have made their way through to actual use. All leaps forward start out this way." ■

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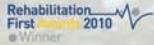
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# ELECTRONIC WARFARE

**Sneaky systems bring exhaustive  
ears to British Army missions**



Report: Joe Clapson  
Pictures: Graeme Main

**F**ACED with an enemy that works in the shadows of Afghanistan's innocent population, it is essential for the British Army to pre-empt lethal attacks.

While varied intelligence gathering is nothing new to Helmand province, evolving technological capabilities on both sides of the fight mean that "electronic warfare" is becoming an increasingly significant term.

By listening in on insurgents, the International Security Assistance Force gathers information on when, why and how the Taliban plans to make its moves. And armed with receivers, satellite communications and other sneaky systems, 14 Signal Regiment members serve as the finely-tuned ears of the UK.

*Soldier* went behind the scenes at the unit's remote base in west Wales to find out how its experts acquire enemy information.

"Our role is to collect intelligence within theatre," said Cpl Darren Fowler, who works as a communications systems operator with 223 Signal Squadron.

"With our state-of-the-art equipment we can monitor messages to find insurgents' tactical procedures."

Cpl Fowler will form part of the Op Herrick 16 contingent running new specialist "manpacks" which enable operators to tap into communications in real time.

Details of this technology are classified and cannot be printed here but such vital work has seen 14 Sig Regt represented on each UK mission since the Falklands War.

Out on the battlefield, unit members are split into light electronic warfare teams of up to four members.

"The groups are out and about in the area of operations, directed by the brigade commander in accordance with his or her priorities," said systems operator Cpl Morgan Scott. "We can collect intelligence that helps us understand what is happening in a certain location."

Cpl Fowler added: "When we first go in, Infantry guys are not too sure about having us with them but after giving threat warnings and

providing the good news, they begin to love us. We basically become part of the Infantry – we live in the base and are members of the team."

Each cluster of the specialists includes a systems operator, an Intelligence Corps analyst and a communications expert. All members can work in each other's role and thanks to evolving technology, their analyses are proving more precise than ever before.

"Equipment is increasingly computer-based with new software that has made us more accurate and useful for the commanders on the ground," Cpl Fowler said. "If we can get the grid quickly it means insurgents have much less of a chance to move on."

While training on Exercise Dragon's Talon, LCpl Tom Scales (237 Sqn) outlined the kind of information his unit can obtain.

"We find out as much about the enemy as possible – where they work, who they work for and where the areas of resupply are," the Serviceman explained.

By tapping into the insurgents'

communications network and using linguistics experts from the Intelligence Corps, light electronic warfare teams can work out why villagers might be supporting the Taliban.

Using equipment acquired as an urgent operational requirement, the signallers are braced to inform their Infantry counterparts of potential attacks.

At a time when the Army is reducing in size, 14 Sig Regt is one of the few units set to expand in the wake of the Strategic Defence and Security Review. Between now and 2013 it will grow by eight per cent to around 750 personnel.

Maj Paul Buck, 2iC of 14 Sig Regt, said: "In this tough climate, if you are a bright bloke with a bit about you then this is the place to succeed. Those with an inquiring mind and keen for a challenge are the sort of people we are looking for."

Personnel in this unit will provide key intelligence to the Army until the end of combat operations in Afghanistan and the union of their sharp intellect and technology is set to give them the edge over the enemy at every stage of that electronic journey. ■

## ‘Our role is to collect intelligence within theatre’





**Report: Richard Long**  
**Pictures: Mike Weston**

**F**OR the Service's new breed of young soldiers, combat scenarios from the virtual front lines are almost as familiar as the challenges posed by operating for real in Afghanistan.

Military titles such as *Call of Duty* and *Battlefield* are a mainstay of today's PlayStation generation and the Army has been using similar gaming technology to prepare troops for the ongoing campaign in Helmand province.

Op Joint Combat Operations Virtual Environment (JCOVE) guides personnel through a host of situations that are likely to occur in theatre and this crucial training is being delivered via the simple click of a button on a laptop computer.

The hi-tech system, delivered by

# ***Virtual BATTLEFIELD***

***Games technology creates ideal platform for perfecting operational drills***

Surrey-based company Newman and Spurr Consultancy (NSC), was introduced in 2007 with a specific focus on vehicle convoy skills but has since undergone a significant expansion to incorporate the tactics, techniques and procedures of a much wider sphere.

Individual units can focus on everything from foot patrols to Barma drills, using platforms and weaponry from across the Service world, and each simulation session is tailored to the exact requirements of the officer in charge.

"The background to this started with logistics," NSC field engineer Steven Snowdon told *Soldier*.

"There was nothing out there for convoy training and the system was developed so personnel could practise these skills. Once that arrived there was a realisation that we

could do a lot more with the technology.

"We expanded it so every platform from the rifle to Apache was covered and we now keep up to date with all the urgent operational requirements from theatre.

"We have a system that allows a unit to cover initial, revision and confirmation training on anything they want to do."

*Soldier* saw the kit in action at Robertson Barracks, Swanton Morley in Norfolk, where The Light Dragoons were being put through their paces ahead of their deployment on Op Herrick 16.

Scimitar crews were engaged in a vehicle recovery task following an improvised explosive device strike and were able to work on the standard operating procedures and communication skills that are needed to ensure such missions are a success.

The troops were able to speak to each other via headsets and used steering wheels and pedals to move their platforms around the area of operations.

"We can really test them in a vehicle recovery," said Mr Snowdon, a former warrant officer in The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers. "It is not just a case of going out and towing the platform back. It is a lengthy process, they have to perform Barma drills, deal with casualty evacuations and pass information to different call signs.

"Our role is to support the training, to keep the kit up and running and provide the commander with the required assets.

"Every scenario is dealt with and there is a full debrief process. There are lessons to be learnt and it is better to do that in a classroom like this.

"This is no substitute for the real thing but this technology is a great add-on."

As well as working with The Light Dragoons, the experts from NSC have recently supplemented the training of The King's Royal Hussars, the Royal Air Force Regiment and elements from the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers and Royal Artillery.

More than 10,000 Service personnel have now sampled the JCOVE experience and with the software proving to be an unprecedented





success many more will follow.

"It is constantly evolving and there is massive scope out there for the longevity of this programme," the ex-soldier explained.

"As long as we get information from the boots on the ground we can continue to improve.

"We are ex-military and I think that is very important. We listen to what they want and how they hope to progress.

"The blokes always say they do not get enough time on the vehicles so we give them what they need, but in a virtual environment.

"I wish I had this ten years ago, it is unbelievably good. We are not teaching them how to shoot or drive but we are giving them some situational awareness. I remember being a commander and hearing things on the net and wondering what was going on. This gives them the bigger picture and reinforces the knowledge they have."

Training officer Capt Alan Ruddock introduced the JCOVE software to the regiment after hearing glowing reports of its impact from Armed Forces colleagues.

"The guys are very positive and the troop leaders love it," he explained. "It gives them scope to practise and stage full debriefs. When you go away on other simulation training it is not always geared towards the

troops. When I heard about this I thought it would be ideal and other units are realising its value as well."

Capt William Tod was leading the Scimitar task that *Soldier* witnessed and the officer spoke glowingly of the benefits.

"It gives the commander and operator the chance to send reports and returns and it increases situational awareness," he said.

"It is a trade-off, the soldiers cannot operate as they would out on the ground but it forces them to use the net and communicate in a concise nature.

"You can add anything you require and mix and match it to what you want to achieve.

"This has come at a perfect time for us.

"We are about to spend two weeks on our final training exercise so this has given us the chance to get that to the forefront of our minds and work on the drills needed for when we are out on the ground."

With so many negatives surrounding the PlayStation generation, the British Army is proving this unique skill set can be built upon to deliver meaningful benefits.

By providing technology that young soldiers fully comprehend, this novel approach to learning is reinforcing the drills that can ultimately save lives in theatre. ■



***It gives the commander and operator the chance to send reports and returns and it increases situational awareness***



**Let the games begin:** Tpr Neil Nutton, Sgt Steve Sampher and Tpr Adam Owen of The Light Dragoons closely monitor the progress of their vehicle patrol during a JCOVE training serial

# GURKHA GUARANTEE

## TROOPS STAMP QUALITY ON NEW TRAINING TASK

Report: Joe Clapson

Pictures: Steve Dock

**A** GROUP of soldiers have showcased their versatility by transforming themselves from logisticians into highly-skilled infantrymen in readiness for a vital role assisting the Afghan National Police (ANP).

Personnel from 1 Transport Squadron,

10 The Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment will arrive in Helmand province later this month to take on an unfamiliar task alongside home-grown colleagues.

Attached to 1st Battalion, Welsh Guards and based in Lashkar Gah as part of the UK's last full deployment of 9,500 troops, the unit's mission represents a significant departure from the vehicle patrol duties they carried out on Op Herrick 11. >>

All-round assistance: Servicemen from 10 The Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment during their training exercise on Salisbury Plain



>> While troops fine-tuned their new skills on Salisbury Plain, Lt Dex Bransby explained the fresh challenge ahead for members of his team.

"We will be teaching and advising locals on police matters in order to get ready for the transition to Afghan control," the Serviceman said.

"Normally we would be doing combat logistic patrols, working from Camp Bastion as we did on our last tour, but it's good for us to be getting out and doing this new type of work."

To transform transportation experts into deployable infantrymen, the squadron has been put through extensive training.

In their latest serial, the soldiers worked with unfamiliar vehicles and on foot patrol techniques. Using Vallons, they carried out 360-degree sweeps of vulnerable points and extracted casualties at high speed during mock explosions.

Commenting on the ability of those under his leadership to adapt to their duties, Lt Col Tim Blackmore, commanding officer of QOGLR, said: "Given their primary role as logisticians, this has been a demanding training period for the squadron as they prepare for an Infantry-focused deployment.

"Gurkhas are renowned for their versatility and professionalism; as such I have every confidence that they will prove ideal mentors."

The unit will form three police advisory training teams, which will focus on building a rapport with the ANP and persuading its commanders to lead patrols.

With the Gurkhas' ability to speak Urdu, conversation between British troops and Afghan National Security Forces will be easier than communicating via interpreters, improving an already strong relationship.

Pte Nar Gurung, who will be working in one of the groups, said: "I feel great about doing this because it's a challenge and I am looking forward to interacting with Afghan people, which was something we didn't have chance to do on our last tour.

"If we can teach the ANP our skills to enable them to work on their own and if we come home safely then we

will have achieved our mission."

LCpl Volaman Limbu added: "Last time I was a point man driving a Jackal so this tour will be entirely different.

"I am pleased to be working with Gurkha blokes and I know we will be effective.

"It will be good for the brigade to show that we can do any job at any given time."

The impressive manner in which these men have adjusted to their new task comes in the wake of reductions to Army manning under the Strategic Defence and Security Review redundancy programme.

But Maj Edward Osborne, officer commanding 1 Transport Squadron, explained that savings measures had not affected troops' focus on the mission in hand.

"They are well aware that soldiers have lost their jobs but at no time has that distracted them from what they are doing, which is utterly admirable," he said.

"Their dedication and professionalism is unparalleled and it's hard to praise them enough without sounding sickly but they are fantastic soldiers."

Alongside QOGLR personnel, each training team will include two members of the Royal Military Police to provide specific knowledge of crime-fighting.

LCpl Phil Macphail (AGC (RMP)) explained: "Britain's contingency plan for leaving Afghanistan hinges on the country's national security forces taking control, so we need to transfer our skills to them.

"In our unit we are police officers in our second role so we understand about forensic awareness and patrols and can help with that side of things too."

A major drive for police advisory teams on Op Herrick 16 is to coach as many of the Afghans at the Lashkar Gah Training Centre as possible in order to build a robust and successful force.

"We will be focusing on getting the ANP to look as professional as possible and

ensuring their arms, forensic awareness skills and action at crime scene drills are in place," added LCpl Macphail.

With British combat troops set to leave Helmand province in two years' time it is vital for the region's future that its own security forces can defend against the Taliban and other offenders.

Until then, British Servicemen and women will play a crucial role in the gradual transition from international assistance to home control.

"Knowing that we are coming out in 2014 gives a fixed target," explained Maj Osborne.

"The Afghans understand that we're not an infinite resource and therefore part of our role is to assist them in becoming self-sufficient."

Operation Herrick 16 will mark the last operational deployment of 1 Transport Squadron, which will cease to exist following the reconfiguration of 10 QOGLR under the Army's ongoing structural changes.

"This unit has transformed itself for a new role and its personnel are now on a par with their Infantry counterparts," added Maj Osborne.

"This underlines the complete diversity of the Gurkhas."

Ready to prove their versatility at the sharp end, the squadron is determined its final assignment will leave a lasting legacy in Helmand. ■

**THIS HAS BEEN A DEMANDING TRAINING PERIOD FOR THE SQUADRON,**





Above, Man down: A member of 10 QOGLR plays injured during a simulated IED blast and is extracted from the danger area by colleagues to receive further medical treatment

Left, Knowledge exchange: Troops are given instruction on dismounted patrolling from a 2nd Battalion, The Royal Gurkha Rifles sergeant who deployed on Op Herrick 14

# In numbers... moving

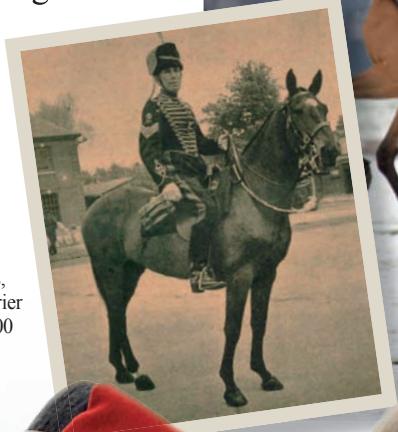
## Unit rides through St John's Wood for last

# 1947

– year the Riding Troop of the Royal Horse Artillery was formed by George VI

**Right, Lucky charmer:**  
This rider, sporting a horseshoe on his stripes, was the troop's first farrier to turn out more than 400 horseshoes a month

**Bottom right, Royal entertainment:** A pearly queen interacts with the crowds



# 65

– years the Queen's ceremonial saluting battery has been in St John's Wood. Other Royal Horse Artillery units have occupied the same site since 1880



# 6

– day in February that troops rode through north London for the last time, ahead of their move to a new purpose-built home in Woolwich

# day for The King's Troop

## time ahead of move to new Woolwich base

Pictures: Steve Dock



# 41

– rounds fired by the unit during a royal salute in Hyde Park to mark the accession of the Queen and formal start of the Diamond Jubilee year

# 2,500

– schoolchildren estimated to have lined the route across London, singing First World War medleys to mark the occasion



# 164

– soldiers in The King's Troop. Six are currently serving in Afghanistan

# 71

– horses involved in the unique event



# 2

– number of outdoor riding surfaces available at the unit's new Napier Lines facility



# STEED SIGNALS

## Horse connection harbours hope

Report: Joe Clapson

Pictures: Graeme Main

**A**N UNUSUAL psychotherapy treatment that brings sufferers of post-traumatic stress face-to-face with wild horses is achieving surprising results.

The Dare to Live programme helps ex-Servicemen and civilians "re-centre" their minds and reduce stress levels by walking among herds and carefully interacting with them.

At a quiet farm in East Sussex, participants with no previous equine experience approach the untamed animals under the guidance of professional therapists.

Before stepping into the steeds' domain, they are taught that horses respond best to what humans are feeling, not what they are thinking.

Sun Tui (pictured above), a former member of the Territorial Army and lead trainer at Dare to Live, told *Soldier* how her own experiences led to the idea.

"With the loss of my child I developed severe depression and, coming out of a military



environment after a divorce, the transition to civilian life left me in a mess," she explained.

"But I noticed that when I got involved with horses the depression lifted."

The scheme may seem quirky, with some detractors championing more traditional methods of treatment, but those involved say they are experiencing positive changes to their mental health.

"When we are being soft and relaxed, horses want to know us," Tui said. "It's when people are stressed in their

minds that they aren't interested.

"We are using the animals to rewire the pathways to the brain, giving a more relaxed route.

"When people find success with this – even for just 30 seconds – it is bliss."

Qualified in psychotherapeutic counselling and influenced by Zen martial arts philosophy, the founder of the International Foundation of Equine Assisted Learning now hopes the technique will assist others affected by bereavement and trauma.

"Soldiers who have been on the course say it's just incredible because they are able to forget everything else," the former Reservist with the Royal Corps of Transport explained.

"The development of neuroscience has really helped our understanding and studies are showing that when you are relaxed, and the more you stay in that state, the better your body can unwind."

Hugh Forsyth, a former explosive ordnance disposal operator, spoke candidly about why he was willing to give a day walking with horses a go.



**Animal interaction:**  
Ex-Royal Marine  
Jay Coen (right)  
attends a Dare to  
Live course along  
with other former  
military personnel

"I saw some pretty bad incidents during my time in the Army such as six people getting blown up in a van in Ireland," the ex-Royal Engineer said.

"Also, while doing mine clearance in Bosnia I was tasked to take a load of explosives to different destinations around the country and saw a car veer off the road and go down an embankment. When I went to help, the guy put a gun to my head."

Forsyth left the Army with a spinal injury in 1997 and years later began experiencing symptoms of post-traumatic stress.

"I started having difficulties with my marriage and I tried to commit suicide twice," the veteran revealed. "I began seeing Combat Stress in 2005 and it was their people that asked if I fancied a day with some horses. I said 'why not?'

"I was bowled over by the fact that the horses were wild and I could get them to do whatever I wanted if I reacted to them properly."

Steeds used by the project are left to run free and it is down to the humans to connect on the animals' own terms. This process helps the visitors to understand more about the impact of their actions on others.

"When you're out there you begin to think 'where is the

space that I feel okay and where is the space that the horse feels okay?'" said Tui. "Through that process the body begins to calm."

Thanks to the techniques offered by the programme, Forsyth now feels optimistic about his future.

"It was like a miracle when the horse lifted its head up and wanted to engage with me," he said.

"It's a lovely warm feeling and I got a real buzz out of it – it's the calmest I've felt in years."

The project's organisers are liaising with various charities to get more people – especially those connected to the Armed Forces – to work with the horses.

By spending time with these animals, ex-Service personnel are beginning to see a civilian life ahead that they can control.

"I have learnt how to take a deep breath and centre myself without having a twisted stomach," said Forsyth. "It's worth giving it a go and those in charge of others should consider it because it will help soldiers who are trying to understand what's going on in their heads."

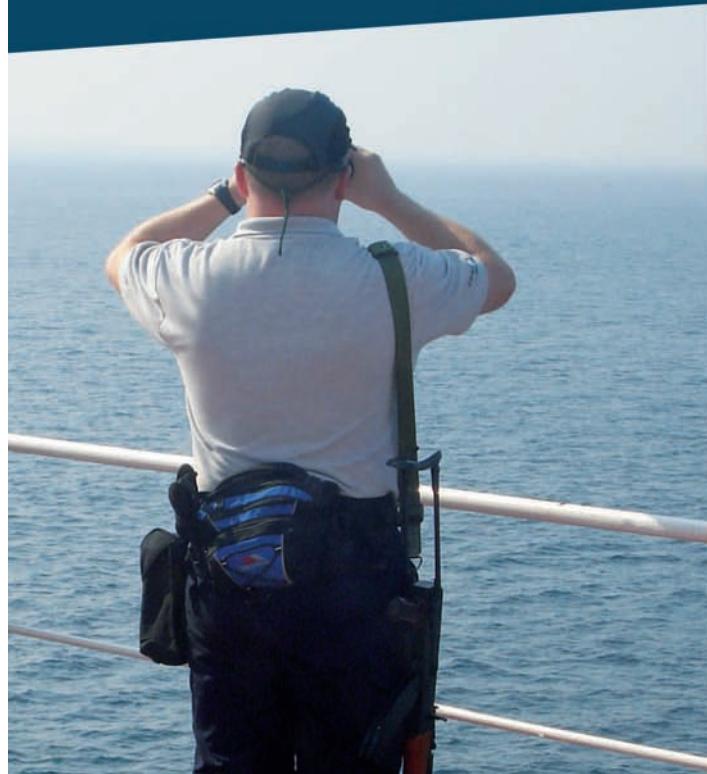
The father-of-four added: "I will never be cured of post-traumatic stress disorder, I have to learn to live with it, but working with horses has made me more aware of when I'm getting anxious." ■

● For more information about Dare to Live visit [www.ifeal.me/dare-to-live](http://www.ifeal.me/dare-to-live)



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## MIND-BLOWING MILITARY SURVIVAL



Left to right:  
The entrance  
to Auschwitz  
II-Birkenau  
extermination  
camp; Ingrid  
Betancourt Pulecio  
is reunited with her  
family after kidnap  
by FARC guerrillas

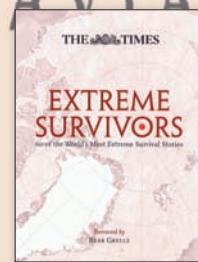
Pictures: Corbis  
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OF WARTIME  
TRIUMPH**

El Dorado

Valln



## 1 MIDGET SUBMARINE AND MALARIA

LT Col Freddy Spencer Chapman personified a very British blend of raw courage, determination and eccentricity. For nearly three-and-a-half years of the Second World War he survived behind enemy lines, deep in the harsh jungles of Malaya and almost permanently ill with malaria. In such conditions he managed to design his own bombs and blow up Japanese transport systems while out-witting 2,000 troops sent to capture him. The senior officer even found time for his beloved hobby of bird watching, taking detailed notes on the wildlife and collecting seeds to send back to Kew Gardens. He finally escaped in the mini-submarine HMS *Statesman*.

## 2 SNOW HOLE HELL

JAN Baalsrud was a Norwegian commando in the Second World War whose undercover mission to blow up a vital German air control tower was betrayed. After shooting a Gestapo officer and escaping to the wilds of Norway, he spent 18 days cowering in a freezing snow hole with four Germans shooting at him. During this ordeal he was forced to self-amputate nine of his toes using a pocket knife as a scalpel and brandy as an anaesthetic to prevent gangrene from spreading. He made his final escape on a sled pulled by reindeer across the frozen Lake Kilpisjarvi into Sweden. Doctors said the earlier action had saved his feet.

## 3 THE GREAT ESCAPE

IN March 1944, 78 Allied prisoners of war tunneled out of Stalag Luft III. The incredible planning and boldness of the escape – masterminded by Sqn Ldr Roger Bushell – severely embarrassed Hitler. Some 73 Servicemen were recaptured of which 50 were shot dead. Just five men made it to freedom. Three tunnels – named Tom, Dick and Harry – were dug nine metres beneath the ground's surface. The fat skimmed from soup was used as candle wax and threads served as wicks. The successful escapees were two Norwegian pilots, Per Bergsland and Jens Muller, a Dutch pilot, Bram van der Stok, and members of the Dutch Resistance, Ryone and Mikail Lambrec.

## 7 CLOSE CALL WITH NAZIS

WHEN Leo Bretholtz fled from the anti-Jewish violence in pre-war Vienna, he little realised he would be spending the next seven years evading the clutches of the Nazis. He made several daring escapes and became one of the few people to successfully break out of a train bound for Auschwitz. Firstly, he swam the treacherous Sauer river, then he escaped from the St Cyprien internment camp. Later, when he was herded on to a train en route to the gas chambers, he broke the bars on his wagon's window and made a bid for freedom along with his companion Manfred Silberwasser.



### Left to right, Staggering survival:

A young guerrilla from FARC on the road where Ingrid Betancourt Pulecio was kidnapped; A rail wagon used to transport prisoners to Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination camp; Skulls from the mass grave of Khmer Rouge; The memorial cairn commemorating the Battle of Culloden in 1746

Pictures: Corbis and Shutterstock

## 4 ESCAPE FROM A SIBERIAN GULAG

DURING 1945, German prisoner of war Cornelius Rost was sent to a Siberian gulag. Facing an unbearable life of beatings, starvation and hard labour in a lead mine, he made an escape. For the next three years he would brave the savage Russian landscape and the constant danger of recapture on an epic 8,000 mile journey home. During this time he learnt how to live in the Siberian wilds, fish and hunt and improvise a tent. He also discovered how to light a fire from moss. When he finally made it out of the Soviet Union, he visited a police station in Tabriz and told them his story. It was so incredible that officers first thought he was a spy.

## 8 ENTOMBED IN IRAQ

WHEN armed gunmen kicked down Roy Hallums' office door in Baghdad he faced the nightmare of capture by Iraqi terrorists. For the next 311 days he was kept bound and gagged in total darkness inside a concrete cell dug out beneath a room at an unkempt farm building. He was fed rice, crumbs, sardines and rotten fruit in the black airless pit under the constant threat of a bloody death. Hallums was being used for ransom money – his captors wanted \$12 million – but he refused to hand over the contact details of his daughter. The prisoner was eventually rescued by the elite US Delta Force when they stormed the farmhouse.



Picture: Getty

## 5 ACROSS THE KILLING FIELDS

DITH Pran was a Cambodian interpreter who risked his life to help *New York Times* journalist Sydney Schanberg cover the arrival of Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge in Phnom Penh in 1975. He then endured four years of torture and starvation at the hands of the regime. To avoid execution, Pran reinvented himself as a peasant by changing the way he spoke, throwing all of his money away and hiding all evidence that he had known Americans. When Vietnam forces removed the Khmer Rouge from power, Pran returned to Siem Reap to find mass graves. Because of his US connections he knew that he must escape, so trekked through the war-torn jungle to freedom in Thailand.

## 9 LAST OF THE 16,000

THE 16,500 British men, women and children who fled Kabul in January 1842 knew their 90-mile journey would be dangerous, but they had little idea of the scale of the tragedy that would befall them. Afghan snipers began firing on the walkers as soon as they departed. Frozen in the ice-bound passes and cut down by hostile tribesmen, only one soldier, William Brydon, reached safety at the British garrison in Jalalabad. He arrived on a near-dead horse with bad injuries to his knees and left hand. Part of his skull had been sheared off by an Afghan sword but the magazine padding in his hat saved his life.



## 6 KIDNAPPED IN COLUMBIA

INGRID Betancourt Pulecio was a presidential candidate campaigning against drugs and violence in the 2002 Colombian elections when the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), a Marxist-Leninist guerrilla organisation, kidnapped her. She was starved and tortured for six-and-a-half years in a brutal jungle camp where she was used as political capital for her captors. Despite remaining lively and passionate, Pulecio was shown in a 2007 video to be pale and haggard. She was rescued as part of Operation Jaque, which was conducted by Colombian security forces posing as TV crew, journalists and FARC members.

## 10 HIDING IN THE WILDS

"BONNIE Prince Charlie" may have been vain and foolish but after his Jacobite Army's defeat at the Battle of Culloden he proved himself a man of great endurance and resourcefulness. While being pursued by the British government he hid and survived for five months in the wilds of the Scottish Highlands. He braved the seas of the Hebrides and successfully evaded the massed forces of one of the most powerful nations on Earth in a lethal-stakes game of cat and mouse through the Western Isles. Then dressed as a maid he returned to Skye and eventually engineered a return to safety on a French frigate.



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## 'Body art is not a blot on British Army's image'

**H**AVING reviewed the extract of the Army's application guidance notes so kindly provided by the author of "Time to get tough on tattoos" (February), I spotted some irregularities.

The letter writer failed to quote the relevant passage correctly or in full. It should have read: "Any tattoos that are offensive, obscene or excessive in size or number **may** be a bar to entry or re-entry.

"Tattoos which are visible on the head, neck and hand **may** be a bar to entry depending on their size and nature. If you have tattoos you may be asked to complete a form describing them. The tattoos will be seen during your medical examination."

Omitting the word "may" in favour of "will" suggests the correspondent has interpreted the guidance notes to support their own argument.

Regardless, I find it offensive that an individual believes "the British Army needs to address this issue before it gets completely out of control and the organisation ends up becoming a laughing stock".

Bearing tattoos in any form does not influence the operational effectiveness of a soldier nor does it lower his or her values and standards.

Military personnel risk their lives for this country and I have no problem sleeping at night in the knowledge that some of those heroes have tattoos, visible or not.

Stating that soldiers with tattoos look like common thugs or members of gangs is absolutely outrageous and anyone who has that opinion should consider their own ethics, values and standards.

Service personnel should be judged on the uniform they wear and the medals they've earned not by those who can't see beyond old-fashioned views.

Perhaps those who feel differently



Picture: Steve Dolk

**A stain on the Service?** A *Talkback* letter bemoaning the increasing number of soldiers sporting "inappropriate and excessive" tattoos has angered those who believe that body art has no bearing on the quality and attitude of Service personnel. During an interview in 2010, Victoria Cross holder LCpl Johnson Beharry (PWRR), pictured, told *Soldier* how he went under the needle for 64 hours to have his back decorated with the award he received for two separate acts of gallantry in Iraq. Of the experience, the Op Telic veteran said: "I knew it would hurt and it was painful but I always wanted a tattoo and the Victoria Cross has changed my life, so I would go through the pain for it. Actually, it was easier getting shot than having the tattoo because at least I didn't know the round was coming".

should read further through the application guidance notes and pay particular attention to the employment and diversity statement. It reads: "We have a strict code of conduct that ensures zero tolerance of bullying, harassment, discrimination and

victimisation on any grounds."

Worth noting before condemning troops to discharge from the military. — **Cpl Jessica Jones, AGC (RMP)**.

### ● Body art blindness – page 61

## Bruised by being branded a thug

I HAVE a few tattoos, as does my wife and the majority of our friends serving in our respective squadrons, and fully understand that any which are "offensive, obscene or excessive in size" may be a bar to entry or re-entry.

However, I'd like to point out that most personnel are professional and would not get anything done that would be visible when in dress uniform.

It is disgusting that I'm being compared to an inner-city thug just because I've been to a tattooist.

Has the author of the letter actually taken time to look at soldiers' tattoos?

I'll admit that there are some bad ones

but the majority are pieces of art.

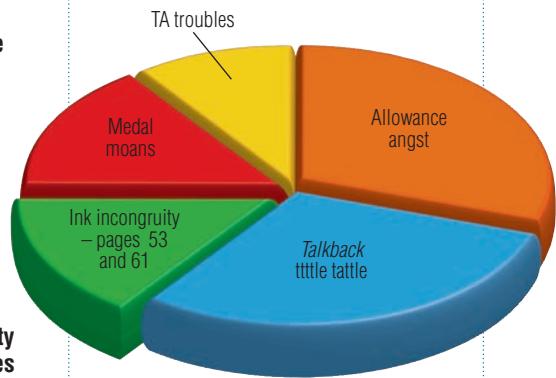
It is frowned upon to have tattoos on hands and necks, and I know there have been cases of soldiers being refused re-entry for doing so. That said, I'm not sure where the correspondent has seen individuals with ink on their face – reputable tattooists will not do this.

I also disagree with the writer's argument that those caught taking drugs would be expelled from the Army so the same should apply to personnel breaking the rules in respect of tattoos.

Taking drugs hinders a soldier's ability to do his or her job, having body art does not. — **Name and address supplied**.

## Slice of Service life

This month's ruminations from the ranks...





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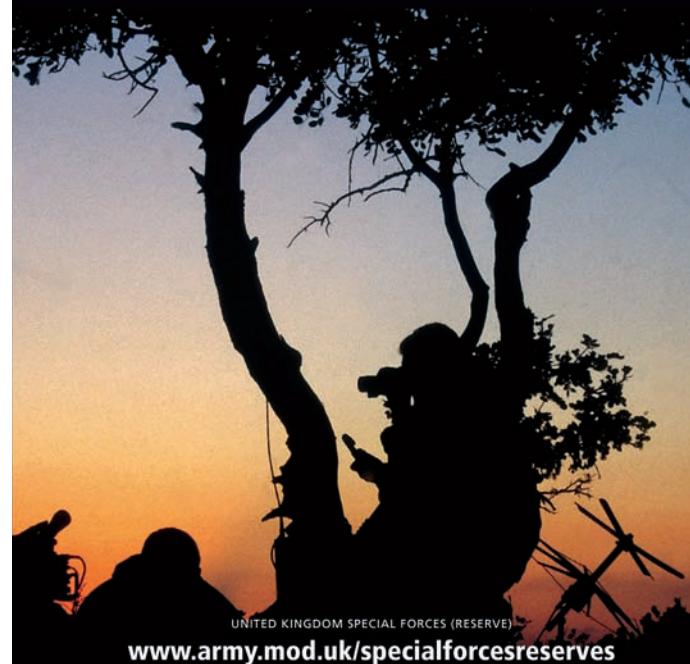
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## Web browser beyond its best before date

I RECENTLY came across an article on the BBC website regarding Internet Explorer 6 (IE6). Usage of this particular web browser has dropped below one per cent in the US and to around 1.4 per cent in the UK.

To mark the "death" of IE6, Microsoft baked a cake and celebrated the event.

It is regarded as one of the worst software products of all time and is also plagued by plenty of security issues.

As a result of the drop in usage Microsoft has recommended to website developers and publishers that they consider the browser a "low priority" and stop spending their time supporting an outdated product.

In fact, several news organisations have already taken that advice on-board and are no longer updating published content for their IE6 websites.

Reading the article on a Defence Internet Infrastructure (DII) terminal, I did enjoy the irony of its closing paragraphs, which stated: "You're using Internet Explorer 6 browser to view the BBC website.

"Our site will work much better if you change to a more modern browser. It's free, quick and easy."

DII's continued use of IE6 will only lead to longer load times and less information being available to its users.

Are there any plans to update to a more modern browser and will it indeed be quick, free or easy? – Sgt Gray, DISC.

**Col G Rafferty, HQ Information Systems and Services, responds:** Upgrading to Internet Explorer 8 is not simply a matter of clicking on a download for the MoD because DII has continued to evolve since the first user access device went live in January 2006, but we are aware of the limitations of the current browser.

There are plans to uplift to IE8 and beyond as part of a much larger technical refresh programme, which will include moving to Windows 7 and the Office 2010 operating systems.

However, DII is the largest programme of its type in Europe and supports 250,000 user accounts on 150,000 computers at more than 1,000 sites and provides access to 639 applications.

Clearly, any upgrade inevitably requires significant investment and, as explained previously "Defence is digitally disadvantaged" (*Talkback* February), many applications such as Joint Personnel Administration are not yet compatible with IE8.

We are working with the platform's owners to agree timescales for when the uplift will occur.

The letter writer mentions his concern for the alleged lack of security of IE6.

Rest assured that on DII the browser is secure and is tested and updated on a regular basis to maintain this status.

● Virtual battlefield – pages 38-39

Picture: Graeme Main



**Bike benefits:** Army time trial rider WO2 Steve Biddulph (RE) plans to spend considerably longer in the saddle than 12 miles per day during his deployment to Afghanistan. The Service cyclist is aiming to cover 3,552.5 miles – the equivalent distance from Camp Bastion to Tidworth – to raise funds for the Naomi House Hospice in Winchester and A Smile For A Child (page 95).

## Pedalling pays out pennies

CYCLE the 12-mile round trip from my Service Families Accommodation to my place of work daily, for which I receive a net Home to Duty Travel (HDT) allowance of £11.16 per month – £133.92 per annum.

This princely sum barely covers the cost of two gear and brake services, never mind the expense of tyres, puncture repair kits, batteries for lights, a helmet and cycle wear.

As my ten-year-old bike is starting to show its age I recently explored the possibility of purchasing a new one through the government's Cycle to Work scheme, which is tax and interest-efficient and can provide savings of around 40 per cent.

However, I was very surprised to hear that, unlike other departments, the MoD does not support the programme.

Given that the scheme encourages environmental friendliness and health benefits and comes at no cost, could it not be presented as an optional alternative to the paltry HDT rates? – Maj James Fawsitt, The Royal Military School of Music, Kneller Hall.

**Brig Tim Hyams, DPS(A), writes:** This is an issue the policy makers in the MoD have studied in some depth.

Cycle to Work is a salary sacrifice scheme, membership of which would

require the department to buy, manage and maintain a fleet of bicycles that it would "hire" to employees.

At the end of the period the individual still does not own the bicycle and provision must be made by the MoD for its purchase or disposal.

As the employee is sacrificing part of their salary to hire the bicycle, they effectively are being paid less; and this may have tax implications for areas such as final pensions, maternity pay and working tax credits.

For these reasons, the scheme is deemed to be overly complex and inappropriate for the Armed Forces.

The MoD encourages personnel to cycle to work through the provision of the HDT (Pedal Cycle) allowance.

Although the personal contribution has increased from one mile to three miles, and you only receive £11.16 a month (about £260 tax free over a 24-month posting), the department is one of the very few employers providing an allowance to contribute towards travel by bicycle.

So in summary, while the Cycle to Work scheme may be suited for civilian employees, for whom it would be an extra benefit, the HDT (Pedal Cycle) rate provides a more appropriate incentive for the MoD to provide to Armed Forces personnel.



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# 'Errors of judgement not exclusive to Army officers'

I WAS surprised to read in Joe Clapson's interview with Sir Max Hastings (*Reviews*, February) the latter's criticism of the Army in the Second World War.

Of course, the editor-turned-author has long been beating a drum about the inadequacies of the wartime Service but the Force's performance ought to be put into proper perspective.

While no one would quibble with him on the importance of the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force, it has to be said that when Britain began re-arming in the 1930s these two organisations were given priority over the Army for new equipment.

When, finally, the Army's turn came, precedence was given to anti-aircraft defences and areas such as armour suffered.

Hastings may believe that "an awful lot of British officers were not up to the job" but that generalisation does not stand up to forensic analysis.

There were poor officers but the majority did their jobs well and professionally. The successes achieved by them, in spite of difficulties, are their witnesses.

Even the evacuation of the British Expeditionary Force from France in 1940 was a masterly achievement by Army commanders, who got their forces safely to the beaches in the first instance so that the Royal and Merchant Navies, and volunteer seamen, could take them off.

One could make general similar claims about the other Services' leaders.

The tragedy of the loss of *Repulse* and *Prince of Wales* come to mind, as do errors in the campaign against the U-boats.



**Combined effort:** British commanders from all three Services played their part in the success of the Normandy landings on June 6, 1944 – the biggest amphibious invasion in world history Picture: Soldierarchive

Likewise, RAF officers could be held to task for the foolish squandering of lives in the daylight sweeps over the continent in 1941 and 1942, never mind the 50 per cent loss of life in Bomber Command when there were alternatives and Harris's

intransigence over the use of bombers for tactical operations, in which they proved highly successful, or supporting Coastal Command. –

**Richard Doherty, County Londonderry.**

**"I DON'T ACTUALLY THINK THE ARMY DID THAT WELL IN THE WAR AND I BELIEVE AN AWFUL LOT OF BRITISH OFFICERS WERE NOT UP TO THE JOB"**



## Service housing a tight squeeze for extended family

I CURRENTLY reside in Service Families Accommodation (SFA) and have applied to do the same at my next unit.

My wife and I have three children between us, two of which live at home.

I have a stepson (ten), son (two) and a daughter (eight) who stays with me for approximately half of the year.

With the joint custody of my daughter in mind, I applied for a four-bedroom property through the housing information centre but was told I am only entitled to a three-bedroom house.

If I am forced to take on a smaller quarter I will have no bedroom for my daughter to sleep in when she stays during holiday periods and weekends.

Is she expected to sleep in with her stepbrother, younger half-brother or on the sofa in the living room?

None of these options are acceptable to my ex-wife, who has expressed her displeasure over such arrangements. Consequently, downsizing could affect my custody arrangements.

At my next unit there are a number of families with two children who presently occupy four-bedroom houses. I have



heard conflicting stories about this with the housing information centre stating that it is a result of no three-bed properties being available and the unit housing officer saying the families in question got lucky.

If I am entitled to four bedrooms, can I turn down the offer of a smaller quarter on the grounds of it not being appropriate

rather than it being a case of wanting a bigger house?

The move will represent my last tour of service and therefore I am not new to the accommodation process and do appreciate that there are only a finite number of houses available. – **SSgt Anthony Taylor, 243 MI Section.**

**Brig Tim Hyams, DPS(A), responds:** In essence, you are entitled to a type C or V Service property – in other words a three-bedroom SFA.

All three children would have to be aged ten or over for you to be entitled to four bedrooms (paragraph 0328 of Joint Service Publication 464, part 1 refers).

Of course, you are free in line with paragraph 0332 of the same document to request to occupy SFA above entitlement.

Clearly, you do so on the basis of agreement to pay the accommodation charge for the type and grade of property occupied. And you will understand that there has to be a SFA available for the housing information centre to allocate.

● **Accommodation overhaul – page 15**



■ THE Apache is by far the best piece of equipment procured by the MoD in recent years, providing support to our troops on the front line, night and day, all year round.

Although I enjoy reading about the helicopter's global successes, I believe that certain groups' efforts are not being publicised enough in *Soldier*.

For example, the RLC provide the worldwide spares back-up necessary to keep the airframe flying.

Equally, the aircraft and avionic technicians of the REME work tirelessly to maintain serviceability for training in the

UK – often at the expense of their personal lives – and endure 24-hour shifts in support of operations in theatre.

Without the REME the Apache would be nothing more than an expensive gate guard. – **Name and address supplied.**

The editor, flicking through back issues, types: The army of engineers who keep Apache fit for flight were given top billing in the magazine last year and the importance of such work is not lost on those at *Soldier* HQ. Further coverage of the Apache's support teams will feature in coming editions.

## CHAIN'S COLD COMEBACK

■ IN January's issue WO2 Darran Kalthober (RADC) criticised the ruling which removes the entitlement to resettlement training for those retiring from the Army prematurely.

I find it extremely difficult to understand how the MoD can justify such a measure for someone who has given nearly a quarter of a century of service and is only leaving the Armed Forces as a consequence of personal circumstances. This is not an individual who has tried Army life for a few years and wants out.

I was also disappointed by the response given by Maj Lovick, Directorate of Manning (Army), which dismissed the matter clinically and coldly, stating the warrant officer was cognisant of the terms when he signed the necessary forms.

The thrust of the original letter was about the unfairness of the rule.

It would have been more acceptable if Maj Lovick had shown a tad more interest and perhaps gone just a little way to explain why the regulation is in place.

When I retired early in 1983 I had the benefit of a resettlement course and terminal leave. – **Lt Col (Retd) Tony Lyons.**

## Buying baubles devalues medals

■ THERE seems to be a large tranche of ex-military personnel who have a very strong sense of entitlement when it comes to medals – especially, but not exclusively, those with British Army of the Rhine (BAOR) service.

I have no axe to grind with individuals who put in years of hard work on the inner German border but the fact remains that doing so was not deemed worthy of recognition in the form of an official award or decoration.

This decision was no doubt due to the lack of an actual daily threat to life and rounds coming down. Potential risk does not necessarily equal danger.

Despite this I see more and more former soldiers adding store-bought medals to their chests – an action that suggests they believe they deserve further recognition.

This is a pointless exercise. While buying medals may raise an individual's status among immediate family and the wider population, it devalues and does a disservice to those who have earned awards.

A recent article in my local newspaper featured an old soldier who had completed two years of national service and has since decorated his chest with a National Service Medal (£39.50), BAOR Medal (£58.50), British Forces Germany Medal (£38) and a Cold War Medal (£39.50).



**"This is my National Service Medal... the bar is for signing on for three years."**

To all those British Army of the Rhine veterans and others like them, thank you for your time in uniform but do not pretend you were in harm's way and do not embroider your Forces career by buying baubles.

By doing so you only cheapen the service of the soldier with a single Iraq or Afghanistan campaign medal. – **SSgt Mark Smith, 55 MI Coy (V).**



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## BODY ART BLINDNESS

■ I AM writing in response to "Time to get tough on tattoos" (February) and to echo the author's dismay.

As a sub-unit sergeant major serving in Catterick I am constantly asked to enforce standards within my own organisation and the garrison itself.

However, while shopping on camp I have witnessed recruits from the Infantry Training Centre with all manner of tattoos.

If a soldier were to be discharged from a unit within the garrison for having a design above the collar and others are not dealt with in the same way, it could open a large can of worms.

There seems to be a lack of consistency in dealing with this issue or a lot of blind eyes around. — **Name and address supplied.**



"I considered lunching there until I discovered they don't serve wine."

## UNWANTED DINNER GUESTS

■ AS a junior non-commissioned officer I am not entitled to eat in either the warrant officer and sergeants' mess or the officers' mess and take my meals within the junior ranks' cookhouse.

With that in mind, why are an increasing number of senior personnel choosing to dine in the same surroundings for seemingly no other reason than they cannot be bothered to pre-book their meals in the mess or conform to the relevant dress code?

If they do not like the customs of their own mess there are plenty of others who would be happy to take their place.

For myself and many other soldiers, mealtimes represent a chance to escape from work and the hierarchy, an opportunity which is being taken away by these unwelcome visitors to the junior ranks' cookhouse.

How would senior personnel like it if their respective messes were suddenly overrun by soldiers? — **Name and address supplied.**



**Choppy waters:** Allowance ambiguity could pose a threat to future overseas expeditions for soldiers, sailors and airmen, according to an adventurous training instructor denied payment Picture: Graeme Main

## Keep instructors on-board

■ WRITE to express my frustration and confusion over the qualifying criteria for Longer Separation Allowance (LSA) in relation to adventurous training instructors and supervisors taking part in expeditions.

For the first time in more than 15 years I have had a request for the payment refused by my current garrison admin office.

There does not appear to have been any change in the regulations, just a shift in interpretation by individuals.

On the expedition in question, another instructor working under exactly the same circumstances as myself (albeit from a different unit) was granted the allowance.

The disparity seems to centre round a paragraph in Joint Services Publication (JSP) 752 which states: "[Ineligible personnel include those] assigned on temporary duty to participate in sponsored or organised recreational activities, sport, expedition or adventurous training. However, those personnel assigned to posts that involve instructing as part of their primary duties (for example physical training instructors) may claim LSA, subject to them meeting the qualifying service criteria."

In light of the above, I would like to make the following points:

- Those volunteering for an instructor or supervisor role take on a great deal of hard work, pressure and responsibility. They do so in the knowledge they will be required to invest a great deal of their own time, money and resources.
- Adventurous training needs the attendance of such key personnel as mandatory before authorisation will be granted for the activity to take place.
- These individuals do not get to fully experience the opportunities open to other participants due to their additional workload and responsibility.
- I would suggest that in such circumstances, instructing is part of a

soldier's primary duties, albeit temporarily, and should qualify for LSA.

- Low numbers of instructors/supervisors in some disciplines mean that it is not uncommon for an individual to be requested several times a year, often at short notice and personal expense.

Being granted LSA in the past has helped in offsetting the cost and inconvenience of taking on such a role.

It would be a great shame in these times of reduced adventurous training opportunities if instructors were to reconsider or limit their support for activities. — **Name and address supplied.**

**Brig Tim Hyams, DPS(A), writes:** Your comment is timely. My staff, along with the allowance policy branch of the MoD, had recognised the direction contained in JSP 752 with regards to LSA and adventurous training instructors was not as clear as it should have been.

We have conducted a rewrite to ensure those personnel subject to separation in order to enable an expedition are compensated appropriately.

However, it is important to recognise that LSA payments are not remuneration for the hard work, pressure and responsibility attendant upon acting as an instructor/supervisor.

Rather, the allowance exists to support and improve retention by compensating those personnel experiencing separation over and above that which is addressed by the X factor in basic pay.

The intent behind the policy always has been to pay LSA to those individuals who enable, rather than participate in, adventurous training. Now this has been clarified, I would suggest you resubmit your claim to your admin office. Provided you meet the other qualifying criteria, you should be entitled to the allowance.

# Pumped up over petrol prices

**A**S ONE half of a military couple with a young family, I accept there will be occasions when the Army Personnel Centre is unable to assign both partners to the same duty station.

In such an event, it is left to my wife and I to decide where we will reside – be it at one of the locations or midway between the two if Service Families Accommodation can be found. Either way a commute is necessary.

What I fail to understand is why soldiers such as myself are expected to contribute to Home to Duty Travel (HDT) when the allowance does not even cover the cost of fuel used.

Individuals are paying for the privilege to get to work because of a military-made decision to separate their family.

I have heard the argument that a civilian commuter pays their own way but this does not stand up.

In the private sector an individual chooses their place of work and location of their property.

A soldier is told where to report for duty, where to live and is asked to contribute to the cost of commuting between them.

I currently face a 108-mile round trip daily, pay for five tanks of fuel a month at the cost of £250 and am awarded £180 in HDT, of which £80 is personal contribution.

In this instance the military covenant is not only broken but utterly repugnant. –

Capt Kev Carpenter, 12 LSR.

#### **Brig Tim Hyams, DPS(A), responds:**

My staff have been in touch with your unit human resources department and ascertained that you have not been receiving the correct amount of HDT; you now should be getting an increased rate based on the mileage you set out.

## FIGHT FITNESS FRAUD

**I SYMPATHISE** with all Armed Forces personnel who are medically downgraded as a consequence of serious injury or long-term illness.

However, there are a large number of individuals in the Reserves who use the system as an excuse to get out of military annual training tests and the like.

There is nothing more morale destroying than getting to the end of an eight-mile combat fitness run and seeing a soldier who, having played the downgrade card, will receive the same bounty as you without having shed a bead of sweat to earn it.

I believe units could do more to monitor the state of health of these personnel and, where possible, encourage them to return to full fitness. It is extremely unfair that I have to work hard to stay fit for role to earn my bounty while others manipulate the system and still get paid. – Name and address supplied.



## THE REALITY IS THAT DEFENCE IS NOT IMMUNE FROM CONTRIBUTING TOWARDS REDUCING THE DEFICIT

However, your letter raises a wider point concerning the allowance, which regular readers of *Talkback* will recognise as a recurring theme.

HDT provides a contribution towards the costs incurred when personnel travel daily between their residence at work address and separate place of duty. Reimbursement is claimed at the motor mileage allowance rate of 25p per mile (which still is in excess of the AA mileage rate), but is subject to a personal contribution.

An increase in the contribution was announced in January 2011 as part of the Strategic Defence and Security Review savings measures, themselves necessary to reduce allowance expenditure by £250 million within three years.

Therefore, with effect from May 1 last year, British Army personnel living in public accommodation saw their

contribution increase from one mile (approximately £9 per month) to three miles (roughly £27 per month).

There will be a further increase on April 1, 2012 when the personal contribution will rise to six miles (approximately £54 per month) and a final increase on April 1, 2013 when it will be nine miles (around £81 per month).

The feedback on this part of the SDSR savings measures reinforces your view that the increase, in three stages, to the personal contribution is extremely unpopular; most Servicemen and women have little or no choice over where they are accommodated.

Whilst this is accepted, it is also the case that many civilian commuters are unable to exercise complete choice over where they are accommodated in relation to their place of work; their average commute being nine miles.

As the Armed Forces remain one of the few employers which contributes towards cost incurred in travelling to work and, given the pressures to find savings, it was deemed defendable that a contribution towards the first nine miles of a daily commute should be made.

Finally, whilst I understand fully your frustration, I take issue with your view that the military covenant in this instance is “broken” and “utterly repugnant”.

Some extremely difficult decisions had to be made to realise the imposed savings. While the Service chiefs would rather not have had to agree (with considerable reluctance) to these reductions in allowances, the reality is that defence is not immune from contributing towards reducing the government deficit.

● IT is with great pleasure that I read *Soldier* – and the thoughts and comments of all ranks contained in it – every month.

Having retired from the Royal Air Force, I find myself working for the MoD at a mostly Army-run unit so naturally we have the magazine delivered.

In February's issue I noticed an article carrying the headline “Gender irrelevant to a career in green” and could not understand why Brig Nicky Moffat (pictured right) is portrayed as the only female one-star officer in the British Armed Forces.

I know from personal experience and contact that there are at least two women serving as air commodores at Abbey Wood and there are undoubtedly more stationed elsewhere in the UK.

Should the opening paragraph have read “highest ranked female officer in the British Army”? – A M Brown, Defence Academy of the United Kingdom.

**The editor, casting aside her single Service blinkers, types:** Yes, you're quite right. I apologise for the magazine's unintentional demotion of the Armed Forces' other leading ladies. As a female, I will be sure to follow Brig Nicky Moffat's example and avoid attributing the unfortunate oversight to my gender.





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## APPOINTMENTS

**Maj Gen J D Page (late Para)** appointed Commander Force Development and Training in the rank of lieutenant general.

**Lt Col Colin Francis** appointed commanding officer of 159 Supply Regiment, Royal Logistic Corps (Volunteers).



## DIRECTORY

**Armed Forces' Christian Union:** 01252 311221; [www.afcu.org.uk](http://www.afcu.org.uk)

**Armed Forces Humanist Association:** [www.armedforcesthumanists.org.uk](http://www.armedforcesthumanists.org.uk)

**ABF The Soldiers' Charity:** 0845 241 4820

**RBL Industries Vocational Assessment Centre:** 01622 795900; [www.rbli.co.uk](http://www.rbli.co.uk)

**SSAFA Forces Help:** 0845 1300 975; [www.ssafa.org.uk](http://www.ssafa.org.uk)

**Service Personnel and Veterans Agency:** 0800 169 2277 (from the UK); 0044 1253 866043 (from overseas)

**The Not Forgotten Association:** 020 7730 2400; [www.nfassociation.org](http://www.nfassociation.org)



## COMPETITIONS

**Spine line winners:** D Felton, QPSI, G Sqn; D Burton, Catterick Garrison; C Duckworth, Telford.

**PT-1000 trainers:** Felicity Sutton, Farnborough, Hampshire.



## DIARY

**March 9:** Sandown Park plays host to six races including the **Grand Military Gold Cup**. Entry is £13 per person and holders of the first 500 tickets sold will receive a free drink in The Grand Military Bar. To book visit [www.sandown.co.uk/pages/grandmilitary](http://www.sandown.co.uk/pages/grandmilitary) and enter the code GM2012.

**March 24:** 4 Para Freedom Parade, Liverpool.

**April 7-8:** Convoy For Heroes at Prestwold Hall in Leicestershire. Booking is now open and the organisers are aiming to assemble 1,000 vehicles for a new attempt at the Guinness World Record for longest Land Rover convoy. Contact Patricia Stoner on 07850 428821 or visit [www.convoy4heroes.org.uk](http://www.convoy4heroes.org.uk) for more information.

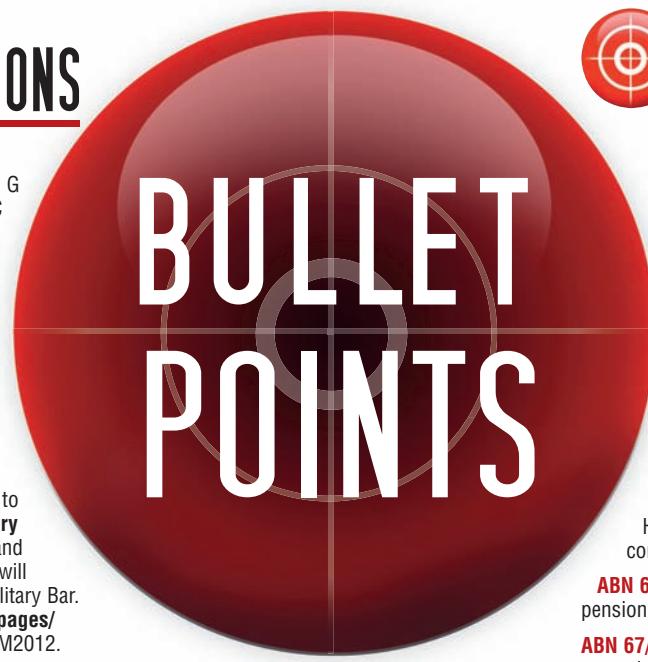
**April 21:** 72 Engineer Regiment Freedom Parade, Birkenhead.

**April 25:** ANZAC Day.

**May 12:** British Military Train 1945-1990 – The 2012 Berliner Tribute. In celebration of the calm professionalism of railway people, civilian and military, a steam locomotive will head a train of 1960s' carriages including a dining car from Berlin to Hanover and back. Fares start at £90 with proceeds going to The Royal British Legion in Berlin. There will also be a pre-train party in Berlin on May 11. For reservations and further details contact [militarytrain2012@gmail.com](mailto:militarytrain2012@gmail.com) or call Neil Howard on 07982 786529.

**Until further notice:** The Lord Ashcroft Gallery: Extraordinary Heroes. The world's largest collection of Victoria and George Crosses. The gallery examines the concept of bravery and personal stories behind the decorations. Imperial War Museum, Lambeth Road, London SE1 6HZ.

**Until further notice:** Exhibition of War Correspondents – reporting under fire since 1914. Featuring some of the people whose words, images, voices and faces bring the story from the front line to those at home, sometimes at considerable risk to themselves. Imperial War Museum North, Manchester M17 1TZ. [www.iwm.org.uk](http://www.iwm.org.uk)



## INTELLIGENCE

The following Army Briefing Notes, Defence Internal Briefs and Defence Information Notices can be found online at [www.armynet.mod.uk](http://www.armynet.mod.uk)

**ABN 62/11:** Launch of the Army Panel

**ABN 63/11:** The formation of Capability Directorate Combat

**ABN 64/11:** Warrior armoured infantry fighting vehicle to get £1 billion upgrade

**ABN 65/11:** The new Army Headquarters and revised Army command structure

**ABN 66/11:** Non-Regular permanent staff pension scheme

**ABN 67/11:** Noise-induced hearing loss campaign – *Listen to sense*

**ABN 68/11:** Personnel and Support Command restructuring announcement

**ABN 69/11:** Launch of the Army Women's Network

**ABN 70/11:** Individual reinforcement training pipeline

**ABN 01/12:** Project Avanti – disbandment of HQ 4 Division and initial operating capability of Headquarters Support Command in Aldershot

**ABN 02/12:** SDSR – Army compulsory redundancy programme tranche 2 announcement update

**ABN 03/12:** CGS's briefing team report (September – December 2011)

**ABN 04/12:** Realignment of Territorial Army command and control

**ABN 05/12:** Changes to British Army counter-IED staff processes

**ABN 06/12:** Changes to the Army Education Centre naming conventions

**ABN 7/12:** The formation of DG Capability and initial elements of the Land Capability management branch

**ABN 8/12:** Armed Forces Covenant – secretary of state's report to parliament

**ABN 09/12:** Opportunity for transfer into the Intelligence Corps

**ABN 10/12:** Wearing of medal ribbons

**ABN 12/12:** New Year Honours List 2013 – civilian awards

**DIB 103/11:** Operation Olympics

**DIB 104/11:** Review of British base sovereign areas in Cyprus

**DIB 106/11:** National Security Council meeting

on the government's strategy in Afghanistan

**DIB 107/11:** Transforming defence – defence reform blueprint for the future department

**DIB 108/11:** Transforming defence – defence reform head office senior structures

**DIB 110/11:** End of Nato training mission in Iraq

**DIB 111/11:** The government's response to the consultation on proposed increases to the principal civil service pension scheme – employee contribution rates effective from April 2012

**DIB 112/11:** Publication of the Armed Forces Covenant interim annual report

**DIB 01/12:** Services publish details for tranche 2 of the Armed Forces redundancy programme

**DIB 02/12:** Publication of the *National security through technology* white paper and accompanying consultation summary

**DIB 03/12:** Royal Navy transforming defence implementation

**DIB 04/12:** Combat operations in Afghanistan to continue as planned

**DIB 05/12:** The Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal

**DIN 2012DIN01-055:** Army Women's Network meeting – March 8

**DIN 2012DIN01-054:** Support fund for state schools with Service children (supersedes DIN 2011DIN01-160)

**DIN 2012DIN01-049:** Adjutant General's Corps (Military Provost Staff) recruitment (replaces DIN 2010DIN01-177)

**DIN 2012DIN01-048:** MIDIT recruitment 2012

**DIN 2012DIN01-047:** Use of PARs/PADRS and equivalent in the recruiting process

**DIN 2012DIN01-046:** Changes to the civilian performance management process for staff below the SCS

**DIN 2012DIN01-045:** The Professional Engineering Institution Churchill Medal Award

**DIN 2012DIN01-044:** External employment including business appointments

**DIN 2012DIN01-043:** Additional employee pension contributions

**DIN 2012DIN01-041:** Guidance for travel planning during the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games

**DIN 2012DIN01-040:** Civilian operational deployment – operational leave (supersedes DIN 2009DIN01-244)

**DIN 2012DIN01-038:** Olympic and Paralympic Games guidance

**DIN 2012DIN01-037:** Late entry commissions in the Royal Corps of Signals (supersedes DIN 2011DIN01-040)

**DIN 2012DIN01-036:** Permanent transfer overseas – school allowances

**DIN 2012DIN01-034:** Late entry commissions in the Adjutant General's Corps (supersedes DIN 2011DIN01-017)

**DIN 2012DIN01-033:** Opportunity for Service personnel to transfer into the Intelligence Corps

**DIN 2012DIN01-030:** Purchasing of added pension (supersedes DIN 2011DIN01-035)

**DIN 2012DIN01-029:** Information Excellence Awards 2012

**DIN 2012DIN01-028:** Changes to the Armed Forces Pension Scheme 2005 and the Armed Forces Redundancy Scheme 2010

**DIN 2012DIN01-027:** Late entry commissions in the Corps of Royal Engineers (supersedes DIN 2010DIN01-019 and DIN 2011DIN01-059)

**DIN 2012DIN01-025:** 54th International Military Pilgrimage to Lourdes (supersedes DIN 2011DIN01-025)

**DIN 2012DIN01-024:** Late entry commissions in the Corps of Royal Electrical and Mechanical

Engineers (supersedes DIN 2011DIN01-001)

**DIN 2012DIN01-023:** SDSR – Implementation of tranche 2 of Local Overseas Allowance measures

**DIN 2012DIN01-021:** All England Lawn Tennis Championships, Wimbledon

**DIN 2012DIN01-019:** Residential support scheme, help with the costs of studying away from home – Armed Forces families special exemption

**DIN 2012DIN01-018:** Enlistment to the Territorial Army for serving and recently discharged ex-Regular soldiers – a process guide and incentives (replaces DIN 2007DIN01-014)

**DIN 2012DIN01-017:** Army compulsory redundancy tranche 2

**DIN 2012DIN01-014:** Lasting power of attorney

**DIN 2012DIN01-013:** Guidance for Service personnel and their families when applying for mortgages and unsecured credit

**DIN 2012DIN01-011:** The in-Service fast stream competition

**DIN 2012DIN01-009:** Armed Forces support to The Prince's Trust team programme – appeal for short-term volunteer leaders (supersedes DIN 2010DIN01-048)

**DIN 2012DIN01-008:** Further legislative changes made to the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme

**DIN 2012DIN01-007:** Electoral registration – members of the Armed Forces and their spouses/civil partners (supersedes DIN 2010DIN01-175)

**DIN 2012DIN01-006:** Pension tax relief – Lifetime Allowance, fixed protection

**DIN 2012DIN01-005:** Army manpower liability adjustment policy

Continued on page 66

NO. 844

# JUST HOW OBSERVANT ARE YOU?

TEN details have been changed on this photograph of Capt Harry Wales as he prepares his Apache for a mission during Exercise Crimson Eagle in California, USA.

Circle the differences in the left image and send the panel to **HOAY 844, Soldier, Ordnance Road, Aldershot, Hampshire**

GU11 2DU by March 30.

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

May issue.

**January's competition:** First correct entry drawn at random and winner of the £100 was Mrs D Malloy, ADA York.

**Runners-up:** Capt MR Hunt, Duke of Lancaster's Regiment, Liverpool and Capt B Gurung, 4 Med Regt, Aldershot.



WIN  
£100

**DIN 2012DIN01-004:** The agency workers regulations 2010: 12 week rights – cancelled by sponsor

**DIN 2012DIN01-003:** Late entry commissioning in the Army Air Corps (supersedes DIN 2010DIN01-233)

**DIN 2012DIN01-001:** Department of Education announce Service pupil premium details

**DIN 2012DIN03-008:** Protection of information relating to UK Special Forces

**DIN 2012DIN03-007:** Re-subordination of Combat Service Support Training Advisory Team to the Collective Training Advisory Cell

**DIN 2012DIN03-006:** Visits to hospital exercises at Army Medical Services Training Centre in Strensall, York (supersedes DIN 2011DIN03-010)

**DIN 2012DIN03-005:** Re-subordination of the Training Development Team to the Collective Training Advisory Cell (supersedes DIN 2010DIN03-019)

**DIN 2012DIN03-004:** Establishment of International Policy France

**DIN 2012DIN03-003:** Diplomatic clearance requirements for foreign state aircraft in the USA

**DIN 2012DIN03-002:** Provision of deployable meteorological support to operations and exercises (supersedes DIN 2006DIN03-017)

**DIN 2012DIN03-001:** Associated support for EOD units

**DIN 2012DIN04-031:** Disposal of surplus

clothing and textiles, medical and dental, official gifts and memorabilia and miscellaneous and small vessels

**DIN 2012DIN04-030:** Declaration of obsolete – meteorological subsystem

**DIN 2012DIN04-029:** Declaration of obsolete – MSTAR

**DIN 2012DIN04-028:** Declaration of obsolete – ASP

**DIN 2012DIN04-027:** Publication of JSP 509, *The Management of Test Equipment* (supersedes DIN 2007DIN04-069)

**DIN 2012DIN04-025:** FV432 Mk2, FV434 Mk1 and FV436 Mk2 AESP 2350-T-250/251/252/253-octads – cancellation and disposal of AESPs

**DIN 2012DIN04-024:** Introduction of module 579-1 for the use, in conjunction with module 579, of FN/FNO carrying out Tac or Strat AE duties

**DIN 2012DIN04-023:** Saxon Patrol AESP 2320-X-120-Octad – cancellation and disposal of AESPs

**DIN 2012DIN04-021:** Declaration of obsolete – grenade discharger anti-riot CS L96, anti-riot practice L97 and withdrawal from service use

**DIN 2012DIN04-020:** Equipment tables, scales and schedules

**DIN 2012DIN04-017:** Booking of coach transport for British Forces Germany-based units

**DIN 2012DIN04-016:** The allocation of radio frequencies for use by UK military systems within the UK and abroad

**DIN 2012DIN04-015:** Flight booking processes for duty travel to Brunei

**DIN 2012DIN04-002:** FMT 932W mandatory equipment inspection report – wheeled vehicles

**DIN 2012DIN04-001:** Field electrical power distribution system – reconfiguration

**DIN 2012DIN05-007:** The Defence Electronic Warfare Centre and the provision of operational support (supersedes DIN 2011DIN05-001)

**DIN 2012DIN05-006:** Consent form for defence imagery

**DIN 2012DIN05-005:** The MoD metadata standard for imagery

**DIN 2012DIN05-004:** Army career management – Army Personnel Centre change and restructuring

**DIN 2012DIN05-002:** Transition of capability from the Joint Chemical Biological Radiological and Nuclear Regiment to Defence CBRN Wing

**DIN 2012DIN05-001:** Realignment of command and control in Germany, the formation of HQ British Forces Germany and the regulation of rebasing

**DIN 2012DIN06-008:** Provision of specialist occupational hygiene monitoring service (supersedes DIN 2008DIN06-024)

**DIN 2012DIN06-007:** Fire extinguishers – colour-coded service markings

**DIN 2012DIN06-006:** Release of JSP 319, edition 3 – *Joint Service safety regulations for the storage and handling and use of gases*

**DIN 2012DIN06-004:** Defence annual road safety award (supersedes DIN 2011DIN06-003)

**DIN 2012DIN06-001:** Management of Panton-Valentine Leukocidin-associated staphylococcal infection

**DIN 2012DIN07-036:** Conversion training to senior non-commissioned officer fighter

controllers (supersedes DIN 2011DIN07-146)

**DIN 2012DIN07-032:** Joint information operations training courses (supersedes DIN 2011DIN07-121)

**DIN 2012DIN07-026:** Defence language courses for training year 2012/2013

**DIN 2012DIN07-025:** Media operations training (replaces DIN 2011DIN07-028)

**DIN 2012DIN07-022:** Cambrian Patrol instructions and application form (supersedes DIN 2011DIN07-032)

**DIN 2012DIN07-020:** Applied technology course for senior officers

**DIN 2012DIN07-019:** Joint and single Service security, intelligence, photographic and geo-spatial training courses (supersedes DIN 2011DIN07-120)

**DIN 2012DIN07-018:** Defence College of Policing and Guarding – courses to be held April 1 to March 31, 2013 (supersedes DIN 2011DIN07-050)

**DIN 2012DIN07-016:** Military Aviation Authority air safety courses (supersedes DIN 2011DIN07-043)

**DIN 2012DIN07-015:** ETS support to the OCD programme

**DIN 2012DIN07-014:** ISR foundation course (supersedes DIN 2011DIN07-158)

**DIN 2012DIN07-013:** Board and search pre-course fitness programme

**DIN 2012DIN07-012:** Defence Diving School courses (supersedes DIN 2011DIN07-024)

**DIN 2012DIN07-010:** Army educational services support to NCO and WO command, leadership and management (supersedes DIN 2011DIN07-174)

**DIN 2012DIN07-009:** Adventurous training concentrations

**DIN 2012DIN07-008:** Unit welfare personnel training courses (supersedes DIN 2011DIN07-077)

**DIN 2012DIN07-007:** Qualifications resulting from attendance at staff colleges (supersedes DIN 2011DIN07-011)

**DIN 2012DIN07-006:** Alpine Challenge 2012 (supersedes DIN 2011DIN10-005)

**DIN 2012DIN07-004:** AB (Communication Information Systems) 1 career course

**DIN 2012DIN07-003:** Z6 course on nuclear weapon familiarisation (supersedes DIN 2011DIN07-004)

**DIN 2012DIN07-002:** Defence Centre of Training Support course schedule, April 2012 to March 2013 (supersedes DIN 2011DIN07-030 and DIN 2011DIN07-110)

**DIN 2012DIN07-001:** The captains' warfare course

**DIN 2012DIN08-001:** 2011-2012 Annual report and accounts, closure of feeders

**DIN 2012DIN09-004:** The Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal distribution and issue

**DIN 2012DIN09-003:** Chief of the Defence Staff commendation

**DIN 2012DIN09-002:** Armed Forces Day, June 30 (supersedes DIN 2010DIN09-008)

**DIN 2012DIN10-003:** Army Sport Control Board Charitable Fund

**DIN 2012DIN10-001:** Basic gliding courses at the Wyvern (Army) Gliding Club, Upavon

# WEB WATCH

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# HOME TRUTHS

A PERSONAL view from Julie McCarthy, chief executive of the Army Families Federation. Log on to [www.aff.org.uk](http://www.aff.org.uk) for more information



Picture: Richard Watt, MoD/PA Wire

**Don't conceal your views:** Soldiers who fail to register on the electoral roll are denying themselves the opportunity to be seen, heard or even to get credit

## We must not hide our presence in communities

**D**ID you take part in your unit's voter registration day last month? The MoD has launched its annual campaign to get as many Service personnel as possible on the electoral roll.

In a recent survey by the department, 75 per cent of respondents said they were on this list but other research by the Electoral Commission suggests that 44 per cent of people who believed they were registered were in fact not.

With all the administration involved in moving every couple of years it is easy to let this sort of task lapse.

But it is essential that it does not.

One improvement to the system is that Service voter enrolment now lasts for three years but of course if you've moved in that time voting papers won't necessarily find their way to your new address.

It is also important to remember that spouses and civil partners of personnel can register as Service voters too.

Doing so means two things. Firstly, you can vote when away on operations or living overseas by enrolling in an area with which you have a connection (perhaps where you grew up, where you were once posted or even where you hope to settle when leaving the British Army).

I signed up at my current Service Families Accommodation address – not for any special reason but I feel that it is important to highlight to MPs and councillors how many members of the Service community they have in their constituencies.

I am often saddened by the lack of interaction between local politicians and the "normal" Army community.

Never in my 17 years of living in Service accommodation have I met an elected official who's come to see what life is really like for military families.

Doing this job, I get to meet rather a lot of them but normally this is in much posher surroundings than my quarter or the local community centre.

It is important that politicians understand their military population – especially if they are interested in making use of the government's £30 million covenant fund.

But what a shame that it would take the lure of a bucket full of cash to encourage active engagement.

It has been interesting to see the noise created by councils and MPs in the areas most affected by the ongoing rebasing. Not always positive noise it has to be said but they at least are beginning to realise the socio-economic impact of large British Army communities.

So why bother registering to vote at all?

Putting aside the ability to have our say in elections, there is another important side to being on the register: the credit check.

I frequently hear from Army families about difficulties they have in getting a loan or a credit card.

It normally comes down to one of two things; they've lived abroad and so have no credit history in the UK or else they haven't registered to vote and so are not on the electoral roll.

All of the most basic checks in this area include looking at the official register and

if you can't be found it is likely that you will experience difficulty in getting credit.

Then, because you've been refused, your rating comes down and you still don't get on the roll... and so the vicious circle begins for soldiers and their families.

Voting also provides an opportunity to have a say on important issues that affect you. Education, health, rubbish collections, the state of the roads; you may think you don't have an opinion now but what if an issue arises down the line that you want to complain about?

What if you want to engage with your local MP or vote in a regional referendum?

If you're on the register, you'll have the chance to do these things.

Votes can be announced at short notice; general elections can be called as little as 17 working days beforehand.

But there are also other opportunities to have your say such as local government or European polls and all of these happen reasonably regularly.

Registering isn't about party politics, it's about our rights as citizens of the UK.

Personally, I think that taking part in general elections should be compulsory – after all, the Armed Forces have fought long and hard in foreign climes to give people the right to a free vote.

Many have lost their lives doing so.

In respect to their memory, we should all be placing our cross on the ballot paper at every opportunity. ■

[www.aboutmyvote.co.uk/armedforces](http://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk/armedforces)



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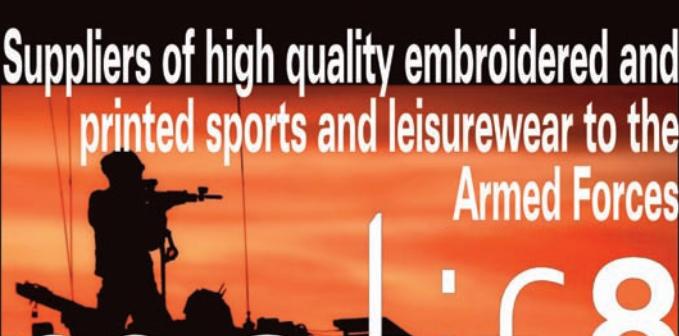
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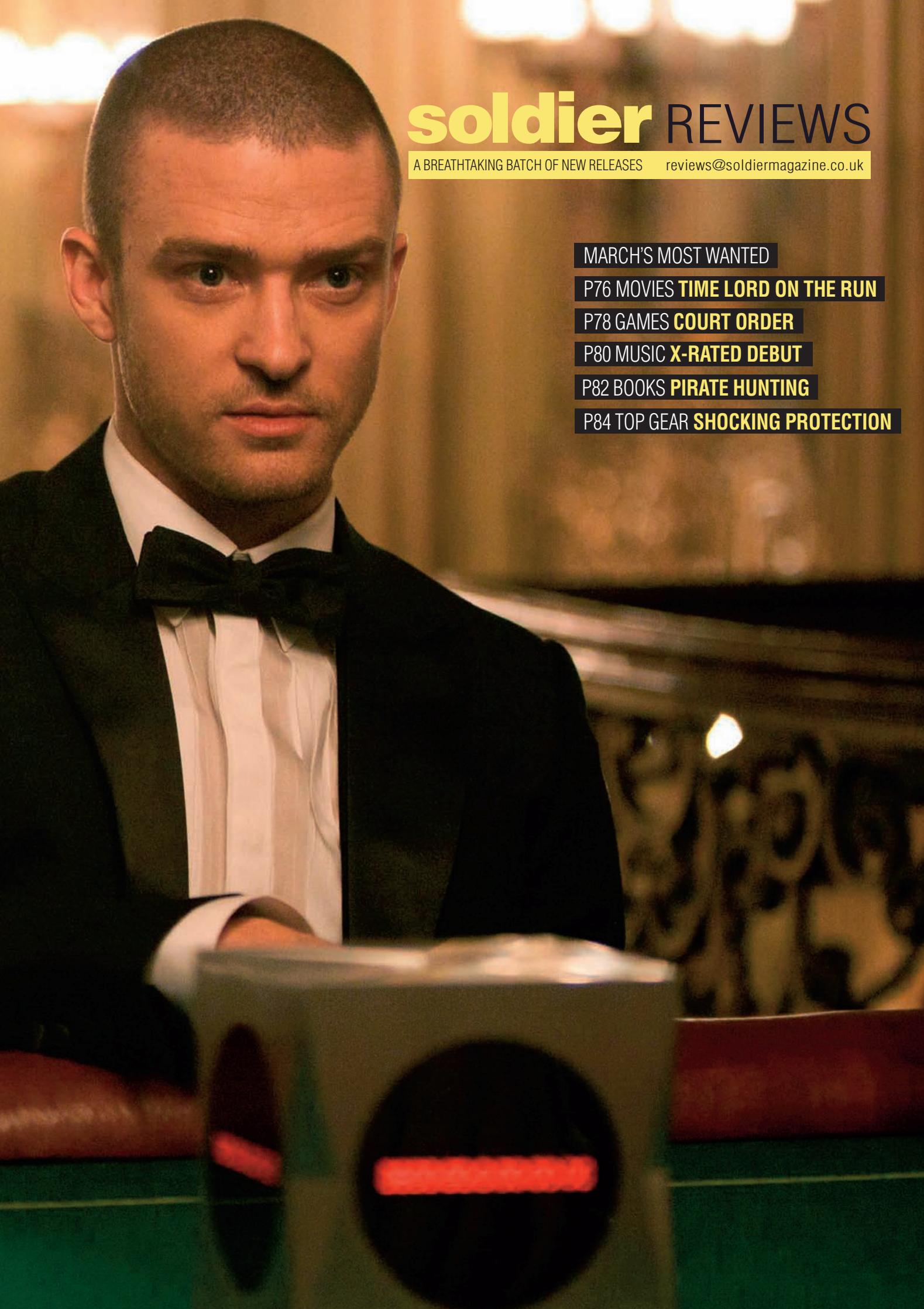
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A dramatic, close-up photograph of a man with short, dark hair and a light beard. He is wearing a dark tuxedo jacket over a white shirt and a dark bow tie. He is holding a clear glass in his right hand, which is raised towards the camera. His gaze is fixed directly on the viewer with a serious, intense expression. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a grand interior with warm, golden lighting.

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MARCH'S MOST WANTED

P76 MOVIES **TIME LORD ON THE RUN**

P78 GAMES **COURT ORDER**

P80 MUSIC **X-RATED DEBUT**

P82 BOOKS **PIRATE HUNTING**

P84 TOP GEAR **SHOCKING PROTECTION**



**Tick tock:** Released by Twentieth Century Fox, the sci-fi thriller *In Time* is out now on Blu-ray and DVD

# JT watches the clock

Strong cast engages audience in anti-capitalist allegory where time means life

**Review: Joe Clapson**

FROM Andrew Niccol, the director of *Gattaca*, this is an entertaining head-scratcher which poses more questions about the world's current state of affairs than it answers.

Set in a future where people stop ageing at 25 and have the ability to increase their internal body clock by working, Justin Timberlake plays a factory employee who has been gifted 100 years of life by a suicidal tycoon.

We are not given an explanation for the rules in this alternative reality and although the plot is definitely a dig at corporate greed, the message is lost slightly amid a complicated concept.

To avoid over-population in this world where time has replaced money as currency, everyone has an electronic digital countdown tattooed on their arm. When the clock reaches zero, the body ceases to function.

The singer-turned-actor's Will Salas decides to use his time to bring down the system and in the process he befriends an elderly time-banker (*Mad Men's* Vincent Kartheiser) before running off with his eye-catching daughter (Amanda Seyfried).

Timberlake explained how the movie, which involves him and his female accomplice sprinting around raiding banks and giving "time" to the poor, is relevant in an era where people are angry at the real world's economic system.

"Andrew [Niccol] has a way of turning the mirror on us and he uses fantastical concepts to do it," he said.

"I can still remember the first time I saw *Gattaca* and *The Truman Show* because they just stuck with me and I think this movie sticks with you too.

"I think it's a direct reflection of what is going on. [There is] the idea that we are obsessed with youth and immortality – that is another concept in the movie and [in real life] there is a multi-million dollar industry that is dedicated to trying to make us look younger."

The story serves as an anti-capitalist allegory right on cue as bonus-hungry bankers are being bashed and despite a complicated idea, the strong cast and sharp production keeps you engaged.

The race against the clock gives the viewer plenty to get excited about and there is also a dose of sadness revolving around Will's mother and her lack of life funds.

Timberlake plays a character much removed from the body-popping boy-band singer of his

past and pulls it off with style.

"I looked at Will as an everyday man who just has had enough," said the Hollywood star. "I can relate to loving your mum a lot like Will does."

The actor, who received plaudits for his efforts in *The Social Network* and *Bad Teacher*, went on to give his secret to connecting with a movie part.

"When you play a character you find the things that are very much like yourself. This is the most personal I have gotten with a role because it felt like a real person."

The former *Mickey Mouse Club* child star added: "I feel like I probably put the most of myself into this character because honestly I came from an everyday man blue-collar type of place."

"I've had a very extraordinary experience thus far but I don't ever want to take it for granted."

There is certainly much for a cynic to pick apart from this dystopian concept but if you allow for the plot holes it is an engaging, fast-paced thriller.

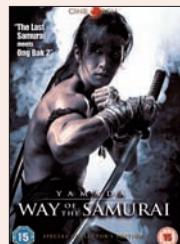
In a nutshell: the poor die young and the rich can purchase extra years from their less well-off counterparts and a remarkably good-looking cast is employed to tell the tale.

Don't expect to have your mind blown but *In Time* is a decent enough way to spend a few hours in front of the screen. ■

From martial arts maestros to dicing with death squads, *Soldier* checks out the latest DVD releases...

## Yamada: Way of the Samurai out now

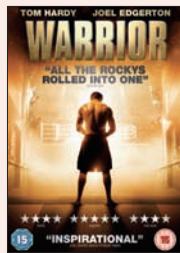
BASED on a true story set in the ancient kingdom of Ayothaya, this film brings to life the adventures of Yamada Nagamasa, a young Japanese samurai warrior who gives up his homeland to protect the sovereignty of the Thai people. Our hero is betrayed and left for dead by Japanese forces, but finds sanctuary in a remote village and masters the fighting art Muay Boran. Using his skills he becomes bodyguard to King Naresuan and finds himself facing the warriors who cast him out. With stunning set locations and mind-blowing fight scenes, this is excellent and should be top of the list for action fans.



**Rodge Tapply, ex RE**

## Warrior out now

WITH a plot akin to a black Shakespearean comedy, two brothers unwittingly find themselves in the "Sparta" mixed martial arts competition with a winner-takes-all five million dollar prize. The two-day tournament is merciless, desperate, shocking and breathtakingly shot. Background plots explore dysfunctional families and an array of complex social issues. The casting is right on the money. With the exception of the inevitable shape, but not the outcome, of the final scene this film had me gripped. Do not confuse this with the schmaltz of the *Rocky* series. I wish I had seen this at the cinema. Definitely buy or rent it.



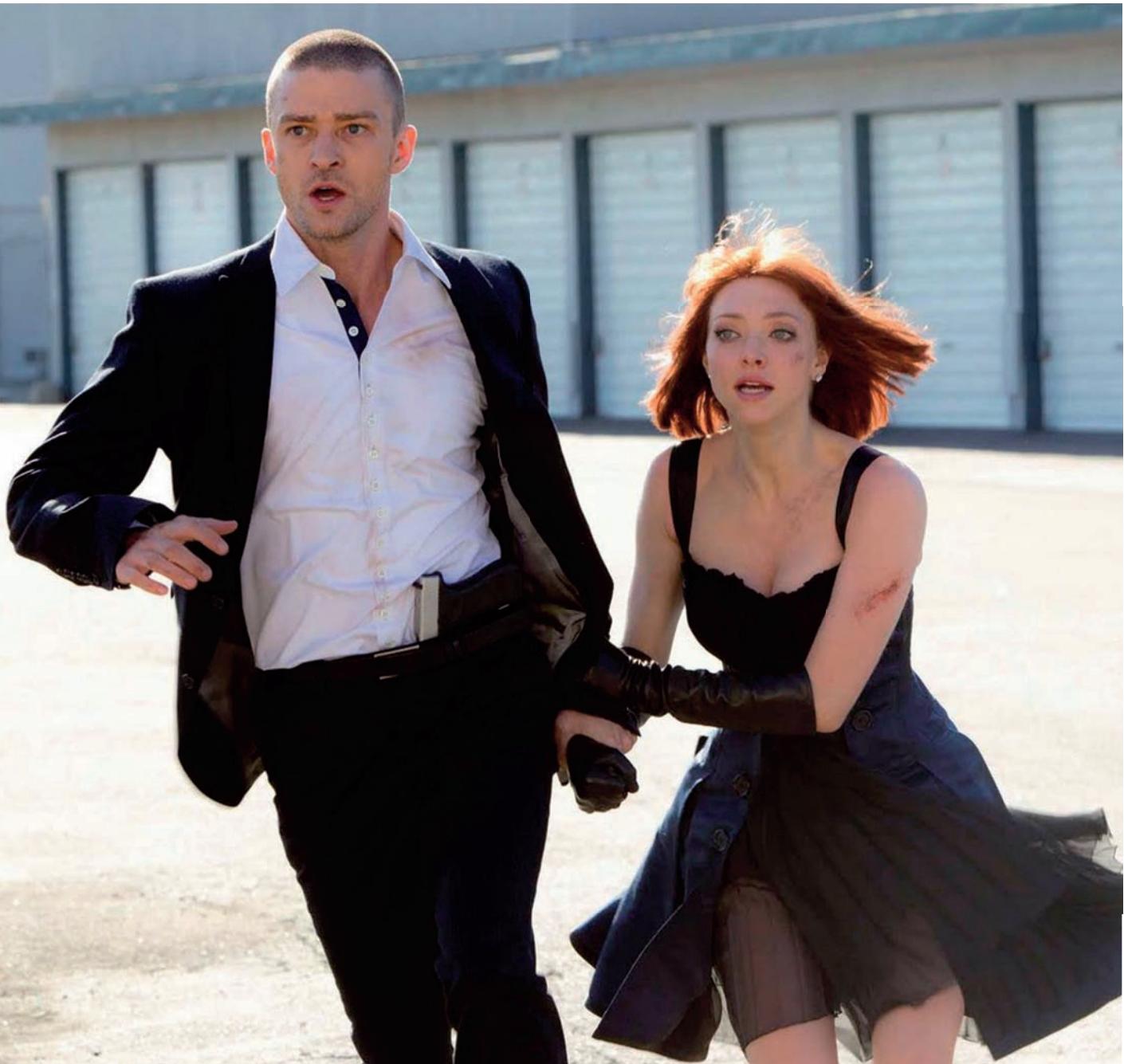
**Maj Neil Johnson, AAC**

## The Guard out now

THIS black comedy written and directed by **John Michael McDonagh** sees an Irish cop in a small village mixed up in murder and a drug smuggling episode. If you liked the quirky thriller *In Bruges* with **Brendon Gleeson** then the chances are you will love *The Guard*. Gleeson stars as Sgt Doyle who has to team up with an American FBI agent, Wendell Everett (**Don Cheadle**). The pair form an unlikely alliance as Doyle is a rude, foul-mouthed racist while his sidekick is a fish-out-of-water American. In Gleeson's hands you cannot help but love his character and the film builds to a satisfying climax.



**Cpl Jools Finch, MPGS**



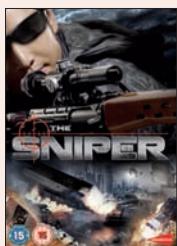
**Clock watchers:** Justin Timberlake and Anna Kendrick race around plundering time from the big bosses in Andrew Niccol's sci-fi thriller

### The Sniper out March 12

AN ex-sniper from the elite squad of the Hong Kong police department is released from jail following an alleged manslaughter and he has revenge on his mind for those who didn't help him. He teams up with a mob boss and the city is thrown into chaos.

Out to stop him are his old partner, Hartman, and new sniper recruit, OJ. The film offers some quite good action with some excellent high-octane "bullet time" sequences thrown in. Being presented in Chinese with English subtitles doesn't detract from the fact that this is watchable. If you have a spare hour-and-a-half, *The Sniper* will keep you suitably entertained.

**Dan Crowder, civvy**



### Don't Be Afraid Of The Dark out now

THIS story follows Sally (**Bailee Madison**), a young girl who moves to Rhode Island to live with her father (**Guy Pearce**) and his new girlfriend (**Katie Holmes**) in the 19th century mansion they are restoring. While exploring the property, our protagonist hears voices coming from creatures in the basement. These beings appear to be set on claiming Sally as one of their own. A disturbing prologue sets up a stylish and scary horror movie, which showcases a lovely performance from Madison. The creatures are revealed a little early and are slightly disappointing but otherwise this is terrific.

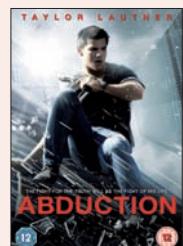
**Cpl Jools Finch, MPGS**



### Abduction out now

IF you want sophistication watch *Mission Impossible*, which this action movie tries hard to blend with every teenage boy's fantasies. Our hero is the son of a CIA operative who has no idea he has been prepared, by his adoptive parents, to cope with death squads and survival situations. Everything seems normal until, very early in the film, the turbo-charged plot kicks in. Throw into the mix an obligatory hottie girlfriend, foreign baddies wearing black and most of the usual clichés are ticked off. Slickly shot under the directorship of **John Singleton** but not aimed at *Soldier* magazine's core readership.

**Maj Neil Johnson, AAC**





**Smash hit:** Publishers Electronic Arts have accurately recreated life on the baseline in *Grand Slam Tennis 2*, out now

# Kings of the court

Sporting heavyweights bring winning formula to elite-level tennis tournaments

**Review: Richard Long**

**W**HEN it comes to sporting titles, the philosophy of powerhouse publishers Electronic Arts has always been "accuracy is God".

Whether it is taking to the pitch for a Premier League title-decider on *Fifa* or firing the ball down the fairway on one of the many incarnations of *Tiger Woods PGA Tour*, the attention to detail is second to none.

Stadiums, courses, sound effects and commentaries all mirror the elite sporting stage, so when the second instalment of the *Grand Slam Tennis* franchise was announced, fans certainly knew what to expect.

The depth of the game is quite stunning and players can put their court skills to the test on the full range of challenging surfaces.

The competition format features the four Grand Slam tournaments, meaning you can wow British crowds and reign supreme at Wimbledon or dazzle in the searing heat of the Australian Open.

As you would expect, the game's leading lights are all stunningly captured.

If you're happy to play as Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal, Andy Murray or Novak Djokovic you won't be disappointed, but there is not a lot of depth to the additional roster.

In the women's draw the possibilities are even narrower but the hard-hitting Williams sisters are on hand to power home the volleys alongside fellow heavyweight Maria Sharapova.

But if the contemporary stars fail to deliver when it matters, players have the option of bringing the legends of yesteryear back to the big time to recreate up to 25 great Grand Slam moments from the past.

Bjorn Borg, Pete Sampras and Martina Navratilova can all be coaxed out of retirement and their introduction adds impressively to the splendour of the game.

The most celebrated element of this title is what Electronic Arts have billed as the "total racquet control" system, which incorporates the right analogue stick.

This is designed to deliver greater accuracy with spin, slice and flat shots but it takes a while to master and the temptation to revert to traditional button play is hard to resist.

Once comfortably under control, this system provides clear benefits and those competing

on the PlayStation 3 have the added bonus of utilising the Move technology.

It is just a pity that such advancements did not extend to the Xbox Kinect.

The career mode proves a welcome addition and you can customise your character with a level of detail ranging from the colour of his sideburns to their style of play on court.

Once in the game, you can compete in a variety of challenges, tournaments and exhibitions to improve your seeding in the professional ranks.

Further realism comes in the form of commentaries from legends Pat Cash and John McEnroe, and the latter guides you through an excellent training mode as you get to grips with serving, net play and shots from the baseline.

*Grand Slam Tennis 2* clearly builds on what Electronic Arts do best and there are no questions or doubts to be raised when it comes to authenticity and realism.

Fans of the sport will undoubtedly be engrossed, it looks great and the gameplay is simply superb.

The title's one weakness comes from the fact there are only so many times you can whack a ball over the net before the action becomes repetitive and a tad tiresome. ■

From puzzling sleep patterns to fulfilling flights of fantasy, we check out the best and the rest of the new releases...

## Fallout New Vegas Ultimate Edition

THE *Ultimate Edition* of Obsidian Entertainment's hugely popular role-player packs an almighty punch and builds impressively on the foundations set by the title's predecessor. Players can explore the mission expansion packs known as Dead Money, Old World Blues, Honest Hearts and Lonesome Road and there are more friends, enemies and armaments to make the adventure even more enjoyable and immersive. Such releases can often be dismissed as an effortless money-making venture but *Fallout New Vegas* successfully bucks the trend and deserves to be celebrated as a game in its own right.



**Richard Long, Soldier**

## Soul Calibur V for Xbox 360 and PS3

THE latest release in the *Soul Calibur* series is aimed primarily at the internet community. If you're thinking about buying this title for an in-depth and satisfying single-player mode then think again as the story is distinctly short. Graphically it is a sight to behold, with around 20 glorious backdrops to fight in. The crowning glory is the online multiplayer and lobby mode. Gamers can choose their preference of connection quality through regional matchmaking that gives a near lag-free connection. Buy this if you like multiplayer beat-em ups but novices should be wary of the steep learning curve.



**SSgt Graeme Russell, Scottish Tpt Regt**

## Catherine for Xbox 360 and PS3

RELATIONSHIP horror puzzle *Catherine* has a rare quality – it is a completely original game which is a glorious amalgamation of elements that shouldn't work together and yet strangely do. You play as Vincent, a man in his thirties struggling to commit to his long-term girlfriend, whose life gets complicated when he wakes up next to Catherine after a night of drinking. The gameplay takes place in our hero's nightmares and much of the story is told through anime cut scenes along with phone calls and messages from the women in his life. This explores adult themes in a mature way and is a must-buy for puzzle game fans.



**Stephen Smith, MoD Corsham**



The brat is back: Former Wimbledon champion John McEnroe is one of a host of court legends to return to the sporting big time in *Grand Slam Tennis 2*

### Final Fantasy XIII-2 for Xbox 360 & PS3

SET three years after the previous incarnation, this iteration follows on with the usual supply of colourful characters and a combat system that many of us have come to love. But the game is significantly different to its predecessor. The paths you choose are nowhere near as linear and instead you are provided with various routes to take in your quest to find Lightning, the protagonist of the previous *Final Fantasy*. This is a beautiful game but it has one major failing – the story. It is surprisingly flat and there isn't much in the way of closure at the end. But despite this single sour grape there is still plenty to savour.



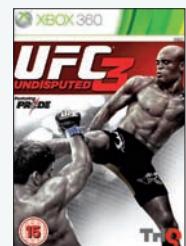
### Darkness II for Xbox 360, PS3 and PC

THE opening plot to *Darkness II* is stunning, it's like *The Sopranos* jacked-up on a cocktail of hard alcohol and amphetamines with some gory horror thrown in. This is a solid offering that plays well and takes the form of a first-person shooter with added demon abilities. Your snake-like arms do your bidding alongside the variety of guns that form an impressive arsenal. The gameplay is fun and addictive and the developers have gone for a comic-style story approach that may take a bit of getting used to, but does look good. Overall it's a decent enough game for rental but it ultimately lacks any long-term playability.



### UFC Undisputed 3 for Xbox 360 and PS3

AS a newcomer to the UFC gaming franchise, I was disappointed with this offering. Most bouts didn't extend past the opening round and all of them were ended with a knockout from frenetic, uncoordinated button bashing. The fights look realistic enough and there is plenty of unlockable content with video footage and interviews of stars talking about their experiences in the cage. There is also a chance to play as your favourite athlete and re-enact past glories. This is definitely a game for fans trying to get the ultimate mixed martial arts experience, rather than those who simply have a passing interest in the sport.



**David McDougall, JHQ Rheindahlen**

**Cpl Mike O'Neill, RLC**

**Sgt Wallace Stephenson, Int Corps**



**Quick off the mark:** Marcus Collins' self-titled album comes just months after his extended run on Saturday night prime-time television

# New kid on the block

Beaten *X Factor* finalist builds swiftly on reality success to deliver debut release

## Interview: Richard Long

**H**AVING been catapulted to stardom on the last *X Factor* pop juggernaut, Marcus Collins has been quick to cash in on his newfound fame.

Just three months ago the former hairdresser was performing to an audience of millions in the competition final and is now about to release a debut album boasting a selection of self-penned tracks alongside familiar favourites.

While he is clearly excited about his work, Collins is braced for the inevitable backlash that comes from those who are quick to criticise the fast track to success that stems from such reality television shows.

"You're not considered to be a credible artist if you come out of *The X Factor*," he said.

"It is slightly ridiculous. Nobody sees you up at five every morning doing vocal warm-ups, getting yourself prepped, songwriting in the studio, making sure you're fighting fit.

"I've got to work twice as hard to get the respect that anyone else gets. I know that."

His self-titled debut opens with a cover of The

White Stripes' *Seven Nation Army*, a rock track that is far removed from the Motown vibe that became his trademark on our television screens.

"I know I'll get caned for some of my stuff," the artist predicted.

"You don't turn to a song like *Seven Nation Army* without expecting the odd raised eyebrow.

"But I'm made of pretty strong stuff.

"I've had worse and it's going to take time and life experience.

"I can be sensitive to people writing things about my choice of songs, my appearance, my sexuality or whatever, but I'm in a good place."

Collins is hoping to follow in the footsteps of fellow runners-up Rebecca Ferguson, Olly Murs and JLS who have all forged arguably greater careers than their victors to date.

And he's happy to have mentor Gary Barlow on-board to guide him along the way.

"He's written a song for me," Collins said.

"I had no idea that he'd be behind me after the competition but he's been absolutely amazing.

"I turned to Gary backstage before we went out for the final announcement and said 'it's fine, we've done what we wanted to do. Little Mix have got it but I've won in my own way.'

"I was genuinely beaming with pride and

sometimes it is better to come second."

Referring to his own songwriting efforts, he said: "I'm not claiming to be Elton John, but I love getting my feelings down in music.

"I've been through so much and feel like I've got a lot to share."

While the rapid-fire turnaround of this eponymous debut may have caught some by surprise, the songs themselves follow a safe formula that play to the strengths the singer showcased on Saturday evenings.

The *Seven Nation Army* reprise strips back the guitar work and hard edge of its predecessor to leave a somewhat underwhelming and heartless pop offering.

But *Higher and Higher*, originally a hit for Jackie Wilson and performed by Collins on *The X Factor*, is a welcome inclusion as is the Janelle Monae hit *Tightrope*.

*Mercy* and *Don't Surrender* prove to be the best of the weaker new material but Collins generally struggles to break free from the pigeonhole created by Barlow et al.

While this is far from being a poor offering, it certainly falls on the safe middle ground and if the famed runner-up is to enjoy any longevity he may have to push the creative boundaries. ■

From stunning sibling songwriting to watered-down angst rock, we check out what's hot and what's not...

## Gotten Gains by ill

ATLANTA-based band **ill** are an evocative fusion of grunge snippets, killer **Hendrix**-style licks and punk attitude. Opening track *One Time* storms right out with a screaming guitar solo and flavours of 90s Seattle, while *A* impresses with an up-tempo beat and vibrant chorus. On the flip side, the delicate vocal work on *Christine* and *Gold & Opal* ooze sentiment and angst. This mood continues with added aggression on *Bitch* before *Castration* restores the pace with some furious drum beats. As an album, *Gotten Gains* grows with every listen and will hit the spot for lovers of rock's various subspecies, while others will be won over by the blend of noisy distortion and soulful grooves.

**Capt Matt Walpole, PWRR**



## Breakfast by Chiddy Bang

ELECTRO hip hop stars **Chiddy Bang** follow-up on the chart success of *Ray Charles* and *Mind Your Manners* with the long-awaited release of debut album *Breakfast*. The record had originally been scheduled for the summer of 2011 and the lengthy delay only heightened expectations, but the end result more than justifies the inconvenience. While the aforementioned hit singles hog the limelight there are numerous standout offerings that create a superb all-round offering. *Handclaps and Guitars* and *Run It Back* have the potential for future greatness and *Baby Roulette* pushes a retro vibe with a sound emanating from an old-school *Super Mario Brothers* game. This is a definite purchase.

**Richard Long, Soldier**



## King of Number 33 by Dee Expus

I WAS intrigued when asked to review this release as I had not heard of the band. Some swift investigation work revealed they are a throwback to the halcyon days of prog rock. A few chords of opener *Me And My Downfall* did nothing to dispel the notion. It helps when you are able to call on the mercurial talents of **Marillion** stalwart **Mark Kelly** and his keyboard abilities are not wasted judging by the solo on *Maybe September*. There are reminders of early **Genesis** influences that combine with hard-edged guitars to make some fascinating sounds. Even the presence of 80s' pop pioneer **Nik Kershaw** on *Memo* should not convince rock lovers that prog is extinct. Well worth a listen.

**Steve King, Soldier**





**Motown man: Marcus Collins builds on *The X Factor*'s winning formula on his debut album, which includes a number of self-penned tracks**

### **Our Version of Events** by Emeli Sande

AFTER the beguiling **Massive Attack**-esque opener *Heaven*, the potential for **Emeli Sande's** *Our Version of Events* to meet its huge hype is great. It's a shame that what follows is a largely forgettable, pop-by-numbers journey. Sande has an outstanding voice and her much-vaunted songwriting ability is obvious throughout, but the punch of hits such as *Next to Me* are isolated nuggets of excitement. Her record of penning tracks for well-established artists is evident in the likes of *Mountain* and *Daddy*, but therein lies the problem – much of this release sounds like it could have come straight from **Leona Lewis** or **Alexandra Burke**. Worth a listen, but average at best.



**Stephen Tyler, ex-Soldier**

### **Country Song** by Seether

ROCKERS **Seether** offer a mouth-watering teaser for the much anticipated album *Holding Onto Strings Better Left To Fray* with this belting offering. *Country Song* is already boasting worldwide honours toppling household names like the **Red Hot Chili Peppers** and **Foo Fighters**. It reflects the mature evolution the three-piece has undergone in the decade since their debut, but is still loaded with passion. Starting poignantly with foot-tapping, bluegrass undertones, this is as far as the southern flavour extends. The chorus blasts you with a low, grinding guitar riff and the asphalt abrasion of **Shaun Morgan's** vocals. Seether tour Britain in March – we should brace ourselves.



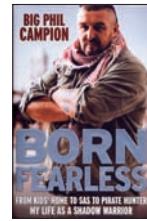
**Capt Matt Walpole, PWRR**

### **Born To Die** by Lana Del Rey

THE unlikely rise of US star **Lana Del Rey** gathered further pace last month when the singer scooped the title for best international breakthrough act at the Brit Awards. But judging by the evidence presented in this debut album it is hard to imagine why such lavish praise has been bestowed upon her. *Born To Die* is pleasing enough and has a handful of endearing qualities in the form of *Dark Paradise* and *Radio*, but it ultimately fails to capture the imagination. *National Anthem*, co-written with *Fame Academy* winner **David Sneddon**, is a particular low and merely confirms the belief that better efforts must surely lie ahead for an artist with such worldly talents.



**Joe Clapson, Soldier**



**Life of hard knocks:** Phil Campion's *Born Fearless: From Kids' Home to SAS to Pirate Hunter – My Life as a Shadow Warrior* is out now

# Memoirs with muscle

Ex-soldier exposes realities of life on the front line without British Army back-up

## Interview: Joe Clapson

**A**SPECIAL Forces operative-turned-private military contractor has set out to tell his story without "the eyes blacked out".

*Born Fearless*, "Big" Phil Campion's first foray into publishing, is certainly candid in its descriptions of a lifetime spent ever-ready for action – both in and out of uniform.

"I'm keen to purvey the private circuit as an extension of an Army career," the debut author told *Soldier*. "The way I see it a doctor in the NHS can go and work for Bupa, so a bloke can become a contractor when he leaves the Forces."

However, the former Royal Hampshire Regiment corporal insists his book is not an attempt to glorify the role and potential trappings of being a hired gun.

"I just tell the truth," explained Campion, who left the military with 15 years of service, some of which was spent "in the nick for being a naughty boy, scrapping and that sort of thing", and has since added pirate hunting and hostage extraction to his CV.

"I enjoy a lot of the work I do but on the flip

side it can be monotonous.

"Before Iraq there was big money to be made in private security but since then prices have been knocked down.

"Most guys on anti-piracy jobs now will be lucky to be on £350 a day and if I was looking at getting out of the Army I would have a massive think about [not doing it].

"If blokes are going to take anything from the book, it's that there are some horrendous times to be had," he added. "It's not just a quick route to the dollar. If it does go noisy and wrong you are going to be in a world of hurt that you've never experienced in the Services."

"There's no quick-reaction force en route; you're on your own and possibly in a boiler suit with someone coming to hack your head off."

Despite the inherent dangers of security work, Campion has added stamps from Afghanistan, Iraq, Kuwait, Israel, Jordan, Somalia and Kenya to his passport and is not yet ready for retirement.

"I've done all sorts of things, from working for shipping companies to carrying £50-million worth of diamonds in a bag you wouldn't put your best suit in," said the larger-than-life character who passed both The Parachute Regiment and Commando selection during his career in green.

"It's not glamorous, although I've had the odd laugh along the way."

"I worked on Led Zeppelin's comeback tour and have provided security for Kasabian but there aren't many 'sports' afternoons in this business."

"I'm currently looking to build the 'Big Phil' brand with other books and potential TV and film work, but I might kick off 2012 with a bit of anti-piracy and Libya is opening up so I'd imagine I'll get out there."

If *Born Fearless* is to be the bedrock of the Big Phil brand it will need to emulate its author, whose early years were spent in a children's home, and prosper against the odds.

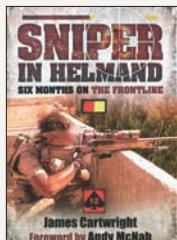
Memoirs penned by ex-Special Forces personnel are ten a penny but, having established himself as one of the top dogs in the often murky world of private security contractors, Campion is unlikely to have too many concerns about operating in a saturated market.

"There have been people working in anti-piracy who have served in Northern Ireland and think they can suddenly transfer those skills onto a ship in the Indian Ocean – it just doesn't work," he said. "As the saying goes, 'the Iranian Embassy's balconies were the biggest in the world because everyone was on them'." ■

From sniping at sharpshooters to being baffled by bridges, a flick through this month's literary releases...

## Sniper in Helmand by James Cartwright

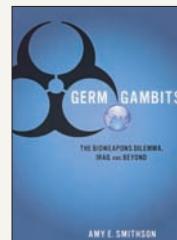
AS an educator I encourage soldiers to read as much as possible and tend to recommend military autobiographies because they are familiar and fun. This is not the case with *Sniper in Helmand*, which is without doubt the worst "how I became a sharpshooter/para/SAS operative" title I've had the displeasure of picking up. It was so bad I admitted defeat after 50 pages. **James Cartwright** covers his time in Iraq in one sentence, dismissing his spell as a gravel-belly infantryman in a fashion that is almost disrespectful. As for the £19.99 price tag [hardback], I can think of a hundred better things to invest in.



**Capt Nick Mazzei, AGC (ETS)**

## Germ Gambits by Amy Smithson

PART historical account and part retrospective arms control inspection manual, this illuminating but slightly repetitive book by **Amy Smithson** reviews an unhappy decade for the United Nations post 1991. The author charts the hunt for Iraq's bio-weapons programme and studies why Saddam Hussein's regime went to the lengths it did to cover its tracks. The late Dr David Kelly features heavily and despite other quality contributing scientists, the UN Special Commission could rarely be certain of the facts as a consequence of blatant Iraqi obfuscation in a clash between bio-science and international politics.



**Lt Col Andy Gladen, RE**

## A Couple of Duffers Go to War

THIS is a very well written book about the childhood exploits of twin brothers – author **Geoffrey Lee Williams** and Alan – prior to and during the Second World War. After reading the title, which includes tales of voluntary employment with the fire service, it is difficult to conceive that the youth of today would be as politically and globally aware of events as the Williams' siblings claim to have been as eight-year-olds. This is perhaps the book's lone failing – the benefit of 65 years' hindsight has removed much of the youthful innocence. An otherwise welcome account of those who had to endure the blitz, evacuation and V1 rocket attacks.



**Sgt Wallace Stephenson, Int Corps**

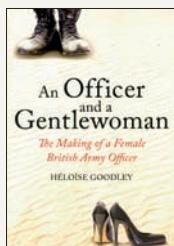


Hard man for hire: "Big" Phil Campion talks candidly about the risks and rewards of being a soldier of fortune in his debut book

Picture: Mike Weston

### An Officer and a Gentlewoman

**HELOISE GOODLEY'S** excellent book describes her transition from civilian to Army officer. The author's inexperience and naivety shines through in some of her criticisms, which are as much her own misunderstandings as anything; but this is not to detract from a really engaging read. There are laugh-out-loud moments and the writing displays a great deal of charming humility; she underplays, for example, the success of being chosen to commission into the AAC. The inclusion of a nasty platoon commander as a literary device, announced as fictitious, is baffling and in contrast to the beautifully observed vignettes about training.



**Maj Inigo Jones, MoD Main Building**

### World War II Book of Lists by C Martin

THIS title is exactly what its cover proclaims – a collection of lists of facts, figures and extracts relating to the Second World War. The quality of the information on offer does vary between subject headings but there are a few nuggets hidden away in the text if you are persistent and sift through the pages. Definitely not the kind of offering that I would usually seek out and not an historical reference book by any stretch of the imagination. However, **Chris Martin's** title will undoubtedly appeal to *Soldier's* younger ranks or those who like to sit and enjoy an easy read during moments of solitude!

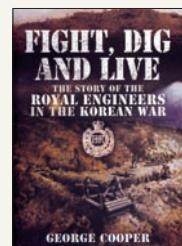
**Maj Mike Peters, AAC**

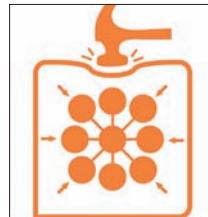


### Fight, Dig and Live by George Cooper

THE author, a retired general and former Chief Royal Engineer, is quick to point out that this is the story, not a history, of RE involvement in the Korean War. Despite deploying himself, this is not a "why I am great" offering, indeed several anecdotes do not show the writer at his best. **George Cooper** assumes a degree of engineering knowledge leaving some sections, especially on the bridges and ferries, fairly incomprehensible. The story is well balanced, covering both the exciting fighting and myriad of often banal, yet essential, tasks carried out in an operational theatre. A good, if slightly niche, account.

**Capt Douglas Searle, RLC**





**Shock lock:** Molecules inside D3O firm up to absorb blows before immediately returning to a flexible, softer state

# Impressive on impact

*Soldier* visits home of orange shock absorber D3O to discover what makes it so unique

## Report: Sarah Goldthorpe

**W**HAT do a pair of pink ballet shoes and the latest hard-wearing motorcycle gloves have in common?

Answer: they are among thousands of items developed from a unique shock-absorbing material called D3O.

Invented back in 2001, this intriguing orange putty-like substance is now a widely recognised brand to those working in the spheres of protective clothing.

Reacting to its growing profile among consumers and manufacturers, *Soldier* paid a visit to the maker's HQ in Brighton to learn more about the capabilities of the formidable foam.

Stephen Wilde, business development manager for D3O, explained: "The material has this fantastic ability of being able to be hit over and over again.

"The key is its absorbing energy. D3O can stiffen under impact and spread the load.

"By doing that, it really protects. Compression over its entire lifetime is about five per cent.

"And the comfort you get on day one is the

comfort you get when you throw it away."

Scientists at D3O headquarters are constantly putting the patented polymer through its paces in various tests that establish suitability for an ever-expanding range of defence and sporting items.

The technology's particles are able to flow under normal conditions but under impact they mesh together to form a very thin but incredibly effective protective layer.

And the domain in which it is really showing its worth is that of adrenalin sports.

To that end, it is perhaps unsurprising to stumble across an online video of a guy being hit across the head with a shovel in order for a journalist to check the material in the extreme.

Sadly unwilling to go to such lengths for a verdict on its performance, *Soldier* was instead guided around the D3O lab to see scientists' more conventional machine-led efforts to test the foam.

Its ability to provide top protection at the point of impact is balanced with the material's comfiness and malleability and means the science is interesting US Army chiefs as much as ballerinas with D3O in the tips of their shoes or motorcyclists wearing it in back protectors.

"It will never be the lowest cost product on the market but the objective is to be the best out

there," Wilde added.

"When you put expensive things on the outside of clothing, buyers can see it but when you start putting it on the inside people can't and that sometimes means they don't want to pay for it.

"D3O is a premium material therefore the price tag goes with it."

So is the product worth its higher cost? Online reviewers appear to think so, with critical comments less than easy to come by during a browse of various forums.

Despite initial concerns over the bulkiness of D3O, one mountain biker commented on the Race Face Flank knee pads: "The fit, comfort, protection and function are executed with near perfection."

D3O comes in three different formats – the durable SHOCK+, the light and soft ST and the temperature stable XT.

According to Wilde, all versions have stood up impressively to both on-site and external experiments with impact and heat.

And this continuing evolution means the brand is increasingly recognised by those on ski slopes, motor racing circuits, sports pitches and mountain sides.

For more information on D3O and its associated products visit [www.d3o.com](http://www.d3o.com)

## A closer look at the diverse functions of D3O's technology...

### Motorcycling safeguard

D3O provides tested and CE-certified body armour components for the motorcycle market. The light and flexible shock absorbers are featured in products including shoulder pads, elbow pads, hip pads and knee pads. Back protectors, as well as customised parts such as knuckle and metatarsal impact protection, are also available. Other products for the sport include boots, gloves, jackets and trousers. D3O is also working directly with Rukka motorcycle clothing on its new range of *R-Star* jackets. The company has created a bespoke version of the material which allows greater airflow while maintaining the usual comfort and protection expected from the component.



### Boxing boost

RIVAL Boxing's D3O-filled bag gloves have become one of the sport equipment retailer's best selling products. "The upper side of the wrist area is extremely well padded the way it should be," one online reviewer commented. "However the bottom side doesn't have any protection to support your wrist and if you land the wrong way your fist can bend down and get damaged. Beginners should look out for that." Despite this criticism, the hi-tech glove's strap system has been praised for its wrist covering and a safe and tight fit. "The D3O material seems like it will outlast the foam padding used in the boxing gloves," the reviewer adds. "The protection is absolutely top notch."



### Glove gain

A RANGE of protective gloves comprising the special orange foam are available for various outdoor sports including motorcycling, motocross, mountain biking and board sports. Lines include *D Gloves* by Ecoblast Acerbis, motocross apparel company MSR's *X-SCAPE* range and *ATAK* products too. Racer has launched a selection of D3O products, as has the board sports and mountain biking brand Dakine. The *Sentinel* gloves incorporate knuckle pads into the hand for extra protection and comfort. Hestra, a Swedish company, has further improved its ski-racing gloves by incorporating D3O into the areas that usually take the most impact.





Pictures: Steve Dock

**The future's orange:** A product technician at the Brighton-based company removes a D3O elbow mould from a tool during a rigorous on-site testing process

#### Tennis attire

ALONG with baseball, cricket, lacrosse and hockey, tennis is another sporting activity where D3O technology has been found to boost performance. The *YouTek Speed IG* racquet from Head includes the product in its shaft. Initially developed for world number one Novak Djokovic, the material can now be found in racquets used by other top tennis stars including Andy Murray, Maria Sharapova, Thomas Berdych and Robin Soderling. The shock-absorbing property of the product means that when a ball makes contact with the racquet at high speed, resulting impact causes it to stiffen and a stronger shot can be returned. At other times the material remains flexible and durable.



#### Personal protection

AS well as ongoing body armour trials in the defence sector – particularly in conjunction with the US Army – D3O's developers believe it could be suitable for combat or riot situations. Its technology has also been brought to life in the medical world in the form of *Fall-Safe Hip Protectors* developed by UK firm HIP Impact Protection. These revolutionary injury prevention pads assist the elderly. Cat Footwear has pioneered the use of D3O metatarsal guards in its industrial footwear, offering the product's first protective work boot. And Scott back, elbow and knee protectors can also safeguard from injury. In body pads, D3O is placed over the spinal cord area and in hip pads it covers the coccyx.



#### Win... a D3O phone cover

SOLDIER has teamed up with D3O to give away five Tech 21 iBands. These futuristic-looking mobile phone cases are strengthened with a slim strip of the clever orange material that doesn't interfere with use of the device. The prizes are made to fit any iPhone 4 but versions can also be purchased for the 3G and 3GS models. The covers help to prolong the lives of iPhones by protecting them from hard knocks and absorbing shock they get exposed to. To be in with a chance of winning one, name a product that contains D3O. Answers on a postcard to the usual address or to [comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk](mailto:comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk)



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Picture: Graeme Main

**FLYING HIGH:** TRIALS TEAM AIM FOR FORCES GLORY IN SPORT'S HISTORIC SCOTTISH SHOWDOWN





# Riders set trial date

Service trio hit top gear ahead of gruelling off-road campaign in the wilds of Scotland

**Report: Richard Long**  
**Pictures: Graeme Main**

**T**HE Scottish Highlands are rightly championed for their stunning scenery and breathtaking beauty. But for the Army motorcycle trials team the historic region will form the backdrop for one of the biggest challenges of their season.

The idyllic location is the setting for the annual Scottish Six Days Trial, an event that sees the world's best riders heading north of the border for the toughest race on the sport's calendar.

Instead of marvelling at the country's flora and fauna, competitors will be negotiating steep gullies, rocky streams and boulder-strewn gorges as they chase individual and collective glory.

More than 270 riders will fire up their machines for the event and the three-strong Army squad will be looking to build on its impressive form from recent campaigns.

In last year's race the military men took second, third and fourth places in the Service rider category and claimed

**“IT IS SIX DAYS ON THE MOORS RACING AGAINST EX-WORLD CHAMPIONS AND TOP CLUB RIDERS”**

the Forces team award for the fourth successive season.

“This event is the hardest trial in the world,” explained Capt Sandy Mack (Scots), the Army trials secretary.

“It is six days on the moors racing against ex-world champions and top club riders.

“They will cover 100 miles every day and are on the bike for eight hours. It is physically demanding, but that is what soldiers do best.

“It is not as simple as turning the throttle and getting to the end. They face 30 sections a day and the idea is to pass through each stage without putting your foot down.

“It is about tackling natural terrain such as river beds, with obstacles like rocks and boulders.

“They climb Ben Nevis, which has

seven sections alone, and they race across the moors.

“But it is also about keeping the bike going. These machines are not as robust as the ones used 30 years ago and the riders have to do their own maintenance every night.

“Our aim is to win the Forces trophy once again. The guys are in great form so hopefully we can achieve that.”

The Army has been riding in the Scottish Six Days Trial since the 1930s and will be competing against rivals from the Royal Air Force, police and civil service, as well as top stars from around the world.

Despite boasting a long association with the prestigious event, the team needs new members to join its ranks and safeguard the sport's future.

“There are ten to 12 guys who compete for the Army and they were all riders before they joined up,” manager SSgt Bill Rhodes (REME) told *SoldierSport* during the group's training weekend in Earl Shilton, Leicestershire.

“The biggest problems we face are work commitments and the ongoing



**Riding hard:** From left, Cpl Neil Hawker (REME), CSgt Vince Mackintosh (4 Scots) and Sgt Darren Hesleton (REME) hit the practice track in Leicestershire

operational cycle.

“But the majority of our members ride off their own back at different club events across the country.

“It is the cheapest motor sport you can do and is a test of rider skill, rather than endurance.”

The trials set-up recently received a welcome boost when it was promoted to full sporting status within the Army, a move that will open new revenue streams for the organisation.

“As we are now recognised as a sport funding is available to compete in a lot more events,” Mack said.

“We have ten dates on the calendar already this season.

“The opportunities are there for soldiers to get on a bike and be coached through the Army.

“We are hoping to run two or three weekends a year to help the young guys coming through.

“There is no background needed and we will always make sure there is a bike available for any newcomers.

“There will be soldiers out there who rode as youngsters but fell away when they joined the Army, this gives them a route back into the sport.”

## “OPPORTUNITIES ARE THERE FOR SOLDIERS TO GET ON A BIKE AND BE COACHED BY THE ARMY”

Cpl Neil Hawker (REME) started riding as a schoolboy but had to put his trials career on hold when he signed up for Service life.

After being welcomed into the fold by Mack he has become a mainstay of the team and has competed at the last seven Scottish events.

“It is very competitive within the Army fold and we are all pretty close,” he explained.

“We ride as a team and that promotes the core values of physical endurance, staying together and looking after one another.

“I want to finish among the top 100 riders at this year’s competition.

“There will be at least 50 professionals taking part, so in football terms it is like the Army playing against Manchester United.

“As a team we want to win the Forces championship.”

CSgt Vince Mackintosh (4 Scots) has been riding from a young age and tested himself in three Scottish trials before joining the Army.

He will be leading the charge again this year but is appealing for new riders to get involved and help move the discipline forward.

He said: “The funding is a lot better now we are acknowledged as a sport.

“For the past two or three years we have been quite tight on numbers so getting new talent on-board is a high priority for us.

“There is every opportunity to get involved but the guys need to be devoted to the cause.

“If they want to get on the team they need to put the time in, but the rewards are there.

“If you get selected for Scotland you have the privilege of competing in the best trial in the world.

“It has been running for 100 years and to ride in that for the Army is a huge honour.”

Anyone interested in getting involved in the sport should contact SSgt Rhodes on 07711 255445 or email [william.rhodes192@mod.uk](mailto:william.rhodes192@mod.uk) ■



Pedal power: SSgt Martin Smith (RE) is hoping to defend his national road race title while also helping to develop a new breed of Army cycling stars

# Master seeks crowning glory

Report: Richard Long

Pictures: Graeme Main

ONE of Army cycling's leading lights returns to the saddle this month on a mission to end his Service career on a sporting high. SSgt Martin Smith (RE) was crowned national masters road race champion following an inspired run of form in 2011 and he is hoping for a repeat performance before calling time on more than 20 years in uniform.

The elite-level athlete is a fresh face on the veterans' scene and he told *SoldierSport* there will be no shortage of competition when this season's race gets under way.

"One of my goals for this year will be to defend my title," Smith said.

"Not many cyclists have managed to do that as you instantly become a marked man."

"You are up against people who are just getting into the sport as well as those who have competed abroad throughout their careers."

"It is a blend of newcomers and riders with vast experience, some of whom have been racing for 30 years."

Smith has enjoyed contrasting fortunes in the masters' competition, with 2010 being particularly tough.

"I had a bit of a mixed year, I rode in quite a few semi-professional events but was struggling on the back of some injuries," he recalled.

"I was on for my best ride of the

season and was in the final group of eight with ten kilometres to go but I hit a pot hole and damaged my gears: it was race over.

"So in 2011 it was a case of unfinished business.

"I went into the event in very good form. I had three weeks of hard training behind me and a fortnight of cycling up



to six times a week.

"I did all the right preparation but it was one of the hottest days of the year.

"On the first lap of the race I lost a water bottle so my drinking strategy had to change.

"It was hard work but it was a great win. I also finished in the top 20 of the UK elite rankings and I would love to stay within that.

"I will be 43 this year and am the only veteran at that level. It is getting really tough with all the youngsters coming through."

As well as plotting his path to personal glory, Smith will be helping to develop the next generation of Army stars at a gruelling training camp in Majorca this month.

"It is two weeks of doing anything between 100 and 160 kilometres a day," he explained.

"There will be ten riders going out there and by the time April comes round they will have a tough spell of warm weather conditioning in the bank ahead of the new season.

"The camp is all about taking people out of their home environment so they can focus fully on their training.

"There are no distractions, they get up, have breakfast and an hour later they are on the bike.

"It is hard work but it will hold them in good stead."

For more information on how to get involved in the sport visit the Army Cycling Union page on Armynet. ■

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Picture: Cpl Paul Morrison, RLC

**King of the ring:** Spr Adam Whitfield (RE), one of the Army's star performers at last year's Combined Services, has enjoyed an unbeaten start to the season

# Buoyant boxers eye title charge

**Report: Richard Long**

**A**RMY boxing coach Sgt Martin Anthony (RLC) faces the first true test of his credentials this month as his all-conquering fighters take to the ring for the Combined Services championships.

With 28 consecutive titles to their name the Reds will be targeting nothing but victory when they travel to RAF Cranwell for the showdown on March 8.

But the man charged with delivering title success is taking nothing for granted.

"The Royal Navy are getting stronger and stronger," Anthony told *SoldierSport*.

"They have got a number of exciting guys coming through. We have won it for 28 years but we cannot afford to be complacent. We need to be on top of our game if we are to be victorious.

"However, I am quietly confident and things are going really well at the moment."

Anthony landed Service boxing's top job last year and is keen to build on the success of recent seasons.

The new campaign has started in fine style with big hitters Spr Adam Whitfield (RE), Cpl James Allen (REME), Pte Martin Stead (RLC), Pte Shamim Khan (RLC) and Spr Tommy Leigh (RE) all emerging unbeaten from

their matches so far.

"We have had 101 contests and have won more than half of those," the coach explained.

"I am very happy with that and we have only had one or two performances that have been below average.

"We have a squad of 34 fighters and

there are places up for grabs ahead of the Combined Services.

"There are two or three guys competing for each slot so they may well be involved in box-offs.

"It all depends on how they apply themselves. If they do well and others fall short, opportunities will be there."

As part of their preparations for the showpiece event the team travelled to Edinburgh last month for a training camp with the Scottish national side.

"It was all about getting away from Aldershot and our normal place of work," Anthony said.

"The guys were up against new people and it was a completely different experience.

"It gave them an insight into the civvy side of the sport and they could really focus on their work in the ring."

Once the Combined Services is over attention will turn to the Amateur Boxing Association Championships.

The Army have a tough early draw against fighters from the North West but hopes for success are high.

Anthony said: "I believe we can get five lads through to the finals and smash the Army record.

"But I don't just want them to get there, I want them to be title winners as well." ■



Picture: Graeme Main



**A force to be reckoned with:** LCpl Alanna Murphy (RLC) is targeting world glory after a successful showing at the Amateur Boxing Association Championships

# Murphy maintains winning run

**Interview:** Richard Long  
**Picture:** Graeme Main

**W**ITH the continued success of the Army men's boxing team making headlines in Service circles, the contribution from the sport's female fighters can often be overlooked.

But LCpl Alanna Murphy (RLC) is bucking the trend and victory at the Amateur Boxing Association Championships means she is rightly enjoying her moment in the spotlight.

The Irish international dropped down to the 60kg weight category for the competition and stormed her way to victory courtesy of an emphatic 29-7 win in the final.

Her triumph came hot on the heels of a dominant performance in last season's ABAs, when she took the 64kg title.

"I decided to drop down as I knew there would be more competition for me at that level," the two-weight

champion told *SoldierSport*.

"It is an Olympic weight so a lot of other girls are doing the same.

"It was my first time boxing at 60kg and I felt a lot faster on my feet and I was sharper with my punches.

"I always go into the ring feeling confident and I fought well.

"In the semi-final my opponent kept coming for me and I was able to pick her off quite easily. I was up against a southpaw in the final, I knew I had to get her on my right-hand side and I won every round."

Murphy is now looking ahead to the qualifying stages for the world championships in April and if successful she will travel to China for the main competition a month later.

"I am really confident. I'm in full-time training with the Army and that is great preparation," she said.

"It is a fantastic set-up. We have nutritionists, physiotherapists and

masseurs and while we are soldiers first, it is like being a professional fighter."

A strong showing at the world championships could push the Service star towards contention for this year's Olympics and she is also looking ahead to the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow in two years' time.

"The quarter-finals will be the qualifying standard for London 2012," Murphy explained.

"I have competed at elite level before and in 2010 I was beaten by the world champion at the same stage.

"The next few months is all about keeping my head down and training hard, but selection is a possibility.

"With women now boxing at the Olympics the sport will also be included in the Commonwealth Games and that is looking like a realistic opportunity for me.

"The more fights I have, the better I will become." ■





**Opening salvo:** Flying winger LCpl Matthew Bruce-Smith (RGR) gave the Army Under-23s the perfect start with a sweetly struck goal in the early exchanges

# Navy sunk by spot kick hero

**Report: Richard Long**  
**Pictures: Graeme Main**

**T**HE Army Under-23s made a winning start to their 2012 Inter-Services football campaign with a dogged 2-1 victory over the Royal Navy in Portsmouth.

Sig Nick Harvey (R Signals) was the hero for the Reds as he fired home a decisive penalty midway through a heated second half that was littered with late tackles and contentious refereeing decisions.

LCpl Matthew Bruce-Smith (RGR) gave the visitors a dream start when he latched onto a lofted ball before drilling a half volley past Senior Service goalkeeper AB Craig Mulholland in the opening minute.

The strike clearly rocked the home side and they struggled to gain a foothold as the Army controlled the contest during the early stages.

Pte Keeno Keenan (1 Scots) should have doubled the lead but lifted the ball over the bar following a goalmouth scramble and Mulholland produced a brave stop at the striker's feet after initially spilling a cross from Spr Simba Green (RE).

Keeper Spr Luke Cairney (RE) was a spectator for long periods but produced a superb

save from AET Danny Brookwell on the stroke of half-time.

The Army defence failed to clear a long ball into the box and the winger struck a sweet drive that was pushed round the post for a corner.

But Cairney was beaten within minutes of the restart as the Reds failed to nullify a break on the left flank,



leaving Mne Keelan Gartside with a tap-in at the back post.

Green hit back with a stinging drive that was well gathered by Mulholland before the Navy threatened through ET Rob Hills, but his effort was cleared off the line by Reds' skipper Tpr Robert Farkins (9/12 L).

However, the game was turned on its head in the 62nd minute.

LCpl Declan Shuttleworth (REME) burst into the area on a surging run but was bundled to the ground to hand the Army a penalty.

Harvey sent Mulholland the wrong way and dispatched the spot kick.

The hosts failed to recover from the setback and the Army rearguard, marshalled by the outstanding Farkins, held firm for a crucial victory.

Speaking at full time, coach SSgt Sean Cochrane (RADC) told *SoldierSport* his side was fully prepared for the challenge and praised the leadership qualities of his more experienced players.

"I thought the lads performed really well, although we had to dig in at times," he said.

"It was a tough fixture, we were hoping to get the ball down and play a bit more but the Navy turned it into a scrappy game and that prevailed throughout the 90 minutes.

"But I was pleased with our



**Match action:** Cairney saves and Harvey converts

commitment and discipline, my lads could have easily kicked out at some of the tackles that were going in but they kept their heads.

"After the start we had I thought we could have scored three or four to improve our goal difference.

"This year we are set on winning both fixtures so it is a great result.

"Rob Farkins was superb and the defensive unit as a whole did a fantastic job for us.

"Luke Cairney has been in goal all season and I have not seen him make a single mistake.

"He is playing with a lot of consistency and that instils confidence in those around him."

The team were in action against the Royal Air Force as this issue went to press and Cochrane said his players would be going all-out for victory.

"We are playing at Farnborough, which is a nice big pitch so we can get the ball under control and play out wide," the coach added.

"When we travelled to the RAF last season they narrowed the surface and that affected our game.

"This year we are going to play football and go for the win, we never want to draw."

The Inter-Services programme continues this month with the Army's senior sides in action against their military rivals.

The men's and women's teams lock horns with the Navy at Aldershot Town Football Club on March 14 before the men travel to Shrewsbury to face the RAF a week later. ■

# Biddulph's Bastion quest

ARMY cyclist WO2 Steve Biddulph (RE) has set himself a gruelling fund-raising challenge ahead of his latest tour of Helmand province.

The time trial rider, who is due to deploy this month, will combine his day job in theatre with a mission to cover 3,552.5 miles by pedal power alone.

The distance covers the route from Camp Bastion to his unit headquarters in Tidworth and he hopes to reach his energy-sapping target via his training bike and rolling machine.

"I will be in Afghanistan from March 19 to September 14, which equates to 19.74 miles of cycling every day," Biddulph told *SoldierSport* on the eve of his departure.

"However, I won't be able to cover that distance every day as I'll be out on the ground and working at patrol bases, so it is going to be tough.

"I've got some rest and recuperation planned for July, when I'll be competing in the national 12-hour time trial event in Yorkshire and I can catch up there if necessary.

"My inspiration is my girlfriend. She is a triple world-record holder and I need to get some miles in to compete with her."

Biddulph is raising money for the Naomi House Hospice in Winchester and A Smile For A Child, an organisation helping disadvantaged youngsters progress in sport.



Picture: Graeme Main

As well as backing the two causes, he hopes to set a new Army record in the 12-day time trial before embarking on the 24-hour race in 2013.

To sponsor Biddulph in his attempt visit [www.justgiving.com/steviebiddulph](http://www.justgiving.com/steviebiddulph) or log on to [www.justgiving.com/helmandonabike](http://www.justgiving.com/helmandonabike)



Picture: Steve Dock

## Rally stars target European tour

A TEAM of motorsport fanatics are taking to some of Europe's most breathtaking roads in a seven-day challenge to raise more than £100,000 for military charities.

Rally for Heroes will see a fleet of 50 cars travel from the *Top Gear* test track at Dunsfold Aerodrome through France, Monaco, Italy, Austria and Germany in a route covering around 2,500 miles.

LCpl Mick Clark (1 PWRR), one of the event organisers, said the adventure builds on a similar trip in 2010 and will be dedicated to the Servicemen and women who have lost their lives in Afghanistan.

"The main emphasis will be to get people

to drive on roads they wouldn't normally see if moving through Europe," he added.

"We are including some of the best routes on the continent and will take in sights such as the Millau Viaduct, Monaco, St Tropez, the Davos to Stelvio road, the Grossglockner Pass and parts of The Alps.

"We will also visit Le Mans, Monte Carlo, Hockenheim and the Nurburgring circuits. It is a true petrol-head's dream."

The rally starts on August 18 and proceeds from the event will be divided between Help for Heroes and The Royal British Legion.

For more information on the team and their trip visit [www.rallyforheroes.co.uk](http://www.rallyforheroes.co.uk)

## SPORT SHORTS

■ THE Combined Services' shinty-hurling team will lock horns with their rivals from the Irish Defence Forces in a charity match next month.

The lomain nam Feachd fixture is being staged at Bught Park in Inverness and will be the first time the two sides have met on the field of play.

Personnel from the Army, Royal Marines and Royal Air Force will form the backbone of the squad, which is known as the Scots Camanachd, and they will be raising money for Poppy Scotland, a cause dedicated to helping ex-Servicemen.

"This will be the first meeting between the two forces so it will be an historic event," team secretary Capt Robert Stoddart (Scots) told *SoldierSport*.

"This is very much a minority sport and we only have around 30 players on our books.

"However, we have some real talent and a number of our guys have competed at the highest level in Scotland and have represented their country."

The game will be played on Saturday, April 28 with a 1730 start.

Admission is free.

Anyone interested in the sport should email [robert.stoddart185@mod.uk](mailto:robert.stoddart185@mod.uk)

■ SUPER fit soldiers from 13 Air Assault Support Regiment, Royal Logistic Corps raised £7,658 for Help for Heroes by completing the US Marine Corps annual marathon.

The 12-man team took to the streets of Washington DC for the challenge and completed the course while carrying 40lb Bergens.

The loggies crossed the finish line in a time of 5hr 24min.

■ THE Army Powerlifting Union is appealing for new members to join the fold ahead of another busy season.

Those interested in taking part should email [julian.vowles981@mod.uk](mailto:julian.vowles981@mod.uk) for more information on all upcoming events and competitions.

■ CAPT Ian Thomas (3 CS Bn, REME) was crowned best individual men's Alpine skier at Exercise Pipedown.

The officer's efforts at the annual 1st (UK) Armoured Division military skiing contest also helped his unit to the team title during the week-long competition at the French resort of Mont Blanc.

■ Personnel from 7 Parachute Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery were special guests at Sandown Park Racecourse last month as they marked the end of their latest operational tour.

The soldiers marched down a crowded Esher High Street before being greeted at the venue by The Duchess of Cornwall.

The feature race of the day was the prestigious Royal Artillery Gold Cup, which was won by the Fergal O'Brien-trained Bradley.



Life at sea: The Row2Recovery crew raised more than £780,000 by completing their 3,000-mile route

# Mission accomplished

Report: Richard Long

THE Row2Recovery team have celebrated reaching the finish line of their 3,000-mile journey across the Atlantic Ocean.

Huge crowds welcomed the six-man crew to Port St Charles in Barbados, where the Servicemen were able to set foot on dry land after an energy-sapping 51 days on the high seas.

Their efforts have raised more than £780,000 – which will be distributed between Help for Heroes, ABF The Soldiers' Charity and SSAFA Forces Help – and with further donations to come it is hoped the total will top the £1 million mark.

"It's been an incredible journey," said Lt Will Dixon (Rifles), one of four amputees in the team.

"What has driven us on is the thought of those who have fallen and have been severely wounded."

"We hope to have inspired some of them by proving it is possible to achieve extraordinary things after injury."

The nautical adventure started at La Gomera in the Canary Islands on December 4 and followed the route taken by Christopher Columbus to the West Indies 520 years ago.

But the journey was far from plain sailing and the crew experienced a

number of technical difficulties along the way.

A broken auto-helm and rudder hampered the boat's progress and a malfunctioning water desalinator left the rowers on rations for 17 days until fresh liquid supplies arrived.

Severe salt blisters and other complications relating to the athletes' injuries were also experienced.

**'It has been the most incredible thing that I've ever achieved'**

On completing the route, fellow amputee Cpl Rory Mackenzie (RAMC) said: "I would not have swapped the last 51 days for anything.

"It has been the most incredible thing that I've ever achieved and it just goes to show that there is life after serious injury.

"All the technical issues we encountered were tough to take, but we always had perspective to fall back on.

"We put issues such as the desalinator breaking and the rudder snapping into context.

"Yes, we desperately wanted to complete our mission, but we had all been in worse spots before.

"We pulled together and found solutions because that is what we do. As soldiers you find answers and we managed that throughout this row. We have been on an amazing journey."

Donations can be made online at [www.bmymcharity.com/R2RAtlanticRow](http://www.bmymcharity.com/R2RAtlanticRow)

Picture: Gareth Phillips/Row2Recovery



Picture: Nick Tyrer



Picture: Foto Kaesberg

**Peak performers:** The Combined Services Disabled Ski Team has gone from strength to strength, while 1 Logistic Support Regiment dominated in Germany

# Skiers surge to slope success

THE Combined Services Disabled Ski Team put their early season problems behind them to deliver a confident performance on the slopes of Meribel last month.

Injuries and conflicting commitments have robbed the squad of key members this term but those who made it to the French resort for the Inter-Services Snow Sports Championships were able to build impressively on the momentum of recent years.

Fus Andy Barlow (RRF) produced an assured display in the Super G in what is his first year of competitive action, while Capt Anna Poole (AGC) continued to progress after just 20 days as an adaptive skier.

Head coach SSgt Mark Scorgie (RE)

said: "Anna's a bright prospect for the future. How far we take it is down to her hard work, effort and determination to get to the places she wants to go."

Mick Brennan, a former sergeant in the Royal Signals, was also involved in the event as he continues his push for World Cup qualification.

He has already sampled success on the international circuit and is targeting a place at the 2014 Winter Paralympics.

"This year I've had two top-ten finishes in the Europa Cup and I've got a few more giant slalom races coming up," he explained.

"If they go well hopefully I'll be knocking on the door."

While disabled athletes excelled in France, slope stars from 1 Logistic

Support Regiment continued their dominance of men's Nordic skiing during Exercise Rucksack in Germany.

The all-conquering squad completed a clean sweep in the team disciplines and also won the prestigious patrol race on the way to lifting the SAS Cup.

In the women's competition, The Royal Logistic Corps were triumphant after winning each of the team events.

Results from the competition were combined with those from the Alpine disciplines to determine the Army's champion skiing unit.

A superior finish in the military patrol race ensured the loggiers continued their hot streak as 29 Regiment, Royal Logistic Corps lifted the Princess Marina Cup. ■

## WINTER SPORT SHORTS



■ A STRING of podium finishes saw 131 Independent Commando Squadron, Royal Engineers triumph over fellow Territorial Army units at the UKLF Divisional Ski Championships in France.

The team also claimed third spot in the overall Service competition, finishing behind 1 Royal Tank Regiment and 14 Regiment, Royal Artillery.

The performance built on last season's success, when the squad achieved the best ever results by a Reserve unit at the Army's Nordic skiing and biathlon events.

■ ARMY snowboarders excelled against their military rivals during a keenly fought Inter-Services campaign in Meribel.

The team secured bragging rights over their opponents with a comprehensive win in the men's competition, where they finished more than 100 points clear of the Royal Navy courtesy of dominant displays in the boarder cross and parallel slalom.

But the women saw their hopes of glory dashed by a ten-point margin as the Royal Air Force claimed top spot, with the Senior Service trailing in third.

■ WINTER sports star OCdt Anna Morrissey (City of Edinburgh UOTC) continued her fine form on the piste by claiming top spot in the Army Ladies Telemark Championships.

The 21-year-old produced a superb display on the slopes of Rauris, in Austria, to secure the latest success in a triumphant season.

She won silver at the national telemark championships and was named in the Army squad for the Inter-Services, where she secured a bronze medal.

# final word



**We asked troops from The Light Dragoons about the benefits of training on a virtual battleground (pages 38-39) and how it prepares them for life on tour**

INTERVIEWS: RICHARD LONG  
PICTURES: MIKE WESTON

## LCpl Richard Sime

JCOVE [Joint Combat Evaluation Virtual Environment] is very realistic and is a real help for those who have not been away before. It gives them a good idea of what's to come, especially in terms of vehicle movements and contacts. Computer-based simulators such as this appeal to the younger generation and our guys have got to grips with it very quickly. It allows them to master the basics.



## Cpl Andrew Bowden

It is decent kit. This gives us the opportunity to train when it is not physically possible to get out on the ground. The technology has some faults and you can only go as fast as the computer allows, but the fact it is Afghan-orientated is a real positive. It helps to get you in the right frame of mind and sharpens your standard operating procedures.



## Tpr Jack Gargan

As a driver I have found this to be quite useful as it highlights how everything around you comes together. It has been a really good refresher and adds a great deal to the work we have already done. The technology is quite sensitive and it's like playing games such as *Need for Speed*. Simulations cannot replace real training out in the field but they are a decent supporting element.



## Tpr Neil Nutton

We have worked with the Combined Arms Tactical Trainer (CATT) at Warminster and this is very similar. It is good training and has helped us to work out what we need to do while out on patrol. We have also looked at IED drills, the formations we need to be in and our gun arcs. It is basic stuff but beneficial and when we go out on Salisbury Plain it will allow us to train in more depth.



## Tpr Ricki Clark

It gives us a greater understanding of our role and how we should be working together. The equipment is easy enough to use and it's as if you are playing a computer game. We have worked on vehicle patrols, Barma drills and some shooting as well. You face the same scenarios as when out on the ground and this system allows you to make mistakes and learn from them.



## LCpl Nick Weston

I think it is valuable. This allows us to work on our standard operating procedures before heading out to theatre and also gives us an idea of what is to come on the final training exercise. We have worked on the CATT so we are familiar with this kind of thing. It is good variation and I prefer to be sat in a warm room learning like this than being out on Salisbury Plain.



## Tpr Jonathan Marshall

It offers interaction and allows you to work more with people in your troop. We have been looking at section attacks, forward movements and engaging the enemy. It is more demanding when out on the ground but this gives you a rough idea of where you need to be for different scenarios. I think it is a good idea – it gets you in the right frame of mind and you know what is expected of you.



## Tpr Adam Owen

This is the first virtual training I have done. It is all about working together as a team and you get to see what the ground should look like. The driving controls are quite sensitive but it is great preparation. The system helps your communication skills, gives you confidence when speaking on the radio and it has allowed me to work more closely with the guys I have just joined.

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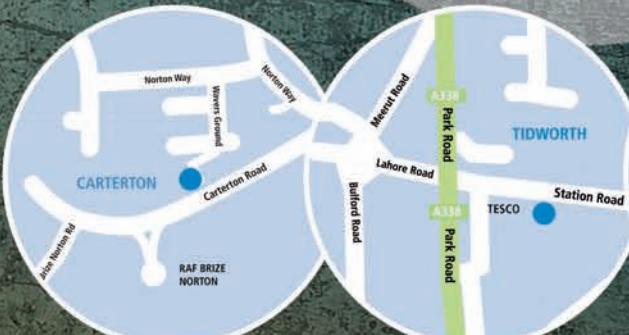


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