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SOLDIER

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Cover picture (left): Pte Daniel St Hilaire (2 Para) leads from the front during Operation Cobra Braveheart Picture: Sgt Rupert Frere, RLC

Background image: Pte Luke Shee (left) and Pte Ashley Jones of 2 Para load an 81mm mortar with shells at Patrol Base 4, Nahr-e Saraj, Helmand province – pages 34-35 Picture: Graeme Main





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ARMY



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"I suppose they'll want the eagle we captured at Salamanca back now."

● Joint force – pages 41-43

First lady's first impressions

MY FIRST fortnight at *Soldier* has certainly embodied the phrase "baptism of fire". As a newcomer to the team – and to the British Army – it has not been easy getting to grips with the world of ranks, regiments and redundancies that greeted me as the new editor.

Unsurprisingly, I arrived with many preconceptions about what this species we call "soldier" might really be like.

Having only ever known a handful of Forces personnel, I have never properly understood what sort of people are motivated to make such sacrifice. Disciplinary? Adrenaline junkies? The vainglorious? The list of military stereotypes on offer to us "outsiders" is endless.

So what better unit to reveal the true and varied traits of British Servicemen and women to me than those in the much-stereotyped Parachute Regiment. This proud institution's endeavours to understand and support Afghan cultural practices push its reputation far beyond the heroic feats it is so often defined by.

As the handover to Op Herrick 14 takes effect, a key achievement of the outgoing tour is surely going to be the way it has used religious interaction to gain the trust of Afghans (pages 30-32). To anyone who feels that their left-leaning politics are best served by a blinkered anti-military stance, please read on.

Meetings with village elders and support of village councils: these may not be the advanced tactics one expects in the fight against insurgents but their impact on intelligence-gathering in Helmand has been undeniable (pages 34-35).

Op Entirety (page 15) continues to develop with this "white side" of warfare in mind. Negotiation, moral intelligence and cultural understanding are what it will take to win hearts

and minds in southern Afghanistan.

This was acknowledged on my first visit to the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, where I learned that much effort is being focused on this area. (And let me also take this opportunity to thank the cheerful and depressingly bright-eyed cadet who helped me after I wandered gormlessly into his path while lost – understanding at its best).

I was surprised to hear that negotiation skills are firmly on the leadership training agenda at Sandhurst now – so much so they are taught as specific lessons (page 23). This is not a skill I would have thought crucial to officer cadets, watching them march the grounds under bellowed instructions, but it seems that times are changing.

How amazed I have been to discover the humour and patience of the various Forces personalities I have encountered so far in the job. Where are these intimidating, world-weary men I was warned about?

In the short time I have worked with the British Army I have been delighted to be proved wrong on many fronts.

One only has to read the heartfelt tributes to our fallen (page 19) to realise that, despite dealing with bereavement on an all-too-regular basis, this organisation has a distinct optimism at its core – something sadly lacking in civilian life.

I am delighted and proud to be *Soldier*'s first female editor in a 66-year history.

In an effort to learn from your optimism, let me assure you that my colleagues' work producing a dynamic and relevant magazine will be upheld over future issues.

And in the meantime, please get in touch if you can shatter any more of my assumptions. –
Sarah Goldthorpe, Editor ■

'The organisation has a distinct optimism at its core – something sadly lacking in civilian life'

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THE informer...

BRITISH TROOPS' GLOBAL INTELLIGENCE ASSET

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Joint effort: Sentinel aircrafts crewed by tri-Service teams are operating in Libya in support on UN Security Council Resolution 1973

Picture: Andy Holmes

Army assisting operations over Libya

ARMY personnel are playing their part in helping to maintain the no-fly zone over Libya.

Among the Royal Air Force Istar [Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance] squadrons enforcing the UN mandate in the north African country is 5 (Army Cooperation) Squadron – a tri-Service set up.

Within 24 hours of combat operations beginning, the state-of-the-art Sentinel R1 aircraft flown by 5 (AC) was using its sophisticated array of sensors to surveil and acquire ground targets.

The unit's chief of staff, Maj Ian Strong, told *Soldier* that around ten British Army troops are among personnel supporting the mission

(Operation Ellamy).

He said: "We have got four or five of them operating as ground image analysts and the remainder working in the air on the Sentinel."

Unlike Op Herrick, Op Ellamy is a more air-centric deployment.

Maj Strong added: "The team finds and tracks pro-regime armour using moving target indicators."

"They are also looking at radar pictures to determine whether an airfield is in use or being obstructed."

"The aircraft uses a sophisticated array of sensors to surveil and acquire ground targets. The resulting information is then brought back to the UK for analysis."

Squadron boss, Wng Cdr Rich Barrow, said: "The use of Istar and

intelligence in particular to try and understand [unusual] situations, to gain insights into what's going on on the ground is absolutely essential."

"Only with that information can we go into action with the confidence that we are doing the right thing and ensuring the right outcomes."

5 (AC) is a 370-strong squadron with 110 British Army personnel drawn from across several different cap badges including the Royal Signals, Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers and Intelligence Corps.

Libya has been split between forces for and against Col Muammar Gaddafi since a revolt against his rule began in mid-February.

Last month US President Barack Obama, British Prime Minister David Cameron and French President Nicolas Sarkozy said in a joint letter printed in *The Times* newspaper that there can be no peace in Libya while Col Gaddafi stays in power. They added that Nato must maintain military operations to protect civilians.

110 THE NUMBER OF **ARMY PERSONNEL** WORKING WITH 5 (ARMY COOPERATION) SQUADRON. THE **TRI-SERVICE UNIT** IS CURRENTLY SUPPORTING UNITED NATIONS-SANCTIONED ACTION IN **LIBYA**



SOLDIER ASKS...

Why is the Service still running television recruitment campaigns when redundancies are being made?

THE HEAD OF ARMY MANNING, BRIG RICHARD NUGEE, SAYS...

"The Army requires a sustained level of recruiting every year just to replace those soldiers who have reached the end of their normal period of engagement and who leave the Service voluntarily.

"We are looking to the future and recruitment is absolutely essential to that: we need to be properly structured.

"It is crucial we keep recruitment at a level that both sustains the fabric of the Army and sustains our current operational commitments.

"We have to make sure that, although we are a little bit smaller, we are still the go-getting Army we are today.

"We continue to work hard to identify potential in all those who seek a career with us.

"Above all, in an organisation that predominantly promotes from within, there is a need to take on new recruits who will become the non-commissioned officers of the future."

'British Army will bounce back from redundancies'

DETAILS of the first phase of Army redundancies have been revealed by the MoD.

It follows an announcement in October 2010 that military personnel would be cut by 17,000 under the Strategic Defence and Security Review – 7,000 from the Army, 5,000 from the Royal Navy and 5,000 from the Royal Air Force. Some 1,000 people will be made redundant from the Army later this year, half of which are expected to be volunteers.

The 150 different fields of the Service to be affected have been disclosed to staff but individuals will not find out until September if they are to go.

Cuts will then continue in tranches until April 2015 when the full redundancy figure will be met.

Speaking to *Soldier*, head of Army manning Brig Richard Nugee offered reassurance that the Service would "bounce back" from the reductions.

"The vast majority of the Army is not going to be changed by this," he said.

"Any redundancy is unsettling for staff but we have tried to minimise the amount of disruption to those on operations, where distraction could be physically dangerous."

Around a quarter of those to be made redundant in September will be officers. All ranks from brigadier to private will be affected.

No medical or intelligence Servicemen and women will be targeted and the only Infantry soldiers to go will be in the Brigade of Gurkhas.

Brig Nugee said the Gurkhas were currently operating "in surplus" due to a change in terms of service in 2008. Around 150 will be made redundant in this September's round of reductions.

The senior officer said:

CALCULATE

A calculator on the MoD's website – www.mod.uk – gives Forces personnel a forecast of their redundancy and pension benefits. The information is based on exit date and stated regulations.



WHO SHOULD I CONTACT?

Personnel needing more information about redundancy should contact unit staff or the Army Personnel Centre in Glasgow. Full details of the redundancy programme are contained in **2011DIN01-097 Army Compulsory Redundancy** and can be found on www.armynet.mod.uk

"Making any soldier or officer redundant will not be easy.

"Gurkhas are the most incredibly loyal personnel and tend not to voluntarily leave [the Service] so we have very little outflow. But we need inflow like all other sources.

"We are committed to a strong Brigade of Gurkhas in the future."

Every tranche of the reduction programme will be considered separately. But no redundancies will include anyone with less than eight years' experience.

Brig Nugee emphasised that operations in Afghanistan would not be compromised by the cuts.

He said that, where posts are removed, a limited number of people would be able to apply for transfers to other fields of the British Army where there are shortages.

These areas will be published to personnel before September along with details of the application process and selection criteria.

No one injured or wounded will be made redundant unless they have reached the point where this was the "right decision" for them, Brig Nugee added. The MoD has said it will help anyone leaving the Service with the transition back to civilian life.

This includes housing and finance advice and assistance getting to grips with the civilian job market.

"We want to ensure we do the right thing by our people in these circumstances," Brig Nugee said.

"While I accept this will be detrimental to people's morale, we will bounce back."

Personnel who volunteer for redundancy will work six months' notice. Non-volunteers will serve 12.



NEWS IN BRIEF

COMPLAINTS CONCERN

■ THE third annual assessment of the way complaints are handled within the Armed Forces has recommended a review of the system.

Despite improvements to the processes for dealing with bullying, harassment and discrimination, the Service Complaints Commissioner Susan Atkins said the time taken to resolve cases remained an area of concern.

The report proposed appointing an Armed Forces ombudsman to put in place an external system for investigating grievances.

It was welcomed by the MoD and Defence Secretary Dr Liam Fox will make a formal response to the recommendations.

APP-ETISING AMBASSADOR

■ FORCES sweetheart Katherine Jenkins poses at the launch of The British Forces Foundation's new mobile phone app.

The programme allows supporters to post messages, donate and keep up-to-date with news about the charity, of which Jenkins is a trustee.



HEALTHCARE HEROES

■ ACHIEVEMENTS of Armed Forces personnel working in health and social care have been recognised at a ceremony.

The Military and Civilian Health Partnership Awards were hosted by Northern Ireland's Health Minister, Michael McGimpsey.

Winners included Lt Col Alisdair MacMillan (Healthcare Reservist of the Year) and Maj Russ Parkes (Healthcare Regular of the Year). Healthcare Civilian of the Year was Dr Sara Reid.

Speaking at the event, Mr McGimpsey paid tribute to their “exceptional” work.

KING-SIZED CRUST

■ NAAFI chefs brought a taste of Britain to personnel in Germany when they celebrated National Pie Week by baking a massive meat-filled pastry dish.

Measuring three feet in length, the enormous meal contained 35lb of corned beef and 12lb of pastry and was big enough to feed more than 200 hungry troops stationed in Gutersloh.

Head chef Paul McNicol said: “It took a full day to prepare all the fresh ingredients and cook the pie.”



Incredibly loyal: Around 150 personnel from the Brigade of Gurkhas are expected to be made redundant this September as the Army seeks to reduce manning numbers by 1,000



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“THE ARMY HAD HOME-COURT ADVANTAGE AND TO LOSE WOULD HAVE BEEN UNBEARABLE, BUT WE GOT THE JOB DONE”

– SERVICE BASKETBALL STARS TOAST INTER-SERVICES SUCCESS, PAGES 88-89



Picture: Graeme Main

Debrief: The outgoing commander of Task Force Helmand, Brig James Chiswell, addresses members of 16 Air Asslt Bde on the eve of their return home

‘Be proud of the immense contribution made’

THE latest operational tour of Helmand province has begun. In a short ceremony in Lashkar Gah, Colchester-based 16 Air Assault Brigade handed over its six-month command of Task Force Helmand, the operation to increase security in southern Afghanistan, to 3 Commando Brigade, Royal Marines.

It marks the end of Op Herrick 13 and start of Op Herrick 14.

Brig James Chiswell, pictured below right, said it had been a significant tour.

He added: “We have continued to strengthen relations with our Afghan partners in the army, police and Helmand government. “Alongside the Provincial

Reconstruction Team, we have continued to stabilise insecure areas and the men and women of 16 Air Asslt Bde, some of whom have made the ultimate sacrifice, and their families can be proud of the immense contribution they have made to improve the lives of the Afghan people.”

In a BBC interview, Brig Chiswell said there had been a sense over the winter that the insurgency was under a lot of pressure. But he added it was too early to judge how successful the past few months had been.

Brig Ed Davis, commander of 3 Cdo Bde, said: “Over the last six months Brig Chiswell and 16 Air Asslt Bde have made tangible progress throughout their area of operations.

“Our main objective is to continue to build on their success and move closer to setting the conditions for the transfer of security authority from the International Security Assistance Force to the Afghan National Army and police.”

Brig Davis, pictured far left, said the coming six months would not be easy, but added: “I am confident that our excellent training

has prepared us for the challenge that lies ahead.”

3 Cdo Bde will provide the majority of units for Task Force Helmand until October 2011.

The last troops from 16 Air Asslt Bde are due to return to Britain by the middle of this month.

NEWS IN BRIEF

PICTURE PERFECT

■ **ENTRIES** are now open for this year's Army Photographic Competition.

The event includes both professional and amateur categories. It is open to personnel and staff from the Army and Territorial Army and cadets from the Combined Cadet Force, Army Cadet Force and University Officer Training Corps.

MoD civil service photographers who work directly for the Army can also enter.

The closing date for entries is September 30 and winners will be announced at the Imperial War Museum on October 25.





“IT’S GIVING US THE OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP OUR PROCEDURES FOR WHEN IT’S AT ITS MOST FRENETIC IN AN OBSERVATION POST”

– MAJ JOE CRAVEN COMMENDS EX MOUNTAIN DRAGON, PAGES 52-53

Picture: Sgt Russ Nolan, RLC



Air Afghanistan: With helicopter flights a common feature of operational tours, avoiding flying is not an option for Helmand-bound Armed Forces personnel

Soldiers encouraged to find a head for heights

FEAR of flying will be tackled in a week-long course at Brize Norton in the coming months.

The programme is aimed at any Forces personnel whose inability to take to the air could affect their work.

Gp Capt Geoff Reid, who has been running the course for more than ten years, said: “Phobia of flying is very common, with up to half of the population having some level of anxiety when onboard an aeroplane.

“Most people are fine, but some experience disproportionate fear which they might deal with either by drinking a lot or avoiding planes entirely.”

The officer said that many sign up for the Army thinking they will not need to fly to do their job.

But with current operations in Helmand demanding long-haul flights, an inability to board aircraft is now likely to be a problem.

“There could even be a risk of having to leave the Services if you are unable to fly,” said Gp Capt Reid. “You can’t deal with it by getting pickled if you’re going into an operational theatre such as Afghanistan.”

It is thought that ten to 20 per cent of the population will not fly because of this fear, the RAF officer told *Soldier*.

Those who sign up to the course start by discussing flying before meeting

pilots and air traffic controllers and getting used to being near aircraft.

The course culminates with more than 80 per cent of attendees taking a short flight from the RAF-run airfield.

“We can’t make people enjoy flying but we can take the heat out of it,” Gp

Capt Reid said. “If you have a problem then the only way to deal with it is to get treatment.”

The course is free to Service personnel but doctor referral is needed. For more information call 01993 897999 or email geoff.reid714@mod.uk

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2	£27,000	NEIGH BAD AT ALL Col Ewen Cameron, chairman of the Greater London Reserve Forces and Cadets Association, and Maj Neil Cross, commanding officer of The King's Troop, Royal Horse Artillery, completed a 400-mile horse ride from London to Edinburgh	Combat Stress and The Light Dragoons Colonel's Appeal
3	£6,400	SUPER-FIT SHREWSBURY SOLDIERS Capt Den Howard, WO1 Lee Seager and WO2 Nick McKenzie of HQ 143 Brigade, along with WO2 Paul Eversfield (RLC) and PC Erica Hanson, took to the Big Apple for the New York City Marathon	Army Widows Association, ABF The Soldiers' Charity and Cancer Research
4	£4,475	GUN RUNNERS A team from Wales University Officer Training Corps raised money by pulling a decommissioned Second World War gun through the streets of Cardiff	Families of the Fallen and the Royal National Institute for the Deaf

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Picture: Steve Dock



On target: A soldier provides top cover with a 40mm grenade machine gun as 20th Armoured Brigade's Brigade Reconnaissance Force conduct mission-specific training in Sennelager, Germany (pages 49-51)



Picture: Sgt Rupert Frere, RLC

IN A NUTSHELL

Mission brief: Op Entirety

What is it?

Operation Entirety was set up back in 2009 in response to the complexity of the operation in Afghanistan. Once implemented, it led to a fine tuning of the Field Army's structure, training and staffing in order to achieve military success in Helmand province.

Why was it set up?

To ensure lessons from both Afghanistan and Iraq were used to best effect as the campaign developed. Prior to this operation, work across Land Forces was often done in isolation and without a senior "owner" to oversee and drive the necessary changes.

How does it differ from other ops?

It provides a vehicle for rapid response in Afghanistan, bending the British Army into the necessary shape to meet operational requirements. Various changes brought about include development of a counter-IED asset and the merging of intelligence and cultural capabilities so troops have a better understanding of local environments before they deploy.

How much of a priority is it?

The number one priority.

Are all parts of the Army involved?

All those in Land Forces are affected by Op Entirety. It covers training, equipment, personnel, information and intelligence, doctrine and concepts, organisation, infrastructure and logistics.

Does it span beyond Afghanistan?

It was initially designed to focus on Op Herrick in Helmand province, but the way we fight there could provide a signpost for future operations. Many changes will be fed into work on British Army structures.

What are we doing less of to achieve this?

Examples include the retraining of tank crews to man protected mobility platforms, reduced armoured infantry and stopping other training – most notably combined-arms manoeuvre and live-firing exercises at the brigade level.

Training tailoring troops for theatre

PRESSURE must be kept up to ensure that only "perfectly prepared" forces enter Afghanistan, the Field Army's chief of staff has said.

Outlining the achievements of Op Entirety over the past 12 months, Brig Richard Smith stressed much effort had been put into making sure units had the "right people at the right time" and that personnel could attend mission-specific training before deployment.

The latest stage of the programme will see the opening of a crew training school at Bovington's Armour Centre this month.

Similar to the existing facility in Sennelager, the asset will allow an entire team to use their skills together to operate and maintain the vehicles they will use in theatre.

Highlighting further advancements, Brig Smith added: "We have increased the number of fire support teams and our ability to integrate air and land capabilities to reflect the way we use artillery, attack helicopters and close air support in Afghanistan."

"One of the Commander in Chief's absolute priorities is delivering perfectly-prepared forces into the fight and we need to maintain the pressure on 'turning the pipeline' to achieve this key objective."

"Our aim is to create the ideal run-in for soldiers deploying so that they arrive in theatre conceptually, morally and physically ready for the fight."

Brig Smith said Land Forces HQ was now looking at what would be needed for the transition of responsibility to Afghan security forces.

Fox focuses on financial future

DEFENCE Secretary Dr Liam Fox has announced details of a four-point plan to fundamentally change the way the MoD does business.

In a speech at the Institute for the Study of Civil Society, the minister insisted that mechanisms must be developed to ensure value for money across the department. These measures include:

- ending the so-called "conspiracy of optimism" in which risks and costs of new projects are under-estimated
- ensuring that all future defence programmes have a transparent budgetary plan for development, procurement and deployment
- bringing an end to the lack of real-time cost control with budgetary discipline
- rebalancing the relationship with industry to achieve value for money,

remembering that items should be procured at a reasonable cost to the taxpayer.

During his speech, Dr Fox said the Strategic Defence and Security Review had led to tough decisions to correct years of mismanagement.

He added: "Change, let's face it, is seldom popular but the case for change in these areas is overwhelming."

"Let us just remember that there is no such thing as Government money."

"There is only taxpayers' money – money raised from individuals and businesses, large and small."

"They expect us to spend money wisely and properly and to enter into contracts that will deliver the equipment that our Armed Forces need, when they need it, while protecting taxpayers' interests and sustaining industrial growth."



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“OUR TWO COUNTRIES SIGNED A TREATY TO HAVE A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP SO WE ARE TRYING TO TRAIN TOGETHER, TO HAVE INTEROPERABILITY AND TO BE FIT TO FIGHT TOGETHER”

– FRENCH COMMANDER MAJ GEN MARC FOUCARD EMBRACES THE BRITS, PAGES 41-43



Picture: Sgt Mark Nesbitt

Timekeeper: SSgt Andrew Sharpe (26 Regt RA) joined the Service on October 28, 1986, at exactly 1150 and will leave for civvy street on September 16, 2011

Artillery piece for gunners at the Sharpe-end

A GROUP of gunners will head to Helmand province with custom-built timepieces thanks to a dedicated Service watchmaker.

SSgt Andrew Sharpe combined 25 years' experience as a soldier with his personal passion to design the Joint Fire watch for those deploying with 26 Regiment, Royal Artillery.

"I want to see the guys go off to Afghanistan with a useful piece of kit," he told *Soldier*.

The senior NCO's timepiece is unusually equipped with a bezel indicating pre- and post-event time.

One side is coloured red and the other blue, representing the unit's tactical recognition flash.

"The colours on the bezel are for artillery but also work well with red indicating the last half an hour before something happens, which is the most important," explained the 40-year-old staff sergeant.

"Timing is everything in the Army. Being in the wrong place at the wrong time – especially working for the artillery – can be disastrous.

"I decided on the technical aspects and how it should look and then found a manufacturer who could build it for a good price."

He added: "It is a really wonderful feeling to know that soldiers will be wearing and using my watches. It makes me very proud."



As well as the unique clock face, the troops' ticker is fitted with a scratchproof sapphire crystal screen and comes with a choice of silicon and textile straps that are built to withstand the tough operational environment of southern Afghanistan.

■ INSIGHT into the lives of British troops in Afghanistan is being given to visitors of the Tank Museum in Bovington.

The exhibition, *Afghanistan – The Armoured Soldiers' Story*, has recreated a forward operating base to share the experiences of Servicemen and women who have deployed on Op Herrick.

Museum spokesman Nik Wyness said the display sought to redress the balance on issues troops felt were misrepresented or misunderstood by the public.

He said: "Visitors will come away from the exhibition with a much better appreciation of what our soldiers are doing and how they do it."

At the exhibition people can see the vehicles used by the armoured regiments as well as the sights, sounds and conditions of life on operations.

Researchers spent hours speaking to personnel from various units who have served in Helmand, collecting

SSgt Sharpe – who is due to retire from the Service later this year – explained that the Army's resettlement funding and support package had been key to converting his hobby into a potential post-Forces career.

Having produced 50 for those deploying on Op Herrick, the feedback from his battery was so positive that he had to place a further order.

"You can only have one if you're going [to Afghanistan]," said SSgt Sharpe. "But everyone who has collected one from me has been impressed and found it useful, so word has spread and I'm now designing one for The Queen's Royal Hussars with their own colours."

audio and video content for the interactive display.

"The soldiers told us how they cope while undertaking tours of duty, which are both emotionally and physically demanding," Wyness said.

"It is fascinating to hear how they deal with the daily threat of death or serious injury and how the units hold together following the loss of a comrade."

Tpr Tom Barraclough (2 RTR) was among those interviewed for the exhibition.

He said he thought it would help people to understand what life is like on operations.

"It's a bit different being in a museum compared with the real thing," he added.

"But if there are non-Service families or people who don't know anyone who's gone out to Afghanistan then when they come to this they will understand straight away what it's like out there."

Visit www.tankmuseum.org for more information.



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IN MEMORIAM



MAJ MATTHEW COLLINS (38)
1ST BATTALION,
IRISH GUARDS
KIA MARCH 23 – AFGHANISTAN



LSGT MARK BURGAN (28)
1ST BATTALION,
IRISH GUARDS
KIA MARCH 23 – AFGHANISTAN

TROOPS from 1st Battalion, Irish Guards are mourning the loss of two committed and professional colleagues who were killed in a bomb blast just days before the end of their operational tour.

Maj Matthew Collins and LSgt Mark Burgan were returning from an operation in the Nahr-e Saraj district of Helmand province when the device detonated. They had been working in support of the Afghan National Army (ANA) on a mission to disrupt insurgent activity and search compounds in the Upper Gereshk Valley.

Maj Collins joined 1 IG in 1996 and later deployed to Kosovo, Sierra Leone, Northern Ireland, Iraq and Afghanistan.

The 38-year-old served on Op Herrick 13 as the commander of an advisory team to the ANA and his natural intelligence and force of personality ensured home-nation personnel made significant improvements.

"He was one whose combination of unquenchable enthusiasm, fundamental kindness and selfless determination marked him as every inch what a Mick officer should be," said Maj Fabian Roberts.

"He was so much more than his achievements in Afghanistan but those achievements themselves have been immense and there is no doubt this country, and the Infantry Kandak he advised in particular, are both the better for his contribution to them."

Capt Ben Irwin-Clark added: "Maj Matt Collins represented the best of the Household Division – he was smart, fit, dependable,

intelligent and utterly gentlemanly. I count it an honour to have served as his second in command, been considered his friend and to have had the opportunity to learn from him."

Maj Collins leaves behind his wife Lucy, daughter Freya and son Charlie. In a statement, his family said: "Not only a soldier but a caring husband, devoted father, caring son, wonderful brother and friend to many."

Liverpool-born LSgt Burgan joined the battalion in 1999 and served in Northern Ireland, Iraq and Afghanistan. He proved himself to be an extremely talented junior commander who loved his job in the signals platoon.

Lt Col Christopher Ghika, CO of 1 IG, said: "He quickly found his feet and became known for the traits that marked out the rest of his service: reliability, hard work and a performance as a proficient and skilled soldier."

"But with all of these came a sense of humour and style that set him apart."

Cpl Andy Cairns (RAMC) added: "He was a consummate professional, in both the calm and the storm. He led tirelessly by example, constantly working with the blokes, for the blokes. This devastating loss will be felt far and wide by all those who knew and loved him."

LSgt Burgan was a passionate Liverpool supporter and devoted family man. He leaves behind his wife Leanne, parents Terry and Rita and sisters Laura, Kate and Jayne.

His father said: "One in a million – proud isn't a good enough word to show how we feel about him."



CSGT ALAN CAMERON (42)
1ST BATTALION,
SCOTS GUARDS
DIED MARCH 31

A SOLDIER described as "a true gentleman" has died as a result of injuries he sustained in Afghanistan last year.

CSgt Alan Cameron of 1st Battalion, Scots Guards was seriously injured after being struck by an improvised explosive device while on a foot patrol north of Lashkar Gah.

Known as Cammy, the 42-year-old father had been making a promising recovery from his wounds after a number of difficult operations but he died at home in Livingston, Scotland, on March 31.

Lt Col Lincoln Jopp, CO of 1 SG, said: "CSgt Cameron was a real father figure in the battalion. Whether in Canada in charge of his beloved Javelin platoon or in Afghanistan in charge of

the fire support group, with his greying hair and knowing smile he was someone everyone looked up to and admired, particularly me. He was a gentleman in all the best meanings of that word."

Maj Rupert Kitching added: "We have lost a true friend, an exceptional soldier and one of life's true gentlemen. Selfless as ever, Cammy had throughout his rehabilitation provided advice and support to others."

CSgt Cameron leaves behind his son Dean, Dean's mother Yvonne, his partner Nicola, parents, brothers and a sister. A family statement said: "[We] would like to thank all the team medics and medical staff involved in saving Alan's life initially as this allowed us a further year in the company of a great man."



THE names of 112 Servicemen and women killed on duty or through terrorism in 2010 are being carved on the Armed Forces Memorial in Staffordshire.

Engraver Nick Hindle (pictured left) started work on the Portland stone tribute at the National Memorial Arboretum last month.

Mr Hindle said: "It's painstaking, but given the scale of sacrifice it represents, it's a job I'm hugely honoured to do."

The stonemason's work is due to be completed this month and the names of those killed will be dedicated at a special service for families later in the year.

● A NEW war memorial has been unveiled at a natural burial ground near Kineton in south Warwickshire.

The Sun Rising site now features a cairn built from Cotswold stone as a tribute to Servicemen and women killed in Afghanistan. Some 160 people are buried in the 16-acre plot, which was opened in 2006 and is situated close to the Civil War battleground of Edge Hill, four miles from the military bomb disposal training base.



In unison: An officer from The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment (left) and the commanding officer of The Mounted Band of La Garde Republicaine at the launch of this year's Windsor Castle Royal Tattoo

French forces to march on Windsor

A UNIQUE Anglo-French display of military might and ceremonial pomp will feature in this year's Royal Tattoo at Windsor Castle.

For the first time in the event's history, mass bands from France will march alongside British outfits in the musical spectacle, which takes place between May 12 and 15.

More than 250 personnel from the French Army, Navy, Air Force and Gendarmerie will perform with UK Servicemen and women in a showcase of current operational capability and military heritage.

It will celebrate the close relationship between the two Armed Forces.

Speaking at a press conference, French attache Adml Charles-Edouard de Coriolis said the two countries were stronger together and described the tattoo as an opportunity to demonstrate their interoperability.

"Bilateral defence cooperation is of huge importance to both of us," he said.

"UK and France are natural partners in security for the reasons that we are similar in size and similar in terms of our capabilities."

A live demonstration of a battlefield evacuation will highlight the close working partnership. Some of the latest

combat equipment in service will also be showcased.

Event director Simon Brookes-Ward said he was delighted with the tattoo's Gallic theme and promised a magnificent show.

"It's a fantastic chance for the public to see some of France's and Britain's finest ceremonial musicians and displays first hand," he said.

"In the UK we have a strong military heritage and ceremonial piece, and it's exactly the same for France."

The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment and The Mounted Band of La Garde Republicaine will perform a joint musical ride with more than 50 horses in what Brookes-Ward described as "a stunning display of horsemanship, pomp and ceremony".

Audiences will also be treated to a rare display by The Band of the French Foreign Legion – an elite unit noted for its "esprit de corps" and haunting singing, marching and music.

Tickets for the tattoo are now on sale, with all profits going to The Royal British Legion. To book seats call the box office on 0871 230 5570 or visit www.windsortattoo.com

● Joint force – page 41-47

GOOD DRILLS

POLAR TREKKERS



FOUR injured Servicemen have completed a 190-mile trek to the North Pole.

They were aiming to raise £2 million for Walking with the Wounded, a charity that supports injured personnel. Prince Harry, the charity's patron, joined the team for four days last month and congratulated them via satellite phone at the end.

MISS J HUGHES

AVID reader Miss J Hughes of Oswestry, Shropshire, took time out of her day and money from her purse to show her appreciation for the endeavours of those at *Soldier HQ*.

Among the many letters received last month bemoaning the Equality Act's "gingerbread clause" (page 65) was a thank you card, chocolate cake and box of fudge. Delicious!

BOGUS SOLDIERS

WOMEN have reported an online dating scam involving men claiming to be British soldiers serving abroad, who were asking for cash.

The BBC reported that West Mercia Police had been contacted by several females who had given their bank details to the bogus military personnel.

CALIFORNIAN CON

A MAN has been arrested for creating a fake US Army unit and convincing immigrants that joining it was a path to citizenship.

Reuters reported that more than 100 Chinese victims were charged fees of between \$300 and \$450 to join the squad, which was given the name US Army/Military Special Forces Reserve.

The "recruits" were urged to pay cash for higher military rank as well as being supplied with uniforms, fake documents and phony identification cards.

They were made to parade in a Los Angeles suburb.

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Picture: Graeme Mann

In the line of fire: Officer cadets sample the heat of public order training at Longmoor camp

Officer cadets to face fear factor

A TRANSFORMATION in the way future Army officers are trained is under way at Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, its commandant has told *Soldier*.

Maj Gen Patrick Marriott said the facility is “widening” the leadership training given to officer cadets in a bid to reflect the changing nature of contemporary military operations.

Exercises are being made “scarier” and lessons in negotiation have been set up.

Maj Gen Marriott explained: “A considerable amount of the leadership challenges on operations are not about men and women in the Army, but those outside the Army.

“A 2nd lieutenant might leave [the academy] and within nine months be facing officers from the British Army, Afghan National Army and police, plus two or three aid agencies and a number of senior Afghan leaders.

“He will have to make an operation work. But the only person he has command over is probably the soldier who has delivered him a cup of tea but left the room.”

Since last year, officer cadets have been learning how to negotiate in such multinational situations.

Maj Gen Marriott (pictured) said a previously “risk averse” attitude to training and “over implementation” of health and safety legislation had been consigned to history.

“They [cadets] are going out on operations and are getting really scared. We have brought back in lots of scary things,” he added, citing the reintroduction of the high-wire trainer.



● BBC Four will screen a three-part documentary on Royal Military Academy Sandhurst later this year.

BUSINESS REFORM

■ A NEW single organisation will supply all MoD “back office” functions under new proposals announced by Defence Secretary Dr Liam Fox.

Human resources, finance, information, commercial and vetting capabilities for the whole Government department will be brought under the banner of Defence Business Services as part of a major restructuring programme.

In a written statement, the minister said that the changes would make a “significant contribution” to the planned civilian staff cuts announced in the Strategic Defence and Security Review and would lead to a reduction of about 2,000 personnel and a net saving of £73m per year by 2014.

“We are exploring options to strengthen our ability to manage this change, including the possibility of bringing in outside professional management expertise to lead and direct the new organisation,” he said.

AFGHANS LEAD THE WAY

■ A BRIGADE of the Afghan National Army (ANA) has conducted its first major independent operation after working alongside British Army personnel for more than five months.

Troops from 1st Battalion, The Royal Irish Regiment watched on as the 4th Tolay 3/215 Brigade cleared a route of improvised explosive devices in southern Nad-e Ali, Helmand province.

The Afghans planned and executed the operation themselves.

Maj Alistair Harbison (1 R Irish) said: “The ANA have come on leaps and bounds in our area over the last five months.

“There was a time when they were reluctant to even go out of the gate unless we had our troops on the ground too, but it’s hard to believe that now.”



Picture: Capt Wayne Nicholls

■ KEEN to keep hold of last month’s prize for ourselves and having learned that *Soldier* readers are anoraks when it comes to the world of cinema, the editorial team switched tactics for April’s spine line competition.

And, with no correct answers received as this issue went to press, it looks as though the decision to focus on the noble art will pay dividends. Yes, many of you correctly identified that the names printed on the side of the cover were boxers but no-one spotted the Army link. (Michael) Watson, (Chris) Eubank, (Thulani) Malinga and (Steve) Collins are the only fighters to have defeated soldier-turned-world champion Nigel “The Dark Destroyer” Benn.

This month we have three sets of the two gripping Second World War memoirs that inspired Tom Hanks’ and Steven Spielberg’s epic TV series *The Pacific* to give away. To stand a chance of winning paperback copies of *With the Old Breed* and *Helmet for my Pillow*, tell us what links the words adorning the side of this issue. Answers to the usual address or comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk by May 31.

WIN





NEWS IN BRIEF

FUND-RAISING DRIVE

■ A SOLDIER whose baby daughter was diagnosed with cerebral palsy as she was deploying to Afghanistan is battling to raise £40,000 for a life-changing operation for her.

LCpl Alex Holt, of 22 Signal Regiment in Staffordshire, is organising various events to fund an operation that will allow Emma, now two, to walk properly. For more information visit www.helpemmawalk.org.

PRIDE IN YOUR WORK

■ EIGHTY five per cent of British military personnel are proud to be in the Armed Forces, a survey has found.

Results from last year’s Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey also showed that more than half have high morale but just 38 per cent feel valued.

More than 80 per cent felt the length of their operational deployments was “about right”.

Some 30,000 questionnaires were distributed in the survey last year with a response rate of 42 per cent – the highest ever.

Copies of this year’s attitude survey are currently being distributed.

DIGITAL DEFENCE

■ WAYS to make Army training better, faster and cheaper have been shared at a Service summit.

The Training Development Symposium, held at the Land Warfare Centre, featured experts from across the Service and the private sector.

Organiser Maj Suzanne Steel said: “It is about innovation and trying to raise awareness of how technology can support the delivery of British Army training.”

The event included workshops on using mobile phones to learn and Virtual Battle Space 2, a combat simulation system.

Maj Steel said: “It was about inspiring people to think about doing things differently.”

Picture: Sgt Rupert Frere, RLC



A BRITISH Army medic has shared his lifesaving skills with Afghan soldiers. Cpl Harvey Davies (RAMC), who deployed to Gereshk with gunners from 7 Para RHA and returned home last month, taught home-grown personnel how to apply tourniquets and surgically open airways. He said: “There is a willingness to learn on the Afghans’ part and, as an all-round fighting force, the Afghan National Army is becoming increasingly capable.”

Combat care to help on home front

MILITARY trauma surgeons will pass on expertise to NHS doctors in a bid to bring battlefield breakthroughs to the UK.

The National Institute of Health Research (NIHR) will be set up at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham. It is to be funded using £10 million from the MoD, £5 million from the Department of Health and £5 million from University Hospitals Birmingham and the University of Birmingham.

The institute will be used for both surgical reconstruction and microbiology and will form a central point where trauma treatment expertise can be shared to help civilians in early stages of injury.

Andrew Robathan, Minister for Defence Personnel, Welfare and Veterans, said: “The medics who work for our Armed Forces are recognised the world over for pioneering new advances in trauma care and quite rightly so.

“Those who have been injured defending their country deserve the very best standards of care.

“I am proud the MoD is investing £10 million in the new NIHR centre, which will allow us to develop new techniques to treat our soldiers fighting in Afghanistan and allow military surgeons to share our skills and knowledge with the NHS.”

Health Secretary Andrew Lansley said it would help to strengthen the response of health and emergency services to major disasters such as road traffic accidents and terrorist attacks.

“The new NIHR centre will fund world-leading research to help people recover better and faster from severe injuries,” he said.

Work will initially focus on the most urgent challenges in treating trauma wounds including resuscitation techniques, surgical care after multiple injuries or amputation and fighting wound infections.



■ A GIFTED artist whose work with the British Army received widespread acclaim has announced he is heading back to Iraq – this time with the American military.

Xavier Pick spent a month in theatre with 20th Armoured Brigade on Op Telic 13 and his sketches captured the mood of both soldiers and civilians.

Now the artist has announced he is embarking on a new mission to probe deeper into the country’s long history and culture and he is initially being hosted by US troops in Baghdad.

The 39-year-old is then aiming to travel



the length of the country from the Kurdish regions of the north to the desert of the south to create a unique visual record.

He is also visiting Basra Palace – once a much-mortared British Army base – which has now been established as a museum charting the history of life in the province.

Pick, whose work has been shown at several exhibitions, said he is relishing the opportunity to return.

He added: “Iraq has a rich cultural heritage and the people there are fiercely proud. I am looking forward to meeting them and playing my part in recording their history.”



Pick admitted that he is particularly looking forward to visiting the Basra Museum, which has been assembled with help from a team in the UK. He said that his experiences with British Forces – and the care and respect they had shown for Iraq and its people – had fired his enthusiasm for the project.

He said: “My time with 20 Armd Bde had a huge impact on me and I left with a tremendous respect for the British Army and those who serve with it.”

● **Combat cartoonist – pages 54-55**

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THE BIGGER PICTURE

A SOLDIER from A Company, 1st Battalion, The Royal Irish Regiment returns fire on insurgents with his light machine gun after becoming ambushed while on a foot patrol around Patrol Base Kalang in Nad-e Ali, Helmand province. Turn overleaf to read this month's extended coverage of what is happening in Afghanistan.

Picture: Sgt Rupert Frere, RLC

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PEOPLE POWER

SOLDIER WITNESSED
REMARKABLE
IMPROVEMENTS IN
HELMAND PROVINCE THAT
HAVE BEEN BROUGHT
ABOUT BY 16 AIR ASSAULT
BRIGADE'S COUNTER-
INSURGENCY STRATEGIES



RELIGIOUS RESPECT

Report: Joe Clapson
Pictures: Graeme Main

WHILE the Taliban spreads “bad propaganda” about the International Security Assistance Force (Isaf) being anti-Muslim, British soldiers have taken the initiative of setting up Koran readings for Afghan villagers.

In a country where televisions are rare and only ten per cent can read, the pioneering religious events at a Babaji patrol base see troops converse with locals and gain their trust.

Maj Nick Copperwaite, officer commanding B Company, 2nd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment, explained the purpose of the Khatim

Koran Sharif ceremony.

“This is another way of showing the locals that we are not ‘infidels’, we are happy to work alongside them,” he said.

“There was an idea that Isaf was anti-Islamic, which is something the insurgents like to tell people, but we’re getting much greater interaction with the locals.”

He added: “We are seeing more and more people actively resisting the Taliban or coming to give us information and reducing the support of the insurgents.”

Since the doors of Patrol Base 4 were opened for Koran readings in December, hundreds of villagers have attended to listen to them and pray. >>



Show of unity Afghan villagers sit alongside British soldiers at a pioneering Khatim Koran Sharif ceremony held at B Company, 2 Para's patrol base in Babaji

>> A key reason for the overwhelming success has been the participation of British Muslim soldiers – who dispel any myth that Isaf is a crusading Christian force.

Gnr Ishan Mahmood (3 RHA) described how sharing religious beliefs with Afghans has led to greater understanding between troops and locals.

“Things like British Muslims attending a Koran reading make Afghans more comfortable – it’s something they’ve never seen before,” said the Yorkshireman.

“There are Muslims who are my colour, black and white but the Afghans are not used to seeing people different to them sharing the same beliefs.

“At the Koran readings people can see that we’re not here to occupy the land, we are here to help people get back on their feet.

“We want to make society safer – to deliver a secure future without improvised explosive devices.”

The light-gun operator told *Soldier*: “I don’t feel like I’ve been put out there as ‘the British Muslim’.

“I’m still doing my job and before I came out here I had always followed my religion. It feels good to meet other Muslims.”

A major accomplishment of the ceremonies, controlled by members of the Afghan National Army (ANA), has been the increased status they have given to home-grown soldiers.

“Locals had been saying that ANA troops were not proper Muslims because of their work with Isaf but when they see them holding events like this they get the real message,” said Maj Copperwaite.

“The fact that we also have Muslim soldiers who speak Arabic and can read the Koran has amazed the locals because they assumed all British Service personnel were devout Christians preaching their beliefs in Afghanistan.”

Religious interaction is something that 16 Air Assault Brigade focused on from the start of Op Herrick 13, in an effort to gain trust and information from people in Helmand province.

WO1 Duncan Hedges, a battlegroup cultural advisor with the Defence Cultural Specialist Unit, put his message bluntly: “If we just move into someone’s town hunting like Robocop nobody is going to want to talk to us.

“Holding shuras and Koran readings and simply stopping in the street to chat to villagers is very different to armed soldiers just grunting.”

In line with their “population-centric” ethos, each British brigade deploying to theatre is now equipped with 72 soldiers who can speak basic Pashto.

According to an Afghan local, who did not want to be named, this strategy of social and religious engagement is working.

“The Koran reading is a rite of passage ceremony and at the end I pray to Allah to improve security and for no fighting and to show my respect,” he said.

“Before, the Taliban said the ANA were not respectful to our religion but now we have this, people see that the ANA and Isaf do not have problems with Islam.

“Each time we go back to the village and tell people the Taliban is lying and, day by day, they are more trusting of Isaf and our own government.”

At the end of a service attended by *Soldier*, in which passages of the Koran were read by a large group, members of the congregation were given copies as gifts.

“This is the only time in their life that they will get a Koran so it serves as a symbol of the ANA and Isaf wanting to help,” explained Maj Copperwaite.

“Now if the Taliban tries to block locals from attending events it is them, not us, getting in the way of religion.”

Gnr Mahmood, who reads Arabic and is

fluent in Punjabi, Urdu, Hindi and Pashto, said forming relationships with Afghans was mutually beneficial.

“It’s an education for myself to see how Muslims in Afghanistan go about things.

“I can also listen to what they need and have informal chats with them.

“It is important to talk because all their information comes through what they hear.”

Prior to Op Herrick 13 it would have been inconceivable for an Isaf soldier to enter these important religious events. But now British troops sit alongside locals, listening to prayers and joining in conversation.

Similar soft power initiatives across Helmand province are ensuring that villagers work with the British troops towards a secure future and ignore Taliban untruths. This is an impressive legacy. ■

FULL OF FAITH



At ease: Gnr Ishan Mahmood (3 RHA), a British Muslim soldier, is helping reshape Afghan perceptions of Isaf



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WIDER VIEW

**MULTI-TALENTED 2 PARA TROOPS
SHOW THEIR ABILITY TO EMBRACE
ALL ANGLES OF THE FIGHT**

On the lookout: Pte Adam Pearce (2 Para) keeps guard in a sanger at Patrol Base 4, overlooking the southern district of Nahr-e Saraj

2 PARA BATTLEGROUP TIMELINE

DECEMBER 2010
OP TOR GHAI BROUGHT IN
ELDERS WHO HAD BEEN FORCED
OUT OF THEIR VILLAGES

JANUARY 2011
MOVED INTO TAJIKAN
IN THE GREEN ZONE TO
HOLD A SHURA



Picture: Sgt Rupert Freese, RLC

Report: Joe Clapson
Pictures: Graeme Main

BRITISH paratroopers are often synonymous with powerful acts of derring-do, forceful interventions and impressive feats of brute strength.

But it is 2nd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment Battlegroup's engagement with the "white side" of warfare that has brought significant change to Helmand province. And this has raised more than a few eyebrows.

On a visit to Patrol Base 2 in Nahr-e Saraj (South), Lt Col Andrew Harrison told *Soldier* that his men's work setting up schools and protecting religious meetings had created a lasting impact.

"There's a very wide spectrum to what we do, from the white side across to the heavily kinetic side," said the commanding officer of 2 Para.

"The bedrock is working with village elders to find out what the local issues are, such as agriculture, water supplies and schools."

He added it was a misconception to think of paras as gung-ho, one-dimensional soldiers.

"People might have a superficial idea of what a para unit might be, but these people are pretty sophisticated as counter-insurgents," the senior officer explained.

"Last time we fought really hard but the progress was not visible. At least we can see that progress now, despite having lost lives and taken casualties."

Prior to 2 Para moving into this area of Afghanistan it was known as an insurgents' haven.

But now, five fortified patrol bases have been put in place to form a protective and well-defended spine through the region.

Building on foundations left by 1st Battalion, The Royal Gurkha Rifles, the soldiers on Op Herrick 13 pushed down to the River Helmand to directly tackle the enemy threat.

Capt Tosh Susuki, company intelligence officer, explained how this added protection had improved villagers' lives in the Paind Kalay area.

"A network of patrol bases and checkpoints mean the region has become one of the most protected parts of Nahr-e Saraj (South), which means locals are happier and feel more secure," he said.

"As a direct consequence, it has been possible for a school for 160 children and staffed by Afghan teachers to be opened."

There are some 10,000 youngsters across the area and thanks to the battlegroup's work about 1,000 are now being educated.

But despite the focus on improving relations with

Afghan villagers as a counter-insurgency strategy, the threat posed by improvised explosive devices (IEDs) remains.

Pte Ian Spink said: "All recent bomb finds have come from locals walking in and telling us: it's simple, they want us to help."

With 82 per cent of British fatalities in Afghanistan coming from IED explosions, huge emphasis is put on finding the devices and making them safe.

An operation in Char Coucha in March serves as a standout example of how the battlegroup looked to tackle problems head-on.

"They deployed an 80-strong clearance force to find and defuse nine devices," said 2 Para spokesman Lt Paul Smart (AGC (ETS)).

"It was like a ghost town thanks to the threat – now people have moved back because of the battlegroup's work."

Another defining moment on the tour came when B Company surged into Padaka, a Taliban hotbed where several British soldiers have been killed or seriously injured.

Maj Nick Copperwaite (2 Para), officer commanding B Company, said: "We never thought we'd see so much change in terms of security and more and more people are actively resisting insurgents and coming forward with very useful information."

In an area where 35,000 people rely on their protection, British troops work alongside 150 Afghan National Policemen and 420 Afghan National Army soldiers to beat back insurgents.

Village councils are thriving and links to central government have been established.

From defusing IEDs to giving Afghans a voice, 2 Para have made a big impact in Helmand. ■

'THE BEDROCK IS WORKING WITH VILLAGE ELDERS TO FIND OUT WHAT THE LOCAL ISSUES ARE'

– Lt Col Andrew Harrison



FEBRUARY 2011
MOVED INTO PADAKA. FLOODED THE AREA WITH TROOPS AND ESTABLISHED A CHECKPOINT

MARCH-APRIL 2011
CONTROL OF GREEN ZONE UP TO 2KM FROM HELMAND RIVER

MARCH 2011
IN CHAR COUCHA BRITISH TROOPS CONDUCTED THEIR BIGGEST EVER COUNTER-IED OPERATION



Picture: Sgt Rupert Frege, RLC



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POLICE PRIDE

With the help of British troops, Afghanistan's 'blue force' earns respect for its disciplined and professional attitude



Report: Joe Clapson
Pictures: Graeme Main

SECOND rate, lacking discipline, under the influence of drugs. These words summarise the unfortunate, but not unfounded, reputation that has preceded the Afghan National Police (ANP) in recent years.

But in the space of 18 months, the British Army has laid solid foundations for the force to “up its game” and take charge of the country’s security while the Afghan National Army fights insurgents.

Improvements are being made in a variety of ways. The South West Regional Training Centre (RTC) based at Lashkar Gah, in Helmand province, is the keystone of the ANP’s burgeoning success.

Police trainees passing through the centre – about 90 per cent of which are illiterate and innumerate – receive 64 hours of training and are taught how to be “Islamic policemen”.

Maj Jake McKay, officer commanding HQ Company, 5 Scots at the centre, said a strong blue force was vital to create stability in Afghanistan after troops have left.

“Up until 18 months ago we hadn’t invested enough time in the ANP but now we are,” he said.

“At the forefront of my mind is the need to have permanence and to ensure Afghan self-sufficiency.

“This is a long-term project and we will be here way beyond 2014 in a training capacity.”

The RTC course takes 150 people, with one International Security Assistance Force (Isaf) instructor, one Isaf mentor and one ANP instructor for every 25 trainees.

Attendees include a mix of new recruits and veteran officers.

Similar training centres are planned for other regions of Afghanistan.

Soldier visited ANP patrolmen at a newly-built police station in the protected community of Paind Kalay in Nahr-e Saraj (South).

Being run by 5th Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland, it is here where British soldiers and Afghan police meet with village elders to discuss local issues.

Explaining the significance of this, intelligence officer Capt Tosh Suzuki (2 Para) said: “The elders know where the main players are in the area and they have intelligence.

“The ANP Commander Muhammad Wali is well respected and is a very important character, controlling the community area down to the Green Zone.

“His men can do things that Isaf and the ANA can’t do because we are not from the area.”

Speaking to *Soldier* after a shura [Arabic for consultation], Mohammed Wali said a recent operation had helped clear the area of insurgents.

“The Taliban are now weak and I am very happy with the way things are going,” he added.

‘THE TALIBAN ARE NOW WEAK AND I AM VERY HAPPY WITH THE WAY THINGS ARE GOING’

The importance of treating local police as crime-fighters rather than the national army’s poor relation was emphasised by Sgt William Carnegie (5 Scots), a police advisory team commander.

He said: “In the past we took the police into the Green Zone to fight the insurgents but now we are trying to get them into the community, putting training into practice.

“People are now coming into the police station to report things.”

Despite such advancements, the memory of a rogue Afghan policeman turning on his mentors and killing five British soldiers in November 2009 remains in troops’ minds.

Maj McKay accepted that working with armed Afghan natives carried risks, but said this wouldn’t hold his soldiers back.

“We work alongside the Afghans day and night



Sharp shooting: Soldiers from 5 Scots train ANP patrolmen from novices to expert marksmen

and there's camaraderie. The security and safety of my soldiers is more important than the training," he added.

WO2 Kenny Petrie said that strong relations with translators was allowing the Scottish troops to converse with Afghan policemen.

"Even the interpreters are picking up bits of Jock lingo now, saying things like 'it's pure freezin' this morning innit'," he added.

The recruits are being taught from a novice level up to working on firing ranges.

Subject-matter experts from the Royal Military Police and Ministry of Defence Police are also teaching them how to carry out domestic police duties.

"There was a recent operation where the ANP made significant finds and arrests concerning ammunition and weapons," said Lt Dan Oakland (RMP), who is based at Zarghan Kalay.

"There has also been a large improvement on the forensic side, which helps arms intelligence officers get to the root of where weapons come from."

On the issue of drugs, British troops accept that in Afghanistan the smoking of hashish is treated similarly to the drinking of alcohol in the UK.

Conscious that Isaf's role is not to change Afghan culture, 5 Scots tell police officers they can only smoke the drug

off-duty. To this end, urine tests ensure all recruits are drug free.

"In the last seven months we have gone from having 80 per cent test positive for hashish down to 20 per cent," Maj McKay said. "Opiate users are kicked out straight away."

So how will the ANP be viewed locally in the future? Abdul Star, a police patrolman who has passed through the RTC programme, has noticed a dramatic change in recent months.

"Before, the villagers did not trust the ANP but now they do because it is professional," he said.

Lt Col Adam Griffiths, commanding officer of 5 Scots, believes that with continued recruitment of good-quality personnel and ongoing British mentoring, the ANP could take charge of local security during Op Herrick 14.

"The ANP is on the crucial path to success in Helmand," he said.

"The police are the ones who will provide community security and that's why it's fundamental we get this right."

British troops have set up a system that will create a disciplined police force, with a reputation for nothing more than protecting Afghanistan's land and population. ■



Learning the ropes: Systematic vehicle checks are carried out by the ANP on a regular basis



Hands-on: Afghan policemen learn search techniques first-hand from British Army personnel



No stone unturned: One of the safety policies instilled into the ANP when searching vehicles



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JOINT FORCE

**Britain and France show commitment
to combined arms**



Report: Sharon Kean
Pictures: Steve Dock

WITH the ink barely dry on the documents cementing an Anglo-French military partnership, a mission is under way to prepare and equip a deployable joint force capable of countering potential future threats.

The Defence Cooperation Treaty signed by Premiers David Cameron and Nicholas Sarkozy last November paved the way for Armed Forces personnel from both countries to train together, share kit and combine arms if necessary.

Gen Paul Newton, the senior officer responsible for Force Development and Training, watched the politicians' words being put into action at a tactical level during Exercise Gaulish.

The two-week serial partnered a company of Coldstream Guards with a French infantry unit at a state-of-the-art facility near Paris.

The general told *Soldier* that the treaty had kick-started a drive for greater interoperability between the two nations and the early signs from the ground at the French urban warfare centre were promising.

"This is exactly what it [interoperability] looks like – a British and a French company covering fire with one another, getting across an obstacle in the most complicated terrain you can imagine," he said.

"On the ground we are making sure that our standard operating procedures fit; that our radios can talk to one another and our protocols for bringing in joint fire work together. All of those things need to be properly matched."

While the training mission clearly demonstrated the will to work alongside the French, the agreement extends beyond the company-level tactics of Exercise Gaulish.

Higher command structures and strategies will be needed if the two nations are to form the sort of fully-functional Combined Joint Expeditionary Force proposed in the papers signed last year.

The French commander of land forces, Maj Gen Marc Foucard, told *Soldier* he was confident that Britain and France would operate ever more closely in future in a "win-win relationship".

"We already have fighting experience together from Kosovo and Afghanistan, for example, where we are committed in the same operations," said the senior officer.

"Our two countries signed a treaty to have a special relationship so we are trying to train together, to have interoperability and to be fit to fight together. It is a very important goal for us."





There is already a strong basis for joint operations as both nations are members of Nato.

But only by actually working together could the finer details of a combined force be formalised, said Gen Newton.

The British commander revealed that a "whole series of activity" was under way with this aim in mind, including a massive Anglo-French training serial codenamed Exercise Flanders which is due to take place next month.

This will involve the UK's 7th Armoured Brigade headquarters working alongside a similar sized French unit under a single French divisional command. It will set the benchmark against which future training missions will be measured.

"The planning for Flanders is well advanced and is probably two levels above Gaulish," Gen Newton explained.

"At the very highest level we are comparing our approach to fighting, aiming to make sure that at brigade and battlegroup level we can tie together our staff procedures and make communications and computers work.

"If we don't have that right, all of the command and control that sets this [interoperability] in motion wouldn't work."

Lt Col Paul Corden, the British liaison officer at the French Force Preparation Centre, said that Flanders was a clear demonstration of the intention of the two countries to work together.

"It's been long planned since before the Franco-British Accord but this has given it increased importance," he added.

"It will help to address issues such as interoperability at the command level, for example using encrypted radios, communications and information systems.

"That whole issue will be exposed, investigated and explored."

Lt Col Corden said that rather than providing technical solutions, its purpose was to highlight specific points that needed work.

"It will take time but will be a step on the road to bringing the two sides together at the operational command level," he concluded.

Plans to boost British and French military power by pooling resources may be in the very early stages but the willingness to engage is already apparent from both sides.

As future exercises unfold, the prospect of a combined force will move ever closer to a deployable reality. ■



Clockwise from above, Ready for action: Soldiers from the French 152eme, Régiment d'Infanterie move in to secure their objective

Holding back: A guardsman defends an inner cordon during simulated civil unrest

Question time: A French instructor debriefs guardsmen at the end of a training serial

Lookout: Soldiers secure a high rise block



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Cross-Channel class

British troops tested by hi-tech French facility

Report: Sharon Kean
Pictures: Steve Dock

SOLDIERS from the 1st Battalion, Coldstream Guards brushed up their basic urban warfare skills during an intensive two-week training package at a state-of-the-art facility in northern France.

The sprawling CENZUB [Centre d'Entraînement aux Actions en Zone Urbaine] complex boasts a purpose-built town complete with historic centre, market square, high-rise flats and industrial area.

More than 120 British personnel worked alongside a French combined arms unit, carrying out a series of manoeuvres involving tanks and engineers on the 6,000-hectare site, which is also equipped with a train station, man-made river, multi-storey car park and even a motorway bridge.

Lt Col Rob Sergeant, commanding officer of 1 Coldm Gds, told *Soldier* it had been a chance for his men to practise their drills in a unique setting with the added challenge of operating with foreign troops.

"Coming here and doing this sort of training adds to the soldiers' skill sets and this environment is just the kind of thing we need to be getting our heads around as we try to understand what the future character of conflict looks like," he said.

"With a site like this you can really bring that to life at the tactical level and this investment in our troops will stand us in good stead, because we don't know where the next conflict will be and what it will be like." >>



The company-sized group were tasked with applying their drills in each of the different types of terrain, working closely with French infantry troops and their armoured vehicles.

Under the leadership of company commander Maj Oliver Biggs, the British unit formed part of a combined force charged with seizing control of Jeoffrecourt, a mock town with a population of 5,000.

The officer told *Soldier* that working with battle tanks and engineers on the ground had been a new experience for him and his men.

"There are things for both sides to learn from this," he explained.

"We are slightly better at coordinating our artillery, as I have an embedded mortar fire controller in my company, whereas the French unit rely on a higher level of command."

He added: "I have snipers in my company and the French don't really have an equivalent – they have people with sniper rifles but they don't use them in the same way that we do."

‘WITH A BIT OF GOODWILL AND PATIENCE WE’VE BEEN ABLE TO DO SOME PRETTY COMPLEX OPERATIONS TOGETHER’

Guardsmen on the ground were impressed

with the size and scope of the training area, which boasts an urban live-firing range complete with streets, buildings and trenches.

"The facilities are really good and the exercises are different because you don't have a clue what you're going into," said LCpl Andrew Ryder.

"When you're at home you know what you're doing because you use the same areas so much, but here you just don't have any idea what you are going to find in the next room."

Military personnel based at CENZUB take on the role of opposing forces, which ensured the British troops were tested by a succession of well-schooled commandos, paramilitaries and hostile civilian crowds.

Adjutant Sebastien Colin has been an instructor

at the French facility for two years and said the aim was to make sure visiting soldiers got the best value from the training by advising, guiding and evaluating participants.

He said he was impressed by British personnel and had noticed differences in some of their battlefield tactics.

"The English use different methods during casualty evacuations, sending ammunition and food up the chain as a soldier is evacuated, whereas the French do not – we could learn from that," he said.

Gdsm Cory Brown agreed there were distinctions between the way the two armies operated, in particular their approaches to defence.

"We work out of one location and build it up to the max to try to stop anyone getting in," he explained. "Whereas they [the French] prefer to have a rolling defence, don't invest too much in one location and constantly keep falling back."

Lt Laurent Bendra, the leader of an engineer platoon within the French infantry company, said that despite contrasting tactics his sappers had worked well with the British soldiers.

"We do the same job so there's not too much diversity and we don't need to say a lot to understand each other," he added.

Camaraderie among the two nations' troops had





"Last year a French Foreign Legion company went to Otterburn and did the combined arms live-firing serial and in return F Company, Scots Guards went to CENTAC [the combat training centre at Maillay Le Camps]," he added.

"The next exchange is confirmed for December. A battalion from 16 Air Assault Brigade will come to France and possibly a logistics squadron too."

Cross-Channel exercises are proving that both countries' troops are more than capable of working together on the ground, despite differences in language and battlefield tactics.

With military relations between Britain and France set to grow ever stronger the ability to share assets such as training facilities and equipment has never been more important. ■

helped the Guards overcome challenges on the ground such as using unfamiliar French rifles and simulation kit, said Maj Biggs.

"With a bit of goodwill, imagination and patience we've been able to do some pretty complex operations together," he explained.

As British Army units constantly drive towards developing the flexibility and agility to deploy soldiers wherever they are needed, training exercises such as this bring clear benefits.

Lt Col Paul Corden, the British liaison officer responsible for setting up the two-week package, said the current arrangement was for opportunities to be reciprocal.

Clockwise from above, Kick-off: Soldiers from 35ème, Régiment d'Infanterie dismount from their VCBI during an assault
Health hazard: French soldiers assault a building under the cover of smoke during the combined exercise with British troops
Unrest: A guardsman tends to a simulated casualty
Ground sign: A soldier carefully surveys the Joeffreycourt layout

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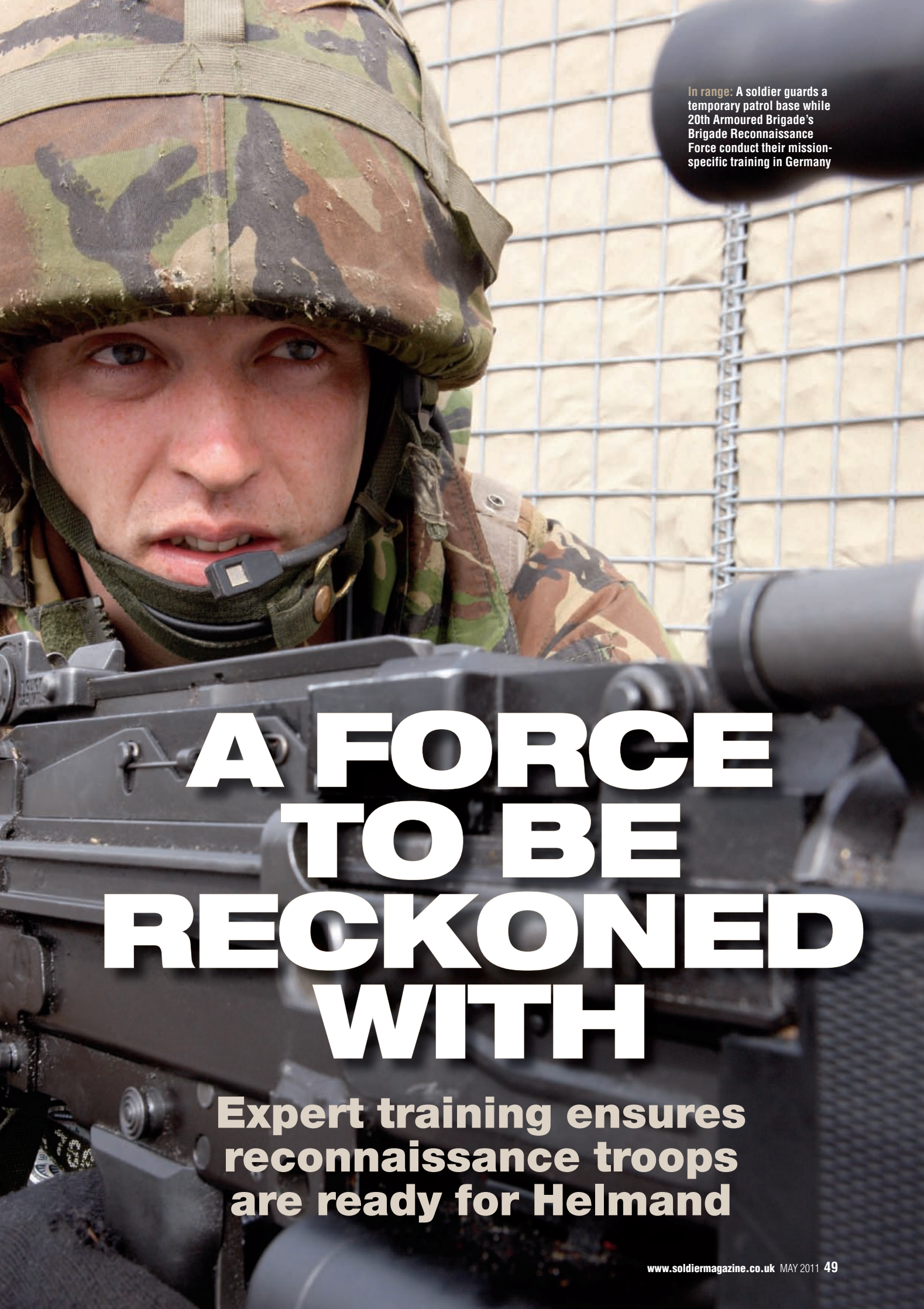
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A close-up photograph of a soldier wearing a camouflage helmet and a communication device. The soldier is looking through the sight of a rifle, which is in the foreground. The background is a chain-link fence. The overall tone is serious and professional.

In range: A soldier guards a temporary patrol base while 20th Armoured Brigade's Brigade Reconnaissance Force conduct their mission-specific training in Germany

A FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH

**Expert training ensures
reconnaissance troops
are ready for Helmand**



Clockwise from bottom left, Leading by example: A Royal Military Policeman on patrol during the five-day exercise; Moving in: Troops from the Brigade Reconnaissance Force prepare to occupy a compound and set up a temporary patrol base; Risky business: Soldiers from 1

Yorks check for IEDs during a ground domination patrol; Combat logistics: A supply patrol escorted by Jackal armoured vehicles arrives to deliver stores and equipment; Grand entrance: Soldiers from the BRF move in to the temporary patrol base and sweep for hidden threats.

**Report: Richard Long
Pictures: Steve Dock**

WHILE troops in Helmand put their training into practise in the full heat of theatre, a temperate forest is hosting 20th Armoured Brigade's preparation to take their place later this year.

A key element of the formation will be the Brigade Reconnaissance Force (BRF) and soldiers tasked with this vital role have been testing their skills and drills during a five-week package in Sennelager.

The programme is delivered by the Operational Training Advisory Group's (Optag) surveillance and reconnaissance wing and its specialist instructors make every effort to ensure the exercise mirrors what is happening on the ground in southern Afghanistan.

Personnel start by looking at key skills such as patrolling, compound clearing and casualty evacuations before progressing to dismounted combat work ranging from section contact drills to complex company clearance operations.

The package then moves to a round-robin stage involving technical training and advanced surveillance techniques.

All activities are accompanied by robust physical conditioning to ensure the soldiers reach peak fitness ahead of a final four-day exercise that is given a distinct Op Herrick-like flavour.

"We have created an Afghan-style scenario with a civilian population that has Afghan characteristics," training officer Capt Charlie Meredith Hardy (LG) told *Soldier*.

"We have made the mapping relevant to central Helmand province, encapsulating key features from the environment.

"The BRF operates outside of secure areas; most of their work is done on the ground in disputed territories.

"They get an enhanced training package from Optag to prepare them for their role as a combined arms sub unit that can potentially work in isolation."

The Queen's Dragoon Guards and 1st Battalion, The Yorkshire Regiment will provide the lead elements of the force, with attachments from the Royal Signals, Royal

'They lapped up the training and came here with the right attitude'

— Capt Meredith Hardy



Engineers and Royal Military Police among the strong supporting cast.

"This course provides the first opportunity for these troops to come together after their specialist training," Capt Meredith Hardy explained. "They are now working together as a collective force.

"The patrolling scenarios are very realistic. The soldiers are facing an enemy armed with AK47s, we are using pressure plates to simulate improvised explosive devices and the guys carry all the kit they will have in theatre such as Vallons and night-vision.

"They have been very enthusiastic. They lapped up the training and came here with



the right attitude.”

The instructors are all armed with operational experience from Afghanistan, meaning the training on offer has direct links to what personnel will face when they go on tour later this year.

Liaison officers are also sent to theatre to give direct feedback after each mission on what patrols faced and how they went about their work.

CSgt Gareth Davis (Gren Gds) spent two months in Helmand province during Op Herrick 13 and is using that experience to develop the programme.

“I was sent to get up-to-date with the latest tactics, techniques and procedures and to see if the drills they are using have changed,” he explained.

“On this exercise the soldiers will be moving into a temporary patrol base. That is what the BRF does in theatre.

“Guys are dropped off by chopper and then take over a compound from which they then operate.

“We are also introducing insurgent tactics, such as late-night shooting, and low-level

shuras involving section commanders,” he added.

“The guys here really want to learn and are constantly asking questions. They are extremely motivated and that makes them easy to teach.”

The early phase of the final exercise saw the BRF move to the patrol base before pushing out to two local villages to gather information about the developing situation on the ground.

Personnel interacted with pro-government supporters and faced those who were opposed to the presence of international troops. They were also attacked by insurgent forces.

Maj Justin Stenhouse (QDG), officer commanding the BRF, said: “This will never be the confirmation exercise, but in terms of the amount of on-the-man kit we use it is pretty realistic. There is a civilian population, which you do not get on other exercises, and it is all very well done.

“It is a good starting point and great for low-level drills. Optag provides the support but I have been involved in writing the

programme to make sure my soldiers get what they need.

“Everything is coming together really well. The integration across the cap badges has been superb.

“It will certainly be a challenging tour. The situation in Afghanistan changes on a daily basis and these are interesting times.

“We have got a desire to push the Afghan national security forces hard so we can get to the transition by 2015.

“There is a pressure to make those inroads and set the conditions for success. 3 Commando Brigade is a highly-professional organisation and their achievements will set things up for us.”

While the forest setting of the Sennelager Training Centre may not replicate the climate of southern Afghanistan, it still plays a crucial role in preparing soldiers for the challenges of the front line.

And with expert tuition at the forefront of such work, the next generation of BRF troops will be more than ready for Op Herrick 15. ■

● Operation Entirety – page 15

Multimedia

VIRTUAL REALITY READIES ROYAL ARTILLERY FOR BATTLE

Report: Sharon Kean
Pictures: Mike Weston

GUNNERS bound for Op Herrick 15 have been honing their joint fire drills by fighting computer-generated forces in a hi-tech hangar at RAF Waddington.

Troops from 26 Regiment, Royal Artillery spent five days familiarising themselves with the latest front-line kit used to coordinate land and air support assets at the Air Battlespace Training Centre (ABTC) in Lincolnshire.

Exercise Mountain Dragon saw the Helmand-bound personnel gathering intelligence, selecting weapons systems and managing virtual missions as training staff used simulators to construct a series of challenging combat scenarios.



Fire control: Gunners get to grips with virtual air and land assets at the Lincolnshire airbase

Wg Cdr Jon Smith, the RAF officer in charge of the multi-million pound facility, told *Soldier* that all the situations used in the training package were based on actual events that had taken place in theatre over the past 12 months.

"In a live environment it would be dangerous if not impossible to generate such complex objectives, so the ability to do this synthetically and then comprehensively debrief those taking part makes this very strong," he said.

"Getting a Tornado pilot to speak to the guys in an observation post is invaluable and something you just can't do out on the ground."

The Royal Air Force-run facility features a series of domes housing mocked-up aircraft cockpits. They are staffed by personnel with recent

experience of operating attack helicopters, fast jets and unmanned aerial vehicles in the skies above southern Afghanistan.

On-screen air assets available to the men of 16 Battery in the Joint Fire Cell included Apaches, Chinooks, Tornados and Reaper drones.

Over a series of exercises their job was to coordinate aircraft with their own fire support teams and other elements such as armoured vehicles and mortars and respond to threats from enemy fighters.

Gunnery training manager Lt Col Andy Smith said a key benefit of the set-up at Waddington was that Army and RAF personnel work together, as they would in theatre.

"They can practice the types of missions they will be doing on operations, making any mistakes here in a synthetic environment without the risk of blue-on-blue casualties," he said.

Herrick-bound battery commander Maj Joe Craven told *Soldier* that a chance to practise skills in such a complex and realistic environment was second-to-none.

"To be able to integrate all of the Istar [intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition and reconnaissance]



Eye in the sky: An RAF pilot takes his seat in a computer-generated Tornado GR4 simulator



masterclass

and joint fire assets and create an effect on the ground at such an early stage in our preparation for theatre is excellent," he said.

"It's very realistic but clearly we are rehearsing the higher-end kinetic activity – training hard, fighting easy – so it's giving us the opportunity to develop our procedures for when it's at its most frenetic in an observation post."

Tents equipped with massive video screens allowed the Royal Artillery men to immerse themselves in a virtual Op Herrick where they monitored air support, received intelligence data and coordinated air and ground-based fire support, using the type of cutting-edge kit in service on the front line.

Bdr Jonathan Japp, a watchkeeper manning the fire desk, said the computer serials had been very good practice.

"It puts us under a lot of pressure and lets us experience things that we will get out in theatre," he said.

"A combat logistics patrol went through our AO [area of operations] and we had to react to multiple enemy locations, with different assets and varying strength."

He added: "There's a lot of subject

matter experts here that you can draw on for operational experience. If there's a gap in your knowledge base you can pick up stuff from them."

A room packed with computer terminals allows members of the 30-strong in-house training staff to role play enemy forces and control the sequence of events that unfold during the cyber serials.

Capt John Dobson, a fire support team commander, said that after a tough start his team had settled into the training.

"My personnel have only just been trained in their jobs so it was a little bit slow to start, but we've progressed as the week's gone on and have learned a lot," he added.

"We did a few lessons teaching us about new developments in the kit and what's changed, then we went through exercises in the simulator to get us ready for using the different assets that we are going to encounter out in Afghanistan."

Pilots and weapon experts took part, manning cockpits and control stations to share information with the gunners stationed in tents representing observation posts.

The principal aim was to bring the Royal Artillery personnel up-to-date

with new developments in tactics, techniques and procedures.

Flt Sgt Paul Taylor from the RAF's 39 (Reaper) Squadron swapped his seat at the American Air Force base in Creech, Nevada, for a two-week stint at Waddington.

He said the exercise was a good chance for him to learn about the ground teams that he relied on while remotely operating unmanned aerial vehicles over Helmand province.

"It's great to get face-to-face with these guys who we're going to talk to on the radios in theatre because it gives us a feeling for the pressure that they are under in the fire tent," he added.

"It keeps us relevant and it's also important because we can let them know about the capabilities of the aircraft, so we can do the best job possible to keep them safe."

Although the gunners of 26 Regiment were at the beginning of their six-month training package, a week spent using the futuristic facilities at the Lincolnshire airbase got their pre-deployment preparations off to a flying start.

They will return ahead of deploying to brush up their skills and ensure they are ready to hit the ground running in Helmand. ■

● Training tailoring troops for theatre – page 15

Interview: Sharon Kean

THE first time Rupert Godesen went to Afghanistan it was as an Infantry soldier with his reservist regiment.

When he returned five years later, the former MoD graphics officer went armed with a sketchbook rather than a SA80. Based in Kabul, Godesen's mission – to share his drawing skill with local draughtsmen to improve the communication of public information – was far removed from that of his previous tour.

"The idea was to use comics to get across ideas about fire safety and mine awareness because such a high percentage of the population can't read," the professionally-trained illustrator told *Soldier*.

"Because the Afghans have lived with war, weapons and bombs for so long, they are careless about everyday things like unplugging electrical appliances and turning off lights."

Swapping his combats and rifle for pencils and paints, Godesen, who now works as a freelance war artist, was tasked with teaching a small group of students the tricks of the cartoon trade.

The trip was organised by US-based company Strategic Social, whose reconstruction work in Afghanistan focuses on improving literacy and safety standards through local media, TV and radio.

Working in a suburb of Kabul in a three-storey house fitted with recording studios, video-editing suites, offices and accommodation, teams of scriptwriters, researchers and artists pool their talents and pass on their skills to Afghan citizens.

Initially the firm approached comic giant Marvel to see if any of its employees would be interested in teaching students from the Kabul Institute of Fine Art but when security issues made this difficult Godesen was contacted by former colleague Nick Leason.

"When we were part of the MoD's Psychological Operations Group, Nick thought up all the clever campaigns and I turned them into pictures and products," explained the TA troop sergeant.

"At Strategic Social, Nick was looking for new ways to get public information messages out in Afghanistan and had his sights set on cartoons and graphic novels so he offered me the job.

"His aim was to create a pool of creative artists, each with different styles and suited to different jobs, so they could be sent design projects accordingly."

Two weeks after the call to arms, Godesen landed in Kabul. He took a sketchbook full of lesson plans and had five days in which to teach aspiring Afghan artists the finer points of cartooning.

Speaking through an interpreter and starting with basic drawing skills, he ran

classes designed to equip pupils with the brush strokes they would need as professional illustrators.

"Initially I taught them how to draw because for them the picture has to tell the whole story so they needed to be very capable," he said.

"I started with specific projects but all the while trying to develop characters that could be used across campaigns – not just in public safety leaflets but to convey longer stories too."

Not knowing what to expect from his class of six, the war artist took graphic novels ranging from *Superman* to *Asterix* with him, in a bid to inspire and influence his proteges.

"I found as many characters as I could in Waterstones but thought perhaps *Tin Tin* would be a good example as it's quite simple to draw and colour, fairly straightforward and easy to reproduce," he explained.

But the Afghan students disagreed, instead favouring the bulging biceps and flowing capes of Superman and Batman with their obligatory "thump", "thwack" and "whoosh" captions.

"We created engaging page layouts using long shots to establish the scene and close-ups for dialogue, as well as special effects tips for drama and action," said Godesen.

"Then we touched on professional practice; being honest about deadlines, not getting precious about alterations requested by clients and the need to compromise your art because the customer is king."

The class contained a range of experience, from first- and second-year students to the university dean. This meant lessons had to be pitched to suit a variety of abilities.

"They were very polite and hung on my every

word but only took the bits they chose to use," added Godesen.

"After listening to everything I had to say, they went away and did it in the method they wanted.

"Attempting to alter someone's style in just five days is a big ask, but I could see as I walked around making suggestions that it was sinking in. They were creating exciting characters with personalities."

Shortly after completing the course, three of the six students were selected to work on a national fire safety campaign and it is hoped the trio's illustrations will ultimately save the lives of Afghan civilians.

Godesen's two tours may have been conducted with vastly different tools, but they both shared this single objective. ■

'The Afghan students favoured the bulging biceps and flowing capes of Superman and Batman'



COMBAT CARTOONIST

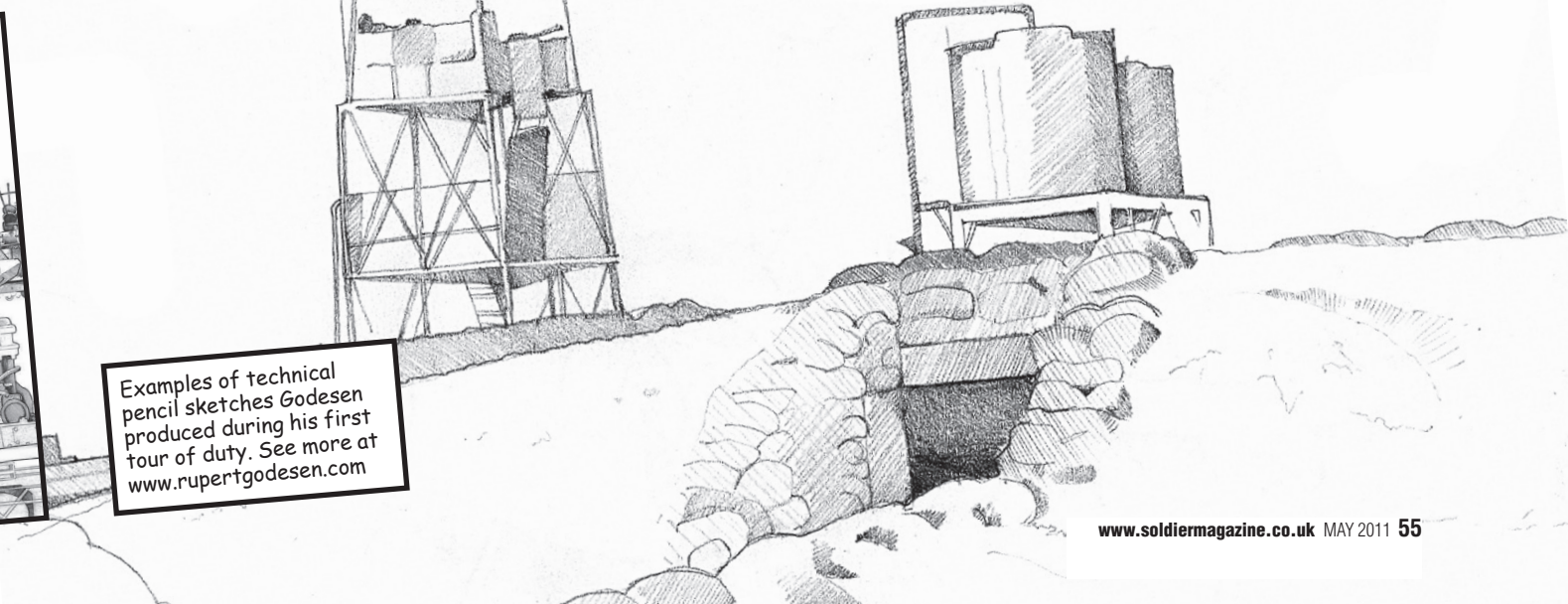
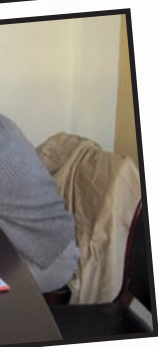
War artist and TA soldier tackles latest
Afghan mission armed with pens and paints



Godesen's own skill is clear in this picture of a medical evacuation



Afghan artists look over a selection of western comic books during a cartooning masterclass



Examples of technical pencil sketches Godesen produced during his first tour of duty. See more at www.rupertgodesen.com



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You've got nothing to lose and perhaps a lot to gain

Pets on parade prove bone of contention

SEE pet ownership as being akin to parenthood – both are a personal choice.

Over the years I have had to endure various messes being utilised as a creche by personnel who seem to see it as a cheap alternative to childcare.

Unfortunately, in the same way that the author of "Hound 'em out" (*Talkback*, April) feels they have no choice about dogs being in the workplace, I have no say over children being brought into the mess or other associated areas.

That said, I would argue that most canines found on military camps are better mannered and trained than some of the kids, and indeed parents, I have encountered during my Army career.

Soldiers residing in single living accommodation already sacrifice many home comforts and pet ownership provides a welcome normality. Those who bring their dogs to work do so to give their companions more than a four-walled view of the world.

Animals are not permitted at my current location and there is no equivalent of the Continuity of Education Allowance to help

finance alternative care for dogs.

I don't begrudge those who are gifted thousands to send their children to boarding school, even if they are serving in the same country, nor Territorial Army personnel whose kennelling charges are met while they are deployed on operations.

I do, however, object to the lack of facilities for those Servicemen and women with pets and believe a dog creche would be welcomed in many garrisons.

Where no such provision can be made, the decision to allow animals into the workplace must be governed by stringent regulations to avoid the issues alluded to by the aggrieved correspondent. In the main, this common sense approach works.

The naivety of the letter writer in acknowledging the role of animals within the British Army and the throwaway comment about Muslim soldiers and dogs demonstrates basic ignorance on their behalf and is simply not worthy of any further comment.

I'm off to start my own dog creche... the author of "Hound 'em out" will be most welcome. – **Capt K Russell, AGC.**



Prohibited pooch: Bob, the pint-sized pup of snapper Graeme Main, is banned from *Soldier* HQ following an incident with a general's leg



I WRITE in reply to the somewhat anti-canine correspondence featured in April's *Talkback*. In answer to the author's opening question, "am I the only non-dog lover serving in the Army?", I would suggest "yes, probably".

We are a nation of dog lovers. Indeed, the world-standard dog show is held annually in the UK. Britons own hundreds of thousands of them and, as a reflection of our society, the British Army is fighting very hard to be leaders in equality. Are we to start being branded "doggist"?

Animals serve with and for us, are bestowed rank and awards and are a huge boost to our public image. I'm sure the Irish Guards, for example, feel very strongly about bringing their wolfhound [pictured left] to work.

As for when it became traditional to have dogs star in military photographs, the answer is probably ever since the first unit photograph was taken and just after the regimental artist put away his brush and watercolours.

I have had my pet in work at previous postings and applied to do so through the chain of command, filling in the necessary forms and arranging the required risk assessments for myself and other members of the organisation. I can categorically state that had anyone, junior soldiers included, raised an objection at any stage then the dogs would have remained at home.

It will be a sad day indeed if I can't raise a small smile because my OC's black labrador puppy flatly refuses to sit and stay. – **WO2 (SSM) N Ulliott, PSI Tayforth UOTC.**

WHILE I agree with some of the points raised by the author of "Hound 'em out", particularly those about dogs jumping up and slobbering over uniforms, I disagree with the sentiment about banning pets from the workplace.

I am a single junior NCO serving at a Phase Two training establishment and own an English springer spaniel.

My dog comes to work with me every day and has his place under my desk, from where he does not move unless I instruct him otherwise.

Equally, he does not jump on all and sundry who enter my office as that would be unacceptable and I have trained him not to do so. My dog is fully insured and better behaved than some of the people I

work with. Can the writer say the same?

I also agree with the author's stance on taking our four-legged friends on squaddied runs and at my location it is policy that it does not happen.

A dog should not be allowed to jeopardise soldiers' safety or feature in a physical training risk assessment.

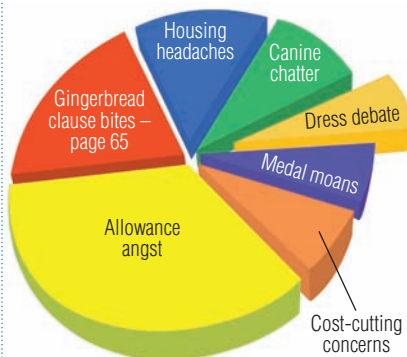
I am all for people having their opinions but believe that when it comes to pets in the workplace, each case should be considered on merit.

If an animal is granted access and then misbehaves its permission to be on site should be withdrawn.

This happens at my location and I have signed an agreement to that effect. – **Name and address supplied.**

Slice of Service life

This month's ruminations from the ranks...



Are bands singing from the same song sheet?

CAN someone please tell me (and no doubt many interested others) why members of military bands appear to have a much easier life than the rest of us?

Musicians go off, perform a parade and because doing so involved an early start (0630) they get the following day off.

Band members are hardly ever seen in uniform when in barracks and very rarely do their Military Annual Training Tests (MATTs).

I appreciate the majority are talented musicians but surely they are soldiers first.

Why can't they do a full working day like everyone else when they are not away performing? Where is the equality?

Do bands come under some other rules that the rest of us don't? – [Name and address supplied](#).

Lt Col Bob Meldrum, Principal Director of Music, HQ CAMUS, replies: The writer highlights a popular misconception that the terms and conditions of musicians are different to those of personnel serving in other arms and Services.



"Nice try, bandmaster. It may have worked at Jericho but times have changed somewhat."

Twenty three Regular Army bands each undertake on average 220 tasks per year (some 5,000 plus commitments in total), all of which directly benefit or support Service personnel or promote public awareness of the wider Army.

In addition to musical training, all musicians prepare for and complete their MATTs in accordance with policy.

What's not so obvious is the fact that most musical commitments take place during evenings and weekends so, quite rightly, working patterns are flexible to accommodate this.

Further afield, a good number of the Corps of Army Music have now served in Afghanistan either as individual augmentees or to provide morale-boosting modern musical entertainment.

Most recently, the Para Band played contemporary music – such as *Fire* by Kasabian – for soldiers at forward operating bases and contributed to the Afghan National Army partnering scheme by mentoring Afghan musicians.

CAMUS wants to do more of this important work and plans are afoot for other bands to deploy later this year.

So, contrary to misconceptions, the corps works hard to support the Army – be it the more routine business of marching troops to duty, performance of popular music in theatre or the deployment of augmentees to support the main effort.

WONDER WOMEN

WHEN *Soldier* asked our Facebook fans if they felt authors Robin Cross and Rosalind Miles had overlooked any worthy candidates in their rundown of history's ten greatest warrior women (*Ranked, March*), we did not anticipate Marge Simpson or Xena being among the names volunteered.

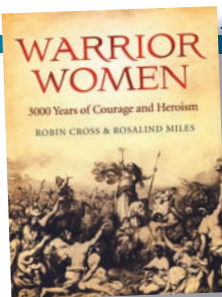
Other less tongue-in-cheek suggestions included Susan Travers, the only female to officially serve with the French Foreign Legion, and British Second World War secret agent and George Cross winner Violette Szabo.

Allied heroine Odette Hallowes and Hua Mulan, China's mythical warrior princess, also earned a mention in dispatches as shock omissions.

However, it was Joan of Arc's absence from the countdown [1, Boudicca; 2, Wu Chao; 3, Matilda of Tuscany; 4, Jinga Mbandi; 5, Deborah Sampson; 6, Harriet Ross Tubman; 7, Lilya Litvak; 8, Pearl Witherington; 9, Martha McSally; 10, Michelle Norris] that surprised most.

"Born a peasant in France, she won an audience with Charles VII and convinced the king to put her at the head of an army," wrote Lt Neil Dickie (105 Regt RA (V)), explaining why "The Maid of Orleans" ranks among the best. "Her formation disregarded the usual French method of warfare and was very aggressive in its action against the English – most notably at the siege of Orleans.

"Despite claiming that she saw divine visions and voices, Joan of Arc went on



to record several victories against the English before being captured, put on trial and burned at the stake. In the years after her death she was pronounced innocent and canonised by Pope Benedict XV."

Lt Dickie's history homework earns him a prize copy of *Warrior Women: 3000 Years of Courage and Heroism*.



Picture: SAC Neil Chapman

Return to action: RAF aircrew leave the cockpit of their Tornado after flying a mission over Libya

BLAST FROM THE PAST

WHAT starts as a no-fly zone and air strikes against Col Muammar Gaddafi's forces could escalate to the deployment of UK soldiers on Libyan soil and see the British Army become entrenched as part of an occupying force for years to come.

It could, in effect, see the resurrection of British Forces Post Office (BFPO) 55 Benghazi, BFPO 56 Tobruk and BFPO 57 Tripoli. Soldiers would be cheered-in by the rebels, but eventually placards would appear saying "go home filthy British" much like they did in the 1950s and early 1960s.

Britain is not much liked today in Iraq despite our enthusiasm for overthrowing Saddam and the sacrifice of our troops.

Perhaps the Prime Minister's enthusiasm for military intervention will get us involved in Bahrain – formerly BFPO 63 – or Aden in Yemen, once BFPO 69.

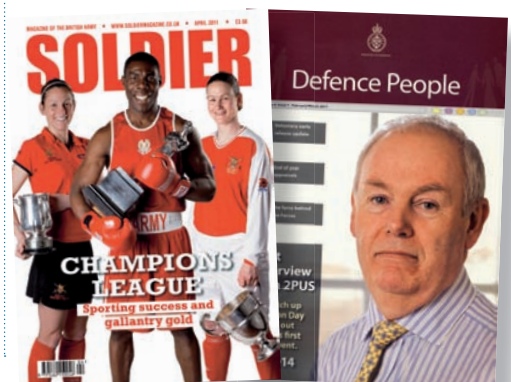
The no-fly zone and air strikes over Libya will be of considerable cost to the British taxpayer at a time when the Government is forcing substantial cuts to the budget of the MoD and other departments. – [David Sparks, London \(ex-RE\)](#).

CIVIL SERVANT STRIKES BACK

TO use the words of SSgt Barnett in "Talkback tittle tattle" (April), I am a "beret-less military support function civil servant" who has worked alongside the British Army for 25 years.

I have a daughter in uniform, was married to a Serviceman and love reading *Soldier* because I often know those featured in its pages. In contrast, I have never picked up a copy of *Defence People*.

Unlike SSgt Barnett, who believes this title is only for those in uniform, my military colleagues don't have a problem with a civvy looking at "their" magazine. – [Mrs Annamaria Miller, London](#).



Equipment evolution



"If you're doing some gardening, pick some daffodils for me please, dear."

UNWANTED WATER FEATURE

WHEN I took over my quarter in November of last year I was told there was a small build up of water in the property's garden, but not to worry.

After moving in, I was amazed at how much rainwater collected and, alarmed to see that it reached the back door, phoned Modern Housing Solutions.

In response they sent out a specialist who didn't even look at the garden but merrily told me it was a "Sandhurst problem" and there was nothing that could be done.

Such is the extent of the problem that we cannot let our dog out for days after it's been raining as he sinks a good few inches.

Why do I have to pay full rent for a house with a garden that cannot always be used? — **WO2 J Brown, RMA Sandhurst, Camberley.**

Defence Estates Operations Housing, RAF Brampton, respond: Some Service Families Accommodation (SFA) properties in the Sandhurst area have gardens that are subject to an occasional build up of water as a result of local topographical characteristics and a high clay content soil structure.

Standing water is not there permanently so this is not a priority for the MoD. In addition, Defence Estates (DE) would have to invest a substantial amount of money to alleviate the issue and funding is not currently available.

Gardens in SFA that are subject to the effects of high groundwater conditions or poor surface drainage, which prevents the full use of these facilities on a seasonal basis, may be awarded one deficiency point which can impact on the grade for charge.

DE intends to approach the chain of command to suggest that a board of officers is convened to discuss WO2 Brown's case.

Service personnel may have pets in SFA, subject to permission being granted, but animals are not provided for or considered during the allocation process.

DURING my ten years in the Army I have seen a substantial improvement in the kit provided to soldiers deploying on operations.

I was extremely happy with the standard of the equipment I was issued for Herrick 13, but feel that the non-operational gear is a little disappointing.

In my opinion the combat boots are terrible – they are very difficult to break in, take an age to dry and are no good for tabbing and physical training.

We are also still issued with a poor-quality fleece and webbing with awkward pockets. The "bouncing bomb" sleeping bag keeps you warm but it is very bulky and far too heavy.

I understand that operations and the kit for them are the priority, and rightly so, but the British Army should not lose sight of the fact that we spend a lot of time training for deployments.

With that in mind, are there any plans to improve any of the items mentioned or will soldiers have to keep on buying alternatives? Sourcing the above items can cost in excess of £500. — **Serving soldier, 5 Scots.**

Col Stephen James, Defence Clothing Team Leader, replies: This letter raises some understandable concerns alongside praise of operational kit.

It has taken a lot of work to get the equipment for personnel on operations just right and sadly, as a result, some other areas have lagged behind slightly.

A competition is under way for new combat boots, which will follow the approach used for the current desert boots. This means that there will be two types available and these will come in a range of width fittings.

The footwear procured will be from the commercial market so personnel should see the same sort of improvement that the current range of desert boots has given us.

The selection will centre on troop trials and therefore it will be soldiers like yourself, with current operational

experience and a real understanding of the demands of theatre and training, that have a say as to what comes into service.

The new Personal Clothing System was described in March's edition of *Soldier* and is in the process of being rolled out.

Although the initial issue is of combat uniform, it will eventually replace the complete range of Combat Soldier 95 clothing, fleece and all.

A number of options are being examined to succeed the current in-service sleeping system, including an arrangement of temperate and warm weather bags that can be combined to cover the full temperature range.

It is planned to complete the competition and start delivery next year.

New webbing is being developed for operations to integrate with the latest Osprey body armour and will incorporate a modular lightweight load-carrying set-up and the existing pouches.

The replacement of the standard-issue personal load carriage equipment is being addressed by the VIRTUS programme (formally known as PECOC).

It is envisaged that this project will introduce a torso system in which the load carriage will be fully integrated with the combat body armour.

Troop feedback from operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, together with a look at other nations' programmes and industrial capacity, will play a significant part in determining the final kit.

I appreciate the temptation is there to buy your own items and recognise that soldiers wish to personalise their gear, but both the Defence Clothing and Personal Combat Equipment Teams are working hard to bring the core equipment up to the same very high standard as the operational package.

I hope you will see some real improvements from 2011 onwards as this work starts to deliver.



Incoming: The Personal Clothing System features a redesigned fleece

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HOLIDAY HEADACHE

THOSE in the Military Provost Guard Service have to put in a seven-day leave pass for four days off – a policy which simply doesn't make sense.

The hierarchy has come up with a formula for justifying this but it doesn't take into account that we work public holidays and during a four-day shift are on duty for a minimum of 50 hours. MPGS personnel also have two training days per month (12 hours) and a minimum of two standby duties per month (one hour's notice to move).

Taking the above into account, many of us feel we are being hard done by as seven for four equates to 23 days of leave and not the 38 that Service personnel are entitled to.

We are not provided with a housing grant or any form of boarding school allowance and the rate of Home to Duty Travel has been dramatically cut, so it seems unfair to also deny us holiday. – LCpl J Russell, Upavon.

Brig Mike Griffiths, DPS(A), replies: LCpl Russell raises a legitimate concern. The policy of requiring MPGS individuals to request seven days off for 12 days' absence was agreed by the three Services when developed, however all now agree that in keeping with the regulations shift workers should only need to request leave for those days that they are rostered to work.

In future, personnel will need to request only six days' leave for 12 days of absence to cover the four days on shift and the two training or additional duty days. MPGS policy will be adjusted to reflect this change.

Winter (tyres) of discontent

I WRITE with reference to the new law now in force in Germany with regards to the mandatory use of winter tyres.

This change in regulation has come at the same time as the reduction in Local Overseas Allowance (LOA) and placed an additional financial burden on those personnel serving here.

There are significant costs involved when purchasing winter tyres and for some models of vehicles this can be in excess of €1,400, with an average price being circa €600 to €800.

It should be noted that this applies to every vehicle in a household, meaning families could face a potential bill of €1,600 to €2,400.

The fact is that there is now a significant extra cost to individuals posted to Germany which I believe was not considered during the recent round of allowance reviews.

Will LOA be revisited in order to compensate for this new motoring law? – WO1 L Weedall, HQ 1 (UK) Armd Div, Master Driver.

Brig Mike Griffiths, DPS(A), responds: As soon as HQ UK Support Command became aware that the German Federal Government had imposed the requirement for winter tyres they informed my staff.

As a result, the costs for these items, which are already met for those serving in locations such as Sonthofen and Oberammergau, has been applied as an increase to all the revised Germany LOA rates, effective from May 1, 2011.



"We know you want to get to Moscow quickly, sir, but the German officials are refusing to let us through without winter tyres."

Based on the need to purchase five €160 tyres, an additional €800 has been factored into the calculations. When paid as part of the daily rate this sum produces an additional 60p per day increase, which is provided over 33 months (the average length of a British Army Germany assignment).

These figures were recently published by the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency. However, the application of the LOA convention changes and the Strategic Defence and Security Review allowance savings measures also come into effect on May 1. Therefore, the winter tyre uplift will not be immediately apparent, but will act as a slight offset to these other adjustments.

Allowance should be used as carrot for weight loss

I WRITE with regards to the apparent widespread abuse of the Daily Rate Subsistence Allowance (DRSA).

As the name suggests, this is a daily subsidy, paid at a set rate, to cover the cost of food and drink when Service messing is unavailable.

It is not an allowance on which to consume rich food and grow fat – but it is clear that many military personnel are doing just that.

The MoD spends millions of pounds on DRSA every year and yet research suggests that more than a third of those in the Armed Forces

are overweight (fat) or obese (even fatter). They hardly need extra food at the taxpayer's expense!

The Armed Forces weight management programme mandates the annual measuring of troops' Body Mass Index (BMI). I am sure that no-one finds this policy humiliating or intrusive and the fact that the current World Health Organisation ranges for overweight and obese are arbitrary and not based on any scientific study is probably irrelevant.

Perhaps British Army personnel with a BMI that places them in these categories should forfeit all entitlement to DRSA except that spent on salad-based foodstuffs and hummus.

Furthermore, those intending to claim DRSA should have their BMI measured before and after the period of any claim.

In the event of an increase, payments should be denied on the ground that individuals have been eating too much. – WO2 (FoS) Potts, RSIT.





Standards to achieve

Press-Ups

Sex/Age	Under 30	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54
Male	72	70	68	62	55	51
Female	46	41	37	33	31	28

Sit-Ups

Sex/Age	Under 30	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54
Male & Female	77	72	71	67	62	61

Run

Sex/Age	Under 30	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54
Male	8:15	8:30	9:00	9:15	9:30	10:00
Female	10:00	10:30	11:00	11:30	12:00	12:45

The 300 club 299 just isn't enough



A salute to April's ginger snaps

WHEN we broke the news last month that the British Army was preparing to undertake a massive overhaul of military ranks and titles to ensure it adheres to the “gingerbread clause” of the Equality Act 2010, it caused quite a stir.

The prospect of the Service giving due consideration to dropping names such as guardsman and craftsman in favour of “gender-neutral designations” prompted a flurry of flustered phone calls and emails to *Soldier* HQ.

For all those still reeling from the revelation that privates in the Guards could soon be known as sentinels, escorts or protectors and that the REME soldiers of tomorrow will be addressed as artisans, stand easy – the diversity drive and aptly-named Lt Col Avril Bridgeman were figments of our imagination.

Among those hoodwinked were a retired (and rather grumpy) brigadier, a member of the Army's media machine (shame on you), a news agency journalist (who bucked the trend and actually sought to check the facts before touting his scoop to the national press), a concerned commanding officer who took some convincing the whole thing was a jape, a potty-mouthed poster on the Army Rumour Service website, a bemused “it's political correctness gone mad” subscriber and the following serving personnel:

CRUMB OF CONCERN

IS “Gingerbread clause prompts changing of the guard” your April Fool's joke?

If not, then I have great concern at the waste of time, manpower (assuming we can still call it that) and money due to the task given to Lt Col Bridgeman's staff.

As far as I can tell from the article, the only title that could be remotely considered sexist is craftsman. If this is the case then surely the focus should just be on this specific rank name.

PAST PRANKS

Hogs of war (2010) – British personnel deploying on reconnaissance missions are doing so alongside wild boars. Armed with a similar digestive system to humans, warthogs are susceptible to exactly the same kinds of poisons as their two-legged comrades and can give the trotters up or down on a potential source of scoff.

Changing the guards (2009) – Defence chiefs claim that introducing a one-button-fits-all approach to the tunics worn by the Grenadier, Scots, Welsh, Irish and Coldstream Guards – which all have their own distinctive button formations – will slash expenditure by a third.

Genetic warfare (2008) – Under a controversial new scheme, recruits struggling to make the grade can volunteer to be injected with the genes of individuals with proven military prowess, including heroes from the Royal Marines.

Is this [the revision of all designations for private] simply a case of mission creep by the equality team or is there something that I am missing?

The titles trooper, gunner, sapper, signaller, air trooper and musician do not identify the holder as a male or a female any more than private or soldier does. The same can be said about fusilier, ranger and highlander, but given that they – along with guardsman and kingsman – can only be held by men, I fail to see how they could be deemed sexist.

This point is at odds with the article which quoted Lt Col Bridgeman as saying: “It is those currently in rank whose opinions count the most and one guardsman interviewed as part of our initial scoping study felt strongly about being pigeon-holed as performing a ‘man’ job. He firmly believed that as his role was not gender specific he'd prefer it to have a neutral title.”

This soldier's stance makes no sense as if he is indeed a guardsman then he is a cap-badged member of an Infantry unit – a position currently only open to men.

The individual's role is gender specific, hence the title. If the article is a joke then well done, *Soldier*. You got me. – **Capt X (DE&S)** [name withheld to save blushes].

CHANGES TAKE THE BISCUIT

I HAVE just read the article in reference to the overhaul of military ranks and, as a female senior NCO, felt it my duty to pose a question.

In respect of the REME, and to preserve a rank title which has been used since the corps' formation in 1942, would it not be simpler to add woman to crafts? This would surely satisfy the Equality Act 2010.

As for the Infantry and their designations such as rifleman and guardsman, there are no grounds for offence as females are not permitted to join these units.

I genuinely feel that the other titles such as gunner, sapper, trooper and signaller are not discriminating. These ranks are just simply a description of the jobs that personnel sign up to as their trade of choice. – **Sgt Y (QARANC)**.

There were of course others, such as Capt Andy Jensen (RAMC) and Alec

Coleman (ex-Royal Warwickshire Regiment), who were quick to spot we'd cooked up a story...

SMART COOKIE

ABOUT time! The Army has laboured for too long with anachronistic rank titles, particularly for the OR-1.

The Royal Signals changed signalman to signaller many years ago but this alteration was merely a token gesture. Bombadier, lance serjeant, corporal of horse, colour sergeant – for goodness' sake, how bizarre an organisation do we sound?

However, I disagree with the assumption made that officer ranks are fine.

They too are wallowing in the dark ages: how many brigadiers actually have a brigade of their own to command nowadays?

And by comparison, why don't we call a divisional GOC [general officer commanding] a

divisioner? It is all such a tawdry mess.

It is time to review and standardise all ranks – potentially removing duplications such as warrant officer class one/two and lieutenant colonel/colonel as recommended by the Bett Report some years ago.

I'm sure Lt Col Avril Bridgeman is the woman for the job (even if she doesn't feature in *The Army List*).

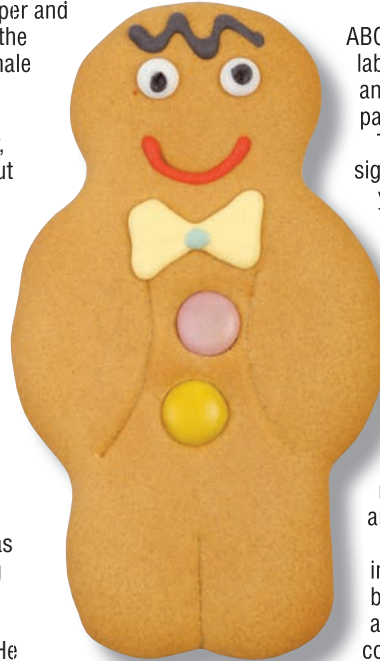
Personally, I would favour the adoption of the Nato rank codes of OR1-9 and OF0-10, which in one sweep of the pen would remove any reference to a pompous and confusing past that is best forgotten.

Perhaps, while we're at it, we could get rid of the variety of different badges we wear to signify our rank and consider decimalisation of the command structure so that a section (renamed a team) has ten personnel instead of eight.

We could then do away with troops and platoons and simply have ten teams forming a department of 100 (assuming we have that many personnel left after the latest round of redundancies).

This system would be much more modern, politically correct and European.

The departments could even be commanded by a rank that reflects the role such as centurion, rather than some old-fashioned, historic nod to the past. Oh, hang on... Happy April 1. – **OF2 Andy Jensen, 202 Field Hospital (Volunteers)**.



“IF IT'S WRONG TO SAY GINGERBREAD MAN, THEN IT'S WRONG TO SAY CRAFTSMAN”



COMPETITIONS

Spine line winners: Mrs Lisa Yates, RMAS, Camberley; Ms Anne McLoughlin, HQ DLS, Deepcut, Surrey.

Due Date winners: M Dryden, HQ GSG, BFPO 140; D Flemming, Trowbridge, Wilts; Cpl L Vernazza, APHCS, Tidworth; WO2 A Samuel, AFCCO Cardiff; WO1 G McLorie, Medical Branch, HQ 4 Div.

RED winners: Pte P Sutton, 1 PWRR, BFPO 22; Mrs L Doyle, 1 PWRR, BFPO 22; L Newport, Oxford; WO2 K Keogh, Loan Service Team, BFPO 11; Sgt D Harris, HQ BATUS.



DIARY

May 12-15: Windsor Castle Royal Tattoo. Held in the grounds of Windsor Castle during the evening. The Royal Windsor Horse Show takes place at the same venue during the day. Tickets available from the box office on 0871 230 5570 or booked online at www.windsortattoo.com

May 25-29: Forces March 2011. One of the UK's top challenge events. Participants attempt to complete five marathons in five days. Entries from military personnel, civilians and emergency services welcome. Minimum of four people in each team. Visit www.forcesmarch.org.uk for further information and an application form.

May 28: Blues Brothers Tribute Band. In aid of Help for Heroes. Performing live at Hatherley Manor Hotel, Gloucester GL2 9AQ. Tickets cost £30, include a three-course meal and are available online at www.peruforh4h.co.uk or by phoning 01452 260063.

June 5: Concert featuring musicians from the Coldstream Guards and US Army Europe Band at The Guards Chapel, London at 1700. Tickets (£15) from The Guards Museum, Wellington Barracks, London SW1E 6HQ or from Toy Soldier Centre on 0207 976 0850. Cheques payable to The Guards Museum.

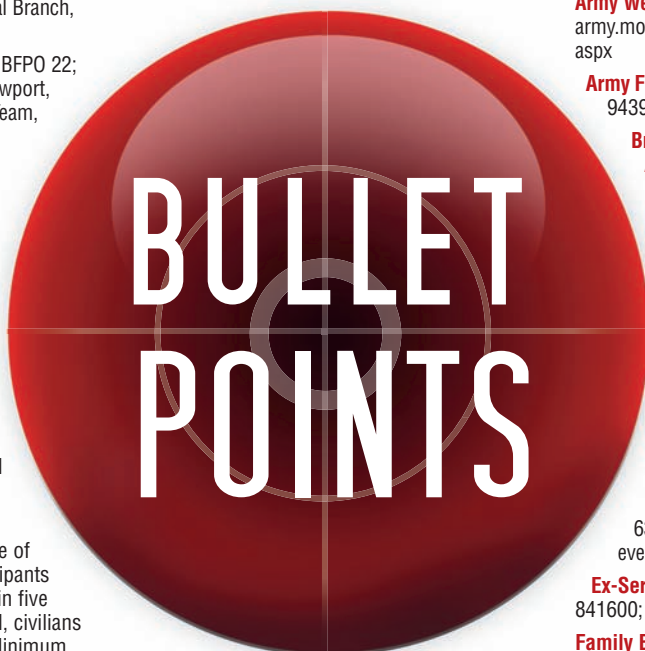
June 8: War Widows' Association, Service of Commemoration at The Guards Chapel, London at 1130 followed by a reception at the Central Methodist Hall, Westminster. Contact Mrs R Campbell, 7 Pentreath Avenue, Guildford, Surrey GU2 7TA or call 01483 852056.

June 8-9: Household Division Beating Retreat. A floodlit music spectacular at Horse Guards Parade, Whitehall, London. Tickets available by calling 0844 847 2435.

June 11: The Great Poppy Picnic. The Royal British Legion celebrates its 90th anniversary with a picnic and afternoon of fun at Ingatstone Hall, Hall Lane, Ingatstone, Essex CM4 9NR. Admission is free and parking costs £5. Gates open at noon with entertainment from 1300. Contact Lynnette Francis on 01245 348818 or Tracey Hall on 01245 240989.

June 15: Swift and Bold. The band and bugles of the Rifles and band of the Royal Logistic Corps. New season of Kneller Hall summer concerts. Gates open at 1800,

tickets £10 (adults), £8 (concessions: under 16s, OAPs), £5 (MoD personnel), £40 (season ticket with chair), £30 (family ticket). Free tickets are available for injured and ex-Service personnel plus one carer. Payment in advance by credit or debit card or on the gate. By post with cheques payable to The Accounting Officer MoD, Concert Secretary, Royal Military School of Music, Kneller Hall, Twickenham, Middlesex TW2 7DU or order tickets by email e1coord@rmsm.mod.uk



June 19: Military Vehicle Show at the Imperial War Museum, Duxford, Cambridge. For information visit www.iwm.org.uk/duxford or telephone 01223 835000.

June 22: Frontiers and Horizons. The bands of The Prince of Wales's Division and Brigade of Gurkhas. Tickets and information as June 15.

June 23: Day of prayer for the Armed Forces. The Armed Forces' Christian Union and the Forces' chaplaincies are organising an annual day of prayer for the Services and their families at St Clement Danes, the central church of the Royal Air Force, The Strand, London. For information visit www.afcu.org.uk

June 25: Armed Forces Day. For more details visit www.armedforcesday.org.uk

June 25: Service personnel and their families can enter **Diggerland** theme parks for free. Details from www.diggerland.com

June 25-26: Wiltshire Armed Forces and veterans celebrations at Trowbridge Park. Marching parade, drumhead service and free show for all the family on Saturday. For further information visit www.bafvc.org.uk

June 29: Top Brass. Tickets and information as for June 15.

July 13: Big Band. Tickets and information as for June 15.

July 16: Anthems in the Park. Concert at RAF Cranwell, Sleaford, Lincolnshire. Kerry Ellis, Brian May and the band of the Royal Air Force, plus fireworks and an air display. Ticket sales on 0844 888 9991. Gates open at 1630.

July 20: A celebration of Army Music. Band of the Irish Guards and The Heavy Cavalry and Cambrai Band. Tickets as for June 15.



DIRECTORY

Armed Forces' Christian Union: 01252 311221; www.afcu.org.uk

Armed Forces Humanist Association: www.armedforceshumanists.org.uk

ABF The Soldiers' Charity: 0845 241 4820

Army Welfare Service: 01980 615975; www.army.mod.uk/welfare-support/welfare-support.aspx

Army Families Federation: 01264 382324; [www.aff.org.uk](http://mil943912324.org.uk)

British Limbless Ex-Service Men's Association: 0208 590 1124; www.blesma.org

Career Transition Partnership: 0207 766 8020

Children's Education Advisory Service: 01980 618244; enquiries@ceas.detsa.co.uk

Confidential support lines: UK 0800 731 4880; Germany 0800 1827 395; Cyprus 080 91065; Falklands #6111; from operational theatres Paradigm Services *201; from anywhere in the world (CSL operator will call back) 0044 1980 630854. Lines open 1030-2230 (UK) every day

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

Family Escort Service: 0207 463 9249

Forces Pension Society: 0207 820 9988

Joint Service Housing Advice Office: 01722 436575

Medal Office: 94561 3600 or 0141 224 3600

Mutual Support (Multiple Sclerosis group): www.mutualsupport.org.uk

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

Regular Forces' Employment Association: 0121 236 0058; www.rfea.org.uk

Royal British Legion: 0845 7725 725

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

St Dunstan's: 0207 723 5021; www.st-dunstons.org.uk

South Atlantic Medal Association: 01495 227577

Services Cotswold Centre: 01225 810358

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



INTELLIGENCE

The following Army Briefing Notes, Defence Internal Briefs and Defence Information Notices can be found at www.armynet.mod.uk

DIB 27/11: Operation Ellamy update (March 24) – UK participation in international military operations in Libya

DIB 28/11: Guidance on conduct during forthcoming election and referendum campaigns

DIB 29/11: New Performance Appraisal arrangements from April 11

DIB 30/11: Publication of Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey 2010 report

DIB 31/11: Publication of the Service Complaints Commissioner's third annual report

DIB 32/11: Conclusion of Planning Round 2011

ABN 23/11: Army Photographic Competition

DIN 2011DIN01-083: Nursing Officer Transfer Scheme

DIN 2011DIN01-085: Volunteers for UK Special Forces Medical Group including Medical Support Wing, 16 Med Regt

DIN 2011DIN01-086: 2011 Band B2/Grade 7 Promotion Review

DIN 2011DIN01-087: Information on family job codes

DIN 2011DIN01-088: Information on skills framework

DIN 2011DIN01-089: Increase in the rate of Excess Fares Allowance from April 6

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additional paternity leave and additional statutory paternity pay

DIN 2011DIN01-101: JSP 764 amendment 4 – Armed Forces Pension Scheme 2005 including RFPS, EDP and AF redundancy schemes

DIN 2011DIN01-102: Publication of revised JSP 893 – policy on safeguarding vulnerable groups

DIN 2011DIN01-103: TACOS transfer guidance

DIN 2011DIN01-104: Volunteers for United Kingdom Special Forces Group

DIN 2011DIN01-106: Pension tax relief annual allowance

DIN 2011DIN01-107: Reduction in Lifetime Allowance

DIN 2011DIN02-006: The Defence Manual of Security (JSP 440) – publication of Issue 3.9.0

DIN 2011DIN03-016: M6 Toll – exemption passes for MoD white fleet

DIN 2011DIN04-050: Introduction into service of the Combined Oxygen Generation System

DIN 2011DIN04-049: JSP 456 Defence Catering Manual

DIN 2011DIN04-048: Declaration of obsolete thunderflash N5

DIN 2011DIN04-047: Declaration of obsolete thunderflash N5 (MCMV)

DIN 2011DIN04-046: Provision of a road freight service within UK and Continental Europe

DIN 2011DIN05-015: Revised procedures for officer appraisal management at the Army Personnel Centre

DIN 2011DIN05-014: Merger of through life support and supply chain management

DIN 2011DIN05-013: Defence Academy of the United Kingdom HQ and corporate services

DIN 2011DIN06-010: BikeSafe motorcycling guidance

DIN 2011DIN06-009: Management of safety, health and environmental protection during the transition to the Defence Infrastructure Organisation

DIN 2011DIN07-078: All arms unit fire safety managers and fire safety NCO course information

DIN 2011DIN07-075: Joint and single Service security, language, intelligence, photographic and geo-spatial training courses for 2011/12

DIN 2011DIN07-064: Nuclear department/medical assistant (SM)/radiation protection supervisor course dates 2012/March 2013

DIN 2011DIN07-063: Army attendance at overseas staff colleges

DIN 2011DIN07-062: Army Education Services support to NCO and WO command, leadership and management

DIN 2011DIN08-007: British Forces Post Office removal of the Post Office accounting rate

DIN 2011DIN08-006: Non Pay As You Dine messing and casual meals charges for non-entitled personnel in the UK for financial year 2011-12

DIN 2011DIN10-020: Army Climbing Championships



REUNIONS

77th Artillery Clerks: Reunion and dinner at Larkhill, Salisbury, on May 6-8. Details from reunion secretary Capt Ian Constantine, 19 Regt RA, Bhurtpore Barracks, Tidworth, Hants SP9 7AS or by phone 01980 656550 or email ian.constantine758@mod.uk

Continued on page 68.

NO. 834

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TEN details have been changed on this photograph of a competitor at the 1 (UK) Armoured Division skiing competition at Les Contamines-Montjoie near Mont Blanc in the French Alps. Circle the differences in the left image and send the panel to **HOAY 834, Soldier**, Ordnance Road, Aldershot,

Hampshire GU11 2DU by May 31.

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

March competition: First correct entry drawn at random and winner of the £100 was **SSgt S Hall**, 4 LSR RLC LAD.

Runners-up **Angela Francois**, 100 Regiment RA (V), Luton, Bedfordshire and **Wayne Baker**, Grantham, Lincolnshire win a £25 gift voucher.



Combined Cavalry Old Comrades: All serving and retired members of the Cavalry and Yeomanry are invited to attend the annual parade and service in Hyde Park on May 8. Those attending are asked to form up with their regiments on The Broadwalk by 1045. A limited number of wheelchairs are available. Contact Maj Stretton on 01753 755132.

Trucial Oman Scouts Association: 60th anniversary of the formation of the force. Reunion in the India and Pakistan Hall, Royal Overseas League on May 14. Veterans of all ranks are welcome. Further details from Terry Ward by email at tjward@jackanapes.co.uk

United Nations Veterans Association: Annual parade on May 26 at the Cenotaph, Whitehall, London. All UN veterans are welcome, parade starts at 1230. Further details from Kieron Ryan at kieronryan58@googlemail.com

Hertfordshire & Bedfordshire Yeomanry Association: Annual reunion on June 4 at the TA Centre, Marsh Road, Luton, Beds. Ex-members including wives and partners from the following regiments: 52 Hy Regt, 79 HAA Regt, 86 Fd Regt, 135 Fd Regt, 148 Fd Regt, 191 Fd Regt, 286 Fd Regt and any former or serving member of 100 Fd Regt RA. Details on 07753 344621 or email k8putthekettleon@hotmail.co.uk

Army personnel who worked at the Services Booking Centre between December 1985 and January 1991: Jane Rigby (nee Newbould) and Steve Holmes are arranging a reunion on June 4 from 1300-1800 at The William Blake, 174-180 Old Street, London EC1V 9BP. Contact Steve on 0207 210 5253 for details.

Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters Association: Annual reunion will be held at Worcester Rugby Club on June 4 from 1200-1800. Past and present members of the regiment and their families are welcome. Contact Maj (Retd) M Green, RHQ Mercian (Nottingham Outstation), Foresters House, Chetwynd Barracks, Chilwell, Beeston, Nottingham NG9 5HA or call 0115 9465415.

Queen's Own Highlanders (Seaforth & Camerons): 50th anniversary gathering, Inverness on June 11-12. Visit www.cabarfeidh.com or call 01463 732343.

Gordon Highlanders: Waterloo lunch at the London Scottish Headquarters, London SW1 on June 18. Ladies welcome. Further details from Bob Harman on 0208 642 7192 or honorary secretary John Spoor on 01634 231070 or email jspoorewigmores@tinyonline.co.uk

ROADSHOWS

The Army Presentation Team wants to hear from members of the public who would like a personal invitation to its hi-tech roadshow. The event starts with a drinks reception, is followed by a presentation and questions and culminates with a finger buffet. There will be a range of military personnel on hand to answer any of your questions. Call 01276 417000 or email your name and address to apt.mod@btinternet.com with the event you are interested in attending.

May: 17, Harrow; 18, Hounslow. **June:** Aberdeen, Perth, Edinburgh (dates tbc).



SEARCHLINE

104 FS Battalion REME requires Territorial Army volunteers for Op Herrick 16. The deployment will cover a 12-month mobilisation period with tour dates between April and October 2012. Anyone interested should contact the ROSO, 104 FS Bn REME via their company PSAO. The selection weekends will take place on **May 20-22, July 1-3 and September 9-11, 2011.**

National Serviceman **Robert Witherspoon** is looking for two former Royal Engineer colleagues (1953-1956). **Crock Crocker** and **Mike Carley** were stationed at Norton Camp, Worcester, and then posted to Gillingham, Kent. Contact Eric by post Box 63, Huxley, Alberta, Tom OZO, Canada.

An author is researching **Capt M D Winthrop** of The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, who served in 1972-1977 and formed the intuitive searching technique known as "Winthopping". If you are aware of the captain's whereabouts or have any observations on his work please contact Jonathan Crook at jacukce@gmail.com

A researcher is trying to find out the extent to which **radiesthesia/dowsing** has been used in the Armed Forces. Contact Mike Haxeltine at 33 Reading Road, Farnborough GY14 6NH or email mike.haxeltine@talktalk.net

A son is looking for colleagues of his late father, **Capt Joshua Bell**, Black Watch (1938-1945). Capt Bell served in India, fought in Burma and was also stationed in Edinburgh. If you have any information contact Stuart Bell at sbell26@jaguarlandrover.com

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Picture: Col Bais Robinson

Deployment deja vu: An RAF Typhoon FGR4 takes off from Gioia del Colle airfield in Italy on a mission to enforce the UN-sanctioned no-fly zone over Libya

Typhoon in a teacup or threat to Army's strength?

DOES anybody else find it ironic that just as the Government feels it has toughed out the worst of a military winter of discontent, a sudden feeling of déjà vu has descended on us all?

Against a backdrop of redundancies, life-changing allowance and pension cuts and an increase in accommodation rates, the Armed Forces have again been called into action against a dictator who has evoked the wrath of the civilised world.

I thought the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) suggested we would do less with less.

Were we not assured that the ten per cent cut in resources would equate to a reduced appetite for intervention?

Britain is certainly not the only nation to be caught unawares by the wave of unrest which continues to sweep across the most volatile region of the globe, but we are definitely the only "world power" who thinks it is still acceptable to decrease investment in the Armed Forces while committing them to further operations.

Short-term fixes and delayed decommissioning cannot hide for long the imbalance between what we have and what we are regularly being asked to do.

Presumably those personnel committed to this latest operation will also be excluded from the microscope of redundancy, just as those in Afghanistan have been?

Can you imagine how valued a pilot who is in the current bracket for redundancy must feel as he launches for a sortie wondering if he will have a job next year?

It is not surprising the Royal Air Force and Royal Navy have seized the opportunity to demonstrate their worth; the media is once again full of jet fighters and warships doing their bit to enforce the United Nations Security Council resolution.

My worry is that in this era of zero sum economics something will have to make way for the Typhoons patrolling the skies above Libya, and I fear for an Army quietly fighting in a far-off corner of a foreign land.

Although we are promised that it will maintain current manning until extracted from Helmand province, the rumours are already circulating of more cuts to the British Army strength in the coming years.

The only certainty in an uncertain world is that you need properly manned and motivated Armed Forces to protect your interests. Will the SDSR legacy give us that?

We should not let the Government fool itself that the can-do attitude of our soldiers, who time and again "get the job done" because of who they are, and definitely not because of the backing they are given, is anything but short term.

Goodwill and experience is quickly replaced in an unresourced world by bitterness and premature voluntary retirements. This has got to be a major concern for commanders.

The Government recently appointed nine special advisers to ministries it believes are likely to cause it difficulty and as such need careful "management" in the coming years.

I was interested, and saddened, to see that the MoD is not one of them. No, I don't want to see the department return to the financial chaos of the last few years

but my feeling is that the coalition believes it has ridden out the storm of cuts, redundancies and pension raids, and thinks the Army will go back to concentrating on the job in hand.

And while we must of course continue to focus on the troops deployed in Afghanistan, it is those same soldiers who are coming home from the latest tours to find a very different Service.

Do we not owe it to them, and the next to deploy on operations, to keep fighting for recognition and funds to let our personnel do their jobs properly? ■

Thanks to Catherine Spencer, AFF Director Communications, for her help with this column.

‘Goodwill is quickly replaced in an unresourced world by bitterness’

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P78 MOVIES **MARINE LIFE**

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Tough love: Drea Weber and Paris Pickard duke it out in the politically-charged and powerful *A Marine Story*

Battle against policy

American military's 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' stance on sexuality is brought to the screen

Review: Simon Savory

MANY of the tug-of-wars that US President Barack Obama struck up with the Republicans since his election have simmered to a bristling stalemate.

Opinion polls are no longer strongly in his favour and many accuse him of not having the gumption to thrash out effective reforms.

There's the overhaul of counter-terrorism practices, carbon emission capping, healthcare changes – and then there's the "Don't Ask Don't Tell" (DADT) military policy that permits the discharge of homosexual troops who publicly reveal their sexuality.

DADT was one of the few big challenges to the senate that Obama saw through, but only just.

A Marine Story was made in 2009 when debate on this issue was rife and it is released on DVD with the change in stance still drawing heated discussion, but with a bill to repeal DADT already passed in December 2010.

The slickly-produced film presents us with the marine of the title, Alexandra Everett (Drea Weber), who returns to her dusty home town

from Iraq after being outed as a lesbian while on military duty.

Stripped of her pension, she has little to fall back on and soon hits the bottle, brawls in bars and retreats inside herself.

Enter Saffron, a wayward, brawny teen with a drug habit who is palmed onto Alexandra by the local cops in the hope that a bit of tough love will turn her into a respectable member of society.

A Marine Story is directed by Ned Farr, husband of the lead actress. The duo have made films before, but none as politically-charged as this and it is their actor-director partnership that kept this movie tight and focused.

It would be easy to bash their effort for the occasional over-sentimentalising and the iffy conclusion to Saffron's turnaround, but the sharp production values, expert lensing and top-drawer performances from the cast keep you hooked.

Most importantly, this is a movie about women in the Armed Forces and apart from *GI Jane* there aren't many in a similar vein out there.

There are plenty of military film tropes that we have seen thousands of times before, such as the yes-sir-no-sir barking of orders to the angry young 'un and the obligatory sunset training session, but that does not detract from the

powerful message on offer.

With the "fairer sex" driving the story forward, the results are fresh and, thanks to Weber's standout performance, all the more engrossing.

In the years since President Bill Clinton first enacted DADT in 1993, some 17,000 Service members have been discharged under the policy. Yet in a recent poll 84 per cent of US Marines who served with someone they knew or believed to be gay or lesbian had no objection to its repeal.

However, the policy will remain in place until the President, Secretary of Defence and chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff certify that its scrapping will not harm military readiness. Then a 60-day waiting period will follow.

Full equal rights are within reach in the US, but they are not quite there yet.

In the British Army there is no such policy. There are openly gay soldiers serving their country on the front line, which makes *A Marine Story* even more worthy food for thought.

Added to the strong message of this feature film there lies good solid storytelling which might raise eyebrows and open eyes to what remains a contentious issue. ■

● *A Marine Story* is out now on DVD

From modern-day action man to ground-up human bones, *Soldier* checks out the latest DVD releases...

The Mechanic out May 17

A SLICK and gleefully violent update of **Michael Winner's** 1972 original that starred **Charles Bronson** sees today's essential action badass **Jason Statham** (*The Transporter*, *Crank*, *The Expendables*) bumping-off his tutor and then mentoring the victim's son. It's a nifty set-up, which is why it warranted a remake, and you really can't go wrong when the man behind the camera also brought us *Con Air*. There is no reliance on bloated special effects and instead this gives us the chop-socky and massive explosions Statham thrives on. A tight, high-speed affair that does what it says on the tin.



Simon Savory, civvy

Balibo out now

THIS is a film within a film. One part surrounds reporter Roger East's attempts to find out what happened to the "Balibo Five" – a group of journalists who went missing just before the invasion of East Timor by Indonesian troops in 1975. The other is a faux documentary that charts the last moments of the collective as they try to capture the events and atrocities to which the world turned a blind eye. The true-life action unfolds as told through eyewitness accounts given post-1999. A powerful film with strong performances throughout, which is well worth the price paid for a DVD.



Capt Marc Claxton, R Signals

The Wedding Song out May 16

THE Wedding Song comes as a welcome reminder that turmoil in North Africa has not always been home-grown. Under Hitler's occupation, Tunisian Jews suffered enormously. This precedent sets up an interesting relationship between schoolgirls Myriam (Jewish) and Nour (Muslim). Myriam's faith poses an obvious threat, yet Nour's arranged marriage and veil make her life difficult too. Scenes such as Afrika Korps planes strewing anti-semitic propaganda across the sky are haunting and the juxtaposition of repressions that existed then, and that remain today, is where this movie cleverly excels.



Rosie Phillips, civvy



Straight talking: Director Ned Farr tackles the controversial US “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy with a good cast, sharp camera work and expert production

Krabat out June 6

THE Thirty Years War and the plague has devastated Medieval Europe. Krabat, a lost 14-year-old orphan, is invited to stay at a mill where he is drawn into a world of magic and dark arts. Based on the best-selling children’s novel by **Otfried Preussler**, *Krabat: Disciple of the Dark Mill* is a sword and sorcery epic, which is surprisingly dark and more than a little bit creepier than the *Harry Potter* imitators we have become accustomed to. Any film that has a scene where countless human bones are ground in a mill – yes the one in the title – is guaranteed to rule out any comparisons with **JK Rowling’s** Hogwarts offerings.

Simon Scott, civvy



Win... Laputa: Castle in the Sky

FROM the creators of *Spirited Away* comes this homage to **Jules Verne** and **Jonathan Swift**. *Laputa: Castle In The Sky* was the first feature film to come from the now legendary Studio Ghibli. Japanese master director **Hayao Miyazaki’s** offering combines eco-thriller with aerial escapades and turns a treasure hunt into a fight against evil for an unforgettable adventure. *Soldier* has teamed up with Optimum Releasing to give five readers a chance to win a copy of the movie. Just tell us which studio made the film. Answers on a postcard to the usual address or send an email to comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk

Closing date: May 31



Win... The Ward

THE Ward marks the return of legendary director **John Carpenter** after nearly a decade. The bone-chilling horror stars **Amber Heard** (*Drive Angry*) as Kristen. Imprisoned in a terrifying asylum alongside a group of erratically-behaved young women, she faces overbearing wardens by day and a savage ghostly figure stalking the ward by night. **Jared Harris** as Dr Stringer delivers plenty of scary moments. Warner Home Video is sending copies of the DVD to five readers who can tell us who plays Kristen. Answers on a postcard to the usual address or send an email to comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk

Closing date: May 31





Ahead of the field: *Tiger Woods PGA Tour 12* reaffirms EA Sports' place at the top of golf's gaming leaderboard

Tiger's master stroke

Fallen idol recreates magic of Augusta in new addition to golf's console world

Review: Richard Long

HIGH-profile indiscretions have seen Tiger Woods stripped of a string of multi-million dollar endorsements in recent times after the sporting superstar hit the headlines for all the wrong reasons.

But while others have deserted him in search of a new clean-cut idol, publishers EA Sports have stood by their man for the latest instalment in their golfing dynasty.

The immense success of this series has been based on consistency, with slight tweaks added each year to ensure players part with their hard-earned cash when the next chapter hits the shops.

Tiger Woods PGA Tour 12: The Masters stands firmly by that mantle.

With the gameplay being virtually identical to its predecessors, the biggest addition this year is the inclusion of one of the sport's most iconic and picturesque tournaments.

The boffins at EA Sports have laser-scanned every hole at the Augusta National Golf Club to provide players with the most authentic digital representation of The Masters.

The attention to detail includes individual trees and azaleas along with the minute undulations on each of the greens.

"This has long been the number one feature our fans have requested, so we've pulled out all the stops for this year's game to ensure that our players feel as though they are actually stepping foot onto the historic grounds at Augusta," explained executive producer Nick Wlodyka.

"*Tiger Woods PGA Tour 12* caters to a wide range of gamers and golf fans, and we believe The Masters tournament integration will help introduce our franchise and the game of golf to a whole new audience."

As well as tackling the splendour of the course in an individual round, players can also relive and work through memorable moments from the historic competition to see how their skills compare to the real-life professionals.

Another new feature this year is the introduction of a virtual caddie.

This is an obvious aid for beginners, who receive expert guidance on club and shot selection and where to aim the ball to achieve the best possible results.

But the tips do not stop there and as skill levels improve the sidekick starts to introduce intricacies

such as spin, fade and lay-ups to help players develop even further.

A roster of 20 professional stars, including new additions such as Zach Johnson and Rickie Fowler, add to the authenticity, while the career mode allows you to create your golfer and take to the fairways.

The action starts on the amateur circuit but swiftly progresses to the upper echelons of the sport, where newcomers can go head-to-head with the tour's biggest hitters.

On the whole, *Tiger Woods PGA Tour 12* is a welcome addition to the fold.

The painstaking effort to recreate the lush confines of Augusta has definitely paid off as the imagery and presentation is simply stunning.

The simplicity of the gameplay has continued from earlier formats, meaning stalwarts will be able to pick up their clubs and immediately head to the tee.

However, the putting is now more difficult to read, which is not necessarily a bad thing and this only adds to the realism.

While Tiger struggles to recapture his form on the course, he can rest assured knowing that EA Sports have ensured his name remains at the top of the leaderboard in the gaming world. ■

From kings of the court to boy racers gone bad, we check out the best and the rest of the new releases...

Top Spin 4 for all formats

HAVING never played any of the other *Top Spin* games, I had no idea what to expect from this fourth instalment. The options menu is vast and allows you to personalise your player in all areas, even down to the type of grunt he or she makes when hitting the ball. The controls don't take long to grasp and they allow you to play a number of different shots, while the career mode offers vast opportunities as you move through the ranks. Overall, this game has good graphics and is quite addictive to play, especially when you progress and start to compete against some of the sport's biggest stars.

Sgt Simon Rose, AGC



Michael Jackson: The Experience

THE posthumous Michael Jackson money-making machine continues at pace with this latest Xbox 360 Kinect offering, which captures the stunning back catalogue of the King of Pop. Instead of just dancing in time to the iconic tunes, players can now sing along while mirroring the awe-inspiring moves that helped make him a global phenomenon. The Kinect technology allows complete freedom of movement and offers hours of entertainment as you try to perfect the signature moves of *Billie Jean*, *Thriller* and other hits. All in all this is an ideal tribute to one of music's true pioneers.

Joe Clapson, Soldier



WWE All Stars for all formats

YET another wrestling title hits the gaming world with an array of freakishly oversized spandex-wearing men. *WWE All Stars* features 30 characters ranging from the legendary Hulk Hogan to the massive Andre the Giant. But unlike other games in this genre it is not just about rampant button bashing as you have to wear your opponent down before getting anywhere near the final execution. The graphics are bright and arcade-like and the gameplay is very smooth, however, the two-player option has some weaknesses. All in all it is a good pick-up-and-play wrestling game that kids and adults alike will enjoy.

Pte Robert Owens, 168 Pioneer Regt RLC





Virtual landscape: EA Sports have laser-scanned every hole at the famous Augusta National Golf Club to create an authentic Masters experience for fans

Crysis 2 for all formats

THIS is the all-format sequel to the popular PC original set in near-future New York amid an alien invasion. As a US Marine wearing a nanosuit, you can play the game your own way, by stealth or all guns blazing due to the kit's unique abilities and spectacular array of weapons. The action is fast and furious, especially when the aliens start attacking, and the graphics are some of the best I've seen in a console game. However, there are some flaws – the first 45 minutes is an elongated tutorial and there are problems with enemies, who will often be seen running on the spot long after being killed.

Sgt Wallace Stephenson, Int Corps



Shift 2: Unleashed for all formats

THE *Need for Speed* series has been around for quite some time and each game is usually a simple and unchallenging affair. Not so this time around. *Shift 2: Unleashed* is an aggressive, in your face racer where opponents try to place you nose first into a crash barrier. Each race is a violent and visceral test of nerve and the addition of the helmet camera provides a twist to the conventional views as you feel significantly more vulnerable and isolated. This might not appeal to veteran *Forza* or *Gran Turismo* players but it fills a welcome gap between earlier *Need for Speed* games and the aforementioned driving simulators.

David McDougall, JHQ Rheindahlen



Men of War: Assault Squad for PC

THE Second World War is the setting once again for the latest expansion in the *Men of War* series. This expansive strategy game gives players plenty to get their teeth into with skirmish campaigns for British, American, German, Japanese and Russian forces. The sprawling maps offer incredible attention to detail as you plot missions ranging from one-on-one infantry battles to full-scale tank duels. Admittedly, there are a few problems when it comes to mastering the controls, but once they are overcome *Assault Squad* offers a healthy fix for those seeking more than just all-out action in a combat title.

Richard Long, Soldier





Regal return: The Band of The Welsh Guards offer a proud celebration of their home country in *A Royal Tribute*, which is out now

Guards of honour

Welsh soldiers give patriotic salute to the valleys in star-studded debut release

Review: Sophie Anderson

ONE of the most famous regiments in the Army is set to receive further notoriety as they combine sentiments of Welsh heritage and national pomp and circumstance on their debut album.

The Band of The Welsh Guards is famed for providing the patriotic music behind well-known British ceremonies such as The Changing of the Guard and the Queen's Birthday Parade, as well as playing an integral part in the homecoming celebrations for personnel returning from theatre.

But the soldiers are about to see their musical talents reach a much larger audience as they have just signed a major deal with Rhino Records, part of the Warner Group.

The partnership has already bore fruit following the release of *A Royal Tribute*, a 16-track album that is introduced by the patriotic *Fanfare Royale*.

Other highlights include *God Bless The Prince of Wales*, a tribute to their regimental colonel, and *Men of Harlech*, which has been described as the best version of the song ever played by a band.

Head of Rhino Records Dan Chalmers said the

decision to sign the Welsh Guards to a £1 million contract was an easy one

He added: "They are one of the most respected bands in the country let alone in the Army and with their royal involvement and the regiment's incredible history, there's little doubt that they will strike a chord with a wide audience."

The record is the first A&R project by producers Nick Patrick and Jeff Chegwin and has received choral support from prestigious vocalists The Treorchy Male Choir and The Choir of Westminster Abbey.

Other artists to provide captivating contributions are Welsh soprano Gwawr Edwards and tenor Wynne Evans, who is an old friend of the regiment.

Evans said: "I first sang with them 20 years ago while I was still in college. We have performed together from humble beginnings in my home town of Carmarthen through to numerous performances at the Royal Albert Hall.

"This album is an honour to be involved with and we had a lot of fun making it."

A composition by celebrated wind band writer Clare Grundman combines a number of traditional Welsh songs, such as *Jenny Jones* and *Two Hearts*. The stunning end result is a tuneful

celebration of national history and culture entitled *A Welsh Rhapsody*.

Famous poet Dylan Thomas is acknowledged within the album, while Hollywood actor and proud patriot Michael Sheen reads the opening of *Under Milk Wood* as the band plays the hymn *All Through the Night*.

The *Damned United* and *Frost/Nixon* star had nothing but praise for the project and the artists working on it.

"The Band of The Welsh Guards are a very loved and revered group and to be invited to work with them is wonderful," he explained. "I'm in great company on this record."

However, the guards are not simply a regiment of music and ceremony and have served as an intrinsic part of forces from the First World War through to more recent operational commitments in Helmand province in 2009.

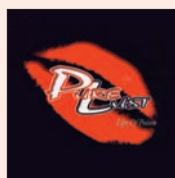
They lost seven men in Afghanistan and on returning home director of music Maj Stephen Barnwell said the band played a key role in maintaining morale.

"There were masses of people, many crying with pride," he said. "It means so much to the regiment to know that they are appreciated after such a tough time." ■

From a lethargic rapper to the triumphant return of rock's royalty, we check out the best of the rest...

Lips Of Poison by Pure Lust

THE literature that accompanies *Lips Of Poison* talks of a band than has produced a "raw and dirty" sound and that description turned out to be spot-on. The production values are certainly dirty, while the musicianship is unmistakably raw, especially for a band who have played the circuit for five years. Claims of creating music akin to **Guns N' Roses** and **AC/DC** also proved themselves to be a mere aspiration. That said, there are a number of positives to be taken. The vocals are strong and behind the vespa-esque guitar noise lays the foundations of good songwriting and punchy rock. My verdict: an amateur sound with some potential, but you should try before you buy.



Capt Fraser Dowling, AGC (ETS)

Wasting Light by Foo Fighters

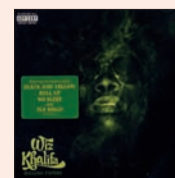
THIS follow-up to 2007's *Echoes, Silence, Patience and Grace* will excite fans of the **Foo Fighters'** heavier side, whereas easy listeners will also find great satisfaction in what is on offer here. Some may say that since the release of *The Colour And The Shape* in 1997 the band have let themselves gradually take a down slide with their music. Whether you agree with the doubters or not, this album will silence all the criticism. It fits the stereotype of a Foo Fighters album in some respects, with the catchy sing-alongs and **Dave Grohl** busting a lung on nearly every track, however this is slightly heavier and there is a lot more diversity in the songs compared to previous recordings.



Pte Stephen McManus, 1 Yorks

Rolling Papers by Wiz Khalifa

AFTER the ongoing success of single *Black and Yellow*, it was clear that Pittsburgh rapper **Wiz Khalifa's** new album *Rolling Papers* would be eagerly anticipated. After all, who doesn't enjoy the promise of a young rapper with a cheeky personality, catchy sound and optimistic, upbeat tempos? Unfortunately, the other tracks prove to be the sleepy younger siblings of his monster hit. They are not bad and are perfect for any situation when repetitive rapping about women, drugs and alcohol won't matter. However, if you're expecting a record packed with the sort of songs Wiz Khalifa has become famous for, it's best to wait for his next release or learn how to rave in slow motion.



Sophie Anderson, *Soldier*



Military to mainstream: The Band Of The Welsh Guards have signed a £1 million record contract that will see their famed music reach a new audience

Up, Guards And At 'Em by Pigeon Detectives

FROM the opening track *She Wants Me*, this new album from Leeds-based outfit **The Pigeon Detectives** sounds promising and is a sign that their three-year absence has been productive. The energy that previously defined them is still there, but it encompasses a fresher sound than before. Best track by far is *Done in Secret*, which has a nippy guitar riff and irresistible chorus melody that will remind you of what this band is all about. This re-energized record clearly marks the start of a new phase of creativity. It may not outshine their indie rocker peers but it is a neatly-performed effort that grows with each listen and would not be lost if played live at any of this summer's festivals.

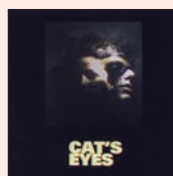
Ray Kalaker, ex-RE



Cat's Eyes by Cat's Eyes

APPARENTLY, this is one of the first landmark releases of 2011, according to *Mojo*. I have to agree, this is certainly a landmark offering – but for all the wrong reasons. *Cat's Eyes* is described as a “romantic pop masterpiece fit to dine at the same table as productions by **Phil Spector**, **Joe Meek** or **Shadow Morton** but with a fiercely modern, experimental premise”. However, it left me wondering just what on earth I was listening to and why it was created at all. *Sooner or Later* will have you reaching for the anti-depressants but at least the final track *I Knew It Was Over* is very aptly named as I was more than thankful that this miserable album had come to an end.

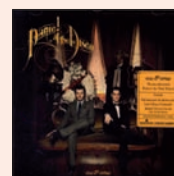
Rodge Tapply, ex-RE



Vices & Virtues by Panic! at the Disco

THE pioneers of the unlikely collaboration of pop and rock are back with a mature version of their first album. *Vices & Virtues* has shed its predecessor's generic chord changes and silly titles. However, hardened fans needn't worry; the tracks are still full of **Brendon Urie's** distinctive voice, a hint of baroque influence and the driving beats from **Spencer Smith** on the drums. It's a surprisingly good pop-rock record, especially since former members **Ryan Ross** and **Jon Walker** left in 2009. It seems that while shedding a couple of faces, **Panic! at the Disco** have also shed a couple of annoying habits, leaving a catchy album sure to pull in a few more fans, and maybe even turn a few haters.

Sophie Anderson, Soldier





Intelligent read: T-Force officer Michael Howard recounts his experiences as an Allied “asset stripper” operating on German soil

Howard gets his way

Forty five years after first picking up a pen, World War veteran’s persistence pays off

Interview: Richard Long

WHEN the curtain finally fell on six years of fighting at the end of the Second World War, the thoughts of most soldiers immediately switched to returning home.

But for a young officer awaiting his first posting, the surrender of the German Army marked the start of an important mission to aid the UK’s recovery and neutralise future threats from central Europe.

After joining the ranks of the Rifle Brigade, Michael Howard found himself posted to T-Force, a small unit tasked with stripping crucial assets from Germany and transferring them to the military ranks at home.

His account of this vital work has been brought to life in *Otherwise Occupied*, a narrative of his time in the Ruhr that is vividly captured in the letters he wrote to his mother while serving.

“We were involved in the business of removing machines, equipment, documents, blueprints, patents and personalities,” the Service veteran told *Soldier*. “We were only there for a short time and wanted to do something interesting and

useful while we had the chance.

“Initially we were looking for the means to continue waging war against the Japanese at a time when nobody knew about the atom bomb.

“But a great deal of what we did was also aimed at helping the engineering industry at home.”

Howard explained that Germany was way ahead of its rivals in terms of military capability and that removing technology, as well as the brains behind the developments, was a huge boost to Britain’s Armed Forces.

“The Royal Air Force benefitted more than any other Service,” he added. “By the end of the war they had superior jet aircraft and wind tunnel testing was well advanced.

“There was no gunner in the British Army who would not have given their right arm for the German 88 as an anti-aircraft and anti-tank gun. It was better than anything we had.”

While the accounts described unravelled more than 60 years ago, Howard has endured a long wait for the story to be printed.

“I made my first attempt to write the book in 1966,” he explained. “I approached the War Office, asking if I could count on their cooperation. I got a pretty po-faced replay saying ‘we can’t stop you but you need to show us it first’.

“However, all the documents that would support such a history were still held under secret embargo or were in the process of being destroyed. If they were restricting and disposing of files they were not about to cooperate with my desire to write a book.

“I tried again in 1984/85 and the situation was pretty much the same. Of the 249 tonnes of documents that came over from Germany, less than two tonnes remain. What survived was released into the Public Records and National Archive in 2007.”

Howard’s refusal to abandon the project has certainly paid off as *Otherwise Occupied* offers an intriguing and well-written account of an often-overlooked post-war period. The letters to his mother form interesting starting points for the author to expand on his experiences in Germany and tell the story of what his job entailed.

Military historians seeking a thorough analysis of the work of T-Force may yearn for greater depth, but Howard has insisted this was never his aim for the book.

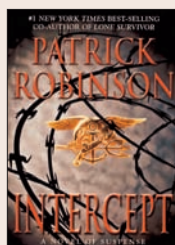
Instead, he has written an enjoyable social history that combines his unique role in the Service with the wider observations of a young soldier during his first posting. ■

From far-fetched fiction to personal recollections of the Pacific, a flick through this month’s literary releases...

Intercept by Patrick Robinson

ON first reading *Intercept*’s synopsis I couldn’t work out whether this book was trying to be a serious thriller or satirical salute to America’s war on terror, and after 100 pages I was still none the wiser. The tale’s terrorists are so evil that they beggar belief and the good guys are so laid back they might as well be horizontal. However, as ludicrous as **Patrick Robinson’s** plot is, I couldn’t help but keep reading to the end. I would recommend this book on the grounds of its light-entertainment value, stereotyped characters and unintentional humour, but not as the serious thriller I believe it is trying so hard to be.

Lt Neil Dickie, 105 Regt RA (V)



Afgantsy by Rodric Braithwaite

THIS brilliant title charts the lead up to the Russian intervention in (or depending on your viewpoint, invasion of) Afghanistan in 1979 through to withdrawal in February 1989. The author provides a balanced account of a conflict which produced 64,000 casualties and a death toll in excess of one million. **Braithwaite** has managed to merge memoirs and official archives to deliver the dark humour of soldiers alongside the harsh realities of such a protracted insurgency. I defy anyone who picks up this title not to draw similarities with the situation in Afghanistan today.

Capt Marc Claxton, R Signals



The Baghdad Express by R W Greenacre

SET in post-Saddam Hussein Iraq, or I-rack as the American characters refer to it, this satirical tale of security contractors is brought to life by its cast list. Starring a book-burning, six-gun-toting American anchorman, a burnt out ex-Guards officer, Eastern Bloc mercenaries and redneck Home Guard guns for hire, *The Baghdad Express* is laced with squaddie humour. Books based on private security work have never really appealed to me but after reading this I’ll be searching out more of the same. This is one for a six-month deployment rather than two weeks of rest and recuperation, but is well worth the investment.

LCpl Adam Jackson, 3 Para





Prize asset: Intelligence officer-turned-author Michael Howard recounts his post-Second World War service with T-Force in *Otherwise Occupied* Picture: Steve Dock

Bridge of Spies by Giles Whittell

THIS excellent book covers selected Cold War spying mishaps that compromised espionage activities across the Iron Curtain. The shooting down of Gary Powers' U-2 is the headline story; the American was in the wrong place at the wrong time. The Soviets never knew his precise altitude; the same missile-type shot down one of their own chasing pilots at lower level. Other overlapping misfortunes in late-1950s' espionage are well described by **Whittell** as a complex mix of professional, ideological and amateurish motivations. Some agents – Powers included – were exchanged across the Glienicke Bridge in 1962. Highly recommended.

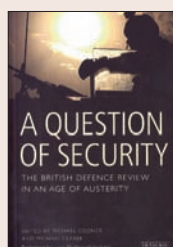
Lt Col Andy Gladen, RE



A Question of Security

EDITED by **Michael Codner** and **Michael Clarke**, this series of articles looks at the potential impact of the Strategic Defence and Security Review and the effect a reduced military would have on Britain's ability to meet international obligations. Covering everything from early engagement with China to discussions on better procurement practices, this thought-provoking title had me pondering points I had never considered. As we look towards the next review in 2015, the book provides an understanding of the broader security issues that may come to light once the military starts to shed people and equipment.

Sgt Wallace Stephenson, Int Corps

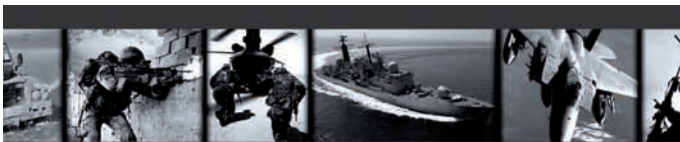


You'll Be Sor-ree! by Sid Phillips

THE author enlisted into the United States Marine Corps at the age of 17 and his memoirs describe in a sincere and unaffected style his experiences at Guadalcanal and Cape Gloucester. With humour a central theme, the accounts of combat are sparse but **Sid Phillips'** recollections of food, fatigues, friends and shared hardship make this an engaging and entertaining read. He served in the same company as **Robert Leckie**, whose best-seller *Helmet for My Pillow* focuses more on the ferocious fighting that took place in this theatre of operations and is therefore a perfect companion to this endearing book.

Lt Col (Retd) Nick Sim, ex-PWRR





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SLAM DUNKED: ARMY MEN
OVERPOWER FORCES CHALLENGERS
IN THRILLING BASKETBALL FINAL

ALSO IN THIS MONTH'S ISSUE...



P90 **RUGBY UNION**
REME STARS SHINE IN
CORPS FINALS



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UNBEATEN LOGGIES
TAKE ARMY TITLE



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STUNNING SAPPERS
IN MAJOR UNIT GLORY



P96 **FENCING**
SWORDSMEN FIND
CUTTING EDGE

Army seal court verdict

Report: Richard Long
Picture: Steve Dock

THE Army's dominance of the basketball court continued in spectacular style at the Inter-Services championships as the all-conquering men's team secured their eleventh successive title.

After thrashing the Royal Navy by an emphatic 74-47 scoreline in their opening fixture, the Reds produced a powerhouse final quarter against the Royal Air Force to reverse a nine-point deficit and record a stunning win.

Captain Cpl Roshane Murray (RE) led the charge as the defending champions recorded a 62-53 triumph over their well-drilled opponents, who employed a civilian coach in their attempt to wrestle the trophy from the Army's grasp.

While the senior side relied on an electrifying final spell to claim yet another crown, the development squad saw their title bid go right to the wire.

Rfn Vicas England (Rifles) landed a last-second free throw to open a 65-64 advantage over the Senior Service and complete a well-deserved double.

After comfortably beating the Navy in their first match, the women slipped to a 47-44 defeat against the RAF as the Army narrowly missed out on a hat-trick of basketball titles.

Speaking after the tournament, men's player/coach WO1 Lee Loveridge (REME) said the senior side had to be at their very best to beat the airmen, who fielded one of their strongest teams for many years.

"Going through the game we were always on a sticky wicket and we really struggled for three

quarters," he told *SoldierSport*.

"There were times when I thought it might not be our year but everything suddenly came together.

"We were down by nine points going into the fourth quarter but we ran them into the ground.

"At one stage we managed to turn that deficit into a 12-point lead and we went on to close out the game. It was a fantastic performance all round."

While the RAF enjoyed a productive training camp, the Army's preparations were not as smooth.

"We had four or five members missing due to operational commitments and training courses," Loveridge explained.

"Cpl Llewellyn 'Bam Bam' Daley (REME) was not going to play this year and we had to bring him out of retirement, but he was superb.

"Some of the junior players had to step up and they did very well. The management also worked really hard to get people released across the board.

"We did not train that well during the build-up and it was only over the last couple of days that the guys started clicking together.

"After winning the tournament for so long the other two have definitely closed the gap and it is now very close.

"They both had a large number of Combined Services players in their ranks and were well prepared.

"However, our athleticism and fitness can destroy teams as we head into the last minutes of a game and that was the case again this year."

Army Basketball Association secretary Capt Dave Wells (RAMC)

praised the team's efforts but singled out skipper Murray's efforts.

"He is the best player in our team at the moment," the officer said. "We annihilated the Navy and he ripped them to bits. The RAF contained him for spells but by the fourth quarter he was running rings round them.

"They really thought they had it won. The Army had home-court advantage

and to lose would have been unbearable, but we got the job done.

"Our rivals were gracious in defeat and have vowed to come back stronger next year, which is something we

are really looking forward to."

The development team enjoyed a 76-55 win over the RAF before England's moment of magic sank the defending champions and tournament favourites.

Loveridge believes the performance by the next generation of Army players points to a healthy future for the sport.

He said: "I was not expecting them to win but they played two fantastic matches and found form that was not there in training.

"With some more development we will hopefully see a good transition from the junior to senior sides as there is a wealth of talent out there.

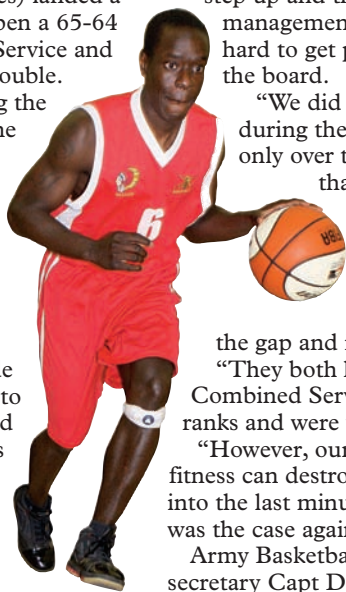
"The Infantry are also coming onboard. They are now taking part in the Inter-Corps Championships and a number of players were in both squads."

Despite relinquishing their Inter-Services crown, the women's team showed tremendous spirit throughout the tournament.

After beating the Navy 44-24 they found themselves trailing the RAF 26-15 at half-time.

They closed the gap to just five points at the end of the third quarter but their opponents managed to hold out for a narrow win. ■

'Our athleticism and fitness can destroy teams as we head into the last minutes'



Inter-Services basketball by numbers

11

SUCCESSIVE TITLES FOR THE MEN'S SENIOR TEAM THANKS TO A DOMINANT PERFORMANCE AGAINST THEIR FORCES RIVALS

31

POINTS SCORED BY ARMY ACE CPL ROSHANE MURRAY IN THE 74-47 VICTORY OVER THE ROYAL NAVY IN THE OPENING MATCH-UP

17

FIRST-HALF POINTS FROM LCPL LLEWELLYN 'BAM BAM' DALEY IN THE TOURNAMENT DECIDER AGAINST THE ROYAL AIR FORCE





Driving force: Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers scrum half Cpl Tom Chennel fires his side forward during their 20-15 win over the Royal Engineers

Cream of the rugby corps

Report: Richard Long

Pictures: Roger Thompson

THE Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers tasted the highs and lows of victory and defeat in a pulsating climax to Rugby Union's Inter-Corps competitions.

A virtuoso performance from Cpl Ceri Cummings helped his side to a 20-15 win over the Royal Engineers in the men's final, but the Royal Logistic Corps proved too strong for the women as they suffered a 20-10 loss in their showpiece fixture.

Fullback Cummings mastered the blustery conditions at Aldershot's Army Rugby Stadium to kick two penalties and two conversions as the defending champions were brushed aside.

With the wind at their backs, the challengers dominated the first half as the sappers struggled to find any attacking momentum.

Cummings opened the scoring from a simple kick in front of the posts and a booming penalty clearance from the

Army ace created a platform for the first try just before the half-hour mark.

The subsequent line-out was comfortably gathered by openside flanker Cfn Matt Bowman and lock forward WO2 Steve Drawbridge was on hand to power home.

Cummings slotted the extras and the REME were in the points again just minutes later.

Fly half Cfn Jamie Laing collected the ball infield and gave a superb pass to Cpl Colin Marangon who ghosted through the defence.

The centre was stopped just short of the line but wing LCpl Bill William pounced on the ball to score.

With the conversion again being added the REME opened a 17-0 interval lead.

Sappers' fullback LCpl Rhydian Slade-Jones kicked his first penalty shortly after the restart and skipper LCpl Ledua Joape produced a

rampaging run to score his side's opening try.

But Cummings steadied the nerves with another well-struck kick as the half progressed and a late penalty try failed to prevent a famous REME win.

Head coach WO1 Burnie Burnard was thrilled with the outcome and said it was testament to the skill and determination of his emerging team.

"We are building with a young side and I am glad the occasion did not get to them," he told *SoldierSport*.

"The Royal Engineers beat us earlier in the year so we came into this match with a definite game plan and we stuck to it.

"We had the wind in the first half and we knew we had to put our chances away, which we did.

"This is a young group that is full of enthusiasm, but we also got the rub of the green.

'We are building with a young side and I am glad the occasion did not get to them'

"Cfn Matt Bowman is doing very well with the Army side and he was superb for us today. I thought scrum half Cpl Tom Chennel and Cpl Ceri Cummings controlled the game for us.

"I was a little bit nervous ahead of the match but training had gone well. We knew the weather was going to be blustery and I think that evened things out in the end.

"I always thought that if we stuck to our plan we could upset the apple cart.

"They were missing some of their star names. Army caps Cpl Ben Hughes, Spr Gus Qasevakatini and LCpl Gerhard Wessels were all absent; they are top blokes and great players.

"That did not help their cause but you can only beat the team you're up against. We did that and I'm delighted."

The sappers fielded a number of Army players in their side, but the likes of Spr Peceli Nacamavuto and Spr Tanielia Bakuso were unable to make the breakthrough against a spirited REME outfit.

While the men triumphed in their final, the women hit an immovable object in the form of the RLC.

The loggies (pictured right and below in navy blue) produced a blistering spell of second-half attacking play to break the resistance of their spirited challengers and secure a hard-fought victory.

The REME dominated for long spells against the defending champions but failed to convert their possession into meaningful points, particularly in the opening period.

After weathering the early storm the RLC ruthlessly exposed their opponent's lack of cutting edge to score two tries after the interval that helped them secure yet another Inter-Corps title.

A well-struck penalty from Pte Tara Ball handed the initial advantage to the loggies, but the REME came storming back into the contest with a barrage of fluent attacking moves.

And their play was rewarded when the superb Cfn Rosie



Ranfield crashed through the line.

The flying fullback was ably supported by her marauding forwards, who drove deep into opposition territory before inspirational skipper

Cpl Rosie Haigh touched down to open a slender 5-3 advantage.

However, their good work was swiftly undone on the stroke of half-time.

A quick penalty caught the defence flat-

footed and the champions-elect spun the ball wide for Sgt Charlie Duell to score in the corner.

The try proved to be the turning point in the match and within minutes of the restart Capt Lucy Davies was able to inflict further damage.

The flanker smashed her way through the rearguard and surged to the line as the RLC took firm control.

But with Ball again missing the extras they could only establish a 13-5 advantage and the REME swiftly reduced the arrears courtesy of LCpl Caz Roberts.

The skilled centre showed electrifying pace to evade a string of would-be tacklers for an outstanding solo score that left the final outcome firmly in the balance.

A prolonged midfield battle followed as both sides sought the upper hand but the loggies broke the deadlock through LCpl Charlie Lloyd, who collected the ball infield and powered to the line.

Ball kicked the conversion and the REME resistance was finally broken.

Davies and Capt Fiona Cox were the star performers for the champions while Ranfield thoroughly deserved her man-of-the-match award for a string of attacking runs that cut straight through the opposition.

Speaking to *SoldierSport* at full-time, RLC director of rugby Maj Eddie Hutton-Fellowes said: "I am absolutely delighted with the season and what we managed to achieve.

"It has been hard-fought across the circuit and to come out on top is a massive achievement bearing in mind our operational commitments.

"We put in a lot of hard work. There have been a few knocks along the way but we remained focused and have come out strong.

"We lost to the REME in one of the opening matches so this was always going to be a grudge match and I am delighted we came out on top.

"Capt Lucy Davies is our player of the season and she was outstanding, but the person who makes us really play is Cpl Sarah Mitchelson.

"She has been a stalwart of corps rugby for a while now and she was superb today.

"We lost a bit of confidence for a while but the tipping point was the start of the second half.

"We went on the front foot and our performance in those early exchanges put the match in our favour.

"But you have to give a lot of credit to the REME.

"They were fantastic in defence and attack and we had to fight for every single one of the 80 minutes." ■





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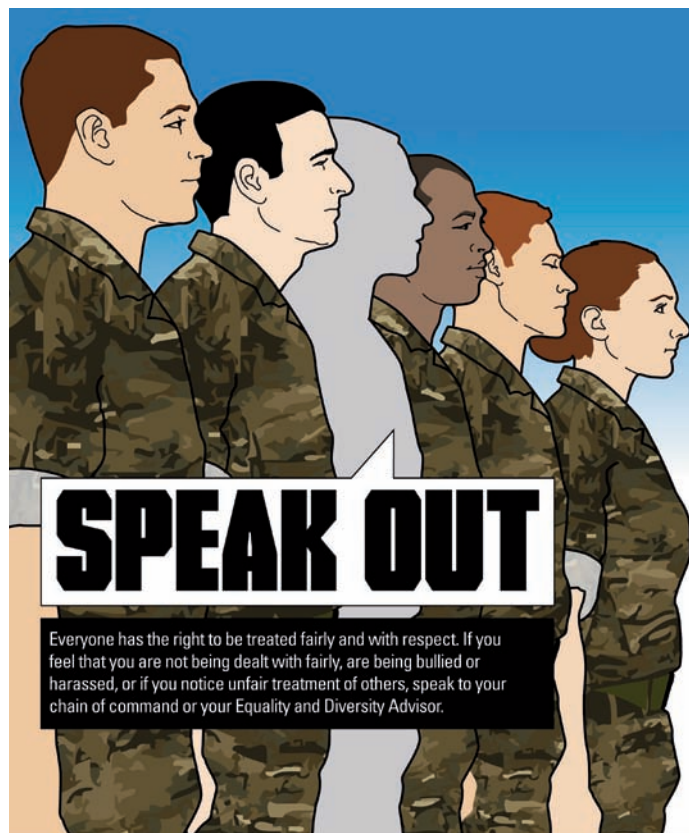
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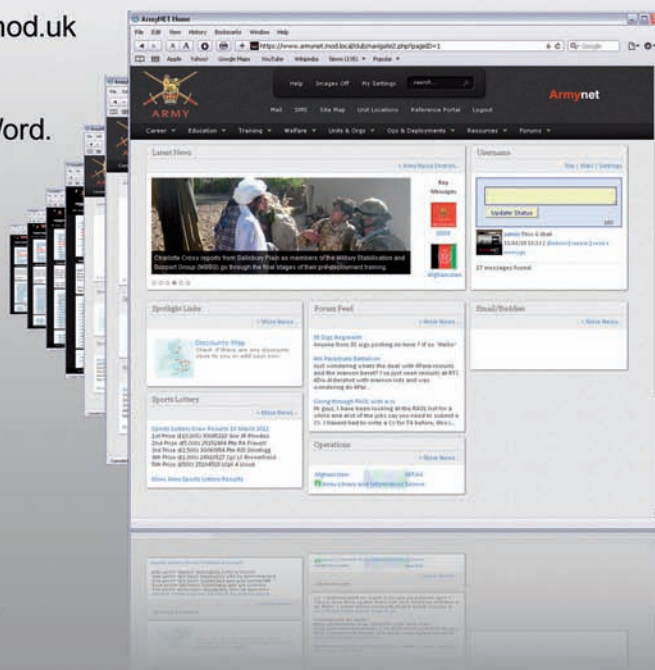
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Victory charge: The Royal Logistic Corps (in red) proved to be too strong for the Rhino Raiders as they romped to a 4-0 triumph in the Army championships

Ruthless Chiefs put rivals on ice

Report: Richard Long
Pictures: Graeme Main

THE Royal Logistic Corps Chiefs have lifted their first Army ice hockey crown after an unbeaten run against their Service rivals.

A 4-0 victory over the Germany-based Rhino Raiders secured the title for the vastly-improved team, which finished last and second from bottom in the previous two tournaments.

The all-conquering Chiefs opened their account with a slender 5-4 triumph against the Army All Stars (pictured) but hit the goal trail in their match with the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers Stallions.

A ruthless performance on the ice saw them romp to an 8-3 win, leaving the Raiders as the final obstacle in their quest for a clean sweep.

After a tight opening the champions-elect soon found their rhythm, scoring two goals in the second and third periods to successfully complete their 100 per cent record.

Speaking at the end of a sensational performance in Bracknell, skipper WO2 Sammy Samuel told *SoldierSport*: "We are absolutely ecstatic.

"This turnaround has taken a lot of hard work and commitment from the boys.

"They have all performed superbly and deserve so much credit

for what they achieved.

"We train a lot with the REME so we knew what we were going to be up against as far as they were concerned. I couldn't have asked for any more.

"Everyone has played a really

important part. Whether they are on the ice for ten minutes, one minute or even a second, I wanted to see commitment and that is what I got.

"It has been good for our new players to take part in these matches and they can take a lot of experience from this and move forward.

"We still have to do a lot more recruiting and the individual desire has to be there. It is difficult to get everyone together due to the tempo of operations but we are looking good.

"I think Army ice hockey is really improving and the standard across all the teams is now a lot greater, so it is fantastic for us to be champions."

The Army All Stars were named runners-up thanks to a comprehensive 8-3 win over the Rhino Raiders.

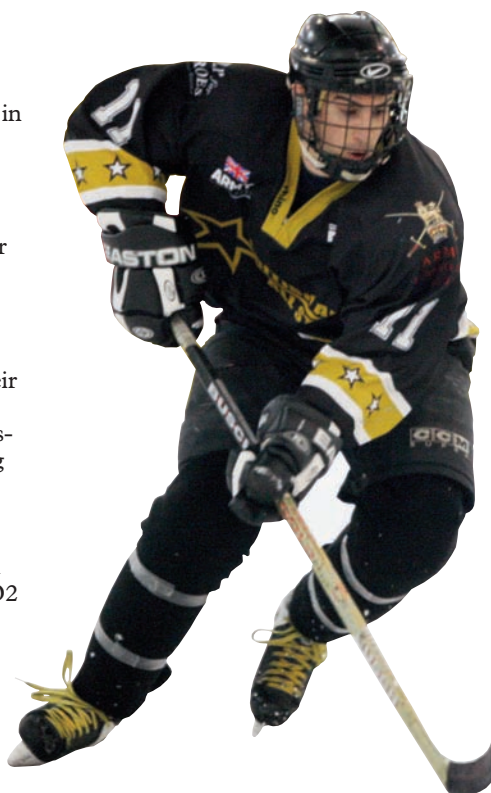
Newcomer Pte Fred Morley (RLC) won the award for best forward thanks to his impressive return of 11 goals and two assists, while teammate Cpl Daz Jones took the prize for best goalkeeper.

SSgt Dave Little (REME) was the top defenceman and Vicki Heaton-Smith, wife of Maj James Heaton-Smith (1 LSR), took the fair play award.

The Army Ice Hockey Association is always on the lookout for new players to join the ranks.

Anyone interested in taking part should contact Maj Red Geddes (RLC) on 94674 8675 or Capt Matt Chapman

(REME) on 94251 2310. ■



Sublime sappers end trophy hunt

Report: Richard Long
Picture: Graeme Main

BOXERS from 26 Engineer Regiment produced a devastating late show to floor their rivals from 4th Battalion, The Rifles and win their first Army Major Unit final.

With the teams locked at 2-2 at the interval, the sappers returned to the ring in determined mood and won four of the five remaining contests to seal a well-deserved victory at Aldershot's Combat Sports Centre.

The Rifles set the early pace courtesy of Rfn Sam Parker, who inflicted two standing counts on LCpl Harry Samuel before the referee ended their featherweight clash in the third round.

Spr Sanjay Marhajan exacted swift revenge with a calculated 11-3 win over Rfn Steve Leigh before LCpl Joe Branch put the engineers in front by beating Rfn Pete Nevison (pictured).

But the Bulford-based soldiers came roaring back courtesy of welterweight LCpl Ryan Castledine.

The undefeated boxer was not

deterred by the height and reach advantage of rival LCpl Charlie Dickens and fought his way to an 18-14 triumph in the bout of the night.

With both sides exchanging wins after the break, LCpl Trev Littler set the sappers on their way with a narrow triumph against Rfn Liam Trotter. Their light heavyweight clash was all-square at 12-12 after three rounds, but a 25-20 countback tipped the contest in Littler's favour.

Cpl Tommy Decker made an electrifying start against Spr Dave Bolton, but the Rifles star failed to land any meaningful blows.

The cruiserweight quickly tired as the fight progressed and his opponent forced standing counts in the second and third rounds before the contest was eventually stopped.

Spr Rob Parry underlined his team's superiority with a first-round victory against LCpl Bronson Logan as the sappers ended the night with a 6-3 win.

Speaking after the final bell, coach Cpl Dan Kelly told *SoldierSport* that 2011 presented an ideal opportunity for his team to win their first Major Unit final. "I knew that with 3rd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment and 16 Air

Assault Brigade away on operations we had a great chance this year," he explained.

"I also knew that 4 Rifles would be the team to beat.

"They came out exactly how I imagined them to, they were tough opponents. I didn't want my guys to get drawn into a fight. I told them to go out there and actually box, which is what they did.

"We have beaten every team we have faced this year and were determined to continue that run.

"We got to the interval at 2-2 but I was feeling confident as we have a strong final five. I would have been disappointed to lose from that position and I expected us to win three, four or even all five of those bouts." ■

"I didn't want my guys to get drawn into a fight. I told them to go out there and box"



SPORT SHORTS

SERVICE personnel are being encouraged to join a new summer Touch Rugby League tournament that launches in Aldershot next month.

The seven-week competition starts on June 11 at Queens Avenue and is open to players and teams of all ages and abilities. It will also be raising money for ABF The Soldiers' Charity.

For more information call Dave McMeeken on 07775 022804 or email david.mcmeeken@rfl.uk.com

TERRITORIAL Army runners have been setting the pace at their annual cross-country and half-marathon championships.

A fine effort from OCdt Thomas Bloor (MSUOTC) saw him crowned men's individual champion, while OCdt Camilla Gray (MSUOTC) dominated the field in the women's race.

The team event was settled by the narrowest of margins as the Manchester and Salford Universities Officers Training Corps triumphed over 2nd Battalion, The Royal Irish Regiment.

Maj Paul Fernandez (Radley College CCF) celebrated victory in the half-marathon and OCdt Carina Rodd and OCdt Kayleigh Pettit (both EMUOTC) finished in the same time in the women's event, but race organisers awarded the win to the former.

COUNTER-IED expert Cpl Dan Skelly (RLC) is hoping to set a new world record this month when he attempts to run a marathon while wearing a bomb disposal suit.

The 28-year-old will complete the challenge on May 8 and is hoping to raise £5,000 for ABF The Soldiers' Charity by beating the existing time for such a feat.

He plans to wear a Mark 4 EOD suit that weighs 55lb at the Halstead and Essex Marathon.

To sponsor Cpl Skelly visit www.justgiving.com/Bomb-Suit-Marathon

Picture: Graeme Main



Outgunned: The Army Medical Services (yellow) romped to victory against their Royal Navy counterparts

Medics too strong for Service rivals

A FIRST-half goal blitz saw the Army Medical Services romp to victory in the relaunched Chatham Tankard football match.

The challenge saw personnel locking horns with their Royal Navy equivalents in the first game between the sides in more than 15 years.

However, the Army players proved to be too strong for their Forces rivals and the encounter was effectively over at half-time.

Midfield dynamo Cpl Andy Reid was superb throughout and the dead-

ball specialist bagged a hat-trick that included a penalty, free kick and a cross-come-shot that sailed over the stranded Navy goalkeeper.

Capt Colin McGrath converted from close range while Capt Scott Hempsey finished neatly with a turn and shot from 15 yards.

Their efforts contributed to a 5-0 interval lead. The Navy grabbed a well-deserved consolation goal in the second half but the strike failed to take the shine off a dominant performance from the AMS.

Cadets onboard with judo ace

EUROPEAN champion Danny Williams has been helping officer cadets master the basic skills of judo during an introductory course at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst.

The sessions were staged as part of the centre's weekly sporting programme and the Olympic hopeful has played an integral role in a successful first term for the initiative.

More than 80 students applied for a place and 40 were selected to work with the under-73kg player during the sessions.

Organiser SSgt Phil Babbington (RAPTC) told *SoldierSport*: "We have run the programme during the commissioning course and have looked to get the officer cadets involved in regular competitions and gradings."

"The majority of personnel are total novices and only one or two have tried the sport at a junior level.

"It has been brilliant. I have had a lot of positive feedback from Danny and the other coaches who have been here.

"It is a basic standard and we have targeted a lot of ground work and standing throws, but the cadets have loved it.

"They have had their first grading and some have gone up a belt, which is a fantastic achievement considering their experience.

"They are really improving and news about what we are doing is spreading.

"We have now got guys from other sports, such as Rugby Union, coming along and they want to get involved next term."

Williams took the European title after defeating home favourite Mitar Mrdic in the tournament final in Sarajevo in March.

The Camberley-based star is now targeting a medal at the 2012 Olympics in London. ■



Picture: Graeme Main



Blades of glory

SERVICE fencers have continued their front-foot assault on the sporting mainstream by going head-to-head in an eagerly-fought Army championships, writes sports editor **Richard Long.**

Rising star OCdt Emma Byatt (Cambridge UOTC) swept the board at the annual tournament and celebrated a hat-trick of wins in what proved to be a strong field.

The 19-year-old triumphed in the foil, sabre and epee disciplines and her efforts saw her crowned ladies master-at-arms at the end of the three-day event in Aldershot.

OCdt Matt Harey (DTUS) won the men's foil, with Pte Francois Louw (RLC) taking the epee and Capt Jamie Metcalfe (1 Yorks) securing a sixth successive title in the sabre event.

The men's team captain told *SoldierSport* that fencing has continued to go from strength to strength and, with Territorial Army personnel now allowed to compete in the main event, the competition has never been tougher.

"Historically they could only be named the best TA fencer, even if they won overall," Metcalfe explained.

"Now they can take part on equal terms and that brings a new dynamic.

"Their soldiers will often be based in one location, near a local fencing club. They have an advantage over Regular personnel who often have to move around and go on operational tours more frequently.

"I think the standard has gone up and a lot of experienced people are now onboard. The level of intermediate fencers is improving as well.

"I won the men's sabre, I've won it for the past six years, but this was definitely the hardest competition. I had tough quarter- and semi-finals as there is now so much strength in

depth within the ranks."

The change in rules has also been well received by WO2 Matthew Nunns (RWxY), secretary of TA Fencing.

"Our guys are chuffed to bits," he said. "We have got at least two athletes who are in the top three at Inter-Services and Army level.

"Now if they finish first they can win the competition.

"We also have University Officer Training Corps fencers who compete three times a week at a very high level. I think the change in rules is a good move and will definitely increase competition within the Service."

TA soldier LCpl Max Weedon (RLC), who finished second in the foil and joint third in the epee, added: "I really like the new format.

"This is a step towards creating a level playing field and that means the standard of fencing will start to improve.

"I have also brought a six-man squad with me for the team event. It is the first time in a long while we have been able to do that

and it just shows how rapidly the sport is growing."

Byatt also inspired Cambridge UOTC to the three-man team title, with 1 Yorks winning the six-man event and the Royal Logistic Corps taking the Inter-Corps crown.

With the Army's top fencers producing fine performances to win individual titles, Metcalfe was also pleased to see less-experienced participants joining the fray.

"Levels range from those who have never picked up a sword before through to international-standard competitors," he explained.

"The novices are not going to take a title but they may win a hit or a bout; that is great experience for them.

"In the past we have run the competition on a friendly basis. Although it is mainly officers and senior NCOs who are involved in the organisation, we are all on first name terms here. The guys return to their units with a positive experience and they come back with more people next time round." ■ Picture: Graeme Main

'The standard has gone up and a lot of experienced people are now onboard'

SPORT SHORTS

AFGHAN children from the Nad-e Ali district of Helmand province have been introduced to a new sport courtesy of troops from 1st Battalion, The Royal Irish Regiment.

More than 40 youngsters attended a boxing club in the village of Noorzo Kalay, where they learned about the noble art under the watchful eye of Rgr Billy Ball.

The TA soldier is an experienced boxer and fully-qualified coach and has been delighted by the positive impact of the initiative.

"Boxing is unique among sports in its ability to bridge the divide within communities, so it seemed the ideal pastime to introduce to the people of Noorzo," he explained.

"It has helped to break down barriers between ourselves and local Afghans."

FORCES fishermen are being invited to cast a line at some of the top angling venues in the country to raise money for the British Limbless Ex-Service Men's Association.

WO2 Mat Lambeth (RRF) is organising a series of 11 open matches over a two-week period later this month at fisheries including Coking Farm in Dorset, Aldershot's Gold Valley and the Decoy Lakes in Peterborough.

Each contest is a minimum of 100 pegs and entry costs £25.

For more information on the date and venue for each match call 07795 061729 or email pennyapoundfishathon@hotmail.co.uk

Donations can also be made online at www.justgiving.com/Penny-A-Pound-Fish-A-Thon

FORMER paratrooper Paddy Doyle has continued his quest to claim the annual Ultimate World Record title by completing a further four feats of physical endurance.

Despite suffering a series of niggling injuries, the super-fit ex-soldier set new records for the most squat thrust para jumps carrying a 40lb pack in one minute; the most push-ups carrying a 45lb pack on a 15-inch bench in one minute; the most alternative squat thrusts in two minutes while carrying a 45lb pack; and the most back of hand push-ups in one minute while carrying a 45lb pack on a 15-inch bench.

Doyle faces four more challenges in his attempt to lift the world crown.

ORGANISERS of the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers Tenpin Bowling Championships are appealing for entries ahead of this year's competition.

The event will be held on September 25 at RAF Brize Norton and is open to all past and present personnel, their spouses, partners and eligible children.

A minimum of 32 participants will be needed for the tournament to go ahead.

For more information and entry forms contact Maj (Retd) Phil Stout on 01276 514540 or email phil.stout@dft.gsi.gov.uk



Picture: Graeme Main

THE Army will be looking for Twickenham revenge against the Royal Navy when the two sides lock horns once again this month. The Senior Service fought their way to a thrilling 24-22 win in last year's showdown and the Reds will be going all-out to regain Rugby Union's Babcock Trophy when they take to the field on May 7. The team travelled to Portugal last month for a training camp ahead of the Inter-Services competition and were due to face the Royal Air Force in Aldershot as this issue went to press. Tickets for the 2011 Navy clash can be purchased online by logging on to www.arutickets.com

Strongmen feel the burn

SERVICE musclemen put their power to the test at the Clash of the Titans strongman event in Sennelager.

The contest attracted 35 entrants from across Germany who competed in a series of arduous challenges in three weight categories.

Modelled on The World's Strongest Man, the tournament at The Queen's Royal Hussars' Athlone Barracks featured eight gruelling disciplines.

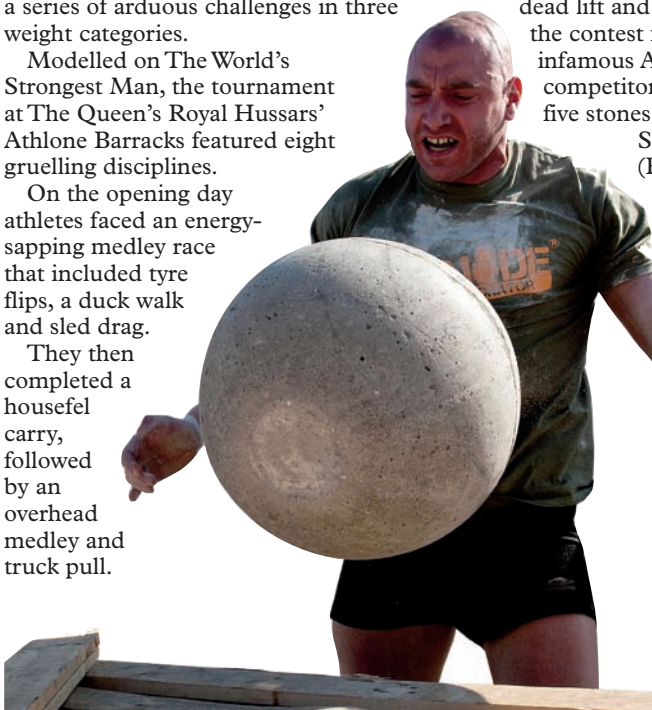
On the opening day athletes faced an energy-sapping medley race that included tyre flips, a duck walk and sled drag.

They then completed a housefel carry, followed by an overhead medley and truck pull.

The second day started with the super york, which saw participants carrying more than double their weight over a 30-metre course.

The next challenges were the car dead lift and farmers walk, before the contest finished with the infamous Atlas stones, where competitors lifted a series of five stones of varying weights.

Sgt Stokes-Whittaker (RAPTC) was victorious in the under-90kg category, with Cpl Sonnenfeld (28 Engr Regt, pictured) winning the under-105kg and Spr Graham (28 Engr Regt) taking the over-105kg title. ■



Picture: Cpl Wes Calder, RLC

final word



We asked soldiers from 1st Battalion, Coldstream Guards for their thoughts on training with French troops and Britain's military partnership with France

INTERVIEWS: SHARON KEAN
PICTURES: STEVE DOCK



Gdsm Nathan Idonga

I think it's a good thing to liaise with other armies out of theatre because it will make it easier to operate together in the future. Although our methods might be different, the objective is the same, which simplified working with each other. When we went to Afghanistan we partnered Danish troops and knew nothing about them, so training like this is a positive step.



Gdsm Cory Brown

The French troops seem really switched on but they have a different approach. We have a lot more operational experience: the things we do have already been done in theatre and are tried and tested, whereas I think they are a lot more theoretical. The language barrier is hard; none of us are good at French. Although they have officers acting as interpreters.



Gdsm John Andrews

The scale of the French urban training facilities is shocking. Normally we deal with one- or two-storey buildings but here there are three or four floors in each block so it's hard work. It has been tough and intense but that's what we do. The French skills and drills are very different to ours but in time we will probably see the pros and cons of each other's ways of working.



Gdsm Duran Guscott

Their tactics are good and while some are shockingly different we can work with it. I've learnt a few things from them. They draw the opposing force into buildings and then retract and as the enemy come through they'll smash the structure with artillery. It's pretty cool. The only problem is the language barrier so if we could sort that it would be a lot better.



Maj Oliver Biggs

The training facility doesn't really have a parallel in the UK in terms of sheer variety and we're working closely with a French unit too. It's a two-way process. We did a week's worth of drills on French tactics with their instructors but 80 per cent of this British company were in Helmand province last year so there's quite a lot they can learn from us.



Sgt Mick Norton

We're learning new ways of doing things. They are so heavily armoured and always want to use these assets, whereas we don't. They also have engineers integrated into their sections and three battle tanks in a platoon. That gives you good cover but they are quite limited when they get into city streets because you can't do anything. We've learnt some good stuff from them.



Gdsm Kyle Cooke

Most of them speak English and we've been using hand signals to communicate, which works. It's been good and I've learnt a lot of new stuff. They approach things differently, like drawing the enemy into structures, whereas we just attack from the buildings. I'm sick of baguettes now – we've had them every day – but their ration packs are alright.



Gdsm Thomas Hodgkinson

It's different to how we work so you have to get used to that, but it's been good. We're used to just infantry on the ground but they have everything together which is a good asset really. It means there's less waiting around for fire support, so you can just get on and do something. The language barrier means you have to talk with your hands.

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