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MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH ARMY



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Cover picture (left): A £1 billion upgrade to the British Army's fleet of Warrior armoured vehicles has been announced (page 8) Picture: Graeme Main

Background image: Cpl Paul Douglass (RLC) fights for possession during the Army's 5-0 win over Sussex (pages 94-95) Picture: Graeme Main



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'Thanks to all of you for your phenomenal commitment'

– A Christmas message from the Chief of the General Staff, Gen Sir Peter Wall

AT CHRISTMAS it is always tempting to reflect on the past 12 months and, as ever, the Army has much to be proud of.

But this year I want to break the habit and look forwards. For the challenges we are confronting are considerable, but they may also bring opportunities.

Looking forward is not to deny the humbling, day-to-day, persistent commitment we are delivering on operations and elsewhere.

It is to recognise that the British Army is arguably at as interesting a moment as at any time in my career, and possibly some time before.

We are embarking on a period of change that will touch every one of us over the next five years, and from which we will emerge a leaner, adaptable and ready Army. After all, we know better than most just how unstable the world continues to be, and there is no sign of that reducing any time soon. Perhaps the reverse.

The first change I want to address is in Afghanistan. We have made superb tactical progress and we're on track to hand over to the Afghans in 2014 through a complex transition operation. And it is going to continue to be hard graft, but much is set to alter.

We started on light scales in Afghanistan and that is how we'll leave. It will be challenging soldiering and it has to be done well. Our reputation, albeit as part of the wider UK government effort there, will be confirmed or undermined in these final chapters of the campaign.

The second change is very significant and, being frank, we have some way to go to be ready for it.

You will be hearing much talk of "the return to contingency". This is a real opportunity and, as the mission in Libya showed, there is always something on the operational horizon.

So we have to move from our very specialised but fairly narrow Afghan skill set into a broader range of capabilities, ready to go at short notice with minimal or no mission-specific training. This will represent a cultural change.

By comparison with Op Herrick today, contingency operations will be more like a "come as you are" party, making big demands on our adaptability and speed of learning to outpace both our enemy and the situation.

All this has to be done against the challenge of shrinking the Regular Army whilst growing and reforming the Reserves to take their place in a 112,000-strong integrated force.

That design work is well under way and the results

will be announced by the middle of 2012.

Everybody will be affected by this in some way sooner or later. We're now thinking about leaving Germany and reconnecting more of the Army with society back here in the UK as we move into new bases around the country.

I know how unsettling this is. Knowing what job we'll be in and where we'll all be living is critical to everybody. We've got to do this properly and it takes some thought, but you will be kept informed every

step of the way. And in conducting any redundancy planning, I want to make one thing absolutely clear: those injured on operations, past, present and future, will continue to get the best medical treatment and aftercare the Army and nation can provide.

There is no question of wounded soldiers being made redundant whilst their recovery is best served by remaining in the Service, as suggested by some recent newspaper articles.

Most people will be better off embarking on a new career in due course and we will do everything in our gift to assist the transition.

Above all, I can reassure you that we are doing everything we can to ensure that transforming to an integrated force is carried out with the care and dignity that the Army deserves.

Of course we're going to need the right equipment to do this. Only last month the Warrior upgrade project was signed off and there will be more new programmes. Recovering our excellent equipment from Afghanistan will be critical to our future capability.

This is a demanding schedule of change – but then look what we have achieved in the past decade. We have

gone from Kosovo, the Good Friday Agreement in Northern Ireland and Sierra Leone through to Basra, Al Amarah, Sangin and the Upper Gereshk Valley to name a few places. We should be confident.

We're good at operations and we know what excellence looks and feels like.

The future force that we will announce across the Army in spring next year will be every bit as good as its predecessors – built as it will be on you, the warrior class of today.

So there is much to be done and not all of it will be easy. For now I want to wish you and your families, wherever duty calls you, a very Happy Christmas and all the best for 2012, saving a special thought for those that won't be together (probably not for the first time).

Sincere thanks to all of you for your phenomenal commitment, for a great year's work and for your optimism as we face the future. ■



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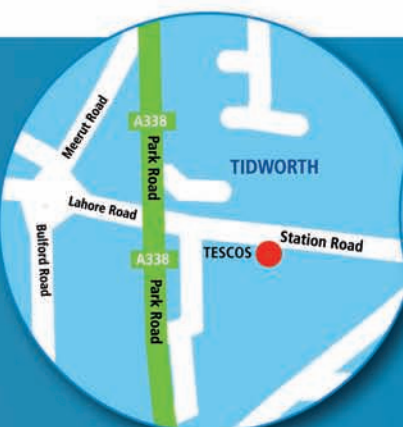
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Picture: Graeme Main

Culture change: Reservist units such as The London Regiment will be expected to train harder as they take on a more significant role in the British Army

'This is no longer just a hobby'

A GREAT culture change is about to take hold in the Territorial Army, its deputy commander has said.

Outlining plans to boost Reservist numbers to 30,000 by 2020, the Duke of Westminster admitted that part-time soldiers were nervous about the future.

But he insisted that evolution was the only way forward for the force.

"We will be changing the Territorial Army to a degree that is really throwing Haldane's structure out of the window," Maj Gen Gerald Grosvenor told *Soldier* during an exclusive interview.

"Our entire culture is going to alter. This is no longer just a hobby, but a lifestyle choice.

"In future, being a Reservist is going to require a much higher level of commitment as well as harder and better training, both here and overseas.

"There is also going to be a degree of compulsion involved, on operations or indeed during training."

Published earlier this year, the Future Reserves 2020 report recommended the British Army should change the balance between its Regulars and Reservists.

As a result, the government has announced a £1.5 billion investment package to enhance the capability of the Territorial Army over the next ten years.

The major general said much effort was already going into recruitment.

"This is a crucial moment," he added.

"I want to change a lot but I want to maintain the critical thing that drives us; the volunteer ethos. That is the golden thread and I don't want to see it broken by any clever-dick ideas."

The senior officer added: "I want to put the fun back in [to being a Reservist].

"We all joined up to work hard and play hard but at the moment we are playing very little. We have, quite rightly, been operationally focused."

The deputy commander said the current structure of the Territorial Army – a name he wants done away with completely – was outdated.

"The Regulars have changed to be more manoeuvre-orientated but our structure is still very much in the Cold War era," he explained.

"We have to catch up. That will mean bigger units and a change of mindset."

The Serviceman believes a closer working relationship between full-time and part-time soldiers is also needed.

"We can provide a very soft landing into civilian life for those made redundant," he said.

The duke has recently held a series of briefings on the report's proposals with Reservists across the UK.

"My impression was nervousness about the future," he added. "But I was also struck by the robustness for change. Troops recognise we can't go on as we are."

"We also debated our name. Despite its astounding contribution to operations, there is still a *Dad's Army* attitude towards the Territorial Army.

"The term should go."





“I HAVE SERVED IN BOTH IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN BUT THE COMBAT IN LIBYA WAS MUCH MORE LIKE TRADITIONAL WARFARE”

– APACHE PILOT WO1 JON LANE REFLECTS ON A JOB WELL DONE, PAGES 40-42

Picture Courtesy of Lockheed Martin



Facelift: Improvements to the Warrior armoured vehicle will be “surprising and significant”, according to experts at UK defence firm Lockheed Martin

Billion pound boost for Warrior

THE British Army’s Warrior armoured vehicles are being given a £1 billion makeover to ready the fleet for future fights.

Key improvements to the tracked asset include a redesigned turret and the latest 40mm CT40 cannon, stabilised by hi-tech sensors to enable troops to fire accurately while moving.

There is also a flexible armour mounting system capable of adapting to new technologies as well as enhanced power generation and distribution to cope with the demands of the latest on-board communications kit.

The Chief of the General Staff, Gen Sir Peter Wall, described the announcement as “extremely welcome”.

“Warrior will continue to be at the heart of our combat capability for at least another 25 years with state-of-the-art firepower and electronics,” he said.

“Wherever the Army deploys, our Infantry will depend on its superior protection, mobility and lethality. This will be a battle winner.”

The planned programme of enhancements will extend the vehicle’s service life from 2025 to beyond 2040, ensuring the fighting machine is fit to play its part in future land operations.

Some 380 Warriors will be upgraded, most of which will be Infantry section and command variants.

The repair and recovery observation post models used by the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers and Royal Artillery respectively are also in line for a facelift.

UK-based company Lockheed Martin

will carry out the work, with the first deliveries expected by 2018 and all upgraded Warriors due to be in service by 2020.

Ben Shaw, senior business development manager at the firm, promised the improvements would be “surprising and significant” from a soldier’s perspective.

“It will be an absolutely up-to-date infantry fighting vehicle, comparable with any other platform around the world,” he explained.

“There will be more space inside, more reliability in the systems and it will be powered in a different way.

“It will be equipped with a modern fast-firing cannon and capable of launching on the move to the type of ranges you would expect of a medium-calibre weapon.

“They will also have increased situational awareness with local cameras in the vehicle.”

Armoured Infantry company commander Maj Mark Beyon (R Welsh) has deployed on operations with Warriors in Kosovo, Iraq and Afghanistan and said the upgrade would be a welcome boost for the versatile fighting platform.

“It’s a quantum leap in firepower, having the same range but a far better

punch at the other end,” he explained.

“The armour modularity will allow us to adapt to the threat and the electronic architecture has also improved the situational awareness under armour, as well as giving us more space to plug and play any new systems that come in.”

The officer said that a key strength in the improved fleet was a new support variant – the Warrior ambulance.

“In Afghanistan we successfully converted a couple of vehicles but to have a purpose-built model is a real boost,” he added.

“The fire on the move is also a key capability, as you are always more vulnerable when static.

“Warrior can get anywhere on the battlefield but now we can destroy anything of a comparable size while moving around.

“From peacekeeping in the Balkans to street fighting in Basra and counter-insurgency in Afghanistan, Warrior has always been a versatile vehicle and these improvements will just make it even more impressive.”

Defence Secretary Philip Hammond said the announcement was a key step towards meeting the requirements of the Future Force 2020 vision. The programme is also set to create 600 jobs in British industry.

380

NUMBER OF ARMoured VEHICLES TO BE UPGRADED WITH THE CASH INJECTION, GIVING THE BRITISH ARMY’S WARRIOR FLEET GREATER FLEXIBILITY AND FIREPOWER



Assaults abate in southern Afghanistan

THE number of insurgent attacks on British troops in Helmand province has almost halved compared to levels in 2010.

Brig Ed Davis, commander of 3 Commando Brigade and Task Force Helmand during Op Herrick 14, said personnel experienced a 45 per cent drop in violent incidents over the summer – the equivalent of 86 per week.

In the Nad-e Ali South district, where marines from 45 Commando were operating as the ground-holding battlegroup, that reduction was even higher at 86 per cent.

In a press briefing at the Ministry of Defence, the senior officer said the military campaign was on track and that efforts to ready local army and police forces for British withdrawal by 2015 had been successful.

“The end state of being able to hand over central Helmand to effective, trusted and sustainable Afghan National Security Forces is deliverable,” Brig Davis commented.

“We have maintained the momentum of progress towards that and built upon successive Herricks that went before us, and I’m sure 20th Armoured Brigade will carry that on.”

Defence Secretary Philip Hammond told MPs that real and meaningful headway had been made and evidence showed a surge in foreign troops had boosted security in the country.

He also revealed that the Afghan National Army had grown to 169,000 and the police force to 134,000.

During Brig Davis’ six-month tenure in Afghanistan, much effort was placed on helping the country’s government deliver a better life to its people.

He said British troops had suppressed the summer fighting season and increased efforts to disrupt routes used



Picture: Sgt Alison Baskerville, RLC

Shared success: Soldiers from 1 Rifles take part in a joint operation with the Afghan Uniformed Police

by the enemy to transport weapons.

“We interdicted about seven-and-a-half tonnes of home-made explosives, which equates to about eight months of contact IEDs,” added Brig Davis. “This had a significant impact on the insurgents’ ability to prosecute their campaign.”

But the senior officer warned that the threat had now shifted from a rural to urban insurgency as a result of British Forces’ success in pushing the enemy out of communities.

The handover of Lashkar Gah to

home-grown security forces in July marked a tipping point in the tour, said the brigadier.

“No longer did we measure our effect by how well we reacted to attacks, it was more about how we connected to people through shuras and engagement,” the commander recalled.

“We went from a population who were at best ambivalent to the Afghan government and what they were offering, to one that was being predominantly supportive.”

NEWS IN BRIEF

E-SURVEY ENCOURAGEMENT

■ PART-time soldiers are being urged to help shape their future terms and conditions of service by completing an electronic survey.

Launched last month on Armysnet, the anonymous questionnaire is open to all Reservist personnel. It takes ten minutes to fill in and is available online until December 31.

Brig John Donnelly, Director of Army Personnel Strategy, said: “With so much change in the offing it is really important that we keep tabs on what TA officers and soldiers think about their current ‘offer’ and what will encourage them to stay in future.”

The *Future Reserves 2020* report, published earlier this year, recommended that the number of Reservists in the British Army should be grown.

Helmand lessons shared at summit

A MEETING of minds has taken place to extract crucial details of the operational experiences of 3 Commando Brigade during its tour of Afghanistan this year.

The Mission Exploitation Symposium, held at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, brought key elements of the returning force together with those responsible for preparing subsequent formations.

Presentations, one-on-one interviews with commanders and in-depth reports allowed those at the two-day event to understand lessons learnt during Operation Herrick 14.

Brig Simon Downey (pictured right), commander of the Land Warfare Development Group, said the gathering was designed to reveal “challenges and insights” from theatre.

“We are now seeking to ensure that we are as prepared as possible for the very particular challenge of transition,” he explained in an interview with *Soldier*.



Picture: Steve Dock



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NEWS IN BRIEF

BARGAIN BENEFACTORS

■ A NEW insurance price comparison website has been created by a team of ex-Servicemen.

Forces Aid (www.forcesaid.com) allows users to weigh up quotes for vehicle, home and pet cover and is donating 70 per cent of its profits to military charities.

VIGILANCE OVER VETERANS

■ AN independent audit of nuclear test veterans has revealed that the majority feel well cared for by the National Health Service.

The survey, commissioned by the Ministry of Defence, asked nearly 900 people involved in experiments during the 1950s and 60s about their experiences of serious illness and treatment.

While most felt happy with the support available, some raised concerns over access to social care.

Suggestions were also made on ways for the MoD to improve its communication with ex-Service personnel.

ARMY MEDICS COMMENDED

■ SIX female medical professionals have been saluted for their work with injured troops.

A mixture of Service and civilian staff from Birmingham's Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Headley Court and the MoD Hospital Unit in Portsmouth were named at the Barclays Women of the Year Awards in London.

Those commended included consultant nurse Debby Edwards, trauma sister Victoria Mulleady, Sgt Lauren Odell (RAF), Surg Cdr Sarah Stapley (RN), occupational therapist Sarah Winters and physiotherapist Kate Sherman.

ROYAL GUEST REVEALED

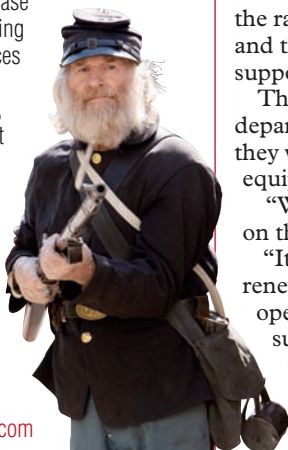
■ THE Queen will attend this month's British Military Tournament, it has been announced.

Held at London's Earls Court, the three-day event will showcase re-enactments, death-defying stunts, ceremonial set pieces and a variety of music.

The two-hour spectacle, which is the world's largest performance of military theatre, will explain the 250-year history of the special relationship between Great Britain and America.

Funds will also be raised for ABF The Soldiers' Charity.

For tickets visit www.britishmilitarytournament.com



Picture: Sgt Steve Blake, RLC

Strong advocate: Philip Hammond shares a meal with troops during a visit to Camp Bastion in Helmand

Hammond outlines Service vision

DEFENCE Secretary Philip Hammond described Service personnel as “the greatest asset” in a speech outlining his vision to members of the military charity SSAFA.

The politician stressed that the first focus of the Ministry of Defence, which he took control of in October, had to be delivering success on operations.

He added that the campaign in Afghanistan continued to play a vital role in ensuring security in the UK.

During his speech, Mr Hammond also pledged his commitment to rebuilding the Armed Forces covenant and ensuring the military is fit to face the challenges and risks ahead.

“I am determined that we neither compromise current operations nor constrain our future defence capability,” he said.

“The projection of military power is the raison d’être of the Armed Forces and the MoD – everything else is a supporting role.”

The defence secretary said his department owed it to troops to ensure they were properly supported and equipped to do their jobs.

“We now have a clear plan to deliver on this pledge,” he added.

“It is an ambitious programme of renewal after a decade of continuous operations – a blueprint for a sustainable future as one of the world’s most capable forces.

“The Armed Forces that will emerge from the implementation of the Strategic Defence and

Security Review will be formidable, flexible and adaptable – structured to defend the country and project power abroad – equipped with some of the best and most advanced technology available in the world.”

Mr Hammond said he intended to be a strong and passionate advocate for the Services and MoD, both within government and among the public.

“I will advance the interests of defence and national security at every opportunity,” he added.

However, the minister warned the Armed Forces had to be affordable and sustainable to ensure continuing success on operations.

“We are dealing with the toughest economic climate in a generation as well as the biggest budget deficit in our peacetime history,” he explained.

“We have also to deal with the legacy of an unaffordable equipment programme and a decade of operations at a continuously high tempo.

“We do so at a time when threats to our national security and interests are evolving fast and by no means diminishing. At a time when the United Kingdom’s Armed Forces, including a substantial number of Reservists, remain engaged in a dangerous and enduring mission in Afghanistan.”

On restoring the covenant, he said: “This will mean all of us working together – government at all levels, charities and the private sector – to look after our serving personnel, their families and the country’s veterans.”

55,000

THE NUMBER OF DISPLACED EARTHQUAKE SURVIVORS THAT BRITISH OFFICER LT COL PAUL HOLDER (RLC) FOUND AT A CAMP IN THE CARIBBEAN COUNTRY OF HAITI WHEN HE ARRIVED TO ASSIST RELIEF EFFORTS LAST CHRISTMAS (PAGES 37-39)

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Olympic ops disclosed to Forces personnel

BRITISH troops are starting to learn details of what role their units will play in supporting the London Olympics next year.

Some Armed Forces personnel could be called upon to lend their military expertise to the extensive security and safety operation, while others will be involved in the ceremonial side of the global sporting event.

The 2012 Games will comprise the Summer Olympics, officially known as the Games of the XXX Olympiad, from July 27 to August 12 and the XIV Paralympics from August 29 to September 9.

Numerous related events are due to take place in the proceeding weeks.

In a letter to all Servicemen and women, the Chief of the Defence Staff, Gen Sir David Richards, said the Ministry of Defence was working closely with police and other civil and Olympic authorities to determine the exact size and nature of the Army’s contribution.

“Personnel will be advised through their chain of command if they or their unit will be required to provide support to the Games,” he said.

“Regulars and Reservists will be involved in a variety of roles and for varying periods in the time leading up to and throughout the Olympics.”

The head of the Armed Forces added:

“You may be providing a specialist capability in the maritime, land or air environments, lending support to emergent tasks as appropriate or taking part in one of the high-profile ceremonial and celebratory events that will showcase the Games and our country to the world.”

The journey of the Olympic torch across the UK from May next year will be the first opportunity for units to be involved ahead of the flame’s arrival in the nation’s capital on July 27, 2012.

A number of Servicemen and women are also expected to compete or officiate at the Games.

Among the Army hopefuls are rower Lt Heather Stanning (32 Regt, RA), who is bidding for a place in the GB team, Ghanaian judo ace Tpr Emmanuel Narthey

(1 RTR, pictured right) and Guyanese cyclist Maj Claire Fraser (RA).

“We wish them all the very best in their endeavours,” Gen Richards added in his letter. “Whatever the involvement

of our people, we are sure their commitment and professionalism will shine through, making a real difference and a vital contribution to this historic sporting event.”



Picture: Graeme Main

Olympic hopeful: Tpr Emmanuel Narthey (1 RTR)

Army begins drawdown from Germany

DETAILS of changes to the regional structure of the Service and the return of almost 20,000 British troops from Germany have been revealed by the Ministry of Defence.

Starting next month, some 1,800 personnel will move back from Europe to sites across the UK. Dates for other base changes have been brought forward. Moves include:

- 43 Close Support Squadron, Royal Logistic Corps to move from Germany to Abingdon to collocate with 12 Logistic Support Regiment by the end of January;
- 2nd Battalion, The Royal Anglian Regiment to move from Cyprus to Cottesmore in Rutland in July 2012;
- 39 Engineer Regiment (Air Support) to move from Waterbeach near Cambridge to Kinloss in the summer of 2012;
- 2nd Battalion, The Yorkshire Regiment to move from Cyprus to Elizabeth Barracks in

Pirbright in July 2013;

- 7 Regiment, Royal Logistic Corps to move from Germany to Cottesmore by summer 2013;
- HQ 12 (Air Support) Engineer Group to move from Waterbeach to RAF Wittering in the summer of 2013;
- HQ 1st Division to move from Germany to Scotland by 2020.

Changes will see the British Army take over the former Royal Air Force base in Kinloss, Scotland, earlier than first intended.

Waterbeach Barracks will be sold and Trenchard Barracks and Munster Station in Germany will be handed back to their respective local authorities.

Structural changes to the regional divisions and brigades – called Project Avanti – mean the Service’s UK divisional headquarters in Edinburgh, Shrewsbury and Aldershot will be replaced by a single Headquarters Support

Command in the latter town.

The new unit will begin operating next month when the older one in Aldershot is disbanded. Edinburgh and Shrewsbury will then both disband by April 2012, continuing some of their tasks until August.

The structure of the ten regional brigades and HQ London District will also be altered over the coming months.

Chief of the General Staff, Gen Sir Peter Wall, said: “The new basing arrangements allow the Army to reinforce vital links with communities in the UK as well as continuing to provide a high level of support to soldiers and their families.”

In October 2010 the MoD said it aimed to return half of its Servicemen and women in Germany by 2015 and the rest by 2020.

Changes will save the department around £250 million a year. More moves are due to be announced in the coming months.

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stick to carving
the Joint ...**

**NEW TESTS
BETTER DETECTION**



Not smoking it!





NEWS IN BRIEF

ALL CHANGE AT THE TOP

■ THE most senior ranks of the British Army have been restructured in a bid to give the Chief of the General Staff more freedom to manage the Service and its finances.

Changes include the axing of the Commander-in-Chief job title. Gen Sir Nick Parker is now Commander Land Forces.

The Commander Field Army post has been removed following the retirement of Lt Gen Barney White-Spunner earlier this year.

And HQ Land Forces in Andover has been renamed Army Headquarters.

As part of the shake-up, CGS, Gen Sir Peter Wall, will now be based in Andover. Only a handful of his staff will remain at the Ministry of Defence Main Building in London including the Assistant Chief of General Staff, Maj Gen James Everard.

Gen Sir Nick Parker will continue to lead personnel alongside fellow three-star commanders Lt Gen Mark Mans, the Adjutant General, and Lt Gen Paul Newton, Commander Force Development and Training.

The overhaul follows recommendations made by Lord Levene earlier this year in his report *Defence Reform*, which called for changes to the structure and management of the MoD.

“We are top heavy and that must end,” former defence secretary Dr Liam Fox told MPs shortly after the findings were published.

BRITS OVERHAUL HOSPITAL

■ A VITAL hospital in Helmand province has been dramatically transformed thanks to British Forces personnel.

Less than 12 months ago Gereshk District Hospital in Nahr-e Saraj was in a state of disrepair with medical waste littering its grounds and no inpatients.

But the provincial reconstruction team, working alongside military stabilisation support staff, has completed 23 renovation projects at the site.

The centre is now one of the leading facilities in the region and able to provide treatment to many extra patients from Now Zad and Sangin, which are more than 20 kilometres away.

ONLINE SURGE FOR SOLDIER

■ MORE readers than ever are choosing to follow *Soldier* on our magazine's Facebook page.

Last month the number of social media users who “liked” us on the site topped 10,000.

More than 4,000 people are also getting the publication's updates via Twitter.

The milestone comes as we launch a new-look website, now part of the British Army pages.

Editor-in-chief Andrew Simms said: “It is fantastic to see a growing number of readers keeping in touch with us online.

“Our new site will allow us to publish even more stories, features, photographs and sport reports than before.”



Major medal discovery

A 94-YEAR-OLD former British Army major has been found in possession of a Dutch honour that is equivalent to the prestigious Victoria Cross.

Kenneth Mayhew was an officer in The Suffolk Regiment.

He was nominated as a Knight of the 4th Class of the Netherlands Military Order of William in 1946 for “outstanding deeds of valour, judgement and loyalty”, according to his citation.

But Dutch officials had no idea of Mr Mayhew's whereabouts after they lost contact in 1965, until he was seen wearing his award at a commemoration service in the town of Venray.

Peter Lambourn, the British defence attache for Holland, said: “The Queen of the Netherlands was the first to be informed that he

had been located.

“He will be invited back to the country for the annual meeting of the Knights next year.

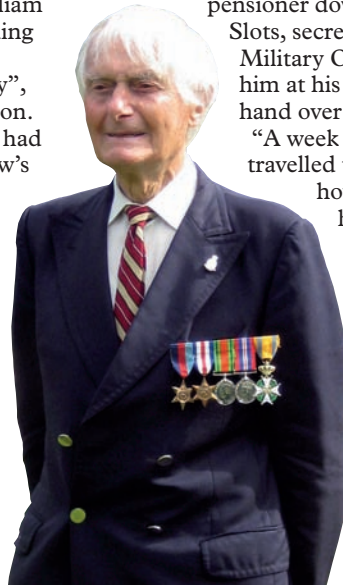
“I would imagine the Dutch will make quite a fuss of him.”

Mr Mayhew is one of only eight members of the order who are still alive. After tracking the British pensioner down, Col (Retd) Gerrit Slots, secretary of the Netherlands Military Order of William, visited him at his home in the UK to hand over a new insignia and tie.

“A week after the discovery I travelled to Norwich to tell him how glad we were that we had found him after so many years,” said the former officer.

“Even Queen Beatrix is very pleased to know that contact with the major is repaired.”

Dutch courage:
Maj (Retd) Kenneth Mayhew with his Netherlands Military Order
Picture: RMWO



Recovery centre opens doors

WOUNDED personnel have received a welcome welfare boost after the new defence recovery centre at Catterick Garrison opened a number of key facilities.

Temporary residential accommodation, classrooms and catering blocks have all been unveiled at Phoenix House, which will provide comprehensive support to injured and sick soldiers and their families.

Help for Heroes has pumped £1.3 million into the capital project that, when complete, will create new accommodation, training facilities and a state-of-the-art gymnasium.

The charity has pledged a further £10.7 million for a personnel recovery and assessment centre, which will be delivered by early 2013.

Operating costs at Phoenix House have been estimated at £11 million over the first ten years and The Royal British Legion has committed £8.5 million to the scheme.

A support hub is also

being developed to allow welfare agencies and Armed Forces charities to offer advice to residents, veterans and Service families.

Cpl Andrew Garthwaite (QRL), pictured below with Help for Heroes founder Bryn Parry, lost his right arm in an explosion in the Nad-e Ali district of Helmand.

He said: “This centre and its staff will provide great support to wounded, injured and sick personnel who are on the road to recovery and to those who may be leaving the Services.

“With the support of charities and the Army, the facility should provide the springboard needed to shape our futures as I and other soldiers will be able to access information we may not have been able to while recovering at home.”

Brig Greville Bibby, commander of 15 (North East) Brigade and York Garrison, added: “I am delighted that we finally have a facility of this nature. Even though it is an interim measure, it will be of immediate benefit over the next 12 months.”





“THERE IS A GREAT INCLUSIVE QUALITY TO *THE HANGOVER*. I THINK THE SECOND ONE IS AN EVEN CRAZIER PARTY THAN THE FIRST”

– ACTOR JUSTIN BARTHA ENTHUSES OVER BOX OFFICE HIT SEQUEL, PAGES 78-79

Picture: Sgt Alison Baskerville, RLC



Continued success: The attack force scooped four separate trophies for work in Afghanistan and Libya

Apache personnel clean up at awards

THE Army's Apache helicopter crews have been honoured for their outstanding work on operations at the annual Guild of Air Pilots and Air Navigators awards.

The attack force picked up four trophies in recognition of the exceptional, innovative and brave efforts of pilots and ground staff serving in Afghanistan and Libya.

Maj Matthew Noble-Clarke (AAC) was awarded The Grand Master's Commendation after he became the first pilot to amass more than 1,000 hours of operational flying.

Between 2006 and 2010, the officer spent 19 months in Afghanistan on four separate tours.

Personnel from 656 Squadron, 4th Regiment, Army Air Corps received The Master's Commendation for their pioneering work to deploy Apache helicopters from Royal Navy ships.

They most recently flew sorties over Libya from HMS *Ocean* as part of Op Unified Protector (pages 40-42).

Maj David Amlot (AAC) received The Sir Barnes Wallis Medal for his exceptional and innovative contribution to aviation.

His work in the judgemental training of crews on rules of engagement, targeting directives and laws of armed conflict has helped to save countless lives in theatre.

Finally, the attack helicopter force as a whole was presented with The Johnston Memorial Trophy in honour of their continued efforts to make Apache the weapon of first choice in counter-insurgency operations.

Force commander Col Neale Moss said: "I am delighted that our success has been recognised and it is particularly pleasing to be honoured by the guild as fellow aviation professionals.

"I am hugely proud of the effort put in by all, whether ground crew, technicians, or aircrew, civilian or military; all these awards underline massive teamwork in extremely hostile conditions over an extended period of time."

NEWS IN BRIEF

SPLASH FOR CASH

■ A THREE-mile swimming race down the River Thames is set to take place on Boxing Day in aid of the Deptherapy Foundation.

The icy challenge organised by the Aquatic Element Dive Club in Windsor will raise money to send injured troops on diving courses as part of their rehabilitation.

For more information visit www.justgiving.com/AE-Boxing-Day-Swim

PROBLEM SOLVER SALUTED

■ A ROYAL Engineers officer has won a prestigious award for his work to develop the Afghan National Security Forces.

The Association of Project Managers named Lt Col Martin Sturgeon's venture as programme of the year. The officer's scheme aimed to link up the dozens of international agencies that recruit soldiers and police officers in the country.

"As a Royal Engineer, I am trained to find solutions to problems and I'm pleased I could put this into action for such a worthwhile cause," Lt Col Sturgeon said. "I feel proud that in some small way I may have helped."

HEADLEY COURT TO MOVE

■ DEFENCE Medical Rehabilitation Centre Headley Court will be moved within ten years, it has been revealed.

In a speech to parliament, Armed Forces Minister Nick Harvey confirmed plans to replace the resource with a larger new building close to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham.

"We are talking about a development that is still a good many years off," he told MPs.

"The new centre will initially support Armed Forces personnel, although we hope that in the fullness of time veterans and members of the wider society will be able to take advantage of it."

COVENANT MADE LAW

■ THE Armed Forces Covenant has been recognised in legislation after the government bill was granted royal assent by the Queen.

A report on its progress will be made each year.

NHS clinics for wounded personnel

AMPUTEE veterans will be treated at dedicated NHS clinics specialising in prosthetics and rehabilitation under new government plans.

Prime Minister David Cameron has committed to investing £15 million in the service for former Forces personnel who have lost limbs in the line of duty.

It follows a review commissioned by the Department of Health to address concerns from military charities and seriously injured soldiers that existing provision was not good enough.

The report, written by Dr Andrew Murrison MP, recommended that specialist clinics for amputees be set up across the UK.

Jerome Church, general secretary of the British Limbless Ex-Service Men's Association

(BLESMA) welcomed the news, saying he was now more confident the health service could provide the prosthetic help veterans needed.

"We are also delighted that this enhanced support will be extended to all those who lost limbs in earlier conflicts," he added.

"We believe this level of care is a national responsibility and BLESMA and other Service charities expect this to be sustained."

Dr Murrison said he was delighted that his recommendations had been accepted.

"I hope the action points I have offered honour the military covenant and benefit military amputees," he added.

"But they should also help to improve the service available to all limb centre users."



Picture: Graeme Main

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– RUGBY UNION’S CAPT IAN WILKINS STILL GOING STRONG AT 44, PAGE 96



Picture: Cpl Paul Morrison, RLC

Stern test: Kgn Marc Henshaw (2 Lancs) was among the gold winners at the challenging two-day event

Troops break Cambrian’s back

A TOUGH patrolling challenge in the Welsh mountains has seen a record number of teams take part.

Organised by 160 (Wales) Brigade headquarters, Exercise Cambrian Patrol gave Regular, Reservist and foreign soldiers chance to compete against each other in a series of physical tests.

Personnel had to march 45km while carrying 60lbs of kit during a continuous two-day mission.

Navigating by day and night, they faced various specialist tasks including reconnaissance of enemy forces, building river crossings, first aid duties and defensive shooting under attack.

More than a third of the 104 groups that entered failed to finish the course.

WO1 Brian Pratt (Para), officer in charge of the 52-year-old event, said: “Once again this exercise has lived up to its reputation as one of the sternest tests a modern-day soldier can face.

“Although not the longest of Cambrian routes, teams this year still had to cover 1,800 metres of climb and another 1,300 of descent in addition to some horrendous terrain on the opening leg.

“The route was both mentally and physically demanding and took its toll on all the teams.”

Participants were awarded points for demonstrating military skills, stamina and dedication during the weekend and successful teams were awarded gold, silver or bronze medals. Certificates of merit were also given to those who completed the course with lower scores.

The gold winning groups came from the following units: 1st Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers; the Household Cavalry Regiment; 2nd Battalion, The Duke of Lancaster’s Regiment; The King’s Royal Hussars; 9 Gorkha Rifles (India) and 2 Engineer Regiment (New Zealand).

GOOD DRILLS

COUNCIL COFFERS

STAFFORDSHIRE County Council has pledged £3 million of funding to the National Memorial Arboretum over the next six years. The cash boost will support a major appeal to add a remembrance centre, pavilion and square to the site, which is visited by some 300,000 people every year.

TEENAGE TALK

VICTORIA Cross recipient LCpl Johnson Beharry (PWRR) has visited pupils at South Thames College to share stories about his challenging background and how he came to be decorated with Britain’s premier award for bravery. The soldier met with more than 100 students during his trip to the London educational establishment.

ANNINGTON ADVENTURES

FORCES charity Annington Trust has teamed up with The Outward Bound Trust to offer adventure courses to 30 teenagers living in Service families accommodation during next summer. For more information visit www.anningtontrust.org

UNDERWEAR ESCAPE

A MAN tried to escape military conscription in Vologda, Russia, by climbing across roofs on electrical cable wearing little more than his underwear. The 24-year-old performed the dangerous stunt above a nine-storey building, news website *Pravda Ru* reported. Vasily Smirnov, deputy chief of the country’s Armed Forces, said more than 200,000 citizens dodged army service this year.

FIFA FARCE

FOOTBALL’S world governing body came under fire for stopping England players wearing poppies at an international match last month. The organisation decrees that political, religious or commercial messages cannot be displayed on strips. A compromise was later reached which allowed the flower to be featured on black armbands.

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IN MEMORIAM



PTE MATTHEW HASELDIN (21)
2ND BATTALION,
THE MERCIAN REGIMENT
KIA NOVEMBER 3 – AFGHANISTAN

SOLDIERS from 2nd Battalion, The Mercian Regiment are mourning the loss of a courageous young colleague who was killed while on patrol in Helmand province.

Pte Matthew Haseldin had been involved in a mission to clear and secure areas along Route 611, a key supply line linking Gereshk to other district centres in the region.

While conducting a check, the patrol came under attack from sustained small arms and grenade fire, during which the 21-year-old was fatally wounded.

Pte Haseldin joined the Army in February before successfully passing the Combat Infantryman's Course. He was posted to 2 Mercian in August ahead of the regiment's

deployment on Op Herrick 15.

"Although he had only served for a short time with C Company Group, he stood out as a young man of immense character who had travelled widely and was mature beyond his years," said Lt Col Colin Marks, CO of 2 Mercian.

"Steadfast in battle, Matthew faced more challenges in the few weeks he spent in Helmand than many soldiers experience in a lifetime."

2nd Lt Luke Beetlestone added: "He was liked by all and made a significant impression on his peers in the short time he had known them."

"An exceptionally likeable character, he will be remembered for his sharp wit."

A statement from Pte Haseldin's parents said: "Matthew was a loving son. We are very proud."



PTE MATTHEW THORNTON (27)
4TH BATTALION,
THE YORKSHIRE REGIMENT
KIA NOVEMBER 9 – AFGHANISTAN

A POPULAR Reservist soldier has been killed by an improvised explosive device during a patrol to reassure and better understand members of the Afghan population.

Pte Matthew Thornton (27) was patrolling ground north of Checkpoint Loy Mandeh with his multiple when he was caught in the blast.

The Serviceman deployed to the country in October and was working as an element of Combined Force Lashkar Gah.

Pte Thornton joined the Territorial Army in 2004 before leaving three years later. He rejoined the Service in 2009 and was one of the first to put himself forward for Op Herrick 15.

Away from military life he was a factory worker and an avid snowboarder, a sport in

which he was a qualified instructor.

"Pte Thornton was always the first to volunteer and help his company, both professionally and socially," said Lt Col Ian Crowley, commanding officer of 4 Yorks.

"One of the reasons he re-enlisted was to do his bit and serve on operations in Afghanistan. There was never a doubt that he would be exactly the right man to deploy."

The soldier leaves behind his mother, father, sister and brother.

A family statement said: "Matthew was a dedicated soldier and passionate about the job."

"He loved life and lived it to the full – in his work, his role with the TA and in leisure time. His death leaves a huge hole in all our lives."



LT DAVID BOYCE (25)
1ST THE QUEEN'S DRAGOON GUARDS
KIA NOVEMBER 17
– AFGHANISTAN

SOLDIERS from 1st The Queen's Dragoon Guards are mourning the loss of two comrades killed in action in Afghanistan.

Lt David Boyce and LCpl Richard Scanlon died after their armoured vehicle struck an improvised explosive device during a patrol in central Helmand.

The Formation Reconnaissance Squadron soldiers were helping to provide security in the Yakchal region of Nahr-e Saraj when they were caught in the explosion.

After joining the Army in September 2009, Lt Boyce commissioned from the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst a year later.

He took command of 1st Troop, B Squadron in July where his reputation as an inspirational young officer preceded him.

Fit, well respected and confident, the Serviceman was an avid skier and a sailor with the Army Offshore Racing Team.

Lt Col Jasper de Quincey Adams, commanding officer of 1 QDG, said: "Lt Boyce was a charming young officer who, quite simply, represented everything that is great about the regiment and British Army."

"He led from the front, setting the very highest standards, and inspired his men and peers alike. They adored him and showed him a level of loyalty that is reserved for the very best."

"David had so much to give, so much to look forward to and so many opportunities ahead. The regiment has been denied one of our best."

Lt Bryn Williams (QDG) added: "Dave was the heart and soul of fun and games in the officers' mess. He was a brother to us all."

mess. He was a brother to us all."

Lt Boyce leaves behind his mother, father, sister and girlfriend. A family statement said: "David brought sunshine into the lives of all those he knew. He will be dearly missed."

LCpl Scanlon completed his Army training in October 1999, when he joined his regiment.

He deployed to Bosnia in 2001 and Iraq in 2003 and 2005 before leaving the Army in 2006.

But after being dissatisfied in several civilian jobs he rejoined in 2009 and was soon promoted to lance corporal.

Lt Col Adams said: "LCpl Scanlon was one of life's great characters, always with an infectious smile and a tangible love of life."

"Calm under pressure, he was hand picked as the troop leader's gunner on a demanding tour."

"We will miss him terribly, barracks life will have lost some of its sheen, but our tragic loss is insignificant compared to that of his family."

"LCpl Scanlon will never be forgotten."

Cpl Gareth Davies (QDG) added: "You'd be hard placed to replace such a good friend, such a character – I don't think there is anyone else quite like him. He was one in a million."

Cpl Rhys Lang (QDG) said: "Richard Scanlon was one of the best."

"Everyone that has ever known him has a story to tell. He was an honest, genuine bloke with a love for life and he lived it to the full."

The soldier leaves behind his mother, stepfather, father and two sisters. A family statement said: "There will never be anyone else like our Richard."



LCPL RICHARD SCANLON (33)
1ST THE QUEEN'S DRAGOON GUARDS
KIA NOVEMBER 17
– AFGHANISTAN



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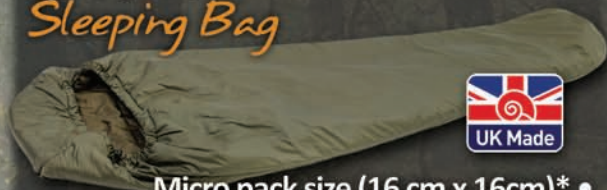


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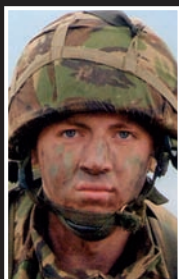
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IN MEMORIAM



LCPL PETER EUSTACE (25)
2ND BATTALION,
THE RIFLES
KIA NOVEMBER 16 – AFGHANISTAN

A HIGHLY-respected junior NCO who flourished in the challenges posed by life on operations was killed while on patrol in Helmand province.

LCpl Peter Eustace, of 2nd Battalion, The Rifles, was on a joint mission with his company and the Afghan National Army when he was fatally wounded by an IED.

The 25-year-old joined the Service in 2004 and deployed to Iraq on Op Telic 9, where he showed immense dependability and courage.

As a newly-promoted lance corporal he led his section through some difficult and testing times in Afghanistan in 2009 and returned to the country in October as a mortar fire controller.

"His professionalism and experience in training and when deployed was essential

to making the lives of those in his company and command safer," said Maj Bobby Bryan (2 Rifles). "It will be his depth of character, selflessness and cheerful disposition for which he will be most sorely missed."

WO2 Keith Evans added: "Throughout the time that I knew him he was always the fountain of laughter. He would walk into work in the mornings and have this big cheesy grin on his face as though he was up to no good and had done something wrong. But that is just the way he was, happy all of the time."

LCpl Eustace leaves behind his mother, sister, brother and girlfriend.

A family statement said: "Peter will be missed by family and friends and is loved by all."



PTE THOMAS LAKE (29)
1ST BATTALION, THE PRINCESS OF
WALES'S ROYAL REGIMENT
KIA NOVEMBER 20 – AFGHANISTAN

TROOPS of 1st Battalion, The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment are mourning the loss of an energetic and popular colleague.

Pte Thomas Lake died after he was caught in an explosion in the Jamal Kowi area of Nahr-e Saraj in central Helmand.

He was taking part in a patrol to reassure the local population.

From Watford, the soldier passed out of training in May 2010. He joined the regiment in Germany shortly afterwards.

Lt Col James Coote, commanding officer of 1 PWRR, said: "Pte Lake packed an almost impossible amount into his two years in the Army, both at work and off duty.

"Where many soldiers would have sought one

specialisation he had three – he was a medic, an assault pioneer and was also training as a sniper.

"Ever professional and totally committed to his mates and battalion, he had an irrepressible smile and an understated manner that made him hugely respected."

Pte William Keough (1 PWRR) added: "My last thought of Tom will be him in a bright green duvet jacket, brew in hand and smiling.

"He will be forever missed and never replaced. A great soldier and one of the best friends anyone could ask for."

Among those Pte Lake leaves behind is his mother Carol. In a statement she said: "Tom died doing something he loved and believed in. I will always be proud of my boy."

LEAGUE OF GENTLEMEN

		FORCE FOR GOOD	QUIDS IN
1	£134,000	EGG SALE EFFORTS The "eggs for soldiers" initiative donates 15 pence to charity for every box purchased in supermarkets across the UK. After just six months of sales, the scheme is more than halfway towards its annual target of raising £250,000 to help wounded troops	Help for Heroes
2	£21,700	BLACK TIE BOOST Friends of Irish regiments held a black tie dinner and auction at Newforge Country Club in Belfast, Northern Ireland. The charitable event saw visitors dig deep to support two worthy causes	The Royal Irish Regiment Benevolent Fund and Irish Guards Appeal
3	£17,380	STUDENT SUPPORT Cambridge and Oxford students in the University Officer Training Corps cycled from London to Edinburgh and back, via Cardiff, in just over ten days. The Oxford team crossed the finishing line first after 62 hours 46 minutes – more than five hours ahead of their rivals	Combat Stress and ABF The Soldiers' Charity
4	£9,640	REGIMENTAL RELIEF Four soldiers from 299 Sig Sqn battled through a 29-mile hill race on the Scottish borders, producing the individual winner and the fastest team on the day	ABF The Soldiers' Charity

■ THE brave actions of Operation Herrick 13 were on our minds last month when the *Soldier* team once again baffled readers with our spine line competition.

Sgt Luke Cole (Para), Sgt Glen Gardiner (Para), A/Capt Luke Higginson (Para) and Maj Daniel Reeve (Rifles) were all awarded the Military Cross in the last round of operational honours and awards.

This month we are giving away five signed copies of Andy Johnson's Second World War novel *Thunder in May*.

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

Send your answers to the usual postal address or email comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk by January 3.

Winners will be drawn at random from correct entries and the usual rules apply.







THE BIGGER PICTURE

THIS haunting image of troops' falling shadows was captured by Rev Andrew Totten. The photographer, who is the senior chaplain to 16 Air Assault Brigade, was named runner-up in the amateur operational image category of this year's Army Photographic Competition (pages 27-29). The picture shows soldiers from the Irish Guards as they step out of the gates of a militia compound in Rahim, Helmand province.

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CAUGHT ON CAMERA

COMPETITION UNEARTHS STUNNING
SERVICE SNAPS

Picture: The image which secured Sgt Russ Nolan (RLC) the runner-up spot in the professional photographer category of this year's Army Photographic Competition

Report: Joe Clapson

FROM iconic battlefield images to sporting brilliance captured in a single shot, this year's Army Photographic Competition served up a plethora of top-class entries.

As well as celebrating exceptional artistry, the event's prize-giving ceremony marked the 70th anniversary of the British Army Film and Photographic Unit – a group established during the Second World War to record front-line action.

The long-running contest, which is held annually, was open to Regular and Reservist personnel as well as MoD civil servants working for the British Army.

Its champions were honoured in the presence of retired Oscar-winning film producer Lord Puttnam, son of the well known Service photographer Leonard Puttnam.

Speaking after being named best Army professional photographer, Sgt Rupert Frere (RLC) said: "My aim was to get my pictures into the media; I wasn't shooting to win a competition. So this is a really nice surprise."

The NCO also won the best overall image and best multimedia package categories.

"I like photojournalism because it follows real life and people. You can see what's going on out there

through the person in a picture," he added.

"I think my *Braveheart* image (pictured opposite) of a soldier and kids just shows what the modern British Army is doing in Afghanistan – working with the community, earning respect."

Sgt Alison Baskerville (RLC), winner of the best professional operational image title, explained how she captured her perfect photo.

"I wanted to get a slightly different take on a tour image because sometimes it's the 'quieter' pictures that are most interesting," she said.

"As a photographer, you just keep shooting but in this case it was the image after the action that proved to be the strongest."

Paying tribute to the achievements of soldiers who operate with cameras as well as weapons, the Chief of the General Staff, Gen Sir Peter Wall, added: "These vivid photographs bring the realities of the Army to life, from the heat and dust of Afghanistan to the private joy of homecoming."

"They are great images that resonate with the public and help us foster better understanding and support for our troops."

To view an online gallery of the competition's successful entries visit tinyurl.com/5ro9bu5

Winning multimedia and video entries can be seen on the British Army's YouTube channel at tinyurl.com/5vsvcdn ■



Top, Professional photographer winner with portfolio of eight: **Sgt Rupert Frere (RLC)**; Middle left, Best amateur portrait winner: **Capt Mathew Green-Armytage (SG)**; Right, Best amateur portrait runner-up: **Capt Matt Odell (3 Mercian)**; Left, Amateur sport/adventure training winner: **Col Simon Jordan (MoD Main Building)**; Above, Amateur sport/adventure training runner-up: **Capt Dave Scammell (RA)**



Above, Best overall image winner: **Sgt Rupert Frere (RLC)**; Below, Professional operational winner: **Sgt Alison Baskerville (RLC)**; Bottom, Professional sport/adventure training winner: **Cpl Wes Calder (RLC)**; Top right, Best amateur photographer with portfolio of five: **Capt Dave Scammell (RA)**



ARMY PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION 2011 CATEGORY WINNERS

Multimedia

Winner: Sgt Rupert Frere (RLC) for *Combat photographer*

Runner-up: Sgt Ian Forsyth (RLC) for *Buffer zone*

Professional operational video

Winner: Sgt Russ Nolan (RLC)

Runner-up: Mr Kevin Capon (HQLF)

Professional non-operational video

Winner: Cpl Tom Robinson (HQLF)

Runner-up: Miss Olivia Prutz (HQLF)

Amateur portrait

Winner: Capt Matthew Green-Armytage (SG)

Runner-up: Capt Matt Odell (3 Mercian)

Amateur sport/adventure training

Winner: Col Simon Jordan (MoD Main Building)

Runner-up: Capt Dave Scammell (RA)

Commended: Capt Matt Odell

Amateur operational image

Winner: WO2 Gary Ranu (5 Rifles)

Runner-up: Rev Andrew Totten

Army Professional Portrait

Winner: Sgt Alison Baskerville (RLC)

Runner-up: Cpl Mark Webster (RLC)

Professional sport/adventure training

Winner: Cpl Wes Calder (RLC)

Runner-up: SSgt Ian Houlding (RLC)

Commended: Cpl Gary Kendall (RLC)

Professional operational image

Winner: Sgt Alison Baskerville

Runner-up: Sgt Rupert Frere

Commended: Cpl Mark Webster

Best overall image

Winner: Sgt Rupert Frere

Amateur photographer (portfolio of five photographs)

Winner: Capt Dave Scammell

Runner-up: Capt Andy Whitehead (MOG (V) Para)

Professional photographer (portfolio of eight photographs)

Winner: Sgt Rupert Frere

Runner-up: Sgt Russ Nolan

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Secret history

Seventy-year mysteries of Special Air
Service operations revealed



After being bound in a leather-clad diary at the home of an anonymous soldier for 50 years, astonishing tales of fearlessness and mettle have been published in a new book, *SAS War Diary: 1941-1945*.

Shortly before the mysterious Serviceman died in the late 1990s he handed the colourful archive to the SAS Regimental Association where documentary maker and writer Gordon Stevens stumbled upon it.

"As an historical record it is unique and the whole thing is unbelievable, including the story of how it was created."

"From the service's point of view I think it is probably better to keep things secret, but these details only concern the period up to 1945 so they are well in the past."

He recruited Sadler from the Long Range Desert Group to be his main navigator through Africa's expansive territories.

"Churchill was very much in favour of this kind of thing and Stirling's connections helped the whole service on its way," recalled Sadler, who was officially enlisted in the force a year after its inception.

The order for Operation Squatter - the first ever S.A.S. operation.

SECRET & PERSONAL

COPY No.

10 Nov 41.

HQ/8A/12/40

EIGHTH ARMY OPERATION INSTRUCTION NO.16.

Capt. D. Stirling.
Comdg. 'L' Sec 1 S.A.S Bde.

Ref Maps - LIBYA 1/500,000 - DERNIA sheets 5 & 13 - BARDIA sheet 14
1/100,000 BOMBA, GAZALA.

1/100,000 BOMBER.

1. Your force will consist of 54 men from 'L' Sec 1 S.A.S. Bde.

2. Your primary task is to raid both aerodromes at ENMI in (3) P 70, GAZALA No.1 362446 and GAZALA No.2, the latter including new ground cleared to the East, destroying as many aircraft as possible, such as H.Q.'s and communications about your other objectives.

3. Other objectives such as H.Q.'s and communications should not be attacked if they will in any way hamper your primary task.

3. You will plan your raid D-1/DL at an hour to be decided. It is important that you of all parties on the various explosions will take place at a point that the enemy should not be aware of your presence during the raid.

4. The types of aircraft in order of priority for destruction

(a) GERMAN - ME 109
ME 111
HE 111
STUKA
JU 88

(b) ITALIAN - G 50
MACCE CR 42
BR 20
S 79

The destruction of fighter bombers and GERMAN air

5. HQ. RAF, Western Desert
in para. 2 at dusk on D-1 and
must therefore be clear of
the whole night

‘It was a very exciting time and I think I can say that we all found it quite amusing but it was also quite alarming.’

But the regiment's second task, led by Paddy Mayne and navigated by Sadler, proved to be a landmark for the British military.

"Paddy had about 30 aeroplanes on the operation and that put the SAS on the map."

"Our jeep got a puncture and the captain with me spoke German, so we went into an enemy field battery and he [the captain] had happened," he said.

Sadler has fond memories of what the diary brings into an open forum.

"We were not as frightened as we should have been.

"I actually found the whole war enjoyable. I liked the desert and navigating and I didn't mind sleeping under a lorry."
 "There was a very good spirit and lots of splendid people to associate with."

However, as the book spells out, the experience of soldiers in Europe was far different to that of North Africa.

"In France they [the Nazis] were issuing instructions that anyone who was caught should be murdered," recalled Sadler.

"We were hiding in the woods and being betrayed by various people we associated with – the whole scene was completely different."

Alec Borrie, who joined the special

MIKE SADLER TALKS ABOUT HIS WARTIME



READY FOR ACTION IN THE DESERT



PADDY MAYNE

ranks as a 19-year-old after serving with the Highland Light Infantry, described another encounter from the book.

"We were in Germany when our first jeep went round the corner and got shot – one soldier was killed and another injured," the 87-year-old said. "Paddy Mayne belted round, shot up all the opposition and picked up the wounded man. He then came back to us, dropped the casualty off and went back for the dead man."

Describing his experience on the run in vast German forests, he added: "We got trapped in the woods and shelled and nobody knew where we were.

"The enemy were hunting for us but we just kept moving from one place to another."

The first-hand accounts featured, coupled with the book's vivid imagery, give a lasting legacy to a group whose impact on the Second World War was significant.

"There are hardly any of us left now," Sadler reflected. "I miss them and I think it's good to remember."

With prices ranging from £975 to £2,500, the diary's details are likely to remain hidden from many for the foreseeable future. But anyone who does peruse this secret history will certainly find it difficult to forget.

● For more information on *SAS War Diary: 1941-1945* visit www.saswardiary.co.uk

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 Parent Unit:- K.R.R.C. Enlisted:- Sept. 1941
 Promoted:- Sgt. 1940, 2/Lt. 1942, Lt. 1943
 Awards:- M.M. February, 1942, M.C. 1943
 Campaigns:- Somaliland and Abyssinia, 1941
 Western Desert, 1941/43,
 Tunisia, 1943, N.W. Europe, 1945
 Joined 1st S.A.S.: July, 1942.



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A photograph showing a group of people, primarily of African descent, gathered behind a metal gate. Many of their hands are pressed against the gate, reaching out. In the foreground, a woman with dark, curly hair looks upwards with a concerned expression. To her right, a man is seen in profile, also looking up. The background is filled with more people and the ornate, dark metal of the gate.

Rescue effort

Serviceman's skills
bring help to Haiti

Humanitarian crisis:
Haitians wait for food to be
distributed by the UN on the
outskirts of Port-au-Prince,
days after a devastating
earthquake struck the country

Picture: PA/Francois Mori

Report: Sarah Goldthorpe

WHEN one of the world's deadliest earthquakes rocked the Caribbean two years ago, Lt Col Paul Holder (RLC) decided to act.

Months later, armed with logistics expertise and annual leave accrued from two operational tours, the British soldier was en route to Haiti's capital city to assist with relief efforts there during the festive season.

His time in the country saw the officer living in conditions of extreme poverty while also, rather bizarrely, rubbing shoulders with some of the most famous names in Hollywood.

He was working for the J/P Haitian Relief Organisation – a charity set up by American movie star Sean Penn, whose profession has taken a different tack since his performances in *Dead Man Walking* and *Mystic River*.

Liaising closely with his A-list comrade, the Serviceman brought crucial organisational skills to Petionville Camp near Port-au-Prince, where 55,000 people left homeless by the 7.0 magnitude earthquake in January 2010 were living in tents.

Lt Col Holder worked around the clock with a team of volunteers to find shelter, food, water, healthcare and education facilities for the area's population while trying to improve the processes that allowed rescue work to continue.

Now back on home turf after two further visits to the region, the officer explained to *Soldier* how his Army skills had enabled him to make a key contribution to one of the poorest countries in the world in its time of need.

"My motivation was to do something worthwhile with unused leave at Christmas time," the 44-year-old explained.

"Driving through the place on my first trip I was hit immediately.

"The scale and extent of displacement was striking and the people in unmanaged camps were far worse off than anything I had seen in any country I've visited, including Afghanistan."

On his arrival last December, the soldier was quickly established as Penn's right-hand man.

With 28 years' experience in the British Army – including various operational tours, a Home Office secondment to assist with Golden Jubilee preparations and deputy command of a regiment during Op Tosca – Lt Col Holder rose to the challenge he was faced with.

"When the charity realised the scale of what I had done in the past they asked me to provide advice," he said.

"They needed support because, as with all areas of life, logistics was the last thing people had thought of.

"At the end of the first week I wrote a report about how they could improve in this area. And at the end of the second week I was asked if I would stand in as country director.

"I was then responsible for overseeing engineering work to remove rubble, rebuilding programmes, rehoming and an emergency response team of helicopters."

Lt Col Holder led a team of 50 international staff and more than 200 Haitian workers.

His tasks included building secure storage facilities for medication, ensuring the products were in-date and helping to erect schools.

He also assisted the organisation by exploring sustainable development ideas for the future.

"As with the Afghans, we were mentoring local people to look after their stock and improve their processes," the officer said.

"Leadership was fundamental. If you lead well, have good knowledge and are making sound decisions then things are not hard.

"But resourcing is definitely the biggest challenge in logistics.

"Another big pressure was the fight against the spread of cholera.

"If you are tackling it you need to treat people within six hours.

"Our charity helped hundreds of individuals a week but at that stage 4,000 had died from the disease in the last part of the year.

"By the summer that figure had reached 6,000."

Something the planning expert did not foresee during his holiday mission was a series of encounters with famous personalities including former US president Bill Clinton, actor Ben Stiller and actress-turned-pop star Miley Cyrus, all of whom visited his team to learn about the work of the J/P Haitian Relief Organisation.

Described by the officer as a "hugely dynamic" charity, its founder took a break to tell *Soldier* about the impact of Lt Col Holder's help.

"Without Paul having volunteered his time

whenever on leave, and fulfilling country directorship in periods of full time absence, our organisation simply would not exist," Penn said.

"What a soldier and officer brings to a humanitarian aid organisation is logistical know-how and the implementation of experienced leadership. These are invaluable.

"What Paul Holder specifically brings as a man is the dignity of his humility and compassion.

"Truly an officer and a gentleman."

Back in Great Britain, one year after he first arrived in the disaster zone, the Serviceman is reflecting on his experiences during a period that most personnel understandably use to relax.

"The only time it affected me was when I came to leave the country in January," the single officer recalled. "I really didn't want to go because I knew what we were doing was making such a difference to the people in Haiti."

The volunteer added: "The holiday season over there was very austere.

"We stopped to have a meal on Christmas Eve but at that stage we were working seven days a week, 18 hours a day. It was relentless.

"But these people weren't getting a Christmas so why

should I?

"I have learnt so much about myself and others from this whole experience.

"You only need to talk with Haitians to understand what's really important in life: everyone there works together for the common good.

"In other countries fighting might decide whether someone lives or dies, but in Haiti people have no choice.

"They didn't elect to be in this position and it's not of their making, yet you will never meet a Haitian who's hacked off or upset about their lot."

Perhaps one thing this population is grateful for is the commitment of foreigners such as Lt Col Holder and Sean Penn who, together, have played a major role in improving and saving civilian lives.

But as with all humanitarian disasters, there is far more still to be done – something the British officer is unlikely to forget as he sits down to Christmas dinner back in the UK this month. ■

● For more information on the charity's work visit www.jpbro.org

These people weren't getting a Christmas so why should I?

J/P Haitian Relief Organisation in numbers:

100,000

Cubic metres of rubble and debris removed from streets of Port-au-Prince by volunteers



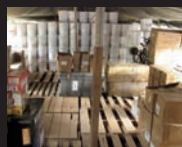
90,000

Patients treated in two field hospitals on the Petionville Camp



12,500

Tents distributed to families across Haiti



6,000

People relocated due to the risk of flooding and mud slides





Crucial aid: US actor Sean Penn (far right) said his charity would not be helping earthquake victims like the above without the help of Lt Col Paul Holder (RLC, right)

Pictures: J/P HRO

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED



Main picture, Trouble spot: Aerial view of HMS *Ocean* operating off the Libyan coastline with Apache helicopters on deck Picture: Guy Pool

Top right, Good job: Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg thanks members of 4th Regiment, Army Air Corps for their contribution to the highly successful Operation Ellamy Picture: Graeme Main

Army adapts to life at sea to deliver success in Libya

Report: Richard Long

WITH Operation Ellamy drawing to a successful close, the UK's Armed Forces have been rightly basking in the glory of a job well done in Libya.

At the peak of the conflict, 2,300 personnel from all three Services were deployed to the North African war zone, with 37 aircraft and four ships committed to the fight against pro-Gaddafi forces.

These efforts saw the Royal Air Force destroy around 640 targets from more than 3,000 sorties and with the Royal Navy offering further firepower, as well as helping to evacuate civilians in the early stages of the campaign, the Army's endeavours in theatre could have easily been overshadowed.

But troops involved in the mission took pride of place alongside their Service colleagues during a homecoming celebration at RAF Waddington last month and *Soldier* was on hand to learn more about the valuable contribution they made in Libya.

At the forefront of the attack were personnel from 4th Regiment, Army Air Corps, who brought the might of the Apache helicopter to the deck of HMS *Ocean* for the first maritime operations conducted by the asset.

The crews flew a total of 22 missions, during which 99 hellfire missiles were launched along with 4,800 rounds from the platform's fearsome 30mm cannon.

"We faced a significant threat from surface-to-air missiles and small-arms fire," explained pilot WO1 Jon Lane. "We came under contact quite frequently and when the enemy attempted to engage us we fought back immediately, destroying their position."

"I have served in both Iraq and Afghanistan but the combat in Libya was much more like traditional warfare. It was low-level flying with a high threat from the ground."



"When you are flying missions such as these it makes you quite proud of the aircraft and how well it can perform in such a tough and complex environment."

Soldiers from 656 Squadron had been engaged in a maritime training programme as the conflict unfolded and Lt Col Jason Etherington, the regiment's commanding officer, was delighted with the way they immediately adapted to the challenge.

He said: "They had been away on exercise and were about to prove their capability when the deployment came."

"We did everything from attacking coastal targets to flying 60 kilometres inland to strike at different locations."

"We had to launch with certainty and ensure we were targeting pro-Gaddafi forces. If there was any chance of collateral damage, or if there was a risk to civilians, we were in no doubt about what we should do."

The Libyan campaign came during a busy spell for the regiment and plans were being made for a continued presence in the region before Col Muammar Gaddafi's death brought the fighting to a close.

"We were preparing for a relief in place and were training a second squadron in the maritime capability," Lt Col Etherington explained. "We have also been working towards an Afghan deployment next year. >>





99

— number of Hellfire missiles fired by the Apache helicopter during the mission in Libya

Below, Nowhere to hide: A Libyan military vehicle, concealed between trees and armed with surface-to-air weapons, is destroyed by Hellfire missiles fired by an Apache

"On the whole, they performed admirably. We had 90 people who all had to go through a number of courses to operate on-board a ship. The captain said they integrated exceptionally from day one.

"It is very different from Afghanistan and the conditions are not as comfortable as you would imagine, but it was remarkable how well they adapted to the environment in which they were working.

"It has been a fantastic success for us.

This was the first time an attack helicopter has flown operationally from a ship and we have proved that it can be done while showing how agile and flexible this asset is."

For WO2 Craig Peaple (REME), part of the ground crew responsible for servicing the Apache, life at sea signalled a new way of performing the behind-the-scenes tasks that are vital to the airframe's success.

"We were working on different scales as the ship has a set routine and you have to feed into that," he said.

"The hangar was 40 degrees with 85 per cent humidity so the guys were sweating all the time but we achieved 100 per cent serviceability for every mission.

"It was not as busy as Helmand province but it was different due to the time lines. Afghanistan runs for 24 hours a day but a ship has to reposition itself every night for different missions. During the day we were outside the high-threat area so we could carry out our maintenance work.

"It has been very good and the guys have learnt a lot in a tiring environment. We were in the hangars throughout the day and when we came on deck it was dark, so we didn't see any light for a long time.

"I am glad to be home now. We went out for a few weeks on exercise and it became a five-month deployment. We have guys who were in Afghanistan last year so it has been a hard slog, but we are glad we achieved our goals."

While the Army Air Corps provided a front-line attack, other soldiers played an important part despite occupying a more withdrawn role.

Personnel from the Intelligence Corps helped process the reams of data generated by the Sentinel

reconnaissance aircraft to provide battlefield situational awareness and target imaging for future missions.

"Our analysis was focused on pattern of life," Cpl John Curwen explained. "We would get images of a certain area to examine and we were looking for any changes to the forward edge of the battle area. If we found anything out of the ordinary it was flagged up for other assets to look at.

"We did not have a ground element to focus on but the Sentinel has such a wide area of coverage and we were relied upon for that information. Each flight would create between eight to ten hours of analysis for us, so it was hard work."

Colleague Sgt Chris Cartwright added: "Afghanistan is a different theatre. Libya is

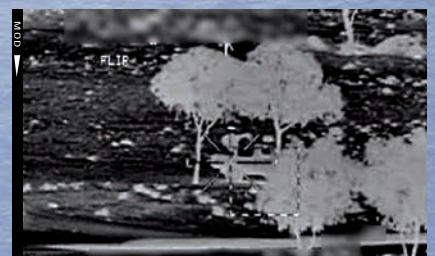
more built up with a lot of roads and infrastructure and our task was to identify the enemy.

"We went out there with very little notice and everyone in the squadron is very proud of the work they produced. It gave us a great deal of job satisfaction and has shown our capability in a new light."

While the RAF and Navy may lay claim to the greater share of the Libyan spoils, the Army should be rightly proud of the role it performed in liberating the country from a brutal regime.

Servicemen and women again proved themselves as a fiercely determined and flexible fighting force and thoroughly deserve parity with their military counterparts. ■

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TROUSERS

- Crotch area has reinforced section to prevent wear and tear
- Thicker and more robust belt loops and no drawstring to prevent chafing from sweat and rubbing
- Meshed pockets with zip on one side. Thigh pockets now slanted for ease of access
- Shrouded buttons to prevent snagging
- Redesigned drawstrings at bottom of trouser legs to tie completely around the base

BOOTS

- A decision on the latest footwear to replace that currently in use will be made this month
- Each soldier will have a choice from two types of lightweight patrol boots and two types of field combat assault footwear

Some soldiers have criticised the new uniform, saying it looks “shapeless” and “uninspiring”. But its features are designed for combat

Picture: Mike Weston

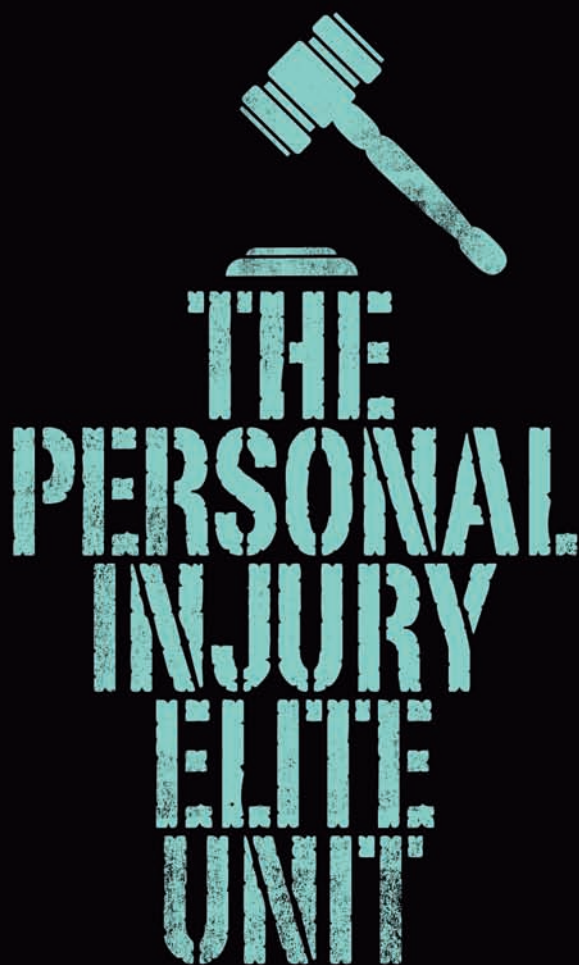


JACKET

- Mandarin collar designed to be rolled up when worn underneath body armour to provide neck protection
- Shrouded rank slide area to prevent snagging. Does not rub when worn with body armour
- Pockets fastened with Velcro, designed without buttons to prevent rubbing when worn with body armour
- Arm pockets made to hold items that can't be carried underneath body armour and angled for ease of access. Velcro allows combat ID panels to be fitted
- Blanking plates, which protect the Velcro, include an area to display recognition flashes/badges of qualification (see above). They can be easily changed between garments
- Forearm pockets with shrouded buttons where protection pads can be placed
- Troops may take a different size in this kit

CLOTHING UNCOVERED

A close-up look at the operation-focused features of the updated personal clothing system



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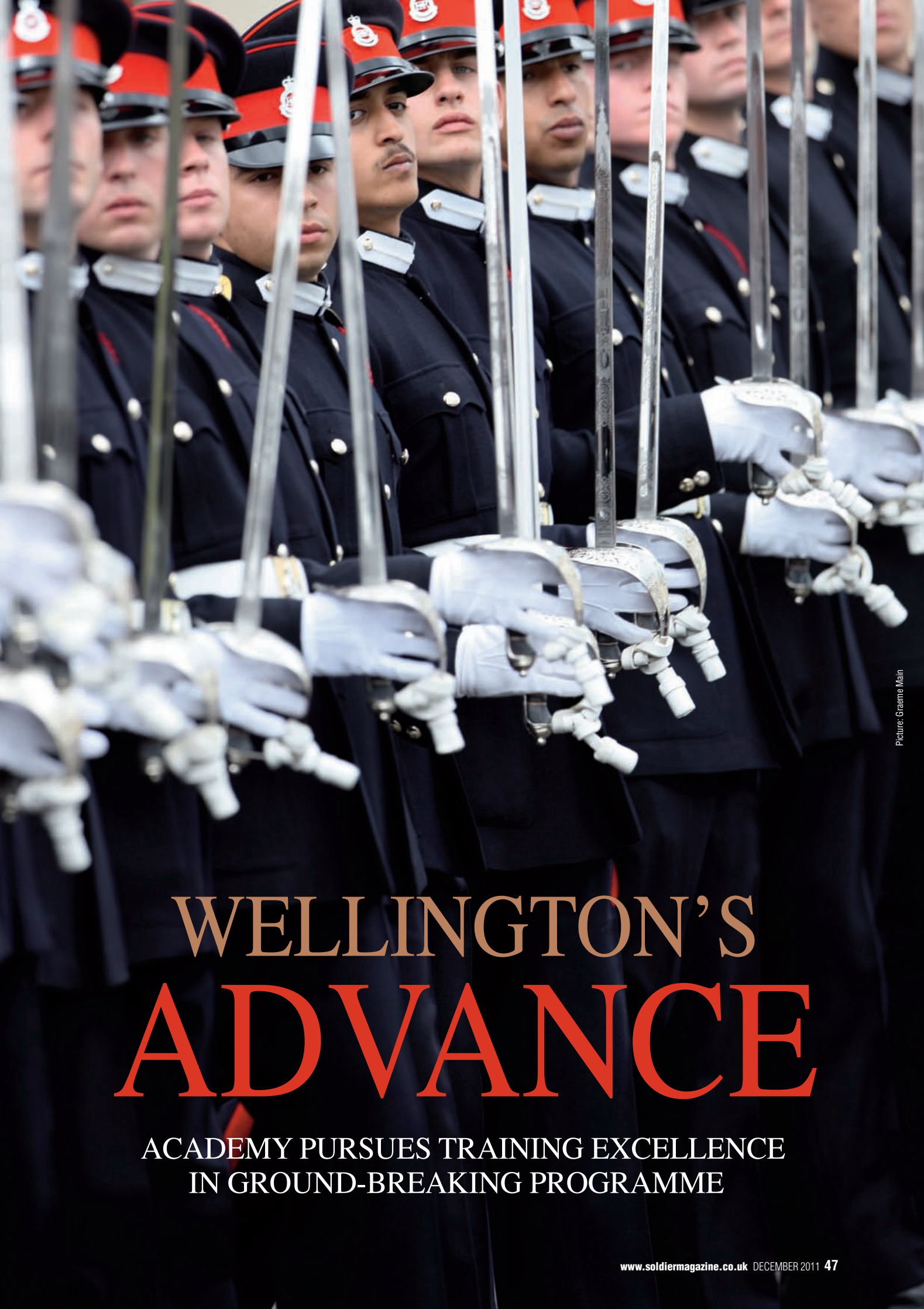
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Picture: Graeme Main

WELLINGTON'S ADVANCE

ACADEMY PURSUES TRAINING EXCELLENCE
IN GROUND-BREAKING PROGRAMME

Report: Richard Long

SET in stunning grounds and boasting a proud array of historic buildings, the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst has been the traditional proving ground for the Army's aspiring officers.

While the famed institution is maintaining its crucial role of training the next generation of leaders, the way it goes about its business is undergoing a radical change.

Project Wellington was launched two years ago to embrace the Service's vision of the "agile soldier" and rigid lessons and lectures have now been replaced with a more flexible approach to learning.

The innovative concept is aimed at allowing cadets to think independently and critically in a bid to achieve their maximum potential and deliver wider benefits to the Army.

To help achieve this goal, Sandhurst has created a new learning environment with simulators that help develop planning and decision-making skills and interactive classrooms that break the monotony of traditional lessons.

A command, control and communications trainer has been added to recreate the complex environment out on the ground and a forward operating base – FOB William – ensures the training package is relevant and stimulating.

"Project Wellington has had incredible success within a very short space of time and I think it is one of the military's best good news stories of 2011," Maj Gen Patrick Marriott, Sandhurst's commandant, told *Soldier*.

"It is all about creating a modern learning practice which is suitable not only for a 21st century Army, but for 21st century students.

"If we are going to teach and develop people, it is important that we do it in a way that has been taught in schools and universities.

"The officer cadets coming through here now will start to understand what 'good' looks like.

"They will understand how to develop people and when they get to their units they will probably be beyond the curve. This way of thinking can then spread throughout the wider Army."

Maj Gen Marriott was quick to point out that Project Wellington is not simply about delivering new kit but did concede that the equipment available had revolutionised the teaching philosophy.

He added: "In the past, a cadet would have to sit at a desk with a headset on and attempt to command a map with a couple of pins in it.

"Now he is in a cubicle with five or six others with up to eight means of communication flowing to him. He has to absorb, digest and decide on what to do



Game-on: Instruction via modern techniques is used on today's computer-literate students

in a very short space of time.

"We are training them to use different parts of their brain but we are also playing to their strengths."

While the initiative has a clear aim of improving the learning experience for cadets it is also designed to develop the skill of its instructors.

A coaching advisory team ensures teachers use the most up-to-date techniques to enhance students' knowledge and Sandhurst as a whole has adopted a mantra of continuous improvement in a bid to be acknowledged as one of the best military establishments in the world.

Col David Hudson, the colonel in charge of training at the academy, said: "We are constantly trying to make what we do better.

"We are adapting to the modern learner, who is very computer literate, but we are also changing the way instructors instruct in terms of modern techniques and technologies.

"The emphasis is on training cadets and unlocking their potential, rather than finding faults.

"They are learning by doing. We are not giving them the solutions but we are giving them the skills to solve the problems in front of them."

WELLINGTON'S WORDS OF WISDOM – OFFICER CADETS GIVE THEIR VERDICT ON THE CURRENT SANDHURST TRAINING EXPERIENCE

"The primary experience I have had of Project Wellington is within the C3 Trainer – a command and control simulation of an ops room. This was one of the best training tools I have come across while at Sandhurst and really brought some of the realities and roles of an ops room to life. This style of learning will bring a more effective and realistic edge to current training."

OCdt Sophie Kennedy



"Project Wellington is essential for bringing Sandhurst training into the 21st century, particularly for a computer-literate generation. It enables more of a hands-on experience rather than the usual theoretical classroom approach. I found the C3 Trainer beneficial in seeing how your individual role fits in with the wider picture of an operational scenario."

OCdt Nathaniel Maylott



"The increasing use of IT in training is useful as it gives large numbers the opportunity to train in command with relatively few resources. Specifically, the new C3 Trainer allows officer cadets scope to utilise virtual assets in real time that otherwise they would only ever see in the operational training and advisory group or on the ground in theatre."

OCdt Ben McConnachie





Trainer: FOB William recreates a complex kinetic environment

A lot of the training is staged in response to changing operational requirements, which are referred to as the new basics.

Col Hudson explained: "We are not working towards this operation, but the one after that and the one after that.

"We focus on the constants. We now offer generic counter-IED training as the Army has said this will be a threat on future operations. When a variable becomes a constant it becomes part of our syllabus."

A key tool in the quest to meet operational needs is the Follow Me simulator.

The computer programme introduces cadets to the basics of platoon tactics such as use of ground, making sure all movements are covered by fire and how to position reserves. It comes complete with an after-action review.

"In the old model they would have gone out in the field with one opportunity to be in command," explained Lt Col Andy Deans (AGC (ETS)), a key figure in the training team.

"With the simulator they have the chance to think, make mistakes and learn from them."

Another key objective of the programme is ensuring cadets are able to lead effectively while under pressure in daunting situations.

Maj Gen Marriott said: "You need to scare people in training and then get them to lead others who are also scared.

"This could easily disappear in the cold grey world of health and safety but we have had the

courage to work around those restrictions legally.

"We are producing a high wire trainer that will be scary for everyone, there will also be tunnels and confined spaces that students will have to go through in the dark.

"These are all things you would not want to go to. But the officer cadets will have to confront them and lead others who are worried as well.

"It is not much fun for them, but it is a lot more fun than having to deal with these emotions for the first time while on operations."

And with changes continuing at pace, the commandant has reported nothing but positive feedback. He believes the significant investment in the project is fully justified.

"The cadets don't know what it was like before," the senior officer added. "It was 1980s' teaching in a classroom and if you were lucky there was a screen and computer with some PowerPoint presentations.

"So this is really exciting. We are trying to deliver the best leaders and that is worth spending money on." ■





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A full-body photograph of Kelly Brook against a grey background. She is wearing a black lace dress with thin straps and a small cross necklace. Her hands are raised behind her head, and she has a serious expression.

SEASON'S GREETINGS

Celebs salute troops serving
away from home

KELLY BROOK

Merry Christmas! We appreciate
everything you're doing out there. Keep up
the good work and take care of yourselves.
Love and kisses.

Picture: Clive Arrowsmith/Celebrity Pictures



JASON MANFORD

Wishing you all a very merry Christmas wherever you are in the world. Careful where you put your Christmas lights up as they can be seen from miles around! Remember, no matter how bad it gets, it could always be worse – your mother-in-law could be there! Try and have a laugh, eat and drink, but stay safe and remember how much we appreciate you looking after our families, especially at this time of year.



TIM WESTWOOD (RADIO 1 DJ)

Much love to all the lads. Wish I was in Afghanistan for Christmas – can't wait to get back! Keep safe and we'll party when you return home.



DOWNTON ABBEY CAST

Hugh Bonneville (Lord Grantham) and Dan Stevens (Matthew Crawley) would like to wish all our Servicemen and women a very happy Christmas and New Year.



CRAIG COLTON (X FACTOR)

There is no thank you big enough for all the work the soldiers and teams are doing abroad. Your bravery will always be appreciated. Happy Christmas.



MARCUS COLLINS (THE X FACTOR)

The troops are doing the most amazing job – I know it's tough to be away from your families at Christmas so my thoughts are with you all.

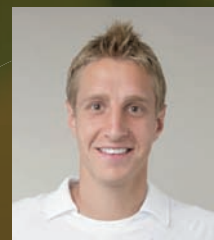


ROY HODGSON MANAGER WEST BROMWICH ALBION

We are very proud of our Armed Forces and the work they are doing in serving this country. In many cases, it must be a very, very difficult experience and we can't possibly imagine how hard life can be, particularly in places like Afghanistan. You are all in our thoughts, especially during the festive period. On behalf of West Bromwich Albion Football Club, I would like to wish you all a very merry Christmas. Keep up the very good work you are doing.

MIKE DAWSON TEAM CAPTAIN TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR

Best wishes to all our forces who are serving away from home this Christmas. We are thinking of you and hope you have a safe and successful tour of duty. Merry Christmas.



GREG DAVIES

My festive message for the troops is happy Christmas, keep looking after each other and come home safely. I don't think Mr Gilbert [*The Inbetweeners*] believes in Christmas but if he did, he'd send you his regards and mutter something about the Army not being disciplined enough for his tastes.



SCOTT MILLS (RADIO 1 DJ)

A very merry Christmas to all our troops. Always in awe of what you guys are doing and I wish you all the very best for next year.

**LEDLEY KING
CLUB CAPTAIN
TOTTENHAM
HOTSPUR**

I would like to wish all the troops and their families all the very best for Christmas, hoping you all stay safe and are back home soon. Your sacrifice and bravery is admired by us all.



**JOHN RUDDY
GOALKEEPER
NORWICH CITY**

I think you are all amazing and I have the utmost respect for everyone in the Armed Forces. It is a difficult time to be away from your family and you deserve so much recognition for the work you do. I wish you all the best and am sure you will enjoy many Christmases to come.



**JERMAIN DEFOE
TOTTENHAM
HOTSPUR AND
ENGLAND**

Best wishes and massive respect to all our serving forces overseas. I hope you have a good Christmas despite being away from home and look forward to seeing you at a game soon!



**ANTON
FERDINAND
QPR**

At Christmas time it is important that we remember our troops all over the world who do such an incredible job for us. Our thoughts are with you, and we hope you all stay safe and return soon.



**BRADLEY ORR
QPR**

I just want to wish all the troops a happy and safe Christmas. We greatly appreciate all the work you do for us.



**JAY
BOTHROYD
QPR**

Merry Christmas to all the troops. Thank you for everything you do. Keep safe.



MISS SCOTLAND, MISS WALES, MISS ENGLAND, MISS NORTHERN IRELAND AND MISS IRELAND

We are incredibly proud to be British and we thoroughly appreciate all the bravery, dedication and hard work shown whilst you represent and defend our country. Our warmest thoughts are with you throughout this festive period.



We wish you a Merry Christmas

Soldier begins month-long prize-giving extravaganza

FEARFUL that your embarrassingly obvious hints about preferred gifts have been rejected in favour of novelty underwear yet again?

If so, you may be pleased to learn that the *Soldier* team has launched Operation Reindeer's Hoof 3 this month.

The 24-day Advent giveaway running from December 1 aims to bring some festive cheer to those serving in Afghanistan, as well as the families facing Christmas without them.

Refusing to be put off by the economic doom and gloom, we are offering thousands of pounds worth of impressive prizes to our readers.

And with the support of numerous

businesses, efforts towards our third Advent calendar-style competition have certainly not been in vain.

The *Soldier* office has once again been inundated with donations from companies far and wide, large and small.

Up until Christmas Eve, a radiant range of glittering gear will be up for grabs on our Facebook page.

From holidays and home furnishings to Michelin star meals and male grooming kits, *Soldier's* sleigh is stacked full of presents ready to be dropped into the homes of Service personnel.

Read on to discover how to be in with a chance of winning the daily draws. Good luck!



Prizes on offer this year include...

For her:

- * Relaxation day for two
- * £250 shopping spree at Debenhams
- * Best of *The Soldiers* CD
- * Chocolate Christmas hamper

For kids:

- * National Trust family day passes
- * Crealy Great Adventure Parks membership
- * A case of caramel wafers

For him:

- * DVD box sets of *The Pacific*/*Band of Brothers*
- * Male grooming kits
- * Professional screwdriver and bit set
- * Voucher for personalised beer

For thrill-seekers:

- * Weekend of surfing lessons for two
- * Bodyboarding coaching
- * Coasteering experience for two



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4. Follow the instructions to enter.
5. Readers should only send one entry per prize but you can try your luck at as many different competitions as you wish.
6. You will be emailed if you are one of the winners.

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Among those *Soldier* will soon be penning thank you letters to are: Adrenalin Quarry, BCB International, Bendicks, Birdworld, Black & Decker, Brittany Ferries, Butlins, Camelot Theme Park, Crealy Great Adventure Parks, Debenhams, Delimann, Dickinson & Morris, Duerr's, Ernest Jones, Halfords, Little, Brown Book Group, Marks and Spencer, Montezuma's, Nathan Outlaw, National Trust, Newquay Activity Centre, Peak Ales, Pieminister, Rick Stein, St Enodoc Hotel, Snugpak, The Bluebeard's Revenge, The Fabulous Bakin' Boys, The History Press, Tunnock's, UK Gear, Virgin Experience Days, Walsall FC, Yorkshire Tea



01 THE AC130 SPECTRE GUNSHIP

BASED on a Hercules C130 airframe and powered by four turboprop engines, the Spectre carries twin M61 Vulcan 20mm Gatling guns, capable of putting down thousands of rounds of cannon fire. It also boasts a 40mm L/60 Bofors auto-cannon and a 105mm M102 howitzer. The barrel of the latter asset sticks out of the side of the Spectre's fuselage like an angry, stubby finger, firing rounds the size of tank shells. Due to its devastating surgical firepower, unrivalled night optics and ability to orbit over targets for long periods, this is the ultimate in air power for the joint terminal attack controller. But as it is a specialist US air asset, the platform is only rarely available.

02 AH64 APACHE ATTACK HELICOPTER

A STATE-of-the-art helicopter gunship operated by British and American forces in Afghanistan. The weapon of choice on the Apache is the 30mm cannon mounted on a chin turret beneath the cockpit, which when employed in conjunction with the aircraft's hi-tech targeting pod is capable of delivering highly accurate air strikes. But the real advantage of the Apache is the asset's loiter time – its ability to remain above target for long periods, observing and striking at the enemy.



03 A10 WARTHOG

THIS tank buster is an armoured ground attack jet aircraft. Its weapon of choice is the nose-mounted, seven-barrel 30mm Gatling gun which sends out a staggering 3,900 rounds per minute, providing devastating firepower. Very close in performance to the Apache, the platform is only disadvantaged by the shorter time it is capable of spending over locations.

04 THE F15 EAGLE FIGHTER QUICK RESPONSE JET

A **WARPLANE** capable of achieving more than two-and-a-half times the speed of sound. Its weapon of choice is the GBU12 – a smart bomb that can be set to airburst mode, detonating directly above a target so as to send an explosive force downwards in a funnel of shrapnel following its momentum. A favourite of the joint terminal attack controller due to the quick response time from calling for air cover to getting the fast jets where they need to be.



05 HARRIER GR7

A VERTICAL/short take-off and landing jet aircraft used by British forces until 2010. Its weapon of choice was the Paveway laser-guided (GBU-series) bomb and the CRV7 70mm rockets housed inside four under-wing weapons pods. Piloted by Royal Air Force crews, the platform was withdrawn from operations last year.



07 B1B LANCER SUPERSONIC BOMBER

A STRATEGIC penetrator aircraft capable of carrying heavy payloads. Its most desirable weapons are the 15 GBU-38 joint direct attack munition GPS-guided bombs, which saturate a battlefield with lethal force. But one drawback for the joint terminal attack controller is the low chance of being allocated this specialist asset for run-of-the-mill combat missions.



10 LYNX HELICOPTER

MAINLY a battlefield utility helicopter, the Lynx has also been used for anti-tank and reconnaissance operations. The addition of door gunners has allowed it to operate in the very close air support role in Iraq and Afghanistan.

RANKED

TOP TEN ASSETS OF THE JOINT TERMINAL ATTACK CONTROLLER

Paul Grahame and Damien Lewis, authors of *Fire Strike: 7/9*, outline an impressive host of war-winning aircraft

06 F16 FIGHTING FALCONS

THE F16 is a jet fighter operated by American, Dutch, Norwegian and Danish forces in Afghanistan. Its weapon of choice is the joint direct attack munition – unguided gravity or dumb bombs which are converted into all-weather smart weapons using a GPS-based guidance system to home on to their targets.



08 MQ1 PREDATOR

THIS remotely-piloted aircraft is largely used for surveillance tasks over Afghanistan. The weapon of choice on the Predator is the AGM-114 Hellfire – a fire-and-forget missile with a semi-active laser homing system. A fantastic silent and covert surveillance and recce platform, but this is far from being a perfect ground attack aircraft.



09 MIRAGE 2000 FIGHTER JETS

THESE French warplanes are capable of more than two times the speed of sound. The joint terminal attack controller's weapons of choice on the Mirage are the nine 500lb Mark 82 bombs which it carries.





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you may be entitled to **Compensation**

***Nothing to pay**
WIN or LOSE

*Subject to taking full instructions

vintry house 18-24 piccadilly bradford bd1 3ls t: 01274 724114 f: 01274 724161
soldier@petherbridgebassra.com www.petherbridgebassra.com

TALKBACK

YOUR letters provide an insight into the issues at the top of soldiers' agendas... but please be brief. Emails (mail@soldiermagazine.co.uk) must include your name and location (although we won't publish them if you ask us not to). We reserve the right to accept or reject letters, and to edit for length, clarity or style. Before you write to us with a problem, you should first have tried to get an answer via your own chain of command.

Campaign clarification

I REFER to the news story featured in September's edition of *Soldier* about changes to the Accumulated Campaign Service Medal (ACSM).

The statement that "those who have already received the medal will get a new version recognising the updated criteria" is incorrect. They will not.

There is no retrospection to an "old" ACSM. However, any further operational time served after the award of the original decoration will be accrued towards the "new" medal.

The crucial eligibility element is the need to be serving on January 1, 2008.

Those who left the Services before then will not qualify, whereas those who are still serving or left after that date will. The revised ACSM qualification requires a total of two years' operational service which can be accrued from August 14, 1969 – providing the individual was serving on or after January 1, 2008.

Full details of the changes can be found in [2011DIN09-008](#) and will also feature in the next review of Joint Service Publication 761. – **Lt Col (Retd) Peter Lockyer, OIC Medal Office.**



"Three of you will be covering Afghanistan. The bad news is that the Taliban are targeting Santas this Christmas. The good news? You'll deploy under the cover of darkness with the support of an Apache and your time in theatre will count towards an Accumulated Campaign Service Medal."

Why won't Army tap into skills of ready-trained troops?

I AM writing in the hope that someone in the Army Recruiting Group, or whoever is responsible for the current manning regulations, can clarify what the policy is with regards to rejoiners.

After almost five years of service, my son left the Royal Engineers last September as a class one plumber in the rank of sapper. Nine months later he came to the conclusion that leaving for civvy street had been a mistake and he attempted to re-enlist.

At the Army careers office he was told to come back in six months' time as the Royal Engineers are not currently accepting rejoiners, apart from in the odd pinch-point trade.

However, he was also informed that the corps are taking on new recruits.

I couldn't understand the logic of overlooking trained soldiers in favour of raw recruits so contacted the careers office myself and received the same message.

In the current climate of cuts and savings, how can this policy make sense? Surely it costs less to accept a qualified, class one plumber than it does to train up a civvy from scratch? – **Name and address supplied.**

Maj C Lovick, Directorate of Manning (Army), responds: Rejoiners are defined as soldiers who having left the military apply

to rejoin to resume their service in their main trade for pay.

Rejoiners are allowed on a quota basis for those cap badges/trades which are at designated operational pinch points. This allows the Army to focus resources where there is a documented shortage of specifically-qualified personnel in support of the current operational effort.

In this instance there is no reported shortfall of plumbers in the RE and that is why this particular soldier has not been allowed to rejoin.

These manning levers are in force to help the Army focus its rather scarce resources towards the operational effort while also trying to maintain its overall strength within its funded liability.



■ WHAT was going on in the photograph [left] which featured alongside the report on the Combined Services vs US military boxing event (November)?

Firstly, one of the boxers is wearing an odd pair of boots. Also of note was the fact that the same fighter was incorrectly dressed in accordance with Amateur Boxing Association rules as he was not wearing socks.

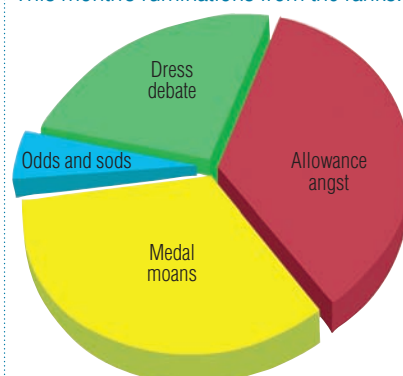
Shame on Army refereeing. – **Maj Martin W Jones.**

Nathan Pearce, secretary of the Army Boxing Association, writes: The guys were wearing socks but they were not as visible as they should be. The letter writer is right, they should be worn above the boot and that is something we will impress upon our boxers.

As far as the footwear is concerned, it was a purely personal choice for the fighter involved.

Slice of Service life

This month's ruminations from the ranks...



Uniformed approach

I AM writing to get some clarification on aspects of the new-look multi-terrain pattern clothing.

Having recently been issued with the kit, I think it's an excellent uniform but would like some direction on how it is to be worn correctly.

I have already seen different units adopt different ways of wearing it.

Should the shirts be tucked in or out?

Are belts to be worn over jackets?

How is it to be ironed?

With creases in the shirt and trousers or pressed flat?

Answers to the above will save people writing to *Soldier* for the next ten years complaining about troops' state of dress. – Name and address supplied.

Brig Tim Hyams, DPS(A), writes:

Thank you for your letter regarding the new personal clothing system combat uniform, which is to be referred to as PCS.

In terms of direction as to the wearing of the uniform, this has been provided in two ways. Firstly, in July this year the Director General Logistics, Support and Equipment wrote to the chain of command.

Secondly, the same information was published in the first week of November

on the defence intranet.

There is also an article on the subject on page 45 of this issue.

The uniform replaces Combat Soldier 95 and has been designed specifically for front-line operations.

Many lessons from recent deployments in hot and temperate climates have been incorporated into the design.

Given that barrack dress was to be reintroduced at the same time, and to ensure the latter is optimised for theatre, the design was not compromised by factors reflecting the wearing of uniform while in barracks.

The jacket has been designed to be worn loose in order to allow movement of air around the body and to avoid abrasion around the waistband.

Pockets on both the top and bottom garments have been designed for ease of access and to avoid any friction points when wearing body armour and webbing.

One of the consequences is that rolling the sleeves up above the elbow will be uncomfortable due to the blanking plate (designed to carry combat identification when it is introduced) and the pockets for forearm protection.

It is as a result of these considerations that direction has been given for the jacket to be worn loose rather than tucked into the trousers and for the sleeves to be kept unrolled.

And to answer your related question about belts, the direction is that the green issue belt is to be worn externally with the windproof smock.

Finally, in terms of ironing, and as the new uniform was not designed for wearing in barracks, it should be ironed flat.

Blood Diamond detractor misfires

I AM all in favour of cogent criticism but the magazine's review of the title written by Fred Marafono and myself, *From SAS to Blood Diamond Wars* (November), included astonishing gaffes which undermine its credibility.

The reviewer writes that the book "charts the fate of Executive Operations – a private company set up by David Stirling and Simon Mann". The reviewer concludes "[buy the book] to see how such companies operate almost with impunity, yet bloodily in Africa".

There is no reference to any organisation called Executive Operations in the book.

If the reviewer means Executive Outcomes, it was not founded by Stirling and Mann – it was set up and registered by Eben Barlow.

When the organisation got under way as an

entity, Stirling was in his grave and Mann didn't link with it until a few years later (as his recent book confirms). *From SAS to Blood Diamond*

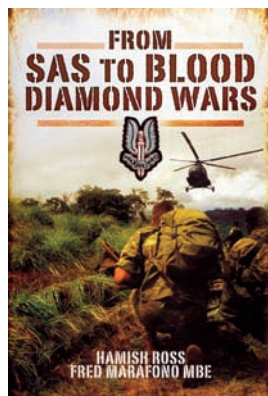
Wars consists of 11 chapters, only one of which deals with Executive Outcomes and Fred's time with the company.

Far from operating with impunity and bloodily, it was a bargain in humanitarian terms.

For a quick balance of opinion, check the August issue of *New Africa Analysis* online and read the review written by Britain's former High Commissioner to Sierra Leone.

This essay stands in marked contrast to the insightful and concise review *Soldier* carried

of my biography on Paddy Mayne, a sentence of which still appears on the reverse cover of the paperback. – Hamish Ross.



'Help give blisters the boot'

I AM a serving soldier currently deployed with 5 Rifles battlegroup on Operation Herrick 15.

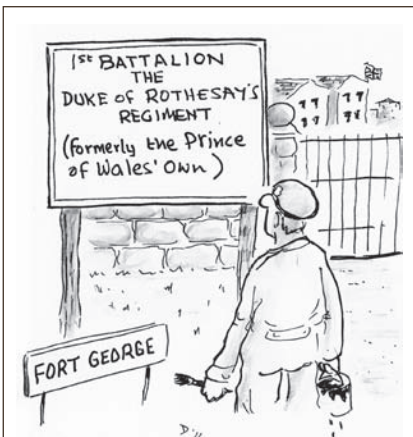
Before arriving in theatre I broke in my issued pair of Meindl desert boots – tabbing in them and wearing them for day-to-day duties. I suffered a few blisters during the first week or so but this is to be expected with any new footwear.

All was well until I began reception, staging and onward integration on arrival in southern Afghanistan. With excessive amounts of walking involved my feet – along with those of others in my unit – became severely blistered.

Unfortunately, my feet rarely get enough time out of boots and the sores are becoming deep lacerations. This makes walking and standing for any significant length of time very painful.

On civvy street Meindl boots retail for around £80-£100 but those given to troops feel as though they have been made at a fraction of that cost.

This problem is a distraction from the more serious issues faced daily by those of us operating from patrol bases. – Name and address supplied.



ROYAL RECOGNITION

AS a proud Scotsman who hails from Rothesay on the Isle of Bute, I'd like to thank your researchers and editorial team for correctly addressing His Royal Highness Prince Charles as the Duke of Rothesay in your "Just How Observant Are You?" competition on page 67 of the October issue.

This title is mandated for use by the heir apparent when in Scotland and should be used in preference of lesser designations such as the Duke of Cornwall or the Prince of Wales.

This will be handy to know for those members of the Army who will find themselves in Scotland in the years to come as part of post-Strategic Defence and Security Review moves. – Sgt Allan Smith, 43 CS Sqn, 12 LSR.

Lt Col Matthew Tresidder, Defence Clothing Team leader, writes: Thank you for your observations on the Meindl boot – I can appreciate your concerns.

Afghanistan, and Helmand province in particular, is an incredibly harsh operational environment, especially for footwear.

Boots must suffer (along with your feet) wading in the watercourses, drying in the sun, climbing over rocks and getting covered by dust. Any boot will have difficulty standing up to this sort of regime, especially daily for six months.

The Meindl is one of a family of boots you have available to you on your tour.

These are not "knock off" items in any way – they are exactly the same as the ones you can buy from any commercial supplier.

However, it is critical to ensure any boots fit you properly if you are to get the best from them.

That is why we offer a choice of two boots – the Lowa and the Meindl.

They have different width fittings, footbed support and so forth to allow for different shapes and sizes.

If you are not getting on with the Meindl design, try switching to the Lowa or vice versa – it may do the job for you better.

Likewise, make sure you are wearing the right size.

It may be necessary to go up a size as all the weight you are carrying will cause your feet to spread.

The size you take in the UK may not necessarily be the size you take while on operations in Afghanistan.

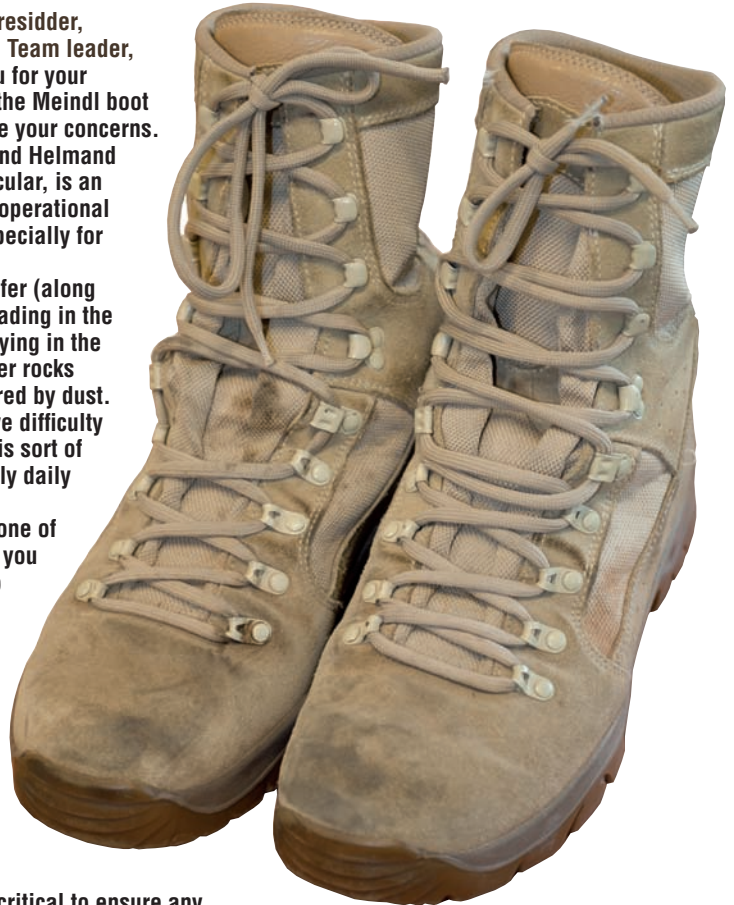
I appreciate getting alternative boots in a patrol base may not be easy but there is plenty of stock in theatre – they will get to you eventually.

Jungle boots are also available if you are in an area where you are in and out of water all the time.

In the meantime, make sure you take care of your boots and rotate them around as much as possible.

You will have been issued two pairs of combat boots and a pair of patrol boots (Magnums). Wear the patrol boots (or your sandals if possible) in camp to rest your feet.

Likewise, swap the combat boots every



day to allow them to dry and rest.

Don't dry your footwear in direct sunlight as it will cause the leather to shrink and harden.

Use the brush you were issued to clean the boots regularly to keep the vents and fabric panels free from a build-up of dust so they can let air flow round and release the sweat.

Be mindful of the socks you are wearing – make sure they can wick sweat away from your feet.

The issued warm weather socks are designed to wear with Meindl boots. Others may not be.

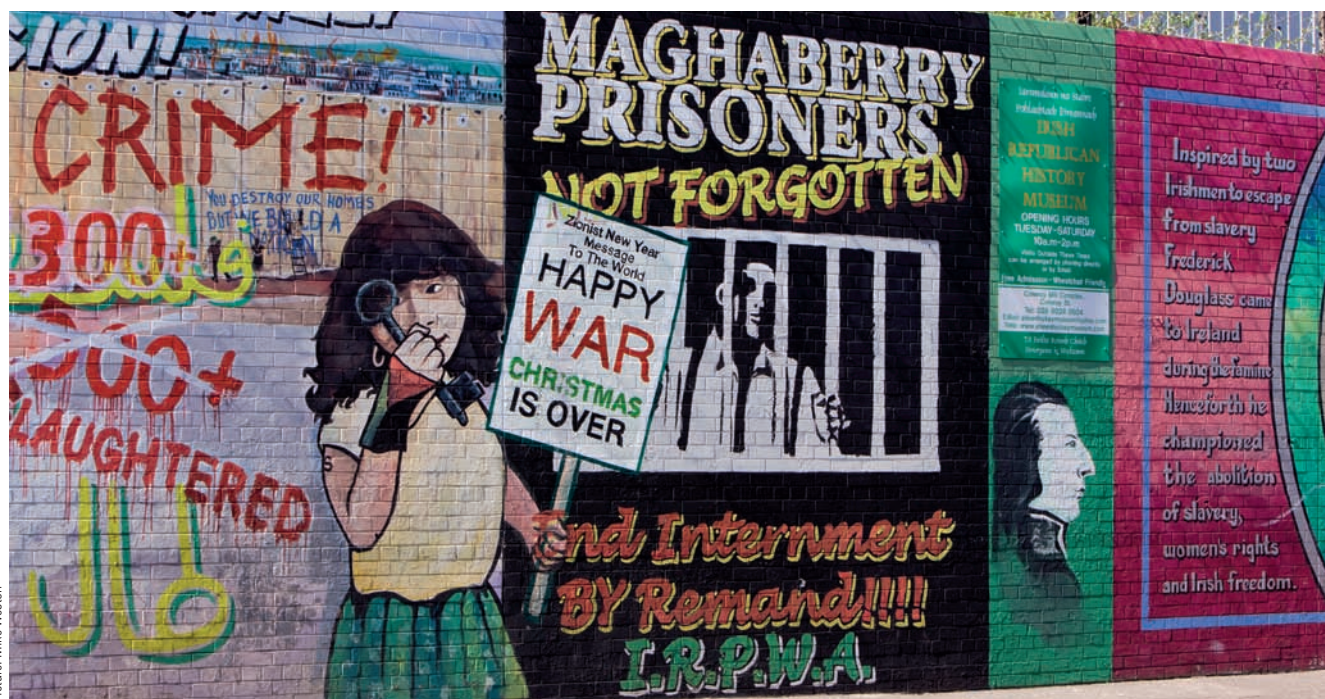
And finally, make sure you wash, dry and powder your feet regularly to ensure they are in the best possible condition.

I am sorry if that sounds like I am teaching you to suck eggs but I know in a patrol base it can be extremely busy and such things forgotten.

To conclude, you will be pleased to hear that a trial is under way which will test all combat footwear.

This programme is being conducted by front-line Service personnel such as yourself who have recent and relevant operational experience.

The process is being overseen by the Infantry Trials and Development Unit who are making sure that boots chosen for the future are fit for purpose.



Not your average neighbourhood: Political murals, such as those displayed along the Falls Road, remain a backdrop for those working in Northern Ireland

Some home truths about a 'home posting'

I RARELY write replies to letters featured in *Soldier* but I have become increasingly alarmed about the number of ex-Service personnel who seem to enjoy pushing their small-minded opinions into the Army's official magazine.

These offerings serve to demonstrate how poor we are at communicating the reality of the present situation.

I would like to counter Ray Spence's stance on the issue of warrants in Northern Ireland (NI), "Curtailed travel costs, save millions" (November), and point out some truths he is obviously unaware of.

- Yes, NI is classed as a home posting. However, I would challenge the former soldier in question to take a trot down the Falls Road while whistling *God Save the Queen* and wearing his regimental tie and Royal British Legion blazer.

The reality is there are areas which remain out of bounds to Service personnel, who receive weekly intelligence briefs in regards to what is a real and active threat.

- The explosive ordnance disposal detachment in NI is the busiest outside of Afghanistan. Mr Spence is obviously unaware of the pipe bombs and similar devices found daily.

- Thanks to the Real IRA and Continuity IRA, the region is regarded as a place where full vigilance is required.

- The last British Army base to be struck by a car bomb was in Holywood, County Down, last year.

- Many families in NI cannot get services delivered to their door so the normal conveniences of life don't exist here.

- Single soldiers can't just pop to the local for a beer and act in the same way as

they would elsewhere in the UK – hence the aid in getting back to the mainland.

- Many married personnel serve unaccompanied because of the very real threat and have spouses who do not want to live behind the wire in a permanent state of worry.

This issue [the provision of travel warrants] has been raised previously by bean counters.

However, agencies such as the Chief of the General Staff's visiting team report the reality of the situation back to the top and the allowance rightly remains.

In conclusion, I would like to thank Mr Spence for his petty-minded parsimonious attitude. Long may he enjoy the freedom defended for him by the many Servicemen and women who live in a state of risk. –

Capt Jim Draper, Northern Ireland.

Council tax concessions, please

I AM a married soldier residing in single living accommodation and own a property in my home town.

Do you know why soldiers are liable for 90 per cent of the council tax for their properties which, due to geography and the needs of the Service, they are unable to occupy? In contrast, prison inmates are given full exemption from this expense.

Why are military personnel being punished for thinking ahead? Surely this should be encouraged as an alternative to local councils having to meet the cost of finding homes for soldiers when they leave the Service. – **SSgt John Browne.**

David Carnell, Department for Communities and Local Government, responds:

The level of discount on second homes is for councils themselves to set – somewhere between ten and 50 per cent.

However, we would urge all authorities to carefully consider an individual's personal circumstances.

As the property on the Army base is actually rented not owned, the council should arguably be considering the soldier's other house empty and offering a discount of up to 100 per cent, rather than viewing it as a second home.

ALDERICK DISTRICT COUNCIL
SUPPORTS OUR BRAVE ARMED FORCES



"Yes, chairman... point taken but think of the crippling loss to our revenue if we eliminate council tax on soldiers' second homes."

You stood up for my rights.

Thank you.

I'm Aron. In 2007 I was badly injured by an IED while serving in Afghanistan. I was given 3 months to decide whether to keep my leg or have it amputated to relieve the pain. In the end it came down to a pen and a bit of paper. Pros and cons. Pros won. Then I was told I wasn't 'disabled enough' to get Disability Living Allowance. I've always worn a poppy since I was a little kid. I thought the Legion might help. Their adviser helped me appeal the decision, fighting my battle for a whole year. I received the reinstatement of my DLA in September. It's hard going from being a soldier to a house husband but finally things are looking up.

The Legion help thousands of people like me every year. But they can only afford to because you wear a poppy.

Thank you.

If you've served and need help, support or advice The Royal British Legion are always there for you too. Call them on 08457 725 725 or visit britishlegion.org.uk

Shoulder to Shoulder
with all who serve

THE ROYAL BRITISH
LEGION



Listen to Sense
Protect your Hearing

Helmet Body Armour Hearing Protection



**Army
Health
Promotion**

FIT FOR LIFE | FIT TO FIGHT

Six months in Kenya – why the long face?

I AM currently serving on a six-month unaccompanied tour with the British Army Training Unit Kenya.

This is an extremely busy deployment and far from being a sunshine posting.

Temporary duty staff here receive nothing in the way of welfare phone facilities and are expected to meet the cost of all international calls using a pay-as-you-go card system.

This is clearly not the cheapest way of communicating with those at home in the UK or Germany.

Rather than a period of R&R, these staff are granted up to ten days' leave which is deducted from their annual entitlement.

However, those Service personnel that wish to fly home to see loved ones are required to pay for their own flights which can cost upwards of £1,000.

Temporary staff have no entitlement to Get You Home (Overseas) [GYH(O)] or any other allowance to offset this expense.

– Sgt D Jones, BFPO 10.

Brig Tim Hyams, DPS(A), writes:

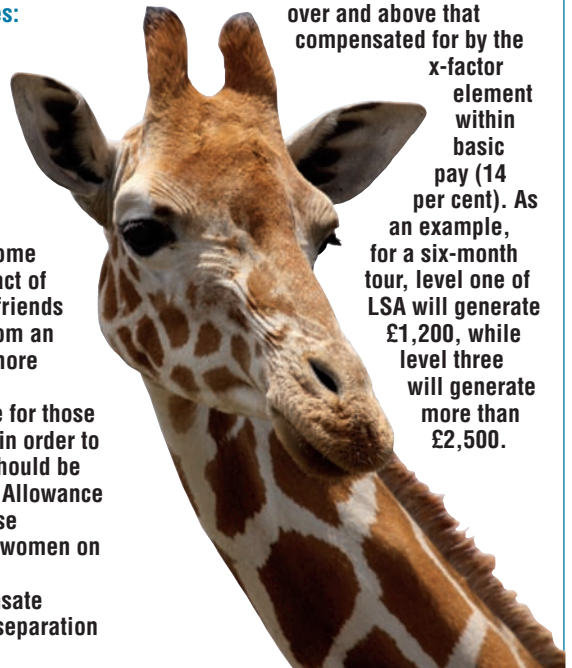
The allowances packages available for those on two-year accompanied and six-month unaccompanied tours are different.

Personnel who are in Kenya on the former are entitled, through GYH(O), to a contribution towards a flight home once a year to reduce the impact of separation from close family, friends and UK lifestyle that results from an overseas assignment lasting more than 12 months.

This provision is not in place for those on a six-month tour. However, in order to mitigate your separation you should be in receipt of Longer Separated Allowance (LSA), which is not paid to those accompanied Servicemen and women on two-year assignments.

The aim of LSA is to compensate those personnel experiencing separation

over and above that compensated for by the x-factor element within basic pay (14 per cent). As an example, for a six-month tour, level one of LSA will generate £1,200, while level three will generate more than £2,500.



Gnashing of teeth over camp's dental care costs

I WANT to complain about the prices of products in the Londis shop at the Defence School of Transport in Leconfield.

While on a course there, I needed to buy some toiletries and was shocked to see an Oral B toothbrush cost just under £7.

After complaining about this price during the evaluation session at the end of my time on camp, the cost of the item was slashed to £1.11 – a reduction of more than 500 per cent.

Most of the prices in the shop are above average. For example, a small bottle of sun lotion will set you back £14.05.

Who is responsible for price checking and making sure the likes of Londis are trading fairly and not taking advantage of Service recruits restricted to camp? – Name and address supplied.

Maj J L Brown, Defence School of Transport, replies: There are two different Oral B toothbrushes on sale in the Londis shop at DST Leconfield which may have caused this confusion, the Oral B classic at £1.11 and the Oral B Pulsar 35 at £6.64.



"No, he's not had a big windfall – he just brought a supply of toothbrushes with him."

Neither of these were reduced in price over the period in question.

Like all supermarkets and high street stores, Londis gives its customers the opportunity to purchase more expensive items alongside cheaper ones.

Sodexo Defence manages Londis shops at many military locations within the UK and has a national pricing policy that compares its prices four times a year to a similar convenience store (Spar), to ensure they remain competitive.

This means that customers pay the same price for Londis goods wherever they are posted in the UK and that savings,

as well as price increases, are passed onto its customers.

The Oral B Pulsar 35 retails for £6.12 at both Boots and Superdrug, 52p less than Londis, but the cheapest Oral B toothbrush that both Boots and Superdrug sell costs £1.59 – 48p more expensive than Londis.

The suncream being sold in Londis shops for £14.05 is a Nivea SPF20 sun spray which is on sale in Superdrug and Boots at £12.75, £1.30 less.

However, smaller convenience retailers like Londis and Spar are not always able to compete on price with the buying power and low overheads of supermarkets and high street chains, but Londis aims to offer its customers convenient shopping at a fair price.

At the end of the training day, students attending courses at Leconfield are able to book out of camp and have the opportunity to purchase products from the local convenience store in town (a five-minute walk) or the major supermarkets in Beverley (a 30-minute walk or five-minute drive).

TALKBACK TOUCHE

I WRITE in response to the letter "Blue over biscuits brown" in November's *Soldier*.

I would urge the author – SSgt Matt Baker – to be wary of making disparaging comments regarding troops with £50 haircuts looking scruffy in their £500 clothes.

There are readers that will readily recall his own fashion faux pas of the past all too vividly! – Maj A L Henderson, AGC (SPS).

DIAMOND SALE

THE answer to the ongoing debate over the proposed issue of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal is simple.

If the government is too stingy to finance its provision to all veterans, I'm sure that most who qualify in respect of time served will be prepared to pay for their own. The alternative, as with the Suez Medal, is to wait for most of us to die off before they relent. – Jeffrey Mills, Cumbria.

ADAPTABLE ARMY

FURTHER to a veteran's enquiry as to why a bombardier was being used as infantry (*Talkback*, October), all REME personnel are trained in both their trade and soldiering.

When a unit is deployed on operations, all are expected to soldier – they are soldiers first and tradesmen second.

Arte et Marte, by skill and fighting. – W Hayles, ex-REME.

COMPS

Spine line: LCpl A MacLennan, ACIO Paisley, Scotland; Gareth Westlake, HQ UKSC, BFPO 140; Mr F Johnstone, Hallow, Worcester; Capt Higgs, 10 Trg Bn, Bordon; Jayne Hawkes, HQ Hereford Garrison, Hereford.

Kill the Irishman winners: Mr K McGrouther, Dunfermline, Fife; Julie Henderson, Helens Bay, Co Down; Emma Reardon, Weston-Super-Mare, Somerset; Mrs L A Savas, Prestwich, Manchester; Melanie Willcox, New Milton, Hants.

Spartacus winners: Vicky Haddock, Bolton, Lancs; Mr D Milsom, Farnborough, Hants; Mr G Smith, Barnsley, Yorks; Mr B Coleman, Leighton Buzzard, Beds; Mr A Davies, Army Headquarters. **Note:** Answers accepted for both Dustin Hare as Gannicus and John Hannah as Batiatus.

DIARY

December 1: Christmas author talk: *Monty and Rommel – parallel lives?* by Peter Caddick-Adams. Begins 1730 at the Prince Consort's Library, Knollys Road, Aldershot. To attend call 01252 349382 or email pcilibrs@alibs.detsa.co.uk

December 2: Army Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Conference takes place at St Hugh's College, Oxford, from 1100. Open to all LGBT members of the Service and their partners, as well as anyone with an interest in equality and diversity matters. For more information visit www.proud2serve.net or email armylgbt@gmail.com. To book contact Capt Emma Hunter on 01264 381919 or email emma.hunter796@mod.uk

December 2-4: British Military Tournament will feature 700 troops, 100 horses, massed bands and more to showcase the skills of the Armed Forces. For tickets or information visit www.britishmilitarytournament.com

December 7: Christmas concert presented by the Royal Military School of Music at St Edmunds Church, Whitton, Twickenham. Free tickets (two per household) are available by booking on 0208 744 8633.

December 10-11: The Birmingham International Christmas Tattoo. Military bands and displays at the National Indoor Arena. To book tickets call the box office on 0844 338 8000 or visit www.birminghamtattoo.co.uk

December 13-14: The Royal British Legion's Christmas at Guildhall concerts in London will conclude the charity's 90th anniversary celebrations in style. Starts at 1900 on both days. Tickets cost £35. Call 020 3207 2272 for a booking form or email rpride@britishlegion.org.uk

December 17, 23, 28 and 31: Christmas in the Wartime House at the Imperial War Museum, London. Find out more about festivities during the Second World War on the British home front. Free admission. Visit

www.iwm.org.uk for more information.

January: The ballot for tickets to The Queen's Birthday Parade opens. Call 020 7414 2479 for information about applications to attend the parade in the seated stands.

February: Two weeks of events called Frontline Australia to mark the 70th anniversary of the bombing of Darwin. Visit www.frontlineaustralia.com.au for more information.



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; [mil.94391.2324; www.aff.org.uk](http://mil.94391.2324;www.aff.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

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

Family Escort Service: 0207 463 9249

Forcesline: 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.

Forces Pension Society: 0207 820 9988

Gardening Leave: 01292 521 444; www.gardeningleave.org

Help for Heroes: 0845 673 1760; www.helpforheroes.org.uk

helpforheroes.org.uk

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: 24-hour helpline 0845 257 4853; www.ngvfa.org.uk

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

Remount: 01451 850 341; www.remount.net

Royal British Legion: 0845 7725 725; www.britishlegion.org.uk

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

SSAFA Forces Help: 0845 1300 975; www.ssafa.org.uk

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

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

The Not Forgotten Association: 020 7730 2400; www.nfassociation.org

INTELLIGENCE

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

ABN 62/11: Launch of The Army Panel

ABN 63/11: The formation of capability directorate combat

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

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

ABN 66/11: Non Regular permanent staff pension scheme

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

ABN 68/11: Personnel and support command restructuring announcement

DIB 88/11: New defence secretary appointed

DIB 89/11: New defence secretary writes to all staff

DIB 90/11: Operation Olympics

DIB 91/11: Operation Unified Protector and Operation Ellamy – end of routine operations

DIB 92/11: New Army Headquarters and top level command structure

DIB 93/11: Defence secretary's first Defence Board meeting

DIB 94/11: Public sector pensions – update

DIB 95/11: Director general human resources and corporate services writes to staff to launch the voluntary early release scheme 2012-2014

DIB 96/11: Transforming defence – Army rebasing and endorsement of the regional

restructuring plan

DIN 2011DIN01-218: Tri-Service Fiji Support Network brief for Germany-based personnel December 7-9, 2011

DIN 2011DIN01-216: Recording working patterns on HRMS

DIN 2011DIN01-215: The Firmin Sword of Peace Awards 2011

DIN 2011DIN01-214: The Firmin Sword of Peace Awards 2010 – results

DIN 2011DIN01-213: Commissioning procedures for serving soldiers

DIN 2011DIN01-212: Coordination of charitable donations to meet Service community welfare needs

DIN 2011DIN01-211: MoD voluntary early release scheme 2012-2014

DIN 2011DIN01-210: Changes to undergraduate naval nurse entry requirements

DIN 2011DIN01-209: Arthur Barratt Memorial Prize 2011

DIN 2011DIN01-208: Lasting power of attorney

DIN 2011DIN02-015: Extensions of validity periods for national security vetting clearances

DIN 2011DIN03-036: Pan theatre portable electronic device policy

DIN 2011DIN04-163: Declaration of obsolete diver recall signal N1 Mk2

DIN 2011DIN04-162: Declaration of obsolescence – adapter, oil filler L9A1

DIN 2011DIN04-161: Declaration of obsolescence of various legacy cryptographic equipments by Crypto Services for Defence

DIN 2011DIN04-160: Declaration of obsolescence of BID/1100 (also known as Arroflex) by Crypto Services for Defence

DIN 2011DIN04-159: Declaration of

obsolescence of Pace Chifferapparat and Pace Merchant Ships by Crypto Services for Defence

DIN 2011DIN04-158: The disposal of Mat Con EO DMC Y3BAT and Z9BAT batteries by units

DIN 2011DIN04-157: Collocation of logistic commodities teams at Abbey Wood from November 2011, with phone contact details

DIN 2011DIN04-156: Pre-notice prior to date archive and termination of intermediate LogNEC applications

DIN 2011DIN04-155: Trade receipts deliveries, booking in procedure LCS Donnington

DIN 2011DIN04-154: Notifications of new demolitions natures being introduced into service in 2011 and 2012

DIN 2011DIN05-043: Changes to the provision of MoD software – introduction of a catalogue service paid for at point of use

DIN 2011DIN06-031: Release of JSP 317 – edition five – joint Service safety regulations for the store and handling of fuels and lubricants

DIN 2011DIN07-167: Chief naval engineer officer's conference and RN engineers' dinner 15-16 March 2012 – "Towards 2025 – the role of naval engineers and the naval engineering strategy"

DIN 2011DIN07-166: Nijmegen marches 2012

DIN 2011DIN07-165: RN flight safety course (AIR 302) 2012 programme

DIN 2011DIN07-164: Junior officer tactical awareness course – implementation of entrance test and RTU policy

DIN 2011DIN07-163: Applying for modules in the military aerospace and airworthiness suite of accredited courses at Cranfield University

DIN 2011DIN07-162: Training by manufacturer of civilian contractor – submissions for financial year 2013/14

DIN 2011DIN07-161: Introduction of training

for ashore users of the unit maintenance management system

DIN 2011DIN07-160: Army Inter Corps and Individual Night Orienteering Championships

DIN 2011DIN07-159: Military stabilisation support group stabilisation staff officers, practitioner hybrid foundation training courses

DIN 2011DIN08-015: Suspension (waiver) of import duty on certain weapons and military equipment

DIN 2011DIN10-039: Exercise Hard Ride



REUNIONS

19 Regiment, Royal Artillery: Regimental reunion will be held in late 2011/early 2012. If you served with the Highland Gunners then write to Maj LeFeuvre at 19 Regt RA, Bhurtore Barracks, Tidworth, Wiltshire SP7 7AS or email welfare19@hotmail.co.uk for further details.

57 (Bhurtore) Battery, 32 Regiment, Royal Artillery: Reunion dinner on January 21, 2012 at Larkhill. Medals parade will also be held on the same day. Ex-members, serving or retired, are welcome. Contact Steph Manning on 01980 845577 or email btj_57@live.co.uk as soon as possible in order to gauge levels of interest.

RAMC Reunited 2012: Reunion will take place at the Royal Court Hotel, Coventry on February 3, 2012. Contact Mick McCran on 01522 879307 or at michael.mccran@ntlworld.com for further details.

Continued on page 68

NO. 841

JUST HOW OBSERVANT ARE YOU?

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TEN details have been changed on this photograph of troops during Exercise Joint Warrior in Dumfries and Galloway.

Circle the differences in the left image and send the panel to **HOAY 841, Soldier**, Ordnance Road, Aldershot, Hampshire GU11 2DU by January 3.

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 February issue.

October's competition: First correct entry drawn at random and winner of the £100 was **Mrs L Sare**, 3 PWRR, Canterbury, Kent.

Runners-up: **Mr I Wright**, Canterbury, Kent and **Sgt A Harlen**, HQ 43 (WX) Bde, Tidworth, Wiltshire.



The 2012 Aliwal Dinner: All members of 16th/5th Lancers, 17th/21st Lancers, Queen's Royal Lancers and attached units are welcome. Event takes place on February 4, 2012 at the Telford Golf and Country Club. For more details phone 07890 207391 or email wjcfive@yahoo.co.uk

Joint Helicopter Support Unit: Old and new faces are invited to celebrate the JHSU's 30th anniversary at the Victory Services Club in London on March 31, 2012. The event costs £40 and will run from 1730 to 2330. Visit www.jhsu.webs.com for further details.

David Sykes is planning a reunion for all members of **4 Sqn, 22 Signal Regiment** who served between 1970-1975. Considers September/October 2012 as a suitable time as hotel prices should be favourable. Anybody interested can contact him by email churchill422@sky.com

Junior Leaders Regiment, Royal Engineers Cassino Troop 1989-1990 is looking for lost members for a reunion scheduled for late April 2012. If you were a member of the troop and are interested in attending please contact Peter King at 4 Turner Close, Catterick Garrison, North Yorkshire DL9 3SP or email peterliamking@live.co.uk

RMP Memorial Parade at the National Memorial Arboretum. This parade for 2012 only will be held on Saturday, June 16 at 1115. For 2013 the date will return to the first Saturday in June. Email rhqrm@btinternet.com for further information.

British Military Train 1945-1990 (Hannover to Berlin) tribute ride. On May 12, 2012 steam locomotive 03 101 will head a train of 1960s' carriages including a dining car, from Berlin to Hannover and back. Proceeds will go to the Royal British Legion in Berlin and the military guest will be Maj Gen David Burden. Fares will be in the region of 90 euros per person. For further details or to reserve a place email militarytrain2012@gmail.com or call 07982 786529.



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 refreshments. 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.

December: No presentations. **January:** Tamworth, Dudley, Redditch (tbc).



SEARCHLINE

PhD student Kim Webb is looking for British **Army personnel** who are willing to share their experiences of **higher education in the UK**. Contact her at k.v.webb@durham.ac.uk

Ann Hamlet is gathering memoirs from **veterans who served in Italy between 1943 and 1945** for a book she is writing. Contact her by phone on 01342 844082 or email at info@italystar43-45.co.uk

Tom Pierce is looking for fellow former Royal Engineer, **LCpl Neil Sutcliffe**, who he served with in Plant Troop on the Pacific atoll of Christmas Island from 1956-1957. Contact Bob Aslett on 01395 264940 or by email at branstons@talktalk.net

Former Royal Engineer Sgt John Chamberlain is looking for **ex-sapper David Joseph Chapple**. They served together with 48 Field Sqn, Royal Engineers in Ripon, Yorkshire between 1963 and 1967 before Chapple left the Army and went to work for GCHQ in Cheltenham. Contact John on 01634 301281.

Mr A Bernard is trying to trace the family of **6979215 Robert Jackson** (born 1917 in County Antrim) who served with the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers before transferring to the Royal Fusiliers from 1940. Contact Mr Bernard by email at findingroots@yahoo.co.uk

A researcher is looking for relatives of soldiers who served in **7th Battalion, The Hampshire Regiment** between 1939 and 1946, while the unit was billeted in Birchington, Deal and Bexhill (Cooden), as well as anyone in the battalion's pre-war recruiting patch of Bournemouth. Contact Ian Taylor on 02380 694771 or at ian.p.b.taylor@btinternet.com

Annika Hofmann is trying to locate her grandfather, soldier **George Matthews**, a Londoner who met her grandmother Christa Schwerm when he was stationed in Schleswig, Germany from 1945-1947. Contact Annika by email at Annika@kiga-english-kids.de or write to Gerhardstr.41, 24105 Kiel, Germany.

A photography student is documenting and comparing the effects of conflict on **Servicemen and the families of soldiers involved in the Second World War, Iraq and Afghanistan**. Any personnel and their families willing to undertake an **online questionnaire** about how war has affected them are asked to contact Rachel Hewitt on 01803 855580 or email Rach102@hotmail.co.uk The Plymouth College Of Art student is also looking for families and/or soldiers willing to be photographed for a photography project running beside the dissertation.

Robin Powell is looking for an old school friend who went on to serve in the British Army. In 1966, **24044749 G N R Akhurst** was training at Park Hall camp, Oswestry, Shropshire. He was a member of A section, C Troop, 24 (Irish) Battery, 17th Training Regiment. Contact Robin by email at robinpowell@btinternet.com

Edna Diana Bey (nee Costa) is looking for her father **William Henry McBride**, who served with the mountain infantrymen in Germany during the Second World War. Edna was born in 1947 in Traunstein, Bavaria to Theresa Costa (born August 3, 1923). Contact Edna on telephone 49 030 405 01 739 or by email at edna-bey@hotmail.de

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Picture: Mike Weston

Lost in transmission? Some 600 MPs, including most front benchers, failed to attend the recent Armed Forces Personnel debate in the House of Commons

Preoccupied politicians should remember people

I AM sure that most people don't watch the BBC Parliament channel on television as a matter of course. But in my line of work it's an occupational hazard.

These viewings haven't done much for my faith in our political system, but generally in dealings with MPs I have experienced some moments of real interest and hope.

So I was surprised and disappointed to discover that the Armed Forces Personnel debate last month was the first to be held in parliament since January 2009.

I watched the whole exchange with interest – and not just because the Army Families Federation (AFF) got two mentions.

Politicians are constantly in the media emphasising their support for the Forces and saying how important personnel and their loved ones are.

But if this really is the case, why aren't they talking about us more often and why were there so few MPs in the chamber on this occasion?

Our new secretary of state had a fair excuse as he was visiting troops in Afghanistan. But that still meant about 600 of our elected representatives – including the majority of the front benches on both sides of the house – had found something more interesting or important to do.

Now, I don't know the whys and wherefores of how parliament operates but if politicians want to encourage the general public to support our Servicemen and women they really need to look at themselves first.

Aside from this, there were some items of good news to be found in the debate.

Armed Forces Minister Nick Harvey confirmed that a new rehabilitation facility is

planned in the Midlands to replace Headley Court in Surrey (page 16).

This centre will offer enhanced welfare to injured Service personnel, veterans and the wider community.

There was also confirmation of first moves in the jigsaw puzzle that is the rebasing of troops in Germany (page 13).

The minister described them as everyday unit moves, but for the personnel and families affected this is finally an answer to the "what on earth is going on" question.

It is the start of a long process and hopefully the answers for those further down the chain will not be too slow in arriving.

Worryingly though, when Mr Harvey was questioned about the cost of the rebasing he remained eerily reticent.

Kevan Jones, member for north Durham, said the cost quoted to him when he was a minister was around £3 billion.

A Royal United Services Institute commentator was reported as saying these expenses were being covered by the reduction in personnel but that is nonsense; there will be huge upfront costs to get new locations ready for incoming units.

Until ministers confirm that funding has been freed up, I remain unconvinced that we won't have to make do with what is available. Families will no doubt bear the brunt of inadequate facilities.

Commonly, my contact with politicians is via Andrew Robathan, Minister for Defence Personnel, Veterans and Welfare.

My colleagues and I met with him recently

for the regular families federations forum.

While there, I was asked what I wanted the minister to pursue – a tricky question as I knew my answer would have to involve minimal cost.

So with housing upgrades, enhanced childcare facilities and several other things out, I asked for the Service families employment taskforce to be restarted.

This group was put together by Harriet Harman under the Labour Government, so one thing that would change is its name. But its aim was clear; to improve employment opportunities and access to benefits and training for Service spouses.

We are living in difficult economic times when a double income is not "nice to have", it's a necessity. So anything the government can do to mitigate the effects of the mobile lifestyle on our CVs and employment prospects must be welcomed. This is even more important in the face of redundancy.

According to a recent AFF survey, nearly 80 per cent of employed Army spouses work with the military in some capacity.

This suggests that when faced with job loss and the need to relocate, a family may not simply be losing the soldier's salary but that of the spouse too – a double blow.

So when they're next debating defence in the House of Commons, I hope politicians remember that it's not all about equipment, tanks and guns and it's not all about money.

It's about people. And decisions about money and kit have incredibly real consequences for individuals. ■

‘It's not all about equipment, tanks and guns and it's not all about money’

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Morning after: *The Hangover Part II* is released this month on Blu-ray, DVD and digital download format

Wolf pack sell-outs

Director Todd Phillips creates a near carbon copy of side-splitting first feature

Review: Joe Clapson

THE HANGOVER was a worldwide box office phenomenon and, quite rightly, hailed as a comedy game changer because of its ability to cause uncontrollable laughter through left-field shock tactics.

Therein lies the reason *The Hangover Part II* falls short of its predecessor's fortunes: nothing unexpected happens.

Ultimately, director Todd Phillips has cashed in with a sequel but sold out to the churn-it-out-quickly ethos with a huge lack of originality.

Following the formula of part one, Thailand's Bangkok replaces Las Vegas; Mike Tyson's tiger becomes a cigarette-smoking monkey and there is photographic evidence of sinful shenanigans at the film's end. Everything that was hilarious in the first feature has been repeated with different props in a new location.

This time around the dorky dentist Stu (Ed Helms) is getting married and has promised his bride-to-be Lauren (Jamie Chung) that his final drink as a single man – with his friends and Lauren's child-prodigy brother Teddy (Mason Lee)

– will be a restrained, placid affair.

Shock horror, a quiet chat on the beach soon results in the "wolf pack" waking up without any memory of what happened on a night of debauched behaviour.

Stu has a tattoo on his face, there's a severed finger in the room and, predictably, Teddy the 16-year-old concert cellist has gone missing.

However, there is no question that this movie is funny, with plenty of laugh-out-loud moments.

The presence alone of Zach Galifianakis as Alan is enough to raise a smile. But alas, there is just no original material.

Chung, a newcomer to the hit series, gave *Soldier* her thoughts on why viewers lap up *The Hangover* franchise's scenes of depravity and drunken misdemeanours.

"I feel like the audience connects with these characters, especially the guys. It's just so funny to watch them get into trouble," she said. "They're magnetic and you can't help but watch."

Justin Bartha, who returns as Doug, added: "I think also there is this great inclusive quality to *The Hangover* and I think that's the secret – it's unapologetically a party and I think people just come along and have a great time.

"I think the second one is an even crazier party

than the first one."

Inevitably the movie centres on finding Teddy and during the panicked search all manner of trouble ensues, from battles with a gang boss (Paul Giamatti) to encounters with transvestite prostitutes and gun-wielding Russian mobsters.

The Hangover Part II is more a case of expecting to laugh rather than not knowing what might happen next but watching Phillips' band of misfits stumble into and out of awkward situations is undeniably amusing.

On the storyline, Bartha said: "It all comes from Todd's sick mind. And his mind is just so sick.

"Todd is a very honest person and I think that shows in his movies – he doesn't apologise for anything at all.

"I think a lot of people love that because a lot of people are afraid to admit that they are the same as these guys... and they get to go to the movie and live that out."

This film is not a failure and is well worth watching because it is genuinely funny.

But while Phillips and his cast will be counting their box office dollars, they must do so knowing the production was bankrupt of imagination. ■

● *The Hangover Part II* is out December 5

From a nostalgic adaptation to mobile phone revelations, *Soldier* checks out the latest DVD releases...

Cold Comfort Farm out now

ORIGINALLY released by Thames Television in 1995, Oscar-winning director **John Schlesinger's** *Cold Comfort Farm* follows the story of the young 1930s' socialite Flora Poste as she goes to live with her rural relatives in order to gather material for a novel. The screenplay is faithful to the book and is a delightfully nostalgic watch throughout.

A young **Kate Beckinsale** is superb among an all-star cast including **Ian McKellen, Joanna Lumley, Stephen Fry** and **Rufus Sewell**. This is an excellent adaptation of a classic novel and although not obviously a comedy, there are intelligently funny moments and a charming end.

Capt Jim Berry, R Irish



Mother's Day out now

FROM the director of *Saw*, this is a well-crafted, suspense-filled thriller. The plot revolves around three brothers who return home after a journey of botched robberies to find that their house has been sold. After informing their mother, she acts out her revenge on the supposedly innocent occupants and their guests. Rising tension, fear and desperation are the focus of this title rather than over-the-top gore as a situation spirals out of control for both the criminals and their victims. There are some incredible acting performances, especially from the disturbed but endearing mother. This film is a brilliant white-knuckle thriller.

Dan Crowder, civvy



The Dead List out now

JEAN Reno (*Leon*) stars in this crime thriller as the patriarch of the Malakian family, a French-Armenian criminal gang plying their trade in the south of France. Relationships are tested as father Milo (Reno) prepares to hand over power to his son Anton who has grown tired of living a lawless life and wants to settle down with his pregnant girlfriend. For a gangster flick this English-subtitled movie contains very little violence and focuses more on an intense father-son bond. The film lacks pace but its cinematic style and fantastic landscapes make up for that. In any case, watching super-cool Reno is never a chore.

Tracey Phillips, Army wife



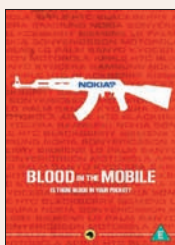


Hazy recollection: Mason Lee, Bradley Cooper and Ed Helms reunite as the wolf pack for another episode of wanton behaviour and memory loss

Blood in the Mobile out now

DID you have any idea that your mobile phone probably contains metals that are the product of modern-day slavery in the war-torn Democratic Republic of Congo? Me neither. In this film a Danish reporter places himself in considerable danger to go to the heart of the problem in a documentary about Nokia's deliberate ignorance of an inconvenient truth. Child labour, medieval mine conditions, extortion and massacres; all part of a landscape ruled by warlords and vested interests. This hard-hitting film should open up an ethical debate and raise awareness, while making phone companies squirm.

Capt Neil Johnson, AAC



Moby Dick out now

FROM the outset it was clear that *Moby Dick* is a poor man's reworking of the **Herman Melville** classic tale of Ahab and the great white whale. Set in the Cold War, the *Pequod* is replaced by a nuclear submarine upon which robo-legged Capt Ahab (**Barry Bostwick**) is a sonar operator. His crazy quest begins when he hears confused sighting reports of a 500-foot whale. The acting in this title is wooden and overly melodramatic and the special effects are far from special. All in all, this is a sad attempt at a modern adaptation of a classic piece of American literature. Sitting through it was torturous. Avoid.

Capt Jim Berry, R Irish

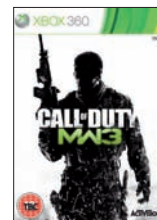


Win... The Hangover Part II

THE sequel to 2009's smash hit *The Hangover* is released on DVD on December 5. Despite being very similar to its predecessor, the film is guaranteed to entertain. The "wolf pack" travels to Thailand for Stu's wedding and despite attempting a "quiet one", the lads find themselves in Bangkok with no recollection of the previous evening's escapades. Before long they are in danger of ruining the marriage ceremony. *Soldier* has teamed up with Warner Home Video to give readers the chance to win one of five DVDs. To be in with a shout, tell us who plays Alan in the film. Answers on a postcard to the usual address or by email to comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk

Closing date: January 3





League leader: The *Call of Duty* series continues its successful run with *Modern Warfare 3*, which is out now on all formats

Battle commences

Combat rivals go head-to-head in quest to be crowned king of the shooters

Review: Richard Long

DEVELOPERS Infinity Ward have enjoyed a long spell of dominance in the sphere of first-person shooters courtesy of their hugely successful *Call of Duty* franchise.

The release of *Modern Warfare 3* will undoubtedly continue the winning run but the series now faces a serious challenge to its crown from Electronic Arts.

The publisher's *Battlefield* saga has been slowly gathering momentum and the third instalment proves to be the most highly polished and well-rounded offering to date.

For *Call of Duty* fans, the main attraction has always been the outstanding action sequences and multiplayer options.

While these are the clear highlights, the campaign mode has bordered on the ridiculous in recent times.

When we last visited the *Modern Warfare* fold a marauding Russian army had invaded the USA and ransacked its capital – and the insanity continues in the opening stages of its follow-up.

With the ever-dependable Delta Force leading

the counter-attack, the enemy is soon pushed back and the action reverts to an international feel with tasks in the Middle East, Europe and Africa.

Controversy rightly surrounded its predecessor for the inclusion of an airport shooting spree and the hard-hitting theme continues here with a terrorist plot on the streets of London.

Story pitfalls aside, *Modern Warfare 3* is an adrenalin-fuelled shooter that is highly addictive.

The controls mirror earlier games, meaning there is no need for an awkward introductory stage, and the gameplay is exceptional.

While the campaign follows a familiar path, the multiplayer experience has been tweaked to offer even greater enjoyment.

A new weapon upgrade concept allows you to boost the capabilities of your gun of choice and there is an impressive arsenal of more than 40 firearms to choose from.

A strike package has also been introduced and sees players benefit from tools such as an airdrop trap and a remote sentry.

These relatively minor changes should be enough to please hardened fans and keep them from the clutches of *Battlefield 3*.

If such followers do veer down this path they will find a story that is far too similar to what has

gone before in other military offerings.

The usual array of terrorist plots, Middle Eastern settings and weapons of mass destruction are all in place, meaning this game struggles to establish its own identity.

This should not be considered as a bad thing and *Battlefield 3* is decent enough, it just fails to offer anything that is truly ground-breaking.

However, the multiplayer options are where this title has traditionally earned its spurs and it delivers, yet again, on a grand scale.

Expansive maps create a huge sense of freedom and help to develop the vast range of tactics required to succeed.

The emphasis is on teamwork and up to 24 players can join the battle at any one time, bringing with them an array of hardware that includes tanks and fighter jets.

Foot soldiers are armed with landmines and surface-to-air missiles to even the score and points are awarded for assists, as well as kills, to help unlock new weapons and upgrades.

In truth, there is little to choose between either title and both deliver a stunning combat experience that is hard to beat.

Call of Duty may be top of the league, but its lead is definitely shrinking. ■

From the perfect party starter to grappling gridiron greats, we check out the best and the rest of the new releases...

The House Of The Dead: Overkill

ALTHOUGH it takes four hours to complete, this PS3 and Wii shooter fails to hold the attention for long. The story mostly entails holding off enough zombies/mutants until the game moves onto the next chapter. Your enemies will smack the life out of you

if you fail to kill them quickly but there are many collectables to grab on the way round, such as the slow motion power up, which allows you to line up multiple fatal headshots. Don't worry if you die, just hit continue and off you go again, making this a far from challenging adventure. The only saving grace is the cheesy 70s' horror movie-style layout and storyboard.

Sgt Ryan Lewis, 7 Para RHA



Madden 12 for all formats

LIKE the *FIFA* series has done with "soccer", *Madden* has played a significant role in the depiction of the heavily-padded world of American gridiron. Sport-orientated games are usually predictable and this follows suit, but in a good way.

Electronic Arts have stuck with what works and improved upon it. The AI is more reliable and competent and the various stars of the NFL have their own little quirks that add to the gameplay. There are some slight glitches and problems, but despite that it's still a surprisingly polished example of what happens with a franchise that is constantly recreated every year without fail.

David McDougall, JHQ Rheindahlen



Just Dance 3 for PS3, Wii and Xbox 360

THIS groovy game will have family and friends strutting their stuff to a host of tunes ranging from the 1982 classic *I'm So Excited* to the recent LMFAO hit *Party Rock Anthem*. *Just Dance 3* lets you copy routines from more than 50 tracks as well as letting you freestyle your own moves and combinations. After a few songs I found myself trying more adventurous challenges such as a jump kick and even the splits, which I don't need to try again any time soon. This title will undoubtedly be on most people's wish list this Christmas and is sure to put the "whoop whoop" into any festive party.

Neil Rodgers, civvy





Front-line challenge: *Battlefield 3* has emerged as a serious rival to the vastly popular *Call of Duty* franchise thanks to its stunning multiplayer features

Forza Motorsport 4 for Xbox 360

RACING favourite *Forza Motorsport* returns for its fourth outing and uses Kinect technology to put you in the driving seat of some of the fastest machines on the planet. This adds to the realism offered by the tracks and cars and this updated title takes what can sometimes be a repetitive game concept and flips it on its head. No two races are ever the same and it is even better when playing the split-screen two-player mode. The attention to detail is second to none, from the car choice to the damage you cause to the BMW you've just crashed into, making this a superb driving experience with bags of fun to boot.

Bdr Paul Godfrey, 203 Bty RA (V)



Supremacy MMA for PS3 and Xbox 360

AS a newcomer to the world of all-action fighting titles, I could only write this review after locking *Supremacy MMA* on easy mode. With the controls mastered, it soon became clear that developers 505 Games have delivered a solid, all-round product that differs from the more mainstream releases in this genre. Unfortunately the graphics look a little tired on the now-dated Xbox but that said the gameplay is great fun and, once on a level at which I could compete, I found myself really getting into it. With a simple fight option, along with a story mode and online combat, there is enough here to keep everyone entertained.

Cpl Mike O'Neill, RLC



Fifa 12 for all formats

ELECTRONIC Arts have dominated the football field thanks to their immensely popular *Fifa* franchise, and the success continues with the latest instalment in this impressive series. The usual array of teams, competitions and players have been accurately recreated once more, but it is the subtle changes to the gameplay that really hit the back of the net. A tactical defending system makes dispossessing the opposition more difficult and the new impact engine brings the traits of today's top stars to life. The multiplayer and online options only add to the fun and help make *Fifa* the league champions for yet another season.

Richard Long, Soldier





A new path: After spending more than a year in the studio, Noel Gallagher has finally returned to the musical mainstream

Gallagher flies high

Former Oasis heavyweight puts band life behind him to launch debut solo album

Review: Richard Long

WHILE the acrimonious break-up of Oasis continues to warrant column inches, Noel Gallagher has set about creating a new musical identity outside the shackles of the once-mighty rockers.

Often seen as the group's driving force, the artist was as famous for his war with brother Liam as he was for penning some of the nation's favourite anthems.

But such rivalries have been put to one side on *Noel Gallagher's High Flying Birds*, a self-titled debut solo record that marks the start of a new chapter in the 44-year-old's career.

"With this album, people are going to think it was a conscious decision to do something different," Gallagher explained.

"It wasn't like that. This is what just came out. I won't criticise anything about Oasis because I loved being in that band and I was in charge of it, but there was always the feeling of how will this go down in Wembley, with 70,000 people braying for good times?"

"This time I didn't have to think about that. I've

got a guy playing wine glasses on one song, a saw on another. This is not Oasis. I don't know what it is... yet."

With Liam forging ahead with new project Beady Eye, the older sibling had been pushed to the sidelines with some critics suggesting he had entered a state of inertia following the downfall of his former band.

"There was a review of the Beady Eye album – and fair play to them, the reviews I've read have been pretty good – that said something like 'while Liam's been hard at work, Noel's been wandering the streets'. It made it sound like I've been stumbling around North London, going through the bins," Gallagher explained.

"I've actually spent over a year in the studio, and it was beginning to drive me a little mad. Now I've got no more recording to do until I'm well into my 70s."

The end result features collaborations with the Crouch End Festival Chorus and The Wired Strings in a move that creates a sense of calmness and tranquility.

The pulsating raw sound captured in his early tracks such as *Cigarettes and Alcohol* and *Supersonic* has long gone and this album reflects the acoustic approach found in his later work.

Lead single *The Death of You and Me* is a pleasant jaunt that offers a throwback to one of the more recent Oasis success stories – *The Importance of Being Idle*.

AKA... *What A Life* marks a break from the guitar-driven sound as piano riffs guide an almost dance-like number, while *Stop the Clocks*, (*I Wanna Live in a Dream in my*) *Record Machine* and *Everybody's on the Run* almost qualify as genuine rock anthems.

If there is one criticism, it is that *High Flying Birds* lacks any real diversity and these tracks embrace subtle variations rather than wholesale and sweeping changes.

However, the finished article proves to be an enjoyable listen and those craving a greater break from the norm will be pleased to learn a second album, recorded in collaboration with dance producers Amorphous Androgynous, is due to be released next year.

On the whole, Gallagher has made a solid rather than spectacular start to his solo career and with his confidence in his ability never in question there will certainly be more to come.

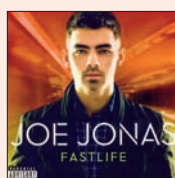
It is doubtful he will ever hit the heights enjoyed by Oasis at their peak, but he appears determined to enjoy life on his own. ■

From Cardle's cringeworthy correspondence to the Manics' musical mastery, we fire up the new releases...

Fastlife by Joe Jonas

PRIOR to launching his solo career, **Joe Jonas** was a member of multi-platinum selling band **The Jonas Brothers**. However, his debut solo album *Fastlife* has received a mixed reception from fans and critics alike. This is a very hit and miss affair, there are some well-produced, catchy numbers such as *All This Time* and *Just In Love*, but these are interspaced (and overshadowed) by some pretty dull, lacklustre tracks that ruin the overall experience. His style is very much **Justin Timberlake** on a bad day and at times he seems to end up in a strange, synthesised robotic trance. I'm sure his huge following of female fans will enjoy this but I doubt he will make much impact elsewhere.

Rodge Tapply, ex-RE



Ashes and Fire by Ryan Adams

POP superstar **Elton John** credits **Ryan Adams** for inspiring his *Songs From The West Coast* album and on hearing *Ashes and Fire* it is easy to see why. The simple acoustic country riffs and the easy blues tone to his voice make this consistently good. Most records have one or two standout tunes and *Chains of Love* immediately impressed. However, the more I listened the more I started to appreciate the other songs. This is a very laid-back offering and is a distinct move away from the electric sound of his time with **The Cardinals**. The backing vocals of **Norah Jones** add to the easy listening and after seeing this as a bit of a slow burner at first, I am now a full convert.

Sgt Wallace Stephenson, Int Corps



Letters by Matt Cardle

THE 2010 *X Factor* winner **Matt Cardle** has produced a mediocre first album that will surely please his legion of TV fans but may not win him any new ones. While the singer is uber-keen to be seen as a serious and edgy musician, *Letters* falls a bit flat with the end result being a number of over-produced bland pop ballads. But there are a few hidden gems such as *Beat of a Breaking Heart* and *Walking on Water*, which have a **Snow Patrol**-type sound and offer a glimpse of Cardle's true potential. This is not a bad start but if he wants to avoid the *X Factor* curse which befell **Shayne Ward** and **Leon Jackson** he needs to distance himself from the **Simon Cowell** gravy train.

Tracey Phillips, Army wife





Man on a mission: Noel Gallagher's *High Flying Birds* marks the start of a new career for the ex-Oasis star, who has a second album planned for 2012

National Treasures by the Manics

THIS is a complete anthology of every single the **Manic Street Preachers** have released since day one. They may have gone pretty much under the radar in recent times, but classics such as *Tsunami*, *You Stole The Sun From My Heart* and *Motorcycle Emptiness* endure and still sound as good now as they did when first released. **Nicky Wire** and co are still up for the fight and new single *This Is The Day* shows that the band has lost none of their appetite for making original music. This is the Manics at their very best and any fan will happily pump up the volume as loud as their eardrums can stand and bounce along to over 30 belting tunes. I know I will.



W02 Mo Morris, RLC

Mylo Xyloto by Coldplay

FESTIVAL headliners **Coldplay** return with their fifth album, which continues the recent trend of baffling titles. While there is nothing particularly new or out of the ordinary on offer here, *Mylo Xyloto* does more than enough to cement the band's place at the top of the mainstream soft-rock tree. Recent single *Paradise* boasts early strings and organ work before bursting into life with a triumphant chorus. *Every Teardrop is a Waterfall* continues the feel-good factor from their last record, while queen of pop **Rihanna** makes a guest appearance on *Princess of China* to help confirm their headline status. All in all, this is a decent offering that builds solidly on the group's successful formula.



Richard Long, Soldier

Own The Night by Lady Antebellum

AMERICAN stars **Lady Antebellum** boast an impressive track record that includes five Grammy awards and a host of honours from the Academy of Country Music, who named them best vocal group and presented them with the song of the year accolade. Their third studio album *Own The Night* maintains this superb form and promises a clutch of further nominations down the line. Opener *We Owned The Night* is an upbeat and enjoyable number that bursts into life with lots of energy and all the tracks have deep, meaningful lyrics that are delivered with great passion. If you liked the trio's previous offerings, or if you're a fan of country music as a whole, you'll love this.



Ray Kalaker, ex-RE



Commanding read: *Monty and Rommel: Parallel Lives*, penned by former TA officer Peter Caddick-Adams and published by Preface, is out to buy now

Defence double bill

Cranfield Academy lecturer delivers two leadership lessons in one masterclass

Review: Maj Mike Peters, AAC

A COMPARATIVE biography of two of the most well-known soldiers of the Second World War is an ambitious and daunting project by anyone's estimation.

Peter Caddick-Adams has taken on the challenge of narrating the twin-track careers of a double act who are still regarded by many as the personification of the British and German officer class of the campaign.

Bernard Montgomery and Erwin Rommel are famed for their long-running duel that ranged back and forth across the deserts of North Africa. To a lesser degree they are also remembered for their opposing roles in the build up to and during the early days of the Normandy campaign.

The legends of Monty and his arch rival, the Desert Fox, were both created and subsequently reinforced by Allied and Nazi propaganda machines. This book explains in some detail how both commanders used the media to further their aims and raise their profile.

Today's popular history of both men, but Rommel in particular, is based on that wartime

spin and the post-war films that recycled the same slanted material.

This well crafted and absorbing study breaks new ground and goes into much greater depth than previous histories, tracking the early lives and seemingly intertwined career paths of these prominent military figures.

Opinions on the strengths and weaknesses of the rivals are as diverse and contradictory as the characters and personalities of the men themselves. However, the similarities highlighted in their provincial upbringing and early years in uniform are striking and challenge the established perception of each.

Caddick-Adams – a lecturer at Cranfield Military Academy – writes with authority about every aspect of his subjects' different paths to the field marshal's baton.

His analysis of their personal lives is equally intriguing and shatters some of the myths that surround both men. I was, for example, genuinely surprised to read that Rommel's career had not been affected by the fact that he had fathered an illegitimate child.

Equally surprising was the realisation that the normally staid, teetotal and conservative Montgomery sported a set of tattoos.

The weaving of these apparently trivial details with a close look at the men's respective strengths and flaws adds depth to the author's enterprise. Caddick-Adams has also reviewed the apparently random incidents of fate that punctuated both officers' service in the Great War.

It is in these chapters that the leadership style and personal characteristics that we accept today come to the fore. The young Monty is seriously wounded early in the conflict, allegedly carrying a sword into a 20th century battle.

On his return to France and Belgium, he discovered a capacity for staff work and a talent for planning – honing his skills under Gen "Daddy" Plumer and other officers far removed from the *Blackadder* stereotype.

In comparison, the Great War exploits of Rommel on the Italian front remain the stuff of legend. His willingness to take risks and consistent desire to see what was happening at the sharp end, and to be seen there by his men, are evident throughout the campaign.

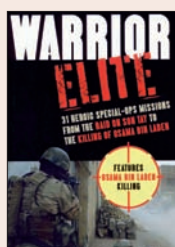
The author, who has led more than 200 visits to in excess of 50 battlefields, has articulated his extensive knowledge in an engaging manner and set out his stall as both a military historian and biographer. This is required reading. ■

From the world's finest warriors to admiration for Arctic adventurers, a flick through this month's releases...

Warrior Elite by Nigel Cawthorne

PROVIDING the details and history of some of the world's elite units, **Nigel Cawthorne** focuses on several well-known missions to highlight the abilities of special forces. Among the operations featured are the actions of the US Rangers in Vietnam and of the SBS in Afghanistan. Refreshingly, in addition to success stories the author has included occasions when operatives were let down by intelligence or equipment failures. Written in an engaging, journalistic style, the reader is quickly drawn into the action. Each chapter highlights a different force making this title easy to pick up at intervals without the need to backtrack.

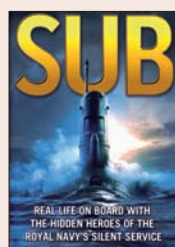
Sgt Wallace Stephenson, Int Corps



Sub by Danny Danziger

FEW really know what life is like on-board a nuclear submarine and this offering by award-winning journalist **Danny Danziger** promised to provide a fascinating insight into this enigmatic branch of our Armed Forces. But having been given privileged and unprecedented access to HMS *Torbay* and her crew, the author squandered this golden opportunity, instead churning out a book which reads more like a research exercise into recruitment and retention for the submarine trade. An underwhelming title which doesn't really do sufficient justice to the valued, perilous and furtive work undertaken by our "silent Service".

Tracey Phillips, Army wife



To War with God by Peter Fiennes

BILLED as an account of the First World War told through the diary of an Army chaplain, I thought this title would provide an interesting perspective of the conflict. I was bitterly disappointed. **Peter Fiennes** uses the diary as a meandering account of his own extended family and with assumptions and rambling conjecture galore, I would hesitate to class this title as non-fiction. There is constant repetition with each extract either preceded or followed by an unnecessary summary. This – and peppering the prose with every Great War cliché going – becomes beyond irritating, distracting from and ruining the enjoyment of the memoirs.

Capt Douglas Searle, RLC



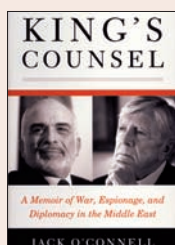


Polar opposites? *Parallel Lives* is the first comparative biography of Montgomery, pictured delivering a pep talk to troops, and Rommel (inset with Hitler)

King's Counsel by Jack O'Connell

THIS fascinating book, co-written by **Vernon Loeb**, should be read by everyone with an interest in the Middle East. **Jack O'Connell**, who died in 2010, worked in Jordan for the CIA and then became King Hussain's lawyer in Washington. With the monarch, whose judgement and rule he much respected, he had a remarkable connection lasting four decades. The chief author's conclusions are therefore based on a wealth of experience. O'Connell is not the only one to see the immense power of the Israeli lobby with the US Congress as the main obstacle to a just settlement of the Palestinian problem.

Dr Rodney Atwood, military historian



Hellfire by James Holland

AN enjoyable Second World War espionage novel, *Hellfire* is the fourth instalment of the Jack Tanner series, in which the protagonist is caught up in the hunt for a spy while preparing for Rommel's assault on El Alamein. Despite not having read the previous titles, I enjoyed this latest offering and didn't feel that there were gaps in my knowledge as a consequence. A lot of research has clearly gone into this book and although **James Holland** has used artistic licence, most of the story's main events are true to history. *Hellfire* is a good read and has convinced this reviewer to seek out the rest of the series.

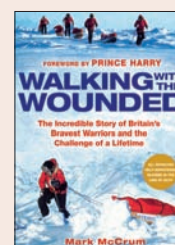
Lt Neil Dickie, 105 Regt RA (V)



Walking with the Wounded

HUMBLING and inspiring, this title recounts the epic journey made by a particularly special team consisting of the eponymous charity's two founders, a polar guide, Prince Harry and four seriously injured soldiers. **Mark McCrum** fully encapsulates the human element of their endeavour, highlighting the personalities, humour and strength of character that enabled them to trek 200 miles unsupported to the North Pole. The book conjures nothing but admiration for the men who have suffered life-changing injuries and driven themselves to achieve a feat that would be beyond the body and mind of most.

Capt Jim Vincent, RLC



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SOLDIERSPORT

Picture: Graeme Main



KING OF THE WORLD: ARMY ACE
TARGETS TWICKENHAM TRIUMPH
AFTER WINNING RUN DOWN UNDER

Ruddy keeps it clean

Canaries' spot kick hero shows Services support in quest for Premier League shutouts

Interview: Richard Long

AS a newcomer to the cut-throat world of Premier League football, John Ruddy's sole focus should be on establishing himself among the game's elite.

But the goalkeeper, who has played a key role in Norwich City's excellent start to the season, has an extra incentive to excel against star strikers such as Wayne Rooney, Luis Suarez and Robin Van Persie.

The 25-year-old will be donating money to Help for Heroes for every clean sheet and penalty save he makes over the coming months and is determined to hit top form so he can provide a handsome boost to the charity's ever-expanding coffers.

For Ruddy, the generous offer is a continuation of the strong link he has with Service life and in an exclusive interview with *SoldierSport* he revealed how he was set to embark on a career in the Army before football intervened.

"My whole family has been involved in the Armed Forces," the Canaries ace explained.

"My father was in the Infantry and my granddad and uncles served in the Royal Air Force.

"I've got two friends who are in the Army at the moment and my cousin has been on tour in Afghanistan with the RAF.

"My father served for 17 years and I lived at Tidworth up until the age of eight.

"He made life-long friends in the Service and although I do not talk to him about his experiences that often, I know he has fond memories.

"If it had not been for my scholarship with Cambridge United I would have followed suit, but once that offer was made football took over really.

"I'm not sure if I would have excelled as a soldier, but I definitely would have enjoyed it."

Ruddy maintains his close connection to the Army through friend Cpl Phillip Wright (2 R Anglian), who will be best man at the player's wedding next summer.

The former Everton stopper launched his fund-raising quest at

the start of the campaign when he signed a new sponsorship deal with glove manufacturers Sells, who have proudly emblazoned the Help for Heroes logo on his customised hand wear.

His first success of the season came when he thwarted a spot kick from Stoke City's Jon Walters in August and the keeper is targeting a run of clean sheets so he can add to his total.

"Help For Heroes is a cause I have a strong association with and I think it is a charity that does not get enough recognition for the work it does," Ruddy said.

"This is the first season I have been paid sponsorship to wear gloves so I thought it would be a good way of getting involved.

"I first asked for the charity's logo while I was on loan at Motherwell, when my best mate was deploying to Afghanistan, so this is something I would have done regardless of the publicity.

"I'm now in a position where I'm getting money for penalty saves and shutouts, so it is the perfect donation to make.

"We have been unlucky and I have not kept as many clean sheets as I would have liked, but I certainly think we are due some. Hopefully they will come over the next few games."

Ruddy signed for Norwich at the start of last season and helped the club to a second-place finish in the Championship, in what has been a remarkable run under manager Paul Lambert.

The Scot took over with the team languishing in the lower reaches of League One and has since masterminded back-to-back promotions to the Premier League, a competition they last graced during the 2004/05 campaign.

Ruddy said: "We have started the season really well and I think we have been unfortunate not to pick up more points from our fixtures so far.

"We're sitting in the top half of the table at the moment and if we

can continue our form and stay there until the end of the season we will be very happy.

"But the Premier League is a completely different style of football and we have had to get used to that pretty quickly.

"Last season we knew we had a good side but not a lot of people were talking about us.

"When we got to the New Year we really thought we could do it [get promoted] and there was great belief within the squad.

"All the players say the team spirit here is better than at any other club they've been at.

"As a group we all want to do well for each other and that is why we have been successful.

"We have players who are not big household names, but they have tremendous ability and are starting to get the recognition they deserve in the Premier League."

Ruddy has been one of those to shine in the spotlight of domestic football's top tier and while his performances have offered a welcome windfall for Help for Heroes, they have also seen him linked with a possible international call-up ahead of Euro 2012.

With England suffering from a lack of quality goalkeepers it appears the door may soon open to a player who spent loan spells at nine clubs before finally settling in Norfolk in 2010.

Lambert has been quick to add his support to the cause and championed his star man's ability following an inspired display in Norwich City's 1-1 draw at Liverpool.

However, Ruddy has avoided such distractions to concentrate on the day job and his quest to keep clean sheets.

He said: "It was very flattering for the manager to say what he did about me and it is every player's ambition to go on and represent their country.

"But I'm not paying too much attention to it at this stage.

"I just want to keep doing well for Norwich. If I do that I will hopefully be there on merit and if it happens, it happens." ■

"I'm not sure if I would have excelled as a soldier, but I definitely would have enjoyed it"

"We have players who are not big household names, but they have tremendous ability"





On target: From left, Maj Ken Brill (AGC), Maj Kelly-Anne Robins (RLC), Cpl Emma Coleman (REME), WO1 Gaz Sweeney (RLC) and Sgt Jason McCoubrey (AGC)

Archers on course for Army glory

Report: Richard Long
Picture: Graham Harrison

ARMY archers will be targeting Inter-Services success this month when they square off against their military rivals at the sport's National Indoor Championships.

The soldiers are hoping to improve on their second-place finish at last year's tournament, which was won by marksmen from the Royal Air Force.

As part of their preparations for the showdown the team was put through its paces at the Army Championships in Arborfield, where 25 bowmen lined up for action.

Sgt Jason McCoubrey (AGC (RMP)) took the recurve freestyle men's title,

with Maj Kelly-Anne Robins (RLC) claiming the women's crown.

Maj Ken Brill (AGC (SPS)) was victorious in the compound discipline, WO2 Gaz Sweeney (RLC) won the bare bow and Cpl Emma Coleman (REME) was named best novice.

Team captain McCoubrey told *SoldierSport*: "It was a massive success. There was some very good shooting from the Army team and our associate members as well.

"Due to operational commitments getting a squad together has been quite hard in recent years. But over the last 12 to 18 months, under the chairmanship of Maj Brill, we have done really well.

"It is slowly building again.

"At the last Inter-Services we took silver, this year we want gold. We have a strong team and I'm hoping we can do it.

"The RAF are very good and they always give us a run for our money. We did not lose by much last time around and we are determined to go one better this year."

The competition will be staged as part of the national championships in Telford on December 3 and 4.

The Army Archery Association is keen to recruit new members and holds regular beginners' courses across the country, as well as in Germany.

Anyone interested in taking part should contact Sgt McCoubrey on 01420 537083. ■



Picture: Graeme Main

Cricketers' Asian adventure

THE Pakistan Defence Force has welcomed Army cricketers to their country for a three-match tour based in capital city Islamabad.

The Service stars will play two 40-over fixtures and a Twenty20 game before flying to Dubai to take on an international XI.

Maj Alex Senneck (R Signals) is skipping the squad and LCpl David Wade (R Signals, pictured left) will also be in action after County Championship outfit Gloucestershire allowed him to join the party.

The group will be accompanied by ex-Serviceman and former Kent star Matthew Fleming, who is the Marylebone Cricket Club

ambassador for sport in the country.

Col (Retd) Peter Sharland, secretary of the Army Cricket Association, said: "This is an invitation from the highest political level for a team to go on tour to Pakistan.

"We were due to go last year but the trip was postponed after the flooding, so we are delighted it has been resuscitated.

"We are going there with a defence diplomacy objective to encourage a stronger relationship between the UK and Pakistan.

"The team also realises this is a golden opportunity to play a high standard of cricket and enjoy life on tour."

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Power play: Army star LBdr Ifereimi Boladau (RA) smashes his way through the Gloucester defence during this year's scintillating Remembrance Day clash

Services suffer late heartbreak

Report: Richard Long
Pictures: Graeme Main

A LAST-gasp try saw the Combined Services Rugby Union team slip to an agonising defeat in a pulsating Remembrance Day clash with the Gloucester President's XV.

A bumper crowd of more than 2,000 people gathered at Kingsholm Stadium for the encounter, which ended in a hard-fought 40-33 triumph for the home side.

The Forces fielded a number of players from the Army's victorious International Defence Rugby Competition squad but it was Royal Navy wing Josh Drauniniu who set pulses racing early on.

The England Sevens star cut through the Gloucester defence to create the opening try for Senior Service colleague Dale Sleeman, who touched down under the posts following a clever offload from fullback Cpl Ceri Cummings (REME).

But the visitors were dealt a double blow moments later as Chris McNeil surged to the line to tie the scores, before skipper Sgt Darrel Ball (RE) was forced from the pitch through injury.

The setback failed to halt the Services' charge and the outstanding LBdr Ifereimi Boladau (RA) broke clear from inside his own half to score in the corner following a slick exchange of passes with wing LCpl Malakai Magnus (RLC).

Drauniniu added his name to the scorers minutes later as he rounded

off a superb break involving Navy counterparts David Pascoe and Sleeman, and with Cummings kicking the extras the military men opened a 21-7 advantage.

But the Gloucester pack were proving to be a fine attacking weapon and Jack Preece crashed through to add tries either side of the interval as the hosts came roaring back to life.

James Pettigrew put Gloucester ahead when he powered home from a tapped penalty and the superb Rory Teague maintained his accuracy with the boot to kick the

resulting conversion.

Royal Marine Gareth Evans charged through the opposition ranks to score from a quick penalty as the scintillating end-to-end action continued.

Ryan Brend gave Gloucester the lead after a bouncing ball left the unfortunate Services defence flat-footed, before man-of-the-match Boladau fired an instant response.

The rampaging back rower collected the ball from the restart and thundered his way to the line for his second try of the night.

With the sides locked at 33-33 the game was heading towards a highly entertaining draw until the President's men launched a final attacking foray that saw McNeil bundle a late winner through a melee of mangled bodies.

Speaking afterwards, Combined Services coach Capt Andy Sanger (RE) told *SoldierSport*: "We wanted to do justice to the fixture and the boys definitely did that.

"From an Army perspective we saw some outstanding performances from players such as Ceri Cummings and Ifereimi Boladau, who was deservedly man-of-the-match.

"This is his third season but he hasn't really been used before.

"He was superb against the Navy in May and was one of our best performers at the International Defence Rugby Competition.

"He was immense against a very good Gloucester pack and was probably the standout forward in the game, so I am very pleased." ■



Cummings joins world elite

Interview: Richard Long
Picture: Graeme Main

AS a member of the victorious Reds side that overpowered the Royal Navy in this year's Inter-Services showdown, the world-famous Twickenham Stadium is a happy hunting ground for Cpl Ceri Cummings (REME).

The fullback makes a welcome return to the arena's hallowed turf this month, but instead of seeking further bragging rights over the Senior Service the Army ace will be stepping out alongside some of the biggest names in Rugby Union.

Cummings has been named in the Northern Hemisphere squad that will face-off against their rivals from the south in a star-studded Help for Heroes challenge match on December 3.

England World Cup winners Lawrence Dallaglio and Jason Leonard will lead the home side, which also includes 2003 stalwarts Will Greenwood and Josh Lewsey, and the Service player is relishing the opportunity of performing on such a big stage.

"I saw the 2008 match and it was awesome, what better game could there be?" he told *SoldierSport*.

"It is like a Barbarians fixture, which is always fun, but staging it in honour of Help for Heroes makes it even better.

"When you consider the players and management involved, it is a dream come true to be called up.

"I should be able to learn a lot from playing with such big names and I'm hoping they will be happy to have me on-board.

"I would also like to think they could learn something from me. I play as a hobby within the Army so I am a soldier first, and that is very different to their way of life."

Selection for the showpiece event comes at the end of a hectic few months for Cummings.

In September he helped the Army Rugby League squad retain their Inter-Services crown and he was an integral member of the union team that won the inaugural International Defence Rugby Competition (IDRC) – where he was named player of the tournament.

"I knew it would be tough. We were living on top of one another for five weeks but with the players, management and support staff we had, it couldn't have gone any better," Cummings said while reflecting on his side's title win.

"My standout performances started with the REME in the corps final in March, since then I have been playing really well.

"I had a great Rugby League season, I have been training hard and I am really enjoying myself.

"I played the full 80 minutes of every game at the IDRC and it was a great experience for me.

"A few of the boys said I had been doing well and they thought I had a chance of being named as the competition's best fullback.

"I was half expecting to be nominated for that position but when I was crowned player of the tournament it was a great shock, but a huge honour."

The individual and team successes come as a reward for the determination Cummings has shown in pushing for a starting berth, after spending the

initial part of his playing career on the periphery of the team.

"I am a lot more mature now, both on the field and off it," he explained.

"I first got involved in the squad through skill alone but other people were far more experienced and were established in the side.

"But as the seasons have gone on I have knuckled down and done what has been asked of me.

"I am now the first-choice fullback and I am determined to keep hold of that jersey."

Tickets for the Twickenham showdown can be purchased online at www.codestorm.co.uk or by calling 02392 313899. ■



Para plays pain game

Interview: Richard Long
Picture: Graeme Main

FOR many of football's top stars, a hamstring twinge or a fractured metatarsal is more than enough to signal a lengthy and depressing spell on the sidelines.

Injuries such as these are commonplace in the modern game but for one Army player they pale in comparison to the horrific setback he has suffered over the past year.

LCpl Tony Fitzpatrick (2 Para) was on patrol in southern Helmand province on December 30, 2010 when he was caught in a Taliban ambush that left him with three gunshot wounds to his right thigh and one to his left.

The midfield ace was told he faced a possible amputation when infection spread through his leg but after a miraculous recovery he returned to action with the senior Army side that thrashed Sussex 5-0 in the Southern Counties Cup last month.

"I was out on patrol and was second in command on the day we did a strike operation," Fitzpatrick recalled.

"We had been targeted from three different sides and were on a mission to engage the enemy.

"We were going through our target area indications when the insurgent ambush struck.

"I got shot four times but within 20 hours I was back in the UK at hospital in Birmingham.

"It was unbelievable.

"I was there for four-and-a-half weeks, then I went to Headley Court for a month.

"With the amount of muscle tissue I had lost I was told I would probably

never run again, let alone play football.

"I then got an infection which meant there was a chance my leg would be amputated. Thankfully the antibiotics fought it off.

"In March I began working on my fitness levels and I have gone from strength to strength.

"There may be some more operations on the horizon but I have made a great comeback so far."

Fitzpatrick has been involved with the Reds' squad for the past three years and was also part of the 2 Para team that won the prestigious Army Challenge Cup in 2010.

Operational commitments meant he missed a large part of last season and he is now determined to make the most of his time on the pitch.

"I thought that was my football career over," he told *SoldierSport*.

"I had to learn how to walk again; I then progressed from a walk to a jog and from a jog to a run.

"It was all about getting my fitness back so I could do my job, playing wasn't even a consideration.

"This [Sussex] was my first match back for the Army team and I'm feeling really good at the moment.

"There is a lot of fatigue and pain but that will not stop me playing.

"I'm just happy to be out there on the field again.

"My aim now is to cement my place in the British Army's starting 11 while continuing to do well for my corps and battalion sides." ■



Bolton braves polar extremes

EXPLORER Capt Jason Bolton (RAMC) will take on one of the world's greatest endurance challenges this month when he competes in the Centenary Race to the South Pole.

The Reservist soldier (pictured left) is part of a three-man team that will tackle the 704-kilometre route in a bid to raise £250,000 for the homeless charity Centrepoint.

The trio will be lining up against a host of international polar experts in an event that will see them negotiate multiple crevasses and snow bridges, while surviving in temperatures as low as -50 degrees and in winds of up to 80mph.

As well as battling the elements, they will have to pull 70kg of kit for 16 hours a day over a six-week timeframe, climbing to altitudes of 9,000 feet.

Bolton started training for the race two years ago and was part of the victorious team at the 2010 North Pole Marathon.

He has also completed long-distance walks in the Brecon Beacons and on the South Downs Way and underwent cold-climate training in a -30-degree chamber at the National Sports Centre in Bisham Abbey.

The Antarctic adventure begins on December 15, which is exactly 100 years to the day since Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen beat Capt Robert Falcon Scott in their epic race to the South Pole.

This is only the third time the contest has been staged and the second run, in 2009, was filmed for the BBC documentary *On Thin Ice*, in which celebrity Ben Fogle and Olympian James Cracknell were narrowly defeated by their Norwegian rivals.

To sponsor Bolton and his teammates in their fund-raising quest visit www.justgiving.com/South-Pole-Race-2012 or text the words POLE12 £3 to 70070. ■

Agar's assault sinks Sussex

Report: Richard Long
Pictures: Graeme Main

AHAT-TRICK from star striker Sig Sam Agar (R Signals) fired the Army to an emphatic 5-0 win over Sussex in the Southern Counties Cup.

The sharpshooter was in ruthless form at the Aldershot Military Stadium and his efforts saw the competition's defending champions comprehensively dispatched as the Reds maintained their impressive early-season form.

The hosts were in total control throughout and made the perfect start when Sgt Keith Emmerson (AGC, pictured below right) headed home a free kick from Cpl Danny Haley (R Signals) inside the opening minute.

Agar should have doubled the Army's lead just moments later when he raced clear of the static Sussex defence, but his shot was well saved by visiting goalkeeper Simon Lockwood.

Defender Pte Sam Lake (2 Para) spurned a glorious chance when he headed over after being left unmarked in the box and Agar went close with a stunning long-range strike that drifted just wide of the goal.

With the Army continuing to squander their chances, Sussex were relieved to make half-time with only a 1-0 deficit.

However, Agar killed any hopes of a comeback when he collected a through ball from A/Sgt Phil Piercey (Infantry) to slot home from the edge of the area.

Haley almost extended the lead as he capitalised on some hesitation in the Sussex defence before Agar sealed the victory in the 75th minute.

Skipper SSgt Glenn Davidson



Hotshot: Sig Sam Agar (R Signals) rounds the Sussex keeper before slotting home his second goal

(AGC) floated a superb pass over the opposition back line and the striker calmly rounded the keeper and rolled the ball into an empty net.

And he completed his hat-trick minutes later when he emphatically volleyed home after the visitors failed to clear a corner.

Cpl Paul Douglass (RLC, pictured left) sealed the rout in the dying seconds as he ghosted through the exhausted Sussex ranks to expertly convert from a one-on-one.

Home goalkeeper Cpl Adam Collington (3 Yorks) was largely untested on a comfortable night for the Reds defence, while Douglass, Piercey and Haley caught the eye in a solid midfield display.

Speaking to *SoldierSport* at full time, man-of-the-match Agar said the result was sweet revenge for the mauling his side received at the hands of the same opposition last year.

He added: "They turned us over 4-0 so to come back and thrash them 5-0 is fantastic for us.

"A few chances went begging in the first half, which is not like me, but we never took our foot off the gas. The lads are really hungry and this is one of the strongest Army squads I have been involved with.

"I've been playing as a lone striker so

it is hard work, but when the lads get forward to support you in attack it can be so rewarding.

"To score a goal is a great achievement in itself, but a hat-trick is unbelievable. I'm delighted."

The Army continue their Southern Counties campaign against London on December 7. ■



SPORT SHORTS

■ **COMBINED** Services netball players tested themselves on the courts down under when they went head-to-head with their rivals from the New Zealand Defence Force.

The tournament saw the squad involved in six 40-minute games, along with an hour-long play-off, in the space of just three days in what was an intense and exhausting schedule.

They opened with a 27-20 defeat to the Royal New Zealand Air Force (RNZAF) and then lost to both the Army and Navy.

The run of losses was repeated on day two but the Combined Services saved their best performance until last, when they beat the RNZAF 35-26 in the third-place play-off.

Army star Cpl Nordia Masters (AGC) was in superb form during the match and her endeavours saw her collect the squad's player of the day award.

■ **ARMY** athlete Maj Phil Watson (9/12 L) won the Masters B title at the National Biathlon Championships in Salford.

The event saw entrants tested in a run-swim-run combination and the officer went on to compete in the Great Britain squad at the World Championships in Bulgaria.

He completed the Sofia course in a personal best time of 9min 49sec, which saw him finish sixth overall.

■ **SUPER-fit** soldiers serving with the British Gurkhas in Nepal will be competing in the world's highest marathon this month.

Maj Kevin Thorpe, Maj Jim Thompson, SSgt Nicky Young (all AGC (SPS)), Capt Frances Fox (RLC), WO2 Steve Roberts (Int Corps) and SSgt Steve Williamson (RE) will line up for the The Everest Marathon on December 2.

The challenge sees athletes running at 5,188 metres above sea level, close to the mountain's base camp.

The team is raising money for a number of causes, including Help for Heroes, ABF The Soldiers' Charity and The Royal British Legion.

Donations can be made online at www.virginmoneygiving.com/team/BGNEverest2011

■ **A TEAM** of ten soldiers from 258 Signal Squadron have completed an expedition to scale the world's largest active volcano – Mauna Loa.

The Hawaiian adventure took two weeks to complete and was the first expedition of its kind conducted by serving members of the Army.

■ **SQUASH** sensation Lt Col (Retd) John Woodliffe has continued his success on court by winning the World Over 70 Championship in Portugal.

The veteran player was due to compete in the over 75 competition but when a lack of entrants saw the tournament scrapped, he dropped down to the lower age bracket.

Top of the props

Interview: Richard Long
Picture: Steve Dock

AFTER 28 years of hard scrummaging in Rugby Union's Corps Competition, it would be safe to assume that Capt Ian Wilkins would be ready to hang up his boots.

But instead of seeking salvation on the sidelines, the front row forward has returned to action with the Adjutant General's Corps on a mission to lift the Division Two title.

The 44-year-old took to the field for the season opener against the Army Medical Services (pictured below) and helped steer his side to a hard-fought 22-20 victory as the campaign started in fine style.

The experienced prop is determined to revel in the twilight of his career and, providing he stays injury free, is hoping to play a key role in the fixtures to come.

"I managed to last for 65 minutes against the AMS

and we won with the last try of the game, which was fantastic,"

Wilkins told *SoldierSport*.

"You are a long time retired so I

want to keep going.

"I am still thoroughly enjoying it. I have done my coaching and referees' courses but there is no substitute for playing matches.

"The great thing about AGC rugby is that it gives guys from all the different branches the chance to come together as one.

"Where else will you get a teacher, lawyer, policeman and human resources specialist sitting on the bench or working alongside one another as a pack of forwards?"

Wilkins made his debut for the Royal Army Pay Corps in 1983 and went on to make 27 appearances before the AGC was formed in 1992.

He has since played 90 matches for the side and set himself a target of 125 games before he finally retires.

As well as being dedicated to the corps game he has fulfilled a variety of roles with the Army Rugby Union, including academy coach and senior team manager, and now sits on the organisation's management board.

"It is a very rewarding position," Wilkins explained.

"I still feel as though I have one foot on the playing field so I know what the guys need.

"I took an Army A side on tour to Romania in the summer.

"We had a squad of 24 players and six of those made the recent trip down under [to the International Defence Rugby Competition] with the senior side.

"That is a fantastic achievement for those guys and proves we have the quality out there in the Army ranks.

"It is great to be part of something like that and hopefully I can be involved for a few years to come." ■





Hot lap: The MX-5 team, which included soldiers Brig Mike Hickson and Maj Jim Cameron, claimed 24th spot in the Britcar 24-hour race at Silverstone

Military Mazda's motoring marathon

Report: Richard Long

ARMED Forces motorsport stars produced an inspired performance on the track at Silverstone to finish tenth in their class at the Britcar 24-hour race.

The Mazda MX-5 team, led by Maj Jim Cameron (2 RTR), excelled in the fast lane and claimed 24th spot in a field of 60 competitors at the country's premier endurance event.

The officer set the tone for the day with a blistering early pace that saw him gain several places on the qualifying position of 52nd.

Will Browning, a former sergeant in the Royal Signals, continued the good work before the car was involved in an accident as night fell.

The resulting damage meant the team had to rebuild the vehicle's front end – a setback that took them off the circuit for more than an hour.

Brig Mike Hickson, chairman of the Army Motorsport Association, pushed the Mazda back into contention with a two-and-a-half-hour stint at the wheel and in the six hours following the crash the racers climbed 19 places from 46th.

Motorsport television presenter Tony Jardine set a new lap record for the team, before Cameron went one better to post the fastest time by any production-spec MX-5.

At the end of their 24-hour run the foursome had completed 475 laps, covering a distance of 1,741 miles.

Speaking at the race finale, Jardine said: "The MX-5 was a real surprise,

it punched above its weight in all areas and it was fast, nimble and reliable."

Cameron added: "The car handled so well and was just so much fun to race.

"It changes direction so easily and is viceless, so it is easy to keep out of trouble even in a mixed and fiercely competitive field."

As well as excelling on the track, the Army was strongly represented in the pit crew, courtesy of Tpr Will Maddern and Cpl Josh Hammell (both 2 RTR).

The drivers also used the event to raise the profile of a number of military charities and the vehicle was emblazoned with logos from Help for Heroes, ABF The Soldiers' Charity, The Forces Children's Trust, The Not Forgotten Association and Scotty's Little Soldiers. ■

Skiers welcome new recruits

THE Combined Services Disabled Ski Team has returned to the slopes in a bid to build on their medal-winning performances from last season.

Five new members have joined the set-up ahead of the gruelling winter of training and racing that forms part of the group's ongoing quest to qualify for the Paralympics in 2014.

With four members already involved with the British team and development squad they are hoping to capitalise on their successes from last year, when they won 11 international medals.

The skiers will go head-to-head with their able-bodied comrades in Army competitions in January, before progressing to Inter-Services level in February.

The team will then focus on the international calendar for the remainder of the season.

Sgt Mick Brennan (R Signals, pictured right), who has been with the group since it formed in 2008, said there was no room for complacency with new talent emerging from the ranks.

He added: "Some of the guys coming through now are a lot better than I was when I started and

in three or four years they'll be right at the top of the sport.

"I'm having to pick my game up all the time and it is good having different abilities on the squad, it brings everyone on and they keep you looking over your shoulder."

Cpl Martin Tye (RLC) is one of the newcomers and he is showing great potential on the piste.

"I've already been accepted onto the GB development squad," he explained. "My hope is to get enough points to qualify for the Winter Paralympics.

"I was in a bit of a rut and quite depressed but because of the sports I've been doing I've been able to turn my life around. I've now got a focus to get to the highest level I can and I'm hoping to do this full-time."

The Combined Services Disabled Ski Team is open to any member of the Armed Forces community with a permanent disability.

For more information on the organisation visit www.csdst.co.uk



Picture: Graham Harrison

final word



We asked troops training on Salisbury Plain for their thoughts on the various changes being made to the Army. Does the future look bright for 2012 and beyond?

INTERVIEWS: JOE CLAPSON
PICTURES: STEVE DOCK



Spr Sam Broxholme (RE)

I would say the future looks gloomy. It does not look good but as soon as the economy picks up, hopefully the Services will get injected with more cash. I'm sure there will be a light at the end of the tunnel and a period when there's no need for redundancies and extra money will be available for kit. But at this time people are worried about losing their place in the British Army.



Spr Richard Hollamby (RE)

Redundancies and cutbacks are not something I worry about to be honest. I've passed my tests and kept my fitness up and I think this is an issue for the officers commanding and the higher ranks to be concerned with. I genuinely don't think about it – if my bosses say something is a problem then I will take note but otherwise I don't see the point.



Cpl Matthew Curgenvan (RE)

I actually think redundancies are a good thing as they give a chance to those who want to leave. Personnel who may not like the military lifestyle can use the cuts as a way out. As far as I am aware it's more a case of people choosing to end their Service career than being forced out. I think the kit we get now is much better than in the past so those remaining in the Army should be okay.



Cpl Jamie Francis (R Welsh)

At the moment changes such as redundancies aren't going to affect us because we're Infantry. However, it is pretty sad for lads in other areas of the Army. Lots of people joined up for a 22-year career and ended up getting a nasty letter. It will result in a downsized force with less manpower and resources, but with leaving Helmand that might not be a major problem.



Lt Gareth Parkinson (RE)

I think it is obvious that the Army is getting smaller and more specialised and we are now focusing on training for a hybrid war to cover all bases. The way things are going it's a good time to be a junior commander in the Royal Engineers because pulling out of Afghanistan will be a massive task for our trade, incorporating everything we have trained to do.



Pte Jason Done (R Welsh)

It's not a good idea to reduce the size of the Army at all. Regardless of equipment, we still need men to make the kit work. It is in the UK's own interest to keep personnel in jobs. Soon we will become a force more like the Australian Army than the British Army. Even now we only look after Helmand while the US has all of Afghanistan so our impact is already small.



Pte Daniel Frowen (R Welsh)

The boys are obviously concerned about their careers ending, where they are going and what they are doing. I do think ahead, wondering about all the different kit and equipment and what might happen in the future. But right now I'm more than happy to stay in the Army because every industry has been affected by cuts and the Royal Air Force and Royal Navy have been hit harder.



Spr Ryan Taylor (RE)

I haven't really thought about the current situation, I just crack on with work and let other people get bothered by it. I haven't had any conversations with the lads about people losing their jobs or how we'll be affected by changes. I joined the Army as a tradesman and that's what I am, so I just get on with my job and if tours come up then I get out on them.



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