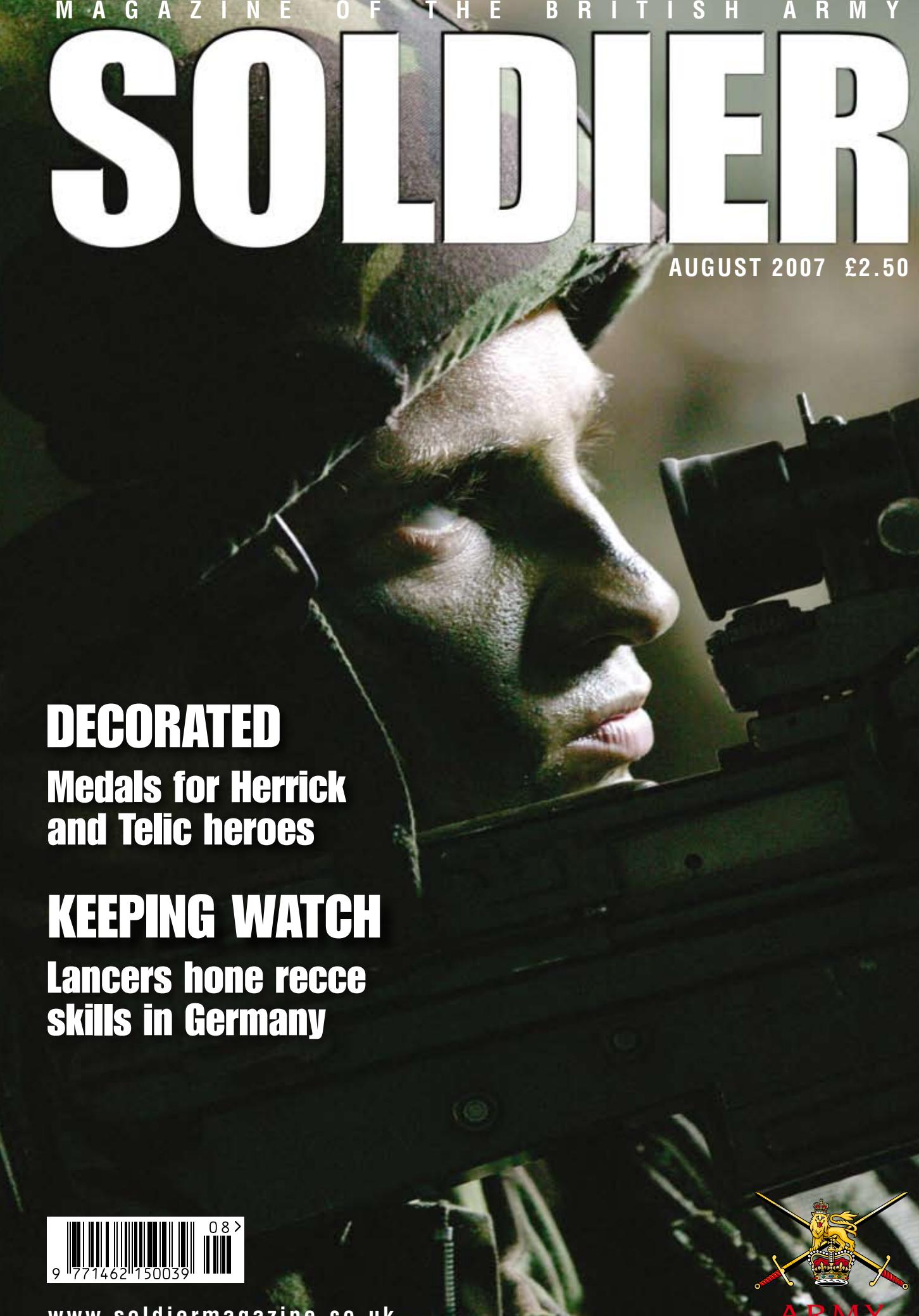


MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH ARMY

SOLDIER

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Sally's story
Sally Spencer's boyfriend Lieutenant Richard Palmer was serving with the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards when he was killed in action in Iraq on 15 April 2006. Just over a year later, Sally ran the London Marathon for him and the times they shared, and raised over £30,000 for the Army Benevolent Fund.

"Richard respected and cared deeply for those he served with. By running for the Army Benevolent Fund, a cause in which we believed so strongly, I can hopefully make him proud."

Image courtesy of Cambridge Newspapers Ltd

SOLDIER

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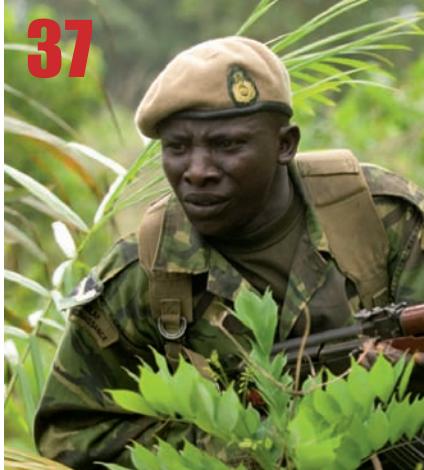
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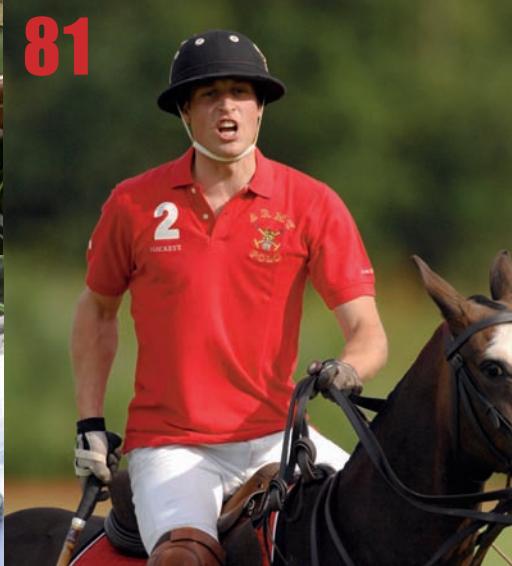
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Cover picture (left): Vigilant – Tpr Allister Palmer, 4 Squadron, Command Troop of the 9th/12th Royal Lancers, during Exercise Swabian Lance. See Pages 21-23 Picture: Steve Dock

Background image: A soldier from 4 Rifles

conducts an intelligence patrol around Basra. See Page 15 Picture: Cpl Dan Harmer, RLC



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"Goodbye . . . and don't forget to write . . ."

● On home soil – Pages 25-29

Always there to support us

BRITAIN'S top soldier, Gen Sir Richard Dannatt, and Sir Hugh Orde, Chief Constable of the Police Service of Northern Ireland, have paid extraordinary tributes to the troops, and their families, who served during the Troubles.

To mark the end of Operation Banner – the largest and longest running in the history of the British military – the Chief of the General Staff, Gen Dannatt, said: "Throughout the operation, the British Army consistently demonstrated a resolute, disciplined and flexible attitude adapting uniquely to the deployment of military forces on United Kingdom territory.

"At the height of the operation, 28,000 troops were deployed and a total of more than 250,000 members of the Regular Army have taken their turn to serve.

"It is often overlooked that more than 600 soldiers died. The majority were killed by terrorist action, including 102 soldiers who died in 1972 alone.

"It is fitting that we take a moment to reflect on the achievements of all those soldiers who have served on Op Banner in support. Above all, we should pay tribute to all those who paid the ultimate sacrifice."

In an exclusive letter to *Soldier*, Sir Hugh said: "As a Police Service, we have been at the very heart of change. Indeed, I do not believe it is an exaggeration to say that police officers and staff have helped to create the

FIRST SIGHT

conditions which have made the political progress and changes in society possible.

"And, if all of this could not have happened without the police, then we could not have done it without the unstinting support of our friends and colleagues in the Army. Soldiers and their families are departing Northern Ireland, leaving only the garrison appropriate to any other part of the UK.

"My officers are now able to police with the community without the need for soldiers to protect them doing their normal job. That situation has been a long time coming. Some would say too long.

"But, throughout the darkest and most distressing times over more than 30 years, when we needed support, you were there. Your support was given generously. It was always professional. It was never any less than courageous. And as with the police, it sometimes came at a great, great cost.

"Words are inadequate to express the depth of appreciation we feel. But to the many thousands of soldiers of all ranks who have served in Northern Ireland, and on behalf of police officers retired or serving currently, I would simply say thank you." ■

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Operational honours

**Military Crosses reward courage of
troops in Afghanistan and Iraq »**

Courage under fire

Military Cross for officer who remained in command despite losing hand

SI X officers and other ranks are to receive Military Crosses for their courage and calm leadership under enemy fire in southern Iraq.

Capt Ibrar Ali, Yorks, was commanding a three-vehicle patrol when a roadside bomb exploded next to his vehicle, fatally wounding the driver and injuring both his top cover sentries.

Although he lost his right hand in the blast and was wounded in the left hand and right leg, Capt Ali's first concern was to secure the contact point and a helicopter landing site.

He told his soldiers to give first aid to his driver and sentries and, despite his own life-threatening injuries, maintained control until help arrived.

Platoon commander **Lt Alex Burgess**, PWRR, also awarded the MC, showed fine leadership when one of the company's Warriors became stuck in a sewage ditch on a search operation.

During an ensuing contact, the largest and most intense battle in Iraq since 2004, he calmly organised his platoon as part of the defensive perimeter around the stricken vehicle, allowing those around him to fight off a numerically superior enemy in a fierce and protracted fight.

A day before flying home, **Maj Jeremy Lamb**, RRF, was asked to search two houses. With less than an hour to make his plans, he headed for the targets with his company of 14 Warriors and about 100 soldiers.

His lead vehicles were ambushed from both sides by about 50 enemy, with a roadside explosion initiating the ambush followed by a fusillade of up to 12 rocket-propelled grenades (RPG) and hundreds of small-arms rounds.

Maj Lamb pushed through and reached both objectives, securing bomb-making kit as well as saving two Land Rovers stranded in the battle by placing his own Warrior in the line of fire. Nearly all his vehicles were

Iraq

hit, with one Warrior sustaining six RPG and more than 100 small-arms strikes. His force fired more than 3,500 rounds in a battle lasting more than two hours. He wins the MC.

When a Queen's Royal Hussars battle-group Challenger 2 tank was struck by an RPG and became stuck in a semi-dry lake bed, **SSgt Christopher Lyndhurst**,



● Capt Ibrar Ali



● LCpl Paul Wilson



● Lt Alex Burgess



● Maj Jeremy Lamb



● SSgt Christopher Lyndhurst



● Rfn Jokini Sivoinauca

Another MC winner is **Rfn Jokini Sivoinauca**, Rifles, who with his team was ordered to occupy an isolated checkpoint building and to engage gunmen during a joint security operation lasting three hours.

In this exposed position he spotted an enemy RPG, with gunmen in support, engaging a Warrior and immediately opened fire on them. Despite being wounded, Rfn Sivoinauca led his team "with complete disregard for his own safety".

When enemy fire hit his Warrior and wounded a colleague, recovery mechanic **LCpl Paul Wilson**, REME, climbed to the top decks of the Warrior via the rear stable door.

Although exposed to sustained fire, he treated his colleague and showed inspirational courage while recovering a stricken Bulldog vehicle, actions which won him an MC.

The remarkable response of **Cpl Michael Harrold**, QRL, at the scene of a fatal accident earned him a Queen's Gallantry Medal.

When a Scimitar rolled into thigh-deep mud and water, Cpl Harrold was the first man on the scene. He waded in to help extract the badly hurt operator, then climbed into the Scimitar to free the commander in "foul and dangerous" conditions.

There is also a QGM for **LCpl Michael Wilkinson**, R Anglian, who was on a desert patrol when three Danish vehicles 500 metres to his front were hit by an IED which disabled the lead vehicle and set it on fire.

After 12 extinguishers had failed to douse the blaze, he fought the fire with drinking water, trying to extract a casualty. Although his own life was at risk he pulled back only when ordered to do so.

● **TEN Military Crosses have been awarded to Royal Marines, eight for service in Afghanistan and two in Iraq. In addition, the commandos won two DSOs, a CGC, 13 MiDs and three QCVS in Helmand.**

NORTHERN IRELAND

CBE: Col W M Campbell OBE, late R Irish.
OBE: Lt Col N A Baker, Int Corps; Lt Col N F C Nottingham, R Irish. **MBE**: Maj M R Fuller RE; Maj A G MacLean RA. **QGM**: Maj G J Powell RLC. **QCB**: WO2 R Kitson RE. **QCVS**: WO2 A D Amies, R Signals; Cpl C Buckingham, R Signals; Maj A Burton REME; Maj D H Clarke, late R Irish; WO2 M A Devenney, R Irish; SSgt D Devlin REME; WO2 A J Fletcher, Int Corps; Maj T Middlemas, R Irish; Capt J Millar, R Irish; Lt Col F R Noble RE; WO1 J N Runchman, R Signals.

FORMER YUGOSLAVIA

MBE: Maj M J Farrington RLC.

AFGHANISTAN

KCB: Lt Gen D J Richards CBE DSO, late RA. **OBE**: Lt Col M Burnett RE; Lt Col R D Winstanley, Gren Gds. **MBE**: Maj D W Southall RE. **MC**: SSgt K J Armatage AAC; LBdr R D Jennings RA; Capt D C Rigg RE; WO1 M S Rutherford AAC. **DFC**: Capt N P Barton AAC; Capt D G O'Malley AAC. **GM**: Fus A L Barlow RRF. **QGM**: Capt G McIntosh RA; Capt P T Rushmere RA; Capt V M Stafford RLC.

MiD: Spr L S Horan RE; Cpl S Marner RE; WO2 M Smith RA (killed in action); Maj J Swift RRF; Sgt M Wilkinson LD. **QCVS**: Maj Gen C C Brown CBE, late RA; Cpl O J Carter, Para; WO2 B L Crane, Coldm Gds; Brig R R Davis CBE, late RA; WO2 R G Groves RA; Maj J D Holman RE; Cpl H Milad AGC; Maj A L Pearce, Int Corps; Brig R W H Purdy OBE, late RA; Maj B J Warrack LD.

IRAQ

OBE: Lt Col T A Sandiford, Staffords. **MBE**: Capt G R Piggott, Coldm Gds. **ARRC**: SSgt H F Jones

Mission improbable

Daring Apache crews who flew into Taliban stronghold cited for gallantry

BRAVE soldiers who took part in a daring mission to retrieve a missing comrade from a heavily defended Taliban stronghold have been recognised with top gallantry awards.

Capt David Rigg, RE, and Apache pilots **SSgt Keith Armatage, AAC**, and **WO1 Mark Rutherford, AAC**, received the Military Cross for their part in the action, which made world headlines.

Capt Darren O'Malley, also of the AAC, receives a Distinguished Flying Cross for his bravery during the operation in Helmand province.

Capt Rigg and three Royal Marines clapped themselves to the sides of Apache helicopters to evacuate LCpl Matthew Ford of 45 Commando RM.

He had gone missing in action, badly wounded, following an earlier assault on an enemy fort, and the plan was hatched to pull him out.

While Capt O'Malley co-ordinated fire support from his Apache, WO1 Rutherford and SSgt Armatage flew the rescue teams into the area. But they were unable to land where they had planned, so SSgt Armatage, armed only with a pistol, climbed out of his cockpit to lead the team to the casualty under fire.

Although the rescuers found the fallen Marine, he had died of his injuries by the time he had been returned to base.

Capt Rigg's citation paid tribute to his bravery in volunteering for the dangerous mission even though he thought he was "about to be thrown into a deliberate ambush".

The citation said: "He knew that he would be returning to face an aggressive, determined and lethal enemy, who were already alert to the company's presence and were very likely to anticipate their return to find LCpl Ford. In the ensuing action he displayed outstanding valour, clarity of thought and purpose in the face of a lethal and determined enemy and with deliberate disregard for his own safety."

Of SSgt Armatage, the citation said his flying skill was impressively courageous throughout the audacious mission.

QARANC. MC: Capt I Ali, Yorks; Lt A J Burgess PWRR; Maj J Lamb RRF; SSgt C B Lyndhurst REME; Pte J Sivoinaqua, Rifles; LCpl P C Wilson REME. **QGM:** Cpl M G Harrold QRL; LCpl M A Wilkinson, R Anglian. **Mid:** Pte G Cooper PWRR; Lt M J E Ellis, Rifles; LCpl S P L Ferguson QRH; LCpl S A Flores, Rifles; Maj M E Foster-Brown, Rifles; Pte M J Godber PWRR; Pte D R Jones, Rifles; Cpl D J Lovell, Staffords; Cpl L C Melvin RAMC; Cpl M T Palmas, R Anglian; Pte V R Ratu, Rifles; LCpl W R Read PWRR; Maj M Ross, Staffords; Cpl J L Smith, Staffords; Pte L P

Afghanistan



● Capt Vincent Strafford



● LBdr Richard Jennings



● Capt Peter Rushmere



● Capt Graeme McIntosh

But the fact that he left his Apache armed only with a pistol was "truly extraordinary." WO1 Rutherford was hailed for his "selfless gallantry and leadership".

"His courage, quick thinking and determination to recover LCpl Ford, with complete disregard for his own safety, were an outstanding act of valour and leadership."

The citation for Capt O'Malley's DFC says he displayed "courageous and skilful flying in the extreme." It added: "Despite

Staines, R Anglian; Cpl A P Wilde, Lancs. **QCVS:** Maj I G T Clegg QDG; Col J M Cowan OBE, late BW; Maj K D M Donaldson, RTR; Brig J R Everard CBE, late QRL; SSgt P Harland REME; SSgt W F McEachran RLC; Capt S M Morte, Rifles; SSgt T J Morton RE; Lt Col R Wardlaw RE.

NATIONAL OPERATIONS
NON-COMBATANT GALLANTRY
QCB: Cpl D A Sipika RLC.

COMMONWEALTH AND FOREIGN AWARDS

the significant risk to his own safety, for two minutes he sat alone calmly directing the fire from supporting Apaches onto nearby enemy positions."

A gunner who braved Taliban fire as he attempted to give lifesaving medical treatment to mortally wounded comrades is to receive an MC. **LBdr Richard Jennings, RA**, laid down suppressive fire after two colleagues were killed in an RPG attack in Afghanistan in March. He gave first aid before medics arrived while continuing to direct air and artillery fire "with total disregard for his own safety".

Capt Nicholas Barton, AAC, who pressed home a Christmas Eve attack mission against Taliban fighters even though his aircraft was badly damaged by ground fire is to receive the DFC. His actions resulted in enemy positions being destroyed and troops being able to break contact.

Fus Andrew Barlow, RRF, who encouraged severely wounded colleagues during a horrifying ordeal in a minefield wins a George Medal. He lost a leg after stepping on a mine during the nightmare situation near the Kajaki Dam, Helmand, while trying to reach a critically injured NCO, yet still got to the soldier's side to treat him. Seven casualties spent three-and-a-half hours in the minefield before a US aircraft rescued them.

The incident claimed the life of **Cpl Mark Wright, 3 Para**. He was awarded a posthumous GC last year. Fus Barlow's citation said: "Although severely wounded, this young private soldier continued to be an inspiration to those around him, as was the way he dealt with his own significant injury."

There are Queen's Gallantry Medals for **Capt Graeme McIntosh** and **Capt Peter Rushmere**, both RA, who ignored exploding ammunition to save the life of a soldier injured when a vehicle in their convoy struck a mine. And **Capt Vincent Strafford, RLC**, also received a QGM for making two suicide bomb vests safe without wearing a specialist EOD suit.

Canadian Meritorious Service Medal: Col C H Vernon MSM, late QRH.

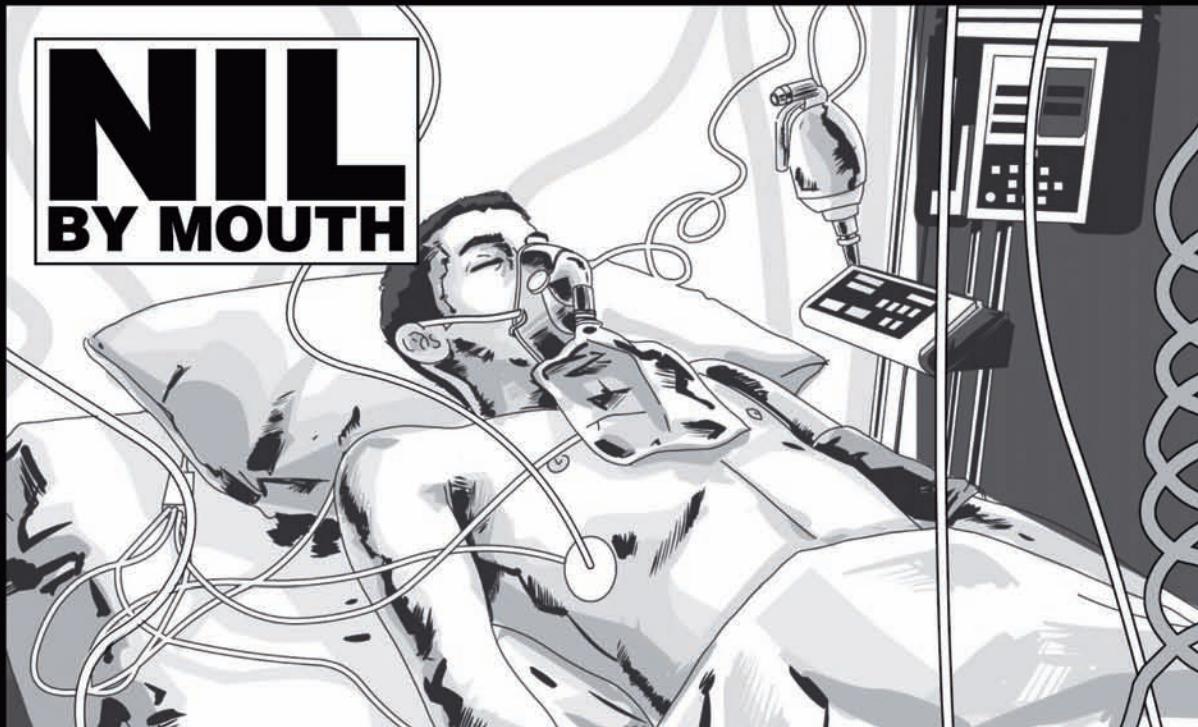
US AWARDS (AFGHANISTAN)

Bronze Star: Capt A J Mawby MBE, Int Corps.

US AWARDS (IRAQ)

US Legion of Merit: Maj Gen S V Mayall, late QDG; Lt Gen N R Parker, late RGJ. **US Bronze Star:** Maj A W Barbone AAC; Capt S A Carpenter, Coldm Gds; Col J R Hockenhull OBE, late Int Corps; Col N J Lipscombe, late RA; Lt Col N S Makin RA.

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Final flight: Once the busiest heliport in Europe, Bessbrook is now being handed back to landowners as Op Banner draws down after more than 30 years

Bessbrook bow

British soldiers move out of Mill as marathon mission comes to a close

A FORMER hub of counter-terrorism actions in Northern Ireland has closed its doors for the last time – heralding the end of the British Army's longest-running operation.

Bessbrook Mill, which has been home to generations of British troops and was once the busiest heliport in Europe, is being handed back to landowners. The move was a prelude to the culmination

of Op Banner – the military's support to the Police Service of Northern Ireland – which formally drew to a close on July 31. Since the early days of Banner in the 1970s, thousands of Service personnel have been deployed to the notorious border base for six-month tours of duty.

The last soldiers based there were from the 2nd Battalion, The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment, whose

predecessors, The Queen's Regiment, were among the first to deploy on the streets of Belfast when the Troubles erupted in August 1969.

Originally built as a flax mill in 1845, the site was acquired as a base by the MoD in the early 1970s. Work began in 2005 to remove 37 years' worth of military infrastructure from the province.

With security force movements so hazardous on the roads of South Armagh, Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force helicopters were crucial to the military campaign in that part of Northern Ireland. Soldiers would fly from there to other security force bases in the region and to the hilltop observation towers dotted along the border.

Terrorists hit the base several times, and it was at the vehicle checkpoint alongside Bessbrook Mill that LBdr Stephen Restorick of the 3rd Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery was killed by a sniper on February 12, 1997. He was the last soldier to die as a result of terrorist action in Northern Ireland.

A garrison of about 5,000 will remain in Northern Ireland, comprising Army personnel from incoming units of 19 (Light) Brigade and Royal Air Force personnel based at RAF Aldergrove. A new regional brigade – 38 (Irish) Brigade – has also been created, made up mostly of Territorial Army personnel.

● Banner tributes start on Page 25

Army head blasts 'disloyal' leaker

THE Chief of the General Staff has written to the Army to express his anger at the leaking of a classified Army Board document to a national newspaper.

Gen Sir Richard Dannatt has described the incident as "the utmost in disloyalty" and says every effort will be made to find out where the leak came from.

The document, a factual summary drawn up by him for the Chief of the Defence Staff, fell into the hands of *The Daily Telegraph*, which led its July 21 edition with a front page story headlined "We have run out of troops, says head of Army".

"While I stand by what I said, I am deeply concerned that someone decided to leak this classified document to the media," Gen Dannatt wrote in an open letter to officers and soldiers.



● Gen Dannatt

"The leaking of documents is in direct contravention not only of our regulations but also our values and standards."

He went on to say that the incident had damaged the Army's reputation within Defence and across Government. "If we are not careful we will arrive at a point where the Services are no longer trusted to keep secrets and we will bring about a culture where the Staff are reluctant to commit their thoughts to paper in case they are leaked to the press.

"No one should be under any illusion that as CGS I am quite prepared to say what needs to be said . . . what I will not accept is being hampered in my work by an individual who, for whatever reason, chooses to make my correspondence public. The same applies to the leaking of any document at any level."

Job for Bob

A NEW Armed Forces Minister is getting to grips with military affairs following a major Cabinet reshuffle by Prime Minister Gordon Brown. Bob Ainsworth took over the portfolio from predecessor Adam Ingram, who was applauded by MoD staff as he left his department after more than six years in office.

A former Coventry City councillor, Mr Ainsworth was elected to Parliament in 1992 and has worked in the Home Office and the Department for the Environment, Transport and the Regions. More recently he has been Labour's Deputy Chief Whip. He said he would soon begin visiting British personnel on operations.

Des Browne stays as Defence Secretary, but takes on additional responsibility as Secretary of State for Scotland. Derek Twigg is still the Veterans' Minister and Lord Drayson keeps the Equipment and Support Minister portfolio.

Air support

MPs have voiced "real doubts" over whether current Royal Air Force passenger aircraft can bear the strain of operations. In its latest report on Strategic Air Lift capability, the Commons Defence Select Committee said up to half the transport fleet had been unavailable for action.

A fleet of 25 modern A400M transport aircraft had been due to enter service in 2009, but it has now emerged that there is likely to be a 15-month delay.

Members pointed out that just over half of the 75-strong TriStar, VC-10 and Hercules fleet was available for immediate deployment last November.

Their report suggested that extra C-17 Globemasters could be purchased to help the situation. The RAF has four of these aircraft with a fifth due to arrive soon.

Telic heroes

ABOUT 2,000 people gathered in York Minster to remember 26 Servicemen and women from 19 Light Brigade who gave their lives during their Iraq tour.

Relatives, soldiers and senior officers listened to tributes paid to the fallen and the 130 injured during the six months of Op Telic 9. During the service, 26 bells were struck to symbolise those lost as each name was read out. Nine buglers from the 2nd Battalion, The Rifles, were silhouetted as Military Cross-holder Maj Ben Hollister went through the roll of honour.

Brig Tim Evans, Commander of 19 Light Brigade, said the sacrifices of the soldiers were not in vain: "The enemy were determined to make their mark, but we were never going to be beaten."

Op Herrick heartache

Enemy action kills four in southern Afghanistan

BRITISH commanders in Afghanistan have pledged to remain resolute in their commitment to reconstruction work in Helmand province despite the deaths of four valued soldiers.

Dmr Thomas Wright, of 1st Battalion, The Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters Regiment, died after his Snatch Land Rover was caught in an explosion near Lashkar Gar on June 24.

Veteran soldier Capt Sean Dolan, also 1 WFR, was killed during a contact with Taliban forces near Sangin six days later. Capt Dolan had been serving as a liaison officer with US forces in the Upper Gereshk Valley when he was involved in a battle with Taliban fighters. The British officer and an American colleague were fatally wounded by mortar fire.

The following day Sgt Dave Wilkinson, of 19 Regiment RA, died from his injuries after an improvised explosive device was detonated during a patrol with the Afghan National Army in Gereshk. Four other soldiers injured in the blast were evacuated to Camp Bastion.

On July 12, Gdsm Daryl Hickey, of the 1st Battalion, Grenadier Guards, was fatally wounded during an assault on a Taliban position.

Dmr Wright, 21, enlisted in 2003 and had served in Northern Ireland, Kenya and Belize.

He had been escorting a military team surveying the site for a new road project when he was killed. Four other soldiers were injured in the bomb blast.

Capt Dolan joined the Army in 1985 as a junior leader, embarking on a career that took him on tours of Afghanistan, Bosnia and Northern Ireland, where he was Mentioned in Dispatches. Commissioned last year, he had served in the Falklands, Kenya and Belize.

His CO, Lt Col Richard Westley, said he would be sorely missed: "Capt Dolan was the complete man and an unsurpassed military talent; strong, intelligent and fit, he was the consummate professional."

Of Dmr Wright, Lt Col Westley said: "He was a talented young soldier whose courage and professionalism serve as a reminder of the commitment of young soldiers across Afghanistan to whom society owes a huge debt."



● Dmr Thomas Wright



● Capt Sean Dolan



● Gdsm Daryl Hickey



● Sgt Dave Wilkinson

Sgt Wilkinson, who was 33, joined the Army in 1993 and had served on operations in both the Balkans and Iraq.

His CO, Lt Col Will Bramble, said: "Sgt Wilkinson was held in the highest regard by all who knew him. His selfless nature and wry wit made him extremely popular. Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife, Rachel, and family."

Gdsm Hickey, who was 27, signed up for service with the Queen's Company of the Grenadier Guards in 2001. He had completed tours of Northern Ireland and Iraq before deploying to Afghanistan in April. His CO, Lt Col Carew Hatherley, said: "Gdsm Hickey was a quiet and thoughtful character, who was fun to be with both on and off duty."

"He had been fighting the Taliban on an operation that had, at times, been nothing short of ferocious. He gave his life in selfless service to his country."

● LCPL Timothy Flowers, 25, REME, who was attached to the 2nd Royal Tank Regiment, died from injuries after being hit by shrapnel in a mortar attack on the vehicle park at Basra Palace, southern Iraq, as this issue went to press. An obituary will appear in the September issue.



Picture: Sgt Will Craig

Road to victory: Under the cover of darkness, soldiers from 26 Engineer Regiment assembled a 30-metre combat bridge in Garmisir, southern Afghanistan

Bridging the gap

Engineers construct first front-line crossing since Malaya Emergency

NATO troops in southern Afghanistan now have a new route to take the fight to the enemy after British sappers braved Taliban bullets to construct a combat bridge.

Around 40 soldiers from 26 Engineer Regiment moved into Garmisir under cover of darkness to assemble the 30-metre structure. The medium girder bridge, which was established in an area attacked by the enemy more than 100 times in recent months, can take the weight of the medium trucks transporting troops to strike at the heart of Taliban forces in the area.

The action to assemble the structure, codenamed Op Bataka, also involved around 200 soldiers from The Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters Regiment and the Grenadier Guards.

Backed up by a company from the increasingly confident Afghan National Army, they quickly moved across the newly-built bridge and stormed a Taliban-held area.

Lt Col Angus Watson, CO of the Light Dragoons battle-group, was delighted with the success of the action. It is believed it is the first time British sappers have built a front-line bridge since the Malaya Emergency of the 1940s and 50s.

He praised the Afghan soldiers and Nato

troops involved in the mission, who are serving as part of the International Security Assistance Force's Task Force Helmand.

Lt Col Watson asserted: "Op Bataka will have a significant effect on the enemy. More importantly it will provide a bigger space into which civilians can

move back and continue the expansion of government and security in this area."

Task Force Helmand spokesman Lt Col Charlie Mayo added: "This bridge will give us the opportunity to retaliate against the Taliban should they try to force us, or our allies, out of Garmisir."

New brigade for Helmand

ONE of the Army's newest deployable brigades – Edinburgh-based 52 Infantry Brigade – is to begin a tour in Afghanistan in October, replacing 12 Mechanised Brigade.

HQ 52 Inf Bde, commanded by Brig Andrew Mackay, was until April part of the UK-based Regional Forces command.

It will deploy for six months to Lashkar Gah, Helmand, taking the Household Cavalry Regiment, 1 Coldrm Gds (including Right Flank, 1 SG); 2 Yorks; 1 RGR; 4 Regt RA; 36 Engr Regt; 27 Regt RLC; 5 GS Med Regt; 1 Bn REME and elements of the KRH; QRL; 5, 16, 32, 39 and 47 Regts RA; 33 Engr Regt; 70 Gurkha Fd Sp Sqn; HQ 62 WGRE, 519 Sp Team RE (W); 10, 14 (EW), 21 (AS) and 30 Sig Regts; 3 and 9 AAC; 1 CS Coy REME; 7 Rifles; 6 Scots; HQ 102 Log Bde; 9 (Sp), 11 (EOD), 12 (Log Sp), 13 AS (47 AD Sqn), and 24 and 29 (PC and Mov) Regts RLC; 148 Sqn

EFI (V) RLC; Hosp Sqn formed from 201 and 243 Fd Hosps (V); 7 (Air Asslt) REME; 101 Pro Coy, 5 RMP; 1 Mil Int Bde; Cimic Group.

An additional troop of Viking protected mobility vehicles will also be deployed.

From December 1, 4 Mech Bde will replace 1 Mech Bde in Iraq, deploying with the RDG; 1 SG; 1 Scots; 1 Lancs; 1 Cheshire (as 1 Mercian from Sept 1); 21 Engr Regt; 12 (Log Sp) Regt RLC; 1 (CS) Med Regt; D Bty, 3 RHA and K Bty, 5 RHA; and elements of 33 Engr Regt (EOD); 62 Wks Gp RE, 523 STRE (W); 3 (UK) Div Sig Regt; 1 (UK) Armd Div Sig Regt; 10, 14 (EW) and 21 (AS) Sig Regts; 6 Sp Regt RLC; 16 Tk Tptr Sqn, 7 Tpt Regt RLC; 11 (EOD) Regt RLC; 84 Med Sp Sqn, 9 Sp Regt RLC; 150 Tpt Regt (V) RLC; 148 Sqn EFI (V) RLC; 24 and 29 PC and Mov Regts RLC; 1 Bn REME; 115 Pro Coy, 1 RMP; 102 Mil Wk Dog Sp Unit RAVC; and 1 Mil Int Bde.

UNDER Big Ben

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

Troops to browse net kit catalogue

A NEW electronic way of supplying personal kit to soldiers could soon be rolled out.

In a written answer, Defence Secretary Des Browne said the MoD had been working on a project to introduce a web-based catalogue, which would allow troops to have personal kit delivered to an address of their choice.

The Defence Secretary also revealed that trials of new desert boots, which are set to be issued to troops deploying to Iraq and Afghanistan in the autumn, were under way. Mr Browne added: "A second alternative boot will be available from 2008, offering some degree of choice."

Iraq drawdown: British troop numbers could fall further in Iraq in the coming weeks if security conditions allow, outgoing Prime Minister Tony Blair said in his final question time. Addressing colleagues shortly before tendering his resignation to the Queen, Mr Blair added that the Iraqi Army's 10th Division was now operating effectively, but stressed that any UK drawdown would depend on security circumstances.

Mental health: The first trials of a new Armed Forces mental health scheme were due to begin as this issue went to press. In a written answer, Veterans' Minister Derek Twigg said the MoD was working to create the community-based scheme that would give NHS professionals access to expertise in military mental health. The pilot schemes would be evaluated after two years, he added.

TA deployment: Some 13,000 volunteers from the Territorial Army have been mobilised for overseas operations since January 2003, Armed Forces Minister Bob Ainsworth has confirmed. Responding to a question from MP Ann Winterton he said the soldiers had been providing crucial support.

Smooth start

... but admin staff accept JPA is not hitch-free

THE roll-out of the Joint Personnel Administration across the Army has gone smoothly despite a few teething problems, staff behind the system have maintained.

They highlighted that feedback from troops about the package had been broadly favourable and said the electronic system was proving both easy to use and convenient.

But some *Soldier* readers were less convinced about JPA (see Talkback), which was finally introduced to the Army in April. Among the frustrations brought to light were unpaid allowances and cases of re-enlisted troops going without their salary.

In Parliament, Veterans' Minister Derek Twigg admitted that nearly 170 soldiers had been incorrectly paid during May but stressed that all errors would be corrected promptly.

While he was unable to comment on

specific cases, a JPA spokesman said that issues arising with the package were being ironed out as soon as they were identified. He added: "The problems have been small given to the size of the system. I believe we are in a better state now than under the old way of doing pay. People tend to remember the difficulties of any system rather than the good points, but the problems we are identifying today are being resolved swiftly."

The spokesman said that lessons had been learned from the earlier introductions of JPA to the Royal Air Force and Royal Navy.

The roll-out of the terminals to support the system was continuing and all bases were expected to be at full operating capability early next year, he added. "As a product, JPA delivers, there is no question about it. We are in pretty good order here and the decision to introduce the system was a good one."

Proud Fijian dies in Basra

FRIENDS and colleagues of a young Fijian soldier who lost his life at Basra Palace have been reflecting on his "humility and commitment" during his tour of Iraq.

Rfn Edward Vakabua, of the 4th Battalion, The Rifles, died on July 6. An investigation into the circumstances of his death has been launched and no further comment has been made.

Comrades remembered the 23-year-old, who joined the Army in 2003 and whose brother is serving in Iraq with the 1st Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery, as a man who set an example to others. Known as V or Vaka, he was recognised for his selfless commitment and for being a man on whom others could depend.

A popular member of the battalion, he was also praised for his quiet professionalism and intelligence.

His platoon commander Capt Will Peltor said: "Vaka's death has hit us deeply. A friend, a cherished brother rifleman, a proud son of Fiji – and one of whom Fiji can be deeply proud – has been lost serving our country."

"Our sense of loss and grief is as nothing compared to that of his family who will be inconsolable and for whom no words of ours can ease their pain and suffering.

"Vaka embodied the proud, honourable and long tradition of Fijians serving in the

British Army. These are men of great faith, decency and loyalty."

Lt Col Patrick Sanders, CO of 4 Rifles, endorsed Capt Peltor's sentiments and the warm tributes paid by Rfn Vakabua's friends. "These are the men who knew him best, loved him best and will miss him most strongly," he said.



● Rfn Edward Vakabua

● A talented NCO has been killed in a road accident in Greece. LBdr Brett Walmsley, of 47th Regiment, Royal Artillery, died in the crash on July 12. The NCO, who joined the Army in 1999 and had been serving with Nato troops in Kosovo, had previously been on operations in Iraq and Northern Ireland.

His CO, Lt Col Andrew Carwardine, said: "He had a promising career ahead – he was one of the rising stars in his troop and battery and was destined for promotion."

LBdr Walmsley, who originally came from Darwen, Lancashire, took up his most recent posting about two years ago having initially served with 12 Regiment RA.

A statement from his family said: "Brett loved being in the Army."

"His death has left a big hole in our lives but we have taken great comfort from the many kind messages we have received from friends, family and our local community."



Picture: Cpl Dan Harmer RLC

Dangerous ground: British soldiers from 1 Mechanised Brigade have been engaged in operations to weed out anti-coalition forces in Iraq's second city

Troops strike back

Soldiers counter mortar attacks by taking battle to the enemy in Basra

DETERMINED British soldiers moved to smash a major terrorist cell believed to be responsible for attacks on their bases during a daring swoop in Basra.

Troops from 1 Mechanised Brigade in southern Iraq were among a 1,200-strong multinational force that descended on locations around the city.

Commanders said they were satisfied with the success of the high-profile action, during which several terror suspects were detained and weapons seized.

According to reports, the operation was planned to strike at individuals believed to be responsible for recent attacks on the Provincial Joint Coordination Centre (PJCC) in Basra – one of which killed Maj Paul Harding, of the 4th Battalion, The Rifles (see Page 16).

A number of Challenger 2 tanks and armoured personnel carriers were deployed during the action, the largest in the region since December.

A British Army spokesman told *Soldier* that several suspects had been detained and “a quantity” of weapons and explosives discovered.

He said: “We lifted a number of people suspected of attacks against both Iraqi and multinational forces – specifically the individuals who we believe have been attacking the PJCC.

“There were more than 1,000 troops taking part in the operations, including

soldiers from 4 Rifles and the 2nd Battalion, The Royal Welsh Regiment.”

But the success was not without cost. LCpl Ryan Francis of 2 R Welsh and Cpl Christopher Read of the 3rd Regiment, Royal Military Police died following separate incidents (see Page 16) and several more were wounded by rifle fire and roadside bombs.

The spokesman added: “The deaths of

friends and colleagues obviously affects us all in different ways, but we have a great team out here and have been pulling together. There are a lot of mechanisms and systems to help deal with grief. The guys are very focused on their jobs.

“There were some minor injuries sustained by the soldiers on the operation and they have been receiving the best possible medical care.”

Border patrols praised

THE proud CO of The Queen’s Royal Lancasters has paid tribute to the courage of his soldiers after patrolling deep into the Iraqi desert near the border with Iran.

Lt Col Richard Nixon-Eckersall revealed how his reconnaissance troops had braved ambushes and bombs to stop weapons getting to terrorist hands in Basra.

And as the soldiers prepared to receive their Op Telic medals, he was confident that the mission had done its job and that many lives had been saved as a result. But the success came at a price. Three members of the QRL were killed, and there were several close calls with lethal improvised explosive devices and mortar bombs.

Lt Col Nixon-Eckersall said the troops had performed outstandingly despite the tough Op Telic 9 deployment and had risen to the challenge in the face of a determined

enemy. He added: “We discovered roadside bombs of a frightening size and found ourselves targeted in a concerted effort by anti-Iraqi forces.

“But, in a sense, that shows the measure of our success. We also found a number of hidden weapons caches and were successful in disrupting the smugglers.”

As well as focusing on a demanding job, the soldiers also had to get to grips with a new role, having traded Challenger 2 tanks for combat reconnaissance vehicles.

Lt Col Nixon-Eckersall said: “We re-roled in 2005 having been with Challenger 2 since 1993 and coming back to formation reconnaissance was a steep learning curve. But the timing was part of our success during the Op Telic tour – while many battle-groups have to deploy outside their role, we were able to stay within it.”

Officer killed in base attack

THE commanding officer of the 4th Battalion, The Rifles, has spoken of his sadness after troops were left reeling by the loss of a much-loved and experienced officer.

Lt Col Patrick Sanders said he had lost a "close comrade, friend and confidant" after Maj Paul Harding was killed by mortar fire in Basra in the early hours of June 20. Father-of-two Maj Harding, who was 48 and from Winchester, had been in a sangar at the Provincial Joint Coordination Centre in the city when the base came under attack. The officer had been in theatre less than a month.

Having joined The Royal Green Jackets as a young soldier, Maj Harding had risen through the ranks.



● Maj Paul Harding

Lt Col Sanders said the officer's experience and friendship would be sorely missed: "The Rifles has lost one of its most senior, long-serving and admired riflemen and the country has lost a soldier of deep personal integrity and professional excellence.

"The experience he gained over 30 years meant that he had done the job of everyone under his command."

Defence Secretary Des Browne also paid tribute to the officer: "Maj Harding was an exemplary soldier, respected by his peers and loved by those who worked for him."



Picture: Gareth Fuller/PA Wire

Heartache: Cpl Will Rigby, 4 Rifles, looks down at the coffin of his identical twin brother Cpl John Rigby, who was killed by a roadside bomb in southern Iraq, during a service at Shorncliffe Military Cemetery

Two die in terror clampdown

SOLDIERS have paid tribute to two fallen comrades, who died in a major operation to close down terrorists in southern Iraq.

LCpl Ryan Francis, of the 2nd Battalion, The Royal Welsh, died when his Warrior patrol was caught in a roadside bomb blast in the early hours of July 7.

In a separate incident, Cpl Christopher Read, of 158 Provost Company, 3rd Regiment, Royal Military Police, was fatally injured by gunfire while returning to base. He was taken to the field hospital at Basra Air Station but later died from his injuries.

Known as Franky, LCpl Francis, 23, was from Llanelli. He joined the 1st Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Wales, in 2003 and had already completed two tours of Iraq.

Lt Col James Swift, CO of 2 R Welsh, said:



● LCpl Ryan Francis



● Cpl Christopher Read

"He will be sorely missed by his team, his company and the battalion.

"Our thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends, especially his mother and father and his girlfriend Joanne. Our loss is their tragedy."

Cpl Read, who was originally from Poole in Dorset, joined 158 Pro Coy direct from training in December 2004. He was remembered as an outstanding policeman who thrived on the challenges of the job.

Lt Col Simon Miller, commanding officer of 3 RMP, said that the 22-year-old had been a brave and committed soldier: "He was a warm and modest young man with a wicked sense of fun.

"He was mature and level-headed and those qualities marked him out as a particularly effective policeman.

"Chris was hugely popular and leaves behind some very close friends, all of whom were able to comfort him during his last few hours. Our heartfelt sympathy goes out to his family at this difficult time."

Brits feel force of Basra blasts

Roadside bombs claim lives of four soldiers during black month in Iraq

TROOPS battling to build a more stable future for Iraq have been remembering the lives of four valued colleagues who were killed in roadside bomb attacks.

Cpl Paul Joszko died alongside Pte Scott Kennedy and Pte Jamie Kerr when a device exploded in the Al Amtahiya district of Basra city in the early hours of June 28.

One other soldier was seriously injured and evacuated to a field hospital.

The incident came just six days after Cpl John Rigby, of the 4th Battalion, The Rifles, was killed by a blast during a patrol of the city (see below).

The troops, who had been serving with B (Rorke's Drift) Company of the 2nd Battalion, The Royal Welsh, had been helping to escort a supply convoy from Basra Palace to the main British base in the area.

They had been clearing the route ahead and had dismounted from their Warrior vehicle when the attack happened.

Originally from Mountain Ash in Wales, Cpl Joszko was remembered as a loyal and compassionate soldier who had been a strong contender for promotion.

The 28-year-old father, whose girlfriend is currently expecting their second child, was recognised as a "rising star" and was respected by both subordinates and commanders alike.

Pte Kennedy, of the 3rd Battalion, The



● Cpl Paul Joszko



● Pte Scott Kennedy



● Pte Jamie Kerr



● Cpl John Rigby

Royal Regiment of Scotland, had volunteered to leave his duties in Northern Ireland to reinforce the Welsh battalion.

The 20-year-old, from Oakley, Dunfermline, was recognised as a strong team player who loved his job. He was known for his competence and sense of humour.

Pte Kerr was also from 3 Scots and had volunteered to deploy to Iraq from Northern Ireland. The soldier, who was 20 and from Cowdenbeath, had already proved his courage and professionalism in an earlier firefight with terrorists.

Remembered for his skill, he had been identified by commanders as a contender for promotion and was expected to undertake a junior NCOs' course at the end of his tour.

Lt Col James Swift, CO of 2 R Welsh, said the battalion had been devastated by the loss of the soldiers, adding that his thoughts were with their loved ones and families.

Reflecting on Cpl Joszko he added: "His subordinates looked up to him, peers sought his advice and superiors respected his knowledge, professionalism and determination.

"He was a truly excellent junior NCO. If only all soldiers were as good as he was, and such a genuine pleasure to know.

"We are devastated and will miss him enormously."

Of Pte Kennedy, Lt Col Swift said: "He had not been in the Army long, but he was already a very competent soldier. He worked hard, was a strong team player and loved his job."

And of Pte Kerr, the CO added: "Jamie was a popular, happy young man who enjoyed soldiering and was good at it – he applied himself and worked hard.

"He was professional and enthusiastic. He had previously been involved in a contact with insurgents and displayed courage and professionalism under fire."

Rifles grieve for 'Beckham' of soldiering

DEVASTATED troops in Iraq have been remembering a promising young NCO, who died from injuries received from a terrorist bomb on his 24th birthday.

Cpl John Rigby, of the 4th Battalion, The Rifles, was mortally wounded after a device exploded near Basra Palace while he provided top cover for his vehicle.

The NCO was taken to a field hospital but tragically died on June 22. His twin brother Will, who is also a corporal serving with the battalion, was at his bedside.

His CO, Lt Col Patrick Sanders, said in

tribute: "John was a remarkable man. He had a dignity, modesty and maturity that went way beyond his years.

"In the words of one of his fellow corporals from B Company: 'We called him Goldenballs. He was to squadding what David Beckham is to football'."

The CO recalled that Cpl Rigby, who was from Rye, had been on patrol on "an almost daily basis" in the five weeks before his death and had shown the mark of a great man. He was killed protecting his riflemen, exposing himself to great risk as a top

cover sentry in an exceptionally dangerous area approaching the palace.

"He made a judgement that someone had to expose themselves and be ready to engage enemy gunmen and bombers to protect the vehicle, its driver and commander. It is typical of his courage and leadership that he chose to do it himself instead of ordering one of his beloved riflemen to do so."

Lt Col Sanders added the battalion's thoughts were with Cpl Rigby's loved ones and many friends.



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Windfall for Gurkha vets

GURKHA pensioners will benefit from an average increase of 19 per cent to their Service pensions under new measures announced by Under Secretary of State for Defence Derek Twigg.

The Gurkha Pension Scheme (GPS) rise is in line with changes to Indian Army pensions and follows the seven per cent increase awarded earlier this year as part of the annual inflationary uplift.

Retired Gurkhas of the rank WO1 and below – representing 95 per cent of all pensioners – will benefit from the boost.

Mr Twigg also announced that the Government will be conducting a review into the mechanism for increasing Gurkha pensions annually.

The review will look at how best to measure the cost of living in Nepal, where an estimated 25,000 pensioners live.

Health help for soldiers

A FREE mental health service for British Army veterans is being extended to cater for all personnel who have served on operations since the Falklands War.

The Medical Assessment Programme (MAP), based at London's St Thomas' Hospital, was set up 14 years ago to provide help and advice to soldiers deployed in the 1990-91 Gulf War.

A recent expansion allowed veterans of Porton Down and the current Iraq conflict to access the service and MAP has now been opened up to soldiers who served in the Falklands or, more recently, Afghanistan.

Initial examinations and clinical tests at MAP are free and the MoD also meets the cost of any additional treatment required.

Firms gear up for MoD deal

THREE companies are fighting for the right to supply the British Army with its next generation of armoured utility vehicles.

The MoD invited designers to put forward their ideas as part of the Future Rapid Effects System (FRES) programme, which will see UK Armed Forces equipped with new medium weight vehicles.

Variants including the Boxer, designed by Artec, the Piranha from GD UK, and the VBCI from Nexter, have been selected by the MoD to be trialled over the summer before a winning vehicle is selected in November.



Helping hands: Soldiers from the Defence School of Transport evacuate elderly residents near Hull

Water warfare

Sappers wade to the aid of British flood victims

VERSATILE troops were pressed into action on the home front as they were called to help combat the worst flooding in living memory.

As the record rainfall left entire communities submerged, soldiers raced to assist the relief effort, distributing sandbags and helping to keep vital power supplies flowing.

Perham Down-based sappers from 22 Engineer Regiment helped reinforce a power station at Castle Mead near Gloucester, one of the worst affected areas. A specialist team also battled to prop up defences at a crucial electricity sub-station at nearby Walham.

The Territorial Army Centre in Gloucester became the HQ for the area's relief effort as troops worked alongside Royal Air Force helicopter crews and Royal Navy personnel in a battle against the elements.

Gurkha soldiers based in Wales were

also told to limber up for deployment while 9 Support Regiment, Royal Logistic Corps, was placed on standby to help with the deepening crisis.

In addition, Army stores were delivered to flood-hit Oxford and Rushmoor. More than 7,000 sandbags were provided to help stem the rising waters while 550 sleeping bags and 25 camp cots were delivered to Oxford County Council's emergency reception centre at the Kassam Stadium, home of Oxford United.

The Army was kept busy throughout July with the floods.

Earlier the Ripon-based 38 Engineer Regiment deployed four assault boats at Thorpe Marsh near Doncaster, South Yorkshire, to help save a sub-station from the deluge.

Elsewhere in the region, troops from the Defence School of Transport in Leconfield, East Yorkshire, helped to evacuate elderly residents near Hull.

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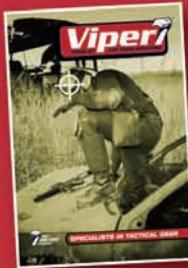
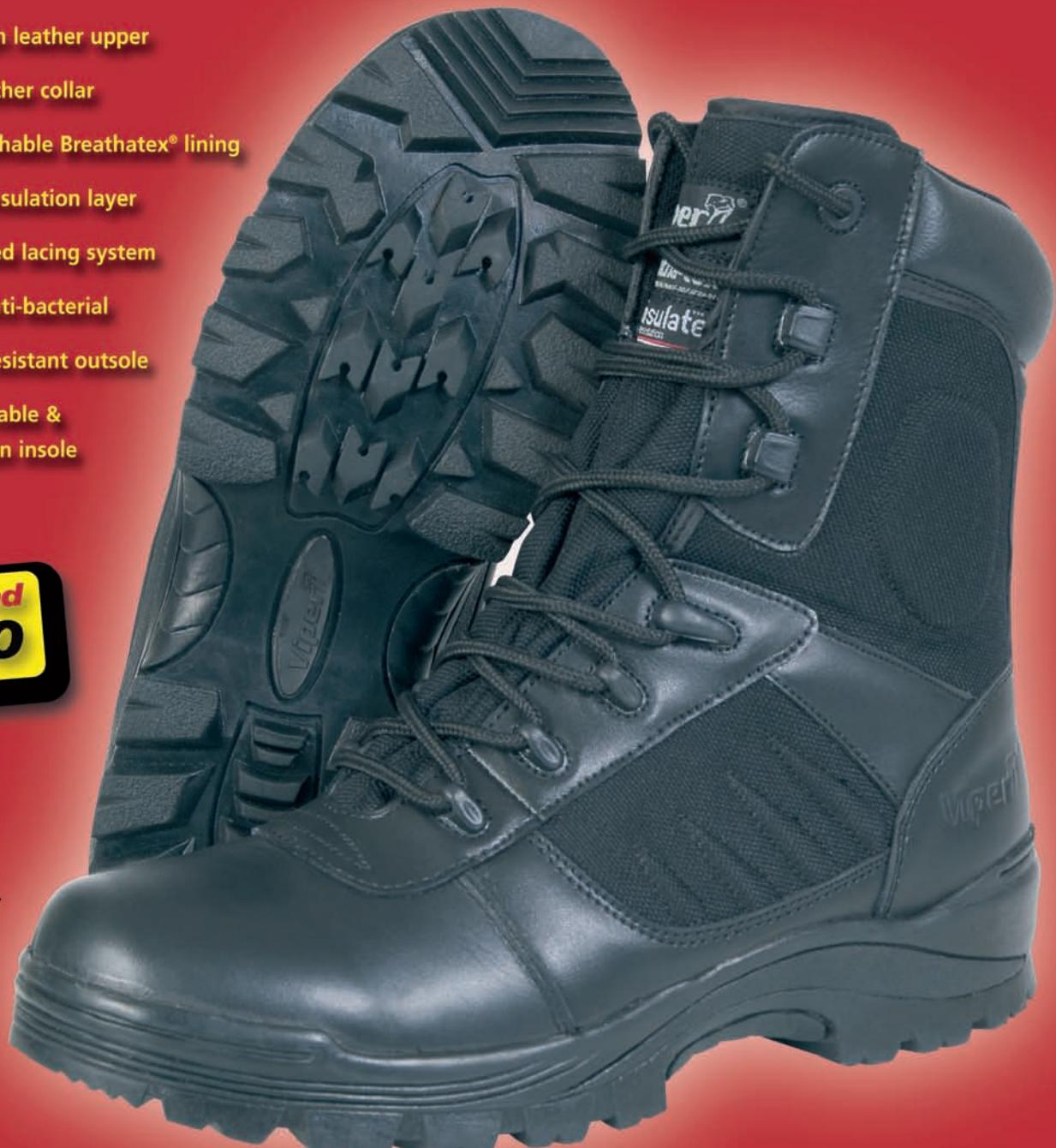
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SOLE DISTRIBUTORS





Information is power: Cpl Andy Smith battles fatigue to keep tabs on the enemy during the final phase of Exercise Swabian Lance in Bavaria

Keeping watch

Recce test for soldiers as 9th/12th Royal Lancers set up shop in southern Germany »



Report: Cliff Caswell
Pictures: Steve Dock

IT was a shocking wake-up call to the perils of long-range reconnaissance missions – the chilling crack of an explosion reverberating around the countryside. Sluggish after an evening of constant movement, the troops concealed in the woodland glade sprang into action, grabbing weapons and heading off in the direction of the blast.

The sight that greeted them just a few hundred metres away was horrifying – their superior officer lying face down, an arm missing and his stomach blown open by a landmine. Racing the clock, the troops battled to administer first aid and arrange an evacuation.

“I’d give this man 25 minutes to live – if the soldiers give him the right treatment,” remarked LCpl Wayne Ulliott, RAMC, a medic overseeing the casualty serials of Exercise Swabian Lance in Bavaria. “In reality, he would be losing a lot of blood and, unfortunately, the troops are out here all by themselves.”

Being at the sharp end of operations makes dealing with any casualties a challenge for the 9th/12th Royal Lancers, but this series of manoeuvres in southern Germany taught them some valuable lessons about dealing with the risks associated with their job.

Given free reign of a populated area spanning 5,000 square kilometres, stretching down to the Swiss border, the soldiers have been operating 700km from their base in Hohne and facing a relentless opposition played by French and German reconnaissance troops.

Working in towns and villages, they have had to win the trust of local people, securing their own clearances to set up outposts on, for example, farms, while dealing with simulated attacks from conventional troops and persistent terrorist strikes.

The manoeuvres were also a key opportunity for soldiers to get hands on experience with the latest kit, including the Bowman communications suite, and of dealing with challenges that included a logistic chain stretching many hundreds of miles.

“This is not a barren prairie – we have everything in Bavaria from mountains to open countryside,” Lt Col Tim Robinson, CO 9/12 L, told *Soldier* between briefings. “It is one of the few places we can operate over such extended distances.

“Being here has given us a valuable opportunity to test every part of the



Clockwise from left, Command and control: Battle-group headquarters staff get together to discuss the next step of the plan; **Fill her up:** A French Army AMX10 medium weight recce vehicle, left, and a VBL, centre, pass through a refuelling point during the exercise; **Cavalry spirit:** A Sultan command vehicle from the 9/12 L battle-group headquarters is directed to a new location as the situation hots up

regiment. For example, all soldiers have been processed into theatre by the Adjutant General’s Corps staff and even our padre has had to do a field service.”

Lt Col Robinson added that squaring up to a live enemy force had also been demanding. “With the French and Germans playing the opposition, the soldiers are encountering vehicles and uniforms that they are not used to seeing,” he said.

“It’s quite ambitious but I think this is a good exercise. You see the value of getting the regiment out together and the morale of the soldiers has been great.”

“It’s quite ambitious but I think this is a good exercise – you see the value of getting the regiment out together and the morale of the soldiers has been great”

Out on the front line of the exercise, where the Lancers had camouflaged their Scimitar and Spartan armoured vehicles in a forest to keep watch over the enemy, the soldiers had been involved in a 48-hour game of cat-and-mouse.

Nearby, French AMX10 and Humvee-like VBL personnel carriers drifted past, their every movement closely watched and reported.

“The opposition is fluid and reacts to what we do, and it is exciting for us to know that they are out there looking for us,” admitted Capt Chris Knight,



leader of 2nd Troop, C Squadron, as his soldiers clocked enemy movements a short distance away.

"We came under attack earlier but got through despite taking some casualties," he added. "Other than dealing with that, the real test on this exercise has been the logistic chain but the guys out here have dealt with it."

Squadron colleague Sgt Carl Hackney agreed that the soldiers had all performed strongly. "We're coping pretty well," he said. "Any vehicles with problems are getting sorted quickly by the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, and we've all been interacting well with local people."

On the other side of the fictional conflict, Swabian Lance provided a key learning experience for the opposition forces, played by German Armoured Reconnaissance Regiment 90 and the French 3rd Hussar Regiment.

"We do things quite a bit differently to the British," one German officer remarked as his armoured column was refuelled just outside of a picturesque village. "For a start, we carry out reconnaissance with two or three vehicles rather than four.

"We've pressed attacks against the opposition quite often and have found that our vehicles are faster, as they have wheels rather than tracks. But everyone has performed well here and the exercise



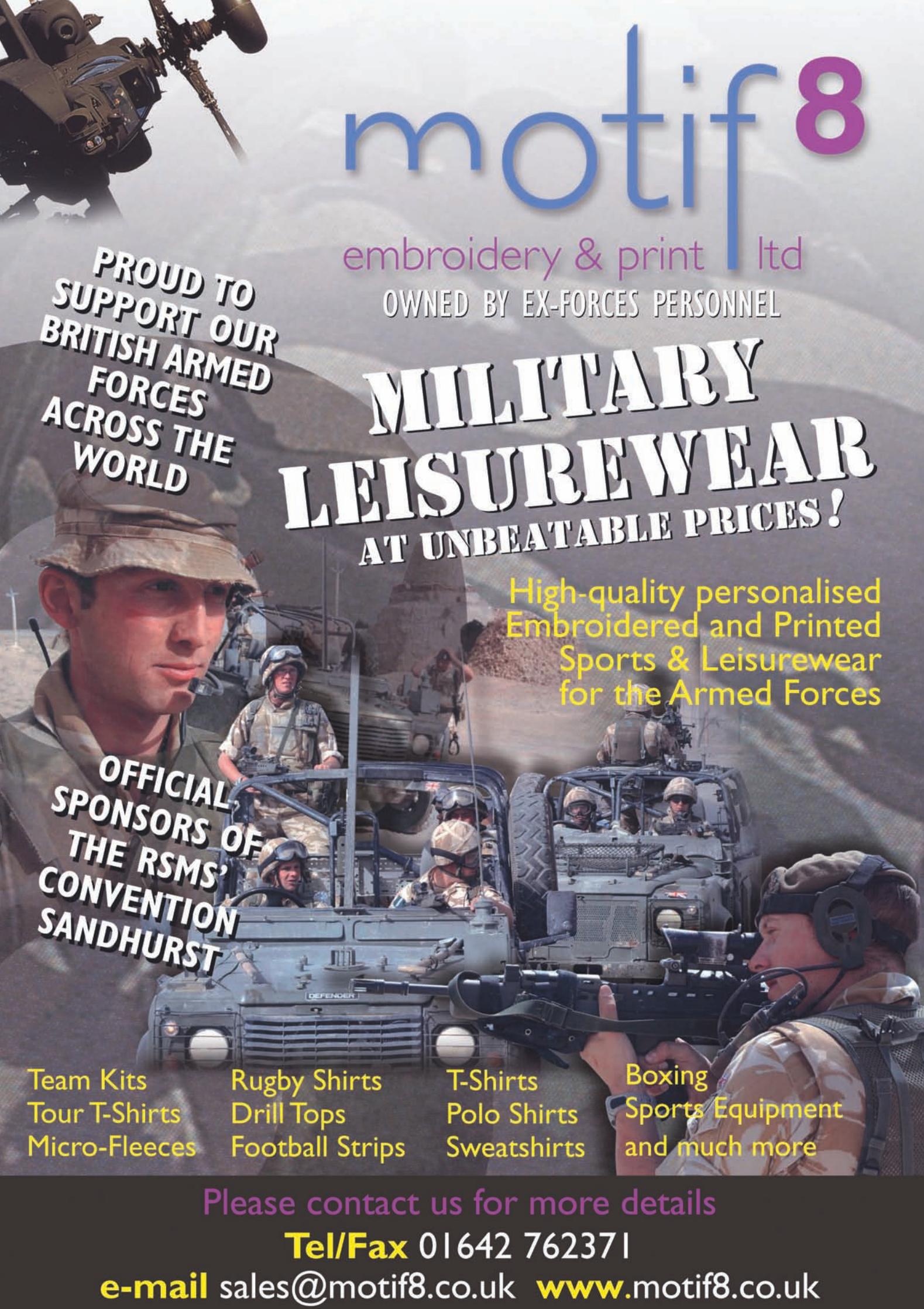
has been a good experience."

Although it was a testing time for all involved, Swabian Lance showcased the strong credentials of 9/12 L, winning them the respect of their multinational allies and giving them invaluable preparation for forthcoming manoeuvres in Canada.

In an unfamiliar environment, and operating at long distances from support, the troops showed why they

have become such a formidable asset. Despite having to deal with tough conditions and a long supply chain, they remained highly effective.

In an age where information is power, commanders have come to rely on armoured reconnaissance at the sharp end of operations. With their skills proven, it is unsurprising that these soldiers are in demand on operations around the world. ■



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On home soil



Commemorating the contribution of the locally-recruited soldiers who put their lives on the line for peace in Northern Ireland »

Dedication to duty:
The men and women of The Royal Irish Regiment (Home Service) and its predecessor, The Ulster Defence Regiment, helped ensure violence did not prevail

Report: Andrea Webb
Pictures: Defence Press Office
(NI) and *Soldier* archive

AS Operation Banner ended and the three Home Service battalions of The Royal Irish Regiment metaphorically marched into history following their disbandment on July 31, the philosopher Edmund Burke's sentiment that "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing" was particularly poignant.

From the formation of The Ulster Defence Regiment in the early days of the Troubles until the disbandment of The Royal Irish Regiment (Home Service) last month, 60,000 men and women were prepared to "do their bit" through part-time and full-time military service to combat a violent terrorist campaign that was being waged on home soil.

Together, they have completed 36 years of continuous operational service – a feat unparalleled in the history of the British Army.

These locally-recruited men and women – with their intimate knowledge of their own country, the ability to recognise people and patterns of life, past experience of previous attacks and hard-won operational experience – became a key capability in the British Army's counter-terrorism campaign in Northern Ireland.

Their dedication to duty in protecting all sections of the community despite intimidation, provocation and grave personal danger was unquestionable. They have played a crucial role in creating the circumstances in which the Police Service of Northern Ireland, formerly the Royal Ulster Constabulary, can now maintain the rule of law without routine military support.

"I think we soldiers are very proud of our service and the contribution we made," said former UDR soldier Sgt Glen Espie. "To be quite honest, there was a time when Northern Ireland could have descended into total civil war. "I just hope that the annals of

history are kind to the regiment and recognise the contribution honourable folk from both sides of the community made in holding the line against terrorism."

Although it is impossible to put a figure on the number of lives that were saved by their military actions, their constant presence on the ground in urban and rural areas of the province disrupted the movements of paramilitaries hell bent on causing murder and mayhem.

"I think it is fair to say that without the security force effort we would not have arrived at this peaceful conclusion and The Royal Irish Regiment was a deeply significant part of that," said Regimental Colonel, Col Mark Campbell. "It would be wrong to separate them out any more from members of the Regular Army who also contributed greatly but, because they lived in the community, they were much, much more vulnerable and the vast majority of those who lost their lives across the ranks, were off duty.

"A large number of our people served on a part-time basis," he added. "They had their normal civilian employment and then left that civilian employment to work long and difficult hours in The Ulster Defence Regiment or The Royal Irish Regiment.

"Because they were living in the community that was being attacked, the strain on them and their families was quite remarkable. I am full of admiration and we are all indebted to those who served and the families who supported them."

"It is a fact that a very small number [of our soldiers] let the organisation down," he said. "Where they came to light they were dealt with and the full rigours of the law were applied against them. They were given no support or succour within the regiment. We condemned them utterly and they let us all down terribly.

"But my only issue is with those who try to use that to blacken the name of all those who served. Ninety nine per cent served without blemish and we should cherish and recognise the



Maintaining the presence:
Soldiers from the 4th
Battalion, The Royal
Irish Regiment patrol
Lough Erne in County
Fermanagh (2003)

record of them."

The relative peace that Northern Ireland is now experiencing is a fitting tribute to the supreme service and selfless sacrifice of so many but it has come at a high price for this close-knit regimental family.

Tragically, 210 members were murdered during their service and a further 64 killed after they left the

April 1, 1970 – The Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR), a locally recruited part-time force, was formed and became operational on the same day. Its purpose was to support the regular forces in Northern Ireland in protecting the border and the State against armed attack and sabotage, by mounting guard duties at key points and installations, carrying out patrols and establishing checkpoints and road blocks.



September, 1973 – Introduction of female soldiers, known as Greenfinches, into the regiment was a huge success

1976 – Full-time companies were raised giving the UDR a 24-hour operational capability



July 1, 1992 – The Ulster Defence Regiment amalgamated with The Royal Irish Rangers to form The Royal Irish Regiment. It comprised two General Service (GS) battalions for worldwide service, seven Home Service battalions and one TA battalion



regiment. Hundreds more suffered permanent physical and psychological injuries as a result of terrorist action.

"When we look back at what we've been through, there were some exceptionally difficult and dark times," said Col Campbell. "But the campaign is over, we have been successful in what we set out to achieve and let's all take pride in a job

well done and play a part in helping political reason to prevail, progress to be made and Northern Ireland to move on.

"There can be no better memorial to those who served than a peaceful and stable society and we all deeply hope soldiers will never ever have to deploy onto the streets of Northern Ireland again." ■

2002 – The seven Home Service battalions merged to form Holywood-based 2nd battalion, Armagh-based 3rd Battalion and Omagh-based 4th Battalion

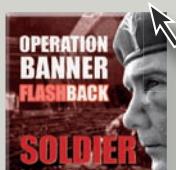
September 1, 2006 – The three Home Service battalions of The Royal Irish Regiment were withdrawn from active operational service in Northern Ireland



October 6, 2006 – The Queen presented the Conspicuous Gallantry Cross in recognition of 36 years of continuous operational service and sacrifice of The Royal Irish Regiment and The Ulster Defence Regiment during Op Banner.

July 31, 2007 – Op Banner, the Army's longest continuous operational commitment, drew to a close. With the task for which it was raised completed, The Royal Irish Regiment (Home Service) formally disbanded.

See Op Banner features from our digital archive looking back at the British Army's 38-year campaign



www.soldiermagazine.co.uk

August 1, 2007 – The 1st Battalion, The Royal Irish Regiment, the last Irish Infantry battalion of the line, will continue the proud tradition of the Irish soldier in the British Army



Read soldiers' personal accounts of service in Northern Ireland at www.soldiermagazine.co.uk



THE ULSTER DEFENCE REGIMENT

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PROUD
REMEMBRANCE
OF ALL THE
MEN AND WOMEN
OF THE
ULSTER DEFENCE
REGIMENT
WHO GAVE
THEIR LIVES
IN THE SERVICE OF
THEIR COUNTRY

*In Ulster field and farm and town,
Fermanagh's lanes and drumlin'd Down,
We died that violent death should cease
And Ulstermen might live in peace.*

Service and sacrifice:
Part-time soldiers
were a vital part of The
Royal Irish Regiment
(Home Service) and its
predecessor, The Ulster
Defence Regiment (UDR)

Full-time courage

Part-time UDR soldiers reflect upon the terrorist attacks they survived

Interviews: Andrea Webb

Pictures: Mike Weston

TOMMY had just turned 18 when he joined the UDR as a part-time soldier in 1985. On May 6, 1993 an IRA bomb detonated beneath his car as he drove home from work. He lost both his legs.

"I HAD agreed to give a colleague a lift home that night," the former lance corporal recalled. "I clocked out of the factory at 2300 and drove about a mile-and-a-half up the road. We were approaching the police station in Lurgan when I saw the flash and then heard the bang. I thought I had got caught up in a mortar attack.

"I felt myself going up in the air for what felt like ages," he said. "I could see a patrol at the barriers ahead. I started shouting 'get me out of this' and I could see them running towards the car. The passenger had been knocked out but my shouting brought him round and he pulled my head out of

the flames – apparently I was on fire. The soldiers dragged me onto the footpath and one of them started working on me and kept asking me my name. I remember saying 'are you effing deaf' because he'd asked me that many times. I wanted to get up onto my feet to get the men that had done this to me.

"The last thing I remember was the feeling of someone cutting at my trouser legs in hospital. That was the early hours of Friday morning and I didn't regain consciousness until Monday.

"When I came round I knew I had lost bits and pieces of my body. If you're in a bomb you come out in a wooden box or with bits missing – but at that stage I couldn't see the extent of my injuries. It wasn't until they took me for a bath, removed the bandages and I looked down that it really hit home. I cried like a two-year-old. I was just 25.

"I had one young son and another one on the way. I had all these plans of what

I wanted to do with them – play football, take them up the mountains – and to realise that that was never going to be possible was just devastating."

Despite the physical, psychological and personal trauma, Tommy insists he would do it all again. "When I joined up I became a member of a family," he said. "The friends I made will remain friends for life. We joined

to help our own country and that adds a whole new meaning to it. I personally think that without The Ulster Defence Regiment and later The Royal Irish Regiment, there would have been a lot more people killed during the Troubles.

"I felt myself going up in the air for what felt like ages"

"It's important to focus on the good the regiment has done and the lives they have saved by being out there patrolling and protecting people. I think we made a difference and I hope the people of Northern Ireland understand and respect our contribution."



Close call: Sgt Glen Espie kept the bullet proof vest that saved his life when he was shot by the IRA in 1978

A PART-time corporal, who does not wish to be named, became one of the UDR's most decorated soldiers. He was awarded the Queen's Gallantry Medal and Distinguished Conduct Medal for acts of immense bravery. He served in the regiment from its formation in 1970 until his medical discharge in 1993.

ON February 6, 1992 the corporal, a council-employed dog warden at the time, was asked to remove a dangerous dog from a remote farm near the border.

"I stopped at home to collect some sandwiches and my personal protection weapon," he explained. "I put my jacket on the seat on top of the gun and off I went.

"As I stopped in front of the house two men came running at me from either side of my van roaring: 'IRA! Get out of the van! Get out! Get out!' One had a pistol at the passenger window so I whipped my gun up, cocked it and bang, bang, bang – out through the door. He fell.

"The other was at the driver's door. Seeing I had a gun in my hand, he ran. I jumped out and lay down at the front wheel of the van. One man was at the corner of the house, the other between the hedge and the wall.

"A shot busted the front wheel, just by my head. I knew there was no place to run without getting shot and I knew I was firing ammo too quickly. I saw a man's head coming round the corner, so I took aim as best I could, pressed the trigger but nothing happened. The magazine was empty.

"I knew there was a spare magazine in my coat on the passenger seat so I ran round and grabbed the coat. It must have taken them a while to realise what was wrong and two of them came running at me with their guns on automatic. That's when I was getting it in the legs. I whipped on the magazine. Bang." The attackers fled.

"My leg was broken and the bones were sticking out. The old man who lived in the house came out and asked if I was alright. He said 'They told me that if I used the phone they would come back and shoot me. But you can use it if you come in.'

"He offered me a brush which I used as a crutch. I remembered the number of the local RUC station and rang it."

One of the terrorists was dead and Gardai arrested three others as they crossed the border. Cpl X spent almost a year in hospital before being medically discharged.

According to a report written about the incident, the Army team who subsequently interviewed the corporal were expecting a "Rambo-type" and were taken aback by the "slight, quiet, modest, gentle countryman" before them. ■

SGT Glen Espie joined the part-time UDR in 1975. Ambushed twice by the Provisional IRA, he sustained gunshot wounds to his upper body but returned fire.

THE first time Glen was attacked (in March, 1978) he was a plumber working for the Housing Executive. "I was called out to a remote house to deal with a burst cylinder," he recalled. "Just to be on the safe side I went home to collect my body armour and put it on. That decision saved my life."

Glen arrived at the house and was invited in. "I was walking across the hallway when a guy stepped out of the downstairs bathroom with a mask on, put a pistol to my chest and fired. It lifted me clean off my feet. I landed against the back of the door, looking up at the guy. He came over and put the pistol to my head.

"I bolted through the door and ran for cover. They fired two or three more shots. I could feel them whizzing by my ears.

"Then one hit me in the shoulder. That spun me round and left me lying flat on my back, looking back at the door. I could see two guys with masks on.

"I was trying to get the zip of my boiler suit down because I had a .22 Walther pistol with me. I could see the gunmen running towards me in what seemed like slow motion. As I fired, they hit the deck. I rolled round and went to fire again – the gun jammed. I knew I hadn't time to clear it so I got up and ran around the corner of neighbouring houses."

Despite his wounds and with adrenaline charging through this body, he cleared a fence and ran across fields and farmyards in a bid to get help. After a few frustrating attempts to call the police – they were

concerned it was a terrorist trap – he found a car with the keys still in it and drove himself to the relative safety of a village four miles away.

Despite his serious wounds, Glen Espie recovered and returned to service. "I think it was one of the first incidents in Northern Ireland where body armour saved someone's life," he said.

Nine years later, in March, 1987, Glen was ambushed again as he left the house early to go to work. "I knew they (the IRA) would come back for me," he said. "I just didn't know when."

"A car came out of the lane opposite and stopped. I saw three guys with balaclavas. One hopped out of the passenger side with a G3 and the first thing I knew the rounds were hitting my car, shattering the windscreen and bursting the tyre. Another got out of the back seat with a G3 rifle.

"One round shattered my wrist. I pulled my 9mm and dived into a drainage ditch. I started to fire at them. One fired back."

Glen was locked in a firefight for what seemed like "a hell for a long time" before his assailants drove off.

He survived but the pressure of living in the same area he served in as a soldier became increasingly stressful. "We knew the dangers but it was difficult for the children. After I got shot the second time, the Army wanted to move me but I refused.

"But one night I was driving up our lane. I looked round and my two children were crouched behind the seat. I said 'what are you two doing down there?' They replied, 'In case the bad boys shoot at us, Daddy.'

"I got home and for the first time I broke down in tears. I thought 'what am I putting my children and my family through?' The next day we decided to move away."





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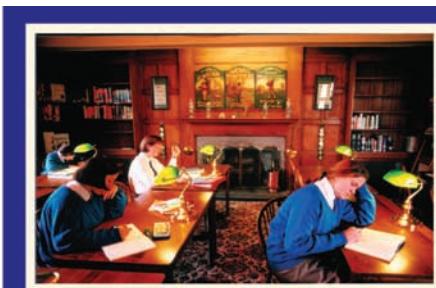
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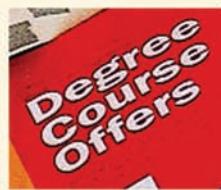


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Dangerous liaisons

Would-be soldier reveals jeopardy of journalism

Interview: Karen Thomas

DONAL MacIntyre doesn't look danger in the face – he goes up to it, shakes hands and starts a conversation while hidden cameras whir away to capture the moment for heart-stopping TV documentaries.

Enthralling many around the globe with his daring undercover exposés, which have brought many villains to justice, the Irish journalist carved a career from courting peril and menace. Gangs of football hooligans, drug-dealers and traders of stolen human organs have all had their infamy bared to millions of viewers courtesy of MacIntyre's commitment to his job.

However, his drive to expose the depths of human depravity also carries huge personal risks, especially when he sits at the criminal world's high-roller table. The multiple award-winner admitted to *Soldier* he goes into dodgy situations with little more than "a good plan and a tall story", and certainly no bodyguards, when recording crooks on secret cameras. But he thought his end had come during an encounter with one of England's biggest narcotics dealers.

"This guy had been smoking crack-cocaine incessantly, a big pipe every 15 or 20 minutes for three days.

"He looked at me and although he didn't know who I was, he lost it, ran upstairs, grabbed a gun of some description, cocked it and launched himself at me, drilling the gun into my neck for about two-and-a-half minutes until my producer talked him down.

"He jumped off me, cocked the gun and clicked the bullet out. I saw that bullet dance in slow motion across the floor and I thought 'that was a close one,'" recalled MacIntyre with a smattering of choice expletives.

The keen mountain-climber took

a safer route to making his latest series of *MacIntyre's Underworld*, now showing on Bravo TV. This time he "befriended" British villains to openly film who they are and how they became criminals. He hopes it might create "a window to stopping other people from going down that road".

With qualities that would serve a soldier well – nerves of steel, self-discipline and an ability to think on his feet – the Irish charmer owned up to contemplating an Army career. As a young athlete who had competed for Ireland at world championship level in canoeing, MacIntyre had one eye on the 1988 Olympics and

the other on the Irish Army to fund his sport. But his application to join up mysteriously went astray until his family made a confession.

"I was sitting down

having tea and said, 'I wonder whatever happened to my Army application?' I

just thought it must

have been rejected and so I didn't bother following it up, and they said, 'we tore it up – we thought, Donal, you know, you're better off without it'. So there you have it, I could have been Capt MacIntyre or maybe more Capt Mainwaring."

The military's loss was the viewers' gain, as Ireland's finest pursued a career that nevertheless demands 100 per cent commitment and serves society by exposing the starker and grittier sides of life. ■



● Catch *MacIntyre's Underworld* at 2200 every Tuesday until August 21 on Bravo

Army-style

Image revolution frees Sierra Leone's forces from chains of brutal past

Report: Karen Thomas
Pictures: Mike Weston

IMAGINE a man in an Army uniform hacking off your hands to stop you voting in a general election and you'll have a hint of life for Sierra Leoneans during a devastating decade of civil war.

Britain's armed intervention in 2000 all but stopped the conflict, but not before tens of thousands of civilians had been killed and more than a third of the country's population had fled their homes in terror.

The British-led International Military Advisory and Training Team (IMATT) was set the unenviable task of uniting rebel and regular soldiers into a 10,000-strong new model army. And they had to ensure civilians saw Sierra Leone's new defence force as friend rather than foe.

It took IMATT just seven years to build a fighting force that embraced British Army core values such as discipline, honour and loyalty, as their own. The Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) is erasing all traces of a brutish image and is now

worthy of its hard-won professional reputation with civilians. When this small West African nation holds its latest election this month there will be no fear of violent reprisals from men wearing military uniforms.

Col Tony Sinnah, 3 Bde RSLAF commander, was a captain when civil war broke out in 1991. He fought as a hero on the streets in a politicised campaign that terrorised civilians and saw soldiers swapping sides.

"The RSLAF has recovered its image. This was the most difficult area because the civilians didn't like us," he told *Soldier*, describing how rebels wore stolen army uniforms as they committed atrocities against the population. "I try to keep our soldiers off the streets and as smart as possible when on them."

In the early post-war days, IMATT had to

'Our soldiers make more impact with the people here and have a huge effect in making a difference'

take the driving seat as the decision-makers who made things happen. Now Sierra Leone is behind the steering wheel with IMATT mentoring from the passenger seat. This can lead to tensions, as striking the balance between letting RSLAF "drivers" step on the accelerator and stepping in to avoid bouncing off a pothole is not always easy.

Yet Brig Iain Cholerton, IMATT commander, considered the British Army, along with the Canadian, Jamaican, Nigerian and US IMATT personnel, were well up to the task of keeping the RSLAF on track.

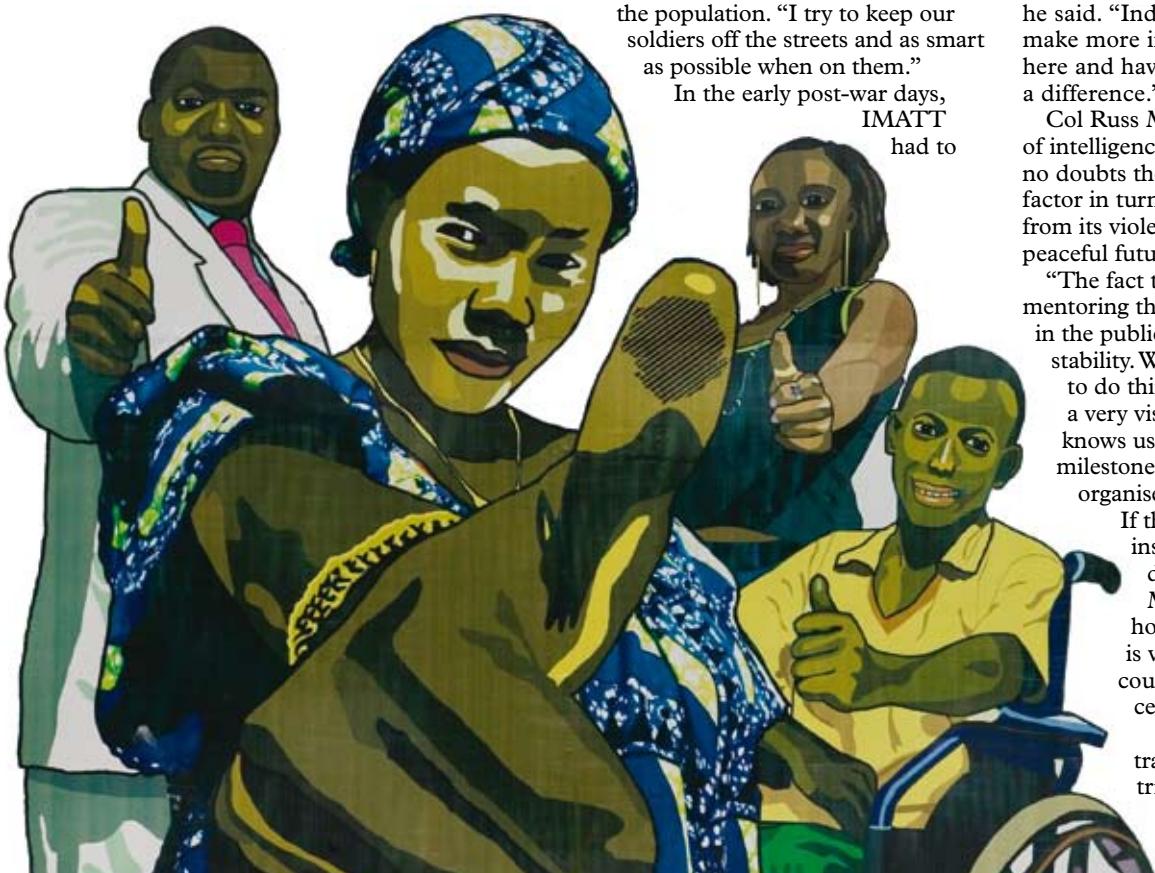
"The environment is challenging and gives the chance to personally develop, as well as transfer skills from operations to a developing country," he said. "Individually, our soldiers make more impact with the people here and have a huge effect in making a difference."

Col Russ Miller, IMATT director of intelligence and security, also had no doubts their presence was a major factor in turning Sierra Leone away from its violent past to embrace a peaceful future.

"The fact that IMATT is here mentoring the RSLAF instils confidence in the public, which adds to the stability. We are perceived to be fair, to do things properly and we have a very visible presence – everyone knows us. The elections are a milestone because they are being organised by the Sierra Leoneans.

If they run smoothly, this will instil further confidence in donors and investors," Col Miller explained, adding how boosting the economy is vital to the security of a country with around 70 per cent unemployment.

Switching emphasis from training to advising offers tri-Service IMATT more scope for helping with reconstruction, especially with rebuilding the



makeover



economy. Sierra Leone has enormous natural resources, including diamonds and iron ore, which could be traded on world markets. Its coastal waters harbour abundant fish stocks but these have fallen prey to pirates. With the RSLAF Army firmly established, more time can be devoted to enabling its Maritime Wing to combat the illegal fishing and generate vital revenue from issuing fishing licenses.

For such a comparatively small force for good, IMATT lays claim to some monumental achievements, so *Soldier* took to Sierra Leone's jungles to find out whether "the IMATT effect" was fact or fiction . . .

● See Pages 37-39



Clockwise from far left, More power to you: Election poster draws a line under previous horrors of going to the polls; Uncertainty: Sierra Leone's future still hangs in the balance; Jolly green giant: Maj Jonny Bristow, 1 Scots, proves there's nothing to fear from men in uniform; Army brats: Playtime for RSLAF and civilian children at the National Islamic Primary School in Pujehun; In vogue: RSLAF soldiers model the new civilian-friendly look

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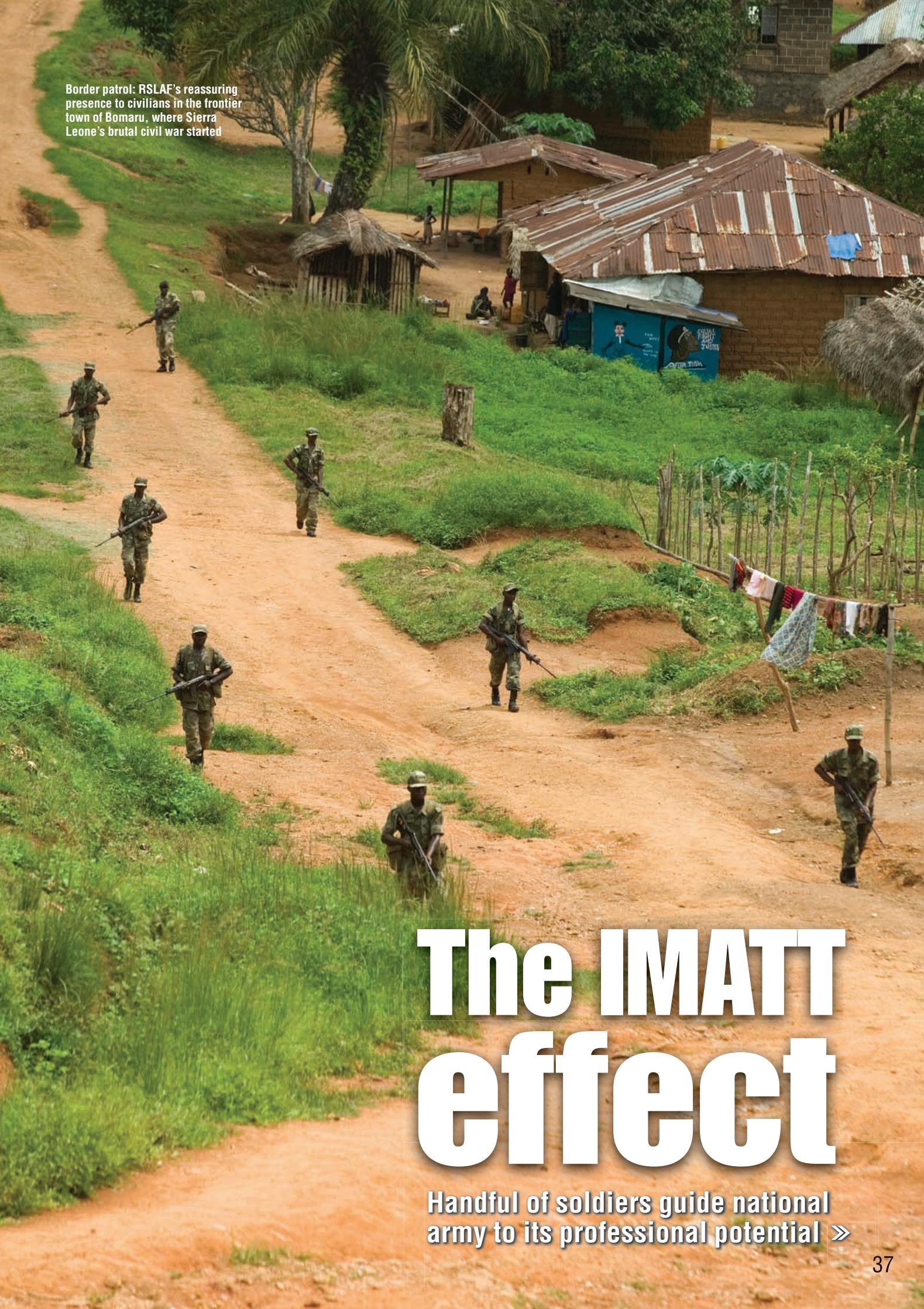
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Border patrol: RSLAF's reassuring presence to civilians in the frontier town of Bomaru, where Sierra Leone's brutal civil war started



The IMATT effect

Handful of soldiers guide national army to its professional potential »



Report: Karen Thomas
Pictures: Mike Weston

WATCHFUL eyes peer out from the forward patrol base guarding the Liberian border, marked not by watchtowers or immigration posts but by unchanging vibrant green jungle.

The four platoons of 3 Brigade RSLAF soldiers on frontier duty are not expecting trouble from their neighbours and hordes of chattering children materialise to investigate the pockets of the IMATT visitors for sweets and pens.

Yet it was into this sleepy village called Bomaru that ten years of terror, death and destruction came pouring from Liberia in the form of rebels trained and armed by former Liberian President, Charles Taylor. Although good relations have resumed between the two countries and Taylor is on trial at The Hague for alleged war crimes, Sierra Leone is not taking any chances.

These RSLAF soldiers spend four months keeping watch over Bomaru but IMATT still provides a safety net through Brigade Advisory Support Team (BAST) visits.

Dotted about the country, BASTs live and work closely with the RSLAF brigades for up to a year in their headquarters and out on operations. And according to Lt Col Anthony Slessor, AAC, the British soldier's trademark wave carries significant reassurance to local residents.

"It's better to do a longer tour because you can build the necessary rapport and trust with your RSLAF colleagues," the adviser to 3 Bde commander, Col Tony Sinnah, told *Soldier*. "And being seen is one of the most important things here – you can do more good just by driving around the country. And people do stop and say thank you because they are incredibly grateful."

Like diamonds, BASTs are a good thing in a very small package, credited with making an enormous difference to RSLAF skill and professionalism, which has done wonders for the RSLAF reputation.

Capt Patrick Crowley, 1 Rifles, regularly stays at 3 Bde outposts advising on intelligence, logistics and training. He was impressed with how the soldiers endure the hardships of living without easy access to basic electricity and clean water. His admiration increased after accompanying his RSLAF colleagues on gruelling jungle foot patrols.

"They are disciplined and take pride in what they do, and if you see a soldier in flip-flops it's because his boots are just so worn out they're not worth wearing," Capt Crowley said, pointing out how neat, clean and tidy our hosts' uniforms were despite the widespread equipment shortages. "It's very worthwhile work but it takes a while to adapt to how slowly things move here."

The discipline and pride is instilled during battleschool training at the RSLAF brigade headquarters. A company of 5 Bde troops were being put through jungle patrol paces during Exercise Diamond Spear just outside Sierra Leone's second



city of Bo. The final training hurdle before being deployed to the Liberian and Guinean borders had soldiers marching six kilometres to their insertion point in a 35C heat before hacking through the tangle of trees and undergrowth to clear a camp. BAST commander Lt Col Ollie Ellwood, Light Dragoons, squatted down among a myriad scurrying insects to listen to the battleschool OC give orders.

"My role is to tell our instructors to be hands-off when things are going well but be able to jump in again if they go wrong," he explained, as the RSLAF run the exercises with minimal IMATT input. "I'm also here to ensure the army can conduct the ops the soldiers are likely to come across and is capable of defending the integrity of Sierra Leone."

Rice-based scoff is dished out of huge cauldrons – issued once a day, it has to be carried by the soldiers – and the troops gather round models of the exercise area constructed from earth. LCpl Hassan Sesay watched his students use the weapon and tactical skills he had taught them for jungle operations, as enemy forces closed in for an ambush.

"The key qualities needed to be a good instructor are knowing your subject matter, having confidence and being disciplined," he said, adding he was once

a student of a British NCO and was now passing on that experience. "I enjoy training RSLAF's future soldiers, as it's very important."

Capt Pete Heath, KRH, agreed nurturing young troops who would one day be RSLAF leaders was key to building a sustainable and accountable fighting force.

"I think we're more than halfway there, as RSLAF already do so many things to a high standard. The junior officers are very good and will filter up the ranks with the help of the brigade commander, Col Simeon Sheriff, who is an intellectual and visionary," he said of his Sandhurst-trained boss. "The main difficulty is mentoring and helping without creating a dependency, as it's very easy to use IMATT resources to solve a lot of the problems."

Fuel, basic equipment and clothing are still limited for RSLAF troops, who are, nevertheless, housed, fed and carry change in their pockets.

But the cascade of self-confidence, professionalism and shining reputation now washing over RSLAF begins as a trickle of dedication and patience from a handful of IMATT soldiers.

Lt Col Ellwood commended IMATT's seven years of hard work but warned there was still much to do for his RSLAF colleagues to bring long-lasting security

to the impoverished country. "It's very fulfilling. It has its frustrations but you feel whatever you do has an impact of some sort. I'm pushing at an open door because they want what we want. It's not a success yet but it could be." ■



Main picture, left, Survival skills: RSLAF soldiers train in the jungle during Exercise Diamond Spear; **Above, Line of sight:** Capt Patrick Crowley, 1 Rifles, eyes up the Liberian border to check his RSLAF colleagues's general-purpose machine gun; **Above, The young ones:** RSLAF recruits get a taste of British Army training under instructor CSgt Andy Buchanan, 1 WFR

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Purrfect: Supacat struts its stuff at Millbrook Proving Ground

Top cat

Pumped up front-line feline on battlefield prowl

Report: Karen Thomas

Pictures: Andrew Linnett

THIS lean, mean, fighting machine is the latest pedigree of Supacat battle truck. It packs a powerful punch and is about to sharpen its claws on hostile forces in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Muscling in on the Land Rover WMIK's operational territory in 2008, the mobility weapons mounted installation kit (MWMIK, aka Supacat) heads up the next generation of long-range patrol vehicle. The 4x4 battlefield beast boasts unbeatable mobility across rough off-road terrain equalled only by its stamina for long-distance reconnaissance beyond the front line.

But this British-made cat takes the firepower cream with its array of weapons including the anti-tank missile, Javelin. Add in twin and single general-purpose machine guns (GPMGs), along with the 0.5-inch machine gun or automatic grenade launcher, and the four-soldier crew can be confident the enemy will struggle to match the

weaponry at their fingertips.

That's if the enemy can catch this Supacat. Described as "a Land Rover on steroids", the powerful feline has clocked speeds of up to 80mph. If the crew need to make a hasty escape, the Supacat has the capacity to sprint away from danger firing on all cylinders and from all guns. And it's a comparatively comfy drive.

The truck's innovative air-suspension frame ensures a softer ride, leaving a fresher crew ready to retaliate if attacked. Strapped into fully harnessed seats, the team have an easy reach to their personal weapons and the five-speed automatic transmission means no fumbling for the right gear while fending off bullets or bombs.

The Supacat was designed by the Devon-based company of the same name to feel at home in desert warfare conditions. The vehicle can stretch its legs to the tune of 21 inches when jacked up for off-road driving and desert sighting, keeping a vital couple of inches in reserve just in case the crew get

snagged in a hole. Despite the high-end desert specifications, this cat's not afraid of water and will wade to depths of more than a metre.

After inspecting the Supacat at the Millbrook Proving Ground near Bedford, Defence Minister Lord Drayson said: "We have made a considerable effort and investment to ensure that our deployed troops get the right equipment to do their jobs. We have a range of enhancements in place covering protection, firepower and mobility."

Well-armed, swift and agile, the Supacat is set to stalk along the front lines ready to pounce and unleash some serious firepower. With 130 of them destined for the battlefields of Telic and Herrick next year, you can expect to see this cat on the prowl very soon. ■

Cat's whiskers - MWMIK's firepower potential

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Lessons from the grave

The real thing: Historian Maj (Retd) Tim Saunders guides Lichfield recruits through the preserved German "Bayernwald" trench system within sight of Ieper's spires. The British trenches were less than 100 yards away

THE ATR Lichfield excursion to the Ypres Salient was organised by Anglia Battlefield Tours (Military and Adult) Ltd of Brick House Farm, Ongar Road, Margaret Roding, Essex CM6 2QR; tel 01245 231735; email groups@angliabattlefields.co.uk; website www.angliabattlefields.co.uk

Battlefield tour to Ypres Salient takes recruits on a journey of discovery »



Clockwise from below, Start line: Recruits handle a First World War Lee Enfield rifle on ground from which a battalion of Staffords advanced on the first day of the battle; Silent vigil: The recruits pay tribute at a wreath-laying ceremony around the cross on Engineer Grove; Pride of Ieper: The sapper recruits march to the Menin Gate, study the names engraved on the great memorial arch and re-enact a trench raid; Gas, gas, gas: Demonstrating the evolution of gas masks developed to counter Germany's use of mustard gas during the Battle of Passchendaele, and (inset) the Menin Gate



Report: John Elliott
Pictures: Graeme Main

IT is virtually impossible to drive for more than a few minutes at a time between Ieper (Ypres) and nearby Passchendaele without one's gaze being

drawn to another neat, low-walled row of identical white headstones.

They are military cemeteries, dotted about on village outskirts, beside main roads, isolated on distant slopes and adding their own tranquil symmetry to the immaculately tilled fields that ripple across these fertile Belgian lowlands.

There are hundreds of them, from the immense cemetery at Tyne Cot to some containing a handful of graves. Over this now gentle panorama was fought 90 years ago the last great static battle of the First

World War – the Third Battle of Ypres, or Passchendaele as it became known.

Hundreds of thousands of men died here, to be gathered up and buried where they fell by the Imperial (now Commonwealth) War Graves Commission, or, if no trace of their bodies could be found, recorded as missing on great memorials in Ieper and at Tyne Cot.

It is a good place to teach young soldiers the value of discipline, integrity, courage, fortitude and loyalty.

Soldier joined a troop of Royal Engineer recruits from Army Training Regiment Lichfield on a battlefield tour of the Ypres Salient, a relatively small area over which three major battles and dozens of smaller ones raged between 1914 and 1917.

Just four weeks into their military careers, the young sappers watched the events of 90 years ago come alive as military historian Mai (Retd) Tim Saunders, D and D, walked them down British lines of advance towards the German defences. Here their predecessors were cut down by artillery, over there by machine-gun and sniper fire.

The giant, jagged holes pockmarking rising ground overlooking the distant spires of modern-day Ieper were not





Anvil of war

THE Ypres Salient – a 35-mile bulge in the Western Front – was the anvil on which Germany's First World War defeat was forged.

A series of major, mostly static, defensive battles were fought around the town over the course of the war, making it the longest and costliest campaign in modern history.

Ypres, or "Wipers" as it was known in the ranks, is now the pretty town of Ieper, sitting at the centre of a saucer of flattish farmland rising to low ridges at its outer rim.

But the 1914-18 battles fought in the Salient ensured that this part of Flemish Belgium is as much a landmark in British military legend as Trafalgar and Waterloo.

The first battle of Ypres, late in 1914, did serious damage to Britain's relatively small professional army (tiny in comparison with those of France and Germany), but it succeeded in denying possession of the town

to the German forces, and thus access to the Channel coast. And so did the subsequent battles fought in the Salient.

First Ypres, between October 18 and November 11, 1914 cost the British 2,350 officers and 55,800 soldiers; Second Ypres, from April 22 to May 25, 1915, resulted in 60,000 Allied casualties as the Germans used poison gas in a major battle for the first time; Third Ypres (Passchendaele), from July 31 to November 6, 1917, inflicted more than 300,000 losses on the British.

So heavily shelled was the area, by both sides, that even today – nine decades on – about 200 tons of old ammunition rises to the surface every year. Many of the rusting shells contain poison gas. Farmers leave

them beside the road to be collected and made safe.

The town's constant vigil

WINSTON Churchill, who fought at Ypres, said of the Salient: "A more sacred place for the British race does not exist in the world".

And a grateful Belgium has taken him at his word. Nowhere is respect for our fallen soldiers more keenly shown than at the Menin Gate in Ieper. At precisely 2000 every night since it was constructed 80 years ago – with the exception of the Second World War – the town's volunteer firemen have sounded the *Last Post* beneath the memorial's towering, name-covered arch.

Come snow or storm, the buglers carry out their sacred duty. This extraordinary commitment is overseen by the Last Post Association, a group of volunteers led by garage owner Benoit Mottrie and retired civil servant Jackie Platteeuw. On foul winter nights there may be no one to watch them, but the buglers still turn up to pay their special homage to a long lost generation.



excavated by nature. They were the work of British sappers, who tunneled under the Germans with massive amounts of explosive, pulverising their trenches and vapourising the defenders.

Down that slope mustard gas billowed into the Allied defences.

At the end of a day during which their corps values were given context by historical military fact, the 37 young Royal Engineers swapped their jeans and T-shirts for combat and marched to the Menin Gate to take part in a timeless act of commemoration – the eight o'clock *Last Post* ceremony which is enacted every night of the year under Sir Reginald Blomfield's inspiring arch.

The centre of attention of visitors who packed every inch of pavement, the recruits stood proudly to attention as three of their number placed a wreath of poppies on the memorial.

Above and around them, offering silent testimony to the sacrifice our nation sometimes asks of its Service personnel, were the inscribed names of nearly 55,000 missing soldiers who have no graves in the Ypres Salient. ■

Past glories: See Vox pop – Page 90

SOLDIER – Magazine of the British Army



Model recruit

Pin-up Keeley Hazell confesses to brief flirtation with a life in uniform

Interview: Richard Lenton

WHEN I told a mate of mine that I'd arranged to interview Keeley Hazell, he gave me a look that seemed to suggest I'd burgled his house and run off with his wife.

The girl who is causing loins to stir across the country is seriously hot property at the moment. Her time is of such a premium that, despite her agent's promptings, I had to wait nearly a week before the promised phone call finally materialised.

And, when she did ring, I got the call at a slightly inconvenient time – finding myself cradling a friend's six-month-old baby girl in a vomit-soaked hand. For a millisecond I considered pressing reject, but, when it's the nation's number one glamour model on the line, you simply have to drop everything. Luckily the baby's got a hard head.

And when we finally meet, I'm not disappointed. Keeley is obviously in possession of what the tabloids would describe as "ample charms", but she's also a natural beauty, somehow oozing sex appeal in leggings, a rock-god T-shirt and ripped cardigan.

The girl who is, I'm reliably informed, the most Googled person in the country, has come a long way from her days as a trainee hairdresser.

However, life could be radically different for the 20-year-old Lewisham lass if she'd followed up her initial interest in a career in the Army. I could have been chatting to Private Keeley Hazell rather than a very public one.

"A good friend of mine, Dan Davis, was joining the Army about three years ago and I was thinking of doing the same," she said.

"I filled out the application, but then

Dan came back with, what to me, were horror stories of the Army fitness test.

"I knew then that I wouldn't get in. But I respect the job that they do so much. It must be so hard at times and it takes a strong-minded person to do it."

The Army's loss is without doubt a major gain for subscribers of lads' mags across the country. Since her brief flirtation with life in the Forces, the likeable and unaffected pin-up has ridden an amazing three-year roller-coaster ride to become Britain's top glamour girl.

And, according to those erstwhile judges who read *FHM*, she's now second only to actress Keira Knightley in the list of world's sexiest women. And they say

no one remembers who finishes second.

After claiming the *Daily Star's* "Search for a Beach Babe" crown at the age of 17, Keeley shot to fame by winning *The Sun's* "Page 3 Idol" competition in December 2004 – a prize which earned her £10,000's worth of clothes and a year-long modelling gig with the Current Bun.

"My boyfriend at the time took some pictures of me to send in to the competition, but I never dreamed I'd win," added Keeley, who was whisked off to Tobago for her first assignment just days after scooping the prize.

"The day I won was memorable for a lot of reasons, seeing as though I hadn't even told my family that I'd entered. I had a lot of explaining to do."

Keeley's life had changed overnight and she was soon a regular fixture on the front covers of glossy men's magazines like *Loaded*, *Arena* and *Nuts*. Last year she was chosen by Sony as the face of PlayStation 3 game, *Formula*

One 06, and earlier this year she became The Parachute Regiment's official Page 3 girl, visiting 3 Para's barracks in Colchester to line up with her adopted colleagues.

She has also dipped her toes into the world of acting with a cameo appearance in the British movie, *Cashback*. It's an avenue she'd like to pursue, and her agent has been in preliminary discussions with Hollywood producers about casting her in

Baywatch The Movie.

Not bad going for a former teenage tearaway who admits that she was "a right handful" during her formative years. Despite being bright and streetwise, Keeley, who is dyslexic, struggled at

school and her rebellious side came to the fore as she stayed out until all hours drinking with her mates.

"I think being a teenager is a very hard time of your life, and that in itself is another reason to send you off the rails," added Keeley, whose parents split up when she was 13. "I think when I realised that I wasn't giving as much as I could I started to knuckle down. At the end of the day I was the only person who was going to suffer if I carried on as I had been."

Keeley's new-found dedication to her studies paid off as she left Bromley's Ravensbourne School with a handful of GCSEs. However, as she began her adult life washing hair in the local salon, the charmingly down-to-earth beauty could have had no idea what a stir she would be causing within just a few short years.

"There are times when you stop and go 'wow, where I am is amazing', but it's rare that you get time to take stock because everything's happening so fast," she added. "I've got great friends and family around me and that makes it easy to stay grounded."

"And you just don't know with the modelling industry; people come and go very quickly. I couldn't really foresee what was going to happen and I'm not complacent enough to think that it will last forever."

While Keeley has enjoyed an amazingly successful ride, she has also experienced



Pictures: Cpl Tony Belgrave RLC





the extreme lows that life in the public eye can bring when, in January, a former boyfriend released an intimate video of the pair on the internet.

"It was very upsetting. The main factor of it is the breach of trust. You trust somebody and they let you down and that's hard to take," she said. "We had been in an on-off relationship for a year and, at the time, I really loved this guy and trusted him. Never in my wildest dreams did I think he would betray me in this way."

However, Keeley is adamant that the experience has not put her off men. "I've moved on. You can't go through life not trusting people, you've just got to be very careful who you trust. It certainly hasn't made me hate men."

She has been linked with the likes of Chelsea star Joe Cole and comedian David Walliams in the past, but Keeley is still waiting to meet the man of her dreams. "I'm not dating at the moment, so there might be a lucky squaddie out there – you never know," she said. "I don't have a type of guy that I go for, I like someone who's funny and has a good personality. They also need to wear good shoes."

Time to get the boot polish out lads. ■

Web watch

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National talking newspapers & magazines. Difficulty reading the printed word? *Soldier* can still be enjoyed in audio format. To receive a free audio sample of *Soldier* contact the National Talking Newspaper Service on 01435 866102 or info@tnauk.org.uk

www.armywivesunited.co.uk

Free community site with message boards on a vast array of subjects that affect Army wives. Offering advice, friendship and support. Army Wives United has been online for three years and has around 1,000 active members.

www.enterpriseation.com

Website launched by Redbrick, the UK's leading consultancy for Regional Entrepreneurial Development, to provide information and inspiration to home workers across the UK.

www.forceshomes.co.uk

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www.moddiscounts.com

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www.stft.mod.uk

The Service Families Task Force website contains useful tri-Service information.

SERVICES

www.remerus.co.uk

REME R US – Unite REME wherever you are. REME R US members include serving, ex and future members of the REME, their families and friends, who want to have an exclusive online community website.

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Official website of the British Army.

www.armyrugbyunion.mod.uk

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www.armyaviation.co.uk

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

www.armysafety.mod.uk

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

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www.armymuseums.org.uk

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

www.kingsownmuseum.plus.com

King's Own Royal Regiment Museum, Lancaster

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Remember

War Graves Commission's 90 years celebrated in travelling exhibition

Pictures: Brian Harris

BRITAIN has long sent its soldiers abroad to fight wars in pursuit of justice, peace and influence. The only signs of those conflicts today are often the headstones of those who made the ultimate sacrifice in the service of their country, **writes John Elliott**.

So great was the loss of life in the First World War that an extraordinary organisation was created to preserve the memory of the fallen. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission cares for the resting places of 1,700,000 men and women who died in two world wars.

To mark its 90th anniversary the striking Brian Harris images on these pages are touring the world. See them at the Imperial War Museum North, Manchester (Nov-Feb 08). Other venues will be the Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance; the Australian War Memorial in Canberra (until May 08); In Flanders Fields Museum, Ieper; Calgary Museum, Calgary, Canada (Sept 1-Dec); Senedd, Cardiff (Sept 7-25). Visit www.cwgc.org and click on "Remembered".

With text by Julie Summers, they also adorn **Remembered: A History of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission** (Merrill, £29.95), reviewed in *Soldier* last month. ■

Their name liveth for evermore – CWGC military cemeteries around the world, clockwise from top right: Rancourt between Bapaume and Peronne on the Somme, surrounded by a field of wheat and poppies; the snow-covered 6th South African Armoured Division cemetery at Castiglione Dei Pepoli, high in the Italian Appenines; Tyne Cot, near Passchendaele in the Ypres Salient, the largest CWGC cemetery in the world; visitors in Chungkai War Cemetery, Thailand, on the site of a Japanese prisoner-of-war camp close to the Kwai Noi River (those buried there worked on the infamous Burma Railway); cactus growing in the El Alamein War Cemetery 130km west of Alexandria on the road to Mersa Matruh, Egypt; another view of Tyne Cot, where many of those lost in the Ypres Salient during the First World War are buried or recorded (the Cross of Sacrifice is built on a German blockhouse captured by the 3rd Australian Division); three Crosses of Sacrifice mark the site of the final action of the Battle of the Somme on Redan Ridge near Beaumont Hamel in France. From left to right, the crosses stand over the war cemeteries of Frankfurt Trench, Munich Trench and New Munich Trench





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A national panel of solicitors supports The Royal British Legion and specialises in accident claims for members of the Armed Forces.

TALKBACK

Legal fees: Time to get real

I LIVE in my own house in the UK and I have been posted to Germany. I want to sell my house while posted abroad and have learnt that I am eligible for Refund of Legal Expenses (RLE). The allowance is capped at £5,000 and was introduced in 1991 when the average house price was £80,000.

The allowance hasn't changed even though the average price is now in excess of £200,000.

Estate agents' fees are £4,000 on an average house and stamp duty of one per cent would be a further £2,000. And this doesn't take into account fees, surveys and searches and the new

PRIZE LETTER

compulsory home information pack. I reckon I will be about £4,000 out of pocket due to my Army posting.

If the Army is really seriously trying to support home ownership it needs to take a more realistic approach to this. I am available to discuss my example in more detail if required. – **Capt R Gill, 12 LSR, Abingdon, Oxfordshire.**

Brig Jamie Gordon, DPS(A), replies: You are right and I agree. RLE is too low and has not kept pace with the market. It is being reviewed as part of the Strategic Remuneration Review and is one of the few areas where there is unanimous agreement.

Keep it brief

YOUR letters provide a real insight into the issues at the top of soldiers' agendas . . . but please keep them brief. Emails (mail@soldiermagazine.co.uk) MUST include your name and location (although we won't publish them if you ask us not to). Anonymous letters go in the bin. The Editor reserves 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. Our postal address is on Page 5.



'I have some sympathy with your problem of inflated legal fees and I can see you feel strongly, but you have no chance of a loan, old fruit.'

PS...

IT'S good to see the guys coming forward with complaints about single soldiers' accommodation (June). I did 12 years in the Army and was based in Aldershot, Germany, Canada and Gibraltar.

Some of our accommodation on tours was better than being in barracks. In Gib I shared a four-man room with eight others and most of the windows were broken.

In Osnabrück the blocks were downgraded more times than I can remember and often there was no hot water and no heating during winter. But what a difference in Canada, where even the tower blocks were great. So why were they run down elsewhere? – Name and address supplied.

Banner headliners

THIS is a thank you to the thousands of Royal Signals riggers and technicians who served under 3, 8 and 39 Infantry Brigades and Signal Squadrons over the years in Northern Ireland.

If you ever deployed as a brigade area response team or a forward repair team to install and maintain the province's Cougarnet radio network, this is in recognition of all you did.

The unsung task of keeping the net going will ring true with many. Those who have sat atop a hill in the middle of nowhere with a foreman at the other end of the net telling you not to come back until it's working will have mixed memories of the uphill struggle we faced. No other job involved the long drives through some of the most dangerous areas in the province.

We climbed masts in red areas at night with fireworks and stones being launched at us, and in the bad old days were shot at. We got stuck up mountains in the snow. We got cuts, scrapes and broken bones but the job was completed.

Every single net apart from one has been removed in the past 12 months. Miles of cable and hundreds of antennae have been taken down and scrapped. Those who worked on it in the first place will probably have no idea that the kit they installed in what seemed the coldest, wettest, windiest part of the world worked so well for so long.

For those of you who played a part in keeping comms going throughout Op Banner, a big thank you. – Name and address supplied, Northern Ireland.

Five pages of your letters and emails on issues of the day

Rail warrant woes

I RECENTLY travelled by rail, on duty, for which I received a travel warrant. I tried to use my HM Forces Railcard to secure a discount against the £52 fare but the clerk told me that I, not the MoD, held the railcard and so I could not use it with the warrant.

Thus my unit, and the MoD, was charged £14 more than need be.

The obvious answer is to buy the ticket myself and claim it back, but that is unsatisfactory for a number of reasons, not least the time taken between submitting my claim and having the money reimbursed.

It is also clumsy in this techno, paper-free, JPA-enabled age. – **SSgt T A Woolfitt, 234 MI Section.**

Brig Jeff Mason, Dir Defence Supply Chain, Operations and Movements, replies: Rail warrants and Forces Railcards are the



"Sorry, Sir . . . no way does your Forces Railcard qualify you for a discount on your dinner bill."

subject of separate agreements between the Department and the Association of Train Operating Companies.

Warrants are used exclusively for duty

travel and are paid for by public funds. Railcards are for leisure travel funded by individuals. Both attract discounts.

The discount for warrants is applied during the accounting process and is not reflected in the price shown on the ticket, whereas the price shown on the ticket for railcard purchases is the actual discounted fare paid.

The ticket clerk was correct in that the two cannot be used in conjunction. This would, in effect, be a double discount.

JSP 800 Vol 2 Part 4 Ch 1 makes it clear it would be a contravention of the terms and conditions of the Forces Railcard for it to be used for duty travel or regular journeys between a residence and place of duty. Full details can be found in 2006DIN02-006.

Guard service lacks status

THIS year the Military Provost Guard Service (MPGS) is ten years old but it seems that the Army cannot decide our status on entitlements.

Examples include resettlement, the 12-year resettlement grant and disturbance allowances. But this gripe is really about getting our status recognised. Every time these questions are asked, the knee-jerk reaction is: "You are MPGS, so I don't know". Glasgow doesn't seem much the wiser.

If we are not entitled that's fine, I'm not complaining. I'm perfectly happy and I like my job. It would just be nice to know exactly where we stand.

I'm a full-time soldier accumulating Colour service, so why is our status such a grey area? – **LCpl D Robinson MPGS, Headley Court.**

Maj Tom Greenwood, MPGS, replies: The Military Local Service Engagement (MLSE) is a different and separate contract, which MPGS soldiers sign for terms of service up to three years. It offers the soldier the opportunity to serve at a unit of his or her choice and remain there. It is a specific contract for the Services' Armed Guarding Force.

Other than their training, which is recognised by higher pay on entry, MPGS soldiers may not bring forward entitlements

from previous service and are not entitled to LSAP because of the short term of their contract and therefore the short time left for recovery of the amount lent.

On resettlement, JSP is the full authority, but if he has less than three years service, he is not entitled to GRT, but his resettlement officers should advise him.

As it happens his platoon commander has just moved to this headquarters and I have been able to discuss this with him. The real issue seems to be the soldier's uncertainty on his pension. I have some sympathy as understanding the new arrangements is difficult and compounded when another pension is involved.

PS...

THANKS so much for publishing my Searchline appeal for an old friend in the July issue. I received an email from Kelvin today after three of his friends had contacted him and told him about my search.

He retired from the British Army six years ago.

I still can't get over the excitement of having made contact after 33 years.

Thanks again for your brilliant service. – Mylene Pieterse, Port Elizabeth, South Africa.

Are we Regulars or Reserves?

I APPLIED for Long Service Advance of Pay (LSAP) and was refused on the grounds that Military Provost Guard Service (MPGS) soldiers do not serve a pensionable contract and do not receive terminal benefits.

For certain purposes MPGS have been classed with Reserves, cadet force volunteers, mobilised personnel et al, and so have no entitlement to LSAP. Am I a Regular or a Reserve? – **Sgt D Ansell, MPGS, HMS Excellent.**

Maj (Retd) T B Greenwood, MPGS, HQ AG, replies: MPGS soldiers join on a Military Local Service Engagement contract mutually renewable after three years. It is full-time

Regular Army service – ie Colour service – and is pension-earning in accordance with the Armed Forces Pension Scheme.

Soldiers choose the location where they serve and can remain there for the period of their contract, up to the age of 55. MPGS soldiers receive much the same conditions of service as their general service counterparts, such as Service families accommodation, medical and dental treatment and leave.

AGAI Vol 2, paras 46 to 151, is a source document for terms and conditions. SP Pol confirms that MPGS soldiers are not entitled to LSAP due to the length of their contract and the difficulty they could face repaying the loan if their service did not continue when their contract ended.

My long wait for tax-free bonus

AFTER Telic 9, I was looking forward to the tax-free sum Regulars I served alongside received within six days.

But I, and many other Territorial Army and Reservist soldiers, learned we would have to wait up to eight weeks for ours. JPA was the excuse. It pays monthly and no other payments could be made, we were told.

Our time in Iraq was as dangerous as the Regulars, yet we have to wait up to eight weeks for our money. – **LBdr John Broux, 100 Regt RA (V).**

Maj Andy Larner, RPA, replies: LBdr Broux returned from Iraq on May 27 and was paid his operational allowance at the end of June. This was no different to his Regular counterparts.

It's taking ages to pay my allowance

I DEPLOYED to Afghanistan in April 2006 and came home in February. I qualified for a separation bonus (LSSA) but nine months later am still waiting.

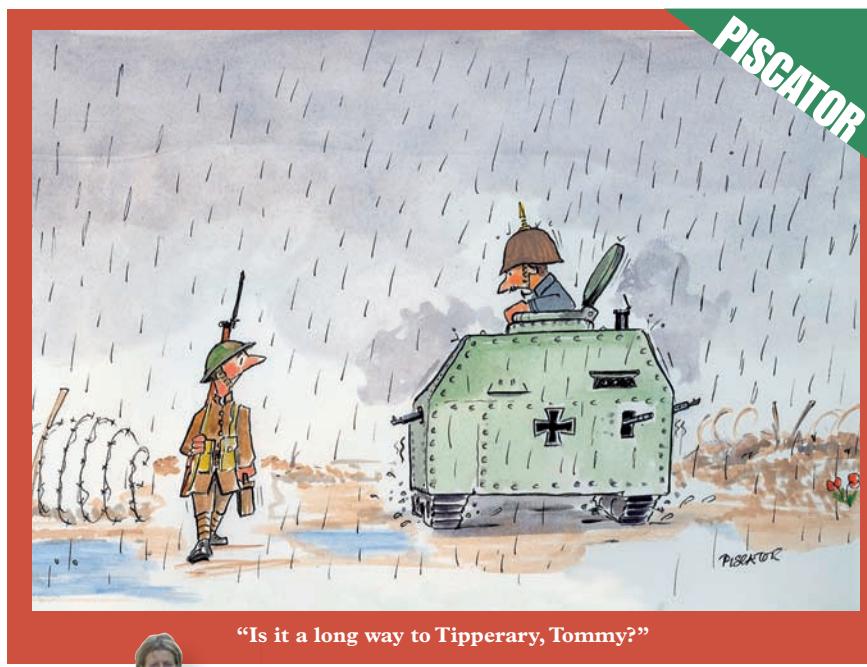
I was overjoyed to hear about the operational allowance, but 15 weeks later it has still not been paid. The initial delay was down to incompetence by a unit clerk who didn't know what the operational allowance was and didn't bother applying for it. – **Name and address supplied.**

Maj Andy Larner, RPA, replies: You received the operational allowance in May. You must approach your unit to chase up your LSSA payment, which you qualified for in October 2006. Your unit can process this.

Months later I'm still being paid incorrectly

I LEFT the Regulars in August 2005 and enlisted in the TA a day later. I began on a private's wage until my records caught up and after a few months was paid as a SNCO, but started on the bottom level. I was told it would be sorted but several months later nothing has changed. If this was a civilian organisation there would be uproar. – **Sgt S Mitchell, 4 Yorks.**

Maj Andy Larner, RPA, replies: You should have moved into the TA on the same increment level and rank you had as a Regular. JPA confirms you are still on level 2. Although your unit can correct the increment level, they should approach JPA enquiry centre and raise a service request because you are due back-pay beyond the date your record was on JPA and only the SPVA(G) Transition Team can deliver this.



Sally's story – see inside front cover





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Injury claim advice was 'misinformed'

DURING phase one training for the RAMC seven years ago I sustained an injury and was told to "crack on and work through the pain". I passed out but my injury got worse and I was downgraded.

My main concern was that this was reflected in my confidential reports and would affect my chances of promotion.

I asked my troop commander about the grievance procedure and potential for a compensation claim. He said it would affect my promotion prospects and that I should leave it until I left the Army. I agreed, reluctantly, but asked if the interview could be documented.

I am leaving in November and asked the Royal British Legion about compensation. I was told there is a three-year period in which you have to start proceedings and as my injury happened more than three years ago they couldn't help me even though they agreed that I had a good case. I feel I

have been misinformed. – **Name and address supplied.**

Brig Jamie Gordon, DPS(A), replies: My staff has discussed this case with the writer and although I will not comment on the specifics, I will make two points for the benefit of others.

First, where an individual has suffered an injury due to service during their career before April 6, 2005, on discharge they may seek compensation from the war pension scheme. If the injury occurred on or after that date they may seek compensation from the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS). Benefits from the AFCS may be paid while the individual continues to serve as well as following discharge.

Second, any soldier who feels they have not been dealt with appropriately at any stage of their career may submit an Application for Redress of Complaint in accordance with the Army Act Section 180, following the procedure at AGAI Section 70.

More letters at **TALKBACK** online
www.soldiermagazine.co.uk

THESE letters, and the official responses, appear in full in the TALKBACK section of our website

I AM serving in Afghanistan and am paying well over £650 a month in tax while I'm out here. I welcome the operational bonus, but it is a long way from being "better" than a tax exemption. – Sgt, Op Herrick.

I WAS injured playing rugby, downgraded, and will remain on the lower band of pay for the next ten years, even if I reach the rank of WO1. I'm in the RAC and want to be paid the same as everyone else. – Cpl, Fallingbostel.

WHY do we have to pay for the keys to use the gym suite on Worthy Down Camp at Winchester when personal fitness is a requirement of the job? – Frustrated soldier.

I INSTRUCT aviation crewmen and air door gunners and have to maintain my flying and survival currencies, but I don't receive specialist flying pay. I have been asking the chain of command for more than two years why not. Can you help? – Instructor, School of Army Aviation, Middle Wallop.

MY brother, who is a serving soldier, emailed you about a LSSA bonus I did not know I was entitled to. The tours I did were in the Falklands in 2003 and Iraq in 2004. – Ex-REME soldier.

THIS year the Military Provost Guard Service (MPGS) is ten years old but it seems that the Army still cannot decide our status on entitlements. Examples include the 12-year resettlement grant and disturbance allowances. – LCpl, Headley Court.

Common courtesy

AS the military recognises same-sex relationships, why won't it countenance "common law" couples? Surely it would be a massive retention tool? Many couples have told me they got married when they did because Army policy would otherwise have forced them apart. If a small outfit such as the Canadian Armed Forces can do it (with six months' proof of cohabitation), why can't we? – Sgt (name supplied), RAF Akrotiri.

The substance to a DPS(A) response to a similar letter (Jan 2006) was that MoD recognises its obligations in terms of entitlements, including the right to occupy Service housing, allowances and benefits to those in a legally registered relationship – i.e. marriage or civil partnership. – Editor

Three months to get it right

I MOVED from Service Families Accommodation on February 28 into my own home and made sure the documentation was completed by Defence Housing Estates (DHE) on march-out to ensure I would avoid being billed the following month when I had my mortgage premium and council tax bill to pay.

A month to stop my accommodation, garage and CILOCT charges might have been too much to expect. So how about two months then? Or what about three?

My pay office advanced me the deficit amounts, which I have to repay when

this sorry saga is sorted. But why should I jump through bureaucratic hoops for someone else's mistakes? Excuses about JPA implementation being to blame are little succour to me and my family. A three-month delay in repaying money to the Crown would be unacceptable. – Name and address supplied.

Maj Andy Larner, RPA, replies: This is a transition to Joint Personnel Administration issue. The soldier had his legacy system overcharge repaid via JPA at the end of May. His JPA overcharges from the start are on his June statement of earnings.

'Baby-sitting' clerks lose out

I AM a clerk and I have been attached to Infantry units throughout my five years in the Army.

I am concerned about JPA because some of the guys can't spell their own names let alone switch on a computer, and the Army expects them to administer themselves.

I appreciate that the Infantry works harder on ops than I do, but when I do get drafted into multiples during ops, shouldn't I be paid on the higher band?

Infanteers on normal rotation play more computer games, drink more beer and sleep more in a week than clerks do in a year. With JPA they want clerks to babysit privates who can't write their own names but who are on more money than AGC JNCOs. – Name and address supplied.

Lt Col Andrew Stevenson, O & D, DPS(A), replies: Your letter highlights the Pay 2000 structure and how this is informed by the MoD job evaluation (JE) system.

JE is a well-established system used in the private and public sectors to assess job weights in order to underpin pay and grading structures.

Representative jobs are assessed in detail against a set of criteria or factors. Under

Pay 2000, trades and ranks were allocated to one of two ranges, higher or lower. Pay is based firmly on trade and rank.

A five-year JE programme begun in 2001 is now complete. However, DPS(A) delayed the military clerk evaluation to take into account the impact on the military clerks' role in JPA, digitization and information administration.

The trade is due to be evaluated between now and June 2008 and the process will take into account any changes to the nature of roles, responsibilities and appointments since it was last evaluated. Any readjustments should be implemented in 2009.

Your letter also raises concerns about the ability of some soldiers to carry out the small range of self-service admin tasks. During extensive trials and testing of the system, using soldiers from different arms and services, some of whom were Gurkhas and Foreign and Commonwealth soldiers, it was clearly shown that these few tasks could be undertaken easily.

The phased introduction of JPA capability in units will help soldiers to better understand the system and use it effectively. A key role of a military clerk is to help, guide and advise our soldiers, and this will not change under JPA.

I was promoted 19 months ago

I WAS promoted to local lance corporal in September 2005, made substantive in February 2006 and told it would be backdated to October 2005.

Many letters have gone up to Glasgow but nothing has happened

and I have still not got my back pay. I seemed to have exhausted my chain of command. – LCpl C MacLeod MPGS, 42 Engr Regt.

Col Steve O'Connell, AGC MCM Div, replies:

My vodka nightmare

IN May the Naafi in York Barracks, Münster, had a special promotion on the price of vodka. I asked the staff if I could buy a large amount and they told me there was no problem.

I bought 16 3-litre bottles and was asked at the till if the vodka would be leaving Germany. When I replied that it would not I was told this saved them stamping the bottles. A member of staff even helped me load the bottles in my car.

The next day, the manager faxed Customs and Excise my details. I was asked to phone Customs and Excise, which I did, and was told someone was on the way to interview me.

I was asked where I had stored the vodka, then for the receipt and my mobile phone as the bottles were going to be confiscated.

I was spoken to abruptly by the Customs and Excise officer. I told her I wanted legal advice as I had not broken the law, at which point she calmed down and said that was not necessary.

She then spoke to the regimental admin officer, changing her story several times. The end result was that



"I see the Jones's have collected their vodka again, Mavis."

the vodka would not be confiscated but 13 bottles would go back to the Naafi and I could have my money back.

The Customs and Excise officer told me that if I had been married it would not have been a problem, but because I am single it was an issue.

Was I being discriminated against? It will be interesting to see how many times my car gets pulled over at the

port. Why, above all else, did the Naafi staff allow me to purchase the vodka and not stamp the bottles? – **Gdsm D Hall, 1 SG, BFPO 17.**

Susan Smith, Customer Service Manager, Naafi Central Supply Office, BFPO 40, replies: The bottles you purchased should have been stamped with the HM Forces Naafi stamp and this has now been addressed with the staff concerned.

The stamping issue, however, was not the reason Customs were contacted and resulted in them insisting that 13 of the bottles you bought were returned.

While we are able to sell unlimited quantities of non-rationed items, under current Customs regulations any purchase of the same spirit in excess of three litres need to be recorded on an excess purchase sheet for their inspection.

In line with these regulations the manager was not only legally obliged to inform them, but had a moral responsibility under the military focus on duty of care. It was then the decision of Customs and Immigration to investigate any concerns they might have and to take appropriate action.

Just give it to us straight

THANKS for a great magazine full of informative chat and stories. The greatest thing you do is to give us a chance to consult on the dreaded admin issues that so define our lives in the Army.

Often I think Service personnel just want a definitive answer: great if it goes their way but most times they will be satisfied that it has been looked into and the issue clarified.

I now find myself requiring just that.

I served in the Territorial Army for several years, deployed on ops in Bosnia and enjoyed my tour so much I went for a Regular commission. It felt good going through Sandhurst as one of the few who already had medals.

I was told by the regimental admin officer that my Longer Separated Service Allowance (LSSA) days would be transferred to my new officer one.

On commissioning I deployed to Iraq and found my records had not been updated, including a number of courses and qualifications I had completed in the TA. I entered them and added the LSSA days, but on returning to the UK and moving to a different corps found the same thing had happened again.

I was able to update my courses, but was told that I was not entitled to transfer LSSA days earned in the TA.

After a year in yet another unit, the RAO has admitted that no one will give her a straight answer. I'm bored with chasing this and just want an answer. What are the regulations? – **Name and address supplied.**

APC Glasgow responds: The answer to your question lies in Para 05.0123 of JSP 752, which deals with the issue of counting

former qualifying service for Longer Separation Allowance (LSA eligibility) for Regular and Reserve personnel who re-enter the Service. Providing your break does not exceed four years, previous LSSA balance earned on ops on a Regular engagement can be transferred.

PS...

I HAVE followed the honours and awards made to Army personnel over the years, particularly since the demise of the British Empire Medal in 1995.

Concerns were raised then by lower ranks but the classless society was the way ahead and the BEM was dissolved so all ranks would be considered for awards such as the MBE.

There were 36 MBEs for officers in the New Year Honours, eight for other ranks; in the latest Queen's Birthday Honours 41 for officers and 15 for other ranks.

As ORs make up most of the Army, concerns raised about the demise of the BEM appear to be justified. – **Name, address supplied.**

but still have had no back pay

LCpl MacLeod was interviewed by his CO on June 7. It came as a complete surprise to the unit, which was unaware of this issue and frustrated by the allegation that previous requests had been ignored.

They had no record that LCpl Macleod

had made previous representations.

The unit has submitted a formal request to the MCM Division to backdate the promotion to October 12, 2005 and once authorisation has been granted, SPVA will take the necessary action.

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No heroes in MBY

The 'My Back Yard' residents of Ashtead should be ashamed of themselves

THE Prime Minister's decision for Des Browne, our Defence Secretary, to also become the Secretary of State for Scotland provoked some anger in the military community.

At a time of high operational tempo and sacrifice on the part of soldiers, surely the Secretary of State job shouldn't be part-time?

Army families display incredible loyalty, but decisions like this make us feel the Government doesn't value those who put the nation's needs before their own – our soldiers.

The unprecedented floods across Britain meant that the stretched Armed Forces were again asked to help – this time to provide humanitarian aid and rescue support. As usual they came up trumps.

Soldiers and their families are proud of being a part of the British Army, but the way we are being treated is definitely starting to rock morale, particularly as soldiers are being asked to do more and more with less and less.

It all boils down to the Military Covenant not being honoured. The Royal British Legion recently launched a "Broken Covenant" campaign to encourage the nation to demand better treatment for soldiers. I fear they have a hard battle ahead of them as much of the population seems indifferent, even faintly disdainful about the military.

A recent incident, which encapsulates this lack of value, is the offensive by some residents of Ashtead to halt



A personal view from Catharine Moss, Editor of the AFF Families Journal

SSAFA Forces Help's intention to use a £1.7million house as short-term accommodation for relatives of injured Service personnel at nearby Headley Court, the military rehabilitation centre in Surrey.

Some soldiers spend months rebuilding their lives at Headley Court and benefit from the support of their families while going through this difficult process.

SSAFA's plans are on hold until the local council decides who wins – residents or Forces families. All this because neighbours are worried that this change of use will negatively affect their property prices and spoil the neighbourhood.

The Ashtead "nimby" have been vilified by the media but an unexpected bonus was the wake of public support which followed.

An online petition to support the proposed development has been launched on the 10 Downing Street website which had (on going to print), more than 3,000 signatures.

Some Army Rumour Service (www.arrse.co.uk) users even hand-delivered flyers to the homes of Ashtead residents asking them to support SSAFA's plans. The flyer featured a photograph of ammunition technical officer and recent recipient of the George Cross Capt Peter Norton and his wife, Sue. While in Iraq in 2005 Peter Norton lost his left arm and leg and suffered nerve damage

to his remaining leg. He spent a year at Selly Oak Hospital in Birmingham before moving to Headley Court to continue his treatment and rehab.

In a moving account of their experiences over the last two years, Mrs Norton asked the Government for improved funding for facilities for families of injured personnel.

"Rehabilitation takes such a long time," she wrote, "months roll into years, the families suffer as a result and are often very alone and at a distance from their own family support network."

With numbers of severely injured personnel on the rise (from January 2006 to June 2007, 133 personnel in Iraq and Afghanistan were seriously or very seriously injured) there's an increasing need for this type of facility for our Service families.

I leave you with a powerful quote from the Military Covenant: "Soldiers will be called upon to make personal sacrifices – including the ultimate sacrifice – in the service of the Nation.

'All because neighbours are worried this will negatively affect their property prices'

"In return, British soldiers must always be able to expect fair treatment, to be valued and respected as individuals, and that they (and their families) will be sustained and rewarded by commensurate terms and conditions of service.

"This mutual obligation forms the Military Covenant between the nation, the Army and each individual soldier; an unbreakable common bond of identity, loyalty and responsibility which has sustained the Army and its soldiers throughout its history." ■

Want to know more about the Army Families Federation? Log on to www.aff.org.uk

The column that offers you a confidential way to tackle debt – and it won't cost you a penny

MANAGE YOUR MONEY

Credit Action Director Keith Tondeur will be pleased to answer, in confidence, specific questions addressed to the Editor.



'Fess up ...

AN Infantry battalion admin officer wrote to tell me he saw a constant flow of soldiers with personal finance issues, which didn't surprise me. The Government has shown its

concern at the rising problem, particularly among the young, by announcing that money education lessons are to be taught.

Frequently people seek help with debts of £40,000 or more. It was these cases that caused the RAO to write to me. He wanted to know what impact debt, bankruptcy and Individual voluntary arrangements (IVAs) had on a soldier's career.

Debt is a sign of not being in control of part of one's life so is not a positive thing for a career although it is better to admit to it to your chain of command than to hide it. This could lead to disciplinary action and may be a security risk. So, if you are in debt, see your officer and:

- Admit the problem.
- Demonstrate

you are taking steps to rectify it, such as seeking help from an agency such as CCCS or Citizens Advice. ● Produce a list of your debts and a realistic budget. ● Confirm that if you are advised to go bankrupt or take out an IVA you will first consult your officer. ● Agree to progress meetings. ● Promise to inform your officer if things change. ● Be willing to talk to any other person you are directed to.

Senior officers are aware of the extent of debt. They know soldiers are not immune, so if you are struggling, bite the bullet now.

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- Because of poor living conditions

then you could be entitled to financial compensation.

Sergeant X – settled his claim for a sum in excess of £175,000 after falling from a personnel carrier whilst on manoeuvres.

Private Y – recovered £130,000 after being injured when jumping over a wall whilst on exercises.

Chef A Class – on board ship suffered severe injuries to a hand trapped by a watertight door in the galley and received £131,000.

Claimant suffered electric shock due to faulty electrical installation awarded £3,000.

Injuries and trauma caused by damp conditions, Claimant recovered £4,000.

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COMING SOON! OUR 2008 CALENDAR



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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
	7	8	9	10	11	12
	14	15	16	17	18	19
	21	22	23	24	25	26
	28	29	30	31		

Welcome to the rough, tough world of military vehicles and aircraft – see the September issue for full details on how to order your very own copy.

NO. 789

WIN £100

HOW OBSERVANT ARE YOU?



THREE details have been changed in the latest in the series of drawings by our cartoonist, Chip. Circle the differences in the left-hand image and send the whole panel to **HOAY 789, Soldier, Ordnance Road, Aldershot, Hampshire GU11 2DU** by August 31.

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

Name: (Give initials and rank or title)

Address:

June competition (No 787): First correct entry drawn at random and winner of the £100 prize was **Fr N Gosnell CF (RC), Chaplain, 1 IG battle-group, Telic 10.** Runners-up **W01 S J Higgs, SEME, Bordon** and **Capt A S Hoyle, QM 9 Regt AAC** each win a £25 gift voucher.

The ten differences were: German grenade; razor; dish handle; insignia on helmet; rifle barrel, magazine on machine gun; hook on anchor; window; clothes on line; commando dagger.



Winner of our June competition (inset)

THERE were some great suggestions for the June contest, but we gave it, by a head, to Capt Nigel Bolter, Ops and Training Officer, 270 Tpt Sqn, RLC (V) for his off-beat caption: "The RCT were once again taking the Aldershot Giant Jenga competition extremely seriously".

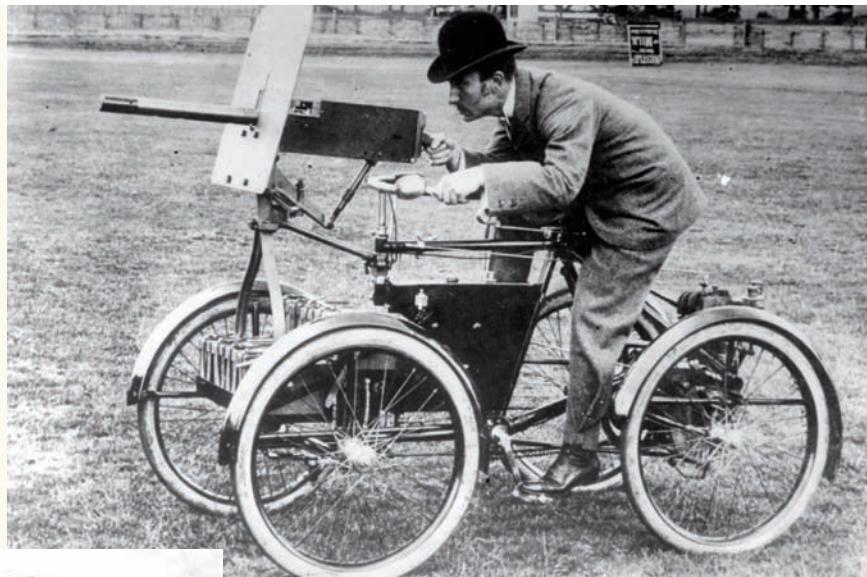
We also liked the cheeky "The officers couldn't believe the phenomenon of the gap getting smaller" from SSgt J Oldfield, 4 LRS RLC, Abingdon.

Other contenders were: "It's the new electric Bedford – battery's a bit big, though" from John Ball, RSME, 63 Sqn, Camberley, and "I wish they'd hurry up and get that portable loo into action. I don't know how much longer I can hold out" from Vince Scott, 299 Para Engr Sqn RE (V), Wakefield.

"Defence Chiefs attend a demonstration of



"Ikea's self-assembly lorry" came from Simon Harrison of Ludgershall and "Typical: two men working, six supervision" was how LCpl O'Brien MPGS, RAF Linton-on-Ouse, interpreted the picture. Also-rans included



Newly-commissioned 2nd Lt Alphonso B Capone knew that one day he would command the 1st The Queen's Very Own Mobile Machine Gun Mob

WIN A BOOK: Write a caption for the photo, above, from our March 1948 issue, and send it in by August 31. The best, in our opinion, will win a copy of Damien Lewis's bestseller, *Cobra Gold* (Century, £17.99), a fictional account of the \$200 million bank robbery in Beirut in 1976. Were Special Forces involved?

"I've got no idea how it fits on, Sir, I normally do Meals on Wheels" by S Pengelly of St Budeaux and "Top brass weren't impressed by their mess accommodation" from W A Wright, Para Regt Assoc, Darlington Branch.

Schools feature

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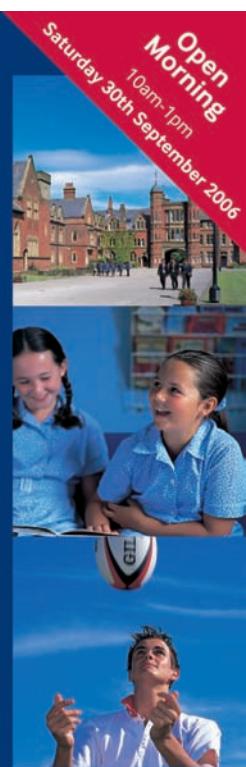
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Garrison guide

Aldershot

COMEDY

Thursday, August 2-4 – Tim Clarke,

Mark Maier and Curtis

Walker, Jongleurs

Comedy Club & Bar

Risa, Reading

Sunday, August 5 –

Laughing Horse

Comedy Club

Edinburgh Preview,

The Britannia,

Richmond-Upon-

Thames

Thursday, August 30 – Rob

Heeney and Tony Gerrard,



Jongleurs Comedy Club & Bar
Risa, Reading

LIVE MUSIC

Sunday, August 5 – Jools Holland
(pictured left), Henley-on-

Thames

Friday, August 10

– Mark Morriss
(The Bluetones),

The Boilerroom,

Guildford

Saturday, August 11 – Lemar and

Beverley Knight,

Marble Hill House,

Twickenham

Wednesday, August 15 –

Feud, The Live and Loud

Bar @ The Star Inn, Guildford

Friday, August 24-26 – Carling Weekend

Reading Festival: Red Hot Chilli Peppers, Maximo Park, Biffy Clyro, Lost Prophets, Jamie T, Klaxons and many more, Reading

THEATRE

Wednesday, August 1-11 – Joseph And The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, Hexagon Theatre, Reading

Saturday, August 4 – Give My Regards To Broadway, Electric Theatre, Guildford

Thursday, August 16 – Oliver, Leatherhead Theatre, Leatherhead

Wednesday, August 22 – Jack And The Beanstalk and Hansel And Gretel, Mapledurham House, Reading

Saturday, August 25 – As You Like It, Gilbert White's House & The Oates Museum, Alton

Coach House, Salisbury

Friday, August 24 – Van Morrison, Lighthouse (Poole Arts Centre), Poole

Saturday, August 25 – Nizlopi and Three Kings, Talking Heads, Southampton

THEATRE

Wednesday, August 1-5 – The Chinese State Circus, Lodmoor Country Park, Weymouth

Wednesday, August 1-11 – Starlight Express, Bristol Hippodrome, Bristol

Tuesday, August 28-31 – Things That Go Bump, South Hill Park Arts Centre, Bracknell

Saturday, August 18-19 – V Festival: Foo Fighters, Snow Patrol, Babyshambles, Basement Jaxx, Happy Mondays, The Killers, Kasabian, The Fratellis, The Kooks and many more, Hylands Park, Chelmsford

Wednesday, August 29 – Hayseed Dixie, Colchester Arts Centre, Colchester

THEATRE

Wednesday August 15-18 – We Will Rock You: Summer Youth, Spa Pavilion Theatre, Felixstowe

Sunday, August 26 – Alice in Wonderland, The Quay Theatre, Sudbury

Sunday, August 26 – Much Ado About Nothing, Layer Marney Tower, Colchester

Wednesday, August 29 – Summer Magic, Spa Pavilion Theatre, Felixstowe



Soul men: Catch The Drifters in Clacton-On-Sea

Colchester

COMEDY

Friday, 3 August – The Laughter Zone: Steve Best and Guest Comedians, Colchester Arts Centre, Colchester

Thursday, August 9 – The Comedy Club: Kevin McCarthy AKA Man With The Beard, Pierre Hollins and Angelo Tsarouchas, Waterfront, Chelmsford

Thursday, August 23 – The Comedy Club: Chambers & Nettleton, Steve Day and Simon Bligh, Waterfront, Chelmsford

LIVE MUSIC

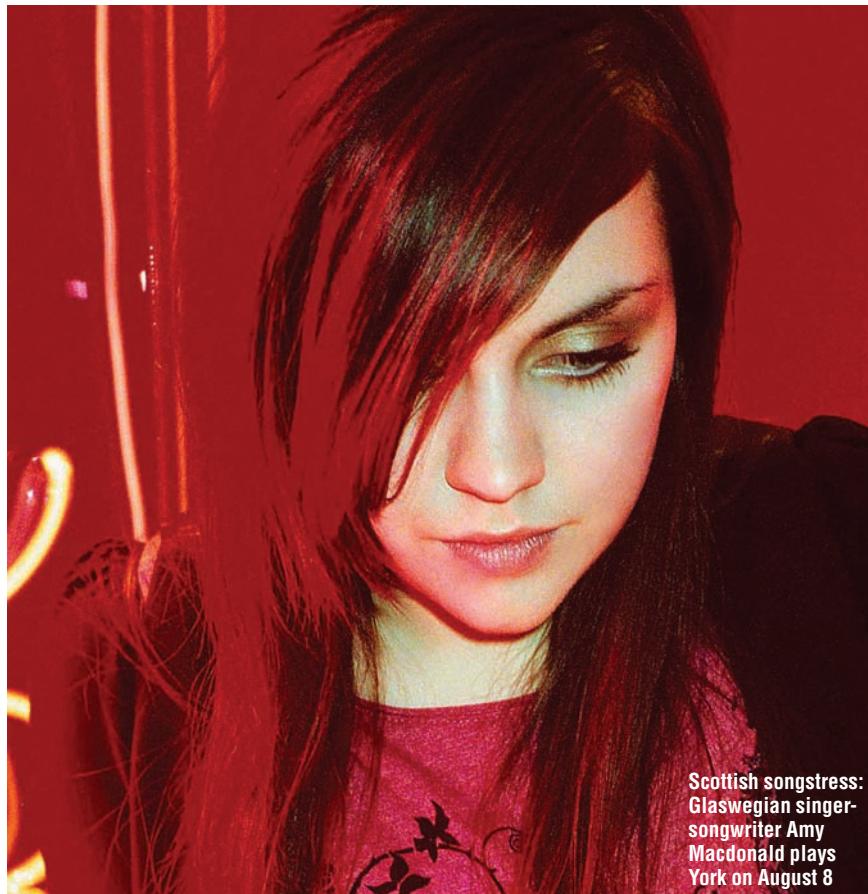
Saturday, August 4 – Fahrenheit451, Bay Horse, Chelmsford

Sunday, August 5 – The Drifters, Princes Theatre, Clacton-On-Sea

Friday, August 10 – Absent Kid and Koopa, The Twist, Colchester

No.1 for Entertainment

Ents24 is the UK's number one entertainments listings and ticketing resource, constantly updated with the latest gigs, theatre, club/bar and comedy events. For the most up-to-the-minute information, and for details about your local cinema listings, visit www.ents24.com or call our ticket hotline 0871 230 2601 to book your tickets now.



Scottish songstress: Glaswegian singer-songwriter Amy Macdonald plays York on August 8

Catterick

COMEDY

Thursday, August 2 – Long Live Comedy: Sarah Millican and Al Dawes, Chillingham Arms, Newcastle upon Tyne

Thursday, August 2 – Silky and Trevor Crook, Jongleurs Comedy Club, Leeds

Saturday, August 11 – JoJo Smith, Brendan Dempsey, Ian Moore and Stu Who?, Jongleurs Comedy Club, Leeds

Thursday, August 16-19 – Jeremy O'Donnell, Phil Walker, Dom Carroll and Andy Watson, Jongleurs Comedy Club, Leeds

Friday, August 24 – Funny Bones Comedy Club: Anvil Springstein and Jay Ryan, Gala Theatre, Durham

LIVE MUSIC

Tuesday, August 7 – In The Basement: Kal Els Cape, City Screen Picturehouse, York

Wednesday, August 8 – Amy Macdonald, Fibbers (Barfly York), York

Sunday, August 12 – Westlife, Mutya Buena, Shane Ward and Chico, Bits Park, Carlisle

Friday, August 17 – Rick Witter & The Dukes, Newcastle Academy, Newcastle upon Tyne

Tuesday, August 21 – Interpol, Newcastle Academy, Newcastle upon Tyne

THEATRE

Saturday, August 4 – Jack And The Beanstalk and Hansel And Gretel, Thorp Perrow Arboretum, Bedale

Wednesday, August 8 – A Midsummer Nights Dream, Solberge Hall Hotel, Northallerton

Friday, August 10 – Merchant Of Venice: Heartbreak Productions, Mount Grace Priory, Northallerton

Wednesday, August 15 – DaSilva Marionette Circus, Darlington Arts Centre, Darlington

Wednesday, August 29-30 – The Lost Forest: Indigo Moon Theatre Company, Darlington Arts Centre, Darlington

DEFENCE DIARY

AUGUST

3-25: Edinburgh Military Tattoo. Tickets and details from +44(0)8707 555 118 or www.edinburgh-tattoo.co.uk

4: RAF Digby's Party in the Park. Tickets and details from 01526 327684 or www.digbypartyinthepark.org.uk

SEPTEMBER

9: Winchester and District Militaria Society annual exhibition and fair, Winchester Guildhall, 1000-1400.

22-23: Salute to the 40s – A weekend of wartime-style entertainment, including two concerts each day featuring music, dance and comedy. Historic Dockyard Chatham. Visit www.thedockyard.co.uk for more info.

OCTOBER

1-31: Poster of Conflict – More than 300 of the most eye-catching and iconic posters. Imperial War Museum London. Tel: 0207 416 5320/5321.

5: Charity Boxing Night – British Army v East of England Select, ATR Bassingbourn. Tickets from £25. Tel: 01223 204363.

NOVEMBER

1-30: 90th anniversary of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission – British leg of a special photographic exhibition (opening simultaneously in Canada and Australia) to mark the 90th anniversary of the founding of the CWGC in 1917. Imperial War Museum North, Manchester. Tel: 0161 8364000.

4: 55th Midlands Festival of Remembrance, starting at 1830 in the Birmingham Town Hall. Contact Frank Manning, 22 Lambeth Road, Birmingham B44 9NS.

DECEMBER

15: Charity Christmas concert for the RBL Poppy Appeal and Banbury Young Homeless Project, Parish Church, Kings Sutton at 1930. Tickets from Mike Carter on 07786 640245/01865 780124.

■ Got a date for the diary? Email details to diary@soldiermagazine.co.uk

Bulletin board

Defence directory

Army Benevolent Fund: 0845 2414820

Army Welfare Information Service: 01722 436569/436461; www.army.mod.uk/aws

Army Families Federation: 01980 615525

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

Career Transition Partnership: 0207 766 8020

Children's Education Advisory Service: 01980 618244; enquiries.ceas@gtnet.gov.uk

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

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

Family Escort Service: 020 74639249

Forces Pension Society: 020 78209988

Gulf Veterans Association: 0191 2301065

Joint Service Housing Advice Office: 01722 436575

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

Mutual Support (Forces Multiple Sclerosis support group): 01666 824709

National Gulf Veterans' and Families' Association Office: (0900-1700) 01482 808730; 24-hour helpline 01482 833812; www.ngva.com

Regular Forces' Employment Association: 0207 321 2011; www.rfea.org.uk

Royal British Legion: 0845 7725 725

RBL Industries Vocational Assessment Centre: 01622 717202/718484; www.rbli.co.uk

Ex-Service Homes Referral Agency (ESHRA): 0207 8394466; www.eshra.com

St Dunstan's charity for blind ex-Servicemen and women: 0207 7235021; www.st-dunstans.org.uk

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

Services Cotswold Centre: 01225 810358

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

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

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

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

Reunions

TS Forward Sea Cadets: 65th birthday reunion for anyone involved, Aug 18, at Ellesmere Port Civil Hall. Ring Karen Cioma-Park on 0151 355 1779 or email karencioma@uwclub.net

Armourers' Association: Reunion dinner at Victory Services Club, Seymour St, London on Sept 1. Armourers, artificers, weapon and gun fitters, REME, RAOC and RM, serving or retired, welcome. Ring Chris Dennis on 01905 755334 or email willow18@tiscali.co.uk

Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment: Annual reunion, Sept 9, in Maidstone. Contact B Bartlett, 185 Park Crescent, Erith, Kent DA8 3EB.

BMH Fayid (33 Company RAMC), Suez Canal Zone 1950-56: Reunion on Sept 15-16 at the International Hotel, Burton Road, Derby. For all who served in the British Military Hospital Fayid, Suez Canal Zone. Contact Bill Lowe, The Cottage, 65 North Street, West Rainton, Co Durham DH4 6NU or email him at wgl70@yahoo.co.uk

Royal Army Dental Corps Weekend: At Home at Evelyn Woods Road, Sept 15; church parade, Sept 16. Ring Maj (Retd) John Sharp on 01276 412753 or email rhq.radc@hotmail.com

National Service Veterans Alliance: Reunion at Britannia Hotel, Coventry, Sept 28-Oct 1. National Servicemen welcome. Ring Ken Wakeman on 0208 850 2246 or email kenwake@ntlworld.com

Glosters Band and Drums: Reunion on Oct 6 at Dowty Sports and Social Society, Staverton, Down Hatherley Road, Cheltenham. Contact Neil Webb, 1 Oakhurst Close, Churchdown, Glos GL3 2SS, tel 01452 855236.

Royal Horse Artillery Association: Annual meeting and dinner at Artillery Centre, Larkhill, Oct 6-7. Past and present members of any RHA unit welcome. Contact Maj (Retd) R J Whiteway, HQ Dulmen Station, BFPO 44, ring 0049 2594 784438 or email rhaassn@hotmail.co.uk

RADC WOs' and Sgts' Mess: Reunion dinner at Duchess of Kent WOs' and Sgts' Mess, Aldershot on Oct 19 and dining-in of new Director Army Dental Services. Serving and retired welcome. Contact Corps RSM Mick Davey, RADC, DDC Complex, Evelyn Woods Road, Aldershot GU11 2LS, tel 094222 2780 or 01252 347780.

8 Transport Regiment RASC/RCT/RLC: Sixth anniversary reunion on Oct 20. Ring Capt Jimmy Aspinall on 094554 8922, 07957 966566 or email him at jimmyasp@hotmail.com

24 Field Squadron RE: Reunion to be held at end of Oct at King Charles Hotel, Chatham, Kent for RE personnel who served 1984-1988. Email Scott Carr at scottcarr909@msn.com

7 Parachute Regiment RHA and Airborne Gunners: Officers' reunion dinner, Officers' Mess, RSQ Larkhill on Nov 9. Write to Capt R I Taylor RHA, F (Sphinx) Para Bty, 7 Para RHA, Merville

Barracks, Colchester CO2 7SW or ring 07967 362763.

2 Army Field Ambulance and 1 Close Support Medical Regiment

Reunion and remembrance service, Nov 9-11, for soldiers serving in 2 AFA and 1 CSMR. More details available from Sgt Ken Collins, Medical Centre, UKSU, SHAPE, BFPO 26; tel 07902 212775; or email standatease@hotmail.com

Searchline

Old friends want to get in touch with **Graeme Goldsmith** from Sunderland, a dog handler at the Maze in the middle-to-late 1980s. Email cathie.brannan@msn.com

Whereabouts of **Maureen O'Hara** of Oldham, Lancs, sought. She joined the Army around 1967-8 and was based in Aldershot and Colchester. She married a soldier, had two children and moved to Catterick. Contact Glenise Jones on 0161-681-5873 or email fortiesgirl49@aol.com

The **Ethiopian Ground Force Veterans Association** is compiling a history of the Ethiopian Army and would welcome input from anyone who has personal experience, or a relative who assisted the Ethiopian forces. Photographs particularly welcome. Email majorjemberie@yahoo.com

Did you serve at **Guildford** between Feb-May 1972, **St Omar Barracks** May-Aug 1972 and **Woolwich** Aug 72-Apr 73? Former WRAC soldier **Janet Spreadbury** is trying to find old friends. Write to her at 98 Wilton Road, Salisbury, Wilts SP2 7JJ.

Simon Jeans, last known military address JHQ Rheindahlen in 1995, also lived in Paulsgrove, Portsmouth, is sought by old school friend **David Fowler**. Email davidfowler@aol.com

Gwyn Phillips is looking for lost mates from **7 Squadron, 14 Signal Regiment, Droitwich Comcen** 1959 to 1961, especially **Tony Ennis, Norman Ridley** and **William (Bill) Jeffries, REME**. Call 01554 754805 or email gwyn.p@virgin.net

Does anyone know the whereabouts of brothers **Charles** and **Fredrick Woppard**, both serving soldiers in the 1970s? Their sister-in-law, Rita from Germany, lost touch in 1974 and is trying to trace them. Contact Mrs Rita Woppard, Westuffler Weg 8A, 59457 Werl, Germany.

Appointments

Lt Gen: P A Wall, late RE, to be Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff (Commitments), in Aug 07.

Maj Gen: M F N Mans, late RE, to be Military Secretary, in Mar 08; A R Gregory, late RA, to be Deputy Adjutant General and Director General Service Conditions (Army), in Feb; C J Boag, late RE, to be Headquarters Land Command/Headquarters Adjutant General Collocation Team Leader, in Jan.

Dirty work: WO2 (RQMS) Ewen Stuart returns the Kiwi's 150ft-long beak to chalky whiteness as members of 3 DSR helped clean up the giant bird, and its NZ signature, which overlook their camp at Bulford. The scale of the 90-year-old hillside carving is apparent from the size of the vehicles parked on the slope above it.

Picture: Cpl Russ Nolan



White All Black

SOLDIERS from 3 (UK) Signals Division at Bulford teamed up with Wiltshire Army Cadets, local scouts and the Bulford Conservation Group to tweak up the big bird which looks over their camp on Salisbury Plain.

The Bulford Kiwi, a massive chalk figure designed by Sgt Maj Percy Blenkarne at the end of the First World War, was carved out of the hillside by the New Zealand Army in 1919 to commemorate their presence at the nearby but now long-gone Sling Camp.

The figure is so big – it is 420ft high and has a 150ft bill – that much of the conservation work is done by contractors. Many groups have tended to the kiwi's "plumage" over the years, including the Kiwi boot polish company, but the task has now passed to Defence Estates.

So large and visible is the kiwi outline that it had to be covered over during the Second World War to prevent the Luftwaffe using it as a landmark and navigation aid.

The helpers scraped away grey gravel to expose the chalk below before a fence was erected to keep out rabbits which are causing major damage to the surface.

But the giant chalk carving is not the only kiwi in the village – it shares that honour with a Kiwi pub and a Kiwi Barracks. Most of southern

England's chalk hill carvings, including the well endowed Cerne Abbas Giant and Uffington white horse, date back to antiquity.

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 reception, is followed by a presentation and questions-and-answers session and culminates with a finger buffet. Military personnel will be on hand to answer your questions.

Call 01276 417000 or email your name and address to apt.mod@btinternet.com with the event you are interested in attending.

August – No presentations. **September** – 11, Burton-upon-Trent; 12, Stoke-on-Trent; 13, Wolverhampton; 25, Chatham; 26, Woking; 27, Eastbourne. **October** – 9, Warrington; 10, Lancaster; 11, Crewe.

Competitions

Manchester Military Tattoo: Winners – Alec Coleman, Wickford, Essex; C Bernoski, Olton, Solihull. Answer: Lancashire.

British Army Badges

By Lt Col (Retd) Robin Hodges

Cap badge

THE Queen's Dragoon Guards adopted the Imperial Eagle, formerly the badge of the 1st King's Dragoon Guards, on amalgamation in 1959. The cap badge is the double-headed eagle taken from the arms of Emperor Francis Joseph I of Austria who was Colonel-in-Chief from 1896 until the First World War. Soldiers buy a silver metal badge and polish off the coat of arms on the eagle's breast. The reason given for this is that it is an attempt to remove the dishonour of having a German Colonel-in-Chief during the First World War.



Formation sign

THE European Force (Eufor) badge was designed by Lt Col Martin Lilly RLC when the European Union deployed Althea Force to replace the Stabilisation Force (Sfor) in the Balkans in December 2004. Many of the troops serving with Sfor remained in place while the command and the badge changed. Eufor is drawn from the EU countries, with other Nato nations and states applying for EU membership welcome to contribute troops.



Specialist badge

Corporals qualified and employed on close protection duties, bodyguards in common parlance, may wear the close protection badge. However the NCOs generally wear either combat dress or civilian clothes and therefore they have little opportunity to wear the highly-prized badge.



Tactical recognition flash

The Army Physical Training Corps TRF, along with the beret badge backing and stable belt, is based on red and black stripes to reflect the red and black striped jersey worn for many years by PT instructors.



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



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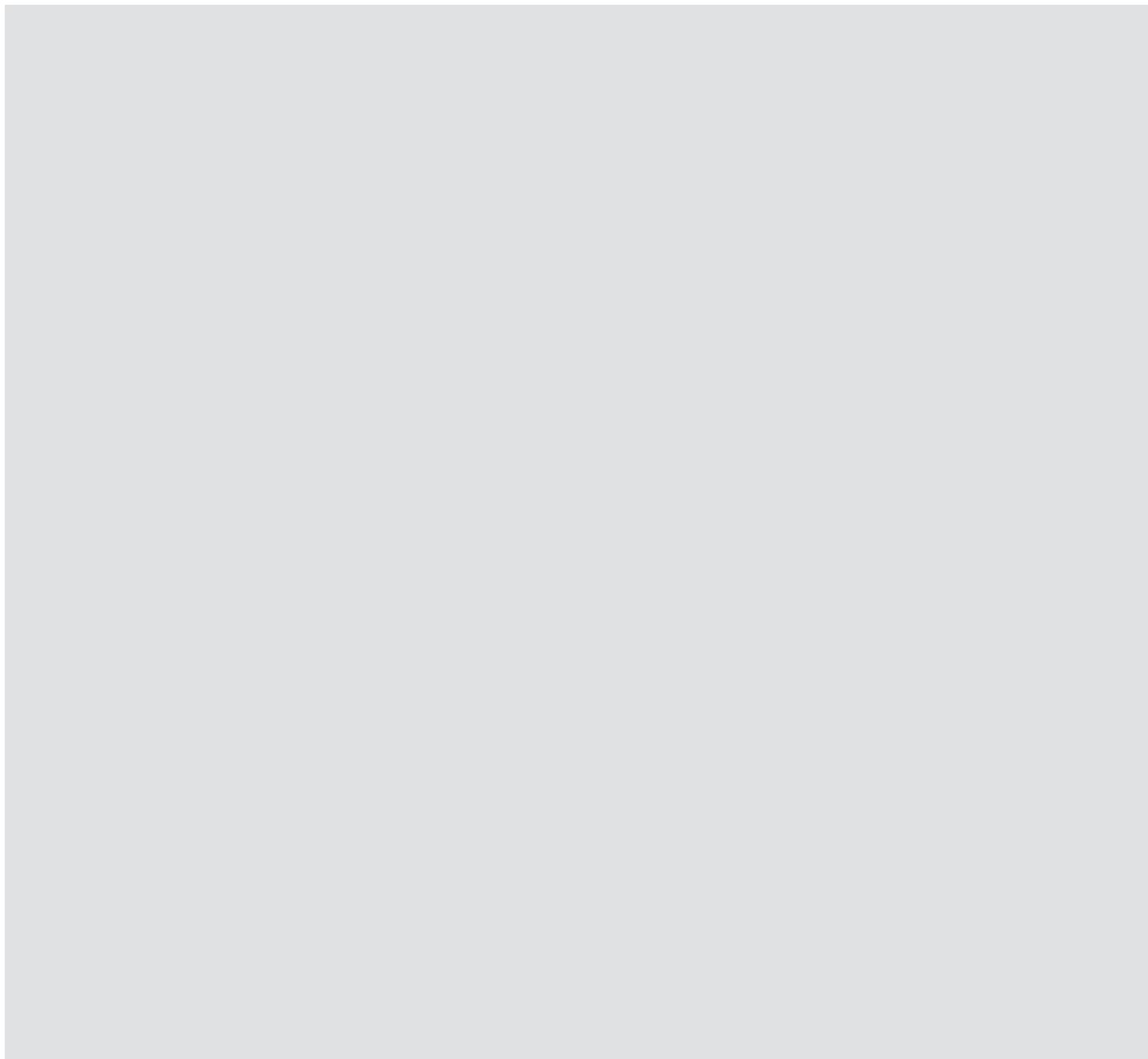
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Future troopers: Early indications suggest *Haze* will breathe new life into the first-person shooter concept



Corporation wars

Insider dealing takes on new meaning as business merges with military

Report: Cliff Caswell

In a world where governments are weak, corporations are king and soldiers from private armies carry out the world's peacekeeping ops, it is unsurprising that some have taken up arms against the forces of corruption.

Gone is the consumer's power of choice. Four decades into the future, a single company called Mantel has flooded global markets with its products and services. And, of most concern, the firm's directors have the military muscle to consolidate their power.

It is against this backdrop that *Haze*, the latest first-person shooter from British software developer Free Radical, is set. But rather than taking up arms as a freedom fighter, as is par for the course in most games of the genre, players find themselves taking the corporate shilling and fighting the cause for big business.

Based on a grubby war in South America, the story is as much a

journey of discovery as a fast-paced shootout. Initially a hardline supporter of his employers, the lead character has his values challenged by what he sees during the game.

"*Haze* is not about war, it is about the perceptions of war and your views of the side you are fighting for," said David Doak, a director at Nottingham-based Free Radical. "In reality war is not just black and white and we wanted to provide an experience that would play with your emotions.

"*Haze* takes you on a three-day battle against a rebel force through locations that include a jungle, a quarry and industrial areas. The year is 2048 and you can forget Nato and the UN – here the influence of Mantel is inescapable."

Despite fighting for a somewhat shady outfit, however, there are perks to being on the winning side. For a start you have the most destructive weaponry and the cream of kit on offer. But, as a special bonus, the company's soldiers also have

access to a dubious performance-enhancing drug known as Nectar.

The substance has a variety of beneficial effects. Dosed-up to the eyeballs on the battlefield, Mantel's troops can tap into some uncanny super combat abilities to give them a lethal edge and wipe out the opposition en masse.

But, as with all good things, Nectar has its drawbacks. Too much of it can prove lethal, and troops who accidentally overdose literally turn into loose cannons. On the other side of the coin, anyone who doesn't get their fix will start to experience unpleasant cold turkey effects, and the horrific realities of battle – the gore and cries of wounded enemy soldiers – are suddenly laid bare.

The complex and multi-layered plot of *Haze* is certainly one of the strong points of the game. Considerable thought has clearly gone into creating a plot that forces players to address moral questions.



"I think it is a potentially more interesting proposition in a video game if you play the anti-hero, or at least start out as a bad character and try to turn good, rather than being the blue-eyed American boy," said Karl Hilton, art director on the game.

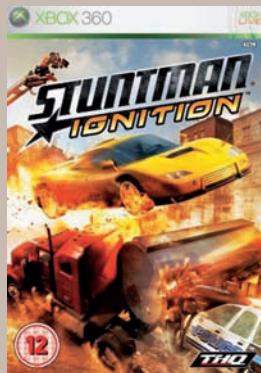
"The moral side of *Haze* is a fuzzy area and it is not until you have been playing a while that you start to make your own decisions about things."

From the early demo shown to *Soldier*, *Haze* looks a slick offering, which could breathe new life into the first-person shooter genre.

The game, which will be launched on the PlayStation 3 at the end of the year, delivers an impressive experience.

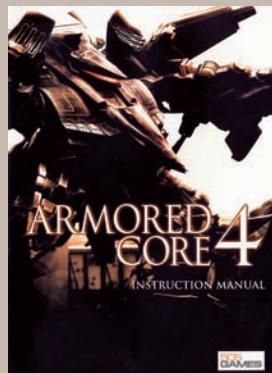
Multiplayer options also look good, with a four-player cooperative mode giving friends the opportunity to unite and make mincemeat of the opposition.

Above all, however, it is the storyline of *Haze* that has the potential to set the game apart. While borrowing some of the elements that made *FarCry: Instincts* so successful – namely the steroid-induced special abilities – the fresh approach to console warfighting and promise of a moral dimension adds an interesting twist to the saturated shooter market. ■



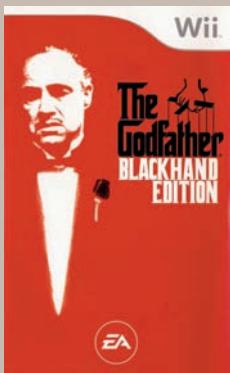
Stuntman: Ignition, Xbox 360 & PS3

FIVE years after the original game received mixed reviews, the *Stuntman* franchise is back on the new generation of consoles. Charged with playing a stunt double in cheesy action movies, players have to drive like raving lunatics in everything from sports cars to artics in a series of increasingly tough scenes. It is a simple concept, but the gameplay is compelling and the action beautifully slick. *Stuntman* does not fall short and will have you coming back for more. Well worth a look.



Armored Core 4, Xbox 360 & PS3

AT first sight, 505 Games seemed to have triumphed in their attempt at this sci-fi warfare epic. Graphically it looks the part and controlling high-tech futuristic war machines is an appealing option for fans. But after an impressive title sequence, the game becomes repetitive with a lack of original level scenarios and an ongoing parade of identical enemies. The plot of an establishment overthrow isn't consistent with its random choice of levels that have no relevance to the storyline. If you want a decent robotic shoot-'em-up, try *Ghost in the Shell* instead.



The Godfather: Blackhand Edition, Wii

RELEASED on the Xbox and PS2 last year, the gangster hit has finally made its Nintendo debut. The game is essentially a carbon copy of the original versions, but the Wii's motion-sensitive controller allows players to mimic fighting actions and get more personally involved in the criminal underworld. If you like gang-themed games in the style of *Grand Theft Auto*, *Scarface* and *Saints Row*, you'll probably enjoy this. Be warned, however, *The Godfather* fully lives up to the 18 certificate and the violence is frequent, strong and bloody.



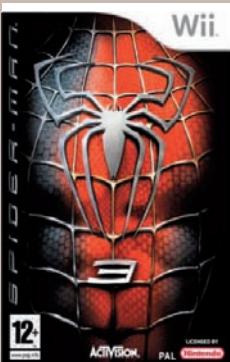
Medal of Honour Vanguard, Wii

ELECTRONIC Arts has given the Wii an early dose of Second World War action with a conversion of the long-running *Medal of Honour* series – and it does not fare badly. Players can use the console's controller to carry out actions such as pointing weapons and lobbing grenades as they make their way through the European theatre of operations. While the title scores full marks for making use of the Wii's innovative control system, it does take some getting used to – and this can lead to early frustrations.



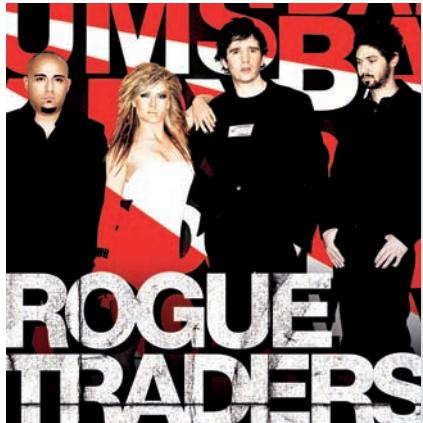
Rainbow Six Vegas, PS3

ALREADY a highly-rated Xbox 360 title, the latest *Rainbow Six* instalment makes the transfer to the PlayStation 3 with aplomb. As in its previous incarnation, players are plunged into a terrorist siege amid the neon lights of Nevada's Sin City. Missions unfold seamlessly via in-game video briefings and the emphasis on tactics is stronger than ever as players must decide which of their three-man team to deploy in different situations. The next-generation graphics add an extra sheen to the best PS3 first-person shooter we've seen.



Spiderman 3, Wii

SOLDIER had a first look at the Xbox 360 version of this game in May and was impressed. The Wii incarnation takes gameplay a step further, making full use of the console's controllers and allowing players to execute combination attacks and sling webs at an endless stream of bad guys. The eponymous hero can also crawl up walls, leap huge distances and use his unique spider sense to avoid incoming attacks. The action will doubtlessly please fans of the movies. But while the controls are a novelty at first, the gameplay soon becomes repetitive.



On the ascendancy: The band's debut album, *Here Come the Drums*, has gone double platinum in Australia and is still riding high in the charts

Fair trading: Natalie Bassingthwaite's accomplished vocals blended with the band's polished dance beats have propelled the Rogues into the UK scene's premier league



Army charmed

Rogue Traders' lead singer spellbinds soldiers with voodoo chant

Interview: Cliff Caswell

IT is a high-intensity dance floor anthem with a raw energy that has been providing the soundtrack for soldiers, deployed in all corners of the world.

A favourite from the military bars of Kosovo to the nightclubs of UK cities, last year's hit tune *Voodoo Child* put Aussie band Rogue Traders in the spotlight as one of the hottest up-and-coming acts as well as winning them critical acclaim.

And capturing the hearts and minds of soldiers has delighted lead singer Natalie Bassingthwaite – a *Neighbours* TV soap star turned accomplished vocalist – who admitted that she was over the moon to have fans in the Army.

"It blows my mind to think that our music has been played out on operations – I wish I'd been there to hear it," the 31-year-old, who grew up listening to Cyndi Lauper and Wham,

told *Soldier*. "I want to say thank you to the troops for going out and doing the job they do – we are all very proud of them."

"For me it is an enormous joy to be with the band, although we're touring as support for Girls Aloud at the moment and I'm a bit delirious with all the going back and forth."

With their energetic mixture of electronic glam pop, raw punk guitar and driving beats, Rogue Traders have proved they are more than one hit wonders.

Following the release of *Voodoo Child* last year, *Way To Go*, the third single from their debut album *Here Come The Drums*, recently cemented their position as dance floor favourites.

In Australia, the band were nominated for four major music awards in 2006, and their album, which is still riding high after more than 12 months in the charts, has gone double platinum.

Way to Go features the same style as the Rogue Traders' previous releases, with a catchy, energetic riff and the singer's fast-paced, husky vocals. The CD also includes remixes from acts Melbourne TV Rocks and Dada.

For Natalie, who performed in musicals including *Grease* and *Chicago* in addition to her role as sexy Izzy Hoyland in *Neighbours*, the influence of manager and former British soldier Patrick Cleary has been key to the outfit's success.

The ex-military man, who served on two tours of Northern Ireland, was introduced to the music industry while working as a bodyguard for musicians, she explained.

"Patrick is hugely competent – he is also a great protector, very loving and looks after us," Natalie added. "He's really dedicated to what we do."

Cleary also won praise from the band's keyboard player and producer James Ash, who was equally delighted with the



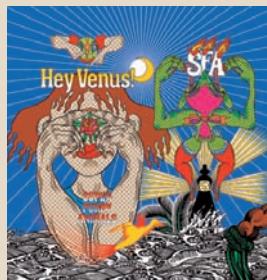
acclaim the music had received. Citing his influences as 80s pop mixed with the dance scene of a decade later, he was satisfied with the distinctive sound Rogue Traders had created.

"It's very exciting for me that we have such a fusion of influences," James, who toyed with a career in the Royal Air Force, said. "We're trying to hit somewhere in between rock and dance with something that is not too generic."

"I was a child of the 1980s and started writing songs myself in that era, a while before I had my first record out in 1994. It's taken 30 releases to have a hit, but I'm glad that happened – it makes me grateful for what we have now."

Success may have been a long time coming, but there is no doubt that it is well deserved. With a powerful and energetic sound, Rogue Traders have certainly carved out a unique niche in the British pop scene. With the fusion of electro pop, techno beats and distinctive vocals, it looks as if further acclaim is assured.

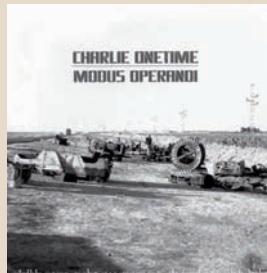
Having been a massive hit in Australia, it seems the sky is the limit for this powerful combo in the UK. And with Natalie's fast-paced yet sweet voice, it is likely that she will be waking up the neighbours for some time to come. ■



Hey Venus (Super Furry Animals)

HEY Venus is **Super Furry Animals'** eighth studio effort and with it comes a change of recording engineers, producers, record label and cover artist. So, the question is, has all this change made a difference? From track one, the revolution is absolute. This is a musical journey, akin to **Frank Zappa's** later work and **The Beatles'** *Sgt Pepper*. The album themes defy analysis, following an off-the-wall story. In short this is an exciting and innovative offering from a bizarre, but brilliant, band.

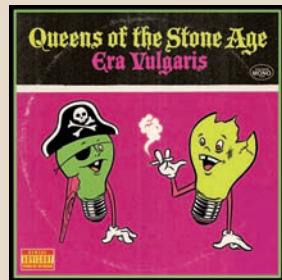
**Cpl Tom Robinson,
151 Tpt Regt, RLC**



Modus Operandi (Charlie Onetime)

INSPIRED by a British soldier's tour of Iraq, this CD creates the mood and feelings experienced that many of us can relate to. I was unsure what to expect, but it turns out that this is an ambient recording along the lines of *Chilled Ibiza* minus the remixes and soul vocals. The attention to detail is outstanding and everything blends faultlessly. The only track that lets it down is the last, which sounds like it was inspired by elevator music. Nevertheless this should definitely be one to add to the collection.

**Bdr Luke Stevens-Burt,
5 Regt, RA**



Era Vulgaris (Queens of the Stone Age)

AFTER listening to this album a few times I struggled to find a bad track. Each has its own edge, from the pounding rock of *Sick, Sick, Sick*, to the subtleness of *Into the Hollow*. It may not be the best album that **Queens of the Stone Age** has produced but if you've never listened to them before then this is a good place to begin. *Era Vulgaris* left me wanting more so if you haven't done so already, don't wait any longer and make this the next addition to your CD collection.

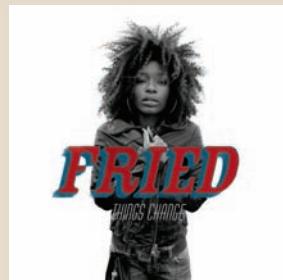
**Cpl Ray Kalaker,
RETDU(B)**



Libertad (Velvet Revolver)

LIBERTAD is the second album release from heavy-rock supergroup **Velvet Revolver**. Their first album *Contraband* was a success, but this recording takes the band to a higher level. A problem for many so-called supergroups is that they come across as a collection of talented individuals but never form a strong identity as a band. With *Libertad*, **Velvet Revolver** have established their own sound and delivered a blend of great songs, strong riffs and soaring guitar solos. This is a powerhouse of an album and establishes the band as one of the best of their genre.

**Pte Patrick Jordan,
RAMC**



Things change (Fried)

THIS is the culmination of ex-Fine Young Cannibals bassist David Steele and young gospel singer **Jonte Short** from New Orleans. To give you an idea of what to expect, think **Aretha Franklin** mixed with a hint of **Macy Gray**. Short's emotionally charged vocals resonate throughout the album and help make *Things Change* a unique and soulful debut. This is what good R'n'B should sound like – smooth, uncomplicated and free from electric pop or manufactured drum machine beats.

**Cpl Ray Kalaker,
RETDU(B)**



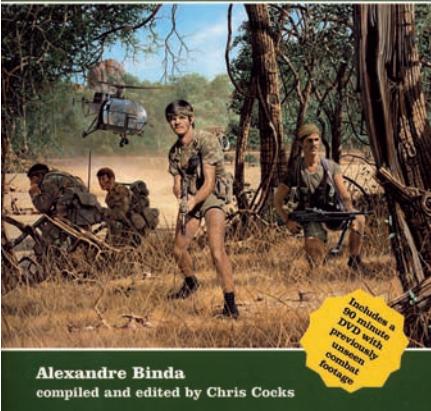
Uncle Dysfunctional (Happy Mondays)

THE Happy Mondays imploded in a blaze of band brawls, drug-fuelled hedonism and record label collapses in 1993. This comeback features vocalist Shaun Ryder, drummer Gaz Whelan and percussionist/dancer Bez from the original line up. The sound is grimy guitar and bass, while Ryder's trademark terrace chants and off the wall tales are still intact. In the current climate of geek chic guitar bands it's good to have some bona fide bad boys back on the block.

**Cpl Charlie Lloyd,
RLC**

THE SAINTS

The Rhodesian Light Infantry



Op Oppress: Rhodesian troops wait for a helicopter after raiding a terrorist base 30km inside Mozambique's border. One soldier examines a captured SKS carbine "pig-sticker", another has a Zanla (Zimbabwe African Liberation Army) cap



Special breed

Tribute to one of 'most effective counter-insurgency units of all time'

The Saints: The Rhodesian Light Infantry by Alexandre Binda, compiled and edited by Chris Cocks (30° South Publishers, 544pp, £50).

Review: John Elliott

HISTORY, declares former Rhodesian premier Ian Douglas Smith, will show that the battle for his country was not a war against a "liberation army" but against terrorists who threatened a bastion of Christian civilisation in a lonely African outpost.

"From the beginning of hostilities to the end, the panache and fighting spirit of the Rhodesians was epitomised by the officers and men of the Rhodesian Light Infantry (RLI), who fought throughout with courage, fortitude and reckless

disregard for their own welfare," writes Mr Smith in a tribute published on the first page of this picture-rich, glossy, coffee-table publication.

Here your reviewer must declare an interest. As a 20-year-old in the late 1960s he completed a year of National Service in the Rhodesian Army, beginning with several weeks of old-fashioned basic training straight out of the British Army manual, delivered in the main by RLI regulars whose accents revealed their formative years were as likely to have been spent in London or Liverpool as Southern Africa.

To us part-timers, the troopers of the RLI were the real deal: tough, resourceful, confident, up for it, within our borders or without, a self-contained, scary band of hell-raisers who fought hard, played harder and spoke an incomprehensible, slang-filled patois. To the white citizens of Bulawayo and

Salisbury they were heroes, although many would have taken their nickname – The Saints – with a large dose of salts.

Arguably one of the most effective counter-insurgency units of all time, the RLI developed the "Fireforce" concept of ruthless airborne envelopment and annihilation of the guerrilla enemy. A superb fighting unit, they won every battle but lost the war.

Their last commanding officer, Lt Col Charlie Aust, now living in the UK, is unequivocal about the RLI's legacy. "Tutored under the auspices of the British Commonwealth, the unit grew and matured in peace and war to become one of the finest regiments of a small and determined army, which itself became the most efficient and successful irregular warfare machine ever known in Africa or indeed, perhaps the world" is how he puts it in a foreword to the book.

Built on a foundation of Rhodesians, the ranks of the RLI were augmented by soldiers from the armies of many nations, not least that of the United Kingdom.

Soldier ordering service

BOOKS mentioned on these pages are available from Helion & Company, who can also supply 14,500 in-print military books and operate a free book search; p&p is extra. Major credit/switch cards taken. Allow 28 days for delivery. Helion & Company, 26 Willow Road, Solihull, West Midlands B91 1UE, England (tel 0121 705 3393; fax 0121 711 4075). Email books@helion.co.uk Website <http://www.helion.co.uk>



Ironically, that tradition operates today in reverse, with hundreds of Zimbabweans currently in the uniform of the British Army.

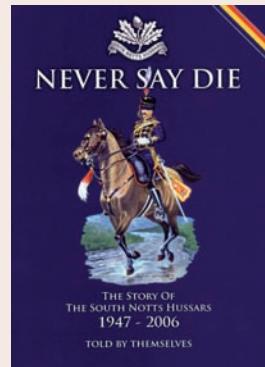
Binda, who served for 15 of the 19 years (1961-1980) that the regiment existed, has woven together a mass of personal and operational detail, maps, sketches and photographs compiled by Chris Cocks, who saw action with 3 Commando, 1 RLI.

Insertions by helicopter and parachute (from ever-reliable Second World War-vintage Dakotas) were followed by hard, aggressive action on the ground. At the height of the war troopers were jumping two or three times a day into contact zones. One racked up 79 operational drops.

An American NCO in 3 Cdo reckoned soldiers on Fireforce missions – operations deep into the bush – required two qualities: a healthy instinct for survival and a lot of luck. Another believed what was needed was aggression, a high standard of sharp-shooting and initiative. “Slow or hesitant reactions and poor shooting,” he said, “wasted the effort of everyone involved in putting sticks on the ground.”

This, writes Ian Smith, was a regiment that “filled Rhodesians with pride”. Binda’s book tells us why. ■

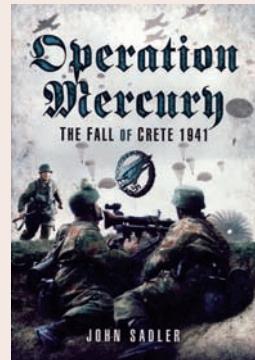
For more reviews, go to www.soldiermagazine.co.uk



Never Say Die edited by Col James Gunn

THIS “Story of The South Notts Hussars 1947-2006” is the print equivalent of a internet blog, hundreds of brief soundbites by former and serving members adding up to an unusual and surprisingly fresh history of the regiment “as told by themselves”. Available from Capt Bob Privett, TA Centre, Hucknall Lane, Bulwell, Notts NG6 8AQ (price including p&p is £25). Ring 0115 927 2251 or email 100regt@btconnect.com

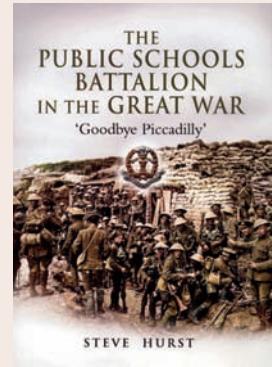
South Notts Hussars Museum and Silver Trust, 240pp, £20



Operation Mercury by John Sadler

ALTHOUGH the fall of Crete in May 1941 was a massive blow to the Allies, the German airborne invaders paid such a heavy price for their victory that Hitler never again sanctioned a major parachute assault. This is a detailed analysis of the ten days of bloody fighting that culminated in the German forces securing the island – and of the strategic and tactical blunders by the Allies that allowed the attackers to take the initiative.

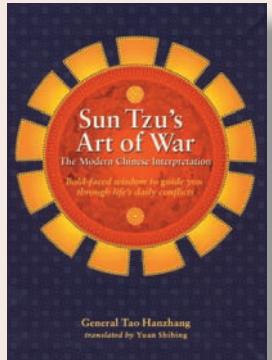
Pen & Sword, 226pp, £19.99



The Public Schools Battalion in the Great War by Steve Hurst

THE 16th Middlesex Battalion was unique even among the array of Pals units that formed the backbone of Kitchener’s new Army, writes **Maj Mike Peters AAC**. The author follows the old boys of the Public Schools Battalion from 1914 to its decimation on the first day of the Somme and beyond. Using detailed first-hand accounts, photographs and good maps this book captures the spirit of these public schools soldiers perfectly. It is highly recommended.

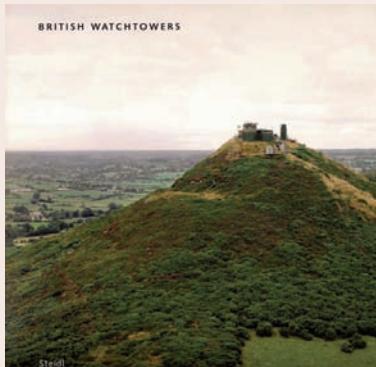
Pen & Sword, 304pp, £25



Sun Tzu's Art of War by Gen Tao Hanzhang

A MODERN interpretation of Sun Tzu’s original work that reads very well, writes **Maj Mike Peters**. The **Art of War** contains military wisdom written in China 2,400 years ago and the pocket size makes it ideal for use outdoors. Whether you are commanding an Armoured Division or Charlie fire team there is something in here for you. And it’s absolutely ideal for those awkward moments when you just can’t decide if it has to be left or right flanking!

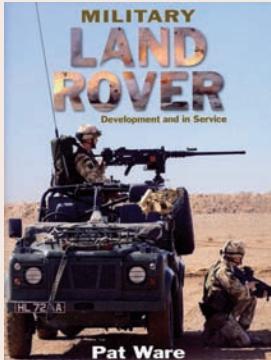
Sterling Innovation, 221pp, £6.99



British Watchtowers by Donovan Wylie

OBSERVATION, by whatever means, requires a structure that elevates the watcher. Britain’s Iron Age hill forts were built on high ground and 2,000 years later the British Army employed a similar chain of watchtowers across Northern Ireland. Mainly located in the mountainous border region of South Armagh, the towers were a backdrop to the Troubles. Belfast-born Donovan Wylie used military helicopters to make this spectacular record before the towers were dismantled between 2003 and 2007.

Steidl, 86pp, £27.50



Military Land Rovers by Pat Ware

VERSATILE could have been a word coined to describe the ubiquitous Land Rover marque. Dozens of variations have been produced to meet the many needs of the military, from the Pink Panthers of Special Forces fame, to ambulances, general runabouts, amphibious hybrids, armoured troop carriers, long-range desert patrollers, gun platforms (as in the Weapons Mounted Installation Kit or WMIK variant), fire engines and much else beside. They are all in Pat Ware’s book.

Ian Allan, 208pp, £24.99



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SOLDIER SPORT

Captain fantastic: Pte Vinny De Souza (RLC) hammers the ball towards the boundary as an attack-minded Army side overcome the Royal Air Force at Portsmouth

Picture: Graeme Main



RED ROCKET
Cricketers
batter rivals

Twenty plenty

Army batsmen pile on the runs to claim enthralling limited overs victory

Report: Stephen Tyler
Pictures: Graeme Main

ABLISTERING attacking display blew the Royal Navy out of the water as the Army's cricketers reclaimed the Inter-Services Twenty20 title from their fierce rivals.

The Reds survived some shaky mid-innings moments on a quick wicket to record victories over the Navy and Royal Air Force at Portsmouth.

Team coach Maj Kirk Steel (RLC) was pleased with the style with which his side won both games and hoped the tournament would act as a springboard for success at the 50-over Inter-Services competition later this month.

"I'm delighted," Maj Steel told *SoldierSport*. "This is only halfway through the season for us and our main effort is going to come at the Inter-Services, but we are all happy to have won, especially in the way we did.

"These guys have worked very hard to prepare for this tournament. They all have jobs to do outside of cricket and they are still putting themselves out to play. In that respect, crossing the white line on the day is the easy part."

The tournament's opening fixture saw the Army restrict the RAF to 121-5 from

their 20 overs, with Pte Vinny De Souza (RLC) taking four wickets for 20 runs from his four overs.

An early lost wicket slowed proceedings as the Army struggled after picking up the bat, but the introduction of Gnr Muzza Heyns (RA) left the airmen shell-shocked.

The diminutive South African, a former provincial player in his native country, smashed eight fours and three sixes on his way to a breathtaking half century from just 16 deliveries.

Heyns eventually fell LBW for 54 and the Army's run rate dropped, although 22 from team captain Cpl Dan Webb (212 MI Sect) and a sturdy 24, including two sixes, from De Souza helped the team pass the RAF's total, with six wickets and four overs to spare.

With the RAF recording a final-ball victory in their match against the Navy, the Army went into the final game of the day knowing that either a win or a defeat with a high enough run rate would be enough to secure the Inter-Services silverware.

After winning the toss, the Army put

the Navy in first and some economical bowling from De Souza restricted their opponents to a score of 169-5, despite a costly final over from which the Navy slogged 32 runs from nine balls.

Maj Steel's team again made a sluggish start to their innings, but the return to the crease of Heyns sparked the Army into life and 34 runs from the South African, an inspired 38 from Webb and a top-scoring 42 from De Souza pushed the Reds to a hard-earned six-wicket victory after just 16 overs.

"I thought the Navy batted very well at the beginning and the end of their innings, but if somebody had said to me at the start that we would be chasing 169 to win I would have taken it without hesitation," said Steel, adding that the build-up to the competition had been helped by the recent inter-corps Twenty20 tournament organised by Maj Paul Bates (RA).

"The introduction of the inter-corps event this year has been a great help for us," he said. "It allowed us to go out and watch new players and it also meant that our existing players got a

If somebody had said to me at the start that we would be chasing 169 to win I would have taken it without hesitation,



Big hitter: Pte Vinny De Souza winds up for a typically powerful shot on his way to a rapid 24 in the Army's Inter-Services victory over the Royal Air Force



Strong arm: Player of the tournament Gnr Muzza Heyns unleashes an accurate delivery as the Army hold the RAF to 121 runs from 20 overs at Portsmouth

chance to play more cricket."

Speaking after collecting a deserved player-of-the-tournament award, Heyns said he was happy that his uncompromising big-hitting batting style had paid off.

"In the first six overs when the fielders are up I always think you should bat over the top and you should be looking to score ten runs or more an over," explained Heyns, who was returning to action after 18 months out with a cruciate ligament injury. "We ended up winning a bit easier than I expected against the Navy even though we struggled a bit in the middle stages.

"Luckily they started bowling poorly and conceded a lot of runs and I think we had it won from the 13th over."

The Army women's Twenty20 side slipped to two narrow defeats in their Inter-Services competition.

Set a total of 158-5 by the Royal Navy in their first game, the Army team battled well before eventually coming up short with a total of 148-5 from their 20 overs.

Defeat to the RAF in the second game of the round robin tournament consigned the women, who were missing injured skipper Maj Ruth MacGill (AAC), to the wooden spoon.

● TWENTY20 cricket fans were also treated to some high-scoring matches at the inaugural Army inter-corps championships.

Twelve teams competed over three days in matches played at Aldershot, Sandhurst and Deepcut, with the Royal Artillery defeating the Infantry with five-and-a-half overs to spare in the final.

Tournament organiser Maj Paul Bates (RA) told *SoldierSport* that he hopes the success of this year's tournament will pave the way for an annual inter-corps Twenty20 event.

"I'm really pleased with how it went," he said. "We held this tournament before the Inter-Services competition because it gave the Army coaches a chance to come down, watch some of the games and pick out two or three players they hadn't seen before.

"To have 200 people attending over two or three days of cricket shows that Army sport is still very much alive, even with the current operational tempo."

Bates added that he hopes the fast and frantic nature of Twenty20 cricket will attract more soldiers into the sport. ■

MARTIAL MASTER

HIGH-kicking WO1 Wayne Sibthorpe delivered a medal-winning performance to take third place at the Tae Kwon Do International (TKI) world championships.

Fitness expert Sibthorpe (APTC), a specialist physical advisor to the Territorial Army in south-west England, won three bouts at Birmingham's National Indoor Arena before losing his semi-final 5-2.

The bronze medal display was a repeat of his performance at the last world championships two years ago and the Tiverton resident is already looking forward to competing at the next event in Canada in 2009.

"I was a bit frustrated to have lost the semi-final because my opponent was basically just running away," Sibthorpe told *SoldierSport*.

"I would have liked to go one better than last time, but hopefully I can try to improve again in Canada."

Middleweight fighter Sibthorpe, 42, has taught self-defence and close combat for 23 years.

SPORTSHORTS

RUGBY FANS DIG DEEP

A COLLECTION held outside Twickenham during this year's Army v Navy rugby match raised £1,372 for two Service charities.

Husband and wife Laurence and Pamela Jones and Mrs Jones's sister Winnie Wright collected the money in buckets before and after the game and have split the proceeds between the Army Benevolent Fund and the British International Sailors Society.

HOSPICE HELPERS

KIND-HEARTED loggies got on their bikes to raise around £10,000 for a hospice for children with terminal illnesses.

Fifteen soldiers from 2 Logistic Support Regiment cycled from MoD Main Building in London to the Eiffel Tower in Paris over four days in aid of Keech Cottage Children's Hospice.

The facility, based near Luton, provides care for children suffering from a variety of life-shortening conditions.

Each member of the 2 LSR team raised a minimum of £500 for the hospice, which is not Government-funded.

AMERICAN ODYSSEY

A HUSBAND and wife team are competing in the 2007 New York Marathon to raise money for sufferers of cystic fibrosis.

Sgt "Nash" Wainwright (APTC) and wife Jane, a corporal who works for the MoD in Whitehall, decided to enter the race to support the Cystic Fibrosis Trust as their daughter Zara suffers from the condition.

Nash is currently in Afghanistan and runs 50km each week.

To sponsor the couple, visit www.justgiving.com/run4moo

BAKER'S BERLIN CHALLENGE

FITNESS fanatic SSgt Karl Baker (RDG) is seeking sponsors ahead of tackling this year's Berlin Marathon in support of the Multiple Sclerosis Society.

The national charity works with an estimated 85,000 people in the UK who suffer from the disabling neurological disorder and Baker is funding his own travel and accommodation to raise as much money as possible.

To sponsor Baker, visit www.justgiving.com/karlsupports

Rock stars

Climbers hang on to perfect Inter-Services record

Report: Stephen Tyler

Picture: Graeme Main

A STRONG challenge from an improving Royal Navy squad failed to stop the Army's sport climbing team from claiming its eighth consecutive Inter-Services championship title.

Tackling a tricky set of climbing walls installed inside a Bristol church, the Army's senior side retained the title in style thanks to second, third and fourth place finishes from Capt Rob Laurence (3 Para), Capt Mark Stevenson and Capt Mike Smith (both REME).

Smith said it had been the toughest competition he has been involved in and told *SoldierSport* that the win was not as comfortable as in previous years, largely because of the skill of overall champion Steve Glennie, of the Navy.

"He was a star for their team and to be honest was head and shoulders above anyone else there," said Smith.

"We were very, very close for the next three places as we all made it to roughly the same position on the wall."

There was not such good news for the Army's under 25 team, which lost out to the RAF despite third and fourth place finishes for Cfn Chris Walker (REME) and LCpl Matthew Hopkinson (RLC).

An understrength women's side containing just two competitors was never likely to challenge for the title, but Spr Sian Etheridge and 2nd Lt Angela Laycock (both RE) performed admirably to finish in second and fourth places respectively.

"I was ecstatic with our performance considering how much trouble we had just getting a team together," concluded Smith, who took charge of the Army side.

"It should be interesting next year because the Navy and the Royal Air Force have both demonstrated that they are getting much better." ■

Golden gloves

Donald hits peak form at national tournament

A POWER-punching private has won a national boxing championship less than one year after lacing up her gloves for the very first time.

Kelly Donald's (2 LSR) debut bout at a regimental tournament last September ended in defeat, but her performance impressed coach Cpl Taff Anthony (RLC) enough for him to take her under his wing at Gütersloh gym.

The pair's hard work paid off when Donald sensationally won the class C 57kg national title at the Amateur Boxing Association's England women's championships, at Hendon.

"I never dreamed I would be national champion when I started in September," she told *SoldierSport*. "There were times when I thought I wasn't sure if I wanted to do this, but every time I fought or had a success it made me more determined."



● Pte Kelly Donald

Donald's rapid rise up the rankings has earned her a call-up to the England women's squad's training camp later this month.

With rumours that women's boxing will be a demonstration event at next summer's Beijing Olympics, Donald is keen to force her way into the reckoning for China as part of an England line-up.

"I am going to the camp to get a bit more experience and to develop my technique," said Donald, who prefers fighting at 55kg rather than 57kg. "After that I want to try to break into the England team, especially if they go to the Olympics."

Her optimism is shared by her coach: "She has the potential to become one of the best fighters in her weight category in Britain. It shows that if you want something and you're willing to put the effort in then you should go for it." ■



On the up: Under 25 team member Cfn Craig Fulford (REME) gets to grips with a tricky overhang during the Inter-Services sport climbing championships

Pedal power

Sapper Scott crowned cycling festival champion

BIKE enthusiasts battled it out to try to become the fastest thing on two wheels at the Army Cycling Union's annual festival.

The week-long event at RAF Honington was open to both mountain bikers and road racers and featured events ranging from time trials to gruelling hill climbs.

Spr Scott Clipstone (RE) held off a strong challenge from fellow sapper Capt Rick Fielder to claim the individual festival champion title, while Joint Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Regt (Jt CBRN) took the major units team crown.

The RAF base's runways and taxi areas as well as the surrounding roads allowed the course organisers to come up with some challenging routes, including one designed with input from Commonwealth Games cyclist Cpl Duncan Urquhart (Jt CBRN Regt).

"The whole aim of the festival was to pull together as many of the Army's cyclists as possible, not just the élite guys but the novices too," said tournament organiser Capt Dave

Tortoiseshell (Lancs). "We had a lot of help from Duncan Urquhart who gave the less experienced riders some useful instruction."

Urquhart finished first in the road section, but because of his élite status the Army championship went to runner-up Capt Gaz Buttery (RE).

Cpl James Cooper (AAC) secured the bragging rights in the mountain bike competition with a hard-fought victory over second-placed Fielder.

Tortoiseshell added that a testing course around Honington's driver training area caught out several mountain bikers during a frantic three-lap night race and a two-hour endurance event.

"The conditions for the mountain biking were quite testing, especially on the driver training course, which was tough enough to cause a few problems," he added.

"The week was a great success and showed a deep passion for cycling with some excellent individual and team performances," he concluded. "Next year's festival aims to be even better." ■

SPORTSHORTS

DISCUS RECORD SMASHED

FORMER international athlete SSgt Mark Wiseman (AGC) finally toppled a decades-old Army discus record after 13 years of trying.

Wiseman, 38, beat APTC athlete Bill Tancred's 1968 mark of 55.28m with an effort of 58.41m during the UK Throwing Festival at Birmingham's Alexandra Stadium.

"I knew as soon as it left my hand it would be a big throw," he said.

PEAK FITNESS

FIVE engineers raised more than £2,000 for charity after climbing Britain's three highest peaks.

Cpl Si Hewitt, Cpl "Jacko" Jackson, WO2 Mark Thomas, Cpl Gav Thornton and LCpl "Scouse" Magee conquered Ben Nevis, Scafell Pike and Snowdon as well as cycling the 517 miles between each summit.

The Land Warfare Battle-group Light Aid Detachment team is splitting the money it has raised between the Starlight Children's Foundation and the Army Benevolent Fund.



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Oriental express

Judo star Nartey hones explosive technique in pursuit of Beijing dream

Report: Stephen Tyler
Picture: Graeme Main

OLYMPIC judo hopeful Tpr Emmanuel Nartey (1 RTR) will complete a meteoric rise into the sport's élite if he makes it into the dojo at the 2008 Games.

The 24-year-old Ghanaian heads to the world championships in Brazil this September full of confidence that he will do well enough to qualify for next summer's Beijing showpiece.

Nartey attributes his burgeoning success to years of hard work and an Army career that made full-time training a possibility, but he is the first to admit that his initial foray into martial arts was not one to remember.

"I was rubbish," Nartey told *SoldierSport* during a break from training at the University of Bath.

"I'm one of three brothers and it was the other two who always went away and came back with medals while I stayed at home and won nothing.

"I was really bad, but in 2000 I managed to win a junior national title and the following year I fought in the Ghana selection tournament and beat the senior player at 66kg when I was just 60kg.

"I was picked for the Manchester Commonwealth Games because of that win, which changed my whole motivation and I started to take the sport very seriously."

It was while Nartey was living in Manchester that he signed up to

become a tankie. Although he stopped competing while he underwent basic training, Nartey says it was his OC who eventually gave him the encouragement he needed to get back on the mat.

"I got to the stage where I wasn't interested anymore, but my OC was keen for me to go back and he pushed me into it," Nartey added. "As soon as I started it again I realised that I was better than most other people and decided to carry on.

"A lot of my motivation for joining the Army was because I was told I could train full-time. I took that on board because it is so rare to be paid to train."

'It has always been my dream to go to the Olympics and the Army has helped give me the push I need to achieve it'

With his sights set on a debut Olympic appearance in a year's time, Nartey has pushed his training into overdrive and spent several months earlier this year in Japan grappling with the country's best judoka. He followed that up with a stint at Team England's centre of excellence in Bath, where the affable Ghanaian has developed a hard-nosed approach thanks to his new German coach Juergen Klinger.

"Since he came in he has managed to change my style to make me stronger and more aggressive," he said.

"When I was fighting before I had a friendly style, but they have tried to coordinate my speed and explosive technique to make me a much more complete competitor."

Nartey has reigned supreme at the top of the Ghanaian judo tree for more than half a decade and admits that he is considering giving himself a whole new challenge after the Olympics by becoming a British citizen.

"It has always been my dream to go to the Olympics and the Army has helped give me the push I need to achieve it," he concluded.

"It will be my proudest moment but it might also be my last time fighting for Ghana.

"At the moment I'm one of the best in Britain and having been number one in Ghana for so long, feel that I should look to take up a new challenge. There are a lot of strong players in Europe, but I'm confident in my ability." ■



ANGLING

August 1 – Combined Services v Maver Barnsley, Lincs and Trentmen (Steinfurth); 11 – Division 1 national championships (Steinfurth).
September 2 – Masters Cup (Swynnerton).

BADMINTON

August 4-5 – Army v Somerset (RAF Uxbridge).

CANOEING

August 4-5 – Inter-Services freestyle championships (Tryweryn).

CRICKET

August 1 – Royal Navy v Army (Portsmouth).

CYCLING

August 5 – Merida mountain-bike marathon series (Selkirk); 11 – Army time trial series round six (Midlands).

GLIDING

August 4-12 – Inter-Services regional gliding championships (RAF Honington).

GOLF

August 1 – Army high handicap open championships (Whittington Heath); 2 – Army v Little Aston (Little Aston); 7 – Army women v Lloyds TSB (Army Golf Club); 13 – Army women v NAPGC women (Burnham Beeches); 21 – Army v NAPGC (Berkshire Golf Club); 22 – Army v Civil Service (Berkshire Golf Club).

PARACHUTING

August 4-12 – Armed Forces championships (Netheravon).

PARAGLIDING

August 27-31 – Inter-Services training camp (Crickhowell).

POLO

August 5 – Royal Star and Garter Charity Match (Leamington Spa); 10-12 – Major General's Cup (Guards).

RIFLE SHOOTING

August 3-5 – British Olympic trap grand prix (East Yorks GC); 4-5 – Great Britain Olympic skeet selection shoot (Blackwood); 11-12 – Great Britain double trap selection shoot (East Yorks GC); 11-18 – Great Britain small-bore championships (Bisley); 25-26 – British Olympic skeet grand prix (Bisley).

ROWING

August 4 – Henley town and visitors' regatta (Henley); 11-12 – Peterborough summer regatta (Peterborough).

RUGBY LEAGUE

August 26 – Middlesex international 9s competition (London); 29 – Lawson Cup final (Aldershot).

RUGBY UNION

August 4 – Cwmtawe sevens (Cwmtawe); 11 – Bath sevens (Bath); 18 – Middlesex sevens (Twickenham).

SAILING

August 4-11 – Cowes week (Solent); 15-19 – Fastnet (Irish sea).

TRIATHLON

August 11 – National club relay championships (Rutland Water).

■ Got a date for the diary? Email details to fixtures@soldiermagazine.co.uk

Red hot shot

Two-goal Prince William lights up polo contest

C ORNET William Wales reminded a packed Tidworth Polo Club of his sporting prowess after his two-goal performance helped the Army team come from behind to claim the Hackett Rundle Cup.

The Prince shrugged off the attentions of the assembled paparazzi to produce an inspired performance against the Royal Navy.

Starting with a one-and-a-half goal handicap, the Army side, comprising of Wales, Capt Matthew Eyre-Brook, Capt Anthony Hayman-Joyce and Lt Col Justin Stanhope-White, struggled to get into any kind of rhythm against their well-organised opponents.

The Navy showed good early attacking intent and deservedly extended their lead to two-and-a-half points with the game's first goal after just three minutes.

Going into the second chukka, Wales spurred his team on with strong vocal support and managed to get the Army off the mark with an astute strike.

The goal proved to be the turning

point in the game as the Reds began to exert constant pressure on their tiring Navy counterparts.

A fast-paced third chukka was dominated by the Army and the deficit was reduced to just half a point when Eyre-Brook scored his side's second of the afternoon.

Wales's second strike – an accurate hit from 30 yards following an infringement – pushed his team's noses in front and two further goals, including one from Eyre-Brook to complete his brace, helped the Army to a comfortable 5-2.5 win.

Victory was particularly sweet for the hosts at Tidworth as the polo club, which was founded in 1907, is currently celebrating its centenary year.

The crowd were also treated to a 14-goal thriller as an invitation team from the United States pegged back the Combined Services Polo Association to claim a 9-5 victory. Argentinian player Nacho Figueras stole the show by scoring six goals on the immaculate Fisher Ground pitch. ■

Phil powers up

Taylor enlists Army experts in battle of the bulge

DARTS legend Phil "The Power" Taylor has enlisted the help of the Army to ensure he is fighting fit for this year's world championships.

In a sport more closely associated with drinking pints than running laps, having nerves of steel and a steady aim have long been considered more important to a darts player than good physical conditioning.

But Taylor, who blames his defeat to Holland's Raymond Barneveld at last year's tournament on a lack of fitness, wants to change that perception and is hoping that undergoing a training programme designed by Army experts will improve his health and prompt a sea change in the sport as a whole.

"The image of darts has been pretty bad and it's something I would like to change," he said. "To be involved with the British Army is a recipe for success because it's the best Army in the world. I

have achieved most things in my life, but I haven't beaten my fitness and that is why I am going to give this 100 per cent."

The Power, who shed two stones after his unsuccessful world title defence, launched his fitness regime during a visit to the Army School of Physical Training (ASPT) at Aldershot.

Registered general nurse Jackie Monk and APTC instructors Sgt Dave Robins and Sgt Mark Beverley checked on The Power's fitness and future objectives to create a training

programme to transform Taylor into a lean, mean throwing machine.

And although the 13-times world champion has an understandable desire to protect his valuable throwing arm from damage, he has pledged to do whatever it takes to reach full fitness.

"These instructors are experts at what they do and they will help me to raise my bar," concluded The Power. ■

'The one thing I haven't beaten is my fitness and that is why I am going to give this 100 per cent'



Picture: Cpl Russ Nolan

Royal Red: Cornet William Wales leads the charge during a two-goal performance that helped the Army beat the Navy and secure the Hackett Rundle Cup

Kabaddi kings

Scratch Army team heads for the subcontinent

THE rough and tumble game of kabaddi faces a full-on Army attack thanks to the formation of a new Service squad.

Looking to the untrained eye like the uglier brother of a playground game of tag, kabaddi is a physically and mentally demanding game requiring speed, guile and brute force in equal measure.

Although it is hugely popular on the Indian subcontinent, the sport receives little exposure in Britain outside of Asian communities.

But, under the leadership of CSgt Dougie Douglan (RRF) a newly-formed Army side is looking to bring the game into the spotlight and recently travelled to Italy to represent England in an international tournament against an experienced Italian Asian team.

The Army's debut ended in defeat, but Douglan hopes his men will be ready to compete at the Indian championships in Mumbai later this year.

"For the amount of training that the lads had I think they did really

well," Douglan told *SoldierSport*. "It was a bit overwhelming. In the first three quarters we weren't brilliant and the Italians' experience made them ten times better than us. We came into our own in the last quarter and everything started to click for us. It has made the lads determined to master the art and hopefully get to the Indian championships."

The Army's kabaddi team is made up of soldiers from 14 Regiment RA and the gunners have been working with English national coach Ashok Das.

Das has helped explain the finer points of kabaddi, which is played in either a square or circular arena between two teams split into raiders and defenders.

The raiders have to tag one of the seven opposing players and make it safely back to their own side – all while holding their breath.

"Kabaddi has the potential to be quite painful, but on the whole it's an exciting and physically demanding sport," explained Douglan. ■

RESULTS

SWIMMING: Army Individual Championships – Men: 4x50m individual medley – 1, Cpl Ferguson (10 Regt RLC); 2, LCpl Broughall (4 AAC); 3, OCdt Fisher (RMAS); **50m freestyle** – 1, OCdt Pusinelli (RMAS); 2, Spr Aitken (23 Engr Regt); 3, Cpl Stapleton (ATR Pirbright); **100m breaststroke** – 1, Cpl Stapleton; 2, OCdt Thorpe (RMAS); 3, Cpl Archer (25 Trg Spr Regt RLC); **100m backstroke** – 1, Maj Palin (WG); 2, Spr Aitken; 3, Pte Taylor (25 Trg Spr Regt RLC); **100m freestyle** – 1, OCdt Pusinelli; 2, LCpl Broughall; 3, OCdt Thorpe (RMAS); **200m freestyle** – 1, OCdt Mikulskis (RMAS); 2, Spr Penfold (3 RSME); 3, Spr Aitken.

Women: 4x50m individual medley – 1, Spr Gavazzi (22 Engr Regt); 2, Cfn Veasey (22 Engr Regt); 3, OCdt S Morris (RMAS); **50m freestyle** – 1, Spr Gavazzi; 2, Capt Ashmore (25 Trg Sp Regt RLC); 3, LCpl Wroot (114 Pro Coy); **100m breaststroke** – 1, OCdt S Morris; 2, Capt Earl (3 RSME); 3, Sig Jaffe (DCI Chicksands); **100m freestyle** – 1, Spr Gavazzi; 2, OCdt S Morris; 3, Capt Ashmore; **100m backstroke** – 1, SSgt Mason (11 Sig Regt); 2, OCdt Amor (RMAS); 3, OCdt V Morris (RMAS); **200m freestyle** – 1, Capt Ashmore; 2, Capt Croall (RRU Bulford); 3, Capt Earl; **200m breaststroke** – 1, OCdt S Morris (RMAS); 2, Sig Jaffe; 3, OCdt Thompson (RMAS).

Past glories

The regular feature in which we ask soldiers for their views on a hot topic

Sapper recruits from ATR Lichfield visited the Ypres Salient to hear about the men who fought there in the great battles of 90 years ago. Here are their views and those of their instructor and guide.

Spr Aaron Burton

This has made me extremely proud to be a soldier as I have a large family with an Army background.

Knowing that they might have been where we have been today makes me proud that I could stand there [under the Menin Gate] and carry on the tradition of the family.



Spr David McCormack

The most memorable thing for me has been visiting all the graves, seeing all those names and memorials to men who laid down their lives to defend everyone else's freedom. I've seen some military cemeteries on telly, but to be there actually next to them was quite moving.



Spr Joe Roberts

I think we've got a lot to live up to with the past because we've seen so many things and a lot of history. But it's no pressure – it's pride in the Army that makes us want to go out there and develop our skills to become the men that they were back then, and what we can be in the future.



Capt Rob Porter, RE Troop commander

The idea behind the battlefield tour was to show the hardships of their forefathers in the military and relate them to modern-day warfare, how things have changed, what's still the same, and to instil pride in where they've come from and what's gone before. I hope when we take them home they'll all be proud to be Royal Engineers.



Spr Matthew Jones

It is very important that we honour fallen soldiers. It makes us look at life in a different way and respect why we are here. It is good to honour the great men who fought and died for us and it makes me feel proud to be here to do that.



Spr Simon Templeton

The most memorable thing for me was being on parade in uniform at the Menin Gate. Just being there in front of all those people with all those names around us was amazing. I have never done anything like that before.



Spr Gregan Wilkinson, who laid a wreath on behalf of ATR Lichfield at the Menin Gate

I found laying the wreath a big responsibility. You have to represent your unit and you want to look your best and you don't want to let anyone down. I don't think we did.



Maj (Retd) Tim Saunders, D and D military historian and Anglia Battlefield Tours guide

I hope these soldiers will get a deeper understanding of their chosen careers and lay foundations on which they can build as they go on and gain experience. I hope also that it will act as a reference point for their futures – a measure of what's good and what's bad.



Spr Robert Drayton

It's amazing how much you can learn in just one day. Standing there under the Menin Gate as a troop was a very proud moment for us. Just to see everyone, all those old faces, and people appreciating us for being there was very good for us and for them and I think everyone enjoyed it.



Interviews: John Elliott Pictures: Graeme Main

Coming up . . . in SOLDIER

Bosnia and Banner bows – British soldiers close gates of Banja Luka Metal Factory for the final time and we continue our salute to 38 years of service in Northern Ireland



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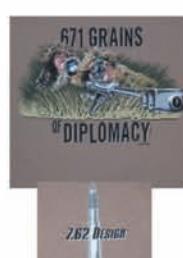
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