

MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH ARMY

SOLDIER

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APACHE

Reporting for duty
with recce forces



ARMY

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MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH ARMY

SOLDIER

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Cover picture (left): A reflective moment for Apache pilot WO2 Neil O'Brien of 673 Squadron, 5 Regiment AAC stationed at Middle Wallop. The Army's new attack helicopter has been exercising with reconnaissance forces. More in Pages 27-29

Picture: Graeme Main



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 necessarily those of the British Army or
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"Tell you what Eccles, you resolve to smarten up, have a haircut
 and a weekly bath . . . I'll resolve not to shout too loudly at you."

Beaten to the punch by D (deadline) Day

THIS issue was dispatched to the printers
 as the Army prepared to absorb details
 of some of the most fundamental
 changes to affect it for decades.

So why aren't we reporting them in this
 edition, which will appear weeks after the
 news has emerged?

When the long-awaited announcement
 was delayed until Parliament's final day
 before MPs adjourned for their festive
 break, *Soldier* was already on its way to the
 printers to meet their tight Christmas print
 schedules.

No final resolution by the
 MoD on the decisions which the
 Infantry in particular had been
 awaiting for months meant this
 edition could contain no credible
 references to either the Future
 Infantry Structure or the Future
 Army Structure.

With the print media full
 of speculation/leaks/informed
 comment on what was happening
 to the one-battalion regiments, we took a
 decision to ignore the mass of sometimes
 conflicting reports and to bring you the facts
 on our website (see Page 7).

TO universal acclaim and considerable relief,
 the men of The Black Watch marched home
 to their families in time for Christmas.

The joy of their reunions is captured in pic-
 tures on Page 7, as is the cost of the British

FIRST SIGHT

Army's involvement in bringing stability and
 democracy to the post-Saddam Iraq.

On the same page we report on the health
 of three brave soldiers whose lives were sud-
 denly and catastrophically changed forever by
 their missions to Camp Dogwood and else-
 where.

The bombs which deprived two of
 them of their legs failed to break their
 spirits. The grins on the faces of the
 three say a lot about the courage and
 the fortitude of ordinary British sol-
 diers. We can only wish them the best
 of luck in the future . . . and the best
 support for the rest of their lives.

ALSO tackled – head-on, some might
 say – in this issue is the subject of
 HIV Aids. We accompanied Army nurse WO1
 Maureen Coshall on a World Aids Day visit to
 a training base near Aldershot.

With the Government concerned that
 the graph of sexually-transmitted diseases –
 including HIV – is rising in the heterosexual
 community, her message was to the point.

When you sleep with someone without
 using a condom you're doing so with all the
 others they've had unprotected sex with. ■

**'The bombs
 which
 smashed
 their bodies
 failed to
 break their
 spirits'**

Infantry changes on our website

DETAILS of the long-awaited reorganisation of the Infantry were released the day after *Soldier's* printing deadline.

This issue had been planned to bring readers a comprehensive breakdown of the major changes affecting Infantry regiments as well as more detail on the Future Army Structure decisions and an interview with the Chief of the General Staff.

A late decision to delay the announcement prevented this and caused some last-minute shuffling of pages.

In order to bring you news of the Future Infantry Structure as soon as possible, we are posting the full details on our website. Visit it at www.soldiermagazine.co.uk



Smiling: Cpls Neil Heritage and Mick Brennan, recovering from their horrific wounds in hospital in Birmingham

Broken but not beaten

Soldiers' own story of Iraq suicide bombing

TWO Black Watch battle-group soldiers who lost their legs in a suicide bombing have spoken for the first time about the horrific attack.

Cpl Mick Brennan and Cpl Neil Heritage have stunned doctors with the speed of their recovery while Cpl Heritage has been able to give a detailed account of the bombing.

The pair, both from the Royal Signals, had just finished sweeping a 25-mile stretch of road for bombs ahead of a soft-skinned convoy near Camp Dogwood when the bomber struck.

They were loading kit into their Warrior when the fanatic drove his car at them before detonating his deadly payload.

The Warrior's rear door took the brunt of the blast but didn't shield the soldier's legs, which were severed.

From his bed at the Royal Centre for Defence Medicine at Selly Oak Hospital, Birmingham, Cpl Heritage insisted on telling his story.

"We'd been working since 0530 clearing IEDs (improvised explosive devices)," he said. "We had just finished the job and were loading our kit into the

back of the Warrior, when we heard a vehicle coming towards us. Then there was an almighty explosion that slammed the door of the Warrior and threw me inside.

"The blast set everything on fire, including me. At this stage, I didn't realise that I was injured; I just wanted to get out of the vehicle and put myself out. So I pushed the door open, and promptly fell flat on my face. There was nothing there to hold me up.

"The Black Watch people quickly rendered first aid to me and Mick, and within 40 minutes a helicopter had arrived. I passed out just as they were loading me into it.

"I woke up here in Birmingham two Thursdays later. Mick didn't wake up until the Tuesday after that."

Both men are now on the long road to recovery, undergoing many operations as well as being fitted with artificial legs.

Cpl Heritage said: "We were both in intensive care for the first two weeks.

"Mick has had eight operations since we've been here; I've had four. Now we are getting loads of TLC and physiotherapy.

"I have had an initial fitting for my new



Sig Dean Lunn, whose Land Rover turned over

legs, but Mick has to wait a while longer. His healing has been a bit slower."

The pair, who were interviewed by Bernard Redshaw, Editor of *The Wire*, magazine of the Royal

Corps of Signals, said they were eager to tell their story. Cpl Heritage said: "We haven't spoken about it before, and we want, through you, to tell our story before any wild rumours start spreading among our mates."

Sig Dean Lunn is also recovering at Selly Oak Hospital.

He suffered four badly damaged vertebrae when his Land Rover turned over on the main road to Al Shaibah.

Just seconds earlier he was providing top cover and would have been killed if his vehicle commander hadn't ordered him back inside the Land Rover.

● Read Bernard Redshaw's full interview with all three soldiers in February's edition of *The Wire*.



What the Press has been saying

● The Army's top commander said British troops may have to stay in Iraq beyond their departure deadline of December 2005 when the US mandate for the coalition to stay in the country expires. – *Independent*

● An American colonel leading the battle against rebels in Iraq's triangle of death praised the Black Watch as "awesome". – *Daily Mirror*



● Pin-up Nell McAndrew has secretly married her long-term boyfriend, property developer Paul Hardcastle. The news will break the hearts of thousands of men who admire the gorgeous Forces' Sweetheart.

– *The Sun*

● The £1.4 million Animals in War Memorial was unveiled in Hyde Park, London by Princess Anne in memory of creatures which have suffered and died alongside British and Commonwealth forces. – *Daily Mail*

● Thirty Territorial Army members are bringing a discrimination test case against the MoD to win pension rights for all 40,000 part-time soldiers. Despite serving up to 126 days a year and believing that part of their pay was going into the Army Pension Fund, they have been told they will not have Army pension rights on retirement. – *The Times*

● British defence officials conceded that military action to bring Serb and Croat war crimes suspects to trial would probably fail because of the sophisticated support network surrounding them. – *Guardian*

● Prince Harry is putting off his Army officer training for four months to allow a knee injury to heal properly. – *Daily Mirror*



● When she was nine, Majorie Dolman placed flowers on the grave of a 19-year-old Serviceman in her village cemetery. Although she didn't know him, she continued to do so every day for the rest of her life. Following her death, aged 99, last month, Mrs Dolman was buried in the same cemetery at Hullavington, Wilts, as Pte James Idle, killed in 1914. – *Daily Telegraph*

● The field marshal's baton presented to the 3rd Earl of Lucan, who commanded the charges of the Heavy and Light Brigades at Balaklava 150 years ago, is to be auctioned. – *The Times*

Fresh Deepcut probe ordered

Inquiry to investigate further list of allegations

FOLLOWING the publication of more allegations of sexual abuse and maltreatment of Army recruits at Deepcut, an independent review was ordered by the Government.

But Armed Forces Minister Adam Ingram dismissed demands for a public inquiry from the parents of four young soldiers who died of gunshot wounds at the Army training base.

He denied there was a culture of fear and violence at the barracks in Surrey and promised a fully independent figure would examine all the allegations listed by Surrey Police.

He told the Commons that allegations supplied by the police did not contain evidence and that some had already been investigated. Others were "worthy of investigation but have not yet been tested".

Some of the 173 complaints, covering two periods – 1995 and 2001-02 – concerned pay discrepancies, "but the majority allege some form of physical or sexual harassment," said Mr Ingram.

"Some of the allegations would appear to relate to the same incident or pattern of behaviour. Nine of the allegations concern rape, and all but three of these have been investigated or are still under investigation," he said.

Of the three cases not investigated, two were, in the judgement of the police, unsubstantiated hearsay. Surrey Police had told the MoD it would not be making further inquiries.

At the heart of several intensive investigations into the barracks by civil and military police were the deaths of four recruits from gunshot wounds. They were Ptes Sean Benton, 20 and Cheryl James, 18, who died in 1995, Pte Geoff Gray, 17, in 2001, and Pte James Collinson, 17, in 2002.

● Basic recruit training has been comprehensively overhauled in recent years to modernise it and improve retention. Many techniques used ten to 20 years ago were found to be unacceptable, according to a *Soldier* report ("Training turnabout", Nov) and adapted for today.

Bullying: You say

And while majority take pride in Army, many of you

AN overwhelming majority of officers and other ranks believe bullying exists in the Army, according to its own research.

The confidential findings, published in the latest Continuous Attitude Survey, show 86 per cent of officers and 85 per cent of soldiers who filled in the questionnaire thought bullying went on.

Three per cent of officers (28 individuals) and seven per cent of other ranks (88) claimed they had been bullied in the past year.

Nearly half the officers who complained of harassment and unfair treatment said they were dissatisfied with the objectivity with which the chain of command handled their cases, while five per cent of officers and ten per cent of soldiers (the largest proportions in both categories) said they

had chosen not to complain because they believed doing so would adversely affect their careers or that nothing would be done.

Half of soldiers and almost as many officers believed sex discrimination existed and a significant number also felt there was discrimination in the Army on the grounds of race, colour or ethnic origin, social background and sexual orientation. But very few of those questioned

thought the military discipline system was unfair.

Most of the 902 officers and 1,236 soldiers who responded to the CAS survey, sent out in December 2003, were proud to be in the Army and thought their jobs were more satisfying than those of their civilian friends, although more than a third of officers and

● ONLY 39 per cent of officers expressed satisfaction with the opportunities they had for playing sport, and even fewer (27 per cent) when it came to adventurous training.

Among ORs, 41 per cent fell into the first category, 24 per cent into the second.

Nearly half the soldiers were dissatisfied with opportunities to take leave when they wanted it.

Bravery award for cadet who led fire rescue

Schoolgirl risked blaze to save trapped woman

SIXTEEN-year-old Army cadet LCpl Vicky Murray broke into a burning house to save the life of a woman.

Now the plucky Birmingham schoolgirl has been awarded a Queen's Commendation for Bravery for her part in the rescue.

Vicky, a cadet at Tennal Grange Troop, Warwickshire and West Midlands South Army Cadet Force, was walking to school in March 2003 when she noticed an elderly woman pulling at curtains in a ground-floor flat from which smoke and flames were billowing.

Vicky smashed the bedroom window with her bare hands, injuring them as she did so, and, helped by a school friend, cleared the glass away. Then she and others built a staircase out of loose bricks so two adults who had arrived on the scene could help her lift the woman through the window to safety.

Vicky treated the woman, whose husband was overcome by smoke and subsequently died from burns, for shock until the emergency services arrived.

West Midlands Fire Service chiefs praised her for saving a life in very dangerous circumstances.

Col Max Gandell, head of the cadet branch, said: "I am delighted Vicky's brave action has been recognised. She led the rescue effort, inspiring all around her through her bravery, leadership and first-aid skills."

"Her behaviour in the face of considerable personal danger reflects the finest traditions of the Army Cadet Force and the training she has received."



Inspiring leadership: Cadet LCpl Vicky Murray



Little and large: Gdsm Stephen Thomas, Coldstream Gds, was asked to hand out Coldstream Guards colour party sets made by William Britain at the London toy and figure show at Alexandra Palace last month.

it's still going on

believe racial, social, gender discrimination exists

only slightly fewer soldiers believed their pay compared badly with their civvy mates. Of the officers, 77 per cent were very or fairly happy with their quality of life, against 57 per cent of ORs.

Most agreed that the Army treated them fairly and with respect.

Unhappiness with the accuracy and speed with which their pay enquiries were handled was greatest among other ranks (27 per cent fairly dissatisfied, 24 per cent very dissatisfied).

Nearly 70 per cent of other ranks (858 in all) had never heard of the Chief of the General's Staff's Briefing Team as a way to communicate their views on the Army, and neither had 199 officers (22 per cent).

Few in either category had heard of the Service Families Task Force.

Half the officers who responded to the survey thought the Army was "getting a little better" – nine per cent thought it "much better" – at responding to individual's views, while half the other ranks thought nothing had changed.

More officers (75 per cent) than soldiers (60 per cent) were very or fairly satisfied with their Combat 95 clothing while nearly half the former and 66 per cent of the latter had found it necessary to

buy extra combat clothing or kit, spending on average £69 (officers) and £81 (ORs).

The most spent by an individual on equipment had been £2,500, the least £1.

Should partners have the same support and allowances as spouses?

While 73 per cent of soldiers thought so, only 41 per cent of officers agreed.

● **WHILE most officers had few gripes about remedial treatment available to them, 48 per cent were unhappy with the healthcare offered to their families. In contrast, 78 per cent of other ranks were satisfied or had no problem with the families' healthcare support.**

Dental support for families was criticised by 57 per cent of officers, 29 per cent of ORs.

New post for C-in-C Land

GEN Sir Timothy Granville-Chapman, Commander-in-Chief Land is handed over to Lt Gen Sir Richard Dannatt in March before taking up a new appointment as Vice Chief of the Defence Staff.

Gen Dannatt (late Green Howards), currently the Commander Allied Rapid Reaction Corps, is to be promoted to the rank of general.

Gen Granville-Chapman is due to succeed Air Chief Marshal Sir Anthony Bagnall as VCDS in July.

1 RHA's Basra tour on the box

AN eight-part series, *Soldier, Husband, Daughter, Dad*, which follows the tour of the 1st Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery from April to October last year, is due to be screened by the BBC later this month.

"Hopefully, it captures the emotion from both the soldiers' side and the families' side," assistant producer Josh Good told *Soldier*. "We are confident that it will be perhaps the closest, most truthful representation of this type of subject for some time."

The first of the 30-minute parts is scheduled to go out on BBC 1 at 1030

New loggy command at PJHQ



A NEW logistic command at the Permanent Joint Headquarters at Northwood has been formed under Brig Jonathan Downes, pictured. The Joint Force Logistic Group is made up of the permanent Joint Force Logistic Component HQ currently being implemented, and 104

Logistic Brigade HQ staffs.

Three to join Forces' pay body

THREE new appointments to the Armed Forces Pay Review Body, the independent team which recommends to the Government how much Servicemen and women should be paid, have been made. The three, who will serve for three years, are Mrs Alison Gallico, Prof Derek Leslie and retired Air Marshal Ian Stewart.

Music feast pulls in £12,000

A CONCERT in Salisbury Cathedral in aid of the Army Benevolent Fund and SSAFA raised just under £12,000 to be split between the Service charities.

The varied programme included music by the Band of the Blues and Royals, internationally-acclaimed singer Susan Mackenzie-Park, resident organist David Halls, and the St John Singers, one of the best-known choral groups in the South-West.

Low-level law, swift justice

NCOs will give spot sanctions for minor offences

NEW rules governing the way soldiers are disciplined for minor offences came into force this month, cutting through red tape as well as speeding up the process.

In future, troops who commit low-level misdemeanours, such as being late on duty or failing to clean their rifle, will be dealt with by NCOs on the spot in a process called minor administrative action.

The changes will mean swift action at the lowest level possible without a company commander having to become involved. Soldiers will also be able to ask for a review of their sanction if they feel harshly treated.

The new rules, detailed in the Army General Administrative Instructions, Chapter 67 (AGAI 67), make a clear distinction between minor and major offences, which will still be dealt with by a high-ranking officer.

Brig Tony Brister, whose team has already trained 3,700 officers and NCOs to administer sanctions in line with the new rules, explained the changes to *Soldier*. He said: "If someone is guilty of a minor offence they'll be dealt with quickly by an NCO at the lowest level rather than being pulled before their company commander and charged with the full weight of our judiciary processes.

"And although it will be dealt with

by a NCO, the soldier has the option of asking for a review which will be conducted by a sergeant major.

"The company sergeant major will have an overview of all the minor administrative actions going on."

Petty offences would lead to an officer or NCO filling-out a short form detailing the soldier's wrong-doing and their sanction, which could include show parades, extra duties or regimental work.

The soldier at fault would then sign the document to show they accepted their sanction or they could ask for the case to be reviewed.

Brig Stephen Andrews, Director of Personal Services (Army), said: "We were using the full weight of military law to deal with some pretty minor matters and decided it wasn't the most efficient way to proceed.

"We needed a way of dealing with low-level lapses in conduct really quickly and really effectively, in a way that is seen to be fair by everyone and that is what I think we have delivered.

"We've put disciplinary power back into the hands of the people who need it most and those are junior commanders and senior NCOs who can act there and then."

For more details, log on to www.ag.mod.uk and click on Serving soldier.

Sappers start work on propping-up Paramali village



Tight fit: Cpl Scott George, left, has his respirator checked by Spr Wembly Rowlands, centre, and Spr Neil Hassan during an exercise by 62 (Cyprus) Support Squadron RE in Cyprus. Behind them is LCpl Ross Homer. Royal Engineers

have begun a year-long upgrade of the island's Paramali fighting village. Damaged every time it is attacked on exercises, it will be refurbished and repaired. Sagging roofs will be propped up and some properties rebuilt.

Picture: Cpl Will Craig

Army's head inspects Sovereign's Parade

GEN Sir Mike Jackson, the Chief of the General Staff, inspects ranks of officer cadets on Sovereign's Parade at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst on December 10.

More than 500 cadets went on parade, of whom 231 received their commissions.

Twenty from 13 overseas countries also completed their training.

The Sword of Honour was awarded to JUO James Thompson, who joins The Parachute Regiment. The Queen's Medal for the best military, practical and academic results went to OC Patrick Hennessey, Gren Gds.



Picture: Mike Weston

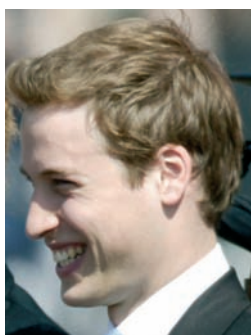
Wills: Don't wrap me in cotton wool

I'd want to fight alongside my men, says Prince

PRINCE William would want to fight alongside his men if he decided to join the Army, the second-in-line to the Throne has revealed.

The Prince, 22, who will complete his degree at St Andrew's next year, is unsure what he wants to do after graduation but stressed that the Army would be his preferred choice if he joined the Forces.

He made the remarks during a BBC interview. If he were to choose a career



Prince William: No favours

in the Army, Prince William would be the most senior member of the Royal Family in recent memory to attend the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst.

"The last thing I want to do is be mollycoddled or wrapped up in cotton wool because if I was to join the Army I'd want to go where my men went and I'd want to do what they did," he said.

"I would not want to be kept back for being precious, or whatever. That's the last thing I'd want."

Military to have more control in managing role with civvies

MORE than 2,500 Army officers who manage MoD civilians are about to find themselves doing things differently.

Under a streamlined human resources regime already being introduced for civilian managers, they will become directly responsible for recruitment of staff (from identifying a requirement to selection); absence management; and performance management and development.

A comprehensive support package will be available for line managers, with on-line services and access to advice. A website will be set up on AGWeb and LandWeb in the next three or four months.

Military involvement in the People Programme under Project Agile will kick-in early in the New Year.

The Project Agile team can be contacted on 01264 348085 or 8053.

European force takes charge in the Balkans

British general in command

THE European Union has taken command of all 7,000 peacekeeping troops in Bosnia – the biggest joint military operation in its history.

Drawn from 32 countries, the new force is headed by Maj Gen David Leakey, with the UK contributing the greatest number of soldiers. Some 950, drawn mainly from the Grenadier Guards, are involved.

Other non-European nations providing troops include Canada and Chile, while neutral non-Nato states involved include Finland, Ireland and Austria.

The new force, called Eufor, replaces Nato's Stabilisation Force (Sfor). Eighty per cent of troops in the Eufor were already in theatre with Nato and simply swapped insignia on uniforms and vehicles.

Nine years after the bloody war in former Yugoslavia, which it is believed claimed 200,000 lives, it is unlikely that Eufor will be involved in fighting.

Instead, it will continue the tasks of disarming the Bosnian people, helping to combat organised crime and hunting wanted war criminals, including the Bosnian Serb Radovan Karadzic.

Maj Gen Leakey said: "Bosnia is still recovering from a very bloody war. The ethnic tensions which started that war are still here."

Make mine a first for NVQs



SSGT Andrew Hamilton RE, left, has become the first person in the UK to achieve an NVQ in planning and management of munition clearance operations at Level 4.

Now at the Defence Explosive Ordnance Disposal School, SSGT Hamilton drew on experience with 33 Engineer Regiment (EOD) and on tours in the Falklands and Bosnia.

● SSGT Jeremy Carter (MCTC Colchester), Sgts Jason Hunter (Unified Systems Support Organisation, DLO) and James White (33 Engineer Regiment) and LSgt Benjamin Mason (Grenadier Guards) are the first NCOs to be awarded NVQs which recognise their command, leadership and management skills.

They were among an initial group of 127 NCOs working towards the qualification.

Sandhurst cadet remembered

SANDHURST cadets visiting Cyprus for Exercise Winter Victory took a break from training to lay a headstone in memory of 2nd Lt Alistair Johnson, an RMAS cadet who died during a training exercise in 1992. The plaque, made by 62 Cyprus Support Squadron RE, is on a hill overlooking the sea, where the accident happened. Alistair was to have joined the Royal Engineers.

Charlotte is school's first lady

SIXTH former Charlotte Davies, pictured, is the first girl to be appointed chief school prefect in the 200-year



history of the Duke of York's Royal Military School at Dover.

Although it started out as a co-educational school, the Duke of York's withdrew places for girls in 1823 on moving to Southampton and did

not welcome them back until 1994. The position of chief school prefect is the top position to be held by a pupil.

The military school took on a tri-Service flavour in 1992 when it became an agency of the MoD.

Club lunch honours veterans

NORMANDY veterans were guests of honour at a lunch at the Victory Services Club in London, which last year marked the 60th anniversary of the D-Day landings.

The private military club in the West End has launched a new family membership for parents and children of Service personnel.

For details, go to www.vsc.co.uk



Ranging in: Pte Jason Grindley of Burma Company, 1st Battalion, The Queen's Lancashire Regiment, sets himself up in a defensive position at Paramarli village during a potential junior NCOs' course in Cyprus.

Beside him is a range card to give him the lie of the land and help identify arcs of fire. Thirty

soldiers took part in the seven-week training cadre, which ended after a dawn raid exercise when the hard-working candidates were rewarded for their efforts by being served breakfast on the beach by their instructors.

Even the regimental silver was wheeled out for the early-morning meal.

Picture: Cpl Will Craig

The Rock's just got a bit bigger

Sappers add a few centimetres to historic peak

GIBRALTAR is 14cm taller than previously thought, according to Royal Engineer specialists.

And they should know because they measured it. Sappers from 13 Geographic Squadron, 42 Engineer Regiment (Geographic) flew in to clarify a dispute over the Rock's exact height on an exercise to mark the 300th anniversary of British rule in Gibraltar.

They also surveyed its network of defensive tunnels, mapped the airport and runway and designed a website for the Gibraltar National Heritage Trust, which wants to highlight little-known attractions. And as to the peak, it was measured at precisely 424.84m, slightly more than any previous claims.



Standing tall: LCpl Damon Mitchell on the Rock



Debut for Defender

THE Army's first Defender 4S AL Mk 1, pictured above, has entered service to fill the Service's requirement for a fixed-wing liaison and light utility aircraft. Based on the Britten-Norman BN2T Islander originally developed in the Isle of Wight, the 4S

can operate from short airstrips in all weather, day and night. The Army ordered three of the aircraft, used by many law-enforcement agencies, under an urgent operational requirement for service in Iraq and took delivery of the first less than ten months later.

Ruth's poem

Sister pays tribute to brother who died in Iraq

DRAMA student Ruth Rayment, the youngest sister of Pte Christopher Rayment, who died at Al Amarah on August 4 while serving with the 1st Battalion, The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment, asked *Soldier* to publish a poem she wrote in her brother's memory.

Ruth, who lives with her family in Eltham, London and has just started a drama course at college, said she hoped the words would mean something to other soldiers.

Ruth, her older sister and her parents heard a moving tribute to Christopher from his close friend Cpl Steve Moran when they joined the entire battalion for a memorial service for Christopher in the Garrison Church at Tidworth in November.

Afterwards, in the officers' mess, commanding officer Lt Col Matthew Maer paid his own tribute and presented the family with Pte Rayment's medals, a memorial book compiled by the battalion, and a PWRR tiger, which by tradition is given to every soldier who leaves the battalion.

Those red poppies
Are all that we give to those
Who receive.
They died on the bloody fields,
They wept their tears
But, determined to succeed,
They hid their fears.

As their hats fell I hear the sheer shudder.
As their hats fall I hide under cover,
For I am not a true soldier
Who died in these wars,
But I am the young sister who cries and mourns
For the loss of my brother,
Who knocked on heaven's door.



In memory: Ruth holds a photo of her brother, Pte Christopher Rayment, after the battalion service at Tidworth Garrison Church



Benefiting: Children of Tibetan nomads

Play the Great Game to help nomadic kids

SERVING soldiers and officers – Regulars, Reserve or cadet – are wanted for a gruelling 14-day trek across 300 miles of desert in Uzbekistan.

The MoD has put its weight behind The Great Game Challenge, which will pitch military and civilians against each other in challenges to commemorate the epic journey made by young British officers 100 years ago during an undeclared war against the Russians that became known as The Great Game.

The challenge, in October, is to raise funds for the Prince's Trust's Youth Business International unit.

Teams of eight will set out from Bokhara (where two British officers were beheaded in 1842 for upsetting the Emir) by camel, horseback and foot.

Afterwards, rival teams will improve communal facilities for an impoverished community near Khiva in Uzbekistan.

Funds raised will be used to help nomadic children and other disadvantaged youngsters in Asia.

High levels of fitness and endurance are required and units must be able to cope with and bear the costs of soldiers' absences. Players will be asked to raise sponsorship.

Applications close on March 31 and can be found on www.thegreatgamechallenge.com or by e-mail to info@thegreatgamechallenge.com

Picture: Steve Dock

UNDER Big Ben

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

Infantry will get reinvested post

THE 537 posts freed up from the four redundant regiments identified under the Future Infantry Structure would be "reinvested" back into the Infantry, Defence Secretary Geoff Hoon said in a written answer.

The armoured infantry will get 154 of the posts, the mechanized infantry 69, the light infantry 257, air assault 48 and the Pathfinder Platoon nine.

Fort George: No decision has been taken on the future role of the Fort George military base and options were being "developed for consideration". Mr Hoon said he did not rule out using it as a Scottish training facility for the Army.

Weapon tests: Three Territorial Army individuals – a surgeon, a chef and a medical technician – who had failed the safety component of their weapons handling test had been deployed to Iraq, Mr Ingram said in a written answer.

During early deployments to Iraq, a decision was taken at the Reserve Training and Mobilisation Centre that a reduced performance in two weapons handling test elements unrelated to safety – loading a magazine and wind tables – would be sufficient. Since October 4 the stated policy has been followed and individuals in Iraq identified for in-theatre training.

Apache: Apache AH Mk1 will be fully operational by September 2007, when three AAC regiments in 16 Air Assault Brigade will be ready to fly them. Initial operating capability for the attack helicopter was achieved last September.

Heroes' return: Nearly 9,000 eligible applications have been received by the MoD under the programme to provide grants for veterans, widows, spouses and carers to attend battlefield reunions and commemoration services abroad. More than £7 million has been paid under the Lottery-funded scheme, which by the end of November had enabled 20,000 people to travel to all theatres of the Second World War.

Some progress on pay glitches

But thousands will still be affected by errors

FOUR more categories of Servicemen and women hit by long-running Pay 2000 computer software problems will be paid correctly in future, but nearly 9,000 others will have to wait a little longer for theirs to be sorted.

In a further development, it is hoped that soldiers who have been overpaid by the system will not have money clawed back from their bank accounts.

Glitches affecting the pay of University Officers' Training Corps cadets, those on accelerated incremental progression, people with driving bans and those on mark-time pay have been ironed out.

But soldiers who have re-enlisted or re-engaged on a month-by-month basis will have to wait a bit longer. Complicated remedial work being carried out by the Armed Forces Personnel Administration Agency (AFPAA) is set to go on throughout this year.

And investigations at Worthy Down have confirmed that errors affecting nearly 9,000 more soldiers in five other groups have still to be addressed.

This work involves:

- Setting the correct increment level for those who move between pay ranges (4,600 personnel affected).
- Setting the right incremental level for those who are promoted to a rank previously held (3,200).

- Setting the right incremental level for those reduced in rank (1,100).

- Assessing the correct prior service for pay purposes for those who joined the Army before the age of 17.5 (50).

- Correcting the pay of temporary crew commanders not corrected during Phase 1 work (20).

This phase will be delivered as quickly as possible, although sources at Worthy Down say the complexity of the work has stretched the timelines.

First on AFPAA's hit list is the problem affecting the most people – setting the correct incremental level for those who move between pay ranges – and it is hoped that this work can be completed in the summer.

Where possible work will continue at the same time on the remaining groups.

Worthy Down is racing against a deadline of April 2006, imposed by the Army's switch to the new Joint Personnel Administration regime.

Computer problems have meant some soldiers have been overpaid. In every instance the overpayment has been "parked" pending the outcome of write-off negotiations with the Treasury.

These discussions are said to be progressing well and it is believed that in most cases the money will not be clawed back from soldiers' accounts.

Army faith groups unite Armed Forces to recruit non-Christian chaplains

THE Royal Army Chaplains' Department has united its two wings under a unified leadership.

Until now split into two denominational elements – Unified (Protestant) and Roman Catholic – it has reorganised itself into a one-department, ecumenical structure under the Chaplain General, currently the Ven David Wilkes.

Previously Roman Catholic padres in the Army came under the Principal Roman Catholic Chaplain while the Unified branch, consisting of the Anglican Church, Church of Scotland, Methodist, Baptist and United Reform Churches, was headed by the Chaplain General.

The appointment is a military one in which denomination plays no part, and all chaplains now fall under his military

authority. The new structure, which will avoid duplication of chaplains, is capable of expanding to accommodate faith communities other than Christian.

In a separate move, the MoD announced that representatives from the Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh communities would be recruited to minister to non-Christian personnel in the Armed Forces.

The £30,000 posts are part of efforts to ensure that people of different faiths are not deterred from enlisting.

The chaplains will lead religious ceremonies and prayer and could be deployed to war zones.

About 750 Armed Forces personnel have declared themselves to be Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim or Sikh.

Troodos trip proves a high point for fund-raising Cyprus signallers



On yer bikes, lads: Members of the Cyprus Communications Unit at Akrotiri turned to pedal-power to raise more than £700 for charity. From right to left are LCpl Malcolm Osborne, LCpl Gaz Hatton, Cpl Pete Stewart, Cpl Lee Ebdon, LCpl

Cam Pitcairn, LCpl Steve Chapman, SSgt Paul Batley and Cpl Mark Aplin. With a police escort through the Western Sovereign Base Area, they cycled from Akrotiri to the island's highest point at the Olympus site in the Troodos Mountains.

The super eight were joined by detachment OC Flt Lt Darren Jones RAF. They completed the 130km trip in a shade over five hours. And just to complete their day's work, the signallers cooled down with a 5km swim.

Picture: Cpl Will Craig

PM goes on Iraq medal parade for TA battalion

PRIME Minister Tony Blair shares a joke with Lt Col Tony Downes, commanding officer of 102 Battalion REME at Newton Aycliffe, County Durham.

He visited the unit for a special parade to present Iraq medals to 65 members of the battalion.

It is thought to be the first occasion on which the Prime Minister had presented campaign medals to a Territorial Army unit.



Paderborn air link to south of England

PADERBORN has a new three-times-a-week air link with the UK which is expected to be welcomed by Army families based in Germany.

Air Berlin, the country's second largest airline, is flying on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays between the city, home to a large British military community, and Southampton.

Prices on the 184-seat Boeing 737-800 aircraft start from £19 one-way, including taxes. Flights leave Paderborn at 0710 and return from Southampton at 0810. Ring 0870 738 8880 or go to www.airberlin.com for details.

● TERRITORIAL Army teams from Farnham-based 3rd Battalion, The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment, finished third and fifth in an international patrol competition in Italy. They beat many Regular entries from Nato forces across Europe and finished only behind two Italian airborne entries and a team of Polish special forces.

● NAAFI Financial Life Insurance has written policies worth more than £550 million for Service personnel deployed to the Gulf in the past 12 months, managing director Al Voice has revealed. He told BFBS Radio that Naafi Financial had never withdrawn cover on any of its products in the face of threats to peace such as September 11 and the Gulf wars.

IN BRIEF

● ARMY cadets from Warwickshire and West Midlands South Army Cadet Force won their Inter-Services first aid competition at Buxton.

● TOC H, the international support movement started in the trenches of the First World War, is to brew its own range of real ales to provide jobs for men and women leaving the Armed Forces. Project manager Tim Chillman, a former Army officer, is to install a micro-brewery to produce beers with names such as Desert Rat, Passchendaele Bitter and Anzac Lager. Toc H supports community action ranging from drop-in centres on housing estates in the UK to schools in India and Bangladesh.

● Double culinary Olympics medal-winner Sgt Matty Boyle (report, Dec) continued his winning streak by picking up another pair at the Combined Services Culinary Challenge – a silver in the cold sweet category and a gold for his centrepiece.

● A Bobby Buck story book published by the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers Museum costs £4.99, not £2 as reported in the December issue (Bulletin board). The Bobby soft toy is available at £7.99. Enquiries to 01926 491653.

● Royal Army Medical Corps ex-PoWs from the Second World War have been given a £5,000 Lottery grant to help them continue their twice-yearly reunion lunches. All are now over 80.

Homecoming

Led by Pipe Major Scott Taylor, married soldiers of the 1st Battalion, The Black Watch march through the early-morning mist to be reunited with their wives and children on the parade ground of their Battlesbury Barracks base at Warminster »



Picture: Steve Dock



Black Watch battle-group troops complete the long

Road trip: The BW battle-group convoy rolling at a snail's pace through the Iraqi desert on the first leg of its journey home



Picture: LA (Phot) Lee Durrant RN

Report: Graham Diggins

THE freezing mist and the uncertain future of their regiment could not wipe the smiles from the faces of the soldiers of the 1st Battalion, The Black Watch as they returned home from Iraq last month.

Instead of the almost daily barrage of enemy mortars at Camp Dogwood they faced a barrage of TV cameras and

paparazzi at Battlesbury Barracks, Warminster, as they were reunited with their joyful wives, girlfriends and families.

The emotional homecoming capped a tumultuous month for the regiment, which had faced suicide bombers, gunmen and the prospect of disbandment.

Six men were killed during the six-month deployment to Iraq – five during The Black Watch battle-group's month-long stay at Camp Dogwood supporting the US Army's assault on Fallujah.

Just days before the end of their mission some 700 soldiers took part in the biggest

military operation since the end of the war, raiding homes and buildings in the Karaguli region east of the River Euphrates.

It was from this area that the lion's share of the rocket and mortar attacks were launched at the Black Watch battle-group's base.

“We have always thought of ourselves as one of the Army's best-kept secrets, and we would now like to return to serving this country for as long as we are allowed to in a rather more quiet and anonymous way”



High alert: A soldier from The Queen's Dragoon Guards, serving with the BW battle-group, patrols beside a Spartan armoured vehicle during a mission west of the Euphrates River. Picture: PO Steve Lewis RN

During the 12-hour raid 26 people were arrested. Although 16 were later released, ten were held for further questioning. Only a handful of shots were fired and there were no casualties.

The battle-group's return to the safety of Shaibah Logistics Base in southern Iraq was equally successful.

Shrouded in secrecy, it trundled out of Dogwood in a slow-moving convoy with its Warrior fighting vehicles perched on low-loader lorries.

The media had been banned from reporting on plans for the move to avoid alerting the enemy.

Standing on the chilly parade ground at Battlesbury Barracks, Warminster,

as his men enjoyed a beer with their breakfast, Lt Col James Cowan, commanding officer of 1 BW, said he was surprised at the amount of attention his regiment had attracted during their deployment.

He said: “We have never actively sought the limelight, we have had it thrust upon us.

“We have always thought of ourselves as one of the Army's best-kept secrets, and we would now like to return to serving this country for as long as we are allowed to in a rather more quiet and anonymous way.”

Meanwhile, in southern Iraq, the 1st Battalion, Scots Guards have halted

and dangerous road back to the arms of loved ones



Daddy's girl: Sgt Allan Dunn, left, gives a TV interview just minutes after seeing his eight-week-old daughter Kate-Lyn for the first time

Cheek-to-cheek: Pte Gary Richford, above, gets to grips with his wife, Carol

Kiss'll do nicely: Lt Guy Williams, right, is greeted by his wife, Natalie

Pictures: Steve Dock



Unfinished business: Troops of the Black Watch battle-group root-out insurgents during their final operation in Karaguli before heading to Basra on the first leg of their journey home Picture: Cpl Rob Knight

a tribal feud which was threatening electricity supplies to Basra.

Fighting between the two factions, which had raged since August, had toppled key power pylons and brought down 6km of electricity cables, jeopardising electricity supplies to half of Basra.

The Scots Guards, the divisional reserve force, brokered a ceasefire between the two warring tribes, allowing Iraqi engineers to carry out vital repairs.

Since hostilities broke out in August over tribal land rights, Basra's population has been suffering rolling blackouts while a small number to the

north of the city have had little or no power.

As *Soldier* went to press the commanding officer of the Scots Guards was personally involved in face-to-face peace talks between the sides in the hope that the feud may be settled.

The tribes had been fighting over ownership of residential land some 10km north of Basra and were attacking each other using heavy machine-guns, rocket-propelled grenades and mortars.

Iraqis living in the immediate area were said to be desperate for an end to the bloody conflict, while Basra's residents simply wanted their electricity supply returned to normal. ■

Meanwhile, Barnsie (and Leilani) drop in on Basra

ENGLAND and Liverpool football legend John Barnes paid a morale-boosting visit to troops based in and around Basra just before Christmas.

The sporting superstar-turned-telly pundit met about 7,000 soldiers on an intensive four-day visit organised by Combined Services Entertainment.

Accompanied by models Jakki Degg and Leilani and singer James Fox, John called on the British military hospital, 21 Engr Regt, the QDG, 1 Scots Guards, 7 Log Sp Regt, the RDG, 1 WG, Basra air station, 1 DWR, Umm Qasr Port's British contingent, 40 Cdo RM, HQ 4 Armd Brigade and 1 BW.

Barnsie talked – and played football – with the soldiers he met.



Picture: Pete Woolridge

John Barnes on tour



Cold War thaw

Adversaries turned allies now investing in the expertise of the British Army in Slovakia »

East meets west: JSOC (CEE)'s RQMS
WO2 Jay Shaw, RRF, on the parade
square of the Slovak Military Academy

Report: Andy Simms
Pictures: Graeme Main

FORMER Cold War adversaries are warming to each other on the Junior Staff Officers' Course (Central and Eastern Europe) at Liptovsky Mikulas in Slovakia.

Nations once on the opposing side of the Iron Curtain to the West are now among those drawing on the British Army's wealth of military expertise at the United Kingdom- and Netherlands-run training centre, which is located within the Slovak Military Academy in the foothills of the Tatra mountains.

Similar in concept to previously successful initiatives at Vyskov in the Czech Republic and in Bucharest, Romania, JSOC (CEE) opened its doors for business early last year with the aim of providing senior lieutenants, captains and majors from Central and Eastern European Forces with command and staff training based on UK and Nato defence doctrine.

Conducted in English, the 12-week course is designed to prepare its graduates for work in multi-national environments on war-fighting, peace support and humanitarian operations and has already attracted students from 17 different countries.

The rush for places on the course has come as no surprise to its commandant, Col Nigel Lithgow, who explained that the

British military is an export very much in demand.

"Nations are keen to share in the experience they have seen the British Army gain across the globe whether by ourselves, such as in Sierra Leone, or in partnership with others in places like the Balkans, Afghanistan and Iraq," he said.

"They have seen what we deliver and how we have delivered it, and know that despite the relatively small size of our Army we can still produce the desired effect.

"We are a nation which can do what it needs to do with relatively limited resources, so it is no wonder that others are intrigued by how we do it."

However, James Bond can rest easy, JSOC (CEE) is not in the business of trading military secrets with rogue states.

The course, which is run three times a year, is open only to officers from full Nato members and Partnership for Peace nations (including those invited to join Nato as a result of the Prague Summit).

"Most of the material we have at the college could probably be found on a rubbish tip in Slough," joked Col Lithgow.

"We are not passing on anything above restricted level, but if we want the students to become true partners



with us then there has to be an element of giving and investment of faith in them.

"What we are teaching here is not rocket science, we are just teaching basic principles and encouraging officers on the course to take the lead when it comes to decision- and plan-making," he said.

"Besides, a course such as this helps us as much as it helps those on it. The key aim is to get the officers that we train here to be more effective from day one when they are with us on operations, exercise or working alongside us in peacetime headquarters – which in turn takes the load of us and our allies."

The centre's driven determination to engender multi-nationality and

inter-operability among its student population is evident in each of JSOC's classrooms.

Students from as far apart as Ireland and Kazakhstan discuss and compare battle plans and this year Serbia are expected to send officers on a course already subscribed to by Croatian, Albanian and Macedonian forces.

Such a mix of nationalities may sound like a volatile one, but staff at JSOC are confident that there will be no playground scuffles.

Col Lithgow told *Soldier*: "It would be silly to say that there are not potential problems, but nationality is generally left at the door here. We already have students here from nations who not so long ago were potential enemies and

I take my confidence from what has happened for many generations at the Army staff college in the UK.

"I actually attended Pakistan's Staff College but before I went there I spent some time at Sandhurst where there were Indian and Pakistani officers, whose countries at that stage were literally at each other's throats, who got along famously.

"If we are mindful of the problem then it is something we will be able to manage.

"I trust that the course will continue to engender better respect and understanding between students from different nationalities." ■

● Low-cost learning Page 25.

United effort: British instructor Maj Will Bartle-Jones, Blues and Royals, surveys the battlefield with students from across Central and Eastern Europe during a Tactical Exercise Without Troops (TEWT) on the United Kingdom and Netherlands run Junior Staff Officers' Course in Slovakia

**"They have seen
what we can deliver
and how we have
delivered it . . . so
it is no wonder that
others are intrigued
by how we do it "**





Picture: Graeme Main

Low-cost learning

'Student prices' add to appeal of Slovakia's Junior Staff Officers' Course

ARMED with the incentive of beer at just 25p a pint, the commandant of the Junior Staff Officers' Course (Central and Eastern Europe) in Slovakia is never likely to face a shortage of instructors.

The cost of living in the former Communist state makes two years' service an attractive proposition for soldiers looking to give their wallets a break from the inflated prices found back home in Britain.

"Beer is about 25p a pint, cigarettes are 68p a packet and a weekly shopping bill for a family of four comes in at about £80," explained the Deputy Chief of Staff at JSOC (CEE), Maj David Nicholson.

"Eating out is equally inexpensive. Even dining in the top restaurants you can have a three-course meal for four, complete with a couple of beers and coffees, and still expect to walk away with change from £40."

But the locale of the British and

Dutch-run training centre in the town of Liptovsky Mikulas has a lot more to offer soldiers than just cut-price booze and a dramatic reduction in mess bills.

Situated in the shadow of the Tatra mountains and at the heart of the country's tourist region, the increasingly popular ski resort represents an ideal posting for lovers of the great outdoors.

Within a short car journey of the Slovak Military Academy, home to JSOC (CEE), off-duty soldiers can find themselves cutting the powder on the pistes, bathing in natural thermal springs, paragliding from lofty heights or exploring Europe's second largest cave system.

The River Vah, which cuts through the resort's centre, also provides the opportunity for soldiers to experience the thrills of white-water rafting or the chance to master canoeing alongside home-town hero and Olympic silver medallist Michal Martikan.

Liptovsky Mikulas also provides a perfect base from which to explore some of Europe's hidden jewels.

Two hours' drive to the north lies the startlingly beautiful city of Krakow – Poland's prime tourist attraction, with many world-class monuments and charming vistas.

Three hours to the south are the cobbled streets of Hungary's capital city, historic Budapest.

Only slightly farther afield are the Adriatic and Greek coastlines, one- and two-day drives away respectively.

Maj David Nicholson said: "Socially, politically, historically, culturally and geographically, there is a lot to see here.

"Although the second language in Slovakia tends to be either German or Russian, more and more of the locals speak English now and are very welcoming.

"All in all it is an interesting place to work and offers great opportunities for travel." ■

DEADLY recruit

Scimitars of The Light Dragoons join forces with the Army's most lethal newcomer to seal another first for the Apache Longbow helicopter »

Shadowed: The Longbow Apache attack helicopter hovers over a Scimitar from The Light Dragoons

Report: Graham Diggines
Pictures: Steve Dock

PROWLING shark-like over Salisbury Plain, the Apache hovered effortlessly for a moment, dipped to within feet of The Light Dragoons' Scimitar and the two crews exchanged salutes.

It was the first time combat vehicle recce troops had eyeballed the Apache Longbow attack helicopter and the aircraft's two pilots were eager to put on a show.

They were tasked with cutting enemy supply lines to Imber, one of Salisbury Plain's many deserted villages, as part of Exercise Sabre's Edge, a three-week counter-insurgency drill ahead of The Light Dragoons' deployment to Iraq.

And the £25 million gunship more than lived up to its formidable reputation as it stalked the training area.

With reconnaissance specialists relaying a steady stream of information to the Apache's crew via forward air controllers (FACs), the aircraft had first devastated an enemy convoy and then raked gunmen with chain-gun fire from two kilometres away during a series of simulated attack runs.

The Apache was also able to "see" villages, roads and cars while remaining virtually invisible thanks to the state-of-the-art Longbow radar system mounted above its rotor blades.

But for all the technological wizardry and awesome firepower at their disposal, the crew of Apache call sign Carnage One insisted they couldn't operate without The Light Dragoons' FACs, who called in air strikes and pointed out threats.

Apache pilot Maj Nick Wharmby AAC said: "To be effective we must work closely with the recce assets

on the ground. We are not free runners out there."

Maj Wharmby, OC 673 Squadron, explained that the Apache was able to materialise where the enemy least expected it before wreaking havoc.

He said: "We really proved a point today. One minute we were to the east of the enemy-held village and 20 seconds later we were attacking from the west.

"We could do that purely because we are not constrained by minefields, woods, rivers or any other obstacles and we were moving

at 140mph, often at a height of 10ft.

"At one point we could see the enemy walking around the village totally oblivious to the fact that we had them in our sights. It would have been a turkey shoot.

"Another opportunity arose to attack a convoy of enemy vehicles.

"We would have fired three missiles – the first two to take out the lead and rear vehicles, destroying them within seconds of each other and boxing-in the convoy.

"The third missile would have hit the centre of the convoy between eight and 12 seconds later."

The Light Dragoons proved their worth as the Apache buzzed enemy-held Imber ahead of a final assault by B and C Sabre Squadrons.

Eagle-eyed FAC WO2 David "Robbo" Robson spotted a gunman shoulder his rocket-propelled grenade launcher, (a gaffer tape and drainpipe mock-up) and take aim at the Apache.

Barking "RPG, RPG, RPG" into his radio, Robbo sent the Apache jinking several times before it escaped fast and low.

No stranger to Apache, WO2 Robson worked with US crews in Bosnia. He said: "They did a great job of evading the RPG threat but only a small part of the FAC's job



● Lt Col Robin Matthews



Eagle's nest: A Light Dragoon stands stag next to the awesome Apache on Salisbury Plain



Danger man: WO2 Tony Hall, Light Dragoons, sends an Apache packing with his mocked-up RPG

is about giving that kind of warning.

"FACs need to build up a picture of the battle by listening to their battle-group net, their own squadron net and then pass on this complex picture to the air assets they're working with.

"As the battle progresses they must update the information constantly so the air crew can see the bigger picture."

The FAC must also know the position of friendly forces to avoid blue-on-blue attacks and they must also be fully aware the extent of Apache's firepower.

WO2 Robson said: "If, for instance, the FAC requests the Apache fires

one of its Hellfire missiles they need to know how big the explosion will be so they can be sure the air strike will not cause collateral damage."

With the enemy militia routed in Imber, Lt Col Robin Matthews, CO LD, declared the serial a success.

"Psychologically Apache is a very impressive beast to look at and certainly, on day one, you could sense the trepidation in the soldiers who would be working with the helicopter," he said.

"But by the second day it was just another call sign bringing its skills to the battlefield.



Road block: A Scimitar crew help besiege Imber

"We've learnt that we need each other – we need Apache and vice versa.

"The battlefields of the future will not be simple environments, they'll be complex and sophisticated and it will be very difficult to distinguish between friend and foe, and while Apache will be able to engage devastating firepower it will still need people like us to provide quality human intelligence to tell it exactly what is going on.

"For formation reconnaissance this exercise was a defining moment, we've done a lot on paper but to get out and do this for real has been a real milestone." ■

'At one point we could see the enemy walking around the village totally oblivious to the fact that we had them in our sights'



Apache Longbow at a glance:

- 16 Hellfire fire-and-forget tank-busting missiles – range five miles.
- Or 76 CVR7 rockets – range, four miles.
- A nose-mounted 30mm chain gun firing 600 rounds a minute – range, two miles.
- Pilots have control panel images projected onto the pupil of their right eye so they can operate the helicopter while looking out of the window.
- The chain-gun automatically points wherever the pilot is looking.
- Apache's target sights are so good the pilot can read a car number-plate seven miles away and with all-weather day and night capability it can detect, classify and prioritise 256 potential targets at once.

Chuckle with Chip



Country matters



"Undignified? Do you really want me to tell the CO that we can't get permission to train on their land because you won't do the farming community a little favour!"

For copies of Chip cartoons or caricatures, e-mail chip@chipwoodcartoons.com

Whole (Fleet) truths

With the number of vehicles held in individual units set to shrink from May under a radical new management scheme, here are a few facts



Report: Phil Wilcox

WHOLE Fleet Management is due to change the way the British Army operates its vehicles.

As reported in *Soldier* (Update, Dec), units will, in the near future, be losing many of the green fleet vehicles now on their motor transport parks. Instead, they will draw them from central pools strategically positioned near airheads and exercise areas as and when they need them.

Here are ten things you probably didn't know about Whole Fleet Management (WFM).

Idle assets: 60 per cent of the Army's

trucks currently clock-up fewer than 500 miles a year.

Cost-effective: The MoD plans to replace 14,000 trucks with 5,000 future cargo vehicles (2,500 four-tonne DAF trucks will be retained) and needs to make savings to afford them.

Where are they? The Defence green fleet consists of about 60,000 vehicles – and the Army finds it difficult to keep track of them all.

It works (1): Trials in Germany have shown that a reduction of vehicle holdings works.

Time-saver: Up to four hours a week previously spent on vehicle maintenance are freed up on average for each soldier.

It works (2): Other armies, including the Swedish, Dutch and German, have used the controlled humidity environment central storage method for years.

It's coming, soon: WFM begins for real in May when 19 Mechanized Brigade switches to the new system.

Deadline 2010: The whole Army will be covered by the scheme by 2010.

Meet James: A new IT system called James – Joint Asset Management and Engineering Solutions – will be used to manage the scheme.

King's James: James 1 is due to be trialled by the 1st Battalion, The King's Regiment in March. ■



Combat chef

Chef of the month:

SSgt Rob Burns,
RLC
Instructor, Defence
Food Services
School, Aldershot

Claim to fame:

Fed the Queen,
singer David Essex,
Dot Cotton from
EastEnders, the
Liverpool football
team and former
goalkeeper Bruce
Grobelaar.



● SSgt Rob Burns

Pressure point: Represented the Army on the BBC show *Saturday Kitchen* with celebrity chef Anthony Worrall Thompson. I had to produce two dishes in nine minutes on live TV with Anthony chatting to me in one ear and several members of the production crew talking to me through an ear-piece in the other.

Pet hate: Chefs who smoke. I remember my days as a young chef and the hotplate would never have got out if it wasn't for the non-smokers.

Fast ball: We were cooking Christmas dinner and the RCWO binned the starter by mistake so we had to knock up a tomato and basil soup for 500 in the space of 20 minutes.

Comedy moment: One year the commanding officer and quartermaster joined the master chef at his office for a Christmas drink with some of the senior ranks. At about midnight two guys decided to break into the kitchen and were caught red-handed by every single rank from the colonel down. A definite case of very bad timing.

Ration-pack magic

Get 2005 off to a healthy start using the tasty new contents of a composite ration pack to create an appetising entrée of salmon and herb potato cake.

Drain the tinned salmon, add the dehydrated mashed potato and onions from the ration pack along with some herbs. Shape into cakes and shallow fry for about two minutes on each side. Cook the sachet of noodles in the vegetable stock. Serve salmon cakes on bed of noodles, add water to the honey and mustard sauce and drizzle over.

Next month - look out for an Army chef's Valentine's Day dinner.



Aye eye



Gary takes his bearings on £250 prize

THE number of quality entries received this month made life difficult for our panel of judges.

In the end Sjt Gary Ranu, 1 LI, walked away with first prize for his image of a prismatic compass.

Gary, who has featured strongly in this competition, got the idea while on a map-reading instructors' course.

The judges liked it for the imagination it showed and because it held their attention as an image.

Second was LCpl Ryan's action photo taken during Exercise Eagle Eye, and in third place was Specialist Donald Chandler of the US Army with a spectacular image of a Chinook during Op Enduring Freedom.

Like all monthly winners, Gary receives a £25 voucher.

All the photographs appearing in the magazine will be entered for the

Soldier category in the main Army competition, with a top prize of £250.

The photos must have been taken on or after January 1, 2004.

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Queries should be directed to 01252 347357 or Aldershot (mil) 2357. ■

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Me and my dog

How Bonnie's nose helped the Black Watch battle-group stop suicide bombers



“I do it because I trust Bonnie 100 per cent. I know if there's something there she'll find it and hopefully we'll be able to get out in time.”

Picture: Heathcliff O'Malley/Daily Telegraph/NoD pool

SNIFFER dog Bonnie can smell a single bullet or a bomb – skills which made her indispensable at Camp Dogwood during Black Watch battle-group operations south of Baghdad.

She and handler LCpl Jenny Chester were brought in to find any deadly devices carried in cars stopped at vehicle control points set up by troops in the area round Falluja.

The five-year-old Labrador is an arms explosive search dog from 102 Military Working Dog Support Unit, based at Sennelager, near Paderborn in Germany.

She and LCpl Chester, who had been due to fly home at the end of a

four-month tour of duty in Basra, were rushed north to lend their special skills to the 850-strong battle-group.

Following the deaths of three soldiers in a road-block suicide attack, tactics were refined and traffic in and out of Falluja was stopped 100 yards ahead of troops' positions.

The drivers were ordered out of the cars and told to open their shirts to ensure they had no explosives strapped to their waists before LCpl Chester and Bonnie were sent in. Once she gave the all-clear, the troops would move in.

Now safely back in Germany, she denied she was doing anything courageous. “Everyone's brave in his or her own different way out here” she said.

“Of course it's scary when you think what could happen when we approach target vehicles, but I'd rather it was me and my dog than five soldiers.

“I do it because I trust Bonnie 100 per cent. I know if there's something there she'll find it and hopefully we'll be able to get out of there in time.”

The Labrador, one of 120 dogs at the Sennelager unit, can sniff-out a single 5.56mm round hidden under a pile of other objects. Black Watch spokesman Cap Tim Petrasky said: “They are an incredibly useful asset. Explosives dog handlers are very dedicated and brave people and the presence of LCpl Chester and Bonnie on Operation Bracken was invaluable.” ■



Combat chef

Chef of the month:

SSgt Rob Burns,
RLC
Instructor, Defence
Food Services
School, Aldershot

Claim to fame:

Fed the Queen,
singer David Essex,
Dot Cotton from
EastEnders, the
Liverpool football
team and former
goalkeeper Bruce
Grobelaar.



● SSgt Rob Burns

Pressure point: Represented the Army on the BBC show *Saturday Kitchen* with celebrity chef Anthony Worrall Thompson. I had to produce two dishes in nine minutes on live TV with Anthony chatting to me in one ear and several members of the production crew talking to me through an ear-piece in the other.

Pet hate: Chefs who smoke. I remember my days as a young chef and the hotplate would never have got out if it wasn't for the non-smokers.

Fast ball: We were cooking Christmas dinner and the RCWO binned the starter by mistake so we had to knock up a tomato and basil soup for 500 in the space of 20 minutes.

Comedy moment: One year the commanding officer and quartermaster joined the master chef at his office for a Christmas drink with some of the senior ranks. At about midnight two guys decided to break into the kitchen and were caught red-handed by every single rank from the colonel down. A definite case of very bad timing.

Ration-pack magic

Get 2005 off to a healthy start using the tasty new contents of a composite ration pack to create an appetising entrée of salmon and herb potato cake.

Drain the tinned salmon, add the dehydrated mashed potato and onions from the ration pack along with some herbs. Shape into cakes and shallow fry for about two minutes on each side. Cook the sachet of noodles in the vegetable stock. Serve salmon cakes on bed of noodles, add water to the honey and mustard sauce and drizzle over.

Next month - look out for an Army chef's Valentine's Day dinner.



Aye eye



Gary takes his bearings on £250 prize

THE number of quality entries received this month made life difficult for our panel of judges.

In the end Sjt Gary Ranu, 1 LI, walked away with first prize for his image of a prismatic compass.

Gary, who has featured strongly in this competition, got the idea while on a map-reading instructors' course.

The judges liked it for the imagination it showed and because it held their attention as an image.

Second was LCpl Ryan's action photo taken during Exercise Eagle Eye, and in third place was Specialist Donald Chandler of the US Army with a spectacular image of a Chinook during Op Enduring Freedom.

Like all monthly winners, Gary receives a £25 voucher.

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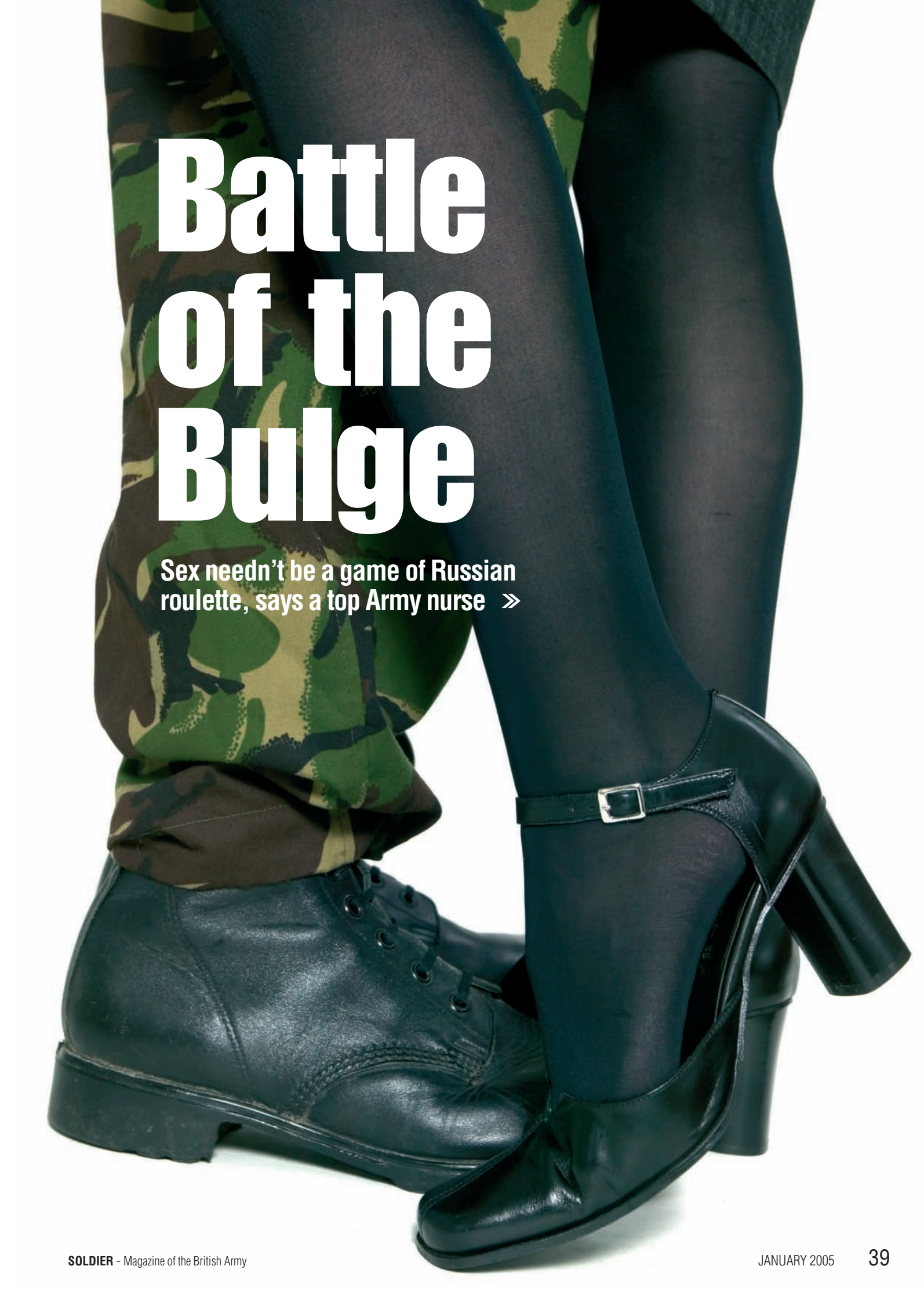
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Battle of the Bulge

Sex needn't be a game of Russian roulette, says a top Army nurse »

Report: Graham Diggines
Pictures: Graeme Main

If you've had your wicked way with a new partner in the last few months and not used a condom then you're in for a shock.

Failure to bag-up has left you with a one-in-five chance of catching a nasty sexual infection called chlamydia and a one-in-ten risk of developing a dose of genital warts.

As well as a legion of other groin-rotting diseases you also stand the risk of catching the big one – HIV. So if you've played x-rated Russian roulette and not

caught HIV/Aids you may have contracted another infection that could leave you infertile or disfigured. Was that

latex-free knee trembler still worth it?

Handing out fistfuls of flavoured condoms to raw recruits at the Army Training Regiment,

Pirbright, the Army's

top sexual health nurse argued that sex needn't be such a risky business.

"When you sleep with someone without a condom you're effectively sleeping with all the other people they have had unprotected sex with and if they are infected the chances are you will catch it too," WO1

Maureen Coshall QARANC said.

"There's a massive increase in sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) in the UK at the moment, across the board.

"HIV has seen the biggest increase of any disease but people still think that it will never affect them.

"Other diseases have also increased dramatically. Syphilis, for example, has

increased by 900 per cent in the last year. People need to realise it's up to them to protect themselves and use condoms – no one else is going to do that for them.

"In fact, using condoms should be like Army training – they should be seen as an essential piece of kit."

If only Army kit was as fun as some of the goodies the Army sexual health team were handing out to troops on World Aids Day last month.

Soldiers were offered a range of flavoured condoms including chocolate, spearmint and tutti frutti as well as extra large condoms for the well endowed.

WO1 Coshall said: "Condoms should even be used for oral sex. Saliva is pretty safe but quite often gums bleed or you may have a cut or sore in your mouth and that's where infection is going to be passed on.

"Anal sex should be avoided because the anus is easily torn and can bleed.

"In the early days of Aids it was seen as a gay disease but more people catch it now through straight intercourse and that trend is just going to get bigger."

While STDs can be killers it seems their partners in crime are ignorance and embarrassment.

Many soldiers don't know how dangerous unprotected sex can be and when they do catch a dose many are too scared to go to a clinic and face the music.

WO1 Coshall said: "There are a lot of myths surrounding sexual health clinics. Some men who come to us think we are going to leave them in agony by sticking instruments down their manhood.

"Most of the time we just take a urine sample or a blood test.

"There's absolutely no reason to be embarrassed or scared. We don't tell anyone else about their visit, not even their unit, so they won't be stigmatised in any way.

"The most important thing is that if you're worried you should come and get treatment before it's too late." ■



● WO1 Maureen Coshall



‘When you sleep with someone without a condom you’re effectively sleeping with all the other people they have had unprotected sex with and if they are infected the chances are you will catch it too’





Nurses WO1 Maureen Coshall and Cpl Kirsten Finn from the Harrison Clinic of Genital Urinary Medicine at Frimley Park Hospital destroy common myths surrounding sexual infections

WILL people think I'm a slapper if I carry condoms in my handbag?

“CARRYING condoms is all about respecting yourself and your partner and taking responsibility for your own sexual health. If people think a woman is loose for doing that then they are ignorant.

Men should carry condoms too.

Any man who refuses to wear one isn't worth the time of day. Chances are he's had unprotected sex in the past and he may already be infected.”

I ONLY sleep with clean respectable people. I wouldn't sleep with a prostitute, for example.

“YOU never know if a person is absolutely infection free even if they do seem clean and respectable. They may have an infection and not even know it themselves. Chlamydia, for example, can sometimes have no outward symptoms at all but it can still make you infertile.”



● Cpl Kirsten Finn

I'VE been seeing my partner for a while now and we don't want to use condoms any more. We're both fit and healthy so we're just going to do it without them.

“THE best thing to do in this situation is to go for a sexual health check-up before you do away with condoms totally. That way you'll know for sure you are in the clear.”

I GET a sexual check-up every few months. I'm as safe as houses.

“THERE'S nothing wrong with going for a regular check-up but this doesn't mean you're protected in any way. If you have sex without a condom, you can still catch an STD. The only difference is that you'll find out what you've caught when you go to the clinic and by that stage it's too late.”

If the cap fits wear it: An Army nurse hands out life-saving kit during World Aids Day



REGIMENTAL

MASCOTS



Mates in arms: Billy with LCpl David Davis

THE origin of the regimental goat of The Royal Welch Fusiliers is not known, although it is believed that one served with the regiment in Boston in 1775 during the American Civil War.

The earliest regimental reference to a goat was made in 1777 when an officer wrote (sic): "The Royal regiment of welch Fuzileers has a privilegeous honor of passing in review preceded by a Goat with gilded horns, and adorned with ringlets of flowers" and that "the corps values itself much on the ancientness of the custom."

One story from the time tells of the goat being ridden by a drummer boy around the officers' dinner table in Boston. The animal is said to have sprung from the floor, thrown the rider on the table, jumped over the heads of those present and run back to barracks.

Queen Victoria presented the regiment with a Kashmir goat from the Royal Herd in 1844 and successive sovereigns have replaced them ever since. Each one has a silver headplate identifying him as a gift from the Royal Herd.

One presented by Queen Victoria died in the Crimea in 1854 and was not replaced until the return of the regiment to England at the end of the war.

The officers' mess is adorned with the splendid mounted head of another which accompanied the 1st Battalion throughout the Indian Mutiny. Yet another died with the 2nd Battalion during the Ashantee campaign in West Africa in the 1870s, and "Billy" accompanied the 1st Battalion to South Africa in 1899 and to Flanders in 1914.

The goat, always a billy, is considered a member of the regiment rather than a mascot and is looked after by a soldier with the honorary title of Goat Major. Traditionally the goat's horns are gilded.

It also wears a silver chain and shield, presented by the mayor and citizens of Lichfield in 1904 in recognition of the service of the 1st Battalion, The Royal Welch Fusiliers in South Africa.

One of the most important dates in the diary of the current incumbent, five-year-old Billy, is St David's Day on March 1. ■

Next month: The drum horse of the Queen's Royal Hussars.



Under guard: Belsen camp commandant Josef Kramer in ankle chains after the arrival of Allied troops

Flashback

SS CAMP commander Josef Kramer, dubbed the Monster of Belsen, sits in chains, awaiting his fate.

There can be few images which better sum up the fraught period in which *Soldier* was born than those on this page.

A shocked reporter from the magazine filed the words which accompanied them in our second issue, dated April 14, 1945.

Headlined "Here is the evidence", they were among the first hard proof of what had happened in Hitler's concentration camps. *Soldier* stumbled on Belsen with the same sense of disbelief that affected everyone who experienced it.

"There is no propaganda like the truth," began the report. "And the truth about the German concentration camp, long suspected but never fully credited, proves to be worse than anything we, of the civilised nations, ever dreamt of."

"Now it is made clear to us, beyond

a shadow of a doubt, what we have been fighting against. Here is the fate that would have been ours also had our spirits failed or our purpose swerved; if we had been a nation small in numbers or a great nation small in heart.

"Here is the evidence."

A senior medical officer of the Second Army was quoted. "I am told," he

said, "that 30,000 prisoners died in the camp in the last few months. I can well believe that figure. It is the most horrible, frightful place I have ever seen."

He spoke of death-pits, of piles of corpses, of evidence of cannibalism, of starving prisoners eating the hearts and kidneys of those who had died.

● To mark *Soldier's* 60th year, we will be dipping into our archives each month to find stories that made the news. Also, our website will feature facsimile pages from past issues. Go to www.soldiermagazine.co.uk ■



Behind the pomp and pageantry of the House of Lords lies a well-oiled Army machine

Report: Phil Wilcox

IT wasn't the kind of drill that former Army apprentice Maj Mike Charlesworth was used to. This time it was of the electric variety. And it was about to disrupt one of the biggest annual occasions in the House of Lords.

As the Lord Chancellor rose to his feet in the Chamber to make his customary speech at the end of the parliamentary session (when he formally prorogues the house until the next State opening of Parliament), Maj Charlesworth sprinted to stifle the blissfully unaware culprit who was working in the roof space above.

Black Rod's staff superintendent, in the best Army tradition, was leading by example again.

Viewers of the television coverage of the State Opening of Parliament each November would barely notice the discreet door on the Queen's left as she starts to ascend the Sovereign's staircase, lined by members of The Life Guards and The Blues and Royals with drawn swords, to the Robing Room.

Behind it are the cramped offices of Maj Charlesworth and the team who support Lt Gen Sir Michael Willcocks, the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod – or "Black Rod" as he is more commonly known.

In the guise of the sovereign's messenger, he is the man who, in a symbolic nod to Charles I, has the door of the House of Commons chamber slammed in his face at the State opening, and hammers on it with his black ebony rod before being allowed to enter and summon MPs to "attend upon Her Majesty immediately in the House of Peers."

Lt Gen Willcocks heads a team of four former Army officers who help to ensure the smooth running of the House of Lords, whether on State occasions or, for most of the year, in more day-to-day matters.

When he is not donning the ceremonial breeches, the general, who began his 35-year Army career with the Royal Artillery and took on his current post in 2001, deals with down-to-earth topics such as security, accommodation and domestic services.

"Basically, it is my job to ensure there is a comprehensive, effective and secure service to the House of Lords,"

"It was only our military thinking along the 'what if?' lines which saved a lot of egg on face"

he said. His deputy, one-time tankie Brig Hedley Duncan, is usually to be seen in court dress when the House is sitting, in his capacity of Yeoman Usher of the Black Rod, as he leads the Lord Chancellor in procession to open the daily proceedings of the Lords.

For the recent State opening, he drew up plans with the Parliamentary Works staff in advance, with the object of "getting as much done, but with the minimum of disruption to peers."

Like Black Rod himself, Brig Duncan believes that, in terms of attention to detail, leadership and organisation, the Army has helped him enormously.

"Man management here is very important. Some of the time, staff are working very unsociable hours – so you have to work on people. That's part of what the Army gives."

And Hedley Duncan's most memorable event during his seven-year contract to date?

That was Operation Marquee – the Lying-in-State of the Queen Mother, in which he played a major part. His colleague, Lt Col Ted Lloyd-Dukes, ex-RAOC/RLC, had served 30 years in the Army, almost to the day, from joining The Green Jackets as a boy to leaving (via stints including Germany, Northern Ireland and the Indian Staff College) in 2002.

He answered an advertisement in a national newspaper for "Administrative Officer to Black Rod" and, to his confessed surprise, was taken on and invited to witness at first hand the State Opening in 2003.

For the past year, he has been responsible for works planning, departmental budgets, security and accommodation in the House of which he and his fellow team members are so proud.

"Like any customer-facing organisation, the customers come first," he says. "Only, in this case, they are peers."

Organising anything – from a cleaner to smarten up the stairs before the Queen is due to walk on them, to dealing with the headaches and logistics of the scheduled move this month by peers into new accommodation across the road from the House – involves, just as in the Army, the willingness to take decisions and give direction, he says.

Mike Charlesworth, whose son Paul



In Rod we trust: Lt Gen Sir Michael Willcocks

is a company commander with the Argylls, who were responsible for training the Iraqi 70th Brigade in Iraq during their recent Op Telic tour, was able to have a "dry run" this time around in overseeing the smooth running of the State opening.

That came in the shape of a State visit by France's President Chirac just days before, which, as the major pointed out, was not without its potential hiccups.

Twenty guests were due to arrive at four o'clock but the plan changed to 100 turning up at three o'clock. At the time, the House was holding a Prorogation rehearsal, and he was briefing the housekeeping team, but Maj Charlesworth and his colleagues managed to turn things around.

"The Household Cavalry were delayed in traffic and got there with five minutes to spare. Fortunately President Chirac had also been delayed, so four State trumpeters were able to give a fanfare as his car came in.

"It may sound conceited, but it was only our military thinking along the 'what if?' lines which saved a lot of egg on face.

"As soon as the team realised what was happening, we changed the plan.

Picture: Deyo R Sands, House of Lords

of the House



The long walk: The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh in the Royal Gallery of the House of Lords at the latest state opening of Parliament Picture: Reuters

Plans never survive contact with the enemy anyway.”

A linguist who rose through the RAOC ranks, Maj Charlesworth admits that his first State opening was extremely worrying, to put it mildly, and even now, nine years on, adrenalin levels are quite high in the day.

“If you just sat down and let the routine flow over you, there’d be all kinds of cock-ups,” he said.

“You must keep checking and double-checking the detail.”

On a single day recently, this unflappable team had helped to deal successfully with two potentially flammable protests outside the House, before calmly returning to cope with the myriad major structural problems which beset the ancient building.

When Black Rod was first appointed in 1361, he would touch any miscreants on the shoulder with the said instrument before expelling them.

On current form, it's highly unlikely that his modern-day counterpart will need to take any such drastic action with the staff of his own capable army. ■

In mufti: Black Rod, Lt Gen Sir Michael Willcocks (2nd left) with team members Lt Col Ted Lloyd-Jukes, Brig Hedley Duncan and Maj Mike Charlesworth



Picture: Steve Dock

Once a Devon, always a Devon

Newspaper magnate who is one of Britain's richest men took surrender of Japanese units while serving as a young infantry officer in Malaya

Interview: John Elliott
Picture: Graeme Main

AS British troops prepared to invade Iraq in the spring of 2003, newspaper proprietor Sir Ray Tindle nailed his colours to the mast.

He asked the editors of his many titles not to publish anti-war stories.

His request was neither politically motivated nor intended to censor – although it was reported to be so by rival organisations. Rather it came from the heart of a man deeply proud of the British Army he served in the closing stages of the Second World War.

“When British troops come under fire,” he wrote, “as now seems possible, I ask you to ensure that nothing

appears in the columns of your newspapers which attacks the decision to conduct the war in which those men are involved, nor, of course, anything which attacks the troops themselves.

“I ask it not just as a proprietor of the newspapers, but as someone who served as a British soldier from 1944 to 1947 in the Far East.”

Sir Ray, 78, owns a vast stable of weekly newspapers and radio stations. One of Britain's wealthiest men, he appeared in a recent *Sunday Times* Rich List with an estimated fortune of £173 million, bracketed by rock 'n' roll knights Mick Jagger and Elton John.

His achievements in the industry are the stuff of legends, not least for keeping alive dozens of historic titles serving communities across southern and western England and Wales.

The 17-and-a-bit-year-old Ray Tindle volunteered for active service in the Royal Air Force in 1943, but spent so much time on the drill square that he asked for a transfer to the Army.

His one brush with live action was when he volunteered for an “important sweep”. With visions of a daring raid over France in mind, he stepped forward . . . and found himself brushing carpets in the corridors of the RAF aircrew reception centre in Torquay's Grand Hotel.

Desperate to do his bit, he joined The Devonshire Regiment, trained in Scotland and Aldershot and found himself in what he describes as “the finest regiment in the British Army. Everyone says it, so why shouldn't I?”

His intake was due to join the Devons' 12th Battalion near

Benouville, not far from Pegasus Bridge in Normandy. But when the RSM asked for volunteers for a special assignment, young Tindle stepped forward and found himself retraining

as a reinforcement for the regiment's 1st Battalion, at that time engaged in Burma in the final violent throes of the war against the Japanese.

He was sent to Calcutta to learn Malay, eventually arriving in Malaya after the atom bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki had brought the conflict to an abrupt end. Japanese forces in Malaya had no one to surrender to, so 6th Brigade of the 2nd Division was sent in to do the job. The then Lt Tindle was among their number.

“I was in C Company, 1st Devons, which was stationed across Johore. I was at Kluang, on a Japanese airstrip. They marched in to surrender during January and February of 1946,” he recalls. “We took their arms and, I think, searched and questioned them.”

The Devons sorted the enemy soldiers into those who had been in action against the British Army and those who had not. The latter were repatriated, the former grilled by intelligence officers to weed out war criminals for summary retribution.

Among Sir Ray's prized souvenirs of the period is the sword of a Japanese officer who surrendered to him.

He still has a fading document, duly signed and stamped, deeming the weapon to be of no further use to British intelligence and granting him permission to keep it. During this period he was posted to the brigade as an intelligence officer and promoted captain. Long-forgotten



Going east: Lt Tindle, Devons

Facts & figures

SIR Ray Tindle owns 173 newspaper titles across Wales, Surrey, Hampshire, Somerset, Devon and Cornwall.

Among them are some of the United Kingdom's oldest titles, including Plymouth's *Sunday Independent*, which first appeared in the reign of George III.

He was a founder member of Capital Radio and owns radio stations in the Channel Islands, Ireland, Lowestoft, Colchester, Bridgend, Chelmsford and Wales.

A past president of the Newspaper Society, he was its honorary treasurer for 14 years.

He was appointed Master of the Worshipful Company of Stationers and Newspaper Makers in 1985 and headed the Newspaper Press Fund, the industry's main charity for journalists.

In 1984 Sir Ray created ten Tindle Enterprise Centres, which provide rent-free premises for out-of-work people trying to start a business. The scheme has helped hundreds of unemployed to make a fresh start.

His wife, Lady Beryl, runs a charity shop in Farnham which has given more than £150,000 to local causes.

In 1973 Ray Tindle was made an OBE for services to the newspaper industry. Five years later he was made CBE and in 1994 he was knighted.

For the past ten years he has, jointly with the *Daily Mail*, sponsored the famous London-to-Brighton veteran car rally.



Guardian: Sir Ray in his office in Farnham, Surrey. Resting against the case of Devonshire Regiment silver behind him is a Japanese officer's sword

faces, places and incidents bubble up as he leafs through a precious scrapbook of military memorabilia. Of the commanding officer who coolly faced down heavily-armed communist irregulars in a remote area of Malaya; of processing Japanese prisoners in Singapore's infamous Changi jail, the scene of so many atrocities after the city had fallen to the invaders; and of being ordered to imprison an entire British battalion judged to have mutinied over poor food, accommodation and facilities.

Of the so-called mutineers, he recalled being summoned to the gate of the compound in which they were being held because a soldier wanted to speak to the officer-in-charge. The man indicated that he had a grenade in his pocket – a potential death sentence violation in the circumstances.

Lt Tindle slipped the offending object into his own pocket and later disposed of it by lobbing it into a latrine pit while no one was watching.

His service took him to Singapore and Hong Kong and he had to wait until the end of 1947 before being demobbed.

Sir Ray's loyalty to the Devons is

fierce, his affection for those he served with still strong. "They were the finest bunch of chaps I have ever met," he says more than once.

In particular, he remembers with admiration the adjutant, Reg Bitts, and a fellow officer called Paul Freeland, who ended up as a colonel. There is special praise for two commanding officers, Colonels Jackson and Doughty-Wylie.

Pride of place in the office in Farnham, Surrey from where Sir Ray runs his media empire, is a cabinet full of silver. It is the regimental plate of the long-disbanded

Devonshire Regiment, sent to auction many years ago.

He put in a bid ("a substantial bid to make sure I got a piece") and forgot about it. Weeks later he learned he was the proud owner of the entire collection. Former Devons may be assured that their cherished treasure could not be in safer hands.

One of a small team who started a newspaper on the troopship which brought him home, Sir Ray was determined to become a newspaperman once he was out of uniform. Fleet Street had other ideas and turned him down.

He eventually got a job "as a dogsbody" on the weekly *Croydon*

Times, turning his hand to a bit of everything.

"I moved around a bit and then started my own paper in Brighton," Sir Ray recalls. When it failed he bought – for the then large sum of £250 – the *Tooting and Balham Gazette*. The source of his capital was £300 he had been given on leaving the Army.

Under pressure from a large group which wanted to buy the Tooting paper, he swapped it for three other titles and took the staff with him. It was an astute move that set him off on an incredible journey. His enormous stable of privately-owned titles under the Tindle Newspapers imprint has earned him a unique niche in the industry.

Among his newspapers are the *Farnham Herald*, launched in the reign of Victoria, the *Cambrian News* from 1860, and the even older *Tenby Observer*. The titles – all 173 of them – fit on a single sheet of paper only if printed in very small type. Half of them he launched, the others he bought. He also owns several radio stations.

Following the removal of his vocal chords after the onset of cancer, Sir Ray speaks with the aid of a valve implanted in his throat. Undeterred, he continues to run and develop the group which bears his name. Two years shy of his 80th birthday, this remarkable man is the first to start work every morning. ■

‘The Devons was the finest regiment in the British Army. Everyone says it, so why shouldn't I?’

TALKBACK

Five pages of your letters and e-mails on issues of the day

This rule's not fair to singles

I AM part of the Bowman Training and Advisory Group (Bowtag) and have a query regarding Get-You-Home (Duty Detached) allowance (GYH(D)).

Due to the nature of the group's role, I have spent most of my time away from barracks on courses and instructing units all over the UK.

This can be for quite lengthy periods, entitling members of my team to GYH(D). What I find hard to accept is that as a single soldier I get half as much as a married colleague.

We're told that a married person travels back to his normal place of duty twice as often as a single person. This rule, like many others exposed in

Talkback, seems outdated and out of line with other allowances which treat single and married personnel equally. This is penny-pinching discrimination.

I left home 14 years ago and my home is now the place where all my possessions are – in my room at my barracks. Why wouldn't I travel back home as often as a married

PRIZE LETTER

person?

Please give your reply, unlike most responses on pay issues, without unnecessary financial-speak that comes up short of answering or resolving the query. – **Name and address supplied.**

Brig Stephen Andrews, DPS(A), replies: *Thanks for the warning about giving a straight answer! The straight answer is that the rules do treat single soldiers less well than their married comrades. They were made in 1997 and are outdated.*

I agree, they need to be changed.

Readers might have heard of a new administrative system called Joint Personnel Administration (JPA). Part of its development has been to set straight the sort of anomalies pointed out. But it won't be changed until October 2006.

It can't be done sooner for practical reasons (we can't go on implementing changes to the current rules while we're working on a new system).*

I hope this is a straight enough answer but would add an optimistic note. You should be aware that most of the posts at Bowtag are being reviewed to establish whether they should be eligible for an entitlement to Longer Separated Service Allowance (On The Road).

This allowance applies equally to married and single personnel and gives an entitlement to LSSA for each unbroken period of detached duty of four days or more, payable to individuals at the appropriate rate. It will be some months before Bowtag (Jnt) is able to gather the necessary evidence to support their case, however, if approved this will help provide an alternative form of financial support.

* See www.soldiermagazine.co.uk

We want to hear from you – but please be brief

ACROSS the ranks, your letters provide a real insight into the issues at the top of soldiers' agendas . . . but please keep them brief. E-mails MUST include your name and location (although we won't publish them if you ask us not to). Anonymous letters go straight in the bin. The Editor reserves the right to accept or reject letters, and to edit for length, clarity or style.

I'll mobilise again . . . if you let me

AS a Territorial Army soldier I was mobilised for Op Telic 1 and injured in theatre.

My rehabilitation took the length of my mobilised service to 16 months. Now de-mobbed and between civilian jobs I have volunteered to be mobilised to any operational theatre, in any role.

I have been informed that, as I previously served more than nine months, I cannot be mobilised for the next three years. At a time when the Army is stretched I find it unfortunate that I, with no employment commitments, cannot volunteer to be deployed. – **Name and address supplied.**

Maj J H Varley, SO2 Pers TA, replies: *If the writer's length of continuous mobilised service was 16 months, then he has been correctly informed that he may not be mobilised again for the next three years.*

This is not the Army being difficult; it is due to the provisions of the Reserve Forces Act 1996, which place a finite limitation on the amount of mobilised service an individual may carry out within a specific period.

Because we do not anticipate "a great emergency" and the UK is not under "actual or apprehended attack" (Section 52 RFA 96), reservists are only likely to be called-out under Section 54 (warlike operations in preparation or progress), or Section 56 (on operations outside UK for the protection of life and property, or on operations anywhere in the world for the alleviation of distress or preservation of life and property in time of disaster or apprehended disaster).

PS...



"Dear Editor, I am one of the 19 and I haven't bought a round for 50 years. Is this a record? – Anon (ex-Queen's Royal Regiment).

IN 1954-1956 I served in the Queen's Royal Regiment fighting communist terrorists in Malaya. Fifty years later 19 of us, all from the same platoon, still meet regularly, socially and for regimental reunions.

Is this a record? – **Richard**

Answer on abatement just missed the point

CAPT Hurst (Oct) wanted to know what happened to the abatement [for pension] taken from his pay. DPS(A)'s reply didn't answer his question.

Pensions abatement is the mechanism whereby the Armed Forces Pay Review Body (AFPRB) takes account of the relative benefits of the Armed Forces Pension Scheme (AFPS) over those available to civilian comparators.

The mechanism was described in detail in the review body's 1996 report in connection with a recommendation – since implemented – to reduce the abatement from nine to seven per cent.

In simple terms, if the review body assesses that the rate for the job for a specific rank/increment is £100 a day, the abatement is applied resulting in a refined basic daily rate of pay of £93.

It is against this refined figure of £93 that the X-factor enhancement is calculated to create the actual daily rate.

The fundamental issue raised by Capt Hurst (albeit indirectly) is that Territorial Army personnel (other than those who are mobilised and elect to join AFPS) are not members of AFPS but receive daily rates that incorporate a seven per cent pensions abatement. What is the rationale for this illogical situation? – Lt Col (Retd) Nick Weekes, Deal, Kent.

Brig Stephen Andrews, DPS(A), replies: *I would agree that, on the face of it, it does seem illogical to apply a pension abatement to TA pay when members of the Volunteer Reserve, including TA personnel, are ineligible to join the AFPS.*

This is a complex issue, which we clearly haven't communicated very well in the past and I will now set the record straight.

The AFPS is an occupational pension scheme, which is contracted out of what is known as the State Second Pension Scheme (S2P).

Regular soldiers and officers automatically become members of AFPS (unless they choose to opt out). In order to qualify for preserved pension benefits (payable at age 60) they must serve at least two years from their 18th birthday (for soldiers) or 21st birthday (for officers).

An occupational pension scheme, such as the AFPS, would not sit well with the type of irregular and intermittent nature of TA service. It could take a number of years for a TA soldier to rack up even the minimum 730 days to qualify for preserved pension

benefits and the amounts payable would be very small.

Instead, the MoD contracts TA personnel into the S2P. We treat our mobilised TA personnel the same as Regulars: once they have completed two years mobilised service, they are given a choice as to where they want their MoD pension contribution paid (as explained to Capt Hurst last month).

If they complete less than two years' service, the accrued pension is paid into the S2P or can be transferred into a personal pension scheme or a company scheme.

The TA soldier does therefore receive a pension benefit, although it is not an AFPS benefit. Indeed, when a TA soldier reaches the age of 65 he or she may be receiving three pensions: the State Pension, the S2P and any occupational/personal pension plan he or she might have.

● *This issue has been vigorously debated since Capt Hurst set the ball rolling. Unless anyone out there has something radically new to say about it, the topic has run its course for the time being. – Editor*

Non-contributory? In a sense it is . . .

AND just to prove that very few topics passing across these pages are completely fresh, here's a letter plucked from the pages of the April 1955 edition:

No peace on pensions

AS a private soldier I have to live in a barrack-room with more than one old soldier.

All I hear from daylight till dark is talk about the amount of gratuity and pension a private soldier receives when he has completed 22 years' service.

I, and others sharing this barrack-room, would be obliged if *Soldier* could throw some light on this matter. We shall never get any peace until it is settled.
– **Infantryman, name and address supplied.**



I REFER to the letter from Capt J Hurst RWF (Oct), which was replied to by Brig Andrews, concerning deductions from the pay of Service personnel to fund the Armed Forces Pension Scheme.

Since the introduction of comparisons between Service pensions and civilian pensions in 1981 the rate of adjustment to gross pay, recommended by the Armed Forces Pay Review Body, has been as follows: 11 per cent (1981); ten per cent (1986); nine per cent (1991); eight per cent (1996); and seven per cent (1997).

This indicates the true value of the pension has fallen compared with the organisations that are used as comparators.

If a deduction were made from net pay then all Service personnel would be entitled to claim tax relief on their contributions in the same way that our

civilian counterparts are currently able to do.

On the last occasion a comparison was carried out, Appendix 4 to the 30th AFPRB report (2001) stated at para 4.19: "*The AFPS is a non-contributory scheme in the sense that no contributions are explicitly deducted from salaries because the level of benefits provided, relative to comparator pension benefits, has already been taken into account when salary levels are set.*"

The fact that the term "in the sense" is used in the extract indicates that the matter is open to another interpretation.

I suggest that whether the deduction is made before or after the payment of tax it should be recognised that all Service personnel, even if they are not eligible for an immediate pension on discharge, are subscribing substantially to their pension fund. – **Maj M C Taylor, RAO, 2 RGR.**



"I know the pipelines are working and 95 per cent of the population are leading normal lives, but mayhem and murder sells more papers."



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The Army Benevolent Fund cares for soldiers, ex-soldiers and their families in times of real need . . . as it has done for the past 60 years. We're hoping to raise more money than ever to fund the work we do with the Army family. Can you help? If you can and would like to receive a fundraising pack, please call us on 020 7591 2042 or send an e-mail to enquiries@armybenevolentfund.com

Call 020 7591 2000 or visit www.armybenfund.org

I've been capped, in spite of doing my 22

WHY is my Forces' pension, earned after 22 years of loyal service, capped because I am now a salaried member of the Military Provost Guard Service?

I wonder how many other MPGS personnel are affected by this ruling and if those responsible for recruiting to the guard service agree that this could put off some of those wishing to join.
— **Name and address supplied.**

Brig Stephen Andrews, DPS(A), replies: The Government has a hard rule which applies to people who leave and re-join as you have done.

It has been the policy of successive governments to abate the pensions of public servants both where a re-employment falls under the same pension scheme as that from which a pension is being paid, or where the re-employment is made under closed competition.

The writer falls into this category and while I cannot change this rule I

can explain it. It states that, when the individual was re-employed in the MPGS, his total pay and pension income could not exceed the value of his pay on the day before he first retired.

This prevents him earning more, in the form of pay and pension, than colleagues of the same rank. This is an established policy that exists in all public pension schemes.

It offers protection against the abuse of re-employment terms and is consistent with UK and European laws.

But we do need to look at the whole picture. With the MPGS individuals have the opportunity for a second career, with restricted commitments, which enables them to serve until 55. In addition, their MPGS service accrues second pension benefits.

On retirement, the writer's original pension will be uplifted back to its original level and he will receive a second preserved pension for his MPGS service at age 60.

It does have an effect on recruitment, but it is a well-known rule.

How can we decide if we don't know how long we can serve?

A BRIEFING by the Armed Forces Pension Society highlighted the need for all Service personnel to choose which Armed Forces Pension Scheme they want.

But it was evident that we are losing out on choice. AFPS accrual rates do not benefit a non-commissioned officer until about 27 years of service.

The flaw is that the Army has yet to announce its decision on extended careers to age 55 and until it does we can't make a decision on what pension is right for us.

Yet soldiers may be forced to decide as early as April.

The military prides itself on knowing all the facts before it makes a decision, so why is it putting its NCOs in this position? — **WO2 Bryan Houston, HQ British Forces Cyprus.**

Brig Stephen Andrews, DPS(A), replies: It is frustrating not to be able to access all the career possibilities which might be available under longer-service schemes.

But NCOs are not being deprived of choice because they themselves will have access to all the available facts and personal factors which apply.

Nor is it evident that they are losing out on choice because they can decide which accrual rate best suits their circumstances.

I agree that the Forces Pension Society is right to highlight the need for all members of the current scheme (AFPS75) to make a decision about whether to transfer to the new scheme (AFPS05).

All members of AFPS75 will be given the opportunity to transfer to AFPS05 from April 6 next year. The process, known as the Offer to Transfer, will start in July. Each individual officer and soldier who is eligible to transfer will be given information on the new pension scheme and how it compares to the current one.

Individuals will receive a personal pension benefit statement that will show what they would receive under AFPS75 if they did not transfer, and what they would receive under AFPS05 if they did choose to transfer. Details of the terms should have been published by the time you read this.

A full reply, including details on accrual rates, can be found on the Soldier website at www.soldiermagazine.co.uk

Wife's name on bill leaves me claimless

I BOUGHT a house in Durham where I was previously based and where I intend to settle with my wife and children in due course.

Recently I took a posting to Hampshire to gain promotion and my family accompanied me. I hoped to claim Get You Home (Stability Assistance) – (GYH(SA)) – so I could make regular checks on my house.

However, I've been told I may not claim it because my wife's name appears alongside mine on the council tax statement for the property.

I'd be grateful if you could shed any light on this situation. – **Name and address supplied.**

Brig Stephen Andrews, DPS(A), replies:

The admin office is correct. As the correspondent's name is not the only one on the council tax bill he is not eligible for monthly warrants under GYH (SA).

The allowance is designed to provide travel warrants for eligible Service personnel occupying either public or rented accommodation at a UK duty station so

they can visit their privately-owned home, which they retain elsewhere in the UK and to which daily travel is impractical.

It requires the individual to have a minimum of three years' reckonable service and to be solely responsible for the council tax demands on the property, which must not be let.

Those getting GYH (Posting) or Recompense in Lieu of Relocation (RILOR) are not eligible for this allowance, neither must Disturbance Allowance have been claimed for the move.

There are inconsistencies between county councils in how owners' names appear on the council tax bill, in that some will put only one name and others more than one.

In the eyes of Durham County Council both the writer and his wife are jointly responsible for the tax on that property. The Army has no influence over this.

We are reviewing the current regulations with a view to making the eligibility criteria clearer and to remove anomalies. This is a complicated allowance and those wishing to claim it should seek detailed advice from their RAO.

PS... Medal line

IN response to Col Tinson's letter ("Medals policy defies logic", Oct), widening the scope for eligibility would diminish the status of awards.

The colonel admits the rules have been over-liberally interpreted in some cases. You'll always find inconsistencies when you draw a line.

Don't change an honours and awards system which is working reasonably well as it is instrumental in our accreditations being respected all over the world.

Moreover, when a mistake is made there is provision within the rules and regulations to correct it, even after some 50 years have elapsed. – **Suez Veteran, name and address supplied.**

Want to let off steam? Write to:
**Soldier, Ordnance Road, Aldershot,
Hants GU11 2DU**

E-mail: mail@soldiermagazine.co.uk

Shape up or take pay drop

I SERVE my country with pride, go wherever I am told to and carry out every order to the best of my ability.

However, I have noticed soldiers around me who do not have this pride in themselves. I believe the Army is not actively encouraging soldiers to reach their full potential.

Why should a soldier who does not pass the basic tests, Basic Combat Fitness Test (BCFT), Basic Personal Fitness Assessment (BPFA) and Army Personal Weapons Test (APWT) be given his full wage?

We know some units can't carry out all the tests for one reason or another, but some individuals do not want to pass these assessments or do the training because, at the end of the day, we all get paid exactly the same, irrespective of standards.

Surely it is cost effective to reduce the pay of people who do not make the grade or who are inefficient. Why don't we have performance-related pay and penalise those who don't make the grade. – **Sgt D J Foster, Bulford.**

Brig Stephen Andrews, DPS(A), replies: *The Army encourages those who are less fit, or*



who lose fitness perhaps through injury, or who have difficulty passing their APWT, to achieve the necessary standards.

Developmental (and rehabilitative) training is core business in a professional Army, which values its people. We also have to be fair to those who are not fully deployable for diverse reasons, some entirely outside the individual's control.

If a soldier broke a leg on PT or was wounded in a terrorist incident and so became temporarily not fit to fight, would it be right for his pay to be cut?

The second point, on performance-related pay, is linked to the first. We do have performance-related pay and in its most competitive form.

We link pay to performance by means of promotion.

Commanding officers can turn off an individual's annual pay increment by declaring his or her performance as unsatisfactory in their annual report – and this is used from time to time.

But it would be wrong to stop pay progression in circumstances other than where a commander judged that an individual's performance was unsatisfactory through personal failing.

We are members of the same team.

The key point is that maintenance of individual and collective standards is everyone's professional business – commanders, individuals and those of us supporting the Army team in headquarters and in the MoD.

Experience shows that many who, habitually, are not deployable, fall out of the Army.

One-Army concept is joke where TA kit is concerned

I AM a Regular currently attached as squadron foreman to a composite Territorial Army signal squadron on Operation Oculus in the Balkans.

Before I joined the unit it was visited by a Defence Clothing team from Bicester, which noted that the TA had not been issued the hot-weather clothing pack, and that certain posts would benefit from assault vest-style webbing.

In due course this arrived in theatre, only for the quartermaster to refuse to issue it. The TA, ever resourceful, went straight to the issuing department at

Bicester, admittedly circumventing the chain of command.

Defence Clothing immediately dispatched a second issue of equipment, marked for the attention of the squadron.

This time the kit was the cold-and-hot-weather pack, with extras such as assault vests, and self-inflating kip mats for deployed troops.

This action caused a stink and after discussion it was decided it was uneconomical to issue the kit except to troops in the field.

It has since been issued to Regular

troops with the same time still to do in the Balkans. A TA soldier extending for six months has been refused the kit while the incoming squadron has already started arriving with, you've guessed it, the full cold-weather pack.

To make things worse the QM has requested we return the kit we have, once we have handed over to the new unit.

The concept of one Army has been seen to be a joke and the TA is likely to lose a group of extremely professional soldiers due to petty-mindedness.

– WO2 (FoS) J S Farrow, Op Oculus.

Col Nigel Start, DACOS Log Sp, HQ Land Command, replies: *It goes without saying that all Service personnel deployed on operations should receive the clothing and equipment to which they are entitled, regardless of whether they are TA or Regular.*

Some aspects of the points raised by WO2 (FoS) Farrow can easily be explained. According to the current mounting order, summer and winter clothing supplements for the Balkans are limited to items such as warm-weather boots, tropical hats and tropical sweat rags (summer) and cold-weather boots, socks, mittens and face masks (winter).

Following a visit by the Defence Clothing Integrated Project Team (IPT) to the Balkans it was agreed to increase the range of items for the summer and winter supplements. The Land mounting order is being amended to reflect this change.

All military personnel are now being issued the supplement clothing and personal equipment before deploying. TA soldiers are issued the entitlement as they are processed through the Reserves Training and Mobilisation Centre Chikwell.

Why it's important to go through chain of command

The Royal Signals unit referred to had already deployed when this policy changed, hence they deployed with the previous entitlement. The QM should have requested an enhancement to his existing stock and then issued it to those already in-theatre.

Combat assault chest webbing and thermal inflatable mats are issued in accordance with the commander's operational priorities and are not an entitlement for every soldier. They are justified by the role and conditions encountered by the unit.

If there was a need for the squadron to have them, then a statement-of-requirement should have been staffed through the G3 chain of command. If endorsed by Headquarters National Support Element (HQ NSE), it would have resulted in additional equipment being made available.

WO2 Farrow should, as he admits in his letter, have addressed his concerns through the chain of command (through his officer commanding to HQ NSE or the Force Ordnance Warrant Officer or DCOS). They would have been able to resolve the issue within theatre and demanded items from the Defence Logistics Organisation (DLO).

Instead, the unit decided to circumvent the chain of command and go directly to the Defence Clothing IPT in the DLO.

This will have exacerbated the problem and masked the issue from the Logistic Support staff within theatre.

Potentially, their actions may have resulted in other soldiers deployed elsewhere on operations, perhaps in Iraq, having to go without equipment for which they had a genuine need and therefore entitlement.

PS...

Our stern-but-caring NCOs were anything but 'foul-mouthed bullies'

I TAKE issue with your description of the traditional NCO as "foul-mouthed bullies", (First sight, Nov). You do them a great disservice.

I began my soldiering 50 years ago and can honestly say that I rarely met a bullying NCO. In fact, behind the stern exterior was usually a concerned and caring man. Bullies, where they existed, didn't last long.

As for being foul-mouthed, you can stand at the gates of most comprehensive schools nowadays and hear worse language.

I went through basic and officer training and on more than one occasion had reason to be grateful to a senior NCO for his compassion.

"Motivators" may be all very well

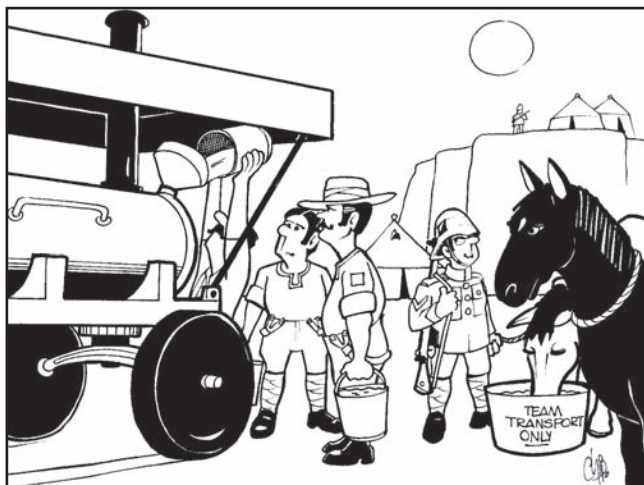
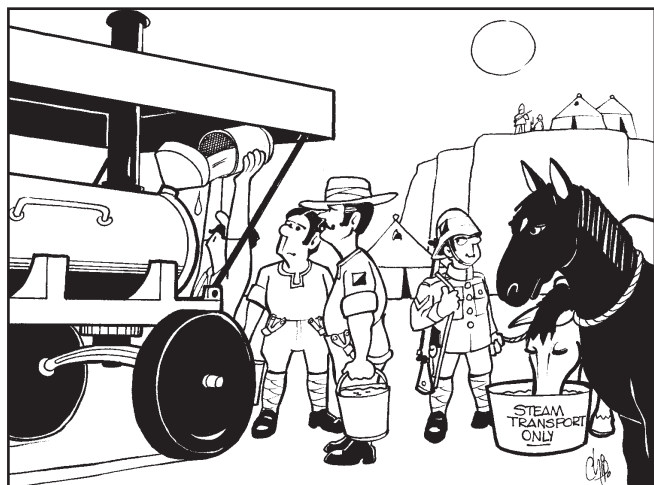
for today's youth, but the traditional way made us tough and saved lives in battle. – Maj (Retd) T C R Armstrong-Wilson.

● *In fairness, the article did go on to acknowledge that the clichéd image of a bullying NCO foaming at the mouth was just that . . . a cliché. – Editor*

NO. 758

HOW OBSERVANT ARE YOU?

WIN £100



TEN details have been changed in the first of a new series of cartoons by our cartoonist, Chip. Circle the differences in the right-hand image and send the whole panel to **HOAY 758, Soldier**, Ordnance Road, Aldershot, Hampshire, GU11 2DU by January 31, 2005.

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 March 2005 issue.

Name: (Give initials and rank or title)

Address:

November 2004 competition (No 756):

First correct entry drawn at random was from **Mr John Dawson**, of Colchester, who wins £100. Runners-up were **Mr J Crombie**, of Glasgow, and **W02 S Stock**, of DPRC, St George's Court, London, both of whom receive a £25 gift voucher.

The ten differences were: lines on spaceship, bottom left; dot on planet; astronaut's helmet, camera, backpack (two differences), left leg and right boot; star at top; island off Africa.

freeze frame

Winner of our November competition (below)

THERE was a big entry for November, but the winner by a short head was keen-eyed Mrs D Burrows from D11 (Army) at Worthy Down with "He may be the only horse in the country with a head growing out of his backside, but you're still not bringing him in 'ere, Miss."

Others we liked included:

"Excuse me, do you know the way to C&A" from Pte Nat Meheut, 1 AAC, Gutersloh; "Yes, RSM, and he came with a free pack of hounds" from Sgt Robert Chroston, AGC



Some troops later wrote to *Soldier* to complain that it was a lot harder to log-on to the AGC's Pay 2000 Follow-on Work website than their officers had led them to believe

WIN A BOOK: Write your own amusing caption for the photograph from our July 1954 issue. The best, in our opinion, will win a copy of *The Victors*, by Stephen E Ambrose (See Page 79).

Centre, Worthy Down; "Oh Sergeant Major, you are a card. It's awfully hard for Champ to stand at ease" from 243 Fd Hosp orderly room clerk Linda Hale in Bristol; and "That

was a misprint on Part 1 Orders; it should have said **Combat 95**, not **Cowgirl 95**" from Graham Drew at the Army School of Ammunition, Warks.

Cut off by The System

How not being on a married patch left me to fend for myself

WHEN Buckingham Palace was hit by a bomb during the Second World War, the Queen Mother declared that she could look the East End of London in the face.

I've never understood this until now. After several years of attending deployment briefings on behalf of the Army Families Federation, him indoors has gone east.

It was three weeks from flash to bang (I'm always one

to borrow a good phrase), and as a consequence some rather interesting problems had to be solved.

The regimental admin office found that it had no record of me or my children on my husband's files, although we have been married for 14 years and have always been married accompanied.

I know that I am his next-of-kin, as I have signed the form and obtained every possible

piece of Army and civilian paperwork I might need him to sign in the next few months.

Unlike previous deployments, when

he went with a regiment, he has been sent as an individual this time. So no helpful briefing or deployment booklet – which I would have valued – as I don't live on a patch, but in a hiring.

That I was not part of the Army community was brought home to me on the day he left. He was leaving, yet I was needed to remove a child from a school four hours away (I dispatched a granny) as my son had spent the day in A&E with facial injuries.

The kitchen flooded, I found a rat in the food cupboard, the car died, and there were five brace of pheasants and a partridge hanging on the back door needing to be plucked.

While all this was going on, his priorities were, quite rightly, focused on all things green, and he was whisked away to Brize Norton by a very nice man with a working car.

Had I been on a patch, I would have found support and laughter. On my own, it was all too much.

Over the years I have always been part of The System, in that via my quarter I received the *AFF Journal*, newsletters, and bon mots from my estate management officer.

I have now joined the growing number of those whose housing is not supplied by DHE, but that should not mean our expulsion from the information and care provided for families.

With the change of the Army structure, many more families will live

in their own homes, and be distanced from the day-to-day work of the Army.

However, soldiers will continue to be deployed, and their families will need to know how to access the support of the Army community without being made to feel a burden or a nuisance. I made

myself known to the welfare office (a Dickensian phrase – I liked having a families' office because it made me feel valued rather than a problem to solve) when we arrived on posting, and they are all very approachable, once you know who and where they are.

The Army is aware that communication between themselves and the families needs to improve.

They have aspirations to include deployed Territorial Army and Reserve Forces families into the wider Army community, but since no interest has been shown in

me, a Regular Army wife of 14 years, or my children, I suspect that it will not happen overnight.

However, let no one think I am unhappy that he has been deployed. I am genuinely pleased; he is happy, and that makes me happy.

I married a soldier, and I have never worried about being left behind. Absence makes the heart grow fonder, makes me appreciate the things he does around the house (bins and grass cutting) and besides, it gives me a chance to crack the diet and to work on my French vocab. ■



A personal view from Rachael Troughton, Communications Director of the Army Families Federation

‘They have aspirations to include deployed TA and Reserve Forces families into the wider Army community, but since no interest has been shown in me, a Regular Army wife of 14 years, or my children I suspect that it will not happen overnight’

MANAGE YOUR MONEY

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



Eight top tips to avoid that sinking feeling

JANUARY is a time for making new resolutions. Giving up chocolate and smoking or going to the gym regularly to lose a few pounds are good ideas . . . but actually much harder to carry out.

The same is true of handling money. By now many of us will have overspent at

Christmas and will be dreading the arrival of credit-card bills. A few resolutions about the way you handle your money could save you from a future of misery.

Here are some basic ideas:

1. Carry a notebook and record where your money goes. It will surprise you because we spend a lot more on stuff we don't need than we realise.
2. Make sure you get benefits to which you are entitled, particularly child tax credits.
3. Look at your income and compare that to your spending. For more help on budgeting go to www.creditaction.org.uk or www.moneybasics.co.uk
4. Look carefully at your spending and see if there are places you can cut back or change your spending habits.
5. Be honest with yourself. Do you use credit or store cards impulsively and buy things you don't really need?

6. Try to put a little aside every month for a rainy day. There are bound to be unexpected repairs. Having emergency cash really helps.

7. Try to put some aside for Christmas and holidays.

8. If you find you are still spending more each month than you are earning call the **Consumer Credit Counselling Service on 0800 1381111**. It provides free and confidential advice.

Today's biggest pressure facing individuals and families is over-indebtedness. By staying in control of your finances you will not only save money but will prevent major personal problems from arising. ■

0800 1381111
or
www.creditaction.org.uk

REUNIONS

RAMC Russell Troop (March 1983):

Reunion planned for Jan 22-23, accommodation available. Details from Capt Taff Hudson on 01179 863571.

Kohima Band and Corps of Drums, 3

PWRR social and reunion curry supper, Feb 6, Drill Hall, Leros TA Centre, Sturry Road, Canterbury. Contact Gary George on 01227 817964 or gary@kohimaband.com

RHA Association, Trowbridge: Reunion dinner for past and present members of any RHA unit to be held at Trowbridge on March 19. Partners welcome. Contact Maj (Retd) R J Whiteway, HQ Dulmen Station, BFPO 44. Tel 0049 2594 784438 or e-mail dinner-sec@rhaasn.fsnet.co.uk

260 Signal Squadron (SAM) Royal Signals Association: Reunion at the Ramada Jarvis Hotel, Loughborough from Apr 29-May 1. Contact secretary Geoff Scott 2 Waverley Road, Elland, W Yorks, HX5 0NL, tel 01422 373075. Anyone who served with 654 and 655 Sig Tp (SAGW) or from 653 Sig Tp (SAM) attached to 260 Sig Sqn (SAM) at any time, visit website www.260sigsqnsam.abelgratis.co.uk

Italy Star Association 1943-45: Service and parade in presence of Fd Marshal Lord Inge on May 8 at Chichester Cathedral to commemorate 60th anniversary of the end of the war in Europe. No tickets required, all welcome (but please be seated by 1320). More details from national secretary Graham Swain on 01425 614884.

RE Ripon Weekend: Annual Ripon REA weekend and freedom parade, May 20-22. RE Airborne and RE amphibious branches to be introduced. Details from Kenn Hart by e-mail to ripon.rea@tiscali.co.uk or Bill Halloran, 11 Whitcliffe Grove, Ripon, North Yorkshire HG4 2JW; tel and fax 01765 6050061 (deadline for bookings April 13).

33 Engr Regt EOD: Reunion to be held on Jul 16 at Carver Barracks, Wimbish. Further details from 2iC 49 Field Squadron (EOD) on 01233 203637 or e-mail eodreunion@yahoo.co.uk

39 Regiment RA: Reunion day to mark ten years at Albemarle Barracks, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, on Sep 3. Daytime parade, families' activities and evening mess functions. All former members welcome. Contact Capt Crawford, battery captain, 132 Bty, on 01923 93395 for details.

Birgelen Veterans' Association: Annual reunion and annual meeting at Trecarn Hotel, Babbacombe, Sept 30-Oct 3. Book via www.birgelenvets.org or contact the secretary e-mail cyril@charding.freeseve.co.uk Tel 01873 856021.

UNIT RESUBORDINATION

251 (Sunderland) Fd Amb (V) will resubordinate to **C Sqn 5 GS Med Regt** on Apr 1. Anyone who has made presentations to unit or messes is invited to reclaim it by Mar 31. Any left will go into squadron history room. Contact Maj (QM) J T Winter, 251 (S) Fd Amb (V), TA Centre, Dykelands Road, Seaburn, Sunderland SR6 8DP; 0191 5293043.

ARMY ROADSHOWS

THE Army Presentation Team wants to hear from members of the public who would like an invitation to its hi-tech roadshow. They start at 1830 and end with a buffet and a chance to talk to the military hosts.

Call 01276 417000 or e-mail your name and address to the team at apt.mod@btinternet.com stating the venue you are interested in attending.

January: 17, Gainsborough; 18, Ely; 19, Leicester; 20, Boston; 31, Yate.

February: 1, Bournemouth; 2, Warminster; 3, Cirencester.

March: 14, Tamworth; 15, Birmingham; 16, Telford; 17, Worcester.

SEARCHLINE

Former members of **14 Field Workshop REME, Berlin** are asked to send their contact details to Michael Goetzke and Jugan Schwan who are hoping to organise a reunion. E-mail michaelalt@aol.com

Commandos past/present are asked to contact Stanley W Scott, ex-3 Cdo, for details of a commando association. Write to 47 Ferndale Road, Leytonstone, London E11 3DW or phone 0208 5581914.

COMPETITIONS

Winners from the November issue:

Classic Kits: CSgt Goodwin, Winchester ATR; A J Ferrier, Sutton, Surrey; CSgt David Bradley, Fallingbostal. Answer: Churchill.

USEFUL NUMBERS

Army Benevolent Fund 020 7591 2000; www.armybenfund.org

Army Families Advice Bureau 01722 436569

Army Welfare Service 01722 433456

Army Families Federation 01980 615525; www.aff.org.uk

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

Career Transition Partnership 0207 766 8020. www.ctp.org.uk

Confidential support lines:

UK 0800 731 4880

Germany 0800 1827 395

Cyprus 080 91065

Bosnia 0800 731 4880

Others UK 1980 630854

Operations worldwide Paradigm Homelink Access Number *2999@thePINprompt

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

Consumer Credit Counselling Service Free Confidential Helpline 0800 1381111

Family Escort Service 020 7463 9249

Forces Pension Society 020 7820 9988; www.forpen.co.uk

Gulf Veterans Association 0191 230 1065 www.gulfveteransassociation.co.uk

Joint Service Housing Advice Office 01722 436575

Mutual Support (Forces Multiple Sclerosis support group) 01666 824709

National Gulf Veterans' and Families' Association Office (0900-1700) 01482 808730; 24-hour helpline on 01482 833812;

www.ngvfa.com

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

Royal British Legion's Legionline 0845 7725 725; www.britishlegion.org.uk

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

ESHRA Ex-Service Homes Referral Agency 020 7839 4466 www.eshra.com or eshra@britishlegion.org.uk

St Dunstan's charity for blind ex-Servicemen and women 020 7723 5021; www.st-dunstans.org.uk; enquiries@st-dunstans.org.uk

SAMA 82 (South Atlantic Medal Association) Falklands conflict veterans 01495 227577, e-mail: densama@aol.com, www.sama82.org

Samaritans 08457 90 90 90

Service Children's Education 01980 618244

Services Cotswold Centre 01225 810358

SSAFA Forces Help 020 7403 8783; www.ssafa.org.uk

SSAFA Forces Help Housing Advisory Service 01722 436400

Veterans' Agency (includes War Pensions Agency) 0800 169 2277(from UK); 0044 1253 866043 (from overseas); www.veteransagency.mod.uk

Victim Support Western Europe (SSAFA Forces Help) in Germany 02161 47 2272

Victim Support UK 0845 3030900, www.victimsupport.org

WRVS General enquiries 02920 739906; www.wrvs.org.uk

BULLETIN BOARD

Army charity proud of Terence Cuneo statue

THE Army's national charity has expressed its delight at the statue of the late Terence Cuneo on Platform One at Waterloo Station.

Cuneo had a strong connection with the Army, serving as a sapper in the Royal Engineers before becoming a renowned military artist. His paintings can be found in many regimental and corps messes throughout the British Army.

He was also famed as a painter of great British locomotives.

Tweedie Brown of the ABF said: "Terence Cuneo was committed to the work of the Army Benevolent Fund and we are pleased and proud his memory is being kept alive in this enduring and imaginative way."

The ABF has a close relationship with the Cuneo family and collaborates on selling prints of his work through its website – www.armybenfund.org – and the *Despatches* mail order catalogue.



● The remains of two unknown British soldiers found near Aprilia in Italy were buried with full military honours in the Commonwealth War Graves cemetery within the Anzio Beachhead.

The service coincided with a visit by the regimental colonel, Gen Sir Evelyn Webb-Carter, and serving and former soldiers of The Duke of Wellington's Regiment for the unveiling of a Yorkshire granite plaque to mark the regiment's landing through the port 60 years ago.

AIR cadets formed a guard of honour for a memorial service to honour Sgt John O'Neill VC, whose grave, pictured right, was uncovered when they tidied up a cemetery at St Hildeburgh's Church at Hoylake.

Although Sgt O'Neill died in 1942 while serving with the Pioneer Corps, he was actually serving with the Prince of Wales's Leinster Regiment (Royal Canadians) when he won his Victoria Cross during the First World War.

A plaque acknowledging his service with the Leinsters was unveiled by members of Sgt O'Neill's family who travelled from his home town in Scotland and from Canada.



HELP FOR RESEARCHERS

ARTIST David Cartwright is researching an action led by his father, Lt H L Cartwright MC, 4th Battalion, The Kings Shropshire Light Infantry, which took place in Sambeek, Holland on Oct 13, 1944.

He would like to hear from any survivors of this raid, particularly Cpl F P Taylor, Pte Curran, Pte T Allen and a Bren-gunner named Sam Caddy. If you can help, write to David Cartwright, Studio Cae Coch Bach, Seion, Rhosgoch, Anglesey LL66 0AE or phone him on 01407 710801.

BERLIN 1945-46 photographic exhibition to be held at the Allied Museum in Berlin from May 2. Researcher is keen to hear from veterans on the road to, involved in the campaign for, or the subsequent occupation of, Berlin, who may have private collections of images taken during the period. Please contact Dr Cyril Buffet, Allied Museum, Clayallee 135, D- 14195. Tel 0049 3081 819981 Fax 0049 3081 819988 E-mail buffet@alliiertenmuseum.de

Reunion and searchline notices also appear on our website.
See them at www.soldiermagazine.co.uk



Modern MEDALS

The Victoria Cross

IT is believed that the Victoria Cross, awarded for gallantry, was originally created at the suggestion of Prince Albert, the Prince Consort.

Of the 1,354 awards made since 1856, 832 have gone to Army personnel.

Description: A bronze cross with a lion standing guard on the royal crown, with the words "For Valour" on a scroll.

On the reverse there is a circular panel on which is engraved the date of the gallantry for which the medal is awarded.

The medal is suspended by a ring from a V attached to a suspension bar decorated with laurel leaves. The reverse of the bar is engraved with the name, rank and regiment of the recipient.

The ribbon is crimson and a miniature cross emblem is worn on the ribbon alone.



Qualifying operations:

Instituted as the premier award for gallantry. The VC is available to all ranks, covering actions since the outbreak of the Crimean War.

Second award bars have been awarded three times.

Posthumous awards began in 1902, while the earlier policy of forfeitures (eight between 1863 and 1908) ceased after the First World War.



DATES

MAY

28: Trooping the Colour (Irish Guards), Major General's Review, Horse Guards (free, see June 11 for further details).

28, 29, 30: Overlord 2005 Military Vehicle Show, Five Heads Road, Horndean, nr Portsmouth (just off J 2, A3M). Chris Pearce (vehicle entries) 01489 572582; Richard Notton (traders and general enquiries) 01329 832616/07939 136149; e-mail overlord@fv623.demon.co.uk or visit <http://www.solentmvt.co.uk>

JUNE

1-2: Household Division Beating Retreat, Horse Guards, 1900. Send cheques/POs for £10 or £7 payable to "Household Division Funds" to Treasurer, Household Division Funds, Horse Guards, Whitehall, London SW1A 2AX. Credit card booking line (020 7839 5323) open from April 1.

4: Trooping the Colour (Irish Guards), Colonel's Review, Horse Guards (£8, see June 11).

11: Queen's Birthday Parade, Horseguards. Limit of three tickets for Queen's parade, no limit on May 28 and June 4 rehearsals. Write for inclusion in open ballot by Feb 28 to Brigade Major, HQ London District, Horse Guards, Whitehall SW1A 2AX.

JULY

4-10: Veterans' Awareness Week.

9: Manchester Military Tattoo, marking 200th anniversary of Trafalgar. Special offer for bookings made before end of Jan, group (ten) discounts. Ring Peter Marshall on 0161 4839395.

16-17: Royal International Air Tattoo, RAF Fairford, Glos. Tickets at gate £35, advance tickets until end of Feb £25.95. After March 1 advance bookings will include a £3 transaction fee. Ring 0870 758 1918 or go to the website at www.airtattoo.com

AUGUST

5-27: Edinburgh Tattoo (Saturday performances include fireworks display). Ticketline on 0131 225 4783, prices range from £10 to £35.50.

Davie makes a break

● DAVIE Howe, right, has retired after serving the Army in uniform and as a civvy for more than 45 years.

His final post was instructing at the Defence College of Police and Personnel Administration, part of the Staff and Personnel Support Training School at Worthy Down, near Winchester.

Davie served a full career in The Royal Highland Fusiliers, which he joined in March 1959, before beginning his long association with military clerical training.



Sapper sailors: Royal Engineers on the Rio Grande in Bolivia on a Scientific Exploration Society trip

BLASHERS is at it again. Britain's most intrepid explorer has issued a rallying call for volunteers to join him on two new adventures.

Col John Blashford-Snell's Scientific Exploration Society (SES) wants help with two civil-military adventures. It is looking for volunteers for trips to an island off Panama from April 5-25 and to Ethiopia in two eight-week phases between October and December.

The destination of the first expedition is Isla Coiba, once a penal colony. At the invitation of local environmentalists, the team will explore the archipelago to search for traces of an Indian warrior race which died out in the mid-1500s.

The Ethiopia trip will take Blashers back to the Blue Nile, where an Army-mounted expedition in 1968 led to the founding of the SES at Sandhurst.

A river party of 20 will navigate the Beshillo, a tributary of the Blue Nile, to its confluence on the Sudan border while a land-based logistics group will work in villages along the

You can join Blashers on his next big adventure

river on projects such as digging wells. The society is looking for engineers, boat-handlers, surveyors, geologists, biologists, chefs and adventurous spirits.

Contact Lorna McGregor at the SES on 01747 854898, e-mail her at base@ses-explore.org or visit the website at www.ses-explore.org

● A party of five Royal Engineers under Maj Tim Chapman navigated more than 300 miles through the Bolivian jungle on Kota Mama V, a ten-week expedition sponsored by the SES.

Queen's Gurkhas 50 not out

THE 50th anniversary of the reintroduction of Queen's Gurkha Orderly Officers has been celebrated in the Kathmandu residence of Our Man in Nepal.

Capt (QGO) Padambahadur Limbu RGR and Capt (QGO) Bhaktabahadur Thapa RGR, pictured right, the two present incumbents, were joined at the party in the embassy by 46 former holders of the post, both still in uniform and retired.

The tradition began when Queen Victoria was proclaimed Empress of India in 1876 and was attended by six Indian Army orderly officers.

Edward VII commanded that the orderly officers should include Gurkhas.

The present Queen reintroduced the practice in March 1954 by commanding that two Gurkha officers



be nominated annually from the Brigade of Gurkhas as the Queen's Gurkha Orderly Officers, and requiring them to attend her at official functions.

Present at the birthday party were Hon Maj Tambasing Gurung and his sons, Hon Majs Chintabahadur Gurung and Budhikumar Gurung, all of whom were QGOs, and Capt Rambahadur Limbu, the last Gurkha to win the VC.

Adjutant rides to the rescue

● WHEN his commanding officer saw a riderless horse galloping across Salisbury Plain, Capt Tim Smail of The Light Dragoons did what any good adjutant would do . . . smoothly retrieved the situation.

Dispatched by Lt Col Robin Matthews, who was returning from an exercise on the Plain – see Pages 27-29 – to his regimental headquarters when he spotted the animal, Capt Smail set off in a Land Rover to head the animal off before it ran onto the busy A360.

Mission accomplished, Tim secured his vehicle, mounted the horse and rode off to rendezvous with his CO, who by then had been joined by the unseated Tim Brown (a former member of the 4th/7th Dragoon Guards) and his wife Melissa.

Both were mightily relieved to have their horse, Murphy, returned safe and well and promised that a quantity of champagne would be delivered to RHQ by way of thanks.

Tie tac tribute

● A TIE tac, pictured, designed and sold in memory of the crew of a 665 Squadron, 5 Regiment AAC Lynx helicopter which crashed in Northern Ireland in December 2003, raised £750 towards the cost of a stained glass window. The Lynx crashed in the Waterside area of Londonderry, killing Capt Andrew Nicoll and Sgt Simon Bennett.

The idea for the collectable tie tacs – a badge depicting the crest of the Royal Ulster Constabulary and Scrabo Tower, a notable landmark at Newtownards – came from Northern Ireland policeman Andy Glenfield.



Up for SSAFA

● TEN soldiers from BFPO London raised more than £1,700 for SSAFA Forces Help by climbing up and down a wall for three days.

Their hare-brained scheme, dreamt up by SSgt Sip Powers, started with the team logging a total of 2,212 ascents of the 30ft wall, a height of 58,058ft (or twice to the top of Everest). They also set up a climbing wall at the London Soldier event and invited to scale it . . . at a price.

A special first day cover celebrating the event is available from Sip on (civ) 020 8818 6424 or (mil) 94641 3424.

Sappers' school

● SAPPERS from 59 Independent Commando Squadron RE built a new school at Akim Anamase, a village in a remote area of Ghana, with the help of Ghanaian engineers. Their efforts were part of a major initiative to promote the nation's military as a positive force among local communities often suspicious of their armed forces.

Chemring winners

● CPL Geordie Richardson (Close Protection Unit RMP, Longmoor) won the annual Chemring art competition. Maj David Stone RAMC was second and Lt Col Henry Worsley RGJ third. More than 250 entries were received, including paintings, drawings, crafts and sculptures.



Homage: The Duke of Kent, above right, with Richard Kellaway, Director of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission; Irish Guardsmen WO1 (RSM) Simon Nicholas, right, and trumpeter LSgt Russell Smith

Duke's desert tribute

MORE than 8,500 Servicemen buried in cemeteries in Tripoli, Acroma, Benghazi and Tobruk were remembered at services attended by the Duke of Kent, a nine-strong military guard of honour and veterans from the United Kingdom.

It was a further indication of the UK's improving relations with Libya following its decision to renounce weapons of mass destruction.



Among those chosen for the historic visit was LSgt Russell Smith IG, who sounded the *Last Post*. He lost two members of his platoon – LCpl Ian Malone and Piper Christopher Muzvuru – in Basra a year ago.

He said: "Seeing the veterans really helped put things into focus for me and I found myself wondering whether that would be me in 30 years' time. Would I be returning to Iraq and paying my respects to those killed in this war?"

Another was Cpl Ross Munro, a piper with The Royal Scots Dragoon Guards, whose grandfather fought in Libya with the Seaforth Highlanders during the Second World War.

Two more for family business

WELL done, bro . . .

Pte Caroline Willis congratulates brother Pte Caleb Willis on passing out at Army Training Regiment Pirbright after three months.

Caroline had finished her training a week earlier.

Brother and sister are now doing RLC trade training at Deepcut, Caroline as a driver and Caleb as a supply specialist.

Their dad, Sgt Jimbo Willis, inset, is serving with the 1st Battalion, The Green Howards.



● There's a £1,000 cheque on offer for the winner of the 20th annual Write a Story for Children Competition. Closing date is March 31. Entry forms and details from the Academy of Children's Writers, PO Box 95, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire PE28 5RL on receipt of a stamped, addressed envelope.

Couch commander

Order your troops into battle with these PC real-time strategy games and discover if you're a natural leader of men.

Rome: Total War: PC Out now

THIS is the third and finest offering from the *Total War* series – no mean feat considering the quality of its predecessors.

Rome boasts new and improved 3D graphics which make its battles – featuring thousands of soldiers – nothing short of eye-popping and seal this strategy game's place in the PC hall of fame.

It features two different types of gameplay. There's campaign mode in which you conquer cities and provinces, make improvements, and move armies around the map as you expand your empire. And then there's real-time battle

mode in which you use tactics to crush your enemies in combat.

You play as one of three powerful Roman families – each fighting in different areas of the known world – desperate to increase your own influence and the power of Rome.

And while you batter barbarians abroad you must also win the favour of the Roman senate at home by choosing to pick fights with difficult enemies.

Before buying this game, pre-order 14 take-away dinners – it's seriously addictive.



Dawn of War: PC Out now

WAR in the 41st century will be fought between a motley crew of demons, mutants, space marines and orks if the creators of *Dawn of War* are to be believed.

But while the scenario may sound far-fetched, this game proves to be one of the best real-time strategy games you could hope for.

Each of Warhammer's baddies has been beautifully designed and vibrantly detailed so they literally come alive as you battle through their massed ranks.

Even the way the opposing sides build their bases is interesting – the Chaos demons use devilish rituals to summon buildings, for example.

The game's brief but action-packed campaign mode, made up of ten missions, begins when the Space Marines are called to help liberate the planet of Tartarus which is under Ork onslaught.

Once on the planet's surface they soon come under attack from another race known as the Eldar and the Space Marines find themselves in a bloody three-way fight. Focussing on the front line of each of the many battles you can zoom in and watch each of the armies slog it out.

The result is an epic RTS game which looks and feels pure class.

Will of Steel: PC COMPETITION

WIN a copy of *Will of Steel*, the new voice-activated strategy game, as well as a state-of-the-art Gainward PowerPack 3D graphics card to boost the power of your PC.

Set in the 1990s, *Will of Steel* puts you in command of a battalion of US Marines which must wage war against enemy forces in Iraq and Afghanistan.

And unlike other games you simply bark orders at your virtual troops to make them snap to attention.

At your disposal are infantry, battle tanks, armoured personnel carriers

and recon units. Missions take place in day or night with a number of climate conditions that may help or hinder your battle progress.

Throughout the game you must also strive to improve your career by winning medals and promotion.

To win this fabulous first prize, or nine runners'-up copies of *Will of Steel*, answer the following brain teaser:

What do the initials USMC stand for? Competition ends January 31.

Our address is on page five.

Usual rules apply.



Reclaim the night

SWITCH ON

The bleak midwinter is upon us, darkness falls before you can digest your lunch and the simple task of finding kit in your bergen turns into an hour-long fumble.

But *Soldier* has seen the light after reviewing a new generation of powerful *Gerber* LED torches and a budget night scope.

The Hornet

THIS three-in-one beauty transforms before your eyes from hand-held flashlight to surface mounted lantern to suspended light. And that's not all – a simple flick of the wrist lets you cycle through a range of light functions from focused white light, diffuse white light, night vision red light and flashing red emergency beacon.

www.gerberblades.com
Around £30



Nightforce Nightvision

NIGHT vision is a must when you want to see in pitch black but don't want to resort to a dazzling floodlight.

And while night-scopes are still expensive they are not out of reach. Take for example the Russian-made *Nightforce Nightvision* sight, a budget monocular

that comes with a powerful infrared illuminator that allows you to see in complete darkness. Running on just two AA batteries it is small and lightweight, but still promises impressive light amplification and two-times magnification.

www.silvermans.co.uk
£350



Flash Flood

NOT to be outdone the *Flash Flood* also has a string of tricks up its sleeve.

It features a magnet to fix it to metal surfaces, a five-foot retractable zip cord so it can be tethered to trees, etc., and a clip to attach it to your top pocket. It also boasts the same impressive light functions as the Hornet.

www.gerberblades.com
Around £30

Rockin' Rooster

Guitar-wielding spring chickens set their sights on world domination

Interview: Graham Diggines

MUNCHING his dinner of bacon- and-olive pasta backstage at Wembley Arena, Rooster's frontman Nick Atkinson seems an unlikely saviour of British stadium rock.

In between mouthfuls of penne the skinny-but-handsome 24-year-old bemoans the death of what he shamelessly calls "commercial rock" before ripping into his musical ancestors, blaming them for nailing shut the coffin.

Despite the fact that none of Rooster looks old enough to shave, Nick insists the four-piece band are on a crusade to plant the Union Flag on the pinnacle of Mount Rock once more.

"We like to think we are championing the resurgence of commercial rock in Britain," he said.

"Spandex-wearing prats killed it off in the 1980s because they were more bothered about strutting up and down the stage being as outrageous as possible rather than how their music sounded."

This seems mighty big talk for a band with just one top-ten single under its belt and its first album out soon but Rooster aren't all mouth and trousers.

Their first single, *Come and Get Some*, perfectly summed up what the band have dubbed "griff rock" or "groove-based, riff-driven rock" and their second single, *Staring at the Sun* (released January 10), promises to be

an even bigger hit. "It's a mid-tempo rock track with a big chorus, big crunching guitars and pumping bass – it's what we're all about."

"*Staring at the Sun* is a bit sweeter and more melodic than *Come and Get Some* but you can't fail to notice it's a rock track."

The band have also proved their

mettle with attention-grabbing stage performances including one at the V Festival in the summer.

Their live set includes *On the Road*, a thumping heavy-rock

song complete with wah-wah guitar solo, *Joyride*, a slower, funkier number with big singalong choruses and *Angel's Calling*, a power ballad that wouldn't sound out of place at a Bryan Adams gig.

Nick argues that his band has drawn influences from some of the biggest names in rock to develop their own crowd-pleasing guitar grooves.

"We described ourselves in *Music Week* as having the swagger of Oasis and the riffs of Aerosmith – it's quite a big swagger to live up to but it's more about what we do live and our belief in ourselves. "As for Aerosmith we like to think we share their love of blinding

riffs. "I'm coming from a 70s-orientated rock background – bands like Free, Led Zeppelin, Rolling Stones. I grew up with that kind of music because my parents were massive fans."

"There are lots of great rock bands out now like Velvet Revolver who have come out with a really

strong album, *Killers and Razorlight*, but it really annoys me that there are teenagers out there who don't know who Thin Lizzy, T-Rex or Led Zeppelin are."

With rock-lite in the shape of Busted and McFly attracting legions of female

fans and The Darkness camping their way to the top of the charts, Rooster look perfectly placed to bridge the gap.

The biggest weapon in Rooster's arsenal is their youth and with time they have the potential to grow into a very successful band.

But whether their success will match the hype has yet to be seen.

"When we've played at Wembley Stadium or Madison Square Garden then we'll know we've arrived. Until then we'll just keep working hard and writing good music," Nick says without batting an eyelid. ■

'When we've played at Wembley Stadium or Madison Square Garden then we'll know we've arrived. Until then we'll just keep working hard and writing good music'

My Prerogative: Greatest Hits (Britney Spears)

AT the age of eleven, **Britney** kicked off her glittering career presenting *Disney's The Mickey Mouse Club* and some would argue the experience has led her to release plenty of Mickey Mouse

music ever since. But for fans of the now-fading princess of pop this deluxe 22-track version of *My Prerogative* offers the Britney-fest they've been saving their pocket money for.

It plots her highs and lows with plenty of mediocre offerings in the middle. The hits include the catchy *Lucky*, *Toxic* and her career-launching *Baby One More Time* while *Boys* and *Outrageous* number among the misses.

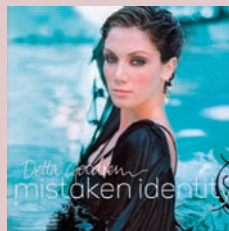


The bonus CD features five remixed hits which the cynic may argue is proof you can't polish a turd. This is a warts-and-all greatest hits – which is more than can be said of Britney's album cover shot which shows her sexy, scantily-clad and airbrushed to within an inch of her life. If you're a Britney fan this album is a must but for the rest of us it's a saccharine-sweet candy-coated hell.

– LCpl Bernie Smyth REME

Mistaken Identity (Delta Goodrem)

AUSSIE pop singer **Delta Goodrem's** second album, *Mistaken Identity*, can best be described as non-offensive. Following on from where her first album *Innocent Eyes* left off, the former *Neighbours* soap star has drawn heavily



on her recent battle against cancer to write this new material.

But while songs like *Out of the Blue* and *Be Strong* are heartfelt they are also rather depressing.

It's unlikely that Ms Goodrem will attract an army of new fans with this album – even if she does look particularly foxy on the cover.

– LBdr Luke Stevens-Burt 5 Regt RA

● Do you think you have a better ear for music than our current crop of jukebox jurors? If so we want to hear from you! To join our team of music reviewers simply send us a 40-word review of your top tune so we can judge if you've got what it takes.

Write to: Music Reviews, *Soldier*, Ordnance Road, Aldershot, Hampshire GU11 2DU or e-mail asimms@soldiermagazine.co.uk



Not just for the birds: Rooster chill and chat. From left, Nick Atkinson, Luke Potashnick, Dave Neale and Ben Smyth

Sound of the guns

Reviews — Gordon Turner

THE Royal Artillery Band, one of the oldest in the world and always regarded as one of the finest, has recorded the music used by the Royal Regiment.

There are trots, canters, slow and quick marches, the *Post Horn Galop*, *Coach Horn Galop* and even the *Eton Boating Song*, to which tune generations of gunners have sung the words of Kipling's *Screw Guns*.

The recording ends with the Cavalry and Infantry *Last Post* and *Reveille*.



● **The Music of the Royal Artillery**, Special Recording Company SRC 131, is available from The Royal Artillery Band, Woolwich Garrison, RA Barracks, Woolwich, London SE18 4BB, price £10 incl p&p.

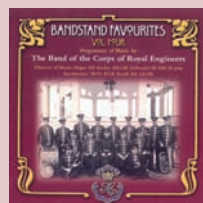
THE BAND of the gunners' sister corps, the Royal Engineers, has recorded a programme of music ranging from the classics to film music and pop songs.

Included are *Procession* and *Cortège* for Bachus; *Force of Destiny* overture;

Bacchanal from *Samson and Delilah*; a Shirley Bassey showcase; *Pirates of the Caribbean*; *Lord of the Rings*; *Concert Piece for Cornet*; a movement from Vivaldi's *Piccolo Concerto* and a fine version of *Lullaby of Broadway* sung by a barber-shop quartet accompanied by the band.

The CD ends with *Hurrah for the CRE* (vocal version) and the corps marches.

● **Bandstand Favourites, Volume Four**, Bandleader Recordings BNA 5185, is available from



The Band of the Corps of Royal Engineers, Brompton Barracks, Chatham, Kent, ME4 4UG, price £13 incl p&p.

A MORE traditional bandstand programme is available from the Band of the Grenadier Guards.

It gets off to a fine start with the cortège from *La Reine de Saba* and then that grand old warhorse, the overture *Zampa*. Other tracks are *The Shipbuilders Suite*; a Cole Porter spectacular; *Bal Masque*; *The Eton Boating Song*; theme from *Those Magnificent Men*; *The Seafarer*; *Gopak*; *Introduction*, *Wedding March*; and, finally, the march *Through Night to Light*.

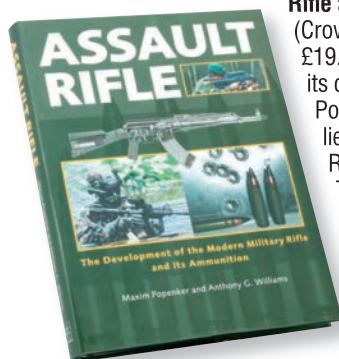


● **A Henley Bandstand**, Special Recording Company SRC 123, is available from the Band of the Grenadier Guards, Wellington Barracks, Birdcage Walk, London, SW1E 6HQ price £13 incl p&p.

If you have a query on military music or bands please write to me c/o *Soldier*.

Russian reserve officer's work

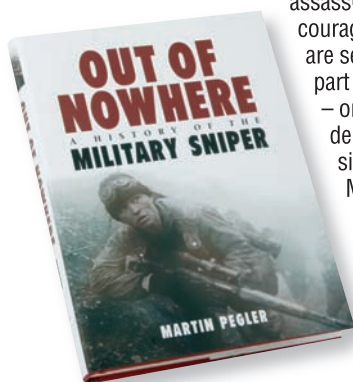
APART from the natural interest in its subject matter, one intriguing feature of **Assault Rifle: The Development of the Modern Military Rifle and its Ammunition** (Crowood Press, 224pp, £19.95) is that one of its co-authors, Maxim Popenker, is a reserve lieutenant in the Russian armed forces.



The other, Anthony G Williams, is the author of the *Flying Guns* trilogy, tracing the history of weapons and ammunition from 1914. This new book has many black-and-white pictures and covers major military nations and others from the Second World War to the present.

Sniper history is on target

IT was not until the Vietnam War that snipers became fully valued by the military. Until then they had been regarded merely as paid assassins. Now these courageous marksmen are seen as an essential part of the battlefield – or greatly feared, depending on whose side you are on.

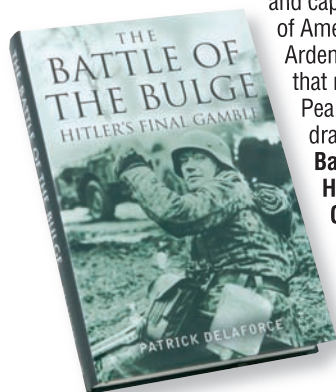


Martin Pegler, senior curator of firearms at the Royal Armouries, Leeds, set out to detail their evolution, training,

weaponry and tactics in **Out of Nowhere** (Osprey, 352pp, £25) – and he has hit the target. His well illustrated history includes interviews with veterans.

Hitler's last-ditch fling

IN the harsh winter of 60 years ago, Hitler's Panzer armies shook the Allies out of their end-of-war complacency when they surrounded and captured divisions of Americans in the Ardennes in an offensive that ranked alongside Pearl Harbour in its dramatic suddenness.



Battle of the Bulge: Hitler's Final Gamble (Pearson, £19.99) by much-decorated Royal Horse Artillery veteran Patrick Delaforce, who was in Brussels recovering from wounds

at the time, includes American, British and German combatants' personal stories as well as photographs, battle plans and sketches.

Magician's

Tom Cruise will star in a film as the British officer who used his stage illusion skills to fool the Germans by 'moving' Alexandria and creating a dummy army in the desert

The War Magician: The Man Who Conjured Victory in the Desert by David Fisher (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 342pp, £16.99.)

Review: Mervyn Wynne Jones

PLUMES of smoke rose into the night sky from the distinctive outline of Alexandria harbour as wave after wave of Axis aircraft dropped bombs on their target.

Searchlights played across the sky and British anti-aircraft guns fired salvo after salvo as the bombers pressed home their attacks.

The following morning, and for seven subsequent days in summer 1941, German reconnaissance aircraft recorded the damage done by their bombers the previous night until, eventually, the attacks were called off in the confident knowledge that reinforcements for the beleaguered British Western Desert Force had been prevented from landing in Egypt.

Alas, for the Germans, this was not the case. They had been conned into dropping hundreds of tons of munitions onto empty desert and coastline by one of the long-forgotten heroes of the Second World War. His name was Lt Jasper Maskelyne of the Royal Engineers.

Maskelyne and his ad hoc Magic Gang had, with the real Alexandria in blackout, transposed in lights the shape of its harbour onto nearby Maryut Bay complete with decoy landmarks and the beam of a dummy lighthouse.

In Alexandria harbour itself, teams of soldiers pulled tarpaulins from pre-prepared heaps of rubble and craters while laying-out papier-mâché wreckage and then draping buildings with drop-cloths painted to look like damage.

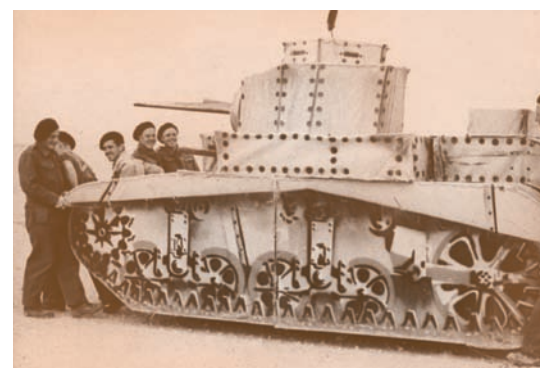
Desperate times demand desperate measures and *The War Magician* reveals the genius and innovation of one of Britain's foremost stage illusionists, who brought his magic to the battlefields of north Africa. Seldom does "fact being stranger than fiction" ring so true as this accessible and anecdotal volume by David Fisher.

The extraordinary wartime exploits of this forgotten magician who was determined to serve in uniform and "do

his bit" are related in fascinating detail. A film starring American Tom Cruise as Maskelyne is due to be released this year.

Working later with military intelligence, Maskelyne put on a stage show inside the Royal Palace in Cairo in order to locate an enemy spy's radio transmitter and, in Malta, he developed the world's first portable "holes" – fake bomb craters – to fool the Germans again into thinking they had hit their targets.

He invented all sorts of camouflage methods to make trucks look like tanks and vice versa and, when not taking an active part in intelligence, he put his brilliant mind to inventing concealed weapons and espionage tools. Maskelyne, the author suggests, was the model for James Bond's "Q". Maskelyne



Fooling the Germans: One of the dummies

ended his desert war as a captain and the mastermind of an ingenious deception plan that proved instrumental to the success at El Alamein. In October 1942,

under cover of darkness and with the desert campaign on a knife-edge, Montgomery's Eighth Army moved north from its holding area. The transposition took two nights.

As tanks, trucks and materiel were moved to the start line of the forthcoming battle, Maskelyne and his men replaced them with dummies. Enemy aircraft reported that the British were still 50 miles behind the Alamein line, unaware that 1,500 replacement vehicles and 1,870 tanks and three-tonners – both real and cardboard – had been substituted and that it was a dummy army they

‘Maskelyne, the author suggests, was the model for James Bond’s ‘Q’

dirty tricks



were observing. It worked perfectly, and Rommel's African army was soon broken.

By the time the Axis powers surrendered unconditionally, Maskelyne had been promoted to major and had served in 16 countries in many theatres of operation. Although his wartime work was supposedly secret, his contributions were well known among the war planners.

Much of his work after the Western Desert campaign was done for the Allied secret services and remains classified.

Jasper Maskelyne, the war magician, died in Kenya in 1973. This is a

remarkable tale, delightfully told. Let's hope the Tom Cruise film goes some way towards matching the book. This was, after all, a very British victory. ■

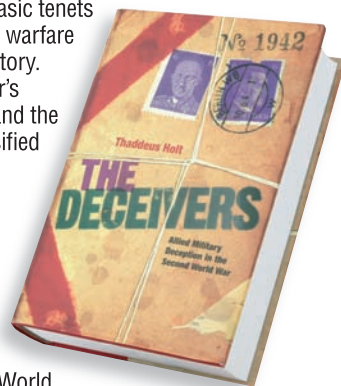
Soldier ordering service

All 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. All major credit/switch cards taken. Please allow up to 28 days for delivery. Helion & Company, 26 Willow Road, Solihull, West Midlands B91 1UE, England (tel 0121 705 3393; fax 0121 711 4075). E-mail: books@helion.co.uk Website: <http://www.helion.co.uk>

BOOKS

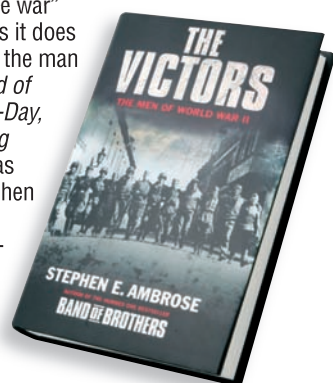
The art of deception in war

MYSTIFY, mislead and surprise – three words that were the key to Stonewall Jackson's successes in the American Civil War, and the basic tenets of deception in warfare throughout history. With his lawyer's incisive mind and the help of declassified material and personal interviews, Thaddeus Holt takes the lid off Allied deception operations of the Second World War in **The Deceivers** (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1,148pp, £30). This heavyweight volume, rightly described as a *tour de force*, corrects misconceptions and adds reality to the legends of double agents from Normandy to Burma. (See also main review.)



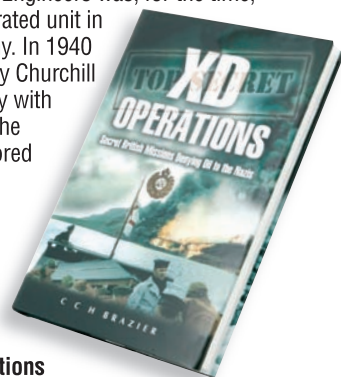
Even-handed coverage of conflict

IT would be foolish to dismiss **The Victors: The Men of World War II** (Simon & Schuster, 396pp, £18.99) as another "how America won the war" story, coming as it does from the pen of the man who wrote *Band of Brothers* and *D-Day*, on which *Saving Private Ryan* was based. But Stephen E Ambrose's excellent single-volume history of the conflict is even-handed in its coverage, telling the story through the eyes of all nationalities. This is a new edition of the 1998 work by the acclaimed author, who died in 2002.



TA unit's secret oil mission

IN the early part of the Second World War the Territorial Army unit quaintly titled the Kent Fortress Royal Engineers was, for the time, the most decorated unit in the British Army. In 1940 it was tasked by Churchill in great secrecy with destroying all the oil reserves stored in coastal port refineries from Holland to the Bay of Biscay, thus denying the Nazis two million tons of fuel. **XD Operations** (ed. P H Brazier, Pen & Sword, 165pp, £19.99) tells this dramatic story in the words of the late Brig Clifford Brazier OBE, who raised the unit in 1932.



SOLDIERSPORT

Fan of the Forces:
Soccer AM presenter
Helen Chamberlain

Picture: Sky Sports

Soldierettes
Winter welfare
Army's ruck stars



Soldierettes

Forces' favourites Lovejoy and Hels-Bells talk exclusively to *SoldierSport*

Interview: Andy Simms

WHEN it comes to football, club will always come before country for Soccer AM presenters Tim Lovejoy and Helen Chamberlain, aka Hels-Bells. However, total devotion to their respective teams from Stamford Bridge and Plainmoor has not stopped them from embracing those who serve our country off the football field . . .

Forces Photos has established itself as a regular in Soccer AM's starting line-up. How did the feature's debut come about?

Hels-Bells: We started getting loads of blueys in from soldiers saying that they were watching us and we thought that it was about time we started saying hello back. As a rule we don't do hellos on Soccer AM – in fact they're a sackable offence, but we've made an exception for the Forces.

We just love the fact that we can get a photo in from a couple of lads in the Army in which one of them is wearing a Sheffield Wednesday shirt and the other is in a Sheffield United top. It's great to know that despite our soldiers' football rivalries they will still unite to fight for our country.

Lovejoy: Unlike other television shows who only embrace the Forces during conflicts, we keep it going. We support the people who protect our country and our liberties all year round. War or no war.

Hels-Bells: Other shows support the Forces during a conflict and then abandon them – it doesn't take GMTV long to stop sending messages to the troops and get back to talking about fat people.

Are you surprised with how popular a signing it has become?

Lovejoy: In the early days we used to get a few photos in each week, but as soon as e-mail became popular we got blooming millions.

I'm always surprised when I hear about the Forces watching us all over the world. It's amazing when you hear that people are watching us in places like Germany, the Falklands, Cyprus and Afghanistan.

Hels-Bells: We found that the more we embraced the Services, the more they embraced us. A while ago we did an item where we put different colour pins representing the Army, Royal Air Force and Royal Navy into a world map whenever people sent stuff in. We had to drop it in the end though because people kept on writing to us from places we couldn't pronounce and had no idea where they were, and we were starting to look thick on television.

'Other shows support the Forces during a conflict and then just abandon them – it doesn't take GMTV long to stop sending messages to the troops and get back to talking about fat people'

Soldiers have their own unique brand of humour. Do you ever have to show the red card to any of the pictures sent in by troops?

Lovejoy: Occasionally we come across line-

ups in which one of the lads is revealing part of their anatomy to the camera. One actually slipped through on to the show once and we flashed up a shot of a guy with everything hanging out on live television. It wasn't until the following week that we realised what we had done.

Do wannabe Soccerettes ever try and pull similar stunts?

Hels-Bells: The Soccerettes are far worse – we get proper nudey pics off them. We also get professional photographs, nice soft-focus, moody black-and-white shots, of people who look fantastic, but when they turn up they're right pig-scarers!

We don't have a back-up plan when that happens because the viewers love it. A lot of the guys get really confused when the Soccerette has a body like Jordan and a face like Joe Jordan. Blokes can't handle that because they like what they see but know they shouldn't.

Lovejoy: The feature is so popular because it has that brilliant element of surprise. You know that the door is going to open and that a girl is going to walk out, but is she going to be top rank or rank?

Have you ever contemplated swapping your football colours for military fatigues?

Lovejoy: I don't know . . . I guess it could be kind of fun being outside, camping with your mates. You erect a tent, dig some holes, have a bit of a laugh with your pals and live



Picture: Graeme Main



Picture: Sky Sports

off the land. What else is there to do?

Hels-Bells: There's no way either of us could be in the Army – we couldn't stand being told what to do for a start. I can't sleep in the dark either and I'd miss my dogs. If I was in the Army I'd be like that fella from *MASH* – I'd spend all my time trying to convince everyone that I was mad to get out of ever doing anything.

Lovejoy: Getting up in the morning wouldn't be easy, but I'd enjoy the exercise.

Hels-Bells: Ditto – getting up early just one morning a week is hard enough. I let the alarm clock go off four times before actually getting up.

I'd like all that fresh air and being outdoors, and I'd like to have a go at an assault course. I also like the clothes, but I don't think I'd enjoy much else.

Lovejoy: Being told what to do all the time must be one of the hardest things to cope with.

Hels-Bells: Tim would last minus two seconds of being ordered about before hitting someone and telling them to get stuffed.

Lovejoy: She's right. I'd spend a lot of time doing press-ups, peeling spuds and cleaning toilets with a toothbrush. As you can probably tell, our knowledge of the Forces is atrocious and we need educating as to what actually goes on.

Live TV demands an element of discipline. What sort of rank system has been adopted by the Soccer AM crew?

Lovejoy: I like to think of myself as a dictator, El Presidente, the general. I lead the whole team. Fenners is my sergeant and Rocket is Baldrick, our cannon-fodder.

Hels-Bells: I'm not sure what rank I'd be. What do you call the person who just turns up for duty one day a week?

Lovejoy: Helen's our TA member.

If the British and American armies were football clubs, what leagues would they be in?

Lovejoy: The Brits would be top of the Premiership. They'd be like Chelsea – on for the quadruple. They're Champions League winners, World Cup winners – the best there is.

Hels-Bells: The Americans would be someone like Rochdale, but I don't want to say that because it will offend Rochdale fans. The Americans would be a club who've got lots of money but constantly blow it.

Soccer AM has now been on air for nine years. How much longer can soldiers expect to see you on their television screens?

Lovejoy: There's no chance of us going anywhere . . . unless we get sacked, that is.

Hels-Bells: Richard and Judy did 12 years on ITV so we've still got a while to go. ■

Winter welfare

***SoldierSport's* new signing, Fuel Armed Forces, offer some food for thought**

NEW Year is an ideal time to plan and prepare for the sports you are passionate about.

Whether midway through the season, preparing for competitions or increasing your close-season training, a critical area to consider is nutrition.

But with thousands of sports nutrition products on the market, it is often difficult to decide which best suit your individual needs and goals.

SoldierSport has recruited the services of Fuel Armed Forces to help explain how sports nutrition can help you get the most from your training and answer any questions you may have.

This month the boffins at Fuel Armed Forces take a look at simple and effective nutrition tips for those braving the elements this winter . . .

Rugby is the type of sport where different abilities are key. Whether it be power to break tackles, strength for mauling or stamina to get around the park for 80 minutes, there are different forms of nutrition which can help.

Explosive power can be aided by supplements, feeding your muscles at the right times and with the right "foods".

Stamina can be maintained during a match with energy drinks to replace depleted energy stores. This can really make a difference, especially in the last quarter of a game.

Recovery has become one of the new focuses in sports nutrition, with the phrase "you're only as good as your last recovery" being used frequently by coaches in a variety of sports.

It is particularly relevant to rugby due to the length of the game and its physical contact. A protein recovery shake within an hour of finishing replaces the spent glycogen (energy stored in your muscle and liver cells). This ultimately enables you to recover quicker and therefore train harder.

Recovery products also contain glutamine and micro-nutrients to aid the soothing of sore muscles and provide a lean protein source for muscle repair.

Sides often start to struggle midway through the season as they are depleted by injuries.

For obvious reasons injury prevention is really important to successful teams. And for those who are injured a speedy recovery is key, both physically and mentally. We all know there is nothing worse than watching from the sideline for weeks with a niggling injury.

When building leg strength you need also to be aware of protecting your joints to support this new strength. Any imbalance can put serious pressure on your joints and can often lead to injuries. In no sport are you more prone to this than skiing.

Skiing puts huge pressure on the joints, especially knees, and this area is often ignored. As is true for rugby, the recovery drink is an effective way to not only reduce soreness, which enables you to train harder and enjoy it more, but also to prevent injury.

Specific protection of the joints is also

necessary. Cartilage and tendons become sore, inflamed and damaged and left untreated these injuries will worsen.

Stretching properly, as well as supplementing your diet with glucosamine and fish oils (Omega 3,6,9), will help keep your joints strong and supple.

For those involved in endurance-based sports the winter months provide a great time to build strength, develop and hone technique, and build muscular endurance.

This is where the focus moves from building actual endurance to strength and technique.

This means you should be eating more protein than you would normally during the season.

Developing lean and efficient muscle is important in the close season as a

way of increasing your power output, but limiting the increase in body mass. Food such as tuna and chicken provide this type of lean protein, but not necessarily in the quantities your training demands.

Therefore protein supplements can provide a convenient and effective additional source of lean protein. ■

● **Fuel Armed Forces offers free impartial advice and stocks a huge range of sports nutrition brands, including MaxiMuscle, Reflex, SIS, High5 and PowerBar. For more information visit www.fuelarmedforces.co.uk or call 0800 652 4750 for your free sports nutrition fact sheet.**

'You're only as good as your last recovery'

Great expectations

HAVING won the treble last season, ATR Lichfield's football team will have more than just their on-pitch rivals to contend with this year.

Nominated by player manager Capt Paul Redding and goalkeeper Cpl Joe Parker, *SoldierSport's* January team of the month were crowned 5 Div league champions and lifted both the 5 Div Cup and Super League Cup in 2004, and must now cope with the high levels of expectancy generated by their haul of silverware.

"We are very proud of our achievements, but in all probability winning the treble is something that we may never do again," said Capt Redding.

"We only have 170 permanent staff to call on, most of whom don't even play football, and often struggle to travel with a complete squad."

But contrary to the manager's reservations and

selection problems, ATR Lichfield have begun their 2004/2005 campaign in fine form, beating MCTC 6-1 to book their place in the third round of the Army Cup and scoring 15 unanswered goals against 19 Regt RA LAD in the opening round of the 5 Div Cup.

Mitre's prize bundle of 15 pairs of *Verus* football boots, a pair of *Show-stopper* goalkeeper gloves, a ball tube containing five match balls and a set of training cones and bibs, should ensure that the team's good run of form continues throughout 2005.

● **All you have to do to enter *SoldierSport's* team of the month competition, which is open to all Army-affiliated football, rugby and netball**



teams, is to tell us why your team deserve the award.

To nominate your team write to *Soldier*, Ordnance Road, Aldershot, Hants GU11 2DU or e-mail asimms@soldiermagazine.co.uk



Pressure point: Sports supplements and stretching can help to reduce the stress put on knees by skiing and help keep joints supple

Picture: Graeme Main

RESULTS SERVICE

ATHLETICS: Army cross country relay championships, major unit team standings – 1, 21 Sig Regt A; 2, Winchester Garrison; 3, 21 Sig Regt B. **Minor unit team standings** – 1, ASPT/HQ 4 Div; 2, 42 Engr Regt; 3, 216 Air Assault. **Women's team standings** – 1, 21 Sig Regt; 2, 25 Trg Sup Regt RLC; 3, Winchester Garrison. **Individual standings, senior men** – 1, Sig Chepkwony (21 Sig Regt); 2, Cpl Branfoot (17 Port & Maritime). **Veteran men** – 1, WO2 Grainger (Winchester Garrison); 2, Maj Lonnen (25 Trg Sup Regt RLC). **Junior men** – 1, Sig Laycock (21 Sig Regt); 2, Cfn Cherryholme (1 D&D). **Senior women** – 1, Cpl Morris (21 Sig Regt); 2, Cpl Sheldon (Winchester Garrison); 3, Capt Kelsey (25 Trg Sup Regt RLC). **Junior women** – 1, Sig Bage (21 Sig Regt); 2, Sig Harvey (21 Sig Regt); 3, Sig Foley (Royal School of Signals).

ANGLING: Inter-Services shore championships – 1, Army (167pts); 2, RAF (139pts); 3, RN (112pts).

British Army Carp Classic – 1, Cpl Graham Copland (2 CS Regt), 44 fish/836lb 6oz; 2, Bdr

Dave Greenland (5 Regt RA), 33 fish/645lb 9oz; 3, WO2 Wayne Ashenden (14 Regt RA), 21 fish/414lb 1oz; 4, Mr Martin Lambourn (GGSI), 21 fish/394lb 5 oz; 5, SSgt Carl Hindson (16 Sig Regt), 20 fish/324lb 3oz.

FOOTBALL: Massey Trophy – RE 4 (LCpl McCabe (2), LCpl McCormick and Spr Newell) AGC 0; Infantry 4 (Pte Morien (3) and Pte Moore) RAC 1 (Sgt Westwood); RA 3 (LBdr Smith (2) and Gnr Lightfoot) APTC 2 (SSgt Chapple and SSgt Fernandez); AMS 0 RLC 4 (SSgt Hope (2) and LCpl Douglas (2)); Int Corps 0 REME 9 (WO2 Corner (4), WO1 Heard (3), Sgt Smith and Cfn Sconce); AAC 2 CA Mus 0 (match conceded); CA Mus 2 (Cpl Holt and Musn Lancaster) RAC 2 (Tpr Haughton and Tpr Dowie); RLC 3 (SSgt Hope (2) and LCpl Spire) APTC 1 (SSgt Chapple); CA Mus 0 RA 7 (Bdr Hale (2), Bdr Carver (2), Bdr Roberts, Bdr Thomas and LBdr Smith); Int Corps 3 (LCpl Horsley (2) and Cpl Kemp) AAC 1; Infantry 1 (Pte Roberts) RE 2 (Prince and LCpl McCabe); REME 2 (Cfn Thorne and Cfn Mavin) RLC 1 (LCpl Douglas).

Army women's inter-corps league – RLC

5 Int Corps 0; REME 1 AGC 5; R Signals 2 AMS 4; AMS 1 AGC 1; Int Corps 0 RA 2; AAC 2 RLC 7; R Signals 7 REME 0.

Challenge Cup, BA(G) zone – 2 CS Regt RLC beat QRH 3-1; 32 Engr Regt beat 2 RTR 4-2; 16 Sig Regt beat 3 REME 4-1; 35 Engr Regt beat RSU 1-0; Sp Bn ARRC beat 1 RRW 5-1; 1 LI beat 1 GS Regt RLC 2-1; 9/12 L beat 2 REME 2-1; 2 CS Regt beat 12 Regt RA 4-1; 3 RHA beat 32 Engr Regt 4-3; 7 Sig Regt beat 16 Sig Regt 2-0.

MARTIAL ARTS: Welsh Open championships (Combined Services Martial Arts Association (CSMAA) standings). Senior men's kata – 1, Sgt Craig Hadley (REME). **Junior men's kata** – 1, Maj Martin Chohan (RLC). **Senior men's kumite** – 1, LCpl Graham Thomas (RRW); 3, Sgt Hadley. **Men's team event** – 3, CSMMA C (Maj Chohan, WO1 Trevor Wallis (RLC), Cpl Ian Aitken (RAF)).

RUGBY UNION: Episkopi Eagles 61 HMS Marlborough 0.

SHORTS

Leader of the pack

ARMY batsman SSgt Nick Palmer (4 Regt AAC) will lead the Combined Services tour side during a three-match series against the New Zealand Defence Force next month.

Capt Jim Fulton (2 RGJ), Capt Alex Senneck (R Signals), Lt Richard Parker (GH), Cpl Stu Houghton (R Signals), LBdr Phil Carlin (7 Para RHA), Gnr Maz Heyns (RA) and Pte Regan McLean (AGC) have also been selected for the PDM Training and Consultancy Limited-sponsored trip.

The tourists will be joined by team manager Lt Col David Jukes (AGC), coach Maj Jim Cotterill (RA) and physio Capt Ed Hudson (RAMC).

Success Stateside

A FOUR-man team from 165 (V) Port Regiment RLC finished a creditable 18th place in the 29th United States Corps Marathon in Washington DC.

Running on behalf of Combat Stress, Sgt John Tasker, Cpl Roger Eustis, Cpl Kevin Howlett and Tony Rawlinson raised more than £800 for the ex-Services mental health charity.

Piste of the action

THE Territorial Army and cadets alpine skiing and snowboard championships will be held in Aviemore from February 27 to March 5. Contact Capt Keith Lister on mil 94741 4873 for details.

Mountain bikers

THE Meningitis Trust wants to hear from any soldiers willing to take on the high mountain climbs of the world's most famous cycle race, the Tour de France.

In a charity first, the Trust is running a Tour de France challenge in the wake of next year's big race. During the four-day event, volunteers will cycle from Grenoble in the Alps, through scenery that has inspired elite cyclists for more than 100 years, to Lake Annecy. Anyone interested in taking part in the challenge should call Kate Baines on 01453 769023.

Cyprus calling

ENTRIES for the 21st Akrotiri international floodlit rugby tens tournament, to be held at RAF Akrotiri, Cyprus, from May 30 to June 4, are now being taken.

Units wishing to take part should complete an application form online at www.akrotirirugbyclub.org.uk or contact WO1 George Herivel on Cyprus mil 6994.

Cycle challenge

THREE Army officers raised more than £1,500 for the Royal British Legion by cycling from the Royal Navy College at Greenwich to L'Arc de Triomphe in central Paris.

Lt Col Tim Wakefield (RE), Maj Elliot Glover (AGC) and Capt Patrick Larkin (AGC) completed the 280-mile ride in four days.

For more information on next year's event visit www.poppybike.org.uk

Duelling date

THE Army School of Physical Training will play host to the Aldershot Open fencing competition on January 15-16. Visit the Army Fencing Union webpage on the Army's website for details.

Academy's

Firm foundations helping Army rugby to flourish

Report: Roger Thompson

CHANCE and luck have played no part in the Army's emergence as a pack leader in the world of rucks and mauls, insists the director of the Army Rugby Union Academy, Maj Jamie Balls (Cheshire).

"That the Army has been at the top of the rugby tree for the last six years is no accident," he said. "The academy is all about opportunity and development, and it's highly popular."

"Through the academy the Army introduces more late teenagers to rugby than any other county body in England. Many soldiers have never played the game before they join their unit's club and now some of them are knocking on representative honours."

A quick backward glance down the "maul of fame" reveals that England's Capt Tim Rodber (GH) and Cpl Dean Ryan (RE), and Scotland representatives Cpl Mattie Stewart (PWRR) and Cpl Rob Hunter (RE) all played for Army

youth sides before breaking into big-time professional rugby.

Late teens is a difficult time for embryonic sportsmen and rugby players in particular. At a time when the majority of young people abandon sport as a way of life, the Army Academy is stepping in to provide an outlet for both exuberance and talent.

Jamie insists that 80 per cent of academy rugby is an entity in its own right – an opportunity for U20 and U21s to play club matches and then seek selection for the Army teams in the Inter-Services championships and the England County Championship.

"Of course it's about winning, but it's also about generating team spirit and giving every player first-class coaching, opportunity and a dose of realistic encouragement," he said. "Every player needs more than one match to show what fires his rockets."

The academy smooths the way to competing at senior level – a job Jamie shares with Lt Col Andy Hickling, the Army's director of elite rugby.

Andy, who is responsible for "cradle-to-grave" representative rugby is keen to stress that elite does not mean exclusive. Indeed the opposite is true. All players are encouraged to test themselves to see if they are capable of reaching the highest standards of the Army team.

Andy and Jamie, with their team of coaches, select about five Academy players each senior fixture to train with the first team – an initiative welcomed by the Army's young hopefuls.

OCdt Rory Thomson (RMCS), a Scotland U19 cap, said: "It's good to see what I have to do to win a cap in a couple of seasons' time."

Playing with the Academy is not easy, especially for those still in the training pressure cooker. A number of officer cadets reading degrees cannot afford to miss lectures and for all the best military reasons, team training is held after work and matches played at the weekend.

The academy's U21s set-up concentrates on University sides – including Oxford and Cambridge who are preparing for varsity confrontation. Early this year those selected for the Combined Services play against Premiership clubs' academy teams, including Leicester and Harlequins. The climax of the U21's season is the match against England Students at Twickenham.

The U20s take on the likes of Surrey,



Pictures: Roger Thompson

Army graduate: England star Capt Tim Rodber (GH)

ruck stars



Young gun: Army fly half OCdt Ben McNeil (DTUS Newcastle) in action against the RAF at Aldershot

Sussex and Hampshire in the County Championship, the final of which is also played at Twickenham.

Coaches and management cut their teeth at the academy, which mirrors the England set-up, with head coaches benefiting from the support of technical teams and medical experts who have fostered links with top clubs.

Under the leadership of WO2 Conrad Price (WG), the academy's technical team work closely with Bath, while physio Capt Nell Mead (RAMC) is attached to the London Wasps.

Head Coach CSgt Andy Price (WG), who works with the Welsh national sides, believes the Army now has an extremely professional organisation which allows him to concentrate on what he loves best – coaching.

"We are now shaping our most talented young players for the future. I believe many will go on to play for the Army and some even have Premiership potential."

Former Army centre SSgt Lee Douglas (APTC), now the U21 backs coach, added: "It's a demanding job to put across vital points in a short time and to such a range of abilities.

"I just hope I am around to see my players go on to represent the Army and even higher."

Having overrun the Royal Navy by 22-10 at Aldershot, the Army U21s suffered an avoidable glitch against their Royal Air Force counterparts late last year. Unforced errors and weak tackling allowed a competent RAF pack, containing several junior internationals, to get back into the game.

But glitches apart the future certainly looks rosy – even Red Team captain OCdt Adam Newns (DTUS Newcastle)

"I believe many will go on to play for the Army and some even have Premiership potential"

and Sig David Bates (21 Sig Regt) have immense potential while OCdt David Fergusson's (DTUS Newcastle) selection for the Irish Exiles highlights how young players can be groomed for the highest level of rugby.

Andy Hickling acknowledges that the Army is "on firm ground" introducing young players to club, county and

representative rugby but emphasised the need for a "discernible thread".

"There has to be a spine through the centre of Army rugby and that must start with the academy," he said.

"Of course good rugby players with senior experience will join the Army, but the shape of our future squad depends on the work being done now by Jamie Balls and his academy volunteers." ■

SPORTDIARY

ATHLETICS

January 17-21 – AOA planners and skills courses (Longmoor); 19 – AGC cross country championships (Worthy Down).

February 10 – Army cross-country team and individual championships (Sandhurst).

BADMINTON

February 7-11 – Army championships (Grantham).

FOOTBALL

January 12 – English Fire Service v Army (Preston); 13 – Army women v Bristol Rovers (Away); 18 – Army U21 v Bournemouth (Aldershot); 19 – REME women v RA women (Bordon), AMS women v AAC women (Fort Blockhouse), RLC women v R Signals (Deepcut); 21 – AGC women v Int Corps (Worthy Down); 22 – South West Counties Championship: Army youth v Berks & Bucks (TBC); 27 – Civil Service Trophy: Civil Service v Army (Chiswick); 29 – South West Counties Championship: Army youth v Guernsey (Aldershot).

February 1 – AFC Newbury v Army U21 (Newbury); 2 – RA women v AMS women (Tidworth), R Signals women v AAC women (Blandford); 6 – Army Crusaders veterans v HAS (RMAS); 8 – South West Counties Championship: Guernsey v Army (Footes Lane); 9 – RLC women v AGC women (Deepcut); 12 – South West Counties Championship: Army youth v Dorset (Aldershot); 15 – South West Counties Championship: Army women v Devon (Aldershot); 18 – Int Corps women v REME women (Chicksands); 20 – Inter-Services Championships: Army youth v Royal Navy (Aldershot); 23 – South West Counties Championship: Wiltshire v Army (Melksham); 24 – South West Counties Championship: Army women v Hampshire (Aldershot).

HOCKEY

January 8-9 – Army U23 v Wales U18 (Hermitage); 23 – Army veterans v Wales (Newport); 26 – Army v RMAS (Sandhurst).

February 6 – Army women v Reading (Aldershot); 8 – Army v United Hospitals (Aldershot); 9 – Army veterans v Nordics (Aldershot); 9-11 – Level one coaching course (5 Div); 13 – Army veterans v Warlocks (Aldershot); 15 – Army v Oxford University (Oxford); 23 – Army v Cambridge University (Cambridge); 24 – Army v London University (TBC).

MARTIAL ARTS

February 12 – Army open championships (Aldershot).

ORIENTEERING

February 17 – Army night championships (Harrogate); 18 – Army short championships (Harrogate).

RUGBY UNION

January 9 – Army U20 v Cheltenham (TBC); 11 – Army v Harlequins (Aldershot); 15 – Holland v BA(G) (Amsterdam); 16 – Army U20 v Middlesex (TBC), Army veterans v London Scottish (Aldershot); 18 – Gloucester v Army (Gloucester); 23 – Army women v Shelford (Cambridge); 26 – Cambridge v Army (Cambridge), Cambridge v Army Development (Cambridge); 29 – BA(G) v Belgium (development XV) (JHQ); 30 – Army U20 v Surrey (Aldershot).

February 4 – Army women v England students (Aldershot); 5-6 – BA (G) v Belgium (JHQ); 9 – Oxford v Army (Oxford); 13 – Army U20 v Neath Swansea (Aldershot); 20 – Army veterans v Sevenoaks (Aldershot); 23 – Army v Wasps (Aldershot); 26 – BA (G) v Germany (JHQ); 27 – Army U20 v Sussex (TBC).

■ Got a date for the diary? E-mail details to fixtures@soldiermagazine.co.uk

Wait to be great

***SoldierSport's* resident psychologist Steve Ward insists it pays to persist**

DOWN-on-their luck athletes should adopt a similar mindset to the late, great Thomas Edison, the inventor of the light bulb.

The pioneering electrician is alleged to have made thousands of unsuccessful attempts at turning his concept into a reality before hitting on the design which illuminated the world.

But when Edison's "poor run of form" was brought to his attention prior to the breakthrough, he is reputed merely to have said: "I haven't failed, I have just found 10,000 ways that haven't worked."

How long are you prepared to persist until you succeed?

All successes require a degree of persistence – a by-product of having an optimistic outlook.

According to a study by American psychologist Dr Martin Seligman, all things being equal, the most optimistic athlete or team will win. From his research he was able to predict the

result of basketball and baseball games accurately, based on the levels of each team's optimism.

To succeed in all areas of life you need a positive mental attitude to be able to focus continually on goals or solutions.

In sport, if you focus on what has gone wrong, the mistakes

and the negatives, it can push you in a direction that you don't want to go.

How? Imagine a golfer preparing for a shot over water. In their mind they think "I don't want to go in water", they visualise it happening, they imagine how bad they would feel if it happened, then they play the shot and . . . hit it into water.

As humans we move like guided missiles towards what we regularly and consistently think and imagine with feeling. This natural guidance system is dictated by the thoughts and feelings we programme into ourselves.

What the golfer should do is pick the spot where he wants the ball to land, visualise it happening successfully, remember past success, feel how good it felt and then hit it.

However, things will not always go to plan no matter how positive you are. How you deal with mistakes is crucial to your confidence and your sporting



Picture: Graeme Main

Well worth waiting for: Former Army physical training instructor Kelly Holmes endured seasons of near-misses and serious injury before becoming a double Olympic champion in Athens last summer

prowess. Treat mistakes not as failure but as feedback.

An excellent and very effective strategy in the event of a mistake is to say "that's not like me, next time do it this way" and then programme in your positive desired outcome.

How you explain to yourself why things happen, particularly negative events, is very important. When negative things happen, it is natural to feel momentarily helpless, but how you recover is crucial.

To succeed in sports you will have to overcome lots of trials, obstructions and setbacks. Your level of optimism significantly improves performance in all areas of life. Pessimists do not fulfil their potential, they get more

illnesses and respond negatively to positive events. When things go wrong try to de-personalise it, make the effect short-lasting, and don't let it affect other parts of your game or life.

When things go well, do the opposite. Make sure you absorb the effects personally and enjoy them, let the feelings last for as long as possible, and let them flow over into all areas of your sports performance and life. ■

I Steve Ward runs Maximum Potential UK Ltd, a mental skills coaching and consultancy service. He is a Sportsmind Institute of Australia Elite Performance Coach, NLP Master Practitioner, Master NLP Hypnotherapist and is a Level 5 member of the Association of Professional Sports and Exercise Psychologists. To find out more about Maximum Potential contact: 01202 623322; e-mail info@maximumpotentialuk.com; or visit www.maximumpotentialuk.com



● Steve Ward

REGIMENTAL resolutions

The regular feature in which we ask soldiers for their views on a topic of the moment

Question: What bad habits would you like to see the British Army give up for New Year?

Interviews: Andy Simms
Pictures: Graeme Main

WO2 Jay Shaw, JSOC CEE

The Army should stop issuing Silver Shadow trainers and invest in something better. A system could be introduced whereby the guys are given money towards a trainer of their choice or a more substantial trainer should be supplied.



Lt Col David Broadfoot, JSOC CEE

Having had more than 30 years in the Army, the first 20 of which were quite a peaceful time, my wish is that the powers that be would stop reorganising just for a short time – please.



Cpl Gopal Rai, 3 RSME

I think one of the Army's worst habits involves alcohol. Some soldiers drink a lot during the week as well as at weekends and then struggle to keep up. I don't think a no-drinking policy should be enforced during the week, but limitations put in place, with dress functions being the exception.



SSgt Andy Taylor, 3 RSME

I'd suggest that the Army needs to try to distance itself from some of the problems you find in civvy street – such as dropping litter. People coming into the Services seem to think it is OK to drop their rubbish on the floor and we're forever having to tell them to pick it up. I would like the Army to adopt a more robust attitude to littering.



Sgt Charlie La-Plain, 3 RSME

I personally don't think the Army has too many bad habits that it needs to give up. I'm quite happy with the way the Army is right now – I've got no complaints.



Capt Mark Teeton, 3 RSME

The Army needs to stop its needless flapping and habit of springing "last-minute dot coms" on soldiers. It would be nice to have a bit of foresight when it comes to operations, tours and exercises.



Maj David Nicholson, JSOC CEE

I'd like the Army to give up the bad habit of not advertising some of its better jobs and more exciting places to serve. Adverts for loan-service posts should be put on ArmyNet. Equally, I wish the Army would stop calling my spouse "wife of".



Maj Will Bartle-Jones, JSOC CEE

I would like the Army to review its policy of taxation for soldiers on operations to reflect the fact that they are not using any of the facilities that tax was originally designed to pay for. I don't believe that the argument of the X-factor being of a compensatory nature to troops stands up. It only comes into play for soldiers who stay in the Army for the full 22 years.



Spr Baz Mairs, 3 RSME

I'd like to see the Army give up spending money on "Websters*" kit and focus on making better stuff for the jobs that are at hand.

* According to contributors on The Army Rumour Service website, www.arsse.co.uk, Websters is a term derived from an old charity shop of the same name, reputedly infamous for its "crap" clothing. Thus anything regarded as "naff" or "crap" by a sapper is Websters. – Editor



LCpl Jim Offord, 3 RSME

One bad habit I would like to see the Army get rid of is last-minute "spams" – being given short notice for deployments or operations like Iraq. For people with families it is a major cause for complaint. Improved planning and notice for soldiers would be appreciated.



Coming up . . .

. . . interviews with the world champion who dedicated his last title fight to The Black Watch and the BBC cameraman who captured Kabul . . .