

# SOLDIER

MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH ARMY

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## Cover picture

Northern Afghanistan: Rfn Tungabhadra Rai, of 2 RGR, pictured at Kala Jangi, a 19th century mud fortress near Mazar-e-Sharif. The Gurkhas are part of a small team attempting to stabilise an area previously the preserve of warlords. Read about their work in Pages 27-31.

Picture: Graeme Main

### Who was that mystery man?

If you were the knight in DPM who rescued a lady in distress on the fog-shrouded Brecon Beacons, please tell us who you are. – See Page 74



"If you think grazing your knee is going to buy you a villa in Spain, Private Atkins, think again" – see Pages 4-5

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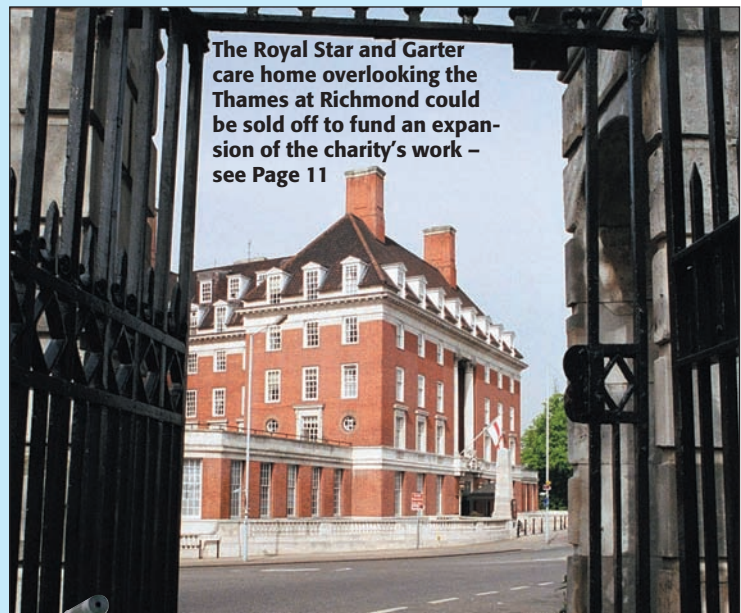
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# COMPEN

## It costs us all ar

### Claims against the MoD cost nearly £100 million last year

Report: Andrea Frazer

THAT puddle of oil you spilt ten minutes ago could end up costing the Ministry of Defence a packet . . . and one of your mates an arm and a leg.

When he slips on it and falls badly, smashing his spine and his prospects of ever working again, the bills start mounting rapidly.

Compensation payouts by the MoD are at an all-time high.

Last year 5,500 claims were settled by the MoD at a cost of £92 million, of which £40 million related to claims from Service personnel. Ten years ago such claims cost just £25 million.

Although a huge increase in itself, the escalation is only part of the picture. The hidden costs of settling claims is estimated to be roughly six times the value of the actual compensation paid – a mind-boggling £600 million last year.

These costs include investigation, lost man-days, the recruitment and training of new staff, and the replacement or repair of damaged equipment.

Jef Mitchell, the MoD's Chief Claims Officer, said: "The increase appears very dramatic but there are several reasons why compensation payments have risen.

"First, Service personnel obtained the right to sue the

Crown only in May 1987 – before that they were barred by Section 10 of the Crown Proceedings Act 1947.

"Second, people are more aware of their legal rights and no one could have failed to notice the vast number of advertisements encouraging people to seek compensation.

"Many accidents are relatively minor, such as slips and trips, but some are very serious and cause permanent disability.

"We cannot limit or place restrictions on the amount of damages paid to someone injured as a result of the department's negligence. The record claim ten years ago by a soldier against the MoD was £360,000. Today it stands at more than £7 million. In the more serious cases, the amount of money paid pales into insignificance when one considers the human suffering caused by such accidents – a family left without a loved one, an individual who suffers a catastrophic injury, or someone who can no longer pursue their chosen career.



Expensive business: MoD's Jef Mitchell

"It's no use thinking it couldn't happen to me because it just might. In a split

second, an incident can change somebody's life and that of their family forever."

There is no other comparable organisation to the MoD in the range of inherently dangerous duties that personnel undertake.

"Our people must train hard in realistic scenarios to equip themselves with the skills that they need to deploy on operations. We must not become a risk-averse organisation."

Although some military activities, such as combat and assault training, involve a greater than normal risk of injury, surprisingly most accidents take place away from the battlefield or training establishments and many are avoidable.

**The record claim just ten years ago by a soldier against the MoD was £360,000. Today it stands at more than £7 million**

Personal injury claims by Service personnel against the MoD have hit the headlines in recent months following the publication of the Claims annual report for 2002-2003.

Statistics indicate that within the past five years more than £6 million has been paid to those injured through lifting and handling, slips and trips have cost £4.3 million and accidents on steps and

stairs have led to £2 million in pay-outs.

The department has been billed £283,000 for bad-fitting boots, £172,000 for paintball injuries, £60,000 for animal attacks, £51,000 by those injured after falling out of bed and £46,000 for food poisoning.

Claims for trapped body parts total £3.7 million, hearing loss and damage has cost £2.6 million and £1.7 million has been paid to those who have been bullied or harassed.

Reports that some Royal British Legion branches banned poppy pins to avoid members of the public suing for injury led many to suggest that Britain's compensation culture has gone too far.

TV adverts are often blamed for the increase in compensation claims and



"After due consideration, I really don't think the RSM's threat to shout at you very loudly is adequate grounds for a financial compensation claim, Pte Eccles."

### Ridiculous but true

A parrot, startled by a low-flying military aircraft, fell off a perch and broke both legs. The parrot's owner sued the MoD and received compensation to cover veterinary bills including the cost of two splints.



# VSATION

## n arm and a leg



### Slipping, sliding, falling soldiers win £100m compensation

THE Ministry of Defence (MoD) paid out in around £100m in compensation in the last financial year, new figures reveal.

The MoD annual report says more than £50,000 has been claimed by soldiers who have hurt themselves falling out of trees, a further £280,000 has gone to recruits whose boots fell off in training.

Officials say that although many of the claims have merit,

they face an increasing number of claims from recruits who are "trying it on".

The report says that in 2002-03, taking the total for the year, the MoD paid out more than £500,000.

In one case detailed in the report, a vehicle instructor used after slipping into a pool of diesel, slipping and breaking bones in his hand. His case was rejected when it was found that he had deliberately

stepped into the middle, but other claims are not so easily dismissed.

In the past five years four recruits have used the military after falling from their bikes. Two of the cases are still being processed and in the other two there has been a total payout of £53,000.

Uncomfortable army bosses have also proved a successful target for personal injury lawyers. More than £200,000

has been paid to four recruits who were given ill-fitting boots. Other payouts include a total of £2.7m to 71 recruits who slipped and hurt themselves, £534,000 to a recruit who fell out of a window, £438,000 to 13 recruits who fell off their bicycles and £172,000 to two recruits who were injured playing football.

A claim from a recruit who drank all believing it was blackcurrant juice was rejected.

A National Audit Office report earlier this year said many MoD payouts could have been avoided by better management. It also warned that the hidden costs of dealing with compensation claims could be as high as £400m a year.

Claims which personal injury lawyers say could have

been avoided include soldiers depressed when left in the army after five firing exercises. Sir Tim Garden, former assistant chief of the defence staff, said: "It would be inconceivable a decade ago that people in the military would pursue many of the claims we see now and I became very

depressed when I left," Bailey says he was given inadequate care, but if we get to a point where people are awarded compensation for the dangers of being in the military, then it's difficult to see how it could operate."

Gen Sir Tim Garden, the shadow defence minister, said: "There must be compensation for medical negligence. But if you fall out of bed at home you don't get compensation, so why should you in the army?"

newspapers are filled with reports of claims being pursued by individuals against their employers. It would appear that nobody has an accident without blaming someone else for his or her mishap.

Another school of thought suggests that the increase in claims is a sign of an educated society whose citizens are aware of their rights and who are now willing to take legal action in pursuing those rights.

"I am not trying to suggest that we will ever eliminate accidents altogether," said Jef Mitchell, "but when you consider that the annual compensation bill would be enough to purchase say three Eurofighters, we must devote more attention to reducing the number of incidents that give rise to claims in the first place by ensuring we implement sound risk management and health-and-safety measures.

"The formation of a risk management team in the Claims Branch has helped spread the word and introduced a number of initiatives. The team has been on the road visiting the Service community to highlight the risks that give rise to accidents. It appears that as a result there are signs that compensation claims are down this year.

"It is very important for commanders to ensure that working environments are as safe as possible. Risks in the workplace should be identified and measures implemented to overcome them.

"Risk management is everyone's responsibility and we are all accountable.

"If you see something that is a hazard or a risk you should deal with it. But too many of us just assume that someone else will take action.

"It puts things in perspective when you consider that something so simple as a spilled cup of coffee by a drinks machine cost the taxpayer £800,000 in compensation and seriously injured the soldier who slipped on it, all because it wasn't cleared up soon enough.

"We have also had cases of engine oil spillages near an vehicle inspection pit that nobody bothered to mop up and the

inevitable happened; someone slipped and fell into the pit, badly injuring their back.

"Compensation cases are often extremely tragic. A lot of soldiers know of others who have been in an accident and have been medically discharged, their career and life ruined, and think, 'that could so easily have been me'," said Mr Mitchell.

■ A member of a Territorial Army motorcycle display team was paralysed during the course of a public display. The case was settled for £320,000.

■ A soldier loading vehicles into railway wagons in Germany was ordered on to the roof of a wagon. He received a huge electric shock from an overhead power cable.

He sustained 60 per cent burns, damage to his skull, electrocution cataracts and had to have a leg amputated.

Paralysed from the neck down, he will require 24-hour care for the rest of his life. He was awarded £3.675 million in damages.

■ A soldier claimed compensation for serious head injuries sustained when he fell from a Army lorry while trying to "windsurf" on the tailgate on the way back to camp after a night out in a local town. He sued the MoD for failing to enforce discipline. The MoD was found to be 25 per cent liable and he received £75,000 in compensation.



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**Sad journey:** The coffin of LCpl Andrew Craw, of the 1st Battalion, The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, is carried by colleagues to his final resting place at St Serf's Parish Church, Tullibody, near Stir-

ling. LCpl Craw died following an accident while with 1 A and SH's advanced party in Iraq. The 1st Battalion is now deployed in southern Iraq. See also "Iraq accidents claim three lives" – Page 9. Picture: Mark Owens

# Soldier's widow seeks answers on body armour

SAMANTHA Roberts, widow of tank commander Sgt Steve Roberts, of 2 RTR, who was killed on March 24 while attempting to control rioting civilians on the outskirts of Az Zubayr, near Basra, has met Defence Secretary Geoff Hoon.

Sgt Roberts was ordered to give up his enhanced body armour to another unit, an event he recorded in an audio diary published last month by his widow. In the diary, Sgt Roberts voiced concern at being sent into battle without proper equipment, describing it as a "joke".

Mr Hoon also met other members of Sgt Roberts's family. Paul Tyler, MP for North Cornwall, and Lt Gen Robert Fry, Deputy Chief of Defence Staff Commitments, were also present.

The Defence Secretary told the family he was extremely sorry Sgt Roberts had lost his life during operations in Iraq, and also that he was sorry Sgt Roberts had not had a set of combat body armour.

He said he had asked the MoD to examine whether enhanced body armour could become standard issue and updated Mrs Roberts, who he had previously met on October 15, on investigations

into the circumstances of her husband's death and the lessons that could be learnt.

After Mrs Roberts expressed concern at the quality of communication between the MoD and families of the bereaved, Mr Hoon asked the chain of command to look again at the way it keeps families informed during ongoing investigations.



**Sgt Roberts**

Gen Fry explained the logistics support arrangements in place for the operation in Iraq. He set out how commanders make a considered judgement on military preparedness.

That is what happened when the Chief of the Defence Staff, on behalf of the Chiefs of Staff, declared full operational capability for combat operations in March 2003. Military commanders at every level – from commanding officers upwards – made their decisions based on their judgement of their ability to manage the risks they faced.

Also being investigated is a claim that military doctors had to amputate the leg of an injured soldier because they lacked essential surgical equipment.

● **SOLDIER to soldier** – Page 73

## Gulf War mortality parallels Service figures

ACCORDING to official statistics, 632 veterans of the 1990-91 war died between April 1, 1991 and December 31, 2003 – compared with 643 in a comparison group of UK Armed Forces personnel of similar age, gender and service.

The Defence Analytical Services Agency, which published the figures, says that approximately 997 deaths would have been expected from a similar sized group drawn from the UK general population of the same age and gender profile.

Its statistics are based on the mortality of 53,409 UK veterans of the war and a comparison group of 53,143.

There were fewer disease-related deaths among Gulf veterans than the comparison group (265 to 321), while more of the latter (130) died from cancer-related causes than did Gulf veterans (115).

Eighty-eight veterans died of diseases of the circulatory system as against 113 in the comparison group, and four of motor neurone disease against three. Suicide and open-verdict deaths among Gulf veterans totalled 113, compared with 108 in the comparison group. Motor vehicle accidents claimed 124 and 101 lives in the respective samples.

The full report can be accessed at [www.dasa.mod.uk](http://www.dasa.mod.uk)

## Army kit online

A NEW interactive section – KIT:UK – on the Army's website lets visitors take a virtual tour around some of the UK's finest military vehicles and equipment.

Challenger 2, Warrior, Scimitar, AS90, MLRS, Apache, Gazelle, communication, engineering, logistic and armoured equipment can be explored on the site.

Brig Chris Wilson, Director of Capability Integration (Army), said: "I hope it will help to improve the public's knowledge of the British Army."

[www.army.mod.uk/kitukonline.htm](http://www.army.mod.uk/kitukonline.htm)



## In safe hands



Clearing the way: LCpl Tommo Thomas and Cpl Rob Hood of 62 Cyprus Support Squadron check Achna Forest Stadium, home of the First Division Ethnimos Achnas football team, using specialist search equipment. The Dhekelia-based Royal Engineer unit joined forces with Sovereign Base Area police officers in an exercise designed to sharpen specialist search skills and synchronize procedures between military and police teams.

Soldiers helped police carry out a defensive search of the venue before a VIP visit.

Picture: Cpl Will Craig

## New set of wheels



Prize-winners: **Pte Chris Heap**, of Cyprus-based 2nd Battalion, The Light Infantry, and wife **Lucy** pick up the keys of the £11,200, top-of-the-range 1.6-litre Renault Megane they won in the Hellenic Bank's monthly prize draw.

Picture: Cpl Will Craig

## Terrier's puppy plea

BOSNIA-based Territorial Army soldier Cpl Hayley Allen, right, of 253 (Northern Ireland) Field Ambulance needs to raise £2,000 before the end of her tour to save Meca, a German shepherd puppy adopted by British troops serving in Sipovo.

"As a result of the draw-down in the Balkans, our camp is due to close and there is nowhere for Meca [it means "little bear" in Serbian] to go. There is a possibility that she will be destroyed," said Cpl Allen.

"I am willing to take her home with me as a pet but it is going to cost a lot of



money in quarantine costs alone."

Anyone interested in supporting Cpl Allen's efforts should e-mail her at hayleyallen007@yahoo.co.uk

# Aldershot brigade raises flag on Plain

THE distinctive Ace of Spades insignia of Headquarters 12 Mechanized Brigade and 228 Signal Squadron was due to be raised over Ward Barracks in Bulford Camp as this issue went to press.

Brigade HQ and Signal Squadron left Aldershot, its home since 1999, in a move to Salisbury Plain which will group them with the majority of 12 Mech Bde's units, including The King's Royal Hussars and the 1st Battalion, The Staffordshire Regiment at Tidworth.

Also in the area are 19th Regiment RA, based at Larkhill, and 6 Close Support Engineer Regiment at Ludgershall.

Part of 3rd (UK) Division, which also has its headquarters in Bulford, 12

Mech Bde is the Army's sixth deployable brigade and the first to begin the conversion to the Bowman communications system.

This process is expected to be completed by the middle of next year, putting the brigade at the forefront of the Army's network-enabled capability.

## Masterly purchase

A DRAWING by Dutch master Willem van de Velde the Elder has been bought by the National Army Museum for £110,000 with the help of grants of £42,500 from the Heritage Lottery Fund and the National Art Collections Fund. It depicts one of the earliest musters of the British Army, in the 1680s.

### IN BRIEF

- Former air force officer Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, the former Dutch Foreign Minister, has succeeded **Lord Robertson** as Secretary General of Nato.

- A company of 120 personnel from 6th Battalion, REME deployed last month to Iraq in support of 20th Armoured Brigade.

Most of the Tidworth-based soldiers are serving at Shaibah Logistic Base, south of Basra, with elements at Al Amarah, Az Zubayr and in Kuwait. They are supported by 14 members of the Territorial Army's 101st and 102nd REME battalions.

- Soldiers from 1 Troop from 21 Field



# Brize alert over ciggies, alcohol

Seizures rise dramatically as troops return with large quantities of contraband

ROYAL Air Force police at RAF Brize Norton, who assist Customs and Excise officers in any search-and-seizure operations they want to conduct, are reporting a dramatic rise in the number of soldiers returning from overseas theatres with more cigarettes and alcohol than their legal entitlement.

More than a quarter of a million cigarettes have been confiscated since September from soldiers returning to the UK from Iraq and the Balkans. Large amounts of cigars, tobacco and spirits have also been found in troops' kit.

The duty on a carton of 200 cigarettes is £45, so the consequences of ignoring the allowances is expensive and time-consuming.

RAF Police at Brize Norton are anxious to get the message across because they know how hard soldiers work overseas and the last thing they need on arrival in the UK is a customs search and the ramifications of having excess allowances of tobacco and alcohol.

By highlighting the problem, they hope to encourage responsible behaviour and easier transitions back to the UK.

Those who try to cheat the system

not only get caught but waste valuable man-hours in processing the seizures and follow-up action. They delay their reunion with their loved ones and bring shame on their units.

Acting on intelligence from Iraq, a Customs and Excise team of eight from Heathrow, supported by seven RAF Police personnel, recently searched an aircraft returning from theatre and seized 120,000 cigarettes as well as large quantities of spirits.

The find, rated a major success by Customs and Excise officers, prevented the loss of more than £24,000 in duty for the Treasury.

**Some individuals had more than 10,000 cigarettes – 50 times the legal allowance**

The limit for Service personnel arriving from non-European Union countries is 200 cigarettes and one litre of spirits. Some individuals had more than 10,000 cigarettes – 50 times the legal allowance. All involved were given the opportunity to declare their excess before the seizure was enacted, but declined.

Soldiers who are caught lose their allowances as well as the excess.

Since then several more flights from Iraq and the Balkans have been searched, with similar quantities of contraband discovered and confiscated.

Further action is being taken as a result of the seizures and Customs and Excise is continuing to monitor inbound flights to Brize Norton.

## Scottish tribute



Dress to impress: Members of the 1st Battalion, The Royal Highland Fusiliers Sergeants' Mess at Episkopi, Cyprus, dress to celebrate Burns Night in style. The regiment recruits extensively in the area of Burns's birthplace. Picture: Cpl Will Craig

## Two killed in Londonderry Gazelle crash

TWO Army pilots died when their Gazelle helicopter crashed in Londonderry just before Christmas. The pilot, Capt Andrew Nicoll, 27 and single, and his co-pilot, Sgt Simon Bennett, 35 and married with three children, were members of 5 Regiment AAC.

They were serving with the Joint Helicopter Force (Northern Ireland) based at RAF Aldergrove.

The crash, which happened at 1530 at the City of Derry Rugby Club in Londonderry, is being investigated by a military air accident investigation team from Wilton near Salisbury.

Gp Capt Martin Sharp, station commander at RAF Aldergrove, said: "This is a terrible loss for family, friends and colleagues and our thoughts and prayers are with the relatives of both pilots. The tragedy has touched colleagues right across Northern Ireland."

Lt Col Duncan Venn, commanding officer of 5 Regt AAC, also paid tribute to the two men.

Sgt Bennett, the aircraft commander, had recently transferred to the Army Air Corps from the Welsh Guards. Capt Nicoll was a world-class canoeist who was shortly to depart for Australia to prepare for the 2004 Olympics.

## Iraq accidents claim three lives

MAJ James Stenner and Sgt Norman Patterson were killed in a road traffic accident in Baghdad early on New Year's Day.

Welsh Guards officer Maj Stenner (30) and Sgt Patterson (28), of The Cheshire Regiment, died when their vehicle crashed inside the US-controlled Green Zone in Iraq's capital.

LCpl Andrew Craw (21) of the 1st

Battalion, The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, died following an incident at a training range near Basra on January 7. The incident is being investigated.

Lt Col Jonathan Gray, CO 1 A and SH, said: "This was a tragic incident in the first few days of the battalion's six-month tour in Iraq. Andy was a bright and promising soldier who will be sorely missed by all the regiment."

**Squadron (EOD) RE**, part of 33 Engineer Regiment (EOD) based at Carver Barracks, Wimbish, completed the Royal Navy's sea survival course at Portsmouth. The programme, at Horsea Island, covered all aspects of sea safety on board ships as well as survival techniques and the correct use of survival suits and life rafts.

● Two thousand soldiers, 400 vehicles and nine helicopters took part in 16th Air Assault Brigade's Exercise Eagles Flight in East Anglia last month.

● The **Army Benevolent Fund**, which is 60 this year, has been adopted by Garrison Radio as its 2004 charity.





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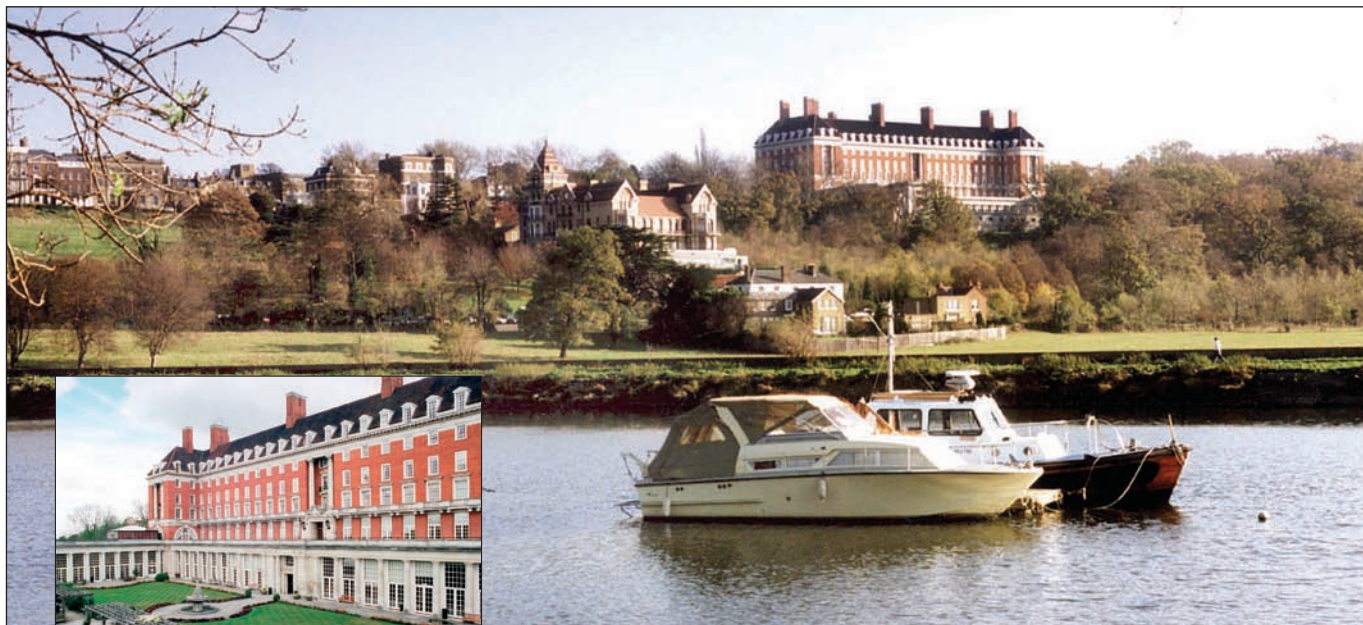
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Home on the hill: The much-loved Royal Star and Garter building overlooking a bend in the Thames at Richmond, above, and, inset, the terrace garden which has a river view

# Big change ahead for Royal Star and Garter

Landmark Richmond care home could be sold off to make national expansion possible

THE Royal Star and Garter Charity is considering a proposal to leave its home overlooking the Thames at Richmond and to open three new care homes from 2008.

The new locations would be in the Richmond area, the West Midlands and a place still to be decided.

Vice-Admiral Sir John Dunt, chairman of governors, said the proposals offered an opportunity for the charity to extend its special brand of care to disabled ex-Service people in other parts of the country.

"It would also enable us to respond to the pressing need to provide care to the ex-Service elderly mentally infirm, for whom there is almost no provision," he said.

The charity is inviting observations and

comments on the proposal from residents and their families until February 28 and hopes to take a final decision at the end of March.



Simon Weston

A long-running review by the governors indicated that the constraints of the much-loved Richmond building were limiting the charity's ability to respond to the changing needs of its residents. High running and maintenance costs meant that in the long run it was not financially viable.

Falklands veteran Simon Weston, a vice-president, said: "Sadly, this proposal would mean eventually moving from the Richmond home, which has served the charity so well over the years and which is held in great affection by so many.

"I understand how hard this would be

for many people, but I am convinced it is necessary if the charity is to continue to serve those who deserve the best we can offer them."

Once the proposed developments were in place, residents of the existing home and the staff caring for them would move to a new site at Richmond. It would be built to the highest specification and include *en suite* facilities for every resident.

Each of the three homes would care for 60 people and include a special unit for people with dementia. All three would continue to run a full range of therapies and organise activities and outings.

The governors are adamant that the charity's strong links with the Armed Forces, the unique military traditions and the ex-Service comradeship will remain at the heart of the Royal Star and Garter homes.

## Tie tacs for crash victims

A LIMITED number of 665 Squadron, Army Air Corps metal tie tacs are on sale to raise money for the families of the two Army helicopter pilots killed in a Gazelle crash on December 22 in Northern Ireland. The Police National Tie Tac Register supplies specially designed badges to police and military units, which can be sold for fundraising purposes. The 665 Sqn tie tacs cost £2 each. Log on to [www.tietacs.org.uk](http://www.tietacs.org.uk).

## Commanding performance

TWO commanding officers, Lt Cols Sean English and Robin Moore of 29 and 3 Regiments RLC, took part in an Army-level formation skydiving exercise at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. They plan to advance skydiving within both regiments and the Silver Stars, the RLC parachute team. For details on how it can help with training, ring the team on 94384 8259 or 01285 868259.

## MoD promoting peace

A UNITED Kingdom-led training initiative to promote conflict prevention and long-term stability throughout central and eastern Europe was launched in Slovakia by Armed Forces Minister Adam Ingram. The Junior Staff Officers' Course at Liptovsky Mikulas in the Slovak Republic will extend Nato expertise to countries in the Partnership for Peace programme.





## Under Big Ben

A digest of what's being said on  
Army matters in Parliament

### Only 41 bosses appealed over TA call-outs

NEARLY 10,000 Territorial Army soldiers were given compulsory call-out notices last year, of whom 6,681 were subsequently mobilised.

In a written answer, Defence Minister Ivor Caplin said 41 employers had lodged appeals against mobilisation of an employee, of which seven were unsuccessful, one succeeded, one remained outstanding and 32 were withdrawn before going to appeal.

**Road accidents:** Between March and November last year UK forces were involved in 786 road traffic accidents. Two military personnel died as a result and 14 vehicles were written off.

### And I quote . . .

6 What percentage of British troops are engaged in security duties for American commercial and business interests in Iraq? 9  
— Glenda Jackson MP

6 None.9 — Armed Forces Minister Adam Ingram

**Leishmaniasis:** There has been one confirmed case and 12 suspected cases of Leishmaniasis among British personnel serving in Iraq.

**Christmas trees:** Fifty Christmas trees were sent to Iraq by the Expeditionary Forces Institute for sale to units. Some units made their own arrangements to import trees.

**Army personnel:** As at October 1, 93 per cent of Regular Army and 83 per cent of Territorial Army soldiers were male.

**The Priory:** One Service person received psychiatric treatment at the Priory, Roehampton, last year at a cost of £73,778. Between January and March last year 101 Service personnel were treated as in- and out-patients at the now closed Duchess of Kent Psychiatric Hospital in Catterick.

**Boarding School Allowance:** Between 4,277 and 4,406 children benefited last year from BSA during the three school terms. The total cost was £42,060,365.

**Art:** Since 1997 the MoD has purchased one painting, a portrait of Admiral Leach, at a cost of £5,000. No sculptures have been bought and no works of art sold in that time.

**Bearskins:** A total of 694 bearskin caps were procured during the past five years. The pelts were imported under licence from Canada. One pelt can make between one and two caps. Pelts are supplied from bears hunted as part of Canadian conservation quotas.

# Rehab changes fast-track path back to fitness

MAJOR changes in the Army's approach to rehabilitating soldiers with musculo-skeletal injuries have begun to make a difference since they were introduced 12 months ago.

With treatment more widely available, soldiers are being returned to duty faster than ever.

Central to the changes has been the development of the Defence Medical Rehabilitation Plan (DMRP), which provides the military with a structured approach to the medical rehabilitation of musculo-skeletal injuries of Service personnel.

Previously limited rehabilitation services had been available on a regional basis – for example the Garrison Rehab Centre at Aldershot and the Sports and Training Injuries Centre at Catterick – but there was no global strategy.

Several studies and working groups looked at the issue of making rehabilita-

tion treatment more widely available for patients with both acute and chronic injuries.

The new regime involves the creation of regional rehabilitation units (RRUs) within every major garrison and primary care rehabilitation facilities (PCRFs) in unit medical centres. The former will focus on treating chronic injuries, the latter on more acute patients.

The process will rely on a close working relationship and cross-referral between the two.

Another major difference between the two types of facility will be the length of stay. Most people treated at RRUs will be inpatients, staying for a period of three to four weeks of intensive rehab of the type previously only provided at DMRC Headley Court.

PCRFs, on the other hand, will treat primarily acute injuries, mostly on an outpatient basis.

## Appeal raises £10,600 for RMP families

AN appeal for funds to assist the families of six members of the Royal Military Police killed in Iraq has raised more than £10,600 since it was published in the September issue of *Soldier*.

It was extended after three more members of the RMP – Maj Matt Titchner, WO2 Colin Wall and Cpl Dewi Pritchard – lost their lives in Iraq when the vehicle in which they were travelling was attacked.

Focus of the appeal was the raffle of a giant tennis ball signed by 30 Wimbledon stars and organised by WO2s Alex Smith and Shirley Barrett, both RMP.

Among those who raised funds were



Brig Maurice Nugent, Provost Marshal (Army), centre, draws the winning tennis ball ticket, watched by organisers WO2 Alex Smith, left, and WO2 Shirley Barrett

SSgt Paul Desborough and his troops of HQ 22 Medical Squadron at Basra, who collected £800 on a sponsored tab.

### IN BRIEF

● By Christmas, 27,192 applications for **Suez Zone Medals** had been received at the Army Medal Office and 2,011 had been dispatched to veterans or their next-of-kin. Nine hundred were posted in time for Remembrance Sunday.



● Physical training instructor **Cpl Dave Garratt**, left, of the Defence Diving School at Portsmouth, has won the TQ Modern Apprenticeship of the Year award. He gained the civilian qualification in sport and recreation while doing the PTI





**Homeward bound:** Four Iraqi refugees have returned home from Cyprus after thanking British Forces for saving their country. The quartet, pictured above with Cpl Ewa Howieson, front, and Cpl Norman Paul at Cyprus's Akrotiri airport, arrived on the island in February 2001 after fleeing the dictatorship.

Salem Zabarkas, Hussein Ashour, Ahmed, Ahmed Mahdiabd and Kassem

Kzarelsa returned to their families and friends to help rebuild their country.

Salem said: "I am so grateful to the British and American forces for their efforts in Iraq. They have saved my country and I will be forever grateful for that. Before I left things had become too dangerous for me. I woke every morning fearing for my life and I just knew I had to leave."

Picture: Cpl Will Craig

## Gunners get early start with Mamba

UNITED Kingdom Armed Forces are taking delivery of the latest battlefield radar six months earlier than expected.

The Mobile Artillery Monitoring Radar (Mamba), is designed to pinpoint the positions of enemy artillery, including howitzers, multiple rocket launchers and mortars.

Earlier versions leased from Ericsson, who developed the system, were successfully deployed in Afghanistan, where they proved very effective in combat. They were also praised by troops in recent operations in Iraq.

Mamba is mounted on tracked BV-206 vehicles and can be deployed

almost anywhere. It is amphibious and can be transported underslung by Chinook helicopter or inside a C-130 Hercules.

The system takes just minutes to deploy and, once in action, can be operated effectively by a single soldier. Mamba has a tactical range of about 20km and can be networked with others to cover an area of more than 2,000 sq km.

The handover of four Mamba systems by Ericsson to the Royal Artillery in a programme worth £30 million was taking place at the Royal School of Artillery in Larkhill on January 23.

## Jolene's smart move



**Iraq-bound:** Pte Jolene Mackay, the only female in the company, makes sure her tam-o'-shanter is adjusted correctly before moving out of Queen's Barracks, Perth, to Iraq with fellow soldiers from the 51st Highland Regiment (Volunteers). Fifty troops, with the same number from the 4th Battalion, The Parachute Regiment (Volunteers), will provide the Force Protection Company at the British logistics base at Shaibah airfield, south-west of Basra.

Picture: Mark Owens

## Academic logisticians

EIGHT officers and warrant officers have received BSc Honours degrees in supply chain management from the University of Wales. A further 23 were awarded the Institute of Logistics and Transports' advanced diploma in logistics. The move is a milestone in enabling military logisticians to achieve academic awards linked to their professional experience and rank. Details from Jane Puttock, School of Logistics, on 94214 5691.

course and hopes to begin a Higher National Diploma in sport this year.

● **Brig Chris Murray** has taken over from **Brig Andrew Meek** as the commander of Regular and Territorial Army troops in the Midlands. As commander of 143 (West Midlands) Brigade, with headquarters at Cophthorne Bar-

racks, Shrewsbury, Brig Murray is responsible for units based across Shropshire, Staffordshire, Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Warwickshire and the West Midlands.

● An innovative language learning package to help soldiers recruited from the Commonwealth and foreign countries has been

launched by the Army. An ELLIS (English Language Learning and Instructional System) centre has been established in partnership with the University for Industry at Shorncliffe, Kent, home of the 1st Battalion, The Royal Gurkha Rifles. Gurkha soldiers and their Nepalese wives have volunteered to trial the computer-based system for six months.





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Close inspection: Conservation officer LCpl Jason Wilson, KORBR, settles into his new job

# Birdman Jason gets dream job

BIRD-watching along the Cyprus coast-line sounds like a dream posting – but for one lucky soldier it's all in a day's work.

LCpl Jason Wilson, of the 1st Battalion, The King's Own Royal Border Regiment, has become the first full-time conservation officer for the Sovereign Base area on the Mediterranean island.

The 32-year-old describes his unusual military attachment as "the best job in the world". A wildlife enthusiast for more than 20 years, Jason was the perfect candidate for the post.

He accepted the job and informed his Cyprus-based battalion just weeks before it was due to leave the island that he would

be staying to take up the new position. "People were surprised when I told them. It's a little unusual for an infantry soldier to be appointed as a conservation officer," he said.

Since his appointment, Jason has worked tirelessly on several conservation issues, developing an expert knowledge of the animal and plant life in the area and raising awareness among adults and children about what the island has to offer.

"There is so much to see in Cyprus and people are not taking advantage of it. I hope to change that through brochures and posters and I'm sure people will be surprised at what we have here," he said.

## George Cross online

THE George Cross database has gone online and is now available for use. Several sites are devoted to the Victoria Cross, but this is the first solely for all 401 recipients of the highest award for civilian and non-operational gallantry.

Based on years of research, the database aims to inform the widest possible audience about the George Cross.

Each recipient has their

own page detailing the act of gallantry that brought them the medal. The information includes, where available, the citation, portraits, photos of headstones, memorials and obituaries, as well as additional information of interest to the user. Collective awards to the Island of Malta and the Royal Ulster Constabulary have their own pages.

[www.gc-database.co.uk](http://www.gc-database.co.uk)

## Go trekking with SSAFA

SSAFA Forces Help wants volunteers to raise money by completing a 15-day trek in Nepal in February 2005. Go to [www.ssafa.org.uk/trek.asp](http://www.ssafa.org.uk/trek.asp) or contact Joanna Le Vannais on 020 7463 9222 or [joanna.lev@ssafa.org.uk](mailto:joanna.lev@ssafa.org.uk)

● If you want a place on, or to help with, the SSAFA special needs and disability holidays in July (24-31) and August (8-13) contact Heidi Dudley on 020 7463 9234 by April 30 or e-mail her at [heidi.d@ssafa.org.uk](mailto:heidi.d@ssafa.org.uk)

## Paper talk

### What the Press has been saying

● Bizarrely, Michael Jackson had adorned his outfit with the badge of the Royal Corps of Transport, a defunct British Army regiment. The badges are available from military surplus stores and websites. Around his neck was a Serbian military medal, the Order of White Eagle, knight's class. – Report on a court appearance by the singer, *Daily Mail*

● After two centuries of bitterness over Britain's role in ousting Napoleon's forces from the Iberian Peninsula, Spain has honoured the soldiers' efforts by commemorating one of the most famous retreats in the British Army's history. Spanish, French and British officials marked the 195th anniversary of the "Retreat to Corunna", led by Sir John Moore during the Peninsular War. – *Daily Telegraph*

● The first Japanese troops sent to a combat zone since the Second World War have departed for Iraq. – *Daily Telegraph*

● More than five million aerial images shot by the RAF during the Second World War are to be made freely available to the public when they are put on the internet. They offer a new perspective on historic events and encounters that we have only ever seen from ground level. They will be available at [www.evidenceincamera.co.uk](http://www.evidenceincamera.co.uk) – *Times*

● Jasper Hankinson, who was the final surviving witness of the last ever cavalry charge by the British Army, has died in Warwickshire at the age of 107. He enlisted in the London Scottish Regiment in 1915 and was a supply driver when he saw 181 men of the Worcester Yeomanry Cavalry rout 20,000 Turkish troops at Juj in the Sinai desert on November 8, 1917. – *Daily Express*

● Former British Servicemen who liberated Rome claimed a second victory after Rome city council agreed to provide a suitable monument there for the 60th anniversary this year. – *Times*

● Crown Prince Filipe of Spain has turned down an offer by the Spanish Government to make him a general in time for his wedding to a television presenter later this year. He already holds the rank of major in the Army and lieutenant commander in the Navy and did not want a meteoric promotion that could prompt hostility. – *Daily Telegraph*



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- The number of people selected for promotion.
- The number of people selected for promotion.

Dear Sarah,

Coming home  
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# Welsh troops bring Basra riot to order

Praise for professionalism of soldiers who quelled violent demonstrations

TROOPS from the 1st Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Wales have been praised for their professionalism after ending a violent demonstration in Basra, writes **Jonathan Turner**.

The soldiers moved in to support Iraqi police after a 2,000-strong crowd of former Iraqi soldiers tried to storm a bank on January 6 during a protest over outstanding salary payments.

Bank security guards opened fire on the crowd, and within minutes several people were injured. It was later reported two people were killed.

Maj Frank Cannon and his troops in A Company were among the first British soldiers on the scene. Despite being initially outnumbered, they took immediate action to bring the situation under control. "When I arrived it was clear the situation was quickly spiralling out of con-

trol," he said. "The police had begun to fire in the air but the crowd was still advancing.

"I felt it was necessary to try to separate the crowd and the police, and the only way we could do this was by my men and I getting between them."

Maj Cannon manoeuvred his Warrior armoured personnel carrier to block the crowd while several of his soldiers began to push the angry protestors back. "At this stage we had to contend with the police firing over our heads, and the crowd throwing stones back," he said. "But we were quickly reinforced and were soon able to bring the situation under



**Commander in control:**  
Maj Frank Cannon

control." CSgt Craig Stockdale, who led the first small group of troops facing the crowd, said he was proud of the way his men had responded.

"It was pretty chaotic when we arrived at the scene, but the lads reacted brilliantly. Without them, what was already a dangerous riot would have become far worse."

The former Iraqi soldiers returned to the bank the next day to register for the outstanding payments, but this time the crowd remained peaceful.

In an unrelated incident in Al Amarrah, north of Basra, several explosions were heard in a crowd of protestors. There were sporadic outbursts of violence, with stones thrown at Iraqi police, who fired on the crowd.

Later in the day a man was seen throwing a grenade or blast bomb at a Warrior. He threw a second one, and as he emerged to throw another he was shot and killed with a single shot. Later in the afternoon a second man was shot as he too prepared to throw a device.

Negotiations were carried out with the leaders of the crowd, who were protesting about a lack of jobs (see picture on Page 21). The crowd gathered again the following day, but the weather was very poor and it soon dispersed.

**Watchful:** A soldier of the 1st Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Wales keeps an eye on angry former Iraqi troops





# Debt of gratitude

PM praises UK Armed Forces during Basra visit



PRIME Minister Tony Blair praised the work British troops are doing in Iraq, during a surprise visit to Basra last month.

He thanked soldiers for their contribution towards winning the conflict and told them they had fought for a "noble and good cause". He said they now had to win the peace.

The Prime Minister referred to British troops as "the new pioneers of soldiering in the 21st century", defending the world against the threats of terrorism and brutal, repressive regimes.

"The world will owe you a tremendous debt of gratitude," he said.

"I don't think that the reputation of the British Armed Forces has ever been higher than it is today, or its prestige ever greater, and that is down to you and the work that you have done.

"Whatever opinions people had of [the wisdom of] the conflict there is absolutely nobody back home who has anything other than enormous pride in the British Armed Forces."

He said the conflict was of great importance. Iraq's former regime had a proven record of the use of weapons of mass destruction and hundreds of thousands of its citizens had been tortured and died in prison camps.

"If we had backed away from that, we would never have been able to confront this threat in the other countries where it exists."

Mr Blair said there were reasons for optimism because Iraqis wanted prosperity and security, to be able to bring up their families in peace and a decent way of living, and this was what British forces were helping them to achieve.

"And that is perhaps the single most important thing now; it is the greatest challenge we face, which is that your soldiering has got not just to be about fighting and being able to engage in

combat, and to win that combat and win it well, which you do brilliantly, but it is also to win the peace, it is to win the hearts and minds of people.

"By nature and by instinct and by the intelligent use of the experience that you have had, Iraq today is taking shape under your help and with your guidance in a way that would have been unthinkable a year ago."

The Prime Minister said the work British troops were doing was a just cause. He had met ordinary Iraqis who for decades had known nothing but the secret police, poverty, dependence on the state and fear but who now had hope and some prospect of a future thanks to the efforts of the coalition.

"I know that this is a multi-national effort, and I know that you have been working hard with the Americans, our principal allies, but also with the scores of other countries that are here now helping us in Iraq. But I wanted to say a special word of thanks to you. You know how passionately I

**Strong arm:** Cpl Neal Williams, foreground, 110 Provost Company RMP, shows how to disarm someone during the Prime Minister's visit to the Iraqi police academy in Basra.

Picture: LPhoto Paul A'Barrow RN

believed in this cause and in the wisdom of the conflict as the only way to establish long-term peace and stability, but I would like you to know that part of the pride that people feel in you is the knowledge that in years to come people here in this country, and I believe around the world, will look back on what you have done and give thanks and recognise that they owe you a tremendous debt of gratitude, and from the bottom of my heart I thank you very much indeed."

**"I would like you to know that part of the pride that people feel in you is the knowledge that in years to come people will look back on what you have done and give thanks"**

**"I don't think that the reputation of the British Armed Forces has ever been higher than it is today"**

## Step in the right direction

**Over to you:** Cpl Gaynor Woods gives a pair of shoes to an Iraqi child in Umm Qasr. She was one of a party of soldiers from 100 Pioneer Squadron, normally based at Cramlington near Newcastle, and 45 Signal Squadron's Tiger Team from Worcester, who visited three schools in the southern port bearing gifts donated from schools back home in England.

Teachers and community leaders turned out to welcome the soldiers and help to keep order among the excited children.

Faces lit up as boxes were

handed out and eagerly opened.

Shoe boxes containing small toys and other little gifts were donated by Manor Park School in Worcester. Footwear ranging from flip-flops to trainers was collected by St Bede's Roman Catholic School, Bedlington near Newcastle.

Community leader Sheikh Majd Altaee asked Capt Andy Sturt, OC Tiger Team, to pass on his thanks to everyone back in Britain who had helped cheer up the children of Umm Qasr.

Picture: LA(Phot) Paul A'Barrow RN





# Troops smash copper gang

Illegal smelting operation foiled by Light Infantry in a major blow to organised crime

SOLDIERS from the Midlands smashed a criminal gang in northern Iraq and recovered copper ingots worth more than \$250,000 on the black market.

The troops, from the 1st Battalion, The Light Infantry, uncovered an illegal

copper smelting plant in the village of Qalat Sallih in Maysan province.

Copper is a valuable commodity in Iraq, and criminal gangs often blow up electricity pylons so they can strip the wire. Much of it is smuggled out of the country to be



Sgt Dave Archer, 1 LI, with some of the copper ingots seized by the battalion



**'Stealing copper from electricity pylons causes a great deal of hardship to the local community'**

Soldiers of 1 LI with the ingots

sold on the black market. The soldiers also uncovered a stash of weapons, including a recoilless rifle, a machine-gun, several assault rifles and ammunition. Several people were arrested.

Capt Rich Clare, 1 LI, said the raid was a major blow to organised crime in the area. "Stealing copper from electricity pylons causes a great deal of hardship to the local community," he said. "Many areas are left without power because the pylons have been destroyed."

The ingots were handed back to the Iraqi authorities to be re-smelted into wire so repairs on the pylons can begin. The smelting plant was later blown up by British sappers.

## Efi prices set to tumble following criticisms

A CHANGE to Expeditionary Force Institutes (Efi) pricing policy in Iraq is about to be implemented.

Maj Gary Pickett RLC, speaking on behalf of Efi, said soldiers would be

pleased to learn there was to be a change in pricing following criticism from customers about the high cost of some electrical white goods, including DVD, CDs and video cameras.

"In the past we have not been competitive compared with the American PX, which is subsidised by the US Government," said Maj Pickett.

"To reduce prices we are looking at local purchasing from new sources in

Kuwait rather than our present suppliers in the UK and Germany.

"Fifty per cent of the profit Naafi makes goes back to the military as a dividend cheque; the rest is used for reinvestment in the business."

Typical is a flagship project at the big Shaibah airfield base where Naafi has invested £1 million in new welfare facilities. It is the biggest project the organisation has ever undertaken.

## Sappers battle to clear mines

ROYAL Engineers from Wimbish are leading the battle to clear millions of mines and unexploded ordnance from Iraq.

Soldiers from 33 Engineer Regiment (EOD) are part of the Joint Forces Explosive Ordnance Disposal Troop, a small unit which is called upon to deal with regular finds of dangerous munitions.

The sappers, who will soon be coming to the end of a three-month tour, have had

to deal with a bewildering variety of deadly ordnance. Years of warfare with neighbouring Iran, internal conflict, and both Gulf wars have left a lethal legacy of mines, bombs, shells and rocket-propelled grenades.

Iraqis have become used to finding explosives lying around. The Royal Engineers have dealt with ammunition found in warehouses, a school, fields, offices and even people's homes.





# Welfare on the move

British soldiers have long envied US troops their welfare packages – now the tables are turned

Report: Ray Routledge  
Pictures: Mike Weston

BRITISH soldiers deployed during the early stages of an operation have long become used to living in less than perfect accommodation, eating basic rations,

**‘Where there was one telephone to 50 soldiers and one internet terminal per 100, additional kit has seen the ratio improve to one telephone per 25 and one terminal per 50’**

enduring pretty awful toilet facilities that were often little more than a hole in the ground, and having no TV or radio to alleviate the boredom and stress.

Contact with home was difficult, with letters taking weeks to arrive and phoning all but impossible.

To rub it in, other armies seemed to offer their soldiers all sorts of comforts.

All that changed on Op Telic. Temporary deployed accommodation (TDA) was erected in weeks, complete with

comfortable beds, mosquito nets, air conditioning and flushing toilets.

Army chefs continue to pull rabbits out of hats, if not ovens, ensuring wholesome, tasty food is available on increasingly varied menus. American soldiers eat in British cookhouses to get a square meal.

And improvements continue.

WO1 Paul Brown RLC, who is in charge of operational welfare, said as military units arrived in fixed locations, TDAs would be replaced with Corimec build-



WO1 Paul Brown

**World view: Paradigm's internet welfare package allows soldiers to log on. See Mail, Page 76.**

ings, while new communications cabins were being provided with purpose-built, 40ft squaddie-proof Portakabins.

“Where there was one telephone to 50 soldiers and one internet terminal per 100, additional kit has seen the ratio improve to one telephone per 25 and one terminal per 50,”

he said. “There has been a corresponding rise in the number of Paradigm engineers, from two to 15, giving an improved maintenance and repair capability.”

The comms cabins offer 20 individual phone booths and more privacy for internet users.

Newspapers are more available and the e-blue system means messages typed in the UK or Germany can be delivered by postal couriers in Iraq within four or five hours.

“It is the best welfare service I have seen on operations,” said WO1 Brown. “It has really moved on from Bosnia and Kosovo.”

**God squad:** A group of Army chaplains (and one RAF colleague) got together at Saddam Hussein's former Basra Palace. Pictured left to right are: Neil Maxted, C of E (1 RRW Basra City padre), Paddy Cable, C of E (MND SE Force chaplain), Basil Pearson, RC (Shaibah Logs Base), Juliette Hulme, C of E (Shaibah Logs Base), Alan Cobain, Presbyterian (Shaibah Logs Base), David Kingston, Presbyterian (Basra Palace Brigade HQ), Andrew Turner, C of E (RAF Basra Airport and all RAF detachments), Steven Forster, RC (Shaibah Logs Base), and Tom Butler, RC (Al Amarah).





# Tents make difference for desert troops

Effective modular accommodation is big hit with soldiers

NEARLY 4,400 British troops are now living in temporary deployed accommodation (TDA) in southern Iraq and the modular tent camps have proved so effective that they are likely to become the standard for military operations between the 30-day and nine-month points, writes **Jonathan Turner**.

TDA is a set of modular tents containing bed-spaces, a cookhouse, recreational facilities and ablutions – complete with proper showers and flush toilets.

As reported in *Soldier* (June 2003), it has been in use with the US military for more than 25 years and was supplied to the British Army by Leatherhead-based

engineering company KBR as an urgent requirement for Operation Telic troops.

Since then tent complexes housing around 4,375 troops have been constructed throughout Iraq, from Umm Qasr in the south to the remote Maysan province in the north. The standard format comes in 125, 250 and 500 man sizes.

TDA has proved to be a big hit with sol-

**The tents are air-conditioned and equipped with heaters, which have proved very useful in the Iraqi winter**

**Workout: The gym housed inside temporary deployable accommodation at Shaibah airfield**

diers. The tents are air-conditioned and equipped with heaters, which have proved very useful in the Iraqi winter.

Although the accommodation is owned by the MoD, contractors are used to ship, construct, operate and maintain it, under contracts managed by the Royal Engineers – freeing up soldiers for other tasks.

Lt Col Tony Bayliss RE, SO1 Infrastructure at MND (SE) in Basra, said TDA would become the standard accommodation used on operations between the 30-day and nine-month points.

"This is the first time that it's been used, but it has been extremely well received," he said. "One major advantage is that we do not need soldiers to construct and operate it, so they can be used for their primary task."

Plans are advanced for TDA to be replaced by the more solid Corimec structures familiar to soldiers serving in the Balkans.

Initial builds will be at the large British base at Shaibah airfield, near Basra. Among the first units to move from TDA to Corimec buildings would be the military field hospital based at the airfield.



**Trouble brewing:** Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, The Light Infantry, deploy in Al Amarah to contain a violent protest about the lack of jobs. During the incident, outside a house used by the Civil and Military Co-operation Team, police opened fire on the crowd. Grenades were thrown and, later, shots were fired by British troops. Six people died during the incident and several more were injured. Soldiers shot two men during the disturbance – one of whom died. Both were about to use explosive devices. Negotiations with the leaders of the crowd eventually allowed soldiers to restore order.

Picture: Capt Rich Clare



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# Lighten up

Lithium-ion battery was so popular on military trials no one wanted to return it

AFTER recent trials in the Arctic and UK, soldiers are beginning to see the benefits of a new breed of high-power, low-weight rechargeable battery.

Apparently the patrol groups testing them didn't want to give them back, and the results may well see the end of the notoriously unpopular NiCd battery.

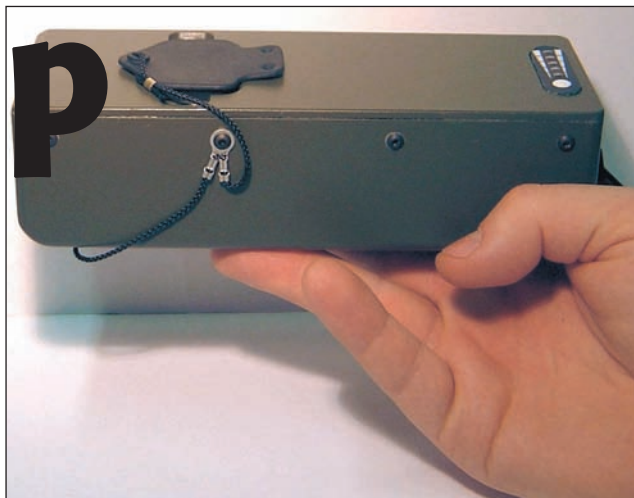
The items causing all the fuss are lithium-ion batteries – or li-ion for short – and they should be familiar. From laptops to mobile phones, lithium-ion rechargeable batteries have been the portable power source for modern consumer electronics.

They have also played an important

part in driving the sector towards miniaturisation. But now an advanced version of the battery has been developed for the defence market and benefits seen in consumer electronics are sure to follow.

The technology was developed in 1975 by AEA Technology Plc and then – with Sony's assistance – licensed to every battery manufacturer across the world. The benefits of the ultra-lightweight, reliable and rechargeable power source meant that consumer electronics became lighter, more portable and increasingly more powerful.

Now it is the turn for military users to benefit. They won't have to wait long as the batteries will be put into service in the new Bowman communications system. So what are the



Powerful handful: AEA's lithium-ion retro-fit Clansman battery

advantages of advanced lithium-ion batteries to the soldier in the field?

- One third the size and weight of other battery technologies such as nickel cadmium – allowing users to carry more batteries, other equipment and supplies or drastically reduce overall weight burden.

- Rugged enough to withstand harsh environments and operating conditions in which other batteries will fail.

- Effective in extreme temperatures. AEA's lithium-ion batteries will operate in temperatures ranging from minus 51C to plus 75C. Other re-chargeable batteries will not operate below zero.

- Higher in power. AEA is now producing rechargeable batteries with power levels approaching that of primary (throw away) batteries.

- Re-chargeable up to 1,200 times, more than six times that of NiCd batteries currently in use in the Clansman radio.

- Fully re-chargeable every time with no memory effect, ensuring the user has full power at the start of every mission.

- Reliable fuel gauge, allowing the user to know exactly how much power remains available, information which has not been available in the past.



THE M1A2 Abrams main battle tank pictured above boasts the world's most advanced digital command and control system (followed by Challenger 2), according to the author of the recently revised third edition of **Battletanks**.

Alan K Russell's extensive notes and

## Tanks are us

technical details of every major MBT currently in service around the world are supported by photographs and Ray Hutchins's drawings of front and side profiles.

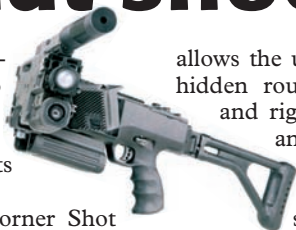
● **Battletanks** by Alan K Russell (Greenhill Military Manuals, £14.99).

# Gun that shoots round corners

SPECIALISED British military units are reported to have been issued with a weapon that allows them to fire aimed shots at targets hidden round corners.

Made by Florida-based Corner Shot Holdings, the state-of-the-art system, pictured above and right, has been bought by police and special forces units in 15 countries, including Israel, Russia, the US and Britain.

It features a swing-hinge front section, a device that houses the handgun and a compact colour video camera which



allows the user to "sweep" targets hidden round corners, both left and right. The video monitor and remote trigger control, together with all the system-operating switches, are fitted to the frame held by the user. The lateral traversing mechanism is said not to affect normal firearm performance.

The weapon can also be snapped straight so that it points to the front when the user needs to confront the target directly.



Illustrations: Corner Shot Holdings LLC 2003





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# Republican guard

100-strong UK contingent leads military training team

Report: Maj Guy Gatenby

BRITISH troops serving in Sierra Leone face an interesting 12 months, particularly when 13,000 United Nations personnel pull out of the West African state at the conclusion of their mission.

Tensions in the country, torn apart in recent years by internal strife and ruthless warlords exploiting the area's prolific diamond mines, will be further heightened when a special court in Freetown convenes to conduct a series of war crimes trials.

"It's a very challenging place to work," said Maj Jackson Docherty RA. "There is very much an African way of doing things. However, the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) are trying very hard to make things work despite the enormous upheavals they have faced."

He is a member of the International Military Advisory and Training Team currently assisting key staff in Sierra Leone's defence ministry and armed forces. The 114-strong, British-led IMATT, which includes 100 personnel from the UK, has small teams based around the country.

Other members are drawn from France, America, Ghana, Senegal, Bermuda and Nigeria. France and Australia have been previous members of the group, which has been in place since the end of 2000. It includes infantry instructors, marines, reconnaissance specialists, engineers, communications experts, logistical planners, medical practitioners and administrative staff.

Meanwhile, the UK maintains an "over-the-horizon reserve ready to deploy rapidly into Sierra Leone to support the UN mission if necessary. British troops will also visit Freetown from time to time to assist the country return to democracy.

Maj John Martin, Para, who is based in Freetown, said: "As well as advising the RSLAF, we have been able to get involved in very worthwhile Cimic [civil-military cooperation] projects. I am responsible for rebuilding a school damaged during the war. It's all stuff that really makes you feel you are making a difference to people's lives."

**Series of war crimes trials will heighten tensions**



Picture: Cpl Dave Liddle RLC



Learning curve: CSgt Stewart Gilroy RHF, above, instructs a soldier in the Sierra Leone Army

Face-to-face: Maj Jackson Docherty RA, left, meets Liberian rebels on the bridge over the Manu River, the precise point at which the borders of Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia meet. On the left is Maj Robin Davies LI



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# Northern exposure

Breathtaking: Snow-capped mountains in the Hindu Kush

## Op Tarrock reconstruction team proves big things can come from small packages

**Report: Andrea Frazer**  
**Pictures: Graeme Main**

AS Afghanistan steps falteringly towards its first ever democratic elections later this year, a team of 85 British soldiers based in Mazar-e-Sharif is working hard to stabilise five of the north's most troubled provinces and extend central government influence.

The radical approach of the UK Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) to security sector reform has won widespread recognition for its impartiality and diplomacy and could be used as a template for other regions in the country.

Northern Afghanistan, the region where the tide first turned against the Taliban, has suffered from decades of battle and bloodshed.

The area and its people are dominated by the influence of two main factions, Jamiat and Jumbesh, and their respective warlords, Generals Atta and Dostum.

Security sector reform is the most press-

ing issue in this area, where deep-seated factional rivalries can quickly deteriorate into full-scale tribal warfare and commanders can deploy troops, battle tanks and infantry fighting vehicles, mortars and RPGs at short notice.

During the autumn this volatile area witnessed some of the fiercest factional fighting in Afghanistan since the fall of the old regime.

"Thousands of militia deployed into the field with tanks, artillery and anti-aircraft weapons," said Col Dickie Davis, coalition commander in the northern provinces.

"There was limited fighting, but they exchanged tank and artillery rounds and front-line villages changed hands. Ten were killed and 30 injured.

"We got stuck in along the front line to try to stop the tension spilling over into more serious fighting and encourage factional commanders to pull back.

"A ceasefire was drawn up and we oversaw its implementation and basically got

everybody back to barracks and calmed things down.

"Since then we have been running disarmament programmes to take the heavy weapons and heat out of the area and try to prevent that sort of thing happening again.

"We have had a number of close shaves with patrols almost being ambushed because militia fighters thought they were the other faction. One of our warrant officers narrowly missed being hit by a negligent discharge from an anti-aircraft weapon."

Isolated from the rest of Afghanistan by the snow-capped Hindu Kush Mountains, this remote region appears to be frozen in time.

"When we travel to some of the more remote villages, it's like you are stepping back 1,000 years," said Col Davis.

"There are no cars, no running water, no electricity; you'll see people thrashing grain. The only forms of transport are oxen, camels and donkeys. Few can read or write, but most have AK47s and RPGs.

"In one village, the people thought we were Russians because they had not seen any westerners since the Russians invaded. We had to negotiate our way out of that one quickly."

● More Op Tarrock reports in Pages 28-29 and 31, images – Pages 40-47



**Col Dickie Davis, PRT commander**



# Treading a fine



Rfn Tungabhadra Rai, 2 RGR, at Kala Jangi Fort



Arms update: Military observation team checks weapons held by factional forces

## British troops urge rival factions to lay down their arms

THE Mazar-e-Sharif UK Provincial Reconstruction Team, one of six such teams of coalition troops and civilian representatives, was established to improve security levels, help the central government extend its influence in the northern provinces and assist reconstruction efforts.

Roughly the size of Scotland, the UK area of responsibility covers the provinces of Balkh, Faryab, Jowzjan, Samangan and Sar-e Pol.

"There was very little intelligence on the north," said team commander Col Dickie Davis. "Nobody had operated here before. Much time and effort has been spent finding out what's going on."

"Security sector reform is a pretty wide-ranging mission. Our first challenge is to reduce unauthorised military capability; our second is sorting out the rule



Negotiation: Capt Ken Thomson, 2 RGR and his interpreter discuss disarmament of heavy weapons with Gen Faqir Muhammed, Deputy Commander 53 Division, in Sheberghan

law. This operation will take a long time."

From a standing start eight months ago, the team, which includes soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, The Royal Gurkha Rifles, with logistic, communication, intelligence, engineer and medical support, personnel from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Department of International Development and two US government departments, has already

achieved a great deal in terms of boosting security levels in this fragile region.

The police force is being reorganised into a more legitimate and capable force as opposed to a factional one. Officers have received new uniforms, equipment, vehicles, permits to carry weapons and the PRT is setting up a police training academy in Mazar-e-Sharif.

"Coalition forces carry great clout here," said Col Davis. "The people realise that we are impartial and that we are working towards peace."

Infantry soldiers within the PRT are divided into small patrols known as military observation teams (MOTs) and regularly spend a week at a time away from their headquarters, travelling extensively into the remote areas of the north.

Led by a captain and a warrant officer and accompanied by an interpreter, the MOTs must build up a knowledge and understanding of their area of responsibility, meet with community leaders and factional commanders, spread the word about the work of the PRT and identify aid projects.

Keeping their fingers firmly on the



# line

pulse, the patrols are in a prime position to provide timely and accurate information on the stability of the Northern provinces.

Maj Guy Bennett, PRT chief of staff, said: "Our military teams have been conducting an assessment of the security situation in the north. They've been going out and getting a feel for what the area holds in terms of factions, militia forces, police, local government infrastructure and the needs of the local people.

"Soldiers have been reacting to situations, brokering local ceasefires, mediating, reducing tension, monitoring the withdrawal of factional forces and supervising disarmament programmes.

"There are two factions here and what you do for one you must do for the other. We have got to be seen to be fair and cannot favour anyone."

British soldiers appear to have earned the respect of regional warlords, rival factions, Afghan officials and local people.

"The quality of the soldiers is excellent," said Col Davis. "They are mature and very experienced.

"Troops are sent out over large distances and have to get themselves in and out of some quite dodgy situations, so we must have confidence in their ability.

"The Gurkhas in the present teams come from Support Company, 2 RGR. They have got to be able to remain calm as they will almost always be outnumbered on the ground.



**Detailed discussion: Regular meetings with commanders of both factional forces ensures impartiality of British teams**

"They can nearly always communicate with local people, giving them tremendous access to the population," he said.

The PRT's innovative, even-handed and highly effective approach has visibly improved stability. Its intervention has stopped major confrontation and potential bloodshed on numerous occasions.

The team's success is seen as a very welcome sign of positive progress. The north is now viewed as one of the most progressive regions in terms of security, with the potential to lead the rest of Afghanistan into a more peaceful and secure future.



**Capt Nick Aucott, 2 RGR**

"We've made a massive difference to security. There is a degree of control now."



**LCpl Bhim Rai, 2 RGR**

"Most of our time is spent off-road driving; it's very difficult, tough on the vehicles but great fun."



**Farhad Jalal, interpreter**

"The PRT has had a positive impact on the security situation, without it there would be more tension. I am 19 years old and this is the most peaceful time that I have ever known."



**SSgt Shaun Breslan, UK PRT**

"The north has taken a major step forward in the short time we've been here. We've gone from warlords fighting each other constantly to the stage where they are handing in their heavy armour."



**Feedback: Capt Tom Barker, 2 RGR, gauges public opinion in Mazar-e-Sharif**



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# Every little helps in war-torn Kabul



Back to school: CIMIC officer Capt Jeff Heaps RLC helps during English lessons at an all-girls school in Kabul. Years of war and neglect critically damaged the education system

## Military team raises funds to make people's lives better

FOUR British soldiers are pulling every string they can to raise money and support for campaigns to help rebuild Kabul's shattered infrastructure and improve quality of life in the city.

The British Civil Military Co-operation (Cimic) team, based at Camp Souter and led by Capt Jeff Heaps of 1 General Support Regiment RLC, works with other International Security Assistance Force (Isaf) personnel and humanitarian and aid agencies.

Funding for Cimic projects comes from Britain, the European Union and charities. The team also relies on fundraising by British soldiers in Kabul and donations from family and friends to provide ready cash for quick-impact projects.

Projects are selected according to Isaf's five main criteria of water, health, education, power and infrastructure. All proposals are tested for future sustainability to ensure long-term benefits.

The Cimic team is running an impressive portfolio of 17 active projects across



Technical expertise: UK National Support Element REME workshop soldiers Cpl Brian Taylor and Cfn Levi Lynch put their free time to good use by repairing Kabul's only accident and emergency ambulances. The Cimic team needs to raise £5,500 to get all four ambulances back on the road

Police Districts 8 and 9, the British area of responsibility in Kabul. They include initiatives such as providing desperately needed drugs, medical supplies and air-conditioning units for Kabul's Maiwand General Hospital, refurbishing schools and nurseries and equipping them with teaching essentials.

Large-scale ventures include digging wells to improve water supplies, constructing footbridges, renovating war-damaged schools and putting together a proposal to attract financial backing for the creation of a new school.

Later this month the team will organise a football match between Isaf soldiers and the Afghan national U-21 team at Kabul's

Olympic Stadium, the scene of atrocities carried out by the Taliban.

The Cimic team's efforts in this poverty-stricken, battle-scarred city may seem like a drop in the ocean but, undeterred by the huge scale of the tasks faced, this determined, motivated and hugely committed group continues to work round the clock, believing every project completed during its tour will vastly improve the lives of the Afghan people.

Donations towards the work are welcomed. Sterling cheques made payable to Cashier APC should be sent to UK CIMIC Officer, HQ BRITFOR, Camp Souter, Kabul, BFPO 758.

● Afghanistan images – centre pages



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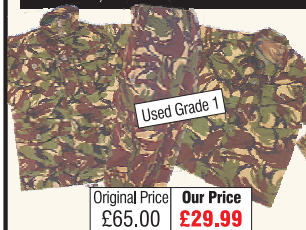
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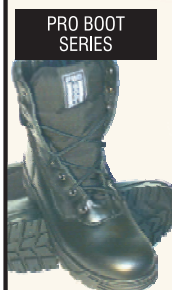
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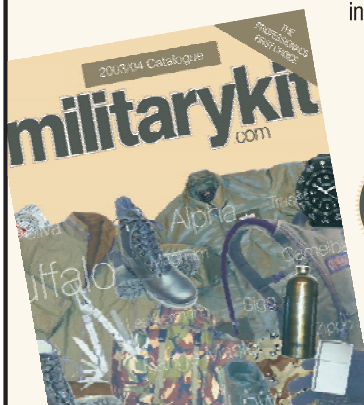


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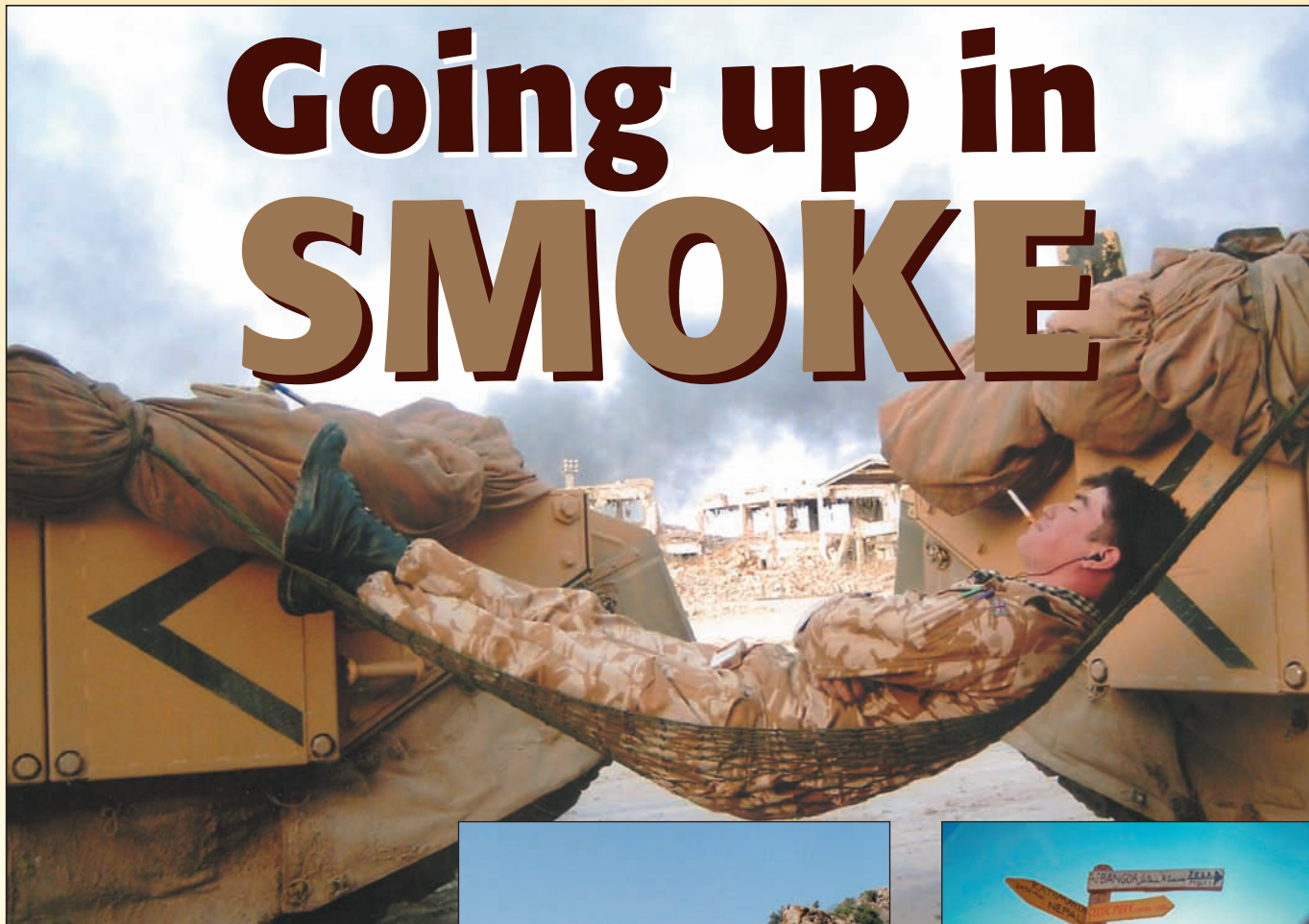


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# Going up in SMOKE



## Op Telic image wins our final £25 voucher

CAPT Ali Gemmell of the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards based at RAC Training Squadron in Bovington is the final winner in this year's *Soldier* photographic competition.

His candid camera snap of a soldier relaxing in a hammock strung between two Challenger 2 tanks during the ground war in Iraq was the unanimous choice of our panel of judges. Though we support the Army's campaign to stop smoking, this is a simple but effective picture which will stand the test of time.

The message seems to be that even in the midst of mayhem, the British soldier will find a way to relax.

Second was Pte Keith Maude of 2 Para, whose picture of a mortar firing in Kenya was described by *Soldier* cameraman Graeme Main as "possibly the best mortar images we have seen. It is very difficult to capture the actual firing with precision because there's an element of skill and luck in the timing, but this image speaks for itself and any professional photographer would have been very pleased with this result".

Third was Sgt Gary Ranu, 1 LI, a past



# SOLDIER

Photographic Competition

winner who obviously keeps an open mind and seems to see a picture wherever he is serving. Shot into direct sunlight, his signpost image gives us a feeling of a warm environment a very long long way from home. It's an image with hidden depths.

They will go forward in the *Soldier* competition to be judged for our £250 award, one of the categories in the 2004 Army Photographic Competition, for which entries close on February 15.

The prize-giving is due to take place in London in April. The competition is open



Winners all: Images taken by Capt Ali Gemmell, main picture; Pte Keith Maude, above left; and Sgt Gary Ranu, above right

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Send entries to DCC(A), SO2 (P), Room 1/20, Metropole Building, Northumberland Avenue, London WC2N 5BP by February 15. Queries to DCC(A) on (civ) 020 780 78653 or (mil) 9621 78653. See also DCI Army 83/03 or [www.army.mod.uk/competitions/apc2003.htm](http://www.army.mod.uk/competitions/apc2003.htm)



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# Major mandarin

So senior Whitehall officials can't tell the difference between a combat jacket and a cushion? Meet one who certainly can

**Report: Ray Routledge**  
**Pictures: Mike Weston**

HIS job title is Second Permanent Under Secretary (usually abbreviated to the unlovely acronym 2nd PUS) and he is one of the Ministry of Defence's most senior civil servants.

Ian Andrews sits on the Executive Committee of the Army Board (ECAB) and controls a budget of £2.4 billion. He is responsible for around 30,000 staff.

A former Territorial Army soldier with The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, Ian spent a year on Regular service with the 1st Battalion in the 1980s. That experience that has given him an insight into what matters to the Army and why, and just what impact decisions taken at the top can have on soldiers on the ground.

His military career started in the Officers' Training Corps at Bristol University. "I spent my last year there as the commander of the infantry platoon," he recalled in his Whitehall office. "It was hugely enjoyable. Here was the best club in the university which sold the cheapest beer and I got paid for drinking it."

He opted for a career in the MoD because, he said, he was a geographer by training and always had an interest in defence and foreign policy issues.

After a year in Bath he moved to London in 1976, by which time he was operations officer of the 5th Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers.

He met his wife, Moira – also serving in the TA – after a MoD posting to the naval base at Rosyth. "There can't be many husband and wife holders of the Territorial Decoration," he said proudly.

With his Civil Service career making progress, Ian decided to take a year out as a Regular officer.

"Since the war and National Service generations had moved on I thought if we had more people on the civilian side of the MoD with some understanding of the



**Top man: Ian Andrews, 2nd PUS, heads the Ministry of Defence's Central Staff**

Armed Forces it would be advantageous."

He spent a year with 1 RRF in Germany as a company 2ic, taking in an exercise in Canada and Berlin brigade reinforcement exercises.

"Although the operational side was interesting I think the greatest value to me was understanding the challenge of running a company of soldiers in barracks."

One of his own MoD projects came back to haunt him, as he explained: "I was in

the Services' Terms and Conditions Branch dealing with Service voting arrangements. There were problems with the levels of registration of Servicemen and women and their spouses because they were constantly moving around.

"We came up with a scheme to encourage spouses to register as Service voters and produced a simple, straightforward booklet explaining the benefits.

"Two years later in Germany, when the DCI [Defence Council Instruction] on service voting registration came round I was determined to demonstrate that this could be done. Then I discovered a booklet that was clearly written by somebody who hadn't the first idea of the realities of life in the Army. Me.

"It was a salutary experience. As a serving soldier I discovered that something which might seem logical and sensible at the MoD, when translated on the ground is very different." Ian left as a major, effectively abolishing his own Territorial Army post under Options for Change. With an increasingly busy schedule and a young family, he could not afford the time. Today he heads, with the Vice Chief of the Defence Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Anthony Bagnall, the Central Staff of the MoD, which supports the Defence Management Board and ministers.

"I have my TLB [top level budget] and staff management role and sit on all three of the single Service executive committees. I am also a member of the Defence Management Board and the Investment Approvals Board."

His work on the Service boards means he considers his share of redress-of-grievance cases, particularly when there are potential resource implications.

"It is the right of every Serviceman or woman to take a redress ultimately to their Service board. These have become increasingly frequent in recent years, often prompted by the perceived impact of transitional arrangements following the introduction of Pay 2000 and the restructuring of the TA. Each is considered individually on its merits by at least two Board members. "My time as a TA soldier and my year as a Regular gave me an insight into how the decisions taken in the MoD can have a huge impact."

## Fact file: Ian Andrews

MoD Career path: Equipment procurement; personnel policy; Defence Export Sales; attended Nato Staff College in Rome; assistant private secretary to Secretary of State for Defence 1986-88; Head of Defence Lands Secretariat; Head of Resources and Programmes Branch for the Army (Options for Change); Civil Secretary British Forces Germany; Managing Director DERA; Chief Executive Defence Estates Agency.





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"I hate Valentine's Day."





JOHN McARDLE

# My military fa

## Former Army brat and soldier found fame in Brookside and Merseybeat

**Interview: Ray Routledge**

"MY dad was in the Army so it seemed natural for me to join too," said affable scouser John McArdle over a half of lager in his local pub in a small Lancashire village.

John's late father, known by everyone as Mac, was a career soldier in the Army Physical Training Corps after first joining The King's Regiment. He was attached to The Parachute Regiment as a parachute training instructor and later served with The Lancashire Regiment.

"It meant that I was an Army brat so it was a different school every couple of years for me. Those schools were as far apart as Fulwood Barracks in Preston and the Kowloon side of Hong Kong."

Typical of people from his home city, it wasn't long before the irrepressible Liverpool sense of humour showed itself.

"I loved the travel and it was a great education for any kid. I was fond of Hong Kong, where we learned to swear in Chinese.

"Dad, who finished his 28 years' service as a staff sergeant, was a bit of a character. He was hardly ever in uniform; it was always a tracksuit or vest. He was always getting into scrapes. I think he was a sergeant major at one time but got busted."

John himself joined the Army cadets at 13 and the Regular Army at 17.

"Unfortunately Dad died aged 48, just two years after he came out. By then I had completed basic training at Maida Barracks in Aldershot and was on my way with the Paras. But with his death my mother really needed me at home so I got a compassionate discharge. It was the end of my Army career."

But John's two younger brothers took up the call to the Colours.

"Rory would have made a fantastic soldier," said John. "He was a hard bloke and Army-mad. If anyone was going to be a professional soldier in our family it was Rory and he joined The Royal Green Jackets.

"Sadly he got a medical discharge because he had an ear problem. He was gutted.

"My other brother Terry, a lovely guy, joined but couldn't stand the Army. He went AWOL and ended up in Colchester."

John drifted into different jobs before moving to Australia in 1970.

But military service nearly caught up with him as he was called up for the Australian Army. With the Vietnam War at its height, he wasn't keen.

"All British citizens were eligible for Australian call-up. I didn't fancy it so I got a job in New Guinea and pretended I didn't know I'd been drafted."

On his return to Oz, the authorities tracked him down.

"I pleaded ignorance and feigned deafness," he laughed. "But I was 23 and very fit from working as a rigger. The final part of the process was a chat with the commanding officer. I explained I had been in one of the best regiments in Britain and had to leave and didn't want to fight someone else's war. To my joy, they said they didn't want me." He returned to

Britain and with no qualifications went to night school while working as a scaffolder during the day.

"I was building a set as a favour for the drama department when an actor dropped out. Since I'd been watching them rehearse I offered to take his part. It was so successful I went off to drama school and haven't done anything else since."

Pictures courtesy of the BBC



# family

He toured in rep for several years, often for poor wages. Small roles on TV came his way, including a part on *Coronation Street* before his big break as the memorable Billy Corkhill in *Brookside*. It was a role that made him a household name.

"Television requires total concentration and focus. If you act badly, the camera will find you out. And there is always the danger of being on an out-take show. I have been on a few of those."

The on-screen chemistry between John and his TV wife Sue Johnston made them television's golden couple. After five years both moved on.

John has appeared in so many small-screen dramas that it is now difficult for his agent to get him guest roles.

"I have been on *The Bill* three times, *Casualty*, *Heartbeat*, and *Holby City*. And there is a *Dalziel and Pascoe* awaiting transmission."

He is now best known as Inspector Jim Oulton in the crime series *Merseybeat*... not the first time he has played a policeman.

"I was Helen Mirren's boss in *Prime Suspect 5*," he recalled.

"I have acted with some star names like Julie Walters, Billie Whitelaw and Robert Carlyle. I've worked a lot with Ray Winston and Joanna Lumley and I did a film called *The Place of the Dead* with Timothy West and Greg Wise. It was about the ten British soldiers who went on the infamous expedition to Low's Gully in Borneo. I played Maj Ron Foster. It was very controversial and an interesting part to play."

When not on TV, he does a lot of radio work and has written and directed stage



#### The McArdle File:

**Born:** August 16, 1949, Liverpool

**Married:** To Kathy Jamieson, who plays his on-screen wife Dawn in *Merseybeat*.

**TV roles:** *Brookside* (1985-90) as Billy Corkhill; *Merseybeat* (2001-present day) as Insp Jim Oulton.

**TV guest appearances:** *The Bill*, *Holby City*, *Prime Suspect 5*, *The Cazalets*, *Peak Practice*, *Born to Run*, *Kavanagh QC*, *Heartbeat*, *Wycliffe*, *Cracker*, *The Ruth Rendell Mysteries*.

**Films:** *The Place Of The Dead*, *Bambino Mio*, *Skallagrigg*, *Gallowglass*.

plays and films. He has made a handful of the latter and would have loved to be part of *Lord of the Rings*.

"Dominic Monaghan, who played Merry, was working on a radio play with me in London when he got the role. I said to him 'By taking this job, you will miss the next part of this radio series - I bet you are gutted!'"

The latest series of *Merseybeat*, the fourth, concluded on BBC 1 last month.

John is optimistic that the popular show, which also stars Leslie Ash of *Men Behaving Badly* fame and former *Hollyoaks* bad girl Joanna Taylor, will be back for a fifth series.

"Hopefully it will be recommissioned, but we haven't heard yet," he said.

## Brookside Billy's military escort

JOHN McArdle's famous face got him out of trouble while filming in South Armagh a few years ago.

Somewhat worse for wear, he was making his unsteady way back to his village digs at two o'clock in the morning. "Suddenly a bush moved and out popped a squaddie.

"He asked where I was going so I told him. He said he recognised me but couldn't place me, so he called his mate.

"Another soldier appeared and said I might be on a wanted poster. Then it dawned: 'It's Billy Corkhill' [John's character in *Brookside*] they yelled and out popped another half-dozen squaddies. I had a military escort back to my digs."

Celebrity does have its downside, though.

"Being recognised everywhere I went when I was on *Brookside* became a nightmare. There was no privacy. I couldn't go to normal holiday resorts like Spain. If I was in a hotel and there was some entertainment on they always dragged me up.

"I am an actor, not a singer, but they would insist. My wife hated it."

## LIFE AFTER THE ARMY

### Taking off the pressure

Former soldiers are working together on divers' safety

THAILAND seems to be the destination of choice for former Army divers... a group of them are working together on the idyllic island of Koh Samui in the safety and emergency business, **writes Ray Routledge.**

Last February, *Soldier* reported on former gunner Crispin J G Paton's exploits in the Gulf of Thailand. Now we learn that four more ex-soldiers are based nearby, where they operate a Samui hyperbaric decompression chamber.

Dave Covey, ex-RLC, spent 24 years in the Army, during which he logged 20 years of diving experience. He went to Thailand to work as a diving instructor, but learned that Hyperbaric Services of Thailand had installed a unit on Koh Samui and needed staff with experience in diving and medicine.

"I went to the chamber with my Army diver's logbooks and discharge papers."

He met chamber manager Lee Griffiths, a former Royal Engineer, and after several months training in hyperbaric procedures, including time at the Diving Diseases Research Centre in Plymouth, qualified as a diver medical assistant and assistant life support technician.

Now he works alongside two other former soldiers. Chris Esplin, who looks after the technical tender, spent 14 years in the REME as an electrical engineer, while boat medic Bob Keen served for 12 years in The Queen's Regiment.

While much of their work revolves around diving accidents, an emergency service has been set up using a sea ambulance and a helicopter from the Royal Thai Police.

"This year our evacuation service has included victims of road traffic accidents, a ruptured appendix, tropical diseases and the bends.

"Recreational divers are usually treated using US Navy protocols covering 15 to 20 hours over several days, and the bill would pay for a mid-range car. Yet I am surprised how many are uninsured."

Considering insurance costs as little as £50, don't leave home without it, is his advice

● Are you ex-Army with a second career that could inspire others? Write or e-mail [rroutledge@soldiermagazine.co.uk](mailto:rroutledge@soldiermagazine.co.uk)



Thai tech: Ex-loggie Dave Covey





# Focusing on



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# n the future

Pictures: Graeme Main

AFGHANISTAN is a country of great beauty, dramatic landscapes, rich culture, archaeological and architectural treasures and unparalleled levels of hospitality. Despite suffering from years of conflict, enormous poverty and crumbling infrastructure, its people have hopes for a future that is stable, peaceful and free.





# Don't blush, look before you flush

About 5,000 soldiers currently serving will contract bowel cancer. We get expert advice on how to deal with it

**Report: Ray Routledge**  
**Pictures: Graeme Main**

FEAR of cancer plays as big a part in its lethality as the disease itself. We pretend it's not there . . . until it's too late.

Take bowel cancer, the UK's second biggest cancer killer. Of the 35,000 people diagnosed with it every year, 16,000 will die, many of them needlessly.

Ignore the signs and it could kill you. Especially if you are male. Women, it appears, are more honest with their doctors when it comes to medical matters of an intimate nature.

This is one of the messages from Colon

Cancer Concern (CCC), the UK's leading bowel cancer charity, whose roadshow visited Aldershot Garrison and may tour other bases around the country.

Cancer is not an old person's disease; it can affect anyone at any age. Yet it does not have to be a killer. Catch it early and the chances of surviving to lead a normal life are good.

CCC's memorable advice is: "Don't blush – look before you flush." That glance into the toilet bowl when you use the lavatory could save your life.



Crusading: Bernard Cribbins



Campaigning: Julia Kennedy

Enrolled nurse Julia Kennedy, who has been working for CCC for four years, described the symptoms to look out for.

"The main one is a persistent change in bowel habits," she said. "Know yourself so that you can identify a change."

Rectal bleeding is also something to look out for, as is abdominal pain, lumps and anaemia. But it is the persistent

**Captain Colon calling: Bernard Cribbins joins Borough of Rushmoor Mayor Frank Rust and Professor Chris Marks to highlight the Colon Cancer Concern awareness campaign**



## The survivor

GEOFF Newman, a retired Queen's Royal Regiment soldier from Cranleigh, Surrey discovered he had bowel cancer seven years ago.

"I went through a phase of getting caught short," he recalled. "One day I used the toilet and it was as if someone had sprayed the pan with red paint."

"I saw my GP, then a specialist and within a fortnight, I was having surgery."

"The important message is that if anything changes in your toilet movements, for God's sake go to the doctor. And do it quickly. I've had three friends who died of bowel cancer because they left it too long."





**Get to your doctor early and your chances of survival are greater by as much as 90 per cent in some cases**

change in bowel habits that is the real clue.

"If in doubt, go to your GP or medical centre. Get to your doctor early and your chances of survival are greater by as much as 90 per cent in some cases."

Julia added: "There are 5,500 Army personnel in Aldershot and three quarters

of them are men. One in 20 – about 220 – will get bowel cancer. Be aware."

Actor, comedian and former Para Bernard Cribbins lent his support to the CCC campaign. "I am involved with a similar organisation: the Bobby Moore Fund," he said. "That targets bowel cancer, the disease that the former Eng-

land football captain and World Cup winner died from.

"Ask yourself, if a fit man like him can get it, anyone can. It is a simple message – look before you flush."

**Simple steps to reduce the risk:**

- Eat five fruit or veg portions a day
- Eat something with high fibre every day
- Cut down smoking
- Reduce alcohol and have a less sedentary lifestyle

## It took a kick up backside from my wife before I did anything

CPL Mick Riley, of 25 Regiment RLC at Deepcut, has been in the Army for 12 years. He survived testicular cancer.

"In 1996, I was 21 and based in Gutersloh with 2 Close Support Regiment RLC," he said. "I was working on the door at the soldiers' nightclub on camp and I took a kick in the privates."

"A couple of days later I noticed swelling in the testicles. My wife urged me to go sick but, being the hard soldier, I thought it would sort itself out."

"After six weeks the swelling had gone but there were lumps where there should not have been. My wife kept nagging me and I was in so much pain I could hardly walk."

"I went to the doctor and was sent straight to hospital. The following day I was in surgery, having a testicle removed."

"There were 17 lumps including a teratoma. That can be malignant."

"After three months I was sent to Haslar in Gosport, Hampshire and from there was posted to my home town, Liverpool, so I could attend the oncology unit at Clatterbridge Hospital while working as an instructor for the Territorial Army."

"A routine check revealed that the

cancer had spread to my stomach, so I started chemotherapy. I was off work and lost my hair."

"But I recovered, all seemed well and I was posted back to Germany with 1 General Support Regiment."

Then a routine scan revealed a three-inch tumour near my kidneys.

"I went under the knife again and since then I seem to be clear. I had the soldier's mentality that at the end of the day if I die, I die. But my attitude, a mixture of arrogance and fear caused my family a lot of anguish."

"If I had gone to my doctor earlier I could have saved myself a lot of pain and suffering."

"Why didn't I go? Embarrassment. Men aren't comfortable about dropping their trousers in front of a doctor, but embar-

rassment is not worth dying for."

"It may have been a kick in the testicles that acted as the catalyst for my illness, but it took a kick up the backside from my wife for me to do something about it."

Cpl Riley and former Army colleague Phil Morris, another testicular cancer survivor, have launched a website advising men how to check themselves and what steps to take next if something is wrong. Their campaign has the backing of pop legend Paul Weller.

Phil, a part-time drummer, had just been diagnosed with the disease and could not attend a drum clinic with Paul Weller's man on the skins, Steve White.

Steve and Paul heard about Phil and offered to fund the website.

Check out [www.checkemlads.co](http://www.checkemlads.co) – it could save your life.





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# From Army office

*Soldier* catches up with England Rugby World Cup hero Josh Lewsey

**Interview: Roger Thompson**

SATURDAY November 22, 2003 – the day England lifted the Rugby World Cup – has become one of those few occasions in history about which people will forever be quizzed on their whereabouts.

One particular Sandhurst graduate should have no problem in answering. Josh Lewsey was on the Sydney pitch, in an England shirt, celebrating a famous victory.

Seconds before the final whistle of extra time, the London Wasps' utility back had watched the predictable tactical build-up which put Jonny Wilkinson in range of the Australian posts from the England bench.

Josh had played at fullback for 80 minutes of the match against Australia and seven minutes of extra time before coach Clive Woodward called upon fresh legs for the final attack.

Acutely aware that all of the team's hard work now focused on one 45-second passage of play, he concedes that the four seconds it took "that drop kick" to fly between the posts felt like an eternity.

For the 27-year-old there was plenty of time to reflect on the meaning of victory, the cheering of the England supporters during the presentation of medals and England skipper Martin Johnson stepping forward to accept the William Webb Ellis trophy.

That supreme moment had concluded a turnaround in Josh's fortunes, which began when he left Bristol in 1998 to rejoin the London Wasps. He had been one of the few bright lights to emerge from the antipodes "tour from hell" when

Australia beat England 76-0 that summer, but found gaining further international caps difficult.

He was training hard and playing well for the Wasps, but was "disheartened" when Woodward suggested that "he had not played sufficiently well to merit an England shirt".

"On reflection, I think that I was just too eager," he said. "Being left out of the national squad made me sit up and take note that there was so much more to life, and so many more important things in this world, than sport."

That realisation partially released a

pressure valve and, as if to hammer home the point, he turned to join the Army and Sandhurst.

Away from full-time rugby it was not easy to balance the rigours of Academy life and merit selection for the Wasps matches. Indeed, in doing both he achieved a degree of national renown.

"I was adamant that neither my friends at Sandhurst nor the rugby club would be short-changed by my decision," he said.

"They both deserved the very best that I could give."

There is no doubt that he completed every aspect of Sandhurst's officer training course with flying colours and earned the total respect of his fellow cadets.

His international career also began to re-blossom. During his time at the Academy he starred in Joe Lydon's highly-successful England Sevens team, which undoubtedly caught the eye of Woodward. "I frequently played for England against the Army Sevens side and was in the Wasps side that lost to them in the Middlesex Sevens at Twickenham a few years back," he said. "The Army had a very strong side and led the way in this country. Joe Lydon watched the Army play regularly in a bid to improve the national game."

Sadly England's gain proved to be the British Army's loss. Josh's ambition as a newly commissioned Gunner officer had been to serve with 7 (Para) RHA, to pass P Company and earn the red beret and the respect of his soldiers.

He wanted real responsibilities as a regimental officer and taking large chunks of time away from the unit to play rugby was not acceptable to him. In his mind there was no compromise and he was "unwilling to take on a token role" in the Army.

He would not accept the same rank and salary as his friends, many of whom were, by then, on their way to Iraq, and consequently resigned from the Service. "To have not done so would be disrespectful," he said.

Winning against Australia at the Telstra Stadium was a euphoric moment, but typically Josh was again quick to put the nature of sporting success and the true values of life in context.

"Pulling on the jersey of your country and representing so many people is a humbling experience," he said. "It provides massive motivation, but I will never forget that what the Army does is far more daunting. Going to war is in a different league."

While in Australia

Josh and the England camp were greatly boosted by text messages from his former colleagues serving in Iraq. After the final he valued the texts he received from Op Telic recounting how the England victory

"had given the boys in the Gulf a big morale boost".

Had he stayed in the Army, "Major" Josh Lewsey might have earned an MBE for outstanding military service. As a World Cup winner he was one of 30 players to gain such an award.

Although a few eyebrows were raised at the time, the award sits very easily with Josh's understanding of the honours system. Winning lifted the national spirit. Morale was high, Joe Public felt good and 750,000 of them lined the streets of London to say "thank you".

"There is no equivalence between the gold medal and the MBE," he said. "The gold medal is for the players on the park on that particular day. The MBE recognises that sport can affect the mood of a nation. It also recognises the sacrifices that the players and their family and friends have made to reach that point. One of my biggest sacrifices was having to leave the Army."

When the discussion turned to the future he was clear that winning the Rugby World Cup could have a downside. Now that the peak ambition had been fulfilled, complacency and a certain dilution of purpose might be the main enemies.

However, serious weights at the Wasps training ground each morning suggests that this former Army man has no intention of resting on his reputation. Winning is in his blood. Maintaining a strong grip

**‘The MBE recognises the sacrifices that the players have made ... one of my biggest sacrifices was having to leave the Army’**

**‘Pulling on the jersey of your country is a humbling experience, but I’ll never forget that what the British Army does is far more daunting’**





# er to Wizard of Oz



World Cup winner: Josh Lewsey parades the William Webb Ellis trophy, left, and in action during England's 40-5 Six Nations win over Italy at Twickenham last year Pictures: Roger Thompson

on the Zurich League is no less important than it was last year and Wasps have never won the European Cup. This summer "new" England tours New Zealand and Australia and in 2005 the British Lions tour New Zealand.

For Josh Lewsey MBE the present is very good and the future might give him eight more years of rugby. He has an Army bursary assisted degree from Bristol University, a hard earned Sandhurst pedigree, a gold medal from the 2003 Rugby World Cup and is now studying law. After rugby more doors should open than close.

This particular Wizard of Oz knows

that his short Army career was in itself a great achievement which contributed to the fulfilment of one of his dreams – to stand on the very top of the world – even if it was Down Under.

◆ Tickets for the Army's clash with the Royal Navy at Twickenham on May 1 are now on sale and can be ordered by calling the booking office on 01252 334415. The Army's defence of the Babcock-sponsored Inter-Services Trophy begins with a show-down against the RAF at Newbury on April 21.





## SHORTS

**Undisputed champions**

IN a repeat of last season's Northern Ireland novice boxing championship final, 1 GH defeated 2 RGJ at Shackleton Barracks, Ballykelly, to become the first battalion to win back-to-back titles.

Captained by Cpl Andrew Morrison and featuring three members of the squad that lifted a record three tournament trophies in 2002, 1 GH came back from a two-bout deficit to secure a 5-4 victory.

**Anyone for tennis?**

SOLDIERS who wish to be considered for stewarding positions at this year's Wimbledon tennis championships, which run from June 21 to July 6, should contact WO2 Manktelow on mil 94872 2051.

**Army's strip search**

THE Army men's football team is looking for a kit manager for the 2004-2005 season. For more information, job details and commitment requirements, contact team manager Maj Rob Bayston (RLC) on 01252 348143 or mil 94222 3143.

**Officials courses**

THE Army Cricket Association is running the first of two week-long umpires and scorers courses next month.

Covering the 42 laws of cricket, the programme incorporates the National Association of Cricket Umpires and Scorers exam and will be held in Aldershot from March 1-5. The course will be repeated during the first full week of October.

Anyone interested in attending should contact Maj Michael Cornwell on mil 94321 8343.

**Stallions prove pedigree**

FOR the second time in three years, the REME Stallions lifted the Second Division trophy at the annual John Muise EME ice hockey tournament in Canada.

Led by Cfn Rob Taylor, the Stallions lost just one of their qualifying games, a narrow 5-4 defeat against National Defence Headquarters (NDHQ) Ottawa, and finished second in their group. The British side then secured their shot at regaining the title and a second showdown with NDHQ Ottawa by beating Petawawa B in the semi-finals.

Determined to avenge their lone defeat of the tournament, which was held at a Canadian Forces base near Toronto, the Stallions finally clinched promotion to the Premier Division with victory in a sudden death shoot-out.

# Bess man 1

## Commonwealth star steps into Maida hot seat

ARMY Boxing Association chiefs are hoping that their new head coach will prove as big a hit outside the ring as he was in it, **writes Andy Simms.**

Commonwealth gold medallist and six times ABA champion Sgt Chris Bessey (RLC) has been tasked with guiding the Army boxing team to its 22nd successive Inter-Services title at HMS *Nelson*, Portsmouth on February 11-12, following the shock departure of SSgt Vinny Powell from the Maida gym hot seat late last year.

Boxing's record books acknowledge Bessey as the most successful amateur light middleweight England has ever had. Discounting his win at welterweight in 1993, he won five ABA titles at his preferred weight – surpassing the hat-trick of championships won by George ABC's Roderick Douglas between 1984 and 1986.

The 32-year-old also shares the record for the most wins in one weight division with the highly regarded Mallin brothers. The two siblings, Harry and Fred, both won five titles at middleweight. Only John Lyon, who fought his way to eight championship medals at light flyweight and flyweight during the 1980s, has enjoyed more domestic success than Bessey.

In an England vest, an appearance at an

Olympic Games is the only international accolade to have escaped the Portsmouth-based pugilist, who won gold at the 1998 Commonwealth Games in Kuala Lumpur and a bronze medal at the European Championships the same year.

"This is a job that I have wanted since leaving the Army team as a boxer two years ago and one that I am really looking forward to doing," explained Bessey. "It has been difficult coming into the post halfway through a season as the guys are already in a routine, but I am here now and do not intend to waste any time complaining.

"My first priority as coach is to retain the Inter-Services championships and, although I will have only spent a short amount of time with the team, I am confident that we have the ability in the squad to do that," he said.

"As a boxer I worked with a lot of different coaches, but the one who had the most influence on my career was Mick Gannon, who was the Army coach for eight years. I will aspire to be as good a coach as he was.

"It is hard not to miss the competitiveness of being in the ring myself, but I've already discovered that as a coach there is no better feeling than being around the lads when they have won."



**Welsh wonder:** Cpl James Whitfield, pictured in action against Australia's Ben McEachran at the 2002 Commonwealth Games, has the second senior national title of his career in his sights

Picture: Graeme Main



# for the job



New man at the helm: Long serving Services boxer Sgt Chris Bessey (RLC) returns to the Army team as head coach

Picture: Graeme Main

Bessey's tenure in a position he describes as his "dream job" in the Army began on a winning note at the novice ABA finals at Knottingley Sports Centre in Yorkshire, where four of his new charges were crowned champions.

Clearly keen to impress the new boss, LCpl Carl Dilks (1 Kings) smashed his way to the middleweight title, stopping his final opponent within seconds of the opening bell. LCpl Jay Summers (2 RGJ) and LCpl Bret Flourney (RE) secured their titles with sound points victories, winning 13-7 and 21-2 respectively, while LCpl John Tuiatu (RLC) was awarded an eleventh hour walkover.

◆ As *Soldier* went to press, light heavyweight Cpl James Whitfield (4 GS Regiment RLC) was preparing for a Welsh ABA final showdown with his former Army team- and roommate, Justin Jones.

"The prospect of fighting Justin for a title I won two years ago is a strange one – especially as this time last year we drove to the competition in the same car," explained the 27-year-old, who represented Wales at the 2002 Commonwealth Games. "Although we remain friends, we won't be talking to each other until after the bout."

With a national title and shot at the Olympic qualifiers at stake, Whitfield knows that there is no room for sentiment in boxing.

## RESULTS SERVICE . . . RESULTS SERVICE . . .

**FOOTBALL: Massey Trophy** – RLC 2 (LCpl Brough, Sgt Hope) REME 3 (Cfn Thorne (2), Cpl Luckhurst); RAC 0 APTC 2 (Miles, WO1 Steven); RA 6 (LBdr Thomas (4), Bdr Wojtas, Gnr Smith) CA Mus 1 (LCpl Holt); APTC 0 RLC 4 (LCpl Brough, LCpl Geary, Cpl Langford, Pte Douglas); RE 1 (LCpl McCormick) Infantry 6 (LCpl Locke (3), Pte Toms, Pte Piercy, Pte Osborne); RAC 1 (Trp Wylie) RA 2 (Gnr Smith (2)); Int Corps 1 (LCpl Tarr) Infantry 3 (Pte Brown, LCpl Locke, Pte Piercy); R Signals 2 (Cpl O'Connor, Sig Rizza) RLC 0; CA Mus 0 RE 5 (Lawson (3), Spr Smith, Taylor); REME 2 (LCpl Webster, Cpl Luckhurst) AGC 1 (LCpl Jardine); AMS 1 (Sgt Cochrane) AAC 0; Int Corps 1 (LCpl Tarr) RLC 3 (Sgt Hope, Cpl O'Donnell, Pte Slack); RAC 0 AGC 3 (Cpl Power, Cpl Harris, Cpl Davidson); AMS 0 RA 2 (Sgt Cunningham, Gnr White); Infantry 6 (Pte Piercy (3), Pte King, LCpl Pinch, LCpl Powell) R Signals 1.

**WINTER SPORTS: RAC/RA/AAC Nordic ski championships: Individual champion** – Cpl Mark Gee (2 RTR). **Best female** – 2nd Lt Anna Downton (19 Regt RA). **Best novice** – Gnr Robert Chadley (3 RHA). **Best junior** – Trp David Dule (QDG). **Best veteran** – Sgt Adrian Smith (QDG). **Best RAC unit** – 2 RTR. **Best RA unit** – 7 Para RHA. **Best AAC unit** – 5 Regt AAC. **Over-**

**all team standings** – 1, 2 RTR; 2, 7 Para RHA; 3, QDG.

**RE Nordic ski championships: 10km biathlon, team winners** – 28 Engr Regt. **Individual winner** – LCpl Allen (28 Engr Regt). **Novice winner** – Spr Thornton (21 Engr Regt). **Junior winner** – Pte Mills (Sp Bn ARRC). **Biathlon relay, team standings** – 1, 28 Engr Regt, 2, Sp Bn ARRC; 3, 21 Engr Regt. **15km classic, team winners** – 28 Engr Regt. **Individual winner** – LCpl Allen. **Novice winner** – Spr Keogh (28 Engr Regt). **Junior winner** – Pte Mills. **Patrol race winners** – 28 Engr Regt.

### MASSEY TROPHY

	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
Infantry	6	6	0	0	32	18
RLC	7	5	0	2	8	15
R Signals	5	4	0	1	19	12
RE	5	4	0	1	12	12
RA	5	4	0	1	9	12
REME	4	3	0	1	4	9
Int Corps	6	2	0	4	-15	6
AAC	4	1	0	3	-2	3
AGC	4	1	0	3	-3	3
AMS	4	1	0	3	-4	3
APTC	4	0	0	4	-19	0
RAC	4	0	0	4	-20	0
CA Mus	4	0	0	4	-22	0



## SHORTS

**Dubai debutants**

PLAYING in front of a crowd of more than 20,000 supporters, the ESS-sponsored Army veterans' rugby team reached the final of the International Invitation Tens tournament in Dubai.

Despite making their debut in the competition, which is held in conjunction with the opening round of the IRB World Series, the Dubai Sevens, the reigning Inter-Services champions cruised through the group stages by thrashing Horsham Casuals 24-0 and scoring 20 unanswered points against the Torbay Sharks.

A 10-0 quarter-final victory over the Buccaneers and 17-5 win against the Marauders set up a final showdown with pre-tournament favourites the Warblers, who, boasting a team of internationals, lived up to their billing and lifted the trophy courtesy of a 19-7 scoreline.

♦ **Anyone over 35 and still playing competitive rugby who wishes to join the Army veterans' squad should contact Capt Gary Stocks on 02380 664341.**

**Signallers at the double**

COLERNE-based 21 Signal Regiment dominated the Army cross country relay championships, scooping both the men's and women's titles.

SSgt Jock Castle, Cpl Kev Conlon, Cpl Smudge Smith and Sig Hagi Chepkwony guided the men to victory, the regiment's first in the competition since 1992, before Cpl Sophie Morris, Sig Steph Bogard, Cpl Julie West and Capt Lindsay Courage completed the double.

**African adventure**

THE British Wheelchair Sports Foundation is looking for volunteers with a sense of adventure to join them at the highest point in Africa later this year, atop the legendary Kilimanjaro.

In a bid to raise funds, the charity, which provides a vital role in the rehabilitation of many disabled children and adults, is organising a trek to the dormant volcano's peak in late September.

Anyone interested in receiving an information pack containing full details on the trek should call 01296 395995 or e-mail [info@bwsf.org.uk](mailto:info@bwsf.org.uk)

**Tigers fans wanted**

FORMER soldier Keith Brown plans to set up a military arm of Hull City FC's official supporters club with the aim of securing reduced admission prices at the KC Stadium for Army, Navy and RAF personnel.

Interested parties should e-mail [hullcityosc@ntlworld.com](mailto:hullcityosc@ntlworld.com)

# Streets ahead

ONE of Army basketball's bright new stars claims that he has time on the court to thank for keeping him out of the courts.

Born in Edmonton, North London and raised by his mother within a three-point throw of the country's capital, Pte Devon James (4 GS Regiment, RLC) concedes that he flirted with a life of petty crime before discovering his love of basketball at the age of 16.

"When I was younger I used to spend most of my time mucking about with my mates and just hanging around the streets," explained the 6ft 2in point guard. "I never got into any serious trouble, but, looking back at some of the things we used to get up to, I was never too far from being on the wrong side of the law."

Fortunately for James, fate, and his mother, intervened.

"My mum told me to get out and find myself a hobby," he said. "They played a lot of basketball at my school so I gave it a try and became hooked straight away. What appealed to me most was that, unlike a lot of other sports, there seemed no limit to the number of plays and tricks in basketball – you can do something different every time you step on court."

"It took over my life and I played it

everyday – whether with friends or practising tricks and skills on my own."

James began training with Crystal Palace before joining the youth set-up at Brixton Top Cats, a club run by former Royal Engineer Jimmy Rogers, where he played in the junior national league.

"All I wanted to do was play and when my coach told me that I could play basketball to a high standard in the Army and get paid for it, I decided to join up."

Now 19 and harbouring ambitions of playing in the top flight of the British Basketball League or America's lucrative NBA, he has already amassed a collection of medals and trophies that belie his mere three years in the game.

Named as the Army cup holders' most valuable player this season and having been a member of the RLC team which reached the final of the Inter-Corps championships (see report opposite), it comes as no surprise that James has already become a regular in WO2 Nick Johnson's Army squad.

"The Army has a lot of talented players and it makes me very proud to say that I play in the same team," he said. "I've still got a lot to learn, but I believe that I am improving all the time and still hope to one day play professionally."



Combined effort: Cpl Stewart Ridsel (RLC), left, helps to break up an Australian Forces attack





**Court in the act: Army basketball star Pte Devon James (4 GS Regt RLC)** Picture: Graeme Main

◆ Boasting a squad featuring nine Army players, five of whom have represented the Combined Services, the REME dominated the Inter-Corps basketball championships.

Having won all of their preliminary league games, the pre-tournament favourites booked their place in the final with a comfortable victory over the APTC before securing the championship title with a 92-72 win against the RLC. REME coach and Army star Sgt Carl Black received the Most Valuable Player award. The AGC and APTC finished in third and fourth place respectively.

A lone point separated the RLC and the AGC in the final of the women's competition. Having overcome a spirited APTC side, captained by Army skipper SSgt Sue Blake, in the semi-finals, the RLC looked to be en route to the silverware until the AGC took the lead with just five seconds remaining on the clock.

The late score proved decisive and the AGC team, which featured Great Britain's javelin champion and former England netball star LCpl Kelly Morgan, were crowned champions by virtue of a 39-38 scoreline.

# Roos tied down

**Combined Services 7  
Combined Australian Services 6**

EMULATING the heroics of England's all-conquering Rugby Union World Cup team, the Combined Services Rugby League squad defeated their Australian counterparts at The Boulevard, Hull . . . by virtue of a last minute drop goal.

Victories over Australia in a Rugby League test, or indeed any sport, are something of a rarity, and true to form the tourists dominated the opening half of this closely-fought encounter thanks to the precise kicking of their halfbacks Cameron Earea and Anthony Piggott.

It was a well-timed punt by Earea, and an uncharacteristic mistake from Cpl Lee Innes (RE), who misjudged the bounce of the ball, that allowed Aussie centre Brian Jones to break the stalemate on 21 minutes.

Minutes later Cpl Stewart Ridsel (RLC) and Kieron Kavanagh (RAF) were penalised for ball stealing and the visitors subsequently extended their lead with an Adam Wallace penalty.

With the defences of both sides monopolising the action, the Combined Services had to wait until just before the half time whistle for their first points of the game – Innes making

amends for his earlier blunder with a cleanly-struck penalty.

With a few harsh words from head coach Andy Smales and skipper Cpl Sean Fanning (RAMC) still fresh in their minds, the Combined Services players emerged for the second half with renewed vigour. Innes, so often the hero for the Army, took full advantage of the early pressure exerted by his teammates and levelled the scores at six apiece with two further penalty conversions.

The Australians then could, and should, have put the game beyond their hosts' reach when they were awarded three successive penalties, all within range of the posts. Opting to run the ball instead of kicking for goal on each occasion was a decision they were made to rue when the British defence stood firm.

And so the scene was set for a dramatic last-gasp winner. With play deep in the Australians' half and with time fast running out, the ball found its way on to the boot of the Royal Navy's Scott Partis, who played the part of Jonny Wilkinson to perfection, sending it sailing between the posts.

◆ **The Army Rugby League's AGM is being held at Aldershot on February 6. For more information contact Capt Mark Bairstow on mil 94357 5430.**

## FIXTURES

### Your sporting guide to February . . .

**ATHLETICS:** 11 – Army cross country championships (Deepcut); 25 – 4 Div cross country league meeting (Sandhurst).

**BADMINTON:** 2-6 – Army championships (Grantham).

**BASKETBALL:** 22 – Founders Cup: Woodley Warriors v Army (Woodley Sports Centre); 25-Mar 3 – Inter-Services wild water championships (Sanquhar).

**BOXING:** 6 – London v Army (Croydon); 21 – Police Communities v Army (Spalding).

**CANOEING:** 16-22 – Inter-Services wild water championships (Sanquhar).

**CLIMBING:** 14 – Army bouldering championships (JSMTC).

**FOOTBALL:** 1 – London University v Army Crusaders (Fulham); 3 – Army development v Royal Navy (Aldershot); 4 – REME women v Int Corps women (Bordon); 6 – RLC v RE (TBC); APTC v AGC (TBC); 7 – AGC (TA) v Army Crusaders (Grantham); 10 – Army v Sussex (Aldershot); 11 – RLC women v AGC women (Deepcut); AMS women v RA women (TBC); 13 – Infantry v AAC (TBC); APTC v REME (TBC); CA Mus v Int Corps (TBC); 15 – Royal Navy v Army youth (Portsmouth); 17 – Army women v Colchester United (Aldershot); Dorset v Army (TBC); 19 – Sussex v Army women (Lancing); 20 – AAC v RE (TBC); RAC v REME (TBC); 21 – Oxford University v Army Crusaders (Oxford Brookes); 24 – Army U21 v AFC Newbury (Aldershot); 27 – APTC v CA Mus (TBC); AMS v REME (TBC); 28 – Army Crusaders v Int Corps (Aldershot).

**HOCKEY:** 5 – Army v United Hospitals (Aldershot); 10 Oxford University v Army (Oxford); 11 – Army women v Woking (TBC); 12 – Army veterans v Nordics (Aldershot); 15 – Army U23 v Wales (Hermitage); Army veterans v Warlocks (Aldershot); 17 – Cambridge University v Army (Southgate); 24 – Army v London University (TBC); 25 – Army U23 v Farnham (Aldershot).

**JUDO:** 7 – Army closed grade championships (TBC); 23 – Army squad training (TBC).

**MARTIAL ARTS:** 9-13 – Kendo course (Hyde Park Barracks, London).

**REAL TENNIS:** 1 – Army v Cranford (TBC); 11-13 – CSSB/Army championships (Queen's).

**RUGBY UNION:** 4 – Cambridge v Army (Cambridge); Cambridge v Army women (Cambridge); 15 – Army women v Wasps (Aldershot).

**SNOWBOARDING:** 1-7 – Inter-Services championships (Austria).

**SQUASH:** 4-6 – Inter-Service championships (HMS *Temeraire*).

**TENNIS:** 1 – Army indoor championships (Aldershot); 14 – Army women v Rowledge (Aldershot); 14 – Army v Manydown (Aldershot); 21 – Army veterans v Avenue LTC (Aldershot).

**TUG OF WAR:** 19-21 – World indoor championships (Glasgow); 27-29 – Judges/coaches course (Aldershot).

■ Got a date for the diary? E-mail the details to [fixtures@soldiermagazine.co.uk](mailto:fixtures@soldiermagazine.co.uk)



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No 747

# How observant are you?

# WIN £100!



TEN details have been changed in one of our archive drawings by Frank Finch. Circle the differences in the right-hand image, cut out the whole panel, add your name and address and send it to HOAY 747, *Soldier*, Ordnance Road, Aldershot,

GU11 2DU by February 30, 2004.

*A photocopy is acceptable, but only one entry per person may be submitted.*

Do not include anything else in your envelope.

First correct entry drawn after the

closing date will win £100; the second and third will receive £10 gift vouchers. No correspondence of any kind can be entered into.

The names of the winner and runners-up will be announced in the March issue.

Name : (Give initials and rank or title)

Address :

December competition (No 745): First correct entry drawn at random was from Cpl P Farrell, LAD REME, 7 Signal Regiment, BFPO 35, who wins £100. Runners-up Mrs Ann Dennis, of Dover, and Mr N J Deacon, of Wakefield, receive a £10 gift voucher each. The ten differences were: second N in Transatlantic; S in Solo; right of zig-zag pattern; top of undercarriage; cloud behind cradle; soldier's shoulder; rifle shape; birds' tail, wing and falling feather.



## Freeze frame

**"I know there's rationing but you've still got to learn how to carve a joint."**

Write a caption for the photograph, right, published in *Soldier* in July 1952. The best, in the Editor's opinion, will win a prize from our silver logo collection. Usual rules apply, entries to reach us by February 27.



WINNER of the November competition, left, is the classic "Moving outside showed just how small the old Nissan hut gym actually was" from G Drew, LSA Wing, Army School of Ammunition, Southam, Warks.

A clever caption, "The RAF were a bit low that time!", came from Maj C B Coull, TA Centre, Walthamstow. Mrs K Davis of the Budget

Office at RAF Digby wrote to us with "Sergeant, isn't there something vital missing from this synchronised swimming routine?", and G Drew's "Sleeping in damp hammocks was causing some unforeseen problems" caused another titter in the editorial office.

Other amusing contributions included: "The new recruits didn't quite get the meaning of 'present arms'" from Sgt M

Parmenter, Dental Centre, Roberts Barracks. BFPO 36; "The topless gym display for the boys was not quite what they expected" from David Deenan, ACIO Strand; "Arms up for the CO's BO inspection" from Ron Gilbert of Welwyn Garden City; and "By using mirrors the PTI could double the numbers on PT parade" from Sgt J Smith, Winterbourne Gunner, Salisbury.



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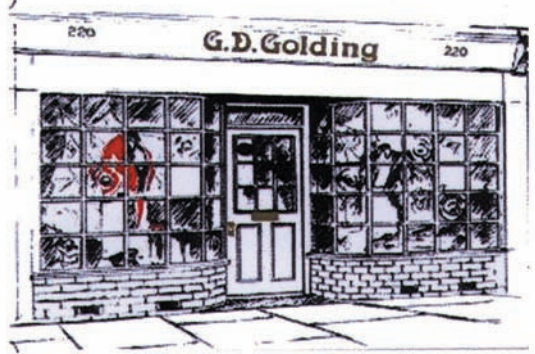
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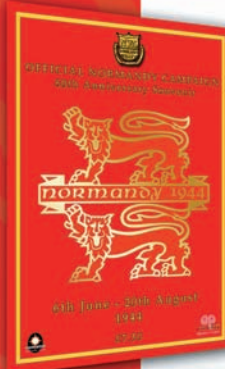
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**All pen pal adverts must be prepaid**

**Trina, (31)**, seeking pen pals the same age or older, must have sense of humour. Write and I will tell you a bit more about myself. P021

**Karen, (36)**, 5'2", long brown hair and blue eyes. Enjoys swimming, reading, having a laugh and looking after my son. Easy going and down to earth, seeking pen pals, 30-40. P022

**45-year-old** redhead residing in Norfolk, outgoing and tanned. Enjoys clubs, swimming, walks on the beach, Baileys, Italian food and coffee. Seeking Servicemen pen pals, any age group. P023

**Pat, (30)**, blonde with blue eyes. Single mum looking for someone special to contact. Enjoys going out, horse riding and music concerts. Seeking pen pals with a wicked sense of humour, who respect women and talk until the cows come home, any age group. P024

**Sophie, (20)**, student who is outgoing and ambitious. Plays rugby league for her university, enjoys clubs, pubs and the gym. Undertaking a BA Honours degree and would love to hear from pen pals with similar interests and age. P025

**Alison, (38)**, 5'7", outgoing brunette. Enjoys motorbikes, adventure weekends, the gym and cinema. Looking for interesting and fun pen pals, any age group. P026

**Pauline, (54)**, 5'8", fair hair and blue eyes. Enjoys eating out, cooking, travel, visiting stately homes, gardening and the cinema. A widow, young at heart, seeking pen pals up to the age of 60. P027

**Adelina, 5'**, Mediterranean complexion. Enjoys music, travelling and the cinema. Seeking soldier pen pals in Iraq, 30+. P028

**Laura, (21)**, 5'10", attractive student with long brown hair and blue eyes. Enjoys Blackadder, walking, shooting (clays) and diving. Seeking genuine pen pals with GSOH, any age group. P029

**Joy, (37)**, 5'7", attractive with slim/medium build with long curly brown hair. Enjoys horse riding, music, cooking, travelling, reading, walking, socialising and the cinema. Single with GSOH and enjoys life, seeking pen pals, 33-40. P030

**Joan, (44)**, 5'4", short hair, average build with blue eyes. Enjoys healthy eating, wrestling, swimming, walking, action movies, animals and most things in general. Seeking pen pals with GSOH, 35-50. P031

**Claire, (37)**, 5'4" with dark hair. Enjoys music, reading, keeping fit, travel and meeting new people. Seeking single, fun and honest soldier pen pals, any age group. P032

**Ann, 5'7"**, attractive dark blonde with hazel eyes. Enjoys hiking, mountain biking, restaurants, movies and the gym. Looking for pen pals who enjoy being active and have GSOH, any age group. P033

**Pamela, (38)**, 5'5", blonde with green eyes. Enjoys disco music, travelling, dining in or out and some sports. Seeking single Marines/soldier pen pals to write to with similar interest from Liverpool/Merseyside, 38-44. P034

**Karen, (39)**, 5'4", blonde with blue-grey eyes. Enjoys walking her dog, eating out, making friends, music, movies, sports, pubs and clubs. Bubbly lady with a great personality who loves writing. Seeking pen pals, 30-45, no time-wasters. P035

**Charlotte, (24)**, 5'4", dark hair and blue eyes. Enjoys nights in or out, fishing, drawing, meeting and making new friends. Fun-loving lady seeking pen pals, any age group. P036

**Teresa, (40)**, 6'1", long light brown hair and brown eyes. Fun, GSOH, down-to-earth single mum. Enjoys live bands, motorbikes, computers, socialising and the great outdoors, camping and walking. Seeking tall single male pen pals with similar interests, 35-50. P038

**Kelly, (29)**, 5'2", curvy size 12 with strawberry blonde hair and green eyes. Enjoys sports, cycling and socialising with friends in London. Confident, positive person working in social care. Seeking interesting pen pals, 28-38. P039

**Janet, 6'**, big girl with brown hair and blue eyes. Caring, mad and fun loving. Enjoys athletics, football (Liverpool), animals, socialising and most other sports. Seeking male or female pen pals who would like a letter from home from a mad woman to cheer up those lonely nights. P040

**Vickie, (25)**, attractive blonde who graduated from university in 2002. Enjoys films, going out for meals, pubs, clubs and the gym. Would like to support troops in Iraq and hopefully cheer someone up who is a little homesick, any age group. P041

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Reunion and searchline notices also appear on our website. See

## REUNIONS

**22 Regiment RA royal salute:** The Regiment will fire a royal salute at Cardiff Castle at noon on Feb 6. Afterwards there will be a buffet lunch for invited guests at the Mansion House. Enquiries to Capt J P Rogers RA, Rapier Barracks, Kirton-in-Lindsey, Gainsborough, Lincs DN21 4HZ or tel 01904 668447.

**APTC Association (South West Branch):** Annual meeting starts at 1830, reunion at 1930 on Feb 6 at the Gables Hotel, Falfield, Gloucestershire on Feb 6. Members and partners invited. Details from Bob Marshall on 01747 860207.

**RAMC Reunited:** For all ex-RAMC and partners at the Norbreck Castle Hotel, Blackpool, Feb 6-9. Sae to M McCran, 132 Nightingale Crescent, Lincoln LN6 0JZ, tel 01522 879307 or e-mail [michael.mccran@ntlworld.com](mailto:michael.mccran@ntlworld.com)

**Rapier maintainers:** Reunion dinner, Feb 7. Details from SSgt Al Friend on 0118 9763371 or <http://members.aol.com/radarreunion>

**Welsh Gunners RFC v Old Boys, Bedwas RUFC:** Current Welsh Gunners RUFC will play their final match in Bedwas on Feb 7 against an Old Boys XV, kick-off 1300, cash bar. Enquiries to WO2 Alad Owen (for those wishing to represent the Old Boys) on 01904 668507 or Maj Giles Carter on 07929 200197.

**RA Gold Cup and gunner reunion** to be held at Sandown Park Racecourse on Feb 19. Tickets from RA Steeplechase Office, King's Troop RHA, Ordnance Hill, St John's Wood, London NW8 6PT. Member's badges £12 and car passes £1. Cheques made payable to The Royal Artillery Steeplechase Fund.

**RAMC Association (York):** First meeting of new branch, Feb 19 at 1930 in the WO's and Sgts' mess, Queen Elizabeth Barracks, Strensall, York. Past and present RAMC members in York area invited. Further details from WO1(RSM) Ian Campbell on 01904 442839.

**Royal Engineers Gibraltar Weekend 2004:** Mar 19-21 celebrating 300 years on the Rock and 200 years since the Garrison library was built. Concert, parade, reception, gala dinner and farewell supper. First come, first served. Details from WO1 Jack Noble, MES Workshops, HQ British Forces, BFPO 52 or tel 00350 55372.

**19 Regiment RA (Highland Gunners):** All-ranks reunion, Mar 20 at TA Centre, Northampton. Details from Maj (QM) GC Porter tel 01980 634230, or WO2 (BSM) Keir tel 01980 634282, or write to 19 Regt RA, Horne Bks, Larkhill, Salisbury SP4 8QU. E-mail [s.keir@ntlworld.com](mailto:s.keir@ntlworld.com)

## COMPETITIONS

All from the December issue:

**Simon Weston, Moving On.** Winners: J Doherty, Larkhill; D Montgomery, Ballyclare, N I. Answer: Welsh Guards.

**MASH Season 2.** Winners: P Brown, Devizes; F Cywinski, St Asaph, N Wales; L Walker, Almondsbank, Perthshire; M Barnes, Ipswich, Suffolk; L Kent, Truro, Cornwall. Answer: Captain B J Hunnicut.

**Queen's Own Warwickshire and Worcestershire Yeomanry:** Reunion and open day 1000 to 1630, Mar 27, at the Warwickshire Yeomanry Museum, The Court House, Warwick. Contact Ron Hartill on 07976 305995.

**RHA Association Trowbridge:** 57th reunion dinner in Trowbridge Mar 27 for all past and present RHA. Ladies most welcome. Contact Maj (Retd) R J Whiteway MBE, HQ Dulmen Station BFPO 44, telephone 0049 2594 784438 or Mike Carter, tel 01225 708223 or [dinnersec@rhaassn.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:dinnersec@rhaassn.fsnet.co.uk)

**All Arms Junior Leaders' Regiment, Tonfanau Camp, Towyn, Merioneth 1950-66:** Reunion to be held Apr 3 in Tywyn. Details via [www.aajlr.com](http://www.aajlr.com)

**Past and Present Commando Gunners:** 29 Commando Regiment RA will host a reunion dinner at the officers' mess, Larkhill on Apr 30. Write to Capt Nick Sargent RA, Commando Gunner Reunion Dinner 2004, The Royal Citadel, Plymouth PL1 2PD or send an e-mail to [cdognrdinner04@hotmail.com](mailto:cdognrdinner04@hotmail.com)

**1, 4 and 7 Royal Tank Regiments Old Comrades:** Annual reunion to be held April 30-May 2 at the Derby-Nottingham Renaissance Hotel. Contact Alex Birrell on 01508 492246 or David Francis on 01992 632372.

**260 Signal Squadron (SAM) R Signals Association** reunion in Dortmund May 7-9. Go to [www.260sigsqnsam.abelgratis.co.uk](http://www.260sigsqnsam.abelgratis.co.uk)

**Black Watch Association:** Dinner and dance, May 8, at the Jarvis Clayton Lodge. Details from F Bailey on 01782 28091.

**Air Formation Signal Regiments' Association:** Open to all Army or RAF who served in any AFSU or CAFSO branch. Next reunion May 8 at Stoke on Trent. Contact Chris Collier by e-mail [cecollier@supanet.com](mailto:cecollier@supanet.com) or tel 01902 338662.

**8th Artificer Telecommunications:** Reunion dinner to be held at Bailleul Sergeants' Mess, Arborfield on May 14. Seminar to take place before meal, limited places. Details from SSgt Roger Millar on 01189 763343 or write to Land Systems Branch, SEAE, Hazebrouck Barracks, Reading RG2 9NH.

**201 RCZ Wksp (V):** 33rd joint mess reunion for former officers, SNCOs and families to be held on May 14-15. Details from R F Smith, 6 St John's Place, Waterloo, Liverpool L22 5NP.

**17 Port and Maritime Regiment RLC and 20 Maritime Regt RCT:** Open day and reunion on May 22 at Marchwood. Full details from

Capt Gary Hawker on 02380 664289.

**WFR Association:** Reunion day at Worcester Rugby Club, June 5, 1200-1800. Bar and canteen, drumhead service, march-past, Prince of Wales's Division Band, colonel's address, static displays, regimental shop.

**50 Missile Club RA:** Reunion at Pettycur Holiday Park, Kinghorn, Fife on June 5. Information from Tony Todd on 01387 262378 or e-mail [secretary@50missileclubra.com](mailto:secretary@50missileclubra.com)

**RCT/RLC Arctic and Nordic ski teams:** Reunion dinner, Jul 3 at Deepcut. All former 2 ADTR/1ADTR/1GS Regt RLC ski teams welcome. Details from Maj Jamie Clarke at [jamieon2wheels@btopenworld.com](mailto:jamieon2wheels@btopenworld.com) or ring 01252 833473 or WO1(RSM) Kipper Knight at [knightsci@hotmail.com](mailto:knightsci@hotmail.com) or tel 0049 5241 927715.

**WFR Association annual pre-Crich buffet supper:** At 1900 for 1930, July 3, at Foresters House. Admission by ticket only. Details from RHQ Nottingham. [rhq\\_wfr@lineone.net](mailto:rhq_wfr@lineone.net)

**WFR Association pilgrimage** to the Regimental Memorial at Crich will take place on July 4. Gates open at 1230, service begins at 1530. Members and families advised to arrive before 1430.

**747 Squad (1960) Royal Marines:** Third reunion to be held July 10 at the China Fleet Country Club, Saltash. Anyone wishing to attend contact Harry Briggs 02088 590846 or e-mail [hbriggs747\\_rm@hotmail.com](mailto:hbriggs747_rm@hotmail.com)

**Beverley Ex-Boys Association Royal Signals:** Reunion to be held at the Ramada Jarvis Hotel, at Willerby near Beverley, Sept 11. Further information available from Tony Hull at e-mail [beba.tonyhull@lineone.net](mailto:beba.tonyhull@lineone.net)

**11 (Sphinx) Battery RA:** Fifth annual reunion for past and present members (all cap badges) and members' association to be held on Sept 25 at the Crewe Arms Hotel, Crewe, Cheshire. Full details from general secretary, Mr G W (Knocker) Knowles on 01270 253154, e-mail [jangarychuck@aol.com](mailto:jangarychuck@aol.com) or go to [www.11sphinxbty.co.uk](http://www.11sphinxbty.co.uk)

**Red Devils Freetail Team:** Reunion on Sept 25-26, venue to be confirmed. To attend send contact details to Steve Candlish, Red Devils Freetail Team, Airfield Camp, Netheravon, Salisbury, Wilts SP4 9SF. Tel 01980 678211 or e-mail [info@reddevilsonline.com](mailto:info@reddevilsonline.com)

**Birgelen Veterans Association:** Annual reunion to be held Oct 1-3 at the Trecarn Hotel, Babbacombe, Torquay. Details from association secretary Cyril Harding on 01873 856021 or via [www.birgelenvets.org](http://www.birgelenvets.org)

## Bikers have their own badge

The **All Arms Veterans Motor Cycle Club**, which now has 47 serving and ex-Service members, has produced embroidered club badges which will be included in the membership fee. The club is planning summer tours to Turin in Italy and the other in Sweden, Norway and Finland (the Norsman tour). See <http://aavmc.homestead.com>



e. See them at [www.soldiermagazine.co.uk](http://www.soldiermagazine.co.uk)

## UPDATE EXTRA

## NEW YEAR HONOURS

**Military Division of the Most Honourable Order of Bath****As Knight Commander:** Lt Gen J P Kiszely MC, late SG.**As Companions:** The Ven J Blackburn QHC, RACHD; Maj Gen P Gilchrist, late RTR.**Military Division of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire****CBE** – Col P Davies, late RRW; Col T M Fitzalan Howard OBE, late SG; Col C G S Hughes OBE, late Staffords; Maj Gen J M Shaw MBE, late R Signals; Col S O Thomas, late RA; Brig D R Wilson, late BW.**OBE** – Lt Col M P Biegel, GH TA; Lt Col P C Curry, REME; Col A M Flint TD, Bristol ACF; Lt Col N J W Moss, AAC; Lt Col D G Ross, A and SH ACF; Col R A Sharp MBE, R Signals; Lt Col P M Smith, RLC; Lt Col I N A Thomas, RGR; Lt Col R G Thomas, R Signals; Lt Col A W Thorburn MBE, D and D; Lt Col C K Walker MBE, RE; Lt Col M E Waring, RA; Lt Col P R Williams, RA.**MBE** – Capt K J Anderson, Small Arms School Corps; Maj (QGO) Laxmibhakta Bantawa, RGR; Maj F T Bilton, Shropshire ACF; Maj A J P Bourne, RGR; Maj A D Boyle, RE; Maj R P Brent, RE; SSgt D P E Bryce, REME; Maj K R Bustard, Sussex ACF; Sgt A M Collins, RA; Maj R J Courteney-Harris, QLR; Lt Col P R

Couser, RLC; WO2 R H Deal, AGC (SPS).

LCpl C A Donaldson, R Signals; WO1 P E Fletcher, RLC; Maj L K Ford, RA; Cpl J S Frendo, Royal Gibraltar Regiment; Capt P L Gibson, QARANC; Capt A S Gill, Berkshire ACF; Hon Maj Dillikumar Gurung, RGR; SSgt A Holcombe, D and D; Maj R L Holt, R Signals TA; Maj E Ingram, REME TA; WO1 H D B Irving, REME; Maj A V Jones, RWR TA; Maj R Jones, RLC; WO1 L Kerr, SG; Capt S C Little, RLC; Maj C T McClean, REME; Maj G R McCourt, RLC; Maj W B Morgan, APTC.

SSgt S C Nellist AGC (SPS); Maj F M Philip, Hldrs; WO2 M A Redfearn, RE; Maj K F Reece TD, RLC TA; Lt Col M D Render, Yorks (North and West) ACF; Sgt C A Rooney, AGC (SPS); WO2 S J Savage, RGJ; Maj M D W Schofield, RE; Maj M J Spandler, RGBWR; WO1 D M Steer, Int Corps; SSgt P N Thomas, AGC (SPS); Maj D M Thompson, Trinity School CCF; Sgt M A Tucker, AGC (SPS); Maj J S M Tulloch, RA; Maj D G Vincent, R Anglian; Maj G Walker, RAMC; SSgt M I Watts, AGC (MPS); WO2 P T Weir, AGC (MPS); SSgt A S Wheeler, REME; Maj K J Willder, REME; Maj A M Wright, Para.

**Queen's Volunteer Reserves Medal**

WO1 W D Cainan, RE TA; WO2 A S Clarke, Tayforth UOTC; Maj P A Gee TD, AGC (SPS) TA; Maj P D Griffiths, LI TA; Cpl R T G Morgan, RE TA.

## SEARCHLINE

Former members of **C Company, 1st Battalion, The Queen's Lancashire Regiment, 1979-84** sought by Dan Taylor. E-mail him at [dan5270@hotmail.com](mailto:dan5270@hotmail.com)**260 Sig Sqn (SAM) R Signals Assn** wishes to hear from 654 and 655 Signal Tps (SAGW) or 653 Signal Troop (SAM) attached to 260 [www.260sigsqnsam.abelgratis.co.uk](http://www.260sigsqnsam.abelgratis.co.uk)Any chefs from **5 Airborne Brigade**, or now with **16 Air Assault Brigade**. Reunion and battlefield tour planned for 60th anniversary of Arnhem. Details: SSgt Andy Andrews, HQ Coy, 3 Para, Hyderabad Bks, Colchester CO2 7TB or 01206 783261.**Margaret Flaherty**, (née McDaid), wife of Ron Flaherty, a fitness instructor with 3 RTR in 1981, is sought by Alice Anderson, 7 Donomore Park, Killinarden, Tallaght, Dublin 24, Eire.**1 Platoon, A Coy, 2 Bn The Middlesex Regiment, 1944-45:** Former platoon commander Rex Fendick seeks news of any old comrades. Write to Lt Col (Retd) R F Fendick, 25 Vaughan Drive, Nauwigewauk, NB, Canada E5N 6T9 or e-mail [rfendick@nbnet.nb.ca](mailto:rfendick@nbnet.nb.ca)Any news of Glaswegian **ex-Para Col Ray Hamilton**, served at Hildesheim and Bad Oeynhausen circa 1949, sought by Alec Stewart, Chapel House, Chapel Lane, Winthorpe, Newark, Notts NG24 2NJ or tel 01636 702634.**Calling all AGC:** The newly formed **Cleveland Branch of the AGC Association** is recruiting members. Meetings are held from 1900 on the last Monday of the month at the Stockton Road TA Centre in Middlesbrough. Branch chairman Capt J R Franklin can be contacted on 01642 242414 ext 20.**Ex-signaller George Holden, 1960-1982**, (former Combined Services cross-country athlete), seeks old comrades, particularly Ben Evans from Birkenhead. Tel 01325 256086 or e-mail [kathleen.holden@ntlworld.co.uk](mailto:kathleen.holden@ntlworld.co.uk)

**A MESSAGE** of support has been sent by The Green Howards to King Harald V of Norway, pictured right, who is undergoing surgery for cancer. The 66-year-old monarch is Colonel-in-Chief of the regiment.

Brig John Powell, Colonel of the regiment, wrote to the King's private secretary to say: "All members of The Green Howards were very concerned to hear of their Colonel-in-Chief's forthcoming operation and send His Majesty their very best wishes for a successful operation and a full recovery. He and his family are very much in our thoughts and prayers at this worrying time."

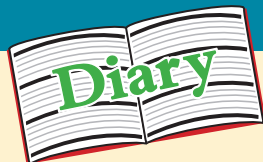
King Harald's doctors say the cancer was been detected early and that he should be able to lead a normal life after the operation.



## Useful numbers

**Army Benevolent Fund** 020 7591 2000; [www.armybenfund.org](http://www.armybenfund.org)**Army Families Advice Bureau** 01722 436569**Army Welfare Service** 01722 433456**Army Families Federation** 01980 615525; [www.aff.org.uk](http://www.aff.org.uk)**British Limbless Ex-Service Men's Association** 020 8590 1124; [www.blesma.org.uk](http://www.blesma.org.uk)**Career Transition Partnership** 0207 766 8020 [www.ctp.org.uk](http://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-Service Mental Welfare Society** 01372 841600; [www.combatstress.com](http://www.combatstress.com)**Consumer Credit Counselling Service** Free**Confidential Helpline** 0800 1381111**Family Escort Service** 020 7463 9249**Gulf Veterans Association** 0191 230 1065[www.gulfveteransassociation.co.uk](http://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](http://www.ngvfa.com)**Regular Forces Employment Association** 0207 321 2011; [www.rfea.org.uk](http://www.rfea.org.uk)**Royal British Legion's Legionline** 0845 7725 725; [www.britishlegion.org.uk](http://www.britishlegion.org.uk)**RBL Industries Vocational Assessment Centre** 01622 717202/718484; [www.rbli.co.uk](http://www.rbli.co.uk)**ESHRA Ex-Service Homes Referral Agency** 020 7839 4466 [www.eshra.com](http://www.eshra.com) or [eshra@britishlegion.org.uk](mailto:eshra@britishlegion.org.uk)**St Dunstan's Home** for blind ex-Servicemen and women 020 7723 5021; [www.st-dunstans.org.uk](http://www.st-dunstans.org.uk)**SAMA 82** (South Atlantic Medal Association) Falklands conflict veterans 01495 227577e-mail: [densama@aol.com](mailto:densama@aol.com)**Samaritans** 08457 90 90 90**Service Children's Education** 01980 618244**Services Cotswold Centre** 01225 810358**SSAFA Forces Help** 020 7403 8783; [www.ssafo.org.uk](http://www.ssafo.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](http://www.veteransagency.mod.uk)**Victim Support Western Europe** (SSAFA Forces Help) in Germany 02161 47 2272; from outside Germany 0049 2161 47 2272**WRVS** General enquiries 02920 739906; [www.wrvs.org.uk](http://www.wrvs.org.uk)





## DATES

### FEBRUARY

**22:** Charity concert in aid of Army Benevolent Fund, with the Waterloo Band and Bugles of the Royal Green Jackets, with Pipes and Drums, 1500 hrs, Chequer Mead Theatre, East Grinstead, Sussex. Tickets £9/£8. Tel 01342 302000.

### JULY

**16-18:** Royal International Air Tattoo, RAF Fairford, Glos. Celebrating 50 years of C-130 Hercules, 30 years of Hawk and 40th display season of Red Arrows. Also hosting tri-Service Defence 2004. Advance tickets £24.95 until Mar 1, £29.95 thereafter, £35 on day. Available at [www.airtattoo.com](http://www.airtattoo.com) or call 0870 758 1918.

### AUGUST

**6-28:** Edinburgh Tattoo. Booking on 08707 5551188 or at [www.edintattoo.co.uk](http://www.edintattoo.co.uk)  
**28-30:** Military Odyssey. Kent County Ground, Detling. Enquiries 01829 730830. [www.military-odyssey.com](http://www.military-odyssey.com)

## New battlefield guide 'guide'

A NEW protocol for battlefield tour guides has been set with the launch of a recognised standard of excellence.

Launched by its first patron, Prof Richard Holmes, the Guild of Battlefield Guides aims to set high professional standards so that the public and soldiers visiting sites can have confidence in guide competence.

To earn the right to wear its badge, guides must complete a validation programme. Col John Hughes-Wilson, president of the guild and a veteran of more than 100 tours, said the rise in battlefield popularity had been enormous. "We needed an organisation setting the highest professional standards," he said.

Senior validator Chris Lance Scott said: "Validation is based on three elements: Knowledge, including detailed military history

combined with the historical, topographical and archaeological perspectives of battlefield study is the first. The second is presentation and developing communication skills, and the third is a duty of care – looking after people."

Prof Holmes, best known for his books and TV work, said he was delighted to be involved. "I have been travelling battlefields on four continents for more than 30 years and in the process have been struck by the variable quality of the experience," he said. "As a working battlefield guide who knows that he could raise his own game, I'm proud to be the guild's patron."

Until he retired three years ago, Prof Holmes – then a brigadier – was the highest ranking officer in the Territorial Army.

● More details on [www.battleguides.org](http://www.battleguides.org)



## Bobby buck's promotion

**BOBBY**, the mascot of The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, has been promoted to the rank of lance corporal and awarded an honorary General Service Medal. An antelope has accompanied the battalions of the regiment as their mascot in many stations during the past 150 years, and is one of only nine live mascots authorised for regiments in the army. Bobby, pictured right, is currently the responsibility of the commanding officer of the 2nd Battalion and housed in Palace Barracks in Belfast.



■ The Army Benevolent Fund has been given a boost with the appointment of Maj Gen Sir Evelyn Webb-Carter, pictured left, as its new controller. Relishing the challenge, Sir Evelyn plans to expand the ABF's profile and offer a regular and exciting schedule of events.



Gen Webb-Carter said: "In the immediate short-term my goals are largely financial, but I also want to make sure that we are charity that is respected and acknowledged, not just in the Army circle, but also in the nation."

■ Octavia Hill, born in Wisbech in 1938, and founder of the Army Cadet Force, was remembered by cadets at a commemoration day. After lunch, members of the Octavia Hill Society attended an inauguration of the Octavia Hill Walk and visited Wisbech detachment, No 1 Company, Cambridgeshire Army Cadet Force.

■ Actress and TV personality Claire Sweeney is joining forces with one of the UK's biggest medical research charities to promote their mobile phone recycling scheme. Claire is appealing to people who had a new mobile phone for Christmas to recycle their old one and raise money for the Arthritis Research Campaign. To find out more visit [www.arc.org.uk](http://www.arc.org.uk) or ring 01246 541106.



## Health watch: Doing it by the book

CLEARING out his Southsea house before emigrating with his family to Australia in the early 1980s, Tony Marchant was intrigued by a small book he found under the floorboards.

Dated 1798, it bore the snappy title *The Soldier's Friend: or the Means of Preserving the Health of Military Men*. It was "Addressed to the Officers of the British Army by William Blair, AM, Surgeon of the Lock Hospital and Asylum, and of the Old Finsbury Dispensary".

In the hustle and bustle of moving, Tony packed the book away and it has just surfaced again after he moved

houses in Perth, Western Australia. Chapter headings range from food, drink, clothing and personal cleanliness to "intemperance and dissipation".

Tucked inside the manual are several copies of a pro forma dated 1811 for making enquiries about missing soldiers and a document signed by the Adjutant General in 1817 about buying oneself out of the Army for £20.

"I thought it might be of some interest to historians or even be worth some money," Tony said.

Any advice or enquiries should be addressed in the first instance to the Managing Editor at *Soldier*.

■ Net radio: As mentioned briefly in our January issue, Garrison Radio has launched its own internet radio service for British soldiers. It brings online Army news and information in a radio format to connect soldiers deployed overseas with family and friends in the united kingdom.

Col Johnny Hackett, commander of Catterick Garrison, who launched the service, said: "The exciting thing about this project is that anybody, anywhere, deployed on operations or normal training, will be able to link back into home."

Garrison Radio online can be listened to at [www.garrisonradio.com](http://www.garrisonradio.com).

■ A drop of fund-raising: Childhood First, a children's charity, is looking for people to take on the challenge of abseiling down ten floors of the Union Jack Club in London on March 25 and 26. Profits will go towards projects which help abused, neglected and disturbed children and young people.

Training on the day will be provided by experienced abseil instructors. A registration fee

of £20 is required and a pledge to raise £50. To find out more call Siwan on 020 7928 7388 or e-mail [s.stephens@peperharow.org.uk](mailto:s.stephens@peperharow.org.uk)

■ Queen rules: Perhaps it comes as no surprise to Freddie Mercury fans, but BFBS Radio's All Time Top 100 programme revealed Queen's *Bohemian Rhapsody* as the Forces' No 1 hit. The eight-hour programme was broadcast on BFBS Radio 1 on Boxing Day. In second place came Meatloaf's *Bat out of Hell*, and Robbie Williams's *Angels* was third.

■ Enquiry boon: Staff at HIVEs across Germany and beyond are celebrating another successful year. During 2003 they dealt with a staggering 110,000 enquiries.

The year also saw the HIVEs raise their profile via new leaflets, an improved database, a new website – [www.hive-bfg.co.uk](http://www.hive-bfg.co.uk) – the re-opening of the Ramstein office and what is believed to be the first HIVE flag in the world, at the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) near Mons in Belgium.



## Kiwi Trophy shoot

MORE than 100 soldiers from Tidworth-based 1 Mechanised Brigade HQ and Signal Squadron (215) took part in the gruelling Kiwi Trophy march-and-shoot competition.

The competitors had to force-march 22km with 30lb bergens on their backs and fire ten shots on the range during the march. They started at the 128m long kiwi, which was cut into the chalk on Beacon Hill by New Zealand soldiers based in Bulford during the First World War.



Winner of the men's race was Lt James King, above, who completed the course in two 2hr 12min. The women's race was won by Lt Catherine Yarroll, left, in a time of 3hr 6min.



■ **FIRST World War veteran** Albert Dye, who celebrated his 107th birthday in October, is to be reunited with other old soldiers at a special party at which guests will include the Princess Royal, Dame Vera Lynn and Sir Norman Wisdom.

In 1915 Albert, then aged 19, was sent to Egypt with the Army Service Corps and Royal Field Artillery. He also served in Palestine until 1919, and on his return he was awarded the Victory Medal.

## Great Tornado pull NEEDS you

A GREAT Tornado pulling competition (below) is to be held at RAF Leeming from July 30 to August 1. Its aim is to raise £50,000 for Macmillan Cancer Relief. The competition will be open to 15-strong teams from the Army, Royal Navy and Royal Air Force. Practice pulls will take place on the afternoon of Friday, July 30, with the main event on Saturday, July 31, culminating in a hangar party in the evening. If your unit is interested, contact Sally Naude on 01677 457775 or email her at [11sqnadjt@LEEMING.raf.mod.uk](mailto:11sqnadjt@LEEMING.raf.mod.uk)



**Special award: Capt Tony Perkins, right, pictured with Capt Sheelagh Heugh of the Medical Supplies Agency Blood Supply Depot at Ludgershall in Hampshire. Capt Heugh was on the NBS awards panel.**

and treatments to a range of patients." If you would like to become a blood donor you must be aged between 17 and 60, weigh more than 7st 12lb (50kg) and be in good health. For further information call the NBS helpline on 08457 711 711 or log on to [www.blood.co.uk](http://www.blood.co.uk).

## Families' officer receives donor service award

CAPT Tony Perkins, families' officer at Dalton Barracks, Abingdon, has received an award from the National Blood Service. He was presented with the NBS special award for his efforts in co-ordinating and promoting blood donor sessions for soldiers and their families based at the barracks.

The special awards are aimed at highlighting those who have gone that extra mile through their involvement with the NBS.

Spokesperson Louise Coxon said: "The special awards are allowing us to thank local supporters of the NBS. We need to collect up to 9,000 voluntary blood donations every day so that 310 hospitals throughout England and North Wales can carry out life-saving surgery

## Tank training for Terrier trooper

TROOPER Chris Davies is the first Territorial Army soldier to be taught how to drive the Challenger 2 battle tank for overseas operations.

Tpr Davies, of the Sherwood Rangers Yeomanry and a bricklayer by trade, was thrilled to be selected following a ground-breaking project in which SRY soldiers were the first part-timers to be allowed to train as Challenger 2 gunners and loaders.

Instruction is being carried out at the RAC base at Bovington, Dorset. Anyone who would like driving lessons in a 72-tonne Challenger 2 should call 0115 961 8722.



## Buller Museum a must for Africa sleuths

MANY military historians are still very keen to study the wars fought by the British Army in Africa, so it goes without saying that a recently opened museum dedicated to **Gen Sir Redvers Buller** will be of great interest.

Maj Gen Edward Fursdon, a regular contributor to *Soldier*, discovered the museum at the Buller family home at Downes in Crediton. Gen Buller, pictured right, was in command at Aldershot, but following the outbreak of the Second Boer War in 1899 he

was dispatched to South Africa as Commander-in-Chief. Although successful at Colenso, Spion Kop, crossing the Tugela, relieving Ladysmith and forcing Alleman's Nek, he nevertheless stirred up a good deal of adverse criticism over his exercise of command. In 1902 he reassumed command at Aldershot before retiring.

The Buller Museum contains shields and

spears from both the Ashanti and Zulu Wars; the Mahdi's flag from the 1884 Sudan Campaign; Gen Buller's private papers and records; contemporary newspaper cuttings about the officer and his conduct of the Boer War; and associated memorabilia.

For Buller specialists the new museum is well worth a visit. With an admission fee, Downes House and museum is open to the public on Mondays and Tuesdays of every week from Easter to mid-July, and then on August Bank Holiday Monday and Tuesday.

Researchers may visit, by appointment, at other times. For more details, contact Diane Shirazian on 01392 439046.



■ **SIXTY Christmas cakes** decorated by Army chefs from the South of England went on display at the King's Royal Hussars all ranks dining room in Tidworth at the end of the 12 Mechanized Brigade Christmas cake competition. All the cakes were donated to charities, hospitals and hospices in the area.

Overall winner of the competition was Cpl Robert Millar of the Royal Logistic Corps.





Edited by Andy Simms E-mail: [asimms@soldiermagazine.co.uk](mailto:asimms@soldiermagazine.co.uk)

## Retail reconnaissance

# Switched on . . .



## BRIGHT IDEA ▲

DESIGNED for military use, the PALight Survival torch is lightweight, compact and offers up to four lighting modes to cover any eventuality in the field, including covert map reading, personnel marking or for use as an emergency beacon.

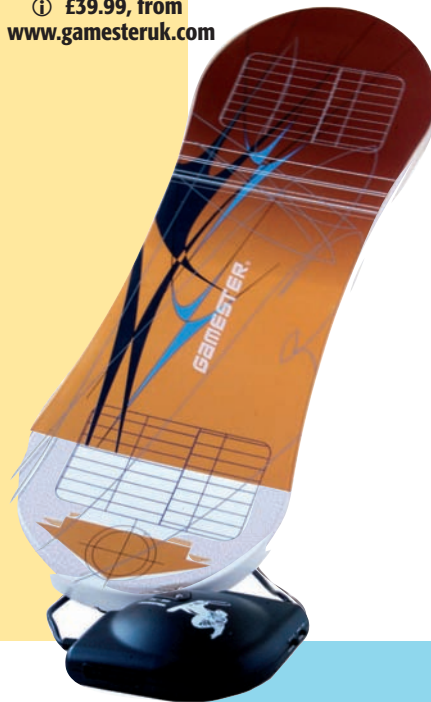
Available in green, red, blue, white or infrared, the torch utilises advanced LED technology and fits into the palm of a hand.

① £19.99, from [www.h3products.com](http://www.h3products.com)

## FANCY FOOTWORK ▼

COMPATIBLE with both the PlayStation and PS2, the Gamester Sportsboard works in conjunction with any control pad to bring a new edge to skate and snowboarding titles. Capable of turning 360 degrees, the Sportsboard boasts three sensitivity levels.

① £39.99, from [www.gamesteruk.com](http://www.gamesteruk.com)



## GAMES ON THE GO ▲

GARMIN'S Geko 301 is one of the smallest and lightest waterproof GPS systems on the market.

Aside from all the usual functions, the navigation unit, which, with batteries, weighs just 3.4oz, also includes five interactive games that transform the great outdoors into a virtual board game.

① £250, from [www.gadgetshop.com](http://www.gadgetshop.com) (0870 8400567).

# Game on . . .

## TOM CLANCY'S RAINBOW SIX 3, XBOX

IN this third instalment of Ubisoft's hugely popular *Rainbow Six* series, players lead a multi-national squad of counter-terrorist operatives as they battle to overthrow a madman and attempt to foil his doomsday plot.

As is fitting of a Tom Clancy title, the squad-based, action-oriented gameplay is embroidered in an epic storyline, which unfolds through cinematic sequences and transports gamers from London to the sun-drenched Cayman Islands and beaches of Rio de Janeiro.

An enhanced real-time and voice-activated order system, which allows users to issue orders to their teammates using more than 80 voice commands, gives the player full control over their team and its four tough members, who each have a specific look and personality.

Aside from its advanced AI and stunning graphics, similar to those seen in Tom Clancy's *Splinter Cell*, the game's greatest asset is its unsurpassed multiplayer options.

Continuing the legacy of its predecessor *Ghost Recon*, *Rainbow Six 3*'s 14 challenging missions can all be played online, allowing Xbox Live subscribers to join forces with, or go head-to-head against, gamers from across the globe.

**VERDICT:** Another Tom Clancy best-seller. 9/10

OUT NOW

## BYTE-SIZE NEWS

A NEW mobile console being developed by Gametrac Europe is set to offer GPS positioning and data communications functionality, as well as music and movie playback.

The Gametrac, which is due for launch later this year, will also sport a comprehensive feature-set for a mobile device, including Bluetooth support and a built-in digital camera.

BRITISH games publisher SCI announced record profits last year, largely due to the continued success of the *Conflict Desert Storm* franchise, which has now sold more than 3.2 million copies worldwide.

SEGA of America has filed a patent infringement suit with a San Francisco federal court, claiming that Fox Interactive's *Simpson's Road Rage* copies gameplay elements from their own *Crazy Taxi* series.

THE Interactive Entertainment Merchants Association of America has announced plans designed to prevent the sale of mature-rated games to minors. Under the new program, retailers will have to check buyer's ID at the point of sale.



COURTESY of Ubisoft, *Soldier* has three copies of Tom Clancy's *Rainbow Six 3* for the Xbox up for grabs.

For your chance to win, simply tell us on a postcard the title of Tom Clancy's first novel.

Winners will be drawn at random from the correct answers received by February 27. Usual rules apply.

WIN!



## SWAT: GLOBAL STRIKE TEAM, PS2 & XBOX

SET in 2018, this squad-based first-person shooter from Sierra Entertainment puts players in command of the newly-formed *SWAT: Global Strike Team* – an elite unit comprised of the three best operators the special forces and law enforcement organisations have to offer.

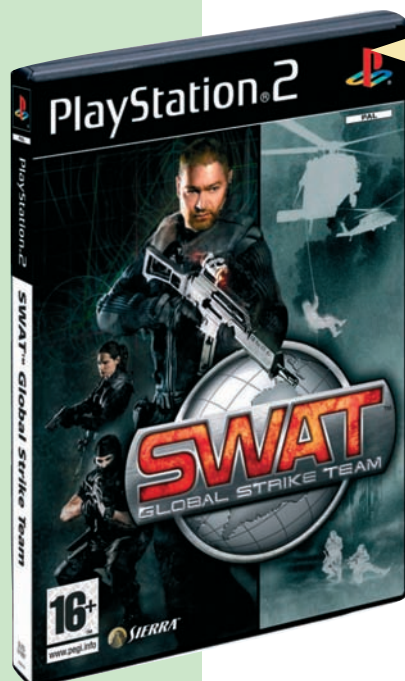
Using intuitive commands via the controller or optional microphone attachment, gamers must guide their squad, which consists of a leader, sniper and technological expert, as they dispense justice to the planet's most ruthless outlaws.

To succeed, players will have to master the skills of breaching and clearing rooms, close-quarter combat, long-range shooting, and the use of sophisticated surveillance equipment.

Armed with a wide range of specialized weapons and next-generation intelligence technology, the team can pick locks, crack computer systems, disable alarms, drill holes through walls and place fibre optic cameras as they try to entrap their hostile targets.

A pioneering, photo-realistic lighting system coupled with innovative "iris effects", which mimic the way the human eye works when you move from light to dark areas and vice versa, ensures gamers' total immersion in the action.

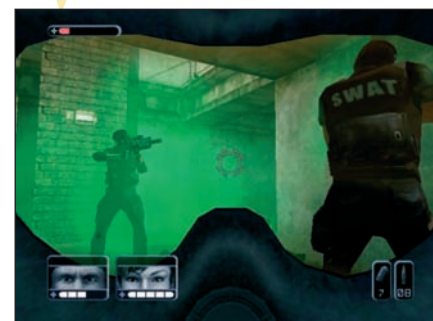
Once players have battled through the



game's 21 single-player missions, they can then test their skills alongside a friend with ten exclusive multiplayer levels.

**VERDICT:** A real crime to miss it. **8/10**

**WIN!** *SOLDIER* has teamed up with Sierra Entertainment to offer readers the opportunity to try their hand at law enforcement. For your chance to win one of five copies of *SWAT: Global Strike Team* for the PS2, simply answer the following question:



Which former Ballykissangel star appeared alongside Samuel L Jackson in the 2003 hit movie S.W.A.T?

Send your answers on a postcard to *SWAT: Global Strike Team* competition, *Soldier*, Ordnance Road, Aldershot, Hants GU11 2DU.

The winners will be drawn at random from the correct answers received by February 27. Usual rules apply.

## BUFFY: CHAOS BLEDS, ALL

OUT NOW

BASED on one of the hottest television shows around, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Chaos Bleds* brings all the excitement surrounding Sunnydale's "Hellmouth" straight into your home.

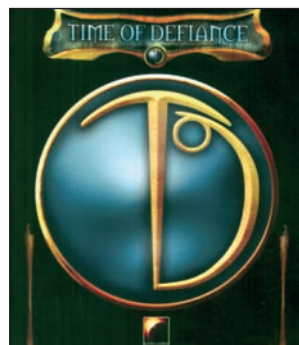
Assuming the role of Sarah Michelle Gellar's cult heroine and five other main characters from the series, this action adventure title boasts an original storyline written by Buffy writers Chris Golden and Tom Sneigowski, and voice recordings from cast members.



**VERDICT:** Worth getting your teeth stuck into. **7/10**

## TIME OF DEFIANCE, PC

OUT NOW



**VERDICT:** Every megalomaniac's dream. **9/10**

*TIME of Defiance* is an online, real-time multiplayer strategy game set across the huge landscape of a shattered world.

Players fight for conquest of the islands in this virtual land and mine their mineral wealth to expand their empire within a territory of more than 4,000kmsq.

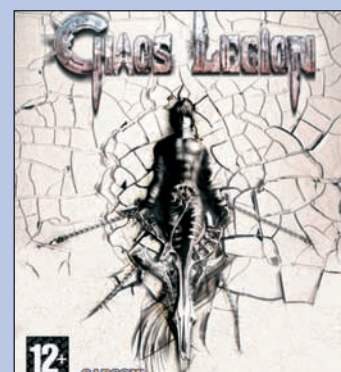
Every other empire is ruled by a human, who will remember broken deals and false promises. Consequently, treachery, propaganda and trade are just as important as sound battle tactics.

## CHAOS LEGION, PS2

OUT NOW

BILLED in Japan as an "intense gothic opera", this single-player game combines elements of strategy, adventure and role-playing, and follows the story of master swordsman Sieg Wahrheit and his oldest ally Victor Delacroix.

As Wahrheit, players must fight their way through gloriously realised 3D environments and slay Delacroix's fearful hordes. Often hopelessly outnumbered in attacks, gamers have the ability to summon a legion of allies, each with their own signature weaponry, to assist them in battle.



**VERDICT:** Novel, but unlikely to attract legions of fans. **7/10**

## DINO CRISIS 3, XBOX

OUT NOW



**VERDICT:** A title with real bite. **8/10**

PREHISTORIC terror meets the outer reaches of space in Capcom's action adventure *Dino Crisis 3*.

As a member of an intergalactic marine group sent to investigate and rescue any possible survivors aboard a missing spaceship, players come face-to-face with a cargo of highly-evolved and ravenous dinosaurs.

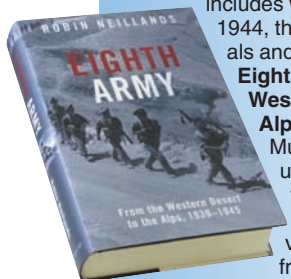
Equipped with a small arsenal of guns and a hyper-speed booster unit, gamers must solve a series of puzzles in a bid to uncover the mysteries of the ship and prevent it from returning to Earth.





## Veterans' accounts of long march to victory

ACKNOWLEDGED as one of our most readable military historians, Robin Neillands's back catalogue includes works on Normandy 1944, the Great War generals and The Bomber War.

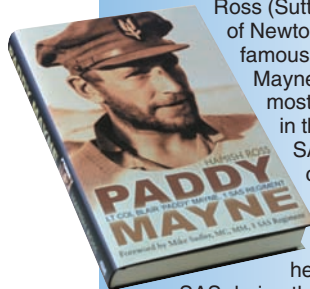


**Eighth Army: from the Western Desert to the Alps, 1939-1945** (John Murray, £20) continues the oral history tradition, being built on the memories of veterans collected from all over the

world. Its 450 pages include eyewitness accounts of the battles fought at Sidi Rezegh, Alamein, in Sicily and at Cassino and of the end of the Eighth Army's epic 3,000-mile march to victory.

## Paddy Mayne, SAS legend: the truth

LEGENDARY is not a word to be used lightly but it is applied correctly to **Paddy Mayne**, the subject of this welcome reassessment by Hamish

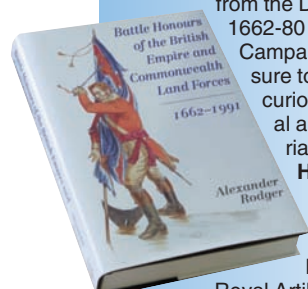


Ross (Sutton, £19.99). One of Newtownards' most famous sons, Lt Col Blair Mayne is one of the most honoured names in the annals of the SAS. A solicitor in civilian life who played rugby for both Ireland and the British Lions, he commanded 1

SAS during the Second World War with great distinction. Soon after his tragic death at the age of 40 in 1955, stories appeared about him which became the received wisdom. This officially-backed and well-researched book sets the record straight.

## Staggering detail in this comprehensive record

ANY book which describes itself as "a complete record of the officially named Battle Honours of the British and Commonwealth Land Forces



from the Defence of Tangier 1662-80 to the first Gulf Campaign of 1991" is sure to arouse the curiosity of professional and amateur historians alike. **Battle Honours of the British Empire and Commonwealth Land Forces** by former

Royal Artillery officer Alexander Rodger (Crowood Press, £35) took 20 years to research. The result is almost 500 pages packed full of a staggering amount of detail.

# Uncle Bill of B

## Soldier's soldier with a cool head and the common touch

**Slim, Master of War** by Robert Lyman (Constable, hardback, £25)

Review: Brian Jewell

IN this significant book Robert Lyman claims that only the skill and exertion of one man, William Joseph Slim, affectionately known to his troops as Uncle Bill, had made it possible.

The author convincingly demonstrates that Slim's talents as a general were equal if not superior to those of such better known men as Montgomery.

His achievements may be summarised as the rebuilding of the confidence of an army so as to take it from defeat into victory and the destruction of the notion that the Japanese soldier was invincible, a myth that could be dispelled once the techniques of jungle warfare had been mastered.

The defeated Burma Army was reorganised into the famous 14th, self-deprecatingly nicknamed the "Forgotten Army". It may surprise some readers to learn that this force comprised 58 per cent Indian troops, 25 per cent African and a mere 17 per cent British.

Quoting from LCpl George MacDonald Fraser's 1992 book *Quartered Safe Out Here*, the new spirit engendered by Slim expressed

itself in "all the rest of the hungry battalion. To say nothing of the Gurkhas along the wire, grinning and chirruping, and the fearsome Baluchi hillmen looking like Forty Thieves... Jap wasn't going to stop this lot".

By the end of 1943 the 14th Army had become an efficient fighting machine able to emerge from a complicated series of engagements known as "The Bloody Plain", to take on and defeat in monsoon conditions an enemy whose formidable reputation was at last beginning to be undermined by disease and starvation.

Once and for all, the notion of Japanese invincibility was shattered in the battle of Imphal and Kohima in June 1944. For his achievement Slim was knighted at Imphal on December 15, 1944.

Robert Lyman, a former officer in the British Army, spent five years researching and writing this exhaustive account of Uncle Bill's Burma career.

He has used material provided by Slim himself in his *Defeat into Victory*, 1956, and an impressive bibliography which includes the *Report to Combined Chiefs of Staff* by Earl Mountbatten of Burma, Supreme Allied Commander South East Asia 1943-45.

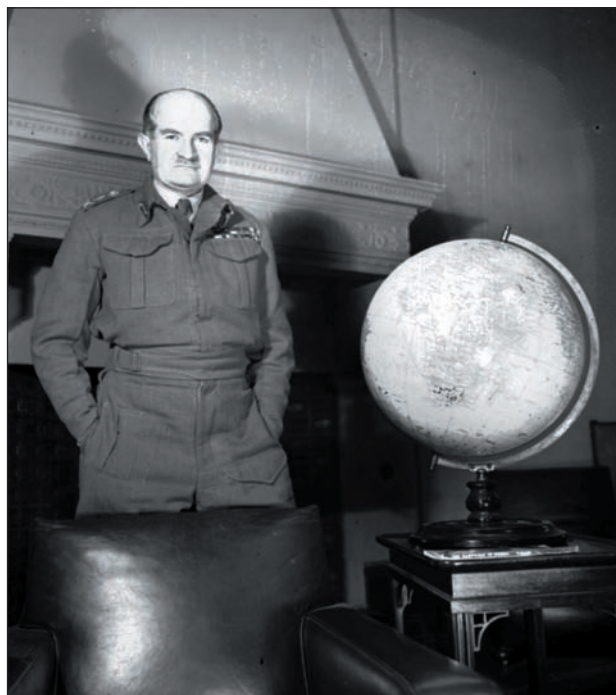
Relationships between commanders in time of war are always a fruitful source of interest; indeed, they are frequently an interpersonal minefield. Lyman's book provides plenty of fascinating detail of this kind.

With Mountbatten, Slim was always comfortable. The two men saw eye to eye and shared a capacity to think imaginatively and against the grain of conventional strategy. The maverick Wingate found Slim one of the few senior officers with whom he could work.

Slim recalled: "We had each in our own way arrived at the same conclusions on certain major issues, the potentialities of air supply, the possibility of taking Burma from the North and in our estimates of the strengths and weaknesses of the Japanese."

Shortly before Wingate died on March 24, 1944, he told Slim: "You are the only senior officer in South East Asia who doesn't wish me dead."

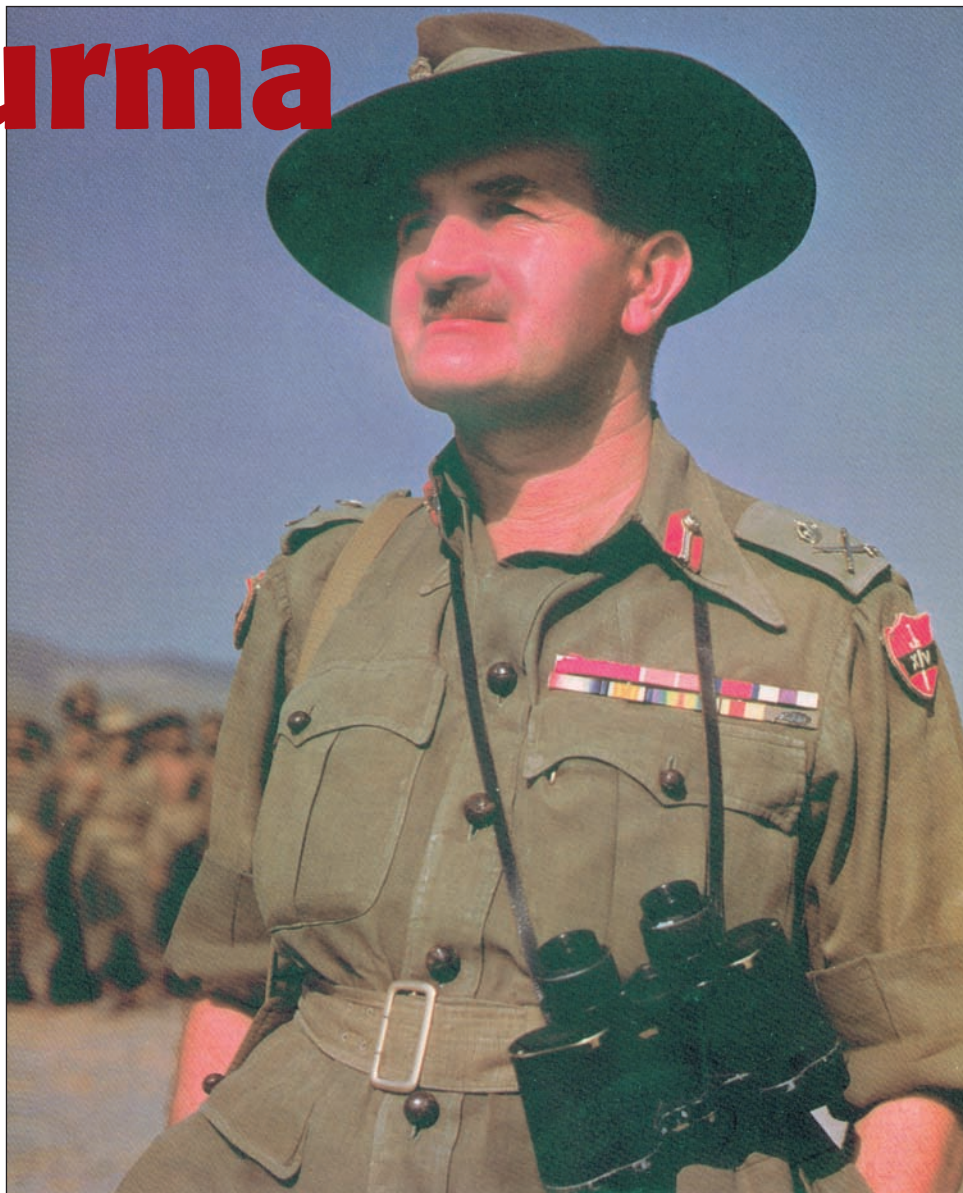
With Lt Gen Sir Oliver Leese, however, who was appointed by Mountbatten in November 1944 to take com-



**Worldly-wise: Fd Marshal Slim as Chief of the Imperial General Staff in 1948**



# Burma



**Cool head:** Fd Marshal Sir William Slim, pictured at the formal liberation of the city of Mandalay in March, 1945. He is wearing his trademark bush hat and just visible on his right shoulder is the strap of a US M1 Carbine. He had been rarely separated from the weapon since "Vinegar Joe" Stilwell gave it to him during the 1,000-mile retreat of 1942.

TRH Pictures; courtesy of Viscount Slim, OBE

mand of Allied Land Forces, Slim's relations were sparky. Leese recognised the importance of Slim's victory at Imphal/Kohima but did not consider it to be on a par with those achieved in North Africa and Italy and was sceptical about Slim's all-round prowess. He aimed not merely to support Slim but exercise command himself.

This uneasy relationship culminated in an attempt by Leese to have Slim removed from command but the tables were turned when Mountbatten intervened to inform Leese he was to be replaced as Commander ACFSEA by Slim and should return home to the UK forthwith.

"It has been a horrid party with Mountbatten and Slim," wrote the discomfited Leese to his wife.

Lyman gives us an affectionate character study of a remarkable and charismatic individual whose cool head under pressure and

common touch endeared him to the men whom he commanded.

At the same time, Slim's insistence, against the wishes of Gen Douglas MacArthur, that the Japanese officers surrender their swords indicates the depth of his antagonism towards the enemy.

"General Kimura's sword is now on my mantelpiece where I always intended that one day it should be," he declared.

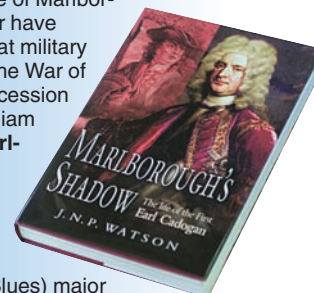
*Slim, Master of War* is a much needed and scholarly addition to the literature of the Burma War.

## 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 booksearch; 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](mailto:books@helion.co.uk) Website: <http://www.helion.co.uk>

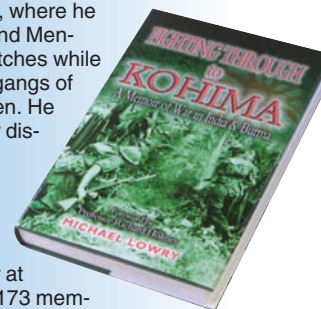
## Two sides of the man behind Marlborough

BEHIND every great man there is at least one able lieutenant and some say that the Duke of Marlborough could never have achieved his great military success during the War of the Spanish Succession with out Gen William Cadogan. In **Marlborough's Shadow** (Pen & Sword, £19.95) Johnnie Watson, a former Royal Horse Guards (Blues) major who served with the Guards Parachute Company in Cyprus and Suez, reveals that Cadogan was not just an inspiring leader of men; he was also a crafty swindler, extortionist and brazen army profiteer.



## One man's war in India and Burma

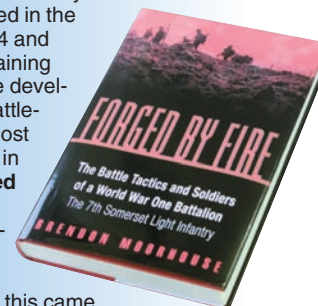
AFTER joining up in 1939 with the Queen's Royal Regiment, Mike Lowry was posted to the North West Frontier of India, where he was wounded and Mentioned in Despatches while chasing bandit gangs of Pathan tribesmen. He earned a similar distinction in the Arakan region during the Japanese advance into Burma and later at Kohima he lost 173 members of his battalion in a week. His experiences are told in **Fighting Through to Kohima: A Memoir of War in India and Burma** (Pen & Sword, £19.95).



## Baptism of fire for Great War volunteers

BEFORE the First World War there was no national service and because the small Regular Army was all but destroyed in the fighting of 1914 and 1915, the remaining army had to be developed on the battlefield into the most powerful force in Europe. **Forged by Fire** by Brendon Moorhouse (Spellmount, £25)

describes how this came about in an "average" volunteer battalion – in this case the 7th Somerset Light Infantry – with the rapid and generally effective introduction of new weapons and fighting methods during the course of the war.







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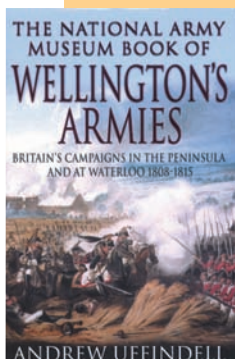
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## VIDEO/DVD

# Willis goes to war: Win Tears on DVD



We've got two copies of **The National Army Museum Book of Wellington's Armies** to give away. Andrew Uffindell's authoritative history of Britain's campaigns in the Peninsula and at Waterloo

between 1808 and 1815 (Macmillan, £30) gives an insight into what it must have been like to fight under the Iron Duke.

Unpublished accounts from the NAM's archives bring to life a comprehensive picture of the campaign.

To have a chance of winning a copy of the book, tell

us on a postcard or sealed envelope the name of Wellington's first battle in the Peninsular War. Was it:

**a) Waterloo b) Rolica c) Vitoria?**

Entries should reach us by February 27 and the first two correct answers drawn at random will win the prizes.

US Navy Seal veteran Lt A K Waters (Bruce Willis) travels to war-torn Nigeria on a hazardous assignment to rescue Dr Lena Kendricks (Monica Bellucci), an American citizen who runs a mission in the jungles.

But when Lt Waters arrives, the beautiful doctor refuses to abandon the refugees in her care.

Waters agrees to escort the mission people on a dangerous trek through dense jungle to the border, all the while being pursued by a rebel militia group who have only one goal in mind, to assassinate Lt Water's unit and the refugees in his care.

This action-packed war drama is available to



buy or rent on VHS/DVD on February 16.

Courtesy of Columbia TriStar Home Entertainment, *Soldier* has five copies of *Tears of the Sun* on DVD up for grabs.

For your chance to win, simply answer the following question:

Hollywood superstar Bruce Willis starred in a series of action movies as New York cop John McLane. Was it:

**a) Die Behaving Badly b) Die Hard c) Die Actually?**

Send your answers on a postcard or sealed envelope to *Tears of the Sun* Competition, *Soldier*, Ordnance Road, Aldershot, Hants GU11 2DU. Usual rules apply.

Winners will be drawn at random from the correct answers received by February 27.

## BOOKS IN BRIEF

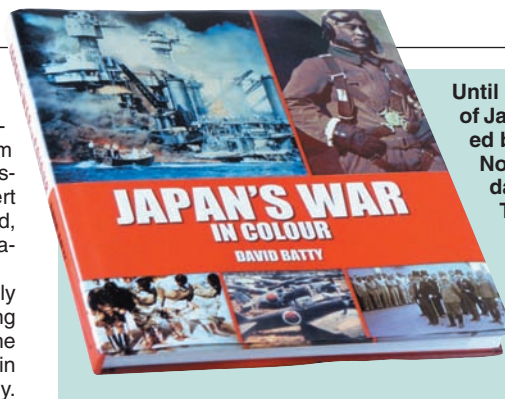
## Shan Hackett: The Pursuit of Excellence

by Roy Fullick. Gen Sir John Hackett – universally known as Shan – was an exceptional fighting soldier, whose actions ranged from the Syrian campaign of 1941 with the Trans-Jordan Frontier Force to the Western Desert (with his own regiment, the 8th Hussars) and, most famously, command of the 4th Parachute Brigade at Arnhem.

A classical scholar and linguist, this highly articulate soldier rose to high rank, occupying key command and staff appointments in the British Army and Nato. He died at home in 1997, two months short of his 87th birthday. (Pen & Sword, £19.95.)

**In the Shadow of Arnhem** by Ken Tout. The author saw action in the battles for the Lower Maas in 1944. This is his account of the fighting across Holland which followed the Arnhem debacle. (Sutton, £19.99.)

**Arnhem: The Battle Remembered** by Robert Jackson. Detailed account of the air and



Until recently it was assumed no colour images of Japan and its Second World War forces existed before the arrival of the Americans in 1945.

Not so. An extraordinary colour record – dating back to 1931 – has begun to emerge.

The TWI-Carlton research team, responsible for the award-winning *Britain at War in Colour*, has amassed hundreds of images, many of them not seen before, and published them in *Japan's War in Colour*, edited by David Batty. It includes photographs of the attack on Pearl Harbour. (Carlton Books, £20.)

ground operation, written with the cooperation of the late Gen Sir John Hackett. First published in 1994. (Airlife, softback, £14.99.)

**Burma: The Turning Point** by Maj Gen Ian Lyall Grant. An insight into the pivotal Imphal-Kohima campaign of 1944, after which the previously all-conquering Japanese 15th Army under Gen Mutaguchi was pushed back, then hunted down to catastrophic defeat. This analysis, by a Burma veteran, was first published in 1993. (Pen & Sword, £19.95.)

## McCrae's Battalion: The Story of the 16th Royal Scots

by Jack Alexander. McCrae's Own – the Heart of Midlothian Battalion – was raised in Edinburgh shortly after the start of the First World War and became one of the finest units in Kitchener's volunteer army. It was decimated on the first day of the Battle of the Somme, fought at Arras and Passchendaele

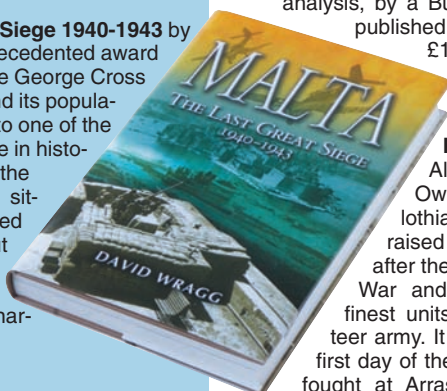
and held the line at Lys in 1918. (Mainstream, £15.99.)

**The Next Moon** by André Hue and Ewen Southby-Tailyour. André Hue, son of a Welsh mother and French father, parachuted into Brittany on June 6, 1944. This is the story of his years as a British agent behind the lines in German-occupied France. (Penguin, £17.99.)

**Gallipoli: Our Last Man Standing** by Jonathan King. Alec Campbell landed at Gallipoli as a 16-year-old Australian larrikin. He survived to become a leading socialist and republican, committed to helping the disabled. (Wiley, £18.99.)

**Letting the Side Down** by Sean Murphy. Drawing on the National Archives, the author exposes the reasons why British traitors of the Second World War betrayed King and country, and explores their fates. Some – William (Lord Haw Haw) Joyce – are well known, others not so. A seaman called Duncan Scott-Ford sold information about convoy movements, while Harold Cole betrayed up to 150 British and French agents. (Sutton, £18.99.)

**Malta: The Last Great Siege 1940-1943** by David Wragg. The unprecedented award by King George VI of the George Cross to the island of Malta and its population marked the climax to one of the greatest acts of defiance in history. Against all the odds, the Mediterranean island – sitting across Axis and Allied supply routes – held out against the Nazis. The author has woven first-hand accounts into his narrative of Malta's ordeal. (Pen & Sword, £19.95.)





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## SOLDIER to soldier

# Case for defence

STORIES about military equipment shortages during last year's war in the Gulf continue to make headlines, further fuelled by a much-publicised meeting between the Defence Secretary and a soldier's widow.

Sgt Steve Roberts was obliged to give up his enhanced body armour because it was required by another unit – and soon after was killed when he was shot during a riot.

Although it is apparently not possible to state categorically that enhanced body armour would have saved his life, lessons learned about American casualties during the conflict must be relevant to his case.



According to the MoD's own report [*Operations in Iraq: Lessons for the future*] initial analysis by the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) indicates that enhanced combat body armour reduced the number of US forces killed in action from torso wounds by at least 50 per cent – and possibly by up to a startling 90 per cent.

Dstl's analysis goes further. It suggests that body armour reduced all US battlefield fatalities by 20 per cent and possibly as much as 32 per cent. "Although data was not available to conduct an analysis for UK soldiers, the results can be regarded as indicative," says *Lessons for the future*.



The report states that the inclusion of enhanced combat body armour in [soldiers'] standard equipment issue was being considered. Although 38,000 sets were sent to Iraq, late delivery and difficulties with issuing them led to some units doing without.

On Page 7 we report that Mr Hoon told Sgt Roberts's widow he had asked the MoD whether body armour could become standard issue to British soldiers. The compelling Dstl analysis of its effectiveness in reducing American fatalities in Iraq surely makes the answer to that question a foregone conclusion.

Home truths

Sue Bonney

# A brave widow puts soldiers' kit back in dock

I DON'T know about you, but I take a bit of comfort from the fact that the Martians appear to be winning their battle to keep Mars to themselves.

I'm not sure it's a good idea for us to be branching out on to another planet when we are making such a magnificent mess of the one we're already on, and they clearly agree.

I rather like the way they quietly muck up everything we send up there – a couple of tantalising shots of the rosy surface is all we get before something goes wrong. Good on you, guys. Keep us in our place until we've sorted this lot out.

Back here on Earth, up against the *Soldier* deadline, I ponder what to say amid all the words my media colleagues are throwing at Defence.

Thanks to reports on Operation Telic 1 and the courageous persistence of Samantha Roberts, the Army and its equipment is the centre of attention. The cynic in me suspects the current excitement is more to do with the fact that the media smells political blood than anything else.

But there can't be many Army wives who aren't silently cheering Samantha Roberts on in her dignified refusal to let the death of her husband be airbrushed away by expressions of regret.

How many other soldiers in Iraq were risking the same outcome because they had to hand over their body armour?

There but for the grace of God could have gone others. We all know that, and we all salute her.

The Army Families Federation began to hear from families about shortages of several kinds early on in Op Telic 1 – the water and food issues went away, but complaints about equipment persisted and were reinforced when the soldiers came home.

Now no one doubts what they said, with both the MoD and National Audit Office reports confirming difficulties



A personal view  
from Sue Bonney,  
Editor of the AFF  
*Families Journal*

with equipment and distribution, but at the time it was implied that much was being made of not a lot. Thanks to Samantha Roberts, attitudes have been forced to change. Equipment shortages are not new, and soldiers have always bought their own bits of kit, especially when the issued stuff is surpassed by something cleverer on the open market.

But a shortage of vital protective gear in a war situation is not acceptable. Perhaps the enquiry

into Sgt Roberts's death will clarify why he had to hand over his body armour. Was it ultimately because the formal decision to commit us to war came late, and equipment orders delayed, until the Army had only three months' notice, when it needed six?

You might think that – I couldn't possibly comment.

Whatever the outcome, by the time you read this, when other reports have been published, I expect we'll still be out there in the sand, doing that magnificent job the politicians always talk about and the public has come to expect as the norm.

We've always made do, bought our own kit when we had to, muddled through, come up trumps, pulled it off, made the best of a bad job, carried on regardless, done a wonderful job, best troops in the world . . .

Will we be able to carry on doing it? Or might we be asked one day to do that one job too many which ends in disaster? For Samantha Roberts, that disaster has already happened.

Lessons, as they say, have been identified. So have they been learned? Will Samantha Roberts get her wish, and no more soldiers will be killed because of shortages of kit? You'd like to think so, wouldn't you. The families would certainly like to think so.

Perhaps someone should draw a line in that sand.

**'There can't be many Army wives who aren't silently cheering Samantha Roberts on in her dignified refusal to let her husband be airbrushed away'**





WRITE TO: SOLDIER, ORDNANCE ROAD, ALDERSHOT, HANTS GU11 2DU  
● E-mail: mail@soldiermagazine.co.uk

# DPM-clad Samaritan came to aid of damsel in distress

I WRITE to express my thanks to the unknown soldier who helped me to safety recently.

## Prize letter

In November, while working in the Brecon Beacons, I was required to walk cross-country to a specified grid reference, position a marker and return within a limited time.

Although usually competent with map and compass I have never experienced the intensity of fog that rolled in to engulf the

ridge and summit that morning. I was unable to locate the path down from the ridge, became increasingly disorientated and had to fight rising panic. I could hardly believe my eyes when the DPM-clad figure of a man materialised out of the fog.

He must also have been astonished to stumble upon a stranded, bedraggled, lone female, but he took it all in his stride

and after introducing himself as Campbell calmly accompanied me to safety before disappearing much the way he had appeared.

I don't know his full name or his regiment so hope that this letter will tell him of my gratitude for his assistance that day.  
– **Sophia Deacon, Richmond, Surrey.**

● If you were the good Samaritan, we would be interested to hear from you. – Editor

## Is there any truth in this rumour about £3,000 bounty

AS a recently returned Gulf War soldier, I was a bit put out to hear on the grapevine that certain Op Telic personnel had been rewarded for their heroics with a £3,000 bounty.

As we front-line infantry had to make do with a pat on the back and a "well done, lads" I would like to know if there is any truth to this rumour. – **Name and address supplied.**



**PJHQ replies:** No members of the armed forces have received bounties for their heroics in the Gulf.

Reservists receive an annual bounty if they achieve a certain training requirement.

Call-out can count towards elements of this; however the maximum bounty any individual can receive is lower than the figure quoted in the letter. The only other "bonus" paid out is for Long Separated Service Allowance (LSSA), which depends on the number of days spent away in a two-year period. Again, the maximum paid out for this is lower than the figure quoted in the letter.

## Late Entry RSMs

AN article on Page 38 (Dec) suggested most Late Entry officers attending Sandhurst would be former RSMs. I find this statement surprising, given the number of WO1 technical appointments there are throughout the Army. The RLC, REME, R Signals, RA, Int Corps, AGC (SPS), AAC, RE and AMS have a vast amount of non-RSM WO1 appointments. – **Capt R Shepherd, Aldershot.**

## Why should I pay to reach new post?

I WAS recently posted from Upavon to Herford, Germany. On arrival I put in a travel claim and received the princely sum of €38.

The actual journey had cost me £100 for the ferry and two tanks of petrol totalling £165 (the ferry cost me £100 as I bought a day return with cash and did not make the return trip).

I am approximately £140 out of pocket, just because I decided to take my car. I know the Army will pay for a flight, but let's wake up to the fact that most people

have cars and want to take them abroad. Surely the least that should be refunded is the actual cost of travel.

On a more positive note, the removals system has improved greatly for singles since my last tour in Germany. My boxes were collected from my house and delivered two weeks later. Well done to whoever was responsible.

Perhaps you could have a word with the "take car to Germany, will pay" decision-makers to bring some reality to the situation. – **Maj J Sheldon, Herford.**



**Lt Col W R Walker, SO1 PS10(A)**

**DPS(A), replies:** This matter is routinely raised, particularly by those posted to Germany, but I would ask readers to remember that this is not just a Germany issue – there are many locations overseas where personnel from all three Services are posted.

The calculation of local overseas allowance (LOA) is complex but includes a financial element based on the assumption that those posted overseas sell their car when they leave the UK and buy another when they return. This amount is based on the sell/buy difference of a UK used car and is currently worth in the region of £300 a year or £25 a month during a three-year tour.

The alternative is to remove the sell/buy calculation from the LOA equation and refund

the actual costs of travel. While this would recognise the added expense of driving to Germany, it would also result in a corresponding reduction in everyone's daily rate of LOA.

Contrary to the assumption that the Army's "take car to Germany, will pay" decision-makers are asleep – we are in fact wide-awake and endeavouring to ensure that the maximum number of military personnel serving overseas are not financially disadvantaged.

Maj Sheldon will break even in less than six months. However, if he/she feels inclined to refund any excess monies received at the conclusion of the tour, I am (as a personal favour) prepared to calculate the amount and am confident that any number of Service charities would be grateful for the donation.

## We want to hear from you . . . but please be brief

**YOUR** letters provide a real insight into the issues at the top of officers' and soldiers' agenda wherever the Army is deployed . . . 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.



## PISCATOR



**This year is the 60th anniversary of the Army Benevolent Fund. To mark 60 years of caring for soldiers, ex-soldiers and their families in times of real need we're hoping to raise more money than ever for the Army family. Can you help? For a fundraising pack, please call 020 7591 2042 or send an e-mail to [enquiries@armybenevolentfund.com](mailto:enquiries@armybenevolentfund.com)**



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# Flight problems can be fault of unit and soldier

AS an RAF mover at Brize Norton, I'd like to respond to the letter from R Sant (Nov) concerning his opinions regarding the RAF's inability to transport troops efficiently.

The fault does not lie entirely with the RAF. Problems also occur when soldiers are given the wrong information. I have seen soldiers turn up on the wrong day for a flight which operates on the same day, every week, all year round.

I have seen soldiers turn up not knowing their flight number or departure time. Bizarrely, I recall a soldier wishing to return to duty in Germany, having being told by his clerk: "Just turn up at Brize on Thursday and they'll get you back". He was not booked on a flight and needless to say was unable to travel that day.

These are not isolated incidents, they are weekly, sometimes daily occurrences at Brize and Lyneham.

This is not to say that mishaps don't happen because, as we all know, they do. But, if you were travelling independently, for instance on a holiday abroad, you would ensure you had all the correct flight details before you left. At the RAF's terminals, the movements staff have all the information to hand.

We are capable of getting our passengers to their destination, but we can't work miracles. As for onward movement from airheads, that is down to the soldier's unit to sort out, not the RAF. If a flight is delayed or cancelled we can't liaise with every unit to rearrange transport.

We handle perhaps 20 flights a day, dealing with all three Services as well as civilians travelling to a variety of destinations. We don't do a bad job, and certainly cannot be held responsible for the accuracy of information given to soldiers. – **SAC Nick Black, RAF Brize Norton.**

PS...

## Give union credit

**THE reply to Sgt Walton's letter concerning a credit union (Nov) from SO2a3 PS10(A) said that as UK Armed Forces were not as large as US Armed Forces, a credit union would not be commercially or economically viable.**

But has the possibility even been looked into? We are sick of being ripped off by companies located close to barracks who take advantage of soldiers who, through no fault of their own, have poor credit ratings. Our choice is restricted because of factors such as our BFPO addresses.

With more than 150,000 serving members, I find it hard to believe that if even a third of that number wished to join a Forces' credit union it would not be financially viable. Come on, let's have a study and not be palmed off with one-sentence answers. — Sgt K Fox, Emsworth, Hants.

## Plea for plaques

**I AM the deputy manager of a 30-flat, sheltered housing complex for elderly ex-Servicemen. In our foyer we have divided the space into three sections to represent the three Services. I would be obliged if any Army units would be generous enough to donate regimental and unit plaques to take pride of place in our display. Our residents would be in appreciation of your help. – Malcolm Garbutt, Flat 12, Trafalgar Court, 2 Richmond Road, Southsea, Hants PO5 2NU.**

## 'Terriers' is top name

**REFERENCE** Talkback (Jan) and the letter from S Goldstein regarding renaming the Territorial Army, Mr Goldstein is wrong if he thinks the Terriers have been so nicknamed for 30 or 40 years – it goes back further than that.

I was well aware of it as a boy in the 1940s. What's the problem with Terriers? I was a Terrier for seven years in the 1980s and found pride rather than annoyance in the term – if it ain't broke, don't fix it.

**As for the media's acceptance of a natty new term, bear in mind we still talk of MI5 and MI6 but neither has existed since 1964 when they became DI5 and DI6 respectively. – Iain Leggatt, Carnoustie.**

## Give it up for E Coy

**IT WAS** good to see The East of England Regiment mentioned in your November issue, but I would like to point out that as well as B and D Companies mentioned in the story, there are 25-plus members of E Company, which has provided personnel for Op Telic 1, 2 and now 3. I am sure these lads will appreciate a mention too.— Cpl Swann, EER.





WRITE TO: SOLDIER, ORDNANCE ROAD, ALDERSHOT, HANTS GU11 2DU  
 ● E-mail: mail@soldiermagazine.co.uk

# Internet filters are another bad case of treating us like children

YOUR excellent article on alcohol use (Special report, Nov) has sparked a lot of comment here in Bosnia, almost all of it sympathetic and positive.

The bottom line seems to be that officers and soldiers should be allowed to behave like grown-ups rather than have policies dictated from on high.

On the subject of being treated as adults, I'd like to raise the issue of internet accessibility when deployed. A lot of people get worked up by the appalling standard of internet connection.

Before our deployment, internet facilities for e-mail were a big welfare selling point, but the reality is disappointing.

My understanding is that this is due to the filters and restrictions which the MoD insists on putting on the system. The

result is that everything slows down. The system here in Bosnia makes my cranky old computer at home look like it is on broadband by comparison.

Once again we are up against a mentality that insists on treating Servicemen and women like children who need to be kept on a tight leash lest they see something they ought not to be seeing.

If the MoD is concerned about inappropriate content there are better ways of sorting this out than putting a blanket filter on everything that has a potential for giving offence, which punishes the majority for the misbehaviour of the few.

The result is that people have difficulty accessing internet banking, shopping sites, credit-card accounts and so on, because the system creaks so slowly that

they are getting timed out or getting "proxy reports" telling them that for some reason they can't go there.

This even happens when people try to access e-mails on Hotmail, Yahoo and AOL. Something has got to be wrong.

It is a hot issue for people I work with, most of whom are reservists used to being treated as responsible adults.

I heard, and it may be an urban myth, a story about an RAVC soldier who was caring for a bitch with puppies. Apparently the bitch was having problems providing sufficient milk for her litter.

He searched on the internet for veterinary information on "lactating bitches" and was subsequently called in to explain himself to higher authority. – **Name supplied, Sipovo.**



**Paradigm Services respond:** This informative letter raises two issues which affect welfare services delivered to personnel on operations.

On internet access, the MoD has worked with Paradigm to establish a policy which allows personnel a high level of access and the MoD to ensure it is not condoning inappropriate material.

Out of a possible 86 categories which may be blocked, the MoD has selected just 19 – adult content, nudity, sex, abused drugs, marijuana, gambling, illegal/questionable, hacking, proxy avoidance systems, all but four web chat sites, militancy/extremist, malicious websites, spyware, special events, tasteless,

user-defined, violence, weapons. A full explanation of these categories appears on the Paradigm Welfare Services homepage, under FAQs "Why can't I access certain sites?"

The MoD listens to requests to unblock sites on a case-by-case basis. Contact your in-theatre administrator. All chatroom sites were blocked originally, but following requests by soldiers, some were enabled.

We are aware that users have experienced slow connections. The MoD and Paradigm have a programme in hand to resolve this. This includes the introduction in December of a threefold increase in the speed of connection from the Paradigm Internet Access Centre in Stevenage. In Bosnia terminal con-

nection rates were doubled last month. Further improvements next month include a sixfold increase in processing capability at the Internet Access Centre and, by the middle of the year, a roll-out programme of upgrades to all 200 PC terminals in the 38 Paradigm internet cabins worldwide.

This will allow popular websites to be more comprehensively cached on local PCs. Paradigm is customer-focused and your needs are our priority. Our customer contact centre, open weekdays 0600 to 2100 (UK time), is staffed by people who care about the service and who are supported by a full-time team of technical and support engineers. Contact us at **customersupport@paradigmservices.com**

## Concerned by 27 per cent PAX rise

THE choice of insurers for soldiers is limited and PAX offers some peace of mind, but my PAX contributions have been increased, seemingly by stealth.

Cost of accident cover has risen by more than 27 per cent to £2.10. Why? I received no notification of an increase and when I made enquiries was told that personnel should have been informed via the chain of command.

I located the release, which highlights changes to the PAX system and includes a statement to the effect that existing members are subject to new terms and conditions. I have not seen or signed an agreement. Is this normal for a professional body providing a financial service?

The 27 per cent increase is outrageous, particularly when pay increases were a tenth of that amount. I am tempted to reduce the number of my units, but I worry, like any regular Lotto player, if I stop playing my numbers will come up. – **Capt C M Jarvill RE, Portsmouth.**



**SO2a3 PS10(A) replies:** In formulating this response I have confirmed the details with AON Ltd, the PAX brokers. The insurance market was severely affected by the events of September 11 and the new rates are a reflection on the increased risk and uncertainty across the world.

The increase in premiums from July 2003 was the first price rise since 1992 and relates only to individual personal accident cover. The family element and life premiums remain unchanged.

The MoD was consulted extensively over the terms and conditions of the new PAX contract in order to facilitate the most advantageous arrangements within the constraints of the commercial insurance market. PAX has remained available without increase in premium or restrictions throughout the current Gulf conflict. Individuals may continue to join, cancel or change their cover at any time.

There are other insurers offering similar non-MoD facilitated insurance schemes and individuals are free to take up any scheme they consider best meets their personal requirements. Further details may be

obtained from the Services; Insurance and Investment Advisory Panel at **www.siiap.org**

Unlike civilian schemes, PAX cannot contact policyholders directly. This is due to a number of reasons, primarily security and the dispersed and mobile nature of Service life. Contact can only be achieved by sending literature to units through the military distribution network at Mill Hill.

New brochures showing the revised terms and conditions are expected to be issued to all existing PAX members shortly. However, there have been some delays in publication and the process has taken longer than anticipated. Advance details of the changes in PAX terms and conditions were promulgated to the chain of command through DCC(A) in May 2003, but it is acknowledged that this method cannot guarantee notification for every individual.

Selection of insurance cover is a matter of personal choice, but PAX still represents value for money in relation to cover provided in the current commercial insurance market. It remains a stable, long-term plan with the safeguards of a written renewable contract in place.



## THEN AND THEN



## 25 YEARS AGO

From *Soldier*, February 1979: A reminder that it is more than 17 years since recruits were brought in from the Commonwealth to bring the Army up to strength comes from Maj Peter Rowe LI at the Army Medal Office. He is involved in issuing the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal to those of the original 200 Fijians who are still serving.

## 50 YEARS AGO

From *Soldier*, February 1954: The new sub-machine-gun, above, which has been tried in active service conditions in the Far East and in Kenya, is to be issued throughout the British Army. It will replace the Sten machine carbine. Early models received some publicity as "the Patchett gun". Since then the gun has been developed and is now known officially as the L2 A1.

# Shaibah Oasis ban is to protect drivers

COULD someone explain why the new EFI complex at Shaibah Logistics Base (SLB) is out of bounds to some units after 1830 because it sells alcohol? This includes being able to sit down and have a cuppa, soft drink or a burger.

I can understand the no-drink policy, but why prevent us from having a place other than our tents or the dining tent to sit and chill out during the evenings? – **Private soldier, Op Telic.**



**Gp Capt Bob Hounslow, RAF Representative to Naafi, in conjunction with HQ UK NSE (United Kingdom National Support Element), replies:**

While I can understand this soldier's disappointment at his inability to make use of the new Naafi Oasis during the hours in which it serves alcohol, the restriction placed on his unit by his commanding officer is a force protection measure taken for the safety of his soldiers.

The unit concerned has many drivers, none of whom are permitted to drink within eight hours of driving and many of whom are expected to begin driving tasks in the early morning. It would be divisive to penalise only the drivers within the unit, and frequent short-

notice tasks make it impossible to identify for certain those who would definitely not be required to drive the following day. Moreover, soldiers on the unit operate daily in the 20 (Armoured) Brigade area where no soldiers are allowed to consume alcohol during their tour.

Having decided that he could not allow his soldiers to drink, the CLSR commanding officer felt it would be unfair for them to be expected to use a bar frequented by other soldiers who were allowed to drink (albeit only two cans a day). Instead, the unit has its own bar area that serves soft drinks.

That said, there is nothing to stop any soldier from using the Naafi Oasis during a break in the daytime routine (when alcohol is not served) to enjoy a coffee, soft drink or meal.

In short, the restriction on soldiers from the CLSR has been imposed for their protection while they are carrying out a demanding and sometimes dangerous role that is not compatible with the consumption of alcohol.

Nonetheless, the welfare facilities at Shaibah Logistics Base are very new, as is the way in which they fit into the working life of the base. Consequently, the rules for all of the units based there are under constant review as the operational situation develops.

*PS . . .*

## Overpaid? Be smart

I REFER to the sad letters in Talkback concerning the recovery of Longer Separated Service Allowance (LSSA) overpayments in one go.

There will always be, despite the best efforts of regimental administrative office staff instances when pay mistakes are made. This is not always the fault of the RAO staff because there are many factors which can and do impinge on the smooth delivery of pay and allowances.

If soldiers become aware that they have been overpaid, by whatever means, they should ensure the RAO has been informed. If they use their common sense they should leave the money in their bank accounts, earning themselves interest, so when repayment is required they won't have any problems.

If the temptation to spend what isn't theirs is too great they can always pay a cheque to their unit imprest account.

Who will look after these people when they leave the Army and have to stand on their own feet? There will be no one to run around and make sure everything is tickety-boo for them then. – P T Williams, Worthy Down.

## Who was Col Clift?

COULD I take up a small part of your Mail pages to ask if any of your readers can help me? Some years ago I came into possession of an F&S fighting knife, No 2 Pattern (straight guard and brass handle, knurled), on the blade of which is etched the name "Lieut. Col P A Clift".

I drew a blank with the Royal Marines' Museum and checked the Commonwealth War Graves site, but again turned up nothing. I can only assume that Lt Col Clift survived the Second World War.

If there are any military historians out there who might be able to supply me with any information – regiment, exploits or anything else that could put a man behind the knife – I would be grateful. I can be contacted at [steve\\_bromfield@lineone.net](mailto:steve_bromfield@lineone.net) and will try to reply to all e-mails. – Steve Bromfield.

## Suez veterans' debt

MUCH credit for the bringing about of the award of the Suez Canal Zone medal should go to the small band of activists involved. I would like to think that I am included in this number.

It must also be said that there were two outstanding figures in the crusade, namely the late Col P S (Pip) Newton (DAAG 3 Infantry Brigade in Suez), who began the work and ex-WO1 Charles Golder RE, who continued the campaign when Colonel Pip died in 1998. All recipients are greatly indebted to these two veterans. – John Hunt, Preston Lancs.

● This is an example of the sentiments expressed in a number of similar letters received at *Soldier* in the past few months.



## TALKBACK

# Vox pop

The regular feature in which we ask soldiers for their views on an issue

## Afghan advice

We asked members of the Provincial Reconstruction Team in northern Afghanistan about the positive and negative aspects of this new operational tour and if they had any tips or advice for those who will succeed them

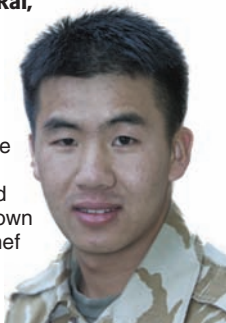
### Sgt Shane Blakey, 2 Sig Sqn



The people and the atmosphere on camp have really made the tour. We are living and working in close proximity so there is a lack of privacy. There is nowhere to get away and be by yourself. I'd advise people to bring a sense of humour, the correct kit for the time of

year and a positive attitude.

### Rfn Santosh Kumar Rai, 2 RGR



Driving is quite dangerous here. There's lots of traffic, no rules and road conditions are very bad. We have a TV room where we can watch films but I'd advise bringing your own laptop as well. The chef knows what we like and prepares very tasty Gurkha dishes.

### SSgt Peter Freeman, AGC(SPS)



The camaraderie within the team is the best bit. It's a small, close-knit unit with a relatively relaxed atmosphere. The down side was missing out on Christmas and New Year with my family. My top tips? Bring a warm quilt, your own pillow and some creature comforts.

### LCpl Tricia Gleave, 4 GS Med Regt



I really enjoy visiting the local hospitals and treating the people and I love getting mail from home. The cold weather is the hardest thing at the moment. Bring a CD player and CDs, DVDs, and a quilt and pillow.

### Rfn Naresh Gurung, 2 RGR



The people are so polite and friendly. I'm based in camp quite a lot but try to get out any chance I can to meet the people. I'd recommend learning some of the language.

### SSgt Shaun Breslan, Int Corps



It was good being one of the first people in to a brand new operation and being involved in getting things up and running. We've had some teething problems with running water, electricity and communication but most have been sorted out now. Mail and flights are still a bit inconsistent. I'd recommend bringing civvie clothes and sports kit to relax in,

your own mug, a selection of DVDs and warm gear for the winter.

### LCpl Chudak Thapa Magar, 2 RGR



There's a good mixture of Gurkha and British food to keep everyone happy. I'd like more internet access and more entertainment. It's important to bring the right kit for the extremes in temperature.

### Rfn Gajendra Limbu, 2 RGR



The local people are very friendly and sometimes invite us into their homes. We can speak Hindi, which makes communicating much easier. I think it's important for soldiers to learn some phrases in the local language and would recommend bringing a camera or a digital camcorder.

### Cpl Matt Purse, 98 PC Sqn RLC



This is a relatively new operation so the welfare package hasn't really kicked in properly yet and we've had niggling problems with the phones and the internet. The theme nights on camp are good and I enjoy meeting the local people. Bring a warm jacket, hat, gloves in winter and your own pillow.

Interviews: Andrea Frazer Pictures: Graeme Main



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