

MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH ARMY

SOLDIER

SEPTEMBER 2009 £3.50



TALAVERA
'Forgotten' battle recalled

TOP TEAM
The eyes and ears of CGS

SCOFF
Hot stuff on Ex Rhino Caterer

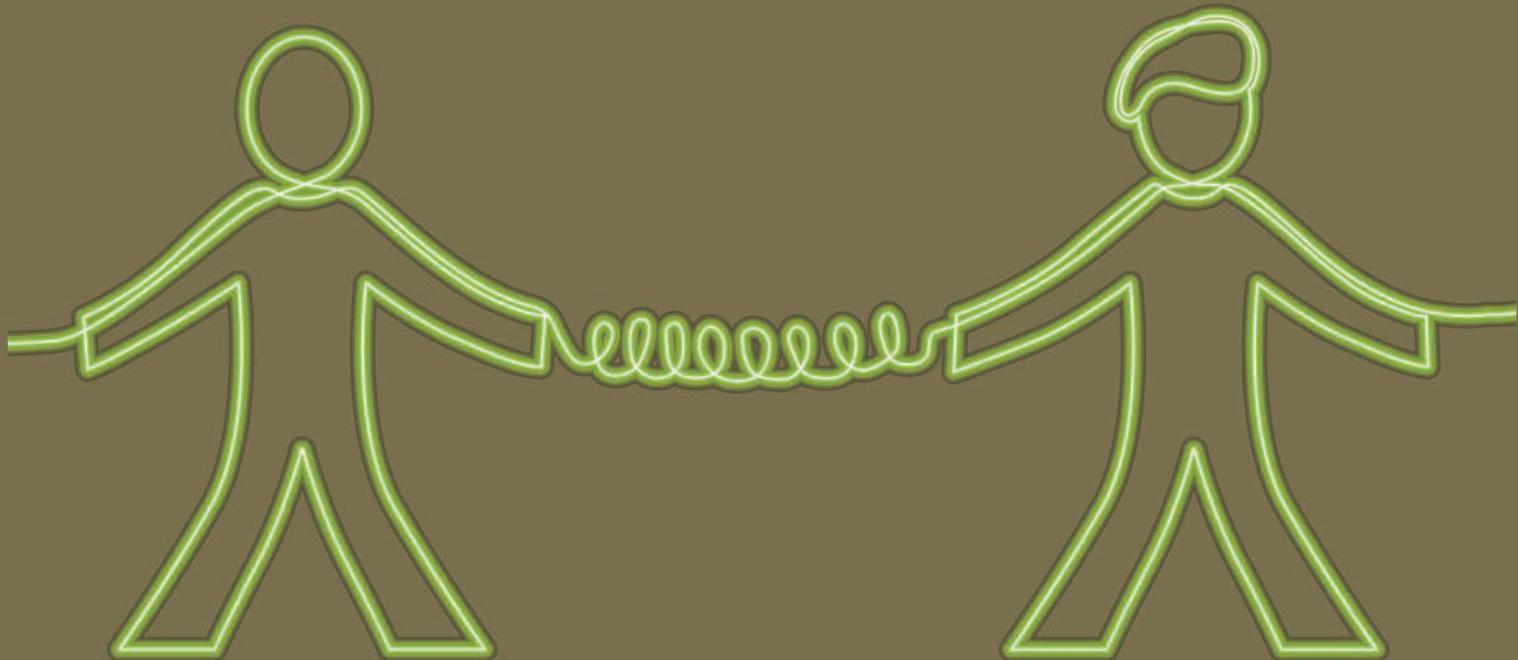
UNITED FRONT

Britain aids allies in
UN's Congo mission



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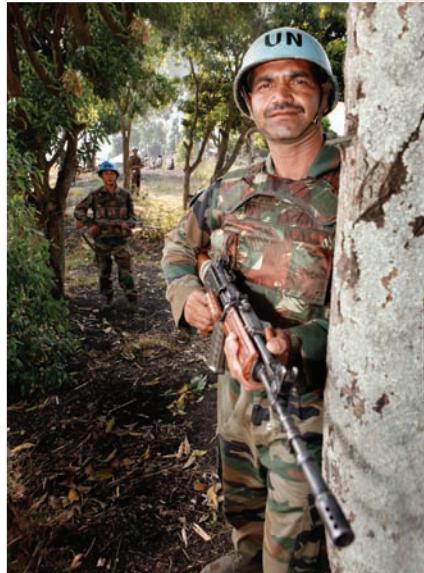
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Cover picture (left): Cpl Basma, of the 5th Battalion Jammu and Kashmir Light Infantry on patrol in Sake, Congo Picture: Steve Dock

Background image: Soldiers from 2 LSR swap logistics for drill after taking over public duties in London last month Picture: Steve Dock



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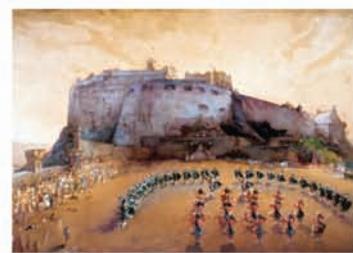
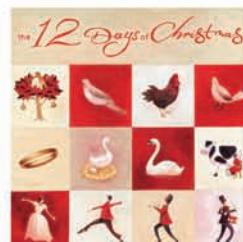


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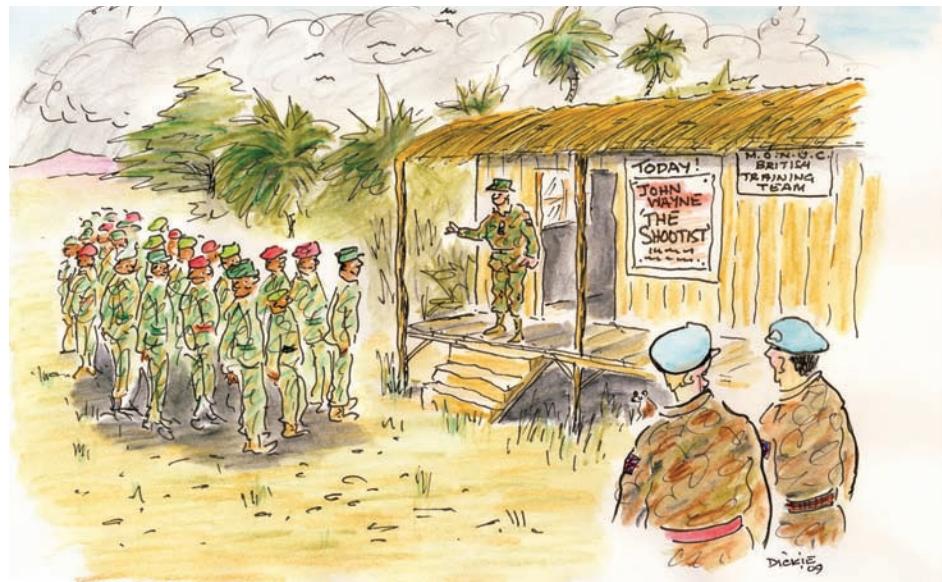


WINNER

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"I know it's good for morale and all that jazz, Jenkins... but a diet of *Dirty Harry* and John Wayne westerns is no substitute for the English lessons and bridge building they're meant to be doing."

● United front – Pages 24-33

Unsung heroes

PUBLIC opinion towards the British Army is riding on the crest of a very positive wave at the moment.

The extraordinary tales of bravery, hardship and sacrifice emanating from southern Afghanistan every day have drilled home to those of us on civvy street exactly how much is being done by the men and women on the front line.

The focus on Helmand province is entirely understandable and entirely right, but the civilian population's sizeable respect for the Armed Forces would go through the roof if it was aware of the work personnel carry out on the nation's behalf to much less fanfare around the world.

Prime examples lie in some of the more troubled countries in Africa. Last year, *Soldier* reported on the work being done by British military staff in the face of a massive humanitarian crisis in Sudan.

This month, we turn the spotlight onto the Congo. When we first received an invitation to visit the east African nation, our only knowledge of the country was that author Joseph Conrad found it a particularly depressing place and that its inhabitants apparently drink *Um Bongo*.

Flippant generalisations aside, a tiny amount of research into the reality of life in one of the world's largest countries painted a bleak picture of a land scarred by decades of war and facing poverty and displacement on a huge scale.

Our reading also revealed that the Democratic Republic of Congo is the home of the United Nation's largest mission and that British personnel are playing an intrinsic role in helping the UN to improve the country's prospects.

The Indian soldier on this month's cover may not have British troops standing on the front line

with him, but he would certainly not be able to do his job without the considerable input of the small band of this nation's Servicemen based in the Congo (Pages 24-33).

On the subject of unheralded efforts, we delved into the history books to look at the immense British losses suffered at the Battle of Talavera, a largely unknown clash of nations that resulted in a huge amount of casualties (Pages 37-39).

Heading back into the 21st Century, this month's magazine also celebrates a couple of the more diverse Army trades.

Student bandmasters, for example, can progress from junior NCO to WO1 by successfully completing a demanding three-year course at Kneller Hall (Pages 44-45).

Military chefs may be known for their knife skills in the kitchen, but those taking part in Exercise Rhino Caterer demonstrated they are still soldiers first by also mastering the bayonet (Pages 52-53).

And while logisticians' stock-in-trade is more likely to be in driving vehicles than mastering drill, soldiers from 2 LSR have shown their diversity by taking over public duties in London (Pages 47-49).

All of that aside, August was another dark month on Op Herrick and Servicemen and women and the general public are united in their gratitude and remembrance of the brave soldiers whose sacrifices paved the way for Afghanistan to be in a position to hold presidential elections as this issue went to press.

The enduring fact is that the British Army is a force for good wherever it finds itself, whether its in the heart of Africa or laying the foundations for peace in Helmand. ■

'The enduring fact is that the British Army is a force for good wherever it finds itself'

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THE **informer...**

BRITISH TROOPS' GLOBAL INTELLIGENCE ASSET

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Desert landing: Troops from 3rd Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland prepare for the arrival of a Chinook during Operation Tyrana

Drug labs smashed in Afghan op

INSURGENTS operating in southern Afghanistan remained under relentless pressure as British-led operations continued to starve them of money and weapons.

In the latest assault on enemy command-and-control structures, hundreds of soldiers from the International Security Assistance Force mounted Op Tyrana, a night-time swoop on a network of narcotics labs in the Sangin Valley.

They seized a haul of drugs that the Taliban had been using to bankroll its campaign of violence.

Senior officers were delighted with the success, which they said had dealt another blow to the insurgents, "significantly reducing" their ability to wage war.

During the operation, 18 British, US and Australian helicopters ferried soldiers from 3rd Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland and the Afghan National Army to the enemy stronghold of Malmand Chinah.

Taliban fighters ambushed the Black Watch troops as they swept through a series of claustrophobic compounds and a firefight ensued.

But the insurgents were quickly placed on the back foot as demolition experts began blasting their way through the walls, allowing more soldiers to join the battle.

Seven enemy fighters are believed to have been killed during the contact. A weapons cache and 250kg of wet opium were also unearthed and destroyed.

Maj Robin Lindsay (3 Scots), who

led the operation, believed his troops had diminished the insurgents' ability to mount attacks.

He said: "It proves to the Taliban that they have no safe havens, even in the most remote places – there are no out of bounds areas and we can hit them wherever they are.

"The money that would have come from the sale of opium would undoubtedly have funded the insurgents' activities, further strengthening their hold on the area and their ability to launch deadly attacks on coalition forces.

"This kind of operation significantly reduces their capability to continue the fight. With fewer numbers and diminished resources, they are simply less effective."

Maj Lindsay was also full of praise for the Afghan National Army personnel who had proved themselves alongside their British counterparts. "They are committed, professional and brave and are a true force to be reckoned with," he added.

300

THE NUMBER OF SOLDIERS FROM 3RD BATTALION, THE ROYAL REGIMENT OF SCOTLAND WHO TOOK PART IN OP TYRANA IN THE SANGIN VALLEY LAST MONTH

NEWS IN BRIEF

THE new Chief of the General Staff has moved to clarify his remarks about the likely duration of the Afghan mission amid claims he was misquoted in some quarters of the media.

In a statement, Gen Sir David Richards said he did not believe British troops would be fighting high-intensity operations in theatre for up to 40 years as some had suggested.

He added: "I want to nail this once and for all – it is not what I said or what I believe. Afghanistan will need international help for many years to come – for example through development, governance and security sector reform, and I am sure the UK will play a part.

"But a British military force along current lines should only be needed for a much shorter period. There is no difference between my views and the Secretary of State on this, and it is unhelpful to all of us engaged in this conflict to suggest there is."

A CLUTCH of some of the most talented celebrity chefs including Ainsley Harriott, Anton Mosimann and Brian Turner are aiming to cook up a healthy sum for Help for Heroes at a special charity event on October 2.

The personalities are joining forces with the cream of catering talent from several London hotels to produce a five-course feast at London's Guildhall in aid of the charity.

Tables cost from £5,000 with tickets from £500. For more information, visit www.chefsforheroes.org

THE Afghan people will not forget the sacrifice of British personnel working to build a lasting peace, the governor of Helmand province has pledged.

In offering his condolences to the families of those killed during the summer fighting, Gulab Mangal said he was "grateful beyond words" for the work of the troops.

He added: "Once again in Helmand we have sad cause to remember the debt we owe to the British Army. The lives of all your brave soldiers are precious to us – we grieve at your loss. You deliver us from the enemies of peace and give us hope that our future will be better than the fear, suffering and oppression of the past."

A FORMER Para is launching a singing career using songs written while serving on operations.

Gary Hart, who served with both 1 and 3 Para before leaving the Army earlier this year, has recorded an album and hopes to break into the charts in the near future.

He plans to donate some of the proceeds of his debut record – *Back To The Sunshine* – to Army charities.

To find out more, visit Hart's website at www.myspace.com/garyhartonline



Dominating the ground: Op Panther's Claw has driven the Taliban from key areas in Helmand province

Picture: Sgt Dan Harmer

Troops build on Afghan gains

SOLDIERS serving in southern Afghanistan have been consolidating on their successes after driving back the Taliban in Op Panther's Claw.

Mixed military and civilian stabilisation teams have been moving into areas where insurgents were routed in an initiative to help restore order after ferocious fighting in the summer.

There has already been strong progress. Projects including the repair of bridges and the clearing of irrigation ditches are among the many schemes already complete.

Lt Hannah Buyers (Royal Navy), who works for the provincial reconstruction team in Helmand capital Lashkar Gar, said the Afghan people were now fully aware that the international community was committed to helping them.

She added: "As they see that we are staying, they become less intimidated by the Taliban and they start to articulate what they want for their community.

"Within 24 hours of the fighting we had teams on the ground assessing the state of the villages, identifying elders and establishing what sort of infrastructure exists."

With elections looming as this issue went to press, a key aim of the latest

projects has been to link remote areas of Helmand with Lashkar Gar.

Iain King, a civilian adviser assisting with reconstruction, said there had been a mood of growing optimism as Afghans became involved in the democratic process. He added: "There has been a lot more interest from local people – they're discussing who they are going to vote for and there are lots of posters around."

Op Panther's Claw was launched in June with the aim of capturing and holding key areas in Helmand province. The action, which was carried out in parallel with the US-led Task Force Leatherneck, saw some of the fiercest fighting since the beginning of Op Herrick in 2006 and claimed the lives of several British soldiers.

Despite the heavy price, Brig Tim Radford, commanding 19 Light Brigade, believed Panther's Claw had bolstered security and would bring long-term gains for civilians.

In paying tribute to his troops, he added: "They are fighting hard out there, with quite extraordinary skill and courage to protect people from fear and oppression, not just for today, tomorrow or the next month but for the long term."

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THE AMOUNT IN POUNDS OF THE FIRST PRIZE IN THE **YELLOW RIBBON FOUNDATION'S** CHRISTMAS DRAW. VISIT [HTTP://SHOP.YELLOWRIBBON.ORG.UK](http://SHOP.YELLOWRIBBON.ORG.UK) TO BUY A TICKET



Picture: Steve Dolk

MORE than 200 officer cadets received their commissions during the 83rd Sovereign's Parade held at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst last month. The tri-annual event at the Berkshire centre of excellence was attended by 204 cadets, including 27 foreign students from countries including Malaysia and The Gambia. Representing the Queen as the reviewing officer for the parade, Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe Gen Sir John McColl told the cadets that they were now "entrusted with the lives of soldiers".

Millies search for Service stars

THE SUN newspaper is appealing for nominations after launching its second Military Awards to honour outstanding members of Britain's Armed Forces.

Prince Charles, founder and patron of "The Millies", urged the nation to do more to remember the extraordinary sacrifices of troops after announcing the annual awards.

Nominations can be made by anyone who wishes to highlight the calibre of Service personnel ahead of the close of voting on Monday, September 14.

Ten of the 11 categories are open to all

serving members of the UK Armed Forces, with the Support to the Armed Forces Award being held specifically for members of the general public.

An all-star panel including England football captain John Terry, *The Sun* columnist and *Top Gear*'s chief protagonist Jeremy Clarkson, double Olympic gold medallist and ex-soldier Dame Kelly Holmes and TV presenter Ross Kemp will judge the Award for Special Recognition.

● To cast your vote or to find out more, visit www.thesun.co.uk/millies

Social surfers urged to stay secure

RULES on how to safely use networking websites have been laid down by the MoD to prevent military secrets being revealed on the internet.

Online engagement guidelines have been published to prevent classified information being published on social networking sites including Facebook and Twitter.

The document encourages Service and MoD civilian staff to "talk about what they do within certain limits to protect security, reputation and privacy".

Personnel do not have to seek clearance when talking online about factual, uncontroversial, non-operational matters.

But authorisation should be sought before publishing any information which relates to operations or deployments, offers opinions on wider Armed Forces activity or attempts to speak on behalf of the Armed Forces or the MoD. An MoD spokesman said: "If in any doubt personnel should always seek advice from their chain of command or from their line management."

NEWS IN BRIEF

A WEBSITE that aims to help military families as they move between camps has been launched.

Forces Home Front provides information about local services such as sports clubs, dog kennels and babysitters and can also be used by those wanting to advertise businesses of their own.

It covers all camps in the UK, Germany, Cyprus and the rest of the world. For more information visit www.forceshomefront.co.uk

AN Army officer whose ancestor died at the Battle of Minden in 1759 has visited Germany to lay a wreath to mark the 250th anniversary of the conflict.

Lt Col Alex Wilson paid his respects to Ensign Thomas Wilson at the battle's Todtenhausen Memorial during commemorations held in the German city last month.

The Battle of Minden was fought between an Allied Army of British and German troops who defeated a superior French force, bringing about the end of the Seven Years War.

Thomas, who was serving with 25th Foot (now 1 Scots), was found by his wife and two children after the conflict but later died from his wounds.

GOOD DRILLS

SOLDIER'S POETIC READERS

WHILE we at *Soldier* HQ like to think of ourselves as competent wordsmiths, we have been outdone by several readers who have submitted poems in praise – and remembrance – of Britain's Servicemen and women. This month's selection includes a piece set to music and video by Liverpudlian artist Laura Walsh. See it at www.soldiermagazine.co.uk/l/poems.htm

SGT MATTHEW BRAGG

SENIOR NCO
Sgt Matthew Bragg saved the life of Justin Wham by administering CPR after the civilian collapsed outside Charing Cross station in London. The RLC movement controller and police sergeant Cam Duggan twice resuscitated Mr Wham.

Bragg was rewarded with a GOC's Commendation from Maj Gen Bill Cubitt.

ARMY MEN'S TENNIS

THE squad failed to build on the form of South Pacific Islands Davis Cup player LCpl Lawrence Tere (RAMC, right) as they were defeated in the men's Inter-Services tournament.

The Service finished two points behind the Royal Navy but the Army women defended their title. See page 105 for a full report.



MIDDLE EASTERN WEATHER

DESERT winds whipping sandstorms up to 52mph made life tough for loggies returning kit used on Op Telic to the UK.

Despite the difficult conditions, which combat medical technician Pte Simon Ameet Limbu described as being like "standing in an oven, a wind tunnel and a beach" at the same time, the return of the equipment proceeded on schedule.

BAD DRILLS

All change at the top

GEN Sir David Richards has taken the helm as the Chief of the General Staff, heading up a new team of senior appointments at the top level of the military.

Gen Richards (pictured right) was commissioned into the Royal Artillery in 1971 and has held several high-profile roles. He led the International Security Assistance Force mission in Afghanistan in 2006 as commander of Nato's Allied Rapid Reaction Corps and most recently served as Commander-in-Chief Land Forces (C-in-C LF).

Richards replaces Gen Sir Richard Dannatt, who has been widely commended for winning a new respect for British troops during his tenure in post as the head of the Army.

In three other appointments, Gen Sir Peter Wall has taken over as C-in-C LF. Formerly Deputy Chief of Defence Staff (Operations) at PJHQ, Gen Wall began his career in the Royal Engineers

in 1974 and has served in a series of posts including General Officer Commanding of 1 (UK) Armoured Division in Germany.

Lt Gen Barney White-Spunner has moved from his former role as Chief of Staff at HQ Land Command in Wilton, Wiltshire, to become Commander Field Army. In a 30-year career beginning with The Blues and Royals, Lt Gen White-Spunner has served in many posts, including General Officer Commanding 3 Division. He replaces Lt Gen Sir Graeme Lamb in his new appointment.



Lt Gen Mark Mans, who is a Colonel Commandant of the Royal Engineers, has seen global operations during his 35 years as an officer. The new Commander Regional Forces, who succeeds Lt Gen Sir Nick Parker, most recently served as Deputy Commanding General Multi-National Corps in Baghdad. He has also held the role of Deputy Adjutant General.

20 **THE PERCENTAGE DISCOUNT BEING OFFERED TO MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES SHOPPING AT THE LETCHWORTH HIGH STREET BRANCH OF OUTDOOR STORE MILLETS ON SEPTEMBER 12 AND 13**

Gurkhas blaze a trail

EXHAUSTION was not an option for energetic soldiers from the Queen's Gurkha Signals as they ran 100km to raise money for communities in Nepal.

The super-fit Gurkhas were part of a 1,513-strong crowd who braved a rain-soaked southern England to make their way from Hampshire to Brighton for the charity event Exercise Trailwalker.

The event, open to all members of the public and military, was organised to raise money for the Gurkha Welfare Trust (GWT) and Oxfam.

Capt Nirmal Gurung (QGS) said Ex Trailwalker, which took place on July 18, meant a lot to his men.

"Money raised will go straight to Nepal where it will be used to improve water systems and fund the building of schools," he said.

"Community-based projects will be funded and Gurkha welfare pensioners and their widows who did not receive a pay-out from the British Government

will now be provided for."

The Queen's Gurkha Engineers Team 2 was the fastest team of four to cross the finish line, with a time of 10hr 44min 30sec.

So far more than £639,000 has been collected, with £1,000,000 pledged.

The race route along the idyllic South Downs Way started at Queen Elizabeth Country Park and finished at Brighton Racecourse, where runners were able to snatch a well-earned drink.

Lt Col Richard Spencer, commander of QGS, told *Soldier* that the event represented the one chance he gets to control all his men.

He said: "This is the only chance in the year that I get to command the whole regiment – and it's great that the exercise also raises money for GWT and Oxfam."

"I look for professionalism. We are setting the standard for the rest of the Army and to the general public that are watching."



THE troop transport fleet in Afghanistan is poised to receive a healthy boost after a consignment of Mastiff personnel carriers were shipped back from Iraq. The armoured vehicles – well known for their punch and protection – arrived back in the UK on board the logistics ship *Anvil Point* before being unloaded by soldiers from 17 Port and Maritime Regiment RLC at Marchwood, Southampton. They are now being refurbished to cope with the demands of Operation Herrick. A wealth of other kit used during the six-year campaign in Iraq was also removed from the ship's hold in a huge movement effort to return it from theatre. Logisticians have been using an innovative tracking system, which makes use of mobile electronic data sensors and satellite technology, to keep tabs on the kit during its journey from Iraq. In all there will be eight ships' worth of hardware brought home when Operation Telic fully draws down.

NEWS IN BRIEF

PRESENTERS working with the British Forces Broadcasting Service in the Middle East have been reflecting on the end of an era after the final show for soldiers serving on Op Telic.

The team transmitted their last live programme from the Joint Force Logistic Component base in Kuwait before packing up their studio for shipping to Cyprus.

Dusty Miller, operational areas managing editor, said the broadcaster was now preparing to begin live shows in Afghanistan from this month. He added: "Our commitment to our troops and their families remains stronger than ever."

SUFFOLK-BASED soldiers serving with the 1st Royal Tank Regiment have become the final British troops to receive medals for serving on Op Telic.

Thirty members of 1 RTR's T Squadron received their awards from the regiment's colonel commandant Lt Gen David Leakey during a ceremony held at RAF Honington last month.

After deploying to Basra in November 2008, 1 RTR took charge of the UK military transition team group and trained more than 1,000 Iraqi soldiers.

London hosts Telic service

THE sacrifices of personnel who took part in the six-year Op Telic campaign in Iraq are being honoured at a service of remembrance in the capital next month.

The event, which takes place at St Paul's Cathedral on October 9, will be an opportunity to reflect on all the Service personnel who contributed to the campaign and in particular those who gave their lives.

Invitees to the service, which begins at 1100, will include serving and retired veterans of the conflict,

their commanders and the families of personnel killed in action.

Defence Secretary Bob Ainsworth said: "This service will provide an opportunity to remember the enormous contribution made by 120,000 members of the UK Armed Forces and their civilian colleagues who served over six years.

"It will also be a time to remember the ultimate sacrifice made by those who died and who contributed to the greater peace and stability that exists in Iraq today."

Compensation check-up

A REVIEW of the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme is to be carried out ahead of schedule to ensure those injured in the line of duty receive the support they deserve.

Although it was originally due to take place next year, Secretary of State for Defence Bob Ainsworth has ordered the process to start immediately in consultation with stakeholders including Service charities and families.

The review will focus on how changes in medical care, legal complexities and other wider issues affect compensation claims from Servicemen and women.

The Secretary of State explained: "The world class medical care that we provide on operations means that more people are surviving very serious injuries than before.

"We need to ensure the scheme is responsive enough to meet their needs."

NEWS IN BRIEF

MILITARY health professionals have voiced fears that soldiers could be putting their ears at risk by not using the protective equipment issued on exercise and operations.

In a bid to combat cases of hearing loss, a new DVD warning of the dangers of excessive noise is being sent out to Army units.

Called *Listen to Sense*, the short film follows a group of friends who don't take the appropriate protective measures and shows how their health is hit as a result.

Maj Moira Dixon (QARANC), who has been working on the project, explained that soldiers needed to be aware that failing a hearing test at a medical could render them unemployable.

She added: "We have seen an increase in noise-induced hearing loss, and this can affect a soldier's ability to deploy, particularly if they are in the teeth arms.

"If they are not able to transfer to another branch of the Army, this could ultimately affect their ability to serve."

BIG-HEARTED TERRITORIAL ARMY TROOPS GAVE WOUNDED COLLEAGUES A BOOST AFTER THEY USED THEIR SKILLS TO BUILD AN OBSTACLE COURSE AT THE HEADLEY COURT REHABILITATION CENTRE.

Soldiers from 168 Pioneer Regiment RLC (Volunteers) assembled the custom-built "trim trail" as part of their annual training.

Lt Col Steve Caldwell, CO of 168 Regt, said the project began when his troops were tasked with removing an old course.

A team of ten soldiers and instructors assembled the new equipment, which included a set of parallel bars and balance beams.

Lt Col Caldwell added: "The whole project was a Class 2 TA pioneer course. We specifically designed the trail for those with lower limb injuries."

2 THE NUMBER OF SIKH SOLDIERS, SIG SIMRANJIT SINGH (R SIGNALS) AND LCPL SARVJIT SINGH (AAC), TO HAVE GUARDED HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN AND PROTECTED THE CROWN JEWELS DURING PUBLIC DUTIES IN LONDON. SIKH PERSONNEL ARE EXEMPT FROM WEARING THE FORAGE CAP, AND INSTEAD DISPLAY THEIR CORPS BADGE ON THEIR TURBAN



Picture: Sgt Dan Harmer (RLC)

COLLEAGUES of a British bomb disposal expert who was killed in Helmand have been proving to the Taliban that they won't be deterred from their mission. The soldiers, from the Joint Force Explosive Ordnance Disposal Group, have been passing on their knowledge to Afghan civilians. The experts are determined to carry on the work of Capt Daniel Shepherd (28), who lost his life in Nad-e-Ali saving comrades from an IED threat. The officer was killed while attempting to make a device safe in July. He had diffused 13 roadside bombs in 36 hours during Operation Panther's Claw. Operating out of a small patrol base in the settlement of Sangin, the bomb disposal squads have been teaching civilians how to identify devices and mark them for clearance. Maj Guy Stone, who has been leading the Welsh Guards Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team, said education was vital. He added: "Unfortunately it's not uncommon for children to tread on devices and kill themselves."

LEAGUE OF GENTLEMEN

SWAG	FORCE FOR GOOD	QUIDS IN
1 £30,000	RFN PAUL APOWIDA The talented artist raised money for the charity that funded his education by selling his art work. Rfn Apowida passed out of ITC Catterick last month	Afrikids www.afrikids.org
2 £10,000	HART RESCUE A team of rescue climbers were joined by individuals from across the Armed Forces and public services to abseil the equivalent height of Mount Everest from a 49ft-tall structure in Glasgow	Help for Heroes
3 £4,000	DELIVERING THE WHITE GOODS Capt Bill Holland (7 Rifles) and former Royal Green Jackets Andy Butler and Steve Wilding climbed Ben Nevis carrying various household appliances	Army Benevolent Fund and Help for Heroes www.justgiving.com/butbsben4h
4 £2,000	SADDLE UP Tim Aston, Dave Stanley and Mark Ford – all members of the Military Provost Guard Service based at RAF Linton-on-Ouse – will get on their bikes to cycle from John O' Groats to Lands End this month	Help for Heroes www.justgiving.com/mpgs-raflintononouse
5 £1,500	INSPECTOR ROB WILLIAMS The deputy commander of Birmingham Airport's police unit walked 124 miles in four days at the Nijmegen Marches in Holland	British Limbless Ex-Service Men's Association
6 £1,315	33 GENERAL SUPPORT SQUADRON A four-man team from the Kuwait-based unit covered 30 miles in under ten hours on treadmills and running around their camp while carrying 32lb of kit	British Limbless Ex-Service Men's Association



Last post for last Tommy

MORE than 1,000 mourners and well-wishers paid their respects at the funeral of the last surviving soldier to have fought in the trenches during the First World War.

Harry Patch, who was Britain's oldest man at 111, died peacefully at his care home on Saturday, July 25 – just one week after the passing of fellow Great War veteran Henry Allingham.

Visitors from around the world lined the streets of Wells in Somerset as Patch's coffin was taken from his residential home to the town's cathedral.

Following news of the veteran's death, the Prime Minister announced plans for a national memorial service to be held at Westminster Abbey in commemoration of all those who fought in the First World War. Paying tribute to Patch, who served as a Lewis gunner at Passchendaele, Gordon Brown said the whole nation would unite in honouring his memory.

The Prime Minister added: "The noblest of all the generations has left us, but they will never be forgotten. We say today with greater force – 'we will remember them'."

Danger Light debuts

In response to an Urgent Operational Requirement the MoD is procuring a new piece of equipment designed to protect soldiers and civilians on Afghanistan's front line.

The Less Than Lethal Effect (LTLE) UOR is a rifle-mounted laser that projects a green beam to serve as a warning to any would-be troublemakers that they are being tracked.

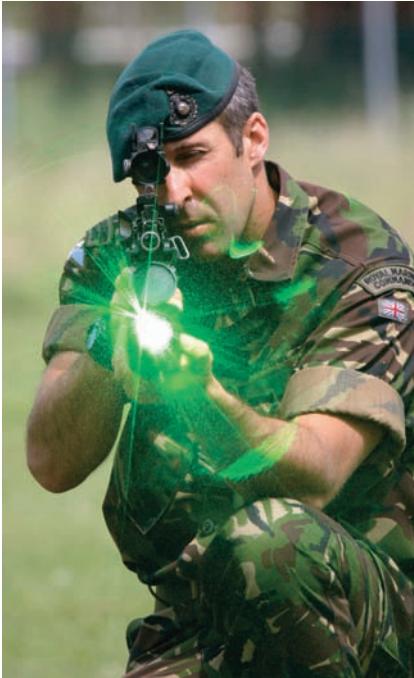
The system, which is manufactured by Thales Air Defence in Belfast, has undergone rigorous testing to ensure that it is medically safe to use in theatre.

It provides an invaluable way of letting a person know that they are being watched by soldiers and is a means of deterring an individual from coming any closer.

The project is being underpinned by a significant education programme in schools and other institutions, advising people what to do if they see the beam.

A spokesman for the LTLE project, more commonly known in theatre as Danger Light, said: "It is effectively like having a torch shone at you and does no damage.

"Green was chosen as the colour of the beam as it is easily picked up by the receptors in the human eye.



Leading light: CSgt Ian Beers demonstrates LTLE

"The system is designed for use on static vehicle checkpoints and by top cover sentries."

Surprise submersion

ARMY diving experts had to don their wetsuits for a dip in the middle of the Helmand desert when they were unexpectedly called into action in southern Afghanistan.

A crack team of nearly 20 specialists from 38 Engineer Regiment took the plunge in an irrigation canal in a move to assist at the scene of a disabled Viking troop carrier.

While the vehicle was quickly retrieved after becoming trapped during the early stages of Operation Panther's Claw, the sappers were detailed to retrieve weapons and sensitive kit that had sunk into the murky depths.

With force protection provided by soldiers from the 1st Battalion, Welsh Guards, who were armed with Javelin missiles and sniper rifles, the divers braved contact with the enemy to retrieve the missing gear.

Sgt Tom Lawndes (38 Engr Regt) admitted that the unusual task had

proved to be "quite unnerving". He added: "This was an area where there had been a big contact with the enemy so it wasn't a safe place.

"There were plenty of suspicious people gathering, monitoring our movements and potentially coordinating an attack.

"We had to get the job done – visibility was down to just half-a-metre and the water was moving pretty quickly. We had to shut off sluice gates to make it manageable."

The task took two hours of exhaustive searching, during which all the lost equipment was accounted for.

Despite the risks of the tasking, the sappers insisted they were prepared for another mission.

"There were some close calls but thankfully no casualties were taken," said Sgt Rob Green (38 Engr Regt). "We've recharged the dive sets and are ready for more."

4167

THE HEIGHT IN METRES OF MOUNT TOUBKAL, WHICH A TEAM OF 12 TERRITORIAL ARMY SOLDIERS FROM 207 (MANCHESTER) FIELD HOSPITAL CONQUERED DURING EXERCISE NORTHERN TOUBKAL WARRIOR, A NINE-DAY TRAINING EXPEDITION HELD IN MOROCCO WITH THE COUNTRY'S ARMY



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IN MEMORIAM



BDR CRAIG HOPSON (24)
40TH REGIMENT,
ROYAL ARTILLERY
KIA JULY 25 – AFGHANISTAN

A BOMBARDIER who had only seen his newborn daughter twice was killed when his vehicle struck an IED in Helmand province.

Bdr Craig Hopson, from 40th Regiment, Royal Artillery, was helping to find areas for civilians to cast their votes in the upcoming Afghan elections when the blast detonated.

The 24-year-old from Castleford, West Yorkshire, had deployed to Kandahar in March 2009 as second-in-command of a fire support team attached to The Black Watch, 3rd Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland (3 Scots).

The talented joint fire controller, who represented the Army at Rugby League, leaves behind his mother Lynn, partner Eleanor and their three-month-old daughter Amelia.

“Craig was the light in so very many lives. The light has now gone out. His family and many, many friends will love him and miss him forever,” said a family statement.

Lt Col Stephen Cartwright, commanding officer of 3 Scots Battlegroup, added: “Bdr Craig Hopson had made a huge impact in the battlegroup for the year we have all known him. He was a big man in every sense: a huge character, great fun and professionally immensely talented.”

“He died at the very front line of Operation Panther’s Claw in Babaji as the most forward artillery observer in the entire brigade. He has given his life for his friends, for the battlegroup and his regiment.”



TPR PHILLIP LAWRENCE (22)
THE LIGHT DRAGOONS
KIA JULY 27 – AFGHANISTAN

A DEVOTED family man who had volunteered to drive for another troop was killed when his vehicle was caught in an explosion.

Tpr Phillip “Lenny” Lawrence, The Light Dragoons, died while travelling in a Scimitar on patrol in Lashkar Gah.

The 22-year-old C Squadron soldier from Birkenhead had stepped in to fill a temporary manning gap when his vehicle was hit.

He leaves behind his wife Amy and their baby daughter Jessica.

Tpr Lawrence’s family said: “No words can ever explain the loss, he was our knight in shining armour.”

“Husband, dad, son, brother, grandson, son-in-law, brother-in-law and friend.”

“The light has been turned off in our world but his memories will always live on in his precious daughter who he thought the world of.”

Tpr Lawrence deployed to Afghanistan this year as part of Emsdorff Troop, a fire support group attached to A Company, 2 Mercian.

Lt Col Gus Fair, commanding officer of The Light Dragoons, said: “Everyone counted him amongst their friends, and his loss will hit the regiment especially hard. He soldiered with great heart, shown both in the boxing ring and on the battlefield.”

“Lenny was devoted to his family, and the pride he took in his wife and daughter shone from him. It fills me with sadness that Jessica will not grow up to know her brilliant father.”



WO2 SEAN UPTON (35)
5TH REGIMENT,
ROYAL ARTILLERY
KIA JULY 27 – AFGHANISTAN

A RADAR systems specialist who had served as a soldier all over the world was killed in an explosion while on foot patrol in Helmand.

WO2 Sean Upton, 5th Regiment, Royal Artillery, was serving as the second-in-command of Sangin’s police mentoring team when the blast happened on July 27.

The family man leaves behind wife Karen and two children Hollie and Ewan.

Speaking about 35-year-old WO2 Upton, Lt Col John Musgrave, commanding officer of 5th Regiment, Royal Artillery, said: “He was a naturally gifted soldier, the complete professional, noted for his light touch in command and dedication to his soldiers.”

“He specialised in the defeat of enemy

rockets and mortars – an art he had practiced in the Balkans, Iraq and on both his Afghanistan tours, always remaining calm under fire and decisive and effective in his response.”

WO2 Upton had quickly risen through the ranks and at the start of Operation Herrick 10 he commanded the counter fire elements at Kandahar Airfield, protecting it from insurgent rocket and mortar fire.

Lt Col Rob Thomson, commanding officer of the 2 Rifles Battlegroup, added: “WO2 Upton was one of those outstanding British Army sergeant majors.”

“He has been brilliant at mentoring his Afghan comrades and did it with a perfect lightness of touch.”



CFN ANTHONY LOMBARDI (21)
ROYAL ELECTRICAL AND
MECHANICAL ENGINEERS
KIA AUGUST 4 – AFGHANISTAN

A SKILLED soldier who showed the potential for a long and successful Army career was killed while on a vehicle patrol in Helmand province.

Cfn Anthony “Lombo” Lombardi (REME) was driving a CVR(T) Spartan as part of an escort for a Viking supply convoy when his vehicle was hit by an explosion in Babaji, Lashkar Gar.

He was attached as a vehicle mechanic to Emsdorff Troop, a group from The Light Dragoons serving with A Company, 2 Mercian.

Lt Col Gus Fair, commanding officer of The Light Dragoons, said: “Cfn Lombardi had all the qualities one would expect of a REME soldier – intelligent, driven and a brilliant mechanic.”

“More than that, though, he was the life and soul of his peer group.”

Friend and colleague LCpl Damo Crick (LD) added: “He was a joy to work with and his enthusiasm never dropped no matter what task was given to him, the time of day or whether he was tired. He would just get on with it with the same unforgettable smile that he always had.”

Cfn Lombardi grew up in Scunthorpe, South Humberside, and joined the Army in 2004, finishing his training at the School of Electrical and Mechanical Engineering in February 2006.

A talented sportsman, he represented the Army youth team and REME at football and is survived by his parents, Helen and Walter, his fiancee Ellie and their one-year-old son Harvey.

A family statement said: “His son will never understand what an amazing star Anthony was.”

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IN MEMORIAM



CPL KEVIN MULLIGAN (26)
THE PARACHUTE REGIMENT
KIA AUGUST 6 – AFGHANISTAN

SOLDIERS serving in Helmand province have been reflecting on the lives of three colleagues who were killed during a Taliban ambush.

Cpl Kevin Mulligan, LCpl Dale Hopkins and Pte Kyle Adams, all members of The Parachute Regiment, died while patrolling with Afghan security forces north of Lashkar Gah. Their Jackal vehicle was caught in an explosion before coming under small arms fire.

Cpl Mulligan, whose fiancee is currently pregnant with their child, was described as a "light and love in all our lives" in a statement from his family.

LCpl Hopkins' family remembered him as being "a determined, energetic man" while Pte Adams' father recalled his son as "the life and soul of any party".



LCPL DALE HOPKINS (23)
THE PARACHUTE REGIMENT
KIA AUGUST 6 – AFGHANISTAN

The trio's commanding officer, who has not been named, said the soldiers had given their lives for their regiment and comrades who held them in high regard.

The CO said of Cpl Mulligan: "He was diligent, caring and with a proud sense of duty. An exceptional leader, he died how he led his life – at the forefront of his men."

"We count ourselves privileged to have known this dedicated, brave soldier and every member of the unit is proud and deeply honoured to have served alongside him. Our thoughts are with his family, fiancee and unborn child at this difficult time."

Of LCpl Hopkins the CO said: "An outstanding and professional paratrooper, he embraced the self-sacrifice, responsibility and



PTE KYLE ADAMS (21)
THE PARACHUTE REGIMENT
KIA AUGUST 6 – AFGHANISTAN

dedication required of his profession.

"He died doing the job he so loved, alongside the comrades that meant so much to him – he was a proud, forthright and honest man who took a joy in soldiering."

Pte Adams was described as "an utterly professional soldier" and a keen sportsman.

The CO said: "The focus, selflessness and responsibility required of his profession came naturally to him – he died alongside the comrades who held him in such high regard."

"Our thoughts and prayers go out to Kyle's family – we hope that the fond memories of an inspiring young man can in some way help them as they do us."

Defence Secretary Bob Ainsworth added: "They were highly gifted individuals."



PTE JASON WILLIAMS (23)
2ND BATTALION,
THE MERCIAN REGIMENT
KIA AUGUST 8 – AFGHANISTAN

AN HEROIC soldier died in an IED blast as he helped secure an attack site where three Afghan National Army (ANA) personnel were killed.

Pte Jason Williams, 2nd Battalion, The Mercian Regiment, was on patrol near Gereshk, in Helmand province, when the explosion hit.

His platoon was securing the area as one of the three ANA dead could not be found and they wanted to prevent insurgents seizing his corpse.

Commanding officer Lt Col Simon Banton said: "On the day he died Jason was taking part in an action which adhered to every soldiers' oldest code: leave no man behind."

"His brave determination and commitment ensured that the Afghan warrior's family are able to pay their proper respects to their own fallen

son. For his selfless sacrifice, ANA warriors now refer to Jason as a hero."

Friend and colleague Pte Jason Fletcher added: "He was definitely a future NCO and many of us knew him as a hardworking, caring person. He would always laugh and joke and he would never turn away when I asked for advice."

Pte Williams, from Worcester, joined 2 Mercian in November 2008 after completing the combat infantryman's course at the Infantry Training Centre, Catterick.

A family statement said: "Jason was a loving and caring son and brother."

"The Army gave him a sense of purpose and enthusiasm for life which stretched beyond the boundaries of his work."



PTE RICHARD HUNT (21)
2ND BATTALION,
THE ROYAL WELSH
KIA AUGUST 15 – AFGHANISTAN

COMMANDERS and friends have been mourning the loss of a skilled sniper with "clear leadership potential" after he became the 200th soldier to die as a result of ops in Afghanistan.

Pte Richard Hunt was caught in an explosion during a vehicle patrol near Musa Qaleh in Helmand province. The soldier was given immediate medical treatment before being flown back to the UK but died two days later.

Originally from Abergavenny, Pte Hunt joined the Army in 2007 and was awarded the physical training prize for his efforts at the Infantry Training Centre in Catterick.

Known as Hunty to friends, the soldier specialised as a Warrior armoured vehicle driver but had been honing his skills as a sniper.

A statement from his family said: "Richard showed us all his strength of character in many ways – he proved to be a loving son, brother and uncle at all times."

"He chose his battles with great thought. In our hearts he will eternally be missed and will never be forgotten."

Lt Col Mark Wheeler, CO of 2 R Welsh, said Pte Hunt was a "sincere and selfless soldier" who had carried out his role without complaint.

The commanding officer added: "Although quiet by nature, he clearly had a passion for soldiering, a true Welsh warrior. He was enthusiastic and dedicated in all that he pursued and, coupled with his natural ability, a bright future lay ahead."



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IN MEMORIAM



CAPT MARK HALE (42)
2ND BATTALION,
THE RIFLES
KIA AUGUST 13 – AFGHANISTAN

A MUCH-respected officer and young rifleman have been remembered for their courage after they were killed while attempting to move a wounded comrade to safety.

Capt Mark Hale and Rfn Daniel Wild had been carrying LBdr Matthew Hatton to a helicopter extraction point after the gunner was wounded during an IED ambush near Sangin. But the trio, who were laying the security groundwork for Afghanistan's presidential elections, were caught in a second explosion.

Rfn Wild and LBdr Hatton were killed, while Capt Hale later died at Camp Bastion.

Remembered by commanders as "one of the most outstanding soldiers of his generation", Capt Hale (42) had amassed a vast amount of experience during more than 25 years of service that started in The Devonshire and Dorset Regiment.

The veteran of operations in Northern Ireland, Bosnia and Iraq was physically fit and mentally sharp – he had studied for an Open University degree before taking a masters in psychology. Married with two daughters, the committed Christian was also remembered as a devoted husband and father.

Capt Hale's commanding officer Lt Col Rob Thomson said he would miss the officer's "superb counsel" and fierce loyalty, which had been huge assets during operations in southern Afghanistan.



LBDR MATTHEW HATTON (23)
40TH REGIMENT,
ROYAL ARTILLERY
KIA AUGUST 13 – AFGHANISTAN

Lt Col Thomson added: "It is entirely typical of this man that he died while helping to evacuate wounded soldiers."

"Mark understood the urgency of the work in spades – one could see that from the amount he crammed into each day."

Maj Darren Denning, chief of staff at 2 Rifles Battlegroup, added: "Mark cared for his people and, such was the respect in which he was held, that formality was never needed in command. Mark was universally well-loved."

Rfn Wild (19) had enlisted in the Army in 2007 and immediately began proving himself a highly capable soldier after deploying on exercise to Canada last year.

In Afghanistan he quickly forged a reputation for his fearlessness in battle and compassion towards his comrades. The qualified team medic was often the lead man on dangerous patrols in Helmand, clearing the way for others to follow.

Lt Col Thomson recalled that Rfn Wild had been "right at the front line" of the fierce fighting in and around Sangin.

He added: "It is tragic but typical that he died carrying a wounded friend to a helicopter landing site for evacuation."

"Rfn Wild will be sorely missed but we will never forget his sacrifice – he has given his life for his comrades, for our nation and for the people of Afghanistan. Our first prayers and



RFN DANIEL WILD (19)
2ND BATTALION,
THE RIFLES
KIA AUGUST 13 – AFGHANISTAN

thoughts must now be with his adored family and friends."

The young soldier's family also paid tribute to a much-loved son. In a joint statement, they said: "You will be dearly missed and always in our hearts."

LBdr Hatton was remembered as being "a young man with a winning smile and a heart of gold" who had made a huge impression during his five years of Army service.

Originally from Haxby in North Yorkshire, the 23-year-old had served on operations in Cyprus and Iraq and had been excelling as an observation post assistant in Afghanistan.

A statement from LBdr Hatton's family said: "He was very brave and a credit to both us and the Army – he passionately enjoyed his job and talked fondly about his friends.

"With a huge heart he touched many lives and will be missed and remembered by everyone forever. He was full of fun and mischief and brought happiness to our days."

Lt Col Owen Adams, CO of 40 Regt RA, said the death of a "positive and inspiring" NCO had been hard to bear and the loss would be keenly felt by his colleagues.

The commanding officer recalled: "He was one of those characters who stood out in a crowd – he revelled in the bond that is commonplace among soldiers who serve in small teams across the Army."



SGT SIMON VALENTINE (29)
2ND BATTALION, THE
ROYAL REGIMENT OF FUSILIERS
KIA AUGUST 15 – AFGHANISTAN

A REAL-LIFE "superhero" died after he was caught in an explosion in Afghanistan.

Sgt Simon Valentine of 2nd Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers was killed on August 15 during a foot patrol in Sangin, Helmand province.

Bedworth-born Sgt Valentine (29), known as "Val", leaves behind wife Gemma and daughters Chantelle and Niamh.

Gemma said: "Simon, above all else, was a truly loved father, son, husband and friend. To have known him was to have loved him."

Close friend and colleague Sgt Paul Greenhalgh, of 3 Platoon, A Company, 2 RRF, added: "He was my best friend, never asking for anything in return no matter how much he put himself out. I will never forget you mate."

"Chantelle and Niamh – your daddy will always be looking down on you from the brightest star in the sky."

The platoon sergeant had served as a soldier all over the world and was also a central figure in the Corps of Drums having performed at Buckingham Palace, Windsor and the Tower of London.

The senior NCO was also known as a superhero fanatic who collected Superman memorabilia and had even decorated his platoon house with the comic icon's emblem.

CSgt John McCullagh, who serves as officer commanding A Company, Fire Support Group, added: "You will go down in my book as a legend and good friend who showed no fear, just like a true superhero."

IN MEMORIAM



FUS SIMON ANNIS (19)
2ND BATTALION, THE ROYAL
REGIMENT OF FUSILIERS
KIA AUGUST 16 – AFGHANISTAN

THE inspiring actions of two young soldiers who bravely tried to save a wounded superior have been held up as a supreme example of courage and self-sacrifice.

Fus Simon Annis and Fus Louis Carter were killed as they battled to evacuate their section commander, LCpl James Fullarton, who had been injured by a Taliban bomb near Sangin.

The trio all died in a follow-up ambush laid by insurgents.

The three men had been serving as part of the 2 Rifles Battlegroup, which played a key security role in the run up to last month's elections in Afghanistan.

Fus Annis (19), who had married his wife Caroline just a few weeks before deploying to Afghanistan, had served in the Army for three years and been on exercise in Jordan, Egypt and Belize. He was remembered as a consummate professional during his first operational tour in Afghanistan.

His wife Caroline said in a statement that her husband had been a "true hero" in all respects. She added: "He made us so proud and he will always have a place in our hearts."

Fus Annis's platoon commander Lt Alan Williamson said the soldier's loss would be deeply felt by comrades.

"It is fitting that he died trying to save his friend, right at the front of the casevac party," he



FUS LOUIS CARTER (19)
2ND BATTALION, THE ROYAL
REGIMENT OF FUSILIERS
KIA AUGUST 16 – AFGHANISTAN

added. "I shall miss him and his quirky sense of humour, but this loss is nothing compared to his wife, whom he loved so much."

Fus Louis Carter (19) signed up for the Army in 2007 and deployed to Helmand immediately after arriving at his battalion in April this year. He quickly adapted to the demanding task he faced despite heading straight into a war zone.

A statement from his family said: "His childhood dream was always to join the Army and ultimately to serve his country – his dream was fulfilled but tragically cut short."

His friend Fus Kenny Cootes added: "He was a great lad who always had time for everyone – he will leave a big hole in a lot of people's lives and will be missed."

LCpl Fullarton (24) joined the Army six years ago and had served on operations in Northern Ireland and Iraq, been on exercise in Jordan and performed public duties in London.

He had also completed the demanding physical training instructors cadre.

The highly respected NCO had proposed to girlfriend Leanne while on leave in June.

LCpl Fullarton's family and fiancee said in a statement: "James was an outstanding soldier who was proud to serve Queen and country."

"He touched so many around him and has left a void in our lives that can never be filled – gone but never forgotten."



LCPL JAMES FULLARTON (24)
2ND BATTALION, THE ROYAL
REGIMENT OF FUSILIERS
KIA AUGUST 16 – AFGHANISTAN

Close friend LCpl Kielan Wale said that he had many happy memories of a trusted comrade. He added: "We both joined the battalion at nearly the same time and I've watched him grow into the perfect soldier. He was proud of his cap badge, his job and glad to be in the Army."

Lt Col Charlie Calder, CO of 2 RRF, said the loss of the three men had been a bitter blow. Of LCpl Fullarton he said: "He had established an enviable reputation and will be sorely missed in the battalion by his friends. However it is to his family, and to his fiancee, that every fusilier sends their heartfelt condolences."

The commanding officer said of Fus Annis: "He was a larger than life character and dedicated soldier. Always at the heart of whatever was going on, it was no surprise to me that he died while trying to save his mortally wounded section commander."

"The heartfelt condolences of every fusilier go to Caroline, his wife of only a few months."

He said Fus Carter had set a shining example on his first tour, adding: "He gave his young life just as he was embarking on his career – thrown into the thick of it right from the start he quickly became a key member of his platoon."

"This act of selfless commitment from one so young should be a shining example to the nation – the condolences of all fusiliers in Afghanistan go to his family."

Picture: Cpl Jim Barron (RLC)



THE widow of a soldier killed in Afghanistan has spoken of her "honour and pride" on becoming the first relative to receive a new award in recognition of her sacrifice.

Karen Upton was presented with the Elizabeth Cross at the funeral of her husband, WO2 Sean Upton (5 Regt RA), who died in an explosion in Sangin in July.

The Lord Lieutenant of North Yorkshire, The Lord Crathbone (pictured) presented Mrs Upton with her decoration following the funeral service at Catterick Garrison.

Mrs Upton said: "It is an absolute honour to receive the very first Elizabeth Cross in Her Majesty's name and comforting to feel the

support of Queen and country.

"Sean was an outstanding soldier, loved his job and was a part of the Army family. I will wear this Elizabeth Cross in his honour and pride and will treasure it always."

ACM Sir Jock Stirrup, the Chief of the Defence Staff, said the nation owed a great debt of gratitude to personnel like WO2 Upton who were willing to lay down their lives.

But he added: "We also owe a great debt to his family, and the presentation of this first Elizabeth Cross is a lasting symbol of the nation's gratitude and respect."

The decoration recognises the loss suffered by the families of those who are killed on ops or in terrorist acts.

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PROFESSIONAL and amateur snappers have been invited to take up their cameras in a bid to win some top prizes. The Army Photographic Competition is running again this year and is open to Regular and TA personnel, their dependants, cadets and MoD civil servants. Entries must have been taken between the beginning of January and before the closing date of November 1. The event offers some lucrative rewards for those judged to be the best-of-the-best. The shot above secured Cpl Russ Nolan (RLC) second place in last year's best digital image category and a cheque for £150. For further information see www.army.mod.uk/photocomp



Picture: Cpl Rupert Free

Vital contribution: Senior officers insist savings measures will not damage the ability of TA units – such as 152 (Ulster) Transport Regiment, pictured delivering supplies in Helmand – to support operations

One-year cut for TA spending

EXPENDITURE on Territorial Army activities is to be cut for the next year as the Army shifts to a campaign footing, officials at Headquarters Land Forces have confirmed.

Before taking up post as the new Chief of the General Staff, outgoing Commander-in-Chief Gen Sir David Richards made it clear that all actions undertaken by troops need to be focused on current operations.

Senior officers at divisional level will be responsible for contributing to more than £16 million worth of savings, which will help ensure the Army's valuable resources are channelled towards maintaining

missions such as Operation Herrick. But it was stressed that the temporary reductions would not cause any long-term detraction from the Reserve Forces, which continue to play a vital operational role.

A statement from HQ Land Forces said: "Detailed work with the divisions has identified areas of TA activity that it would be safe to place on hold for a year without causing permanent damage or affecting its current contribution to operations.

"The savings identified represent around 16 per cent of the TA activity budget and would reduce average TA activity from 41 to 36 days, consistent with initiatives across the Army."

NEWS IN BRIEF

RESERVE medics are preparing to deploy to the Military Field Hospital in Camp Bastion, Afghanistan.

A total of 90 TA soldiers from 256 (City of London) Field Hospital Volunteers will take over from Danish military medical staff when they leave for theatre later this year.



A PAINTING to commemorate the end of Op Banner and the cessation of the last Close Observation Platoon (COP) has been hung in HQ Infantry.

The work of art (pictured above) depicts soldiers deployed in a green field site observation post. This was the "gold level" standard which had to be achieved by all COPs.

Copies of the painting are available to buy and have all been signed by the artist, Chris Palmer. The cost is £22 per print and £1 will be donated to Combat Stress. To purchase one, send a cheque and contact details to Pippa Tyrer, HQ Infantry, Land Warfare Centre, Warminster BA12 0DJ.



UNITED FRONT

In a country torn apart by civil war, *Soldier* visits the British personnel playing their part in the United Nations mission attempting to mend the broken heart of the Democratic Republic of Congo

Report: Stephen Tyler
Pictures: Steve Dock

OCCUPYING a large chunk of the heart of Africa, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is a country of excesses. The world's 12th-largest nation occupies an area the size of western Europe, has land more fertile than almost anywhere on earth and counts gold, diamonds and oil among its natural resources. Even its copper deposits are in such abundance that it is said that their glow can be seen from outer space.

But for all the country's potential, it also faces problems on an equally vast scale. DRC has been embroiled in decades of conflict that have left millions dead and many millions more displaced and homeless.

Adding to the country's list of huge figures is the size of the United Nations mission based there. Numbering 17,000 troops – soon to rise to 20,000 – United Nations Organisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo

(MONUC) is the world's largest deployed UN force and is tasked with keeping a lid on the numerous armed groups that kill, rape and steal from the civilian population.

And in among the mission's military and civilian representatives from 56 countries are a small team of British personnel playing an intrinsic role in bringing some kind of peace and stability to the massively troubled land.

Based at MONUC HQ in downtown Kinshasa, Lt Col Simon Canning (RA), Lt Col Simon West (Scots) and Lt Col Toby Ingram (Scots) head up multi-national teams sharing vital information with units at the heart of the fighting in the east of the country.

"The scale of the problem is matched by the scale of the country," explained Lt Col Ingram, who heads up MONUC's military information team, suggesting options for how the organisation can deploy its various assets. "This is a country the size of western Europe, but it's also one which has only got 700km of usable roads. >>



Dominating the ground: Indian soldiers conduct a foot patrol through the impoverished town of Sake in North Kivu, which has seen fierce fighting in recent years

"Physically it's a big challenge, but the complexity is enormous. In Rwanda [the genocide of the mid-1990s] it was simple as you had Hutus and Tutsis. This is a different kettle of fish because there are so many different groups."

Kinshasa itself has enjoyed relative peace since a battle was waged along its main boulevard in 2007. A 1,600km flight to the nation's eastern fringes, however, and it is apparent that the fighting is far from over.

Although The National Congress for the Defence of the People (CNDP) – the main recent agitators until the group split in January – have now been integrated into the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo (FARDC) and Congolese police force, new threats were quick to materialise.

In early May, the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) launched attacks in the provinces of North and South Kivu, killing more than 100 people and displacing thousands from their homes. Further enemy forces in the shape of as many as 12 different Mai-Mai tribal groups also operate in the region.

MONUC's response was swift. In a joint operation involving FARDC troops under the direction of the Pakistani Brigade in South Kivu and an Indian Brigade in North Kivu, Op Kimia 2 was launched. The multi-front mission aimed to drive the rebels from the area to allow security to be established.

"Kimia 2 is going according to plan," said Col Guy Deacon (late QDG), the deputy chief of staff for MONUC's eastern integrated headquarters. "The mission is to neutralise the FDLR and that is happening. The FARDC – with MONUC support – are tackling them to stop them being effective in their areas of interest.

"We haven't been able to stop their influence completely because we don't have enough FARDC or MONUC troops to maintain a presence in the areas we have moved into.

"The consequences of our success are the large numbers of



Col Guy Deacon



internally displaced people, but in reality the number of refugees was roughly the same before the operation began. Depending on your view, it's a price worth paying to restore government authority in the Kivus, but it is something that we are always monitoring."

Britain is undoubtedly playing its part in providing a military response to the DRC's problems. But thanks to the hard work of staff based at the Embassy in Kinshasa, it is also helping the Congo develop its woefully outdated infrastructure.

A two-man defence section – Lt Col Tim Woodman (RLC) and SSgt Simon Van-De-Peer (AGC/SPS) – operates alongside Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Department for International Development staff to provide everything from English lessons for FARDC troops to major bridge repairs.

The United Kingdom's support to MONUC comes at a cost of around £250,000 per day, but Col Deacon insisted that the nation's dedication to a country thousands of miles away from the Army's main effort on Op Herrick is entirely altruistic.

"Britain has no agenda in the DRC except to bring peace to the region," he explained. "So in simple terms, we just have a desire to do the right thing."

At a time when the world's focus is largely on the conflict in Afghanistan, it is easy to forget the immense suffering and front-line fighting taking place in the heart of Africa.

There are certainly no quick fixes, but the peace being fought for by the United Nations will go a long way to helping a country with the world's lowest gross domestic product.

"There's a lot that doesn't get reported," said Lt Col Canning. "For example, there's a village in North Kivu where 365 families have been moved out by one of the warring factions so that the armed group could move in. They have just been told to leave and the armed group doesn't care where they go. This is not an isolated case."

"In a strange way it almost seems that the country is moving back along the evolutionary scale because the signs of progress – like the roads and railways – are being taken back by the jungle."

"It is a big task, but we have to try and create the conditions where the Congolese have sufficient security to put the country back on its feet." ■

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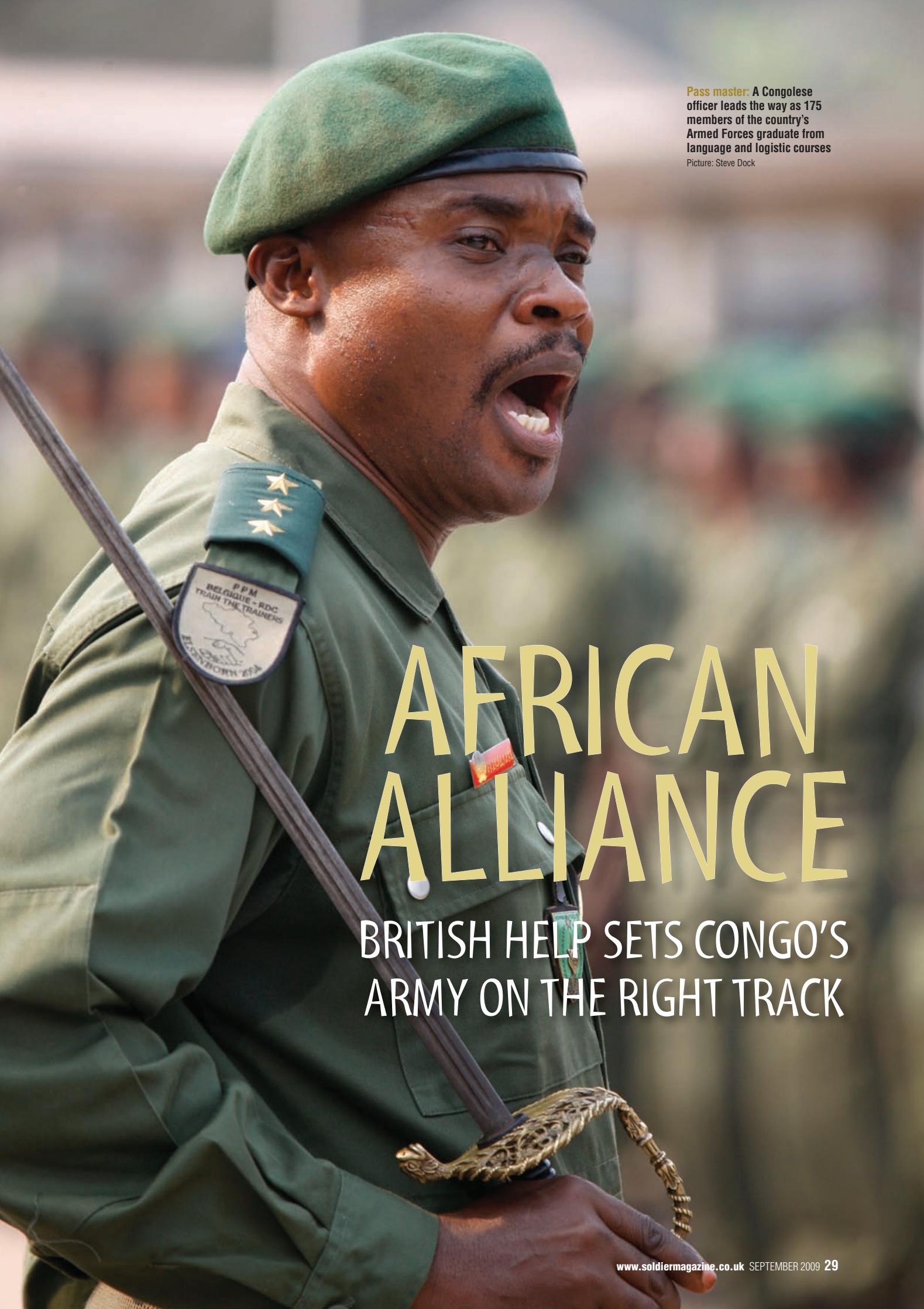
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Pass master: A Congolese officer leads the way as 175 members of the country's Armed Forces graduate from language and logistic courses

Picture: Steve Dock

AFRICAN ALLIANCE

BRITISH HELP SETS CONGO'S ARMY ON THE RIGHT TRACK

Report: Stephen Tyler
Pictures: Steve Dock

LINING up on the dusty parade square at the Congolese Armed Forces' officer training school in Kinshasa, 175 soldiers beamed with pride as they passed out of logistic and language courses.

Smartly-turned out and stood to attention ahead of receiving their certificates from the facility's RSM, the graduates listened intently as their guests of honour – representatives from the British Embassy – addressed them in their native French.

The presence of the British contingent was a fitting tribute to the impact that the nation's vision, expertise and funding has had on beginning to turn the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo (FARDC) into a professional force.



Key to getting that transition under way has been the renovation of the capital city's GESM (group of higher military schools). Using UK funds, the facility's ramshackle classrooms have been rebuilt and linked together to form a top-class learning facility.

And thanks to the dedication of British Embassy staff, including defence attache Lt Col Tim Woodman (RLC), the new buildings are being used to deliver suitably high quality lessons in English and logistics.

Speaking to *Soldier* after watching the graduation ceremony, logistic school commander Lt Col Deto Bomongo said: "The UK has given us a lot of help in the general organisation of our logistics.

"We have learned a lot about how to run things and how to manage them.

"Now for the first time we have people who know how to organise their department and how to manage the buildings and weapons."

In addition to the logistic support, GESM also hosts the Peacekeeping English Project (PEP). Started in the former Soviet Bloc in 1995, PEP is a language tuition scheme jointly funded by the MoD, Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Department for International Development. It is managed by the British Council. The project aims to teach English to

Congolese troops and country manager Danny Whitehead hoped that the course's focus on issues such as the rule of law, human rights and the fight against sexual violence will have a positive impact across the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

Conducting the English training in-country also costs just a fraction of the £17,000 required to send a Congolese officer to the Defence School of Languages in Beaconsfield.

With the majority of MONUC's (United Nations Mission in the Congo) members speaking English and with the DRC playing an increasingly more senior role in the English-speaking African Union, learning the language will allow the DRC's troops to play a greater part in providing their country's security.

"The focus has been to improve their English so that they work better with people from other countries," explained Whitehead. "I'm really proud that we have someone who only knew how to say hello and goodbye and now, after 12 months, is doing teacher training. That's the sustainable model we are trying to achieve.

"There are a lot of officers and soldiers who are keen on doing it because they want to see the development of peace in the country and they look up to the international peacekeepers here. A company of FARDC soldiers also received PEP training in Mbazza-Nyungu and have just deployed as peacekeepers to the Central African Republic. We are proud to assist DRC as it

begins to take on its role as a regional force for peace."

Speaking after graduating from the PEP course, Lt Olivier Kabange (FARDC) said he was grateful for being given the opportunity to polish his skills with the language.

"The course has been very interesting and I have really enjoyed it," he said.

Lt Pascaline Gbemani added: "Before I came here I spoke a little English but not enough to talk to someone. I'm very happy to have completed the course and I now want to start peacekeeping work."

In addition to hosting the PEP, the refurbished GESM compound serves as a base for visiting international short term training teams.

British troops from 14 Signal Regiment were among the first to pass on their knowledge to the FARDC when they visited Kinshasa earlier this year. WO2 (Yeoman of Signals) Jimmy Samuel headed up a seven-man team that taught 100 Congolese signals officers how to use radio equipment.

Three experts from HQ Royal Logistic Corps (Volunteers) – Maj William Scott, WO1 Bridget Miller and WO2 Stephen Jones – provided a specially-crafted course in the safe handling and storage of weapons and ammunition for 100 students, while

WO2 Luke Biggs and WO2 Andy Wright flew in from 25 Training Regiment Deepcut to deliver a "train the trainer" course to 75 instructors from the FARDC's School of Logistics.

In such a vast country, the redevelopment of one officer training school may appear little more than a drop in the ocean. The United Kingdom has, however, also helped to finance the building and equipping of an administrative school and a junior staff college and is working with the

Dutch to renovate a logistics school. The UK is also set to carry out catering training for the FARDC in purpose-built kitchens.

And with enthusiastic graduates beginning to filter through the system, Britain's input is providing the Congolese with the skills they need to play a part in their country's future.

"There are members of the FARDC at all ranks from the lowest soldier all the way up who

want the Army to improve," said United States Army officer Col Thomas Crowder, director of military cooperation.

"Courses like the British one here will help them to achieve that. They wanted help from the most professional militaries and I believe that they are getting it." ■

Graduation day: Congolese soldiers celebrate after passing out of British-funded language and logistics courses in Congo's capital Kinshasa





VIEW

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BUILDING BRIDGES

Broken link brought back to life thanks to Congo-based British officer

IN A country where paved roads are few and far between, Congolese drivers have come to rely on the 1,500km of existing tarmac.

The rudimentary network, which is centred around the country's major towns and cities, is vital in helping trade flow into, through and out of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

However, the infrastructure is starting to show its age. Potholes the size of craters pit the surface of many of the roads and the condition of the DRC's few bridges was brought into focus last year when a 60-year-old Bailey Bridge over the River Congo collapsed into the water under the weight of an articulated lorry.

The structure, which was built in 1948 and was meant to last for five years, was situated near the town of Kisangani in central DRC and served as the main route linking the country with Uganda.

With the civilian population facing a precarious trip across the river on rafts or a massive detour, the local senator contacted the British Embassy for help and it arrived in the form of defence attache Lt Col Tim Woodman (RLC).

He explained: "The Mambassa Bridge stayed in place until 2008 when someone drove an articulated truck across it. Bailey Bridges support weight across them if you drive slowly, but this guy went quickly and that caused the bridge to collapse into the river."

"The shortest detour around was 300km and took three days to drive, so the local senator realised that they needed to keep the supply route open and approached the British Ambassador Nick Kay."

Through the involvement of the ambassador and the Department for International Development (DFID), Lt Col Woodman managed to source funding for a new bridge to cover the 140-metre span across the river.

The officer then organised for the kit to be shipped to the Kenyan port of Mombassa in 40 containers before being moved 2,000km across bumpy roads to Entebbe in Uganda ahead of its final journey to Kisangani.

To build the bridge, Lt Col Woodman arranged for Nepali engineers deployed with the Mission of the United Nations Organisation in the DRC to receive specialist training in the UK and the group are now based at a camp at the construction site. Building work has begun and the bridge should be completed this month.

As well as making life much easier for the people who came to rely on the bridge to cross the River Congo, Lt Col Woodman told *Soldier* that the project served as a prime example of how the military works hand-in-hand with other Government agencies in DRC.

"You basically have four departments [the defence section, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, British Council and DFID] all working together and that is how we operate here," he said. "We refer to ourselves as the British Embassy rather than by our individual titles."

"This is a very worthwhile project because it will allow the people living near the bridge to get their produce into Kisangani to sell it."

As well as helping the local population and further enhancing Britain's reputation in the region, Lt Col Woodman's mission will have an additional positive impact on the DRC.

Two of the containers that the bridge was shipped in are being converted into roadside cafes for truck drivers in the Kisangani area, while the remainder will be used as armouries for the the Armed Forces of the DRC (FARDC).

The remaining sections of the original Bailey Bridge are being dismantled by the FARDC and will be reinstalled elsewhere along the river to provide extra crossing points across the water.

And in five years time the new bridge will be replaced by a permanent structure over the River Congo, freeing the temporary one up to be relocated within the country. ■



A bridge too far: The Mombassa Bridge, which served as a vital part of the trade route between DRC and Uganda, pictured after it collapsed last year

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All the while, as your arms are beneath the water's surface, kick your legs as if you're jogging underwater.

Don't worry about coordinating your arms and legs – the important thing about staying afloat is feeling comfortable. Do what works best for your body and you'll still be breathing air when the rescue boat comes.

SURVIVE A SHARK ATTACK

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Keep your eye on the shark, anticipating flanking moves. Don't play dead – it'll make mincemeat out of you. Your best option is to appear as a threat. If it comes near, aim any attack at the nose or gills. Should it get close enough to bite, aim for the eyes. Don't be squeamish – punch and kick with all your might, it's you or it.

If a shark bites you, remain calm and keep fending it off. It may up its attack rate if you're wounded, so you must try to show it who's boss. Get out of the water as soon as you can, and get medical treatment. A shark bite will bleed profusely, and even minor wounds can become infected rapidly.



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OF THE BATTLE OF TALAVERA 200 YEARS AFTER
THE END OF THE PENINSULAR WAR

Picture of war: 7th Battalion, Royal Artillery
advance on the French infantry in military artist
David Rowlands' painting of the Battle of Talavera
Picture: Courtesy of David Rowlands, www.davidrowlands.co.uk



Report: Richard Long
Pictures: Mike Weston

WHEN it comes to thoughts of the Peninsular War many people conjure the image of Sean Bean as the battle-hardened hero Richard Sharpe.

The hugely popular novels and subsequent television series drew new interest to the conflict and the epic battles that the British Army fought with the French.

While writer Bernard Cornwell spins tales of fiction within a historical context his works do not tell the full story of the war, the role of the UK's allies and the sacrifices the troops made.

Soldier travelled to Spain to join Service personnel for the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Talavera, a conflict fought over July 27 and 28, 1809 that accounted for huge losses on both sides.

As a mark of respect, soldiers from four of the regiments involved in the epic struggle visited the battlefields of their forefathers and joined the official commemorations in Talavera de la Reina.

The trip was organised by Peninsular War 200 – the UK body established to plan events for the conflict's anniversary.

Chairman Col Nick Lipscombe, senior British officer at the Nato Rapid Deployable Corps in Spain, told *Soldier* that there were more than 100 battles or skirmishes during the war as well as around 50 sieges.

To focus their attention, the group selected the main events of each year as a source for the commemorations.

The Peninsular War (1808-1814) saw Napoleon's French soldiers fight the allied forces of the UK, Spain and Portugal for control of the Iberian Peninsula.

By May 1809 the French had been forced out of Portugal and attention turned to Spain.



Looking back: British soldiers pay their respects at the Battle of Talavera memorial watched by a member of a Spanish re-enactment group

Right, Guiding light: Col Nick Lipscombe leads a battlefield tour





British forces, under the command of Sir Arthur Wellesley, united with the Spanish and engaged their enemy once more in Talavera, where the French advanced but were repulsed several times by the determined infantry.

Despite gaining victory the battle left the British precariously exposed and they had no option but to retreat, leaving the town and its people to the French.

In the 200 years that have elapsed since the encounter there have been differing accounts of the battle, resulting in some hostility between the British and Spanish.

Col Lipscombe said: "There is a feeling in the town that the British deserted them. That is why we are here today, to commemorate an epic battle in the history of the town, with the town's people."

Professor Charles Esdaile, a prominent historian of the conflict and deputy president of Peninsular War 200, added: "There was a perception after Talavera that the Spanish had done nothing and ran away but none of that happens to be true.

"The Spanish did everything they could to help but the British soldiers were not aware of it."

He added: "It is clear there is immense prejudice against Britain in Spain. If we are remembered at all it is in a negative sense.

"Some things are not exactly praiseworthy but it is very important the British Army is remembered in a positive light.

"Some 40,000 soldiers died in the Peninsular War and the losses here in

Talavera were proportionately higher than the first day of the Somme.

"That sacrifice is largely forgotten. There are no Commonwealth war graves in Spain; there is no Wilfred Owen or Siegfried Sassoon. These men are forgotten."

The battle helped Wellesley enhance his reputation within the British Army and stood him in good stead for future challenges when appointed the Duke of Wellington.

"He was Arthur Wellesley up to this point. He had a good reputation from earlier campaigns in India but this raised him to Viscount Wellington, Col Lipscombe explained.

"I think this was an endorsement of his future capabilities. There was an element of luck but it gave a glimpse of what was to come.

"This was not his finest hour but it was still a brilliant battle."

The 50-strong visiting party – comprised of soldiers from the Scots Guards, The Royal Dragoon Guards, The King's Royal Hussars and The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment – were shown key locations on the battlefield and the sense of history was not lost.

Lt Richard Emmerson (RDG) said: "It is important we honour the sacrifices made by the regiments and a lot of the lessons they learned

are still relevant today. It is very interesting to see the battlefields and picture the conflict. I had to look Talavera up. I knew it was one of our battle honours but all I knew was the name, I did not know the who, what, when and why, so in that respect it has been a very interesting trip."

But do the experiences of a 19th century infantryman on a Spanish battlefield bear any comparison to those of the contemporary soldier?

Professor Esdaile answered: "It was about sensible use of weapons systems and that is very much the case today.

"This was a very sticky situation, it was not good, but the extremely high morale of the British Army carried them through.

"If anything will get these guys through in Afghanistan it is the same level of morale."

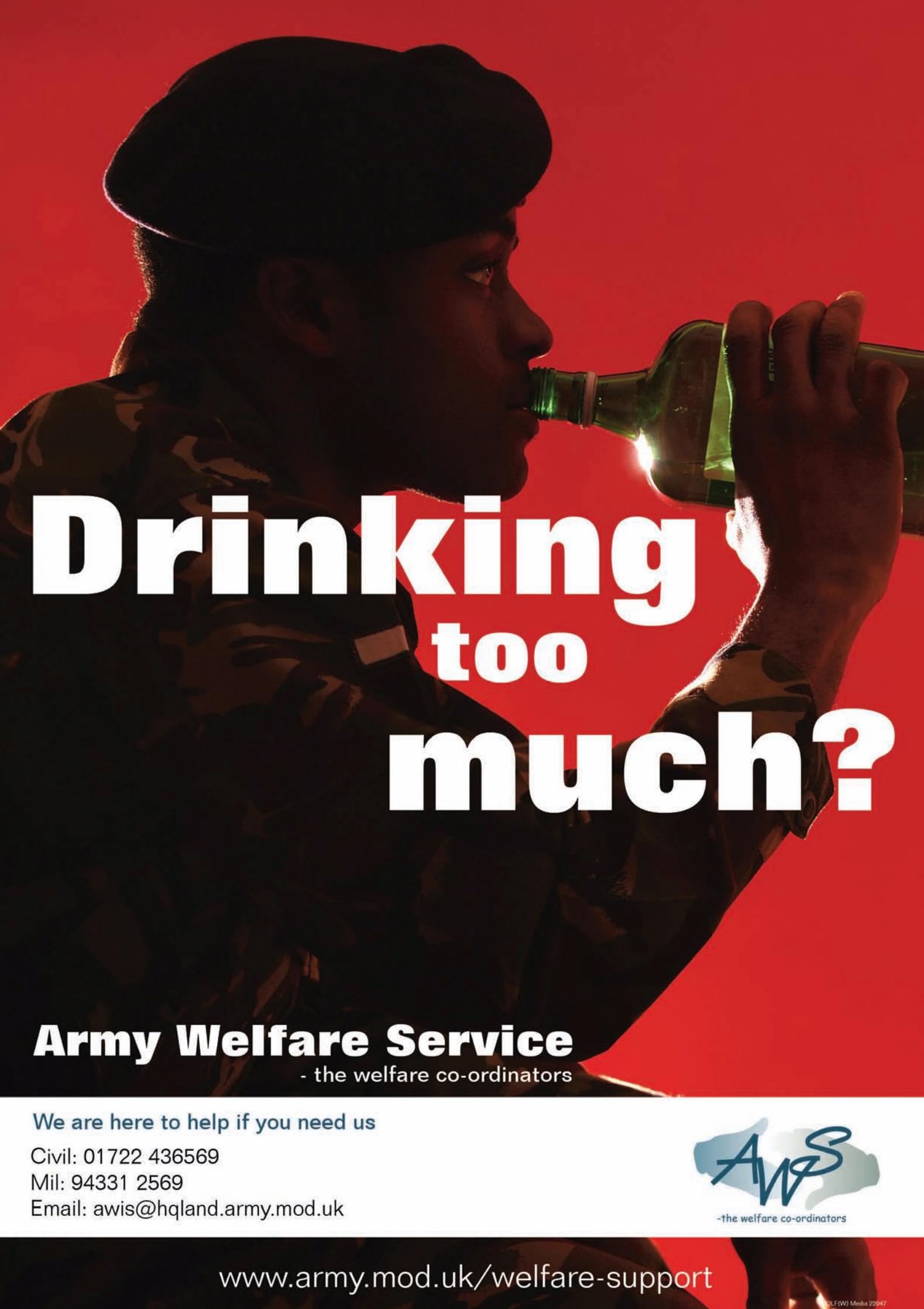
Col Lipscombe added: "When you look at these campaigns they are a complete study of joint operations.

"The difficulties we face today are the same that were faced by commanders and soldiers on the ground then."

• Peninsular War 200 is involved in a number of commemorations up to 2014, with a separate organisation – Waterloo 200 – responsible for events surrounding the epic Napoleonic showdown.

For more information visit www.peninsularwar200.org and www.waterloo200.org ■





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TEAM TALK

EXPERIENCED TRIO KEEP
CGS'S FINGER ON THE PULSE
OF CRITICAL ARMY ISSUES



Report: Cliff Caswell
Picture: Mike Weston

GRIPPING in the office is nothing new – since the dawn of working life conditions have been far from perfect, the boss has always been flawed and the pay never enough.

It is a familiar story wherever you happen to be employed. But while the worst cases of the daily grind in civvy street affect the bottom line, an unhappy and unmotivated British Army could literally make the difference between life or death for a soldier on operations.

Against the backdrop of high-intensity actions in Afghanistan, any dramas could quickly become a distraction if left unheeded. So keeping a finger on the pulse of matters affecting those on the front line is a priority for Gen Sir David Richards, the new Chief of the General Staff, who succeeded Gen Sir Richard Dannatt last month.

Backed by an experienced briefing team that regularly canvasses the views of soldiers from private upwards, the head of the Army is kept well informed on the issues of the day. Troops who speak their mind can be assured that the chief is listening and his concerns are passed to the highest echelons of command and Government.

Lt Col James Robinson (RGR) and two experienced NCOs collectively form the general's eyes and ears in the field. CGS's briefing team regularly visits all Regular and Territorial Army units, giving personnel an hour-long presentation on what is happening in the wider military, which explains how operations are progressing and provides updates on the latest equipment. The team also speak on issues closer to home such as housing, welfare and support to families.

The floor is then thrown open to soldiers and officers who, in small groups, can raise any positive or negative aspects of Army life they think CGS should consider. These are noted and fed directly back to Gen Richards during regular meetings in his office at MoD Main Building in Whitehall, London.

"The briefing team is a two-way opportunity – firstly it allows soldiers to hear about the major issues both in defence and the Army," Lt Col Robinson explained. "But it also gives troops the chance to air concerns about anything they see fit."

"We put all the feedback into an annual report in which staff branches make comments against the issues raised before CGS adds his own remarks which soldiers then see. Additionally three times a year we brief the Executive Committee of the Army Board and we can give them a frank account of the perceptions of our people."

"Our aspiration is to get around each unit once every two years – as well as speaking to the soldiers we also have a discussion session with the families and brief each commanding officer on any issues that they may wish to follow up."

The forum, however, does not only canvass negative views. Personnel are encouraged by the briefing team to speak about the upbeat side of Army life and to keep CGS informed about the progress made on any points raised in previous briefings.

"In particular there has recently been positive feedback in areas such as personal kit and equipment," said Lt Col Robinson. "Troops are also pleased with the stability and security of their career and the welfare package on operations. But they are less satisfied with issues including IT support, contractorisation

and housing repairs and have voiced their concerns about the burdens and pace of life when not deployed on ops.

"The previous CGS, Gen Sir Richard Dannatt, was extremely vocal on the military covenant – the relationship between the Army and the nation.

"While he did not believe the agreement had been broken, he acknowledged it had been out of balance, and it has very much been a priority to improve the situation and there has been much success."

Despite the pressures they were under, Lt Col Robinson was pleased that soldiers unfailingly turned out to give an honest appraisal about the highs and lows of their lives. He also acknowledged the professionalism of his two NCO colleagues in the briefing team for gaining the trust and respect of those they spoke to.

"It does take experience and skill to carry out open forums," he admitted. "The three of us in the briefing team have recent

operational experience, which gives us credibility. We also have to make sure that we keep ourselves fully informed of the wide range of issues facing the military so that we can speak with confidence about them."

For those who meet Lt Col Robinson and his colleagues during the briefing team sessions, the opportunity to have their views fed directly to the head of the Army is invaluable.

Lt Col Marcus Simson, CO of the Tidworth-based 2nd Royal Tank Regiment, said soldiers and officers had been enthusiastic about discussing the key issues of the day when their views were canvassed during a recent visit.

"It was an excellent opportunity for them to talk about their frustrations and what is positive about the Army," he added. "They are all the better for getting the chance to have their say and it

has given me some feedback on more local issues facing them.

"The briefing team always provides a polished service and it is extremely effective."

Having a barometer of Army opinion is certainly a crucial asset given the operations in which the military is now involved. Maintaining morale, ensuring troops have an outlet for their concerns and acting on any potentially serious problem areas are key if soldiers are to be successful in Afghanistan.

The briefing team is a vital tool in making sure soldiers are kept up-to-date as well as providing a hotline to the top. Experienced, committed and respected by troops, their accurate reflection of current Army life is helping to define future thinking. ■

‘IT WAS AN EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY FOR THEM TO TALK ABOUT THEIR FRUSTRATIONS AND WHAT IS POSITIVE ABOUT THE ARMY’

● Any unit, Regular or TA, or HQ who would like CGS's Briefing Team to visit should contact WO2 CBT at the Army Presentation Group on 01252 417009/417000 or email apg-wo2-cbt@rmras.mod.uk



Talk back: Cpl Melita Jarvis (AAC) addresses members of 2 RTR at Tidworth before conducting a series of smaller feedback sessions across all ranks of the Regiment

Beat street

Report: Cliff Caswell

Picture: Graeme Main

ARMED with nothing more than a baton and facing a bewildering array of musical dots, Student Bandmaster Shane O'Neill is clearly not enjoying being the centre of attention.

The pressure on him is intense. Leading an intricate classical piece that he was only introduced to ten minutes previously, every swing of his hand is being interpreted by a virtuoso pianist who is following him with a ruthless efficiency.

When he makes mistakes the music strays mercilessly awry. After this happens the performance stops and his peers, watching from the sidelines, are invited to criticise. Tiny details of his technique are questioned at every turn by a professor.

"There is a lot of pressure, but you have to make that work for you," O'Neill told *Soldier* as he stepped down from the podium. "At the end of the day the Corps of Army Music (CAMUS) doesn't want somebody that can't keep up with the rigours of the job."

The stress might be relentless, but it is only part of the tough demands of life as a bandmaster. The students selected each year for this most competitive of courses are put through their paces in every aspect of musical skills, from performance to teaching in a grinding three years. And, despite the packed agenda, they must still find time to maintain the demands of soldiering, keeping up their fitness and attending Command, Leadership and Management (CLM) classes.

But for those who pass, the rewards are great. Even if a musician joins the course at the lowest echelons of the NCO chain, they will be promoted to WO1 – with a commission in their sights – on passing out. As a bonus, their qualification is accredited by Kingston University as a Bachelor of Music honours degree.

"The Bandmaster's Course is the longest in the Army and it needs to be thorough," explained Maj Kevin Roberts (CAMUS), chief instructor with the Royal School of Military

Music at Kneller Hall, Twickenham.

"If you get through you are going to be promoted to warrant officer – a rank that it can take others 20 years to achieve – so you must quickly amass a huge amount of experience.

"The challenge that we have is getting top class people with great technical ability

who have all the right skills in certain areas – you might be a great musician but conducting is entirely different, requiring huge control and expertise."

Roberts is well aware of the pressures the student bandmasters are under having been one himself. But the former musician with the Band of The Parachute Regiment, who has the demanding P-Company course under his belt, is enthusiastic about what students can achieve if they fully apply themselves to the challenge.

"You can find yourself organising concerts at places such as the Royal Hospital Chelsea

Student bandmasters strive for the top in Army's long-haul music course

and the Headley Court rehabilitation centre in Surrey, learning the process of how to best please the audience," he said. "You gain a lot of experience."

Professor Tom Czepiel, who is responsible for introducing students to teaching, is also adamant that those on the course grow in maturity over the three years. "It is all about whole life development," he said. "You have to pack a lot into your time, particularly with all the military stuff, but you find that even those who are struggling tend to spring during their final year."

"Being a bandmaster is an extremely diverse role – they conduct, manage and teach and that makes it very intense. But the beauty of the course is that there are relatively low numbers and you can quickly move to address any weaknesses."

There is certainly very little rest for the would-be bandmasters. But with candidates for the course hand-picked in a demanding two-week cadre – and with only a handful of musicians making the grade each year – those who are selected inevitably rise to the occasion and ultimately enjoy the experience.

"This is definitely one of the most

challenging things I have ever done but it has been a brilliant three years," said Std BM Craig Bywater, who is coming to the end of his time at Kneller Hall. "The life is very hard on you and your family but it is incredibly rewarding – you go through a huge amount of development."

"I don't think a course could do any more to prepare you for the demands that you will face. You're expected to complete your senior NCO CLM package when you first arrive and have to do the same for warrant officer soon after graduating. And you're expected to keep up all your military skills and drills too."

For O'Neill, who is replacing his baton after the demanding conducting lesson, his first year of the course has been rewarding despite the pressures. "I'd served for eight years and was a lance corporal before I was selected to train as a bandmaster and it is an honour to be here at this stage of my career," he said.

"I am having a fantastic time and feel I have come a long way already. The most challenging aspect at Kneller Hall is maintaining the military and academic sides of your life – you have to make sure you organise your time management properly."

It might be a daunting training programme, but the intensity of this course reflects the leap in rank and responsibility that students will undergo should they make the grade.

To be knocking on the door of the warrant officers' mess in three years requires candidates to be capable leaders, good soldiers and completely ready for the demands they will face as they take up their new role in a band.

This is a course for the best-of-the-best. Yet for a gifted individual who wants to forge their life in music, the Army offers this golden opportunity to see and experience all aspects of the craft.

And with nearly 80 per cent of bandmasters going on to become directors of music, the ladder does not end there. ■

'There is a lot of pressure but you have to make that work for you'





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On guard

For The Royal Logistic Corps, the idea of guarding Buckingham Palace used to be one left behind at the careers office. But the high operational tempo means that for one regiment it has become an all-important reality. >>



Report: Samantha Chapman
Pictures: Steve Dock

STARING fixedly ahead as the London crowds gathered for one of the oldest ceremonial rituals in Britain, Pte Daniel Fletcher of 2 Logistic Support Regiment, The Royal Logistic Corps wiggled his toes in his gleaming boots.

Determined to stay focused on the Changing of the Guard, where soldiers take up sentry post outside the Queen's residences, he strained his ears to listen for his commanding officer's voice, guiding him through the drill motions learnt just a month beforehand.

As a driver, standing outside Buckingham Palace to defend the Queen was a moment Pte Fletcher had never believed he would experience, especially having only returned from one of the final tours of Iraq just eight months previously.

"It's mad how quickly things can change," he said. "This time last year we were doing all our pre-deployment training and gearing up for our tour and now we're in London guarding the Queen's residence. It's just so different.

"I never thought I would do this – I didn't realise that logisticians could, so when they asked for volunteers I stuck my hand up.

"We were drilled by the Irish

Guards for this and it was really hard work because a lot of us hadn't done any drill since basic training. It was definitely a challenge."

The regiment, which supports 7th Armoured Brigade in Gutersloh, Germany, volunteered to take up the ceremonial duties almost immediately on their return from tours of Iraq and Afghanistan, giving the soldiers less than a year to prepare for the momentous – and extremely public – task ahead.

Still highly unusual for a logistic regiment to perform public duties which are traditionally an honour upheld by the five Foot Guard Regiments of the Household Division, 2 LSR is one of just a handful of loggie regiments to ever take up the ceremonial service. Due to Operations Telic and Herrick, the Foot Guards have been in constant demand, leaving the door open for the rest of the Army to take up some of their traditional roles.

"I first heard about it when I was in Iraq last year," explained Lt Col Edward Corrigan, CO 2 LSR. "It was clear in my mind that this was a great opportunity. There wasn't much on the calendar in terms of future operations

and this was an opportunity that just wasn't to be wasted.

"It's definitely unusual for a logistic regiment to take up public duties, but I was aware that there was a lot of scope for us to do it. It was extremely important that we got on with it as it may not be an opportunity that will be around much longer. I suspect the guard regiments are very keen to return to it, especially with Iraq drawing down,

and they will almost certainly want it back. It is a real honour and a real privilege for us to be able to say that we did this."

The four-month stint of public duties sees the 111 soldiers take up posts at St

James' Palace, the Tower of London, Windsor Castle and the jewel in the crown, Buckingham Palace itself. An extremely prestigious appointment, the soldiers must make sure that each 48-hour duty is performed perfectly and the Changing of the Guard ceremony carried out with precision.

"We had the Irish Guards come out to drill us in July so that we would be ready for this," explained 2 LSR's RSM, WO1 Paula Rowan.

"The drill was tough going for the guys but I think they enjoyed it – it's all

'We had the Irish Guards come out to drill us in July so that we would be ready for this'



part of being a soldier – and the Guards were really good, they know exactly what they are talking about and there were no conflicting stories.

“We are a logistic regiment and they were working with drivers and suppliers who don’t normally do this sort of thing, so I think it was a good learning exercise for all of us.

“As well as the drill they gave us lots of tips about how to stay focused when you have to stand still for a long time – the main one being to keep your mind active and wiggle your toes around in your boots.”

Aside from the ten days of constant drill practice, preparation for the public duty stint was immense – not only for the squadron of soldiers taking part, but also for their administration team.

Divided into those who sorted out the mountains of paperwork and organisation and those in the pressing team who spent ten-hours-a-day ironing uniforms, the task was momentous.

Equally important was knowing the layout of the areas in which they would have to march so the soldiers would have an accurate idea of what to expect when they arrived in London.

Cpl Luke Sumner was one of the few soldiers who had already undertaken public duties and he was immediately signed up to the admin team.

“I’m the only one who knew the

layout and what you actually have to go through so I joined the admin team to help them out with all the relevant information,” he said.

“We are responsible for everything that goes on behind the scenes, although it was the uniform which caused us the most headaches.

“I know from experience how nervous those guys are feeling so it is up to us to make sure that everything runs as smoothly as possible to make it easier for them.”

Despite undergoing four months of intensive work, which was slotted in around the loggies’ day jobs, many also took the opportunity to have a look around their capital city – a place the majority of the squadron had never visited.

“We organised trips around London for them,” explained Maj Stu Field, officer commanding 22 Close Support Squadron. “Many of them had never used the Tube before or anything like that so it was another learning curve for them. They all seemed to enjoy it.

“It’s just four months of a really good all-round experience and there aren’t many people who can turn around and say they’ve guarded the Queen – it’s definitely something they can take back with them.” ■

Palace goal: The first soldier from 2 Logistic Support Regiment, The Royal Logistic Corps, takes up his sentry position in front of Buckingham Palace

Report: Cliff Caswell
Pictures: Mike Weston

COMMUNICATIONS have been key to military campaigns from the dawn of time – for thousands of years actions have been won and lost because of information or the lack of it.

From the Crimean War, when ambiguous orders sent the British cavalry into a murderous charge against Russian guns at Balaclava, to the Falklands, where a release of info to the media alerted Argentine forces of an attack at Goose Green, valuable lessons about reliable and secure comms have often been learned the hard way.

Fast-forward to the current operation in Afghanistan, with its remote outposts and forward operating bases, and the data war is all the more prevalent. Faced with an insurgent enemy

that thrives on leaks and exploits weaknesses, British troops have to remain in the loop without compromising themselves or others. But they'll soon have some upgraded kit to help them.

A team of soldiers and officers from across the Army have been putting the latest update of the Bowman communications suite – BCIP5 – through its paces. And from the early previews given to *Soldier*, the equipment offers a step-change over its predecessor.

Reconfigured from the ground up, the system now has far greater processing power to offer both secure voice and data capability, a greater battery life and a new broadband antenna. The Portable User Data Terminal control system has now been withdrawn and two Microsoft Windows-based alternatives introduced.

The comms suite's new features include radios that now automatically report the soldier's position to friendly forces. The system also delivers a mobile internet service, enabling text messages and documents to be sent between HQs and commanders in the field.

'The upgrade delivers tools and capabilities that can speed up the production and distribution of orders and improve situational awareness'

Col Andy Barr, Assistant Director of Command and Battlespace Management at Land Forces, was confident that the BCIP5 upgrade offered a package that made the system more powerful and easy to use.

Personnel serving with the Germany-based 1 (UK) Armoured Division had already deployed with the system during Exercise Flying Rhino in the Czech Republic, and had given highly favourable feedback about the new features, he said.

"Although the kit has not changed a great deal visually, there has been a lot done on the inside," Barr added. "As a result we have a system that is smarter with more

processing power – even the battery management has been overhauled.

"We will have a major advance on the current in-service version of Bowman, with improved secure voice and data communications and planning tools that will enable better shared situational awareness."

The upgrade has certainly been taken extremely seriously and has been designed to fit around the busy programme of operations.

Nearly 2,500 extra radios have been ordered from defence contractor General Dynamics to support actions in Afghanistan.

As the new kit comes online, a comprehensive training programme is ensuring soldiers are up to speed. Specialist Bowman teams have been earmarked to put brigades through their paces with the equipment in a six-month package and troops are expected to deploy on Op Herrick with



the beefed-up system from 2011.

"The upgrade delivers tools and capabilities that can speed up the production and distribution of orders and improve situational awareness," emphasised Col Barr.

"However, it takes time and effort to get the best out of it and it is important to ensure that formations master the basics before moving on to more complex capabilities."

Getting to grips with the kit is going to prove crucial. With British involvement in Afghanistan expected to last several years, solid communications will be a key battle-winning asset in a country where troops are based in inhospitable environments and often separated by vast distances and difficult terrain.

But the new equipment shows plenty of promise. Overseen by a team of soldiers from all ranks with many years of operational experience among them, the Bowman upgrade provides a system that is both easier to use and more potent than its predecessor.

"I'm certainly very proud to be representing the team that is delivering the BCIP5 programme," said Col Barr. "It has been well thought out and everyone involved has had first-hand experience of the operational pressures the Army is under."

"But, ultimately, it will be the users who define how this upgrade will be deployed – there are some good features that can be put to use out in Afghanistan, but it will be our soldiers and officers that will define its potential and how to use it."

All of a quiver: The Bowman BCIP5 training team put the upgraded communication suite and equipment through its paces on Salisbury Plain

At a glance: Bowman BCIP5

Comms suite

NOW offers more reliable and secure voice and data services, with a High Capacity Data Radio network providing the backbone of a mobile tactical internet service. Users can run the battle planning application (ComBAT) and other specialist applications while their positions are automatically fed back digitally to friendly forces. In the future Bowman will be able to connect and work with other comms services.

Powerhouse potential

BOWMAN batteries now have an indicator to show the level of charge. It is believed that the powerhouse can provide 24-hour coverage rather than the eight hours currently delivered. Col Barr said: "As a result of these changes there will be less of a requirement to carry replacement batteries, which will reduce the burden on soldiers."

Better ergonomics

THE Lightweight Data Terminal and Lightweight Manpack Data Terminals are now being introduced. With the current Portable User Data Terminal being withdrawn, these two new handheld devices are Microsoft Windows-based and offer better ergonomics and a more user-friendly experience.

Beaming back

AN improved broadband antenna, pictured below, is currently being delivered to soldiers on Op Herrick. The aerial will help exploit the full capability of the Bowman network.

Hitting the mark

Potent Bowman upgrade will give troops the tactical edge

SUPER CHEFS

Military cooks prove their skills in and out of the kitchen on daunting Exercise Rhino Caterer

Report: Samantha Chapman

Pictures: Graeme Main

WHEN Steven Seagal flexed his muscles and growled "I'm just a cook" in *Under Siege*, viewers everywhere realised it would be futile to ask for seconds in his kitchen.

The role may have been tongue-in-cheek, but the aim was to portray chefs as an

unlikely battle comrade – a person better suited to slicing onions than scalps.

Yet the British Army's mantra of soldier first, trade second is important in Forward Operating Bases (FOBs) in Afghanistan where every Serviceman or woman could be called upon to defend their territory.

Exercise Rhino Caterer in Gutersloh, Germany is an annual competition which ensures that chefs compete against each other both in and out of their comfort zones. Half of the eagerly-anticipated contest hosted by HQ 1st (UK) Armoured Division every June tests their core military skills and the other half assesses their improvised cooking ability.

"It is excellent training value," explained exercise controller WO1 Dave Asquith (RLC). "Most of the chefs don't get the chance to do field catering or military skills very often so it's a good test of their ability.

"They have to use their imagination and draw on what they have learnt – there is a great sense of comradeship as well because for many people it's a reunion from their training days."

For the field catering section, each team of four Royal Logistic Corps personnel have to beef up their skills with just one hour to build a makeshift oven and a further three to cook a gourmet meal from scratch.

Yet it is the military skills part of the competition that really stretches the chefs by pitting them against one another at events such as bayoneting, camouflage and concealment, fire team attack and casualty evacuation.

Each team consists of three chefs and one driver – and they must summon up all their core battle skills and aggression to be able to score highly, with a maximum of 1,000 points available.

"If they are attached to an infantry unit then they will regularly do this type of training," explained military skills supervisor Sgt Kevin Waldock (1 RRF). "However, if they're not then they may not have done this for years and it will be tough for them. For example, it's the first time that a lot of them have used bayonets and it's good to see how they use them and react to the instructions of their commanders."

Each soldier is marched around the bayonet training ground by a commander – usually a corporal – who encourages them to stab enemies at close quarters. While shouting "kill, kill, kill", the loggies have to crawl through tunnels and run around a field to attack the stuffed dummies lying in wait.

"It's really challenging," said Cpl Chris Powell (RLC). "We don't really do much of this – it was the first time we've done bayonet training. It was fun but knackering. It gives us a taste of what the boys are doing on a daily basis as well – it's a bit of an insight so I think it's good for us."

Hot stuff: Exercise Rhino Caterer had a distinctly operational flavour as Army chefs tested their soldiering skills as well as feeling the heat in field kitchens



'The assault course is something that a lot of chefs really do not look forward to'





Each team was also required to put their fitness levels to the test with a run over the base's substantial assault course. All four members had to demonstrate teamwork and comradeship by encouraging and helping each other over the testing obstacles.

"The assault course is something that a lot of the chefs really do not look forward to," added WO1 Asquith. "Unless they go over them regularly when they're attached to an infantry unit, some of them will not have done this since their basic training.

"Each year the competition is growing substantially – in 2008 we had 19 teams enter, but this time we've had 32. I think it's because they get the chance to see what they can do and for soldiers

this is what they joined the Army for. They are soldiers first and trade second and this teaches them to remember that."

Spread over two days, Ex Rhino Caterer splits the teams in half and gives them a day to concentrate on each part of the competition, ensuring that once they've tired themselves out with military skills they don't then have to cook a dinner in four hours.

"The standard in the improvised catering

section has been very high," said judge WO1 Al Rankin (HQ 3 Div).

"Although the chefs don't get a chance to do this type of cooking very often, it is an essential skill if you are being deployed – you need to have these skills if you are based in a FOB."

Cpl Powell agreed, adding:

"We don't get to do a lot of improvised cooking but it's one of the skills we should have.

"We did our cooking before the military skills which I think was probably the right way around – we're all totally wiped out now." ■



Helmand's Kitchen

She might like a bit of home cooking, but can Samantha pass the RLC's culinary challenge to score *Soldier* a much-needed *Media Ops* win?

The knives, as they say, are out . . .

Report: Samantha Chapman

Pictures: Graeme Main

LOOKING doubtfully at the ground I could see a pickaxe, two shovels and several bits of metal cylinders and pipes. It looked like the unwanted contents of a shed after it had been raided.

"You want me to make an oven?" I squeaked, hoping that my rising panic had not yet crept into my voice. If I'm being honest I had thought they might let me cheat and would have already built me one in a flourishing, *Blue Peter*-style.

No such luck. "Oh yes," grinned Exercise Rhino Caterer controller, WO1 Dave Asquith (RLC). "We've set it up so you're just like everyone else."

It was a bright sunny morning in Gutersloh, Germany and the RLC contingent of HQ 1 (UK) Armoured Division had challenged me to take part in its annual exercise, which puts both catering and military skills to the test. >>





(UK) Armoured Division
Exercise Rhino
Caterer 01

NAAFI

Luckily, as I'm not a soldier, I only had to take part in the improvised field cookery section and would battle it out against 32 teams of four to come up with the best menu. Our scenario was that we were on our way to cook a banquet for Afghan elders in Helmand province when our vehicle was hit by an IED and a quarter of the cooking equipment lost.

Despite this catastrophe each team had to make two starters, three mains and two desserts as support from the elders was crucial. Not too much pressure then...

However, as per the rules, I was allowed three other team members – SSgt Andy Savage (26 Regt RA), Cpl Mark Fryer (1 LSR) and Sgt Megan Bennett, a chef with the Australian Army who is attached to the division for a year.

The first part of my mission was to build an oven in an hour with the tools laid out in front of me, none of which I had ever used before. Embarrassingly, the shovel barely even dented the ground, flicking up minuscule lumps of mud in every direction. I felt like a small puppy tearing into the carpet.

Five minutes later, Cpl Fryer grabbed the second shovel and quickly ripped into the earth. Sgt Bennett took charge of the pickaxe and between us – mostly them – we dug an L-shaped oven and grill that would sink the heart of even the most stoic gardener. We then arranged the metal drum as the oven, a tray for a shelf and a drum lid for the oven door, along with a trellis for a hob and I have to confess it looked good.

‘As the food started bubbling and cooking in our oven, the smells wafting into our tent were tantalising’

Once that was done we had to sort our menu. Opening the box was like entering an Aladdin's cave for foodies – there was fresh fruit and veg, chicken, lamb and mince, sardines and red mullet – as well as all the pulses, rice and baking ingredients you could ever want.

We quickly decided to cook vegetable rostis with fried sardines and beef koftas for our starters, and poached mullet with lemon on a bed of couscous, lamb curry with rice and scented chicken pieces for main. Our mouth-watering desserts would be stewed figs and dates and also pear and apricot turnovers with honeyed cream.

The game was on. Cpl Fryer set about stealing extra pots and pans from the other contestants. SSgt Savage began chopping the chicken and lamb while I grated an entire veggie patch for the rostis. Even the *Soldier* photographer was given the potatoes to peel by the ever-industrious Sgt Bennett who quickly separated the ingredients so we knew what was going into each dish.

My job was getting the starters ready for cooking – although I chopped and peeled everything thrust under my nose – including my thumb. This was the first time any of my challenges had drawn blood, a turn of events made all the more embarrassing by Cpl Fryer who raced to my aid flourishing a giant blue plaster that marked me out as a novice for all to see.

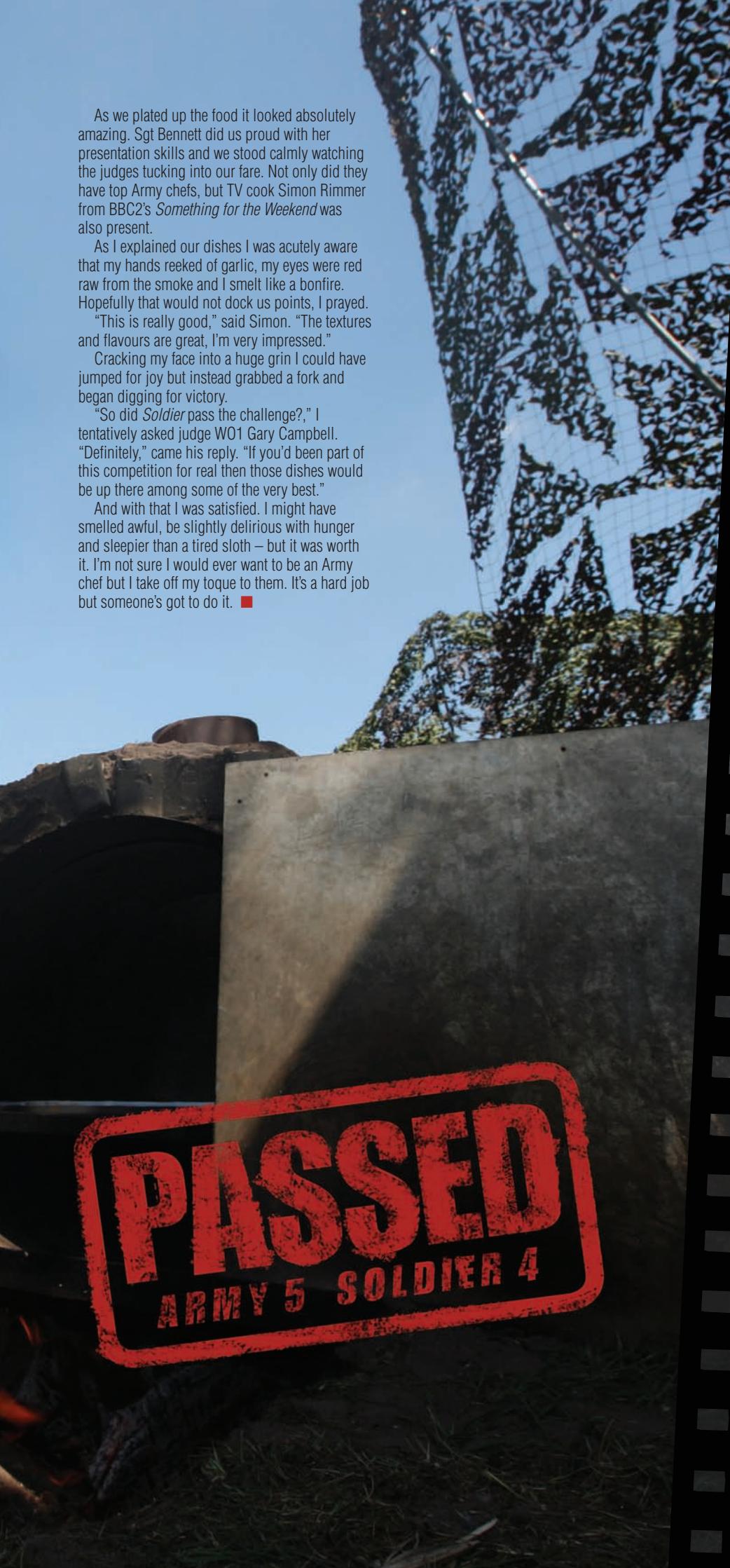
As the food started bubbling and cooking in our oven, the smells wafting into our tent were tantalising.

The lamb curry looked amazing, and the scented chicken and stewed fish made my stomach constrict with hunger. All we had to do was make sure the trench was constantly topped up with firewood to keep the heat going and ensure we would be finished on time.

“Me and my team won this last year,” Cpl Fryer informed me as I pressed him for what the judges would be looking for. I could have kissed the ground. We had this in the bag!

Finally, as the three hours we'd been given to cook up a gourmet banquet drew to a close, it was my turn to get the starters ready. Frying the rostis on a giant metal sheet over the hob I also kept an eye on my koftas – or burgers as spectators kept calling them. Although I slightly burnt a few, Cpl Fryer again came to my rescue and scooped them into the oven before they turned to charcoal.





As we plated up the food it looked absolutely amazing. Sgt Bennett did us proud with her presentation skills and we stood calmly watching the judges tucking into our fare. Not only did they have top Army chefs, but TV cook Simon Rimmer from BBC2's *Something for the Weekend* was also present.

As I explained our dishes I was acutely aware that my hands reeked of garlic, my eyes were red raw from the smoke and I smelt like a bonfire. Hopefully that would not dock us points, I prayed.

"This is really good," said Simon. "The textures and flavours are great, I'm very impressed."

Cracking my face into a huge grin I could have jumped for joy but instead grabbed a fork and began digging for victory.

"So did *Soldier* pass the challenge?" I tentatively asked judge WO1 Gary Campbell. "Definitely," came his reply. "If you'd been part of this competition for real then those dishes would be up there among some of the very best."

And with that I was satisfied. I might have smelled awful, be slightly delirious with hunger and sleepier than a tired sloth – but it was worth it. I'm not sure I would ever want to be an Army chef but I take off my toque to them. It's a hard job but someone's got to do it. ■





1 Call of Duty 4

TWO developers take turns to make new instalments of Activision's all-formats *Call of Duty* first-person shooters, but cognoscenti know that by far the best is Infinity Ward. And until *Modern Warfare 2* comes out this Christmas, *CoD 4*, released in 2007, will remain its masterpiece. No other game has paid so much attention to detail in attempting to capture the disorientating hell of combat. And once you've finished, you can crank up the difficulty or play online.

2 Rainbow Six 3

RAINBOW Six's tactical squad-based-shooting gameplay, which encouraged you to plan missions meticulously before executing them, instantly hit the spot. But this 2003 release is our favourite version of the franchise, with a bizarre plot (at least on the PC version) which starts in 1945 and plays out in South America. Mercifully free of too many of Tom Clancy's future-warfare flights of fancy, this all-formats title is a pretty hard but deeply satisfying game.

3 Empire: Total War

NOBODY makes better historical warfare sims than British outfit Creative Assembly and 2009 saw the release of their masterwork. The PC game replicates the 18th Century age of war, with sea battles coming into effect properly and bewildering numbers of countries and races itching to fight each other. Fantastically good fun to play whether you're commanding a land battle, building a fleet, shafting your enemies with diplomacy or sending out waves of spies.

7 Company of Heroes

SECOND World War games aren't exactly thin on the ground, but every aspect of the 2006 release *Company of Heroes* was spot-on. A real-time strategy effort which puts you in charge of a company from either the 101st Airborne or 29th Infantry as you fight your way through France during the Battle of Normandy. Similar territory to the much-loved *Medal Of Honour*, but this allows you to test your strategic abilities in the crucible of post-D-Day Normandy.

8 EF 2000

THIS Eurofighter simulator, believe it or not, was lovingly completed in 1995 in the salubrious environs of Runcorn. But it was years ahead of its time and included features such as air-to-air refuelling and views from your guided bombs. You could even persuade it to play via virtual-reality goggles. The first PC 3D combat flight-sim with a convincing level of realism, developer DiD later reworked this exceptional title as *Eurofighter Typhoon*.

RANKED

THE CREAM OF COMBAT VIDEO GAMES



4 Counter-Strike Source

THIS 2004 PC squad-based first-person shooter, in which you play either a terrorist or a counter-terrorist, is pretty simple, with two key ingredients: shooting (which is very authentic – moving, for example, reduces your accuracy) and teamwork. It really forces you to coordinate closely with squad-mates, which is why it is still the top dog in competitive gaming circles, and has been “modded” by various military organisations to create virtual training exercises.

5 Operation Flashpoint

PUBLISHED by British outfit Codemasters in 2001, this tactical shooter boasted a decent mid-1980s Cold War plot and squad-based gameplay involving a lot of vehicles. But what really stood out with this PC and Xbox title was its sheer fierceness – it isn’t one of those games in which you can carry on running full-tilt with a whole clip of bullets in you. The latest incarnation, for the PC and next-gen consoles, will be out soon and preserves the game’s no-compromise philosophy.

6 Defcon

A BIT obscure this one, but well worth hunting down (it can be downloaded from Valve’s Steam service). It’s a full-blown PC nuclear war simulator, complete with a 1980s vector-graphics-style look, in which you take charge of a territory such as Europe, Russia or North America and attempt to destroy as much of your enemies’ territory as possible, while taking the minimum possible casualties. This 2006 release is the sort of scary what-if stuff which justifies video games’ very existence.



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9 Battlezone

THE first military game to go absolutely huge with the general public, this arcade tank-sim with then-impossibly futuristic green-on-black vector graphics is simply legendary. Given that it encouraged you to shoot UFOs, you could argue that this 1980s game wasn't enormously realistic, although the US military did commission a version to use as a targeting trainer for its Bradley Fighting Vehicles. With its two sticks and "periscope" viewer, *Battlezone* let a whole generation of teenage tearaways imagine they were in command of a real tank. A decent remake (pictured above) can be found on Microsoft's Xbox Live Arcade.

10 Silent Hunter

THIS 1996 PC Second World War submarine simulator, achieved a seminal reputation as it proved that seemingly academic military sim-games could actually be seriously good fun to play and fearsomely addictive. Dated now, of course, but still infuriatingly moreish.

Last month

ABF FUNDRAISERS

1. Peak performer
2. Big challenge
3. Extreme team
4. Biggest curry
5. Raise a million
6. Boxing night
7. Drum fund
8. Six days a week
9. Memorial garden
10. Food fund

July's Ranked

JOBS FOR THE GIRLS

1. Nuts and bolts
2. It's good to talk
3. Pooch power
4. Bright sparks
5. Flying high
6. Big guns
7. Top of the cops
8. Keep on trucking
9. Weapons experts
10. Life savers

June's Ranked

BEST BITS OF BEING AN ARMY BRIDE

1. Homecoming
2. Community
3. Travel
4. Friends
5. Children
6. Social life
7. Spring cleaning
8. Job security
9. Men in uniform
10. Absence

May's Ranked

TELIC TALKING POINTS

1. Is this the way
2. Arabian Knights
3. Radio gaga
4. Vote of approval
5. Lynx tragedy
6. Gardener's world
7. Great Danes
8. Top of the pops
9. Master speaker
10. Demolition day

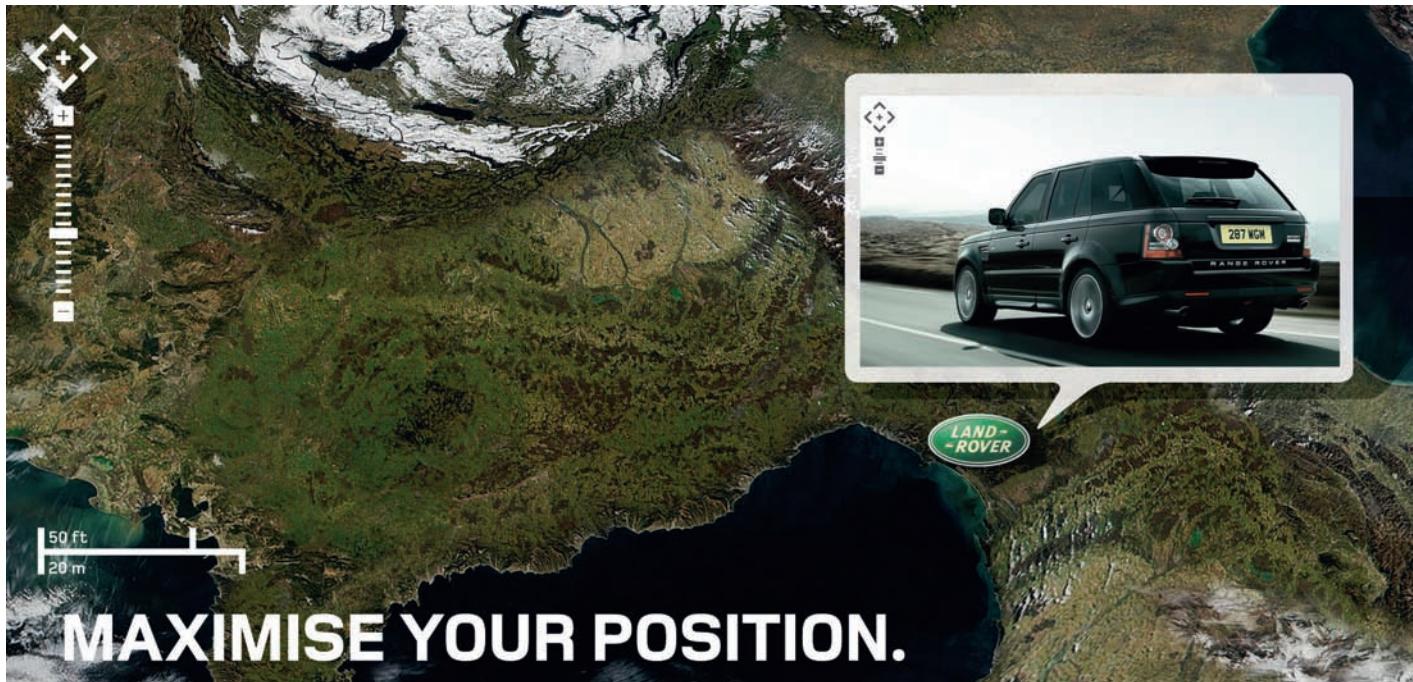
April's Ranked

GREATEST SPORTING MOMENTS

1. Dame at the double
2. Ruck star
3. Desert oar-kid
4. Nagano nod
5. Golden gloves
6. Taylor-made move
7. Ice queen
8. Medal soldier
9. Melbourne master
10. Old man winter

Author

STEVE Boxer blames his long association with video games on an Atari console he acquired during the 1970s. With a wealth of experience the journalist has gone on to make video games his life, writing for national newspapers including the *Telegraph* and *Guardian* and serving as the games guru on Channel 4's *Big Breakfast* throughout the 1990s. ■



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

Postal traumatic stress

THE MoD is, quite rightly, conducting a wide-ranging campaign to encourage Servicemen and women to register for their vote.

However, there is little point in registering if the system prevents one from exercising that right.

Soldier's Home Truths columnist Julie McCarthy was absolutely spot on in highlighting the problem with postal voting, "Battle of Britain's ballot box" (June).

I have been a registered postal voter since my mother, who had my proxy vote all through my Army career, died in October 2002. Since then, I have been unable to vote as the postal system is incapable of turning around my mail in time.

Now posted to Georgia, I have been serving in successive British Embassies since March 2002, where we can receive and send mail once a week.

For the 2005 general election, my ballot paper arrived the day before the election, with the next post due out the day after it. For this year's council and European elections it was even worse – the paper arrived the day after the vote.

I've heard apocryphal stories that a similar situation exists with troops deployed on operations and Julie McCarthy's article seems to lend credence to them. I wrote to my MP after the general election to highlight the problem but received no reply. I realise that this is not an MoD



problem, but is there not something that could be done to persuade the electoral authorities to send out the voting papers earlier?

General elections are announced at least six weeks in advance and even post to and from Georgia should be possible within that time. – **Lt Col N J Ridout, British Embassy Tbilisi, Georgia.**

Capt (Retd) M O'Neill, SO2 Discharges, replies: The MoD and the Electoral Commission are aware of the problems with postal voting – difficulties which not only have an effect on the Service population.

The time scales for elections are laid down by Parliament and the Ministry of Justice has been approached many times, to no avail, about this issue. The Services' respective Families Federations have also discussed the difficulties faced by those using the postal vote from abroad with the Under Secretary of State, who they met with several weeks ago.

Until Parliament decides to change the legislation we are constrained by the present system. And while the MoD has offered to work with the Electoral Commission in using overseas' garrisons to develop options for electronic voting, this is highly unlikely to happen before the next general election.

Hungry for some home cooking

IN June's issue there was a letter from a soldier living in Single living accommodation modernisation (Slam) who wanted to cook for himself as an alternative to Pay As You Dine (PAYD), "Full board? I'd rather go self-catering".

Slam blocks boast kitchen areas complete with hobs, which suggests to me that cooking for yourself is permitted.

However, I am living in non-Slam accommodation in Ripon which has a utility room but no hob. Some of the soldiers I live with bought stoves only to be told they could not be used as they represent a fire risk. In a bid to remedy this we put in a request for the installation of fire blankets.

Again we were told that the use of hobs was not permitted because the space was a utility room and not a kitchen.

Why are those in non-Slam housing being penalised? – **Cpl I G Armstrong, 1 Armd Engr Sqn, Ripon.**

Brig Mark Armstrong, D Infra, responds:
I recognise that you feel penalised

for not being able to use hobs in your accommodation, but must reinforce that this is for health and safety as well as food hygiene reasons.

A utility room is not a kitchen and your chain of command has decided that it is not a fit place for the preparation of food. As has been previously stated in the pages of *Talkback*, PAYD was introduced to allow Service personnel who live in to choose when and what to eat and pay for it accordingly while preserving the ability to take three balanced meals for the daily food charge.

There was no intended link between this and the ability to prepare meals within Single Living Accommodation (SLA). To this end, while Slam accommodation does indeed have limited facilities to heat food and prepare snacks in properly designated areas, PAYD facilities should provide the local source of balanced meals; hence we have not fitted Slam units with ovens.

I understand that not having the same



"You'd better call 999... it looks like Cpl Armstrong's deep pan fryer is acting up again."

facilities available to those who live in Slam blocks is a frustration and can confirm that it is our intent to modernise all SLA in due course.

Team players: Members of 2 Squadron, RAF Regiment provide force protection around Kandahar Air Base in Afghanistan

Picture: SAC Andrew Morris



I WAS delighted to read the news of the RAF Regiment's expansion in *Soldier* and especially to find it in the "good" section of your new *Good Drills, Bad Drills* column (August 2009).

Many of us in the Royal Air Force Regiment read the magazine with interest in a bid to keep abreast of ground combat news and views, especially when equipment in common service with us all is reviewed.

I know that there will be some who believe that mention of a corps – albeit styled as a regiment – from within the RAF should not be included in your journal. However, while the "soldiers in blue" who comprise the RAF Regiment do not compare themselves with their Army brothers in arms, we do compare ourselves against your standards and those who know us will acknowledge that we make a small but significant contribution to numerous joint assets.

And for those who prefer not to accept our presence quite so warmly (I do read the Army Rumour Service website as well!), I hope they will at least recognise that if we did not stag on at places such as Basra, Kandahar, Bastion and the like, some more of your units would have to.

Keep up the good work and congratulations on the best internal magazine award. – **Jerry Riley, Boarding Officer.**

PS . . .

DURING service in Afghanistan individuals receive both the Operational Service Medal (OSM) and a Non-Article 5 Isaf medal. While the OSM can be worn on Service dress, the second award cannot. All troops understand and accept this.

Confusion arises when some individuals wear the Non-Article 5 medal on their mess dress. Is this permissible? Irrelevant of the answer it would be beneficial for all readers to know in order that they can ensure they display only those medals they are entitled to wear. – **Name and address supplied.**



Lt Col (Retd) Peter Lockyer, Medal Office, writes: The Non-Article 5 Isaf medal is a commemorative keepsake. It is not to be worn either on Service dress or mess kit.

Allowance confusion

A NEW policy has recently been put in place at our unit which states that you cannot claim Incidental Expenses (IE) and Get You Home Travel (GYH(T)) for the same course.

Surely one is for the cost of little luxuries while away from home and the other is to assist in getting you home, and therefore the two are completely unrelated.

The DIN for claiming these allowances has not changed and it seems that only our unit has adopted this stance.

Originally it was just our chief clerk who was saying that the two could not be claimed together, but it has since been included on company orders. – **Name and address supplied.**

Brig Mike Griffiths, DPS(A), responds: GYH(T) is designed to support the mobile nature of the Services and improve retention by reducing the financial impact of separation on Service personnel.

IE are designed to cover necessary personal costs actually incurred during an overnight absence in a hotel or when temporary Service single accommodation is occupied. In brief, you can claim GYH(T) and IE concurrently.

Having checked with your unit, it is apparent that they were misinterpreting a section of the regulations.

My staff are amending that section of the relevant JSP to make it clearer.

Strain on career couple

HAVING read your feature on the pressures placed on marriages by a life in the Army, "Embedded bliss" (June), I am writing to add to the debate on Forces couples.

I would like to highlight the severe lack of support for partners who are both serving.

My wife and I are sergeants (myself a chef and my wife a clerk), have three young children and have had to fight very hard to get posted near to one another since marrying in 2002.

During the past seven years we have only been with the same regiment for 18 months with the remainder of the time spent with one of us having to endure spells in the mess, single accommodation or facing a considerable daily commute to work.

I moved from Ripon to Antrim, Northern Ireland in August 2008 and although there were vacancies for clerks with my unit at that time, the powers that be at the AGC instead posted my wife to Ballykinler. My daily commute (a three-hour round trip), along with the lack of nursery places in the area and the Army's unwillingness to post us closer together has led to my wife signing off.

The Service is about to lose an outstanding up-and-coming SNCO because of a distinct lack of support and posting coordination for the serving man, wife and family. – **Sgt K Geddes (RLC), Op Herrick.**

Lt Col David Barrington, Combat Service Support, replies: Career managers in the APC are acutely aware of the difficulties that military families face and always seek to assign Service

couples as close together as possible. In doing so, they have to balance the needs of the Army against those of the individual, as enshrined in the Military Secretary's binding principle.

However, for AGC(SPS) personnel the situation is further complicated by chronic undermanning at the ranks of corporal and sergeant. Under such conditions meeting the operational requirements of the Army must take precedence over individual preference, which restricts the options available when assigning personnel. Such were the circumstances at the time of Sgt Geddes' assignment to Antrim. Despite vacancies elsewhere in the Province, Ballykinler was severely undermanned and the Brigade's highest priority for AGC(SPS) personnel.

A thorough assessment of the operational and personal imperatives was conducted in order to identify the most appropriate solution to meet, as far as practicable, the needs of both the Army and family. The assignment of

Sgt [Mrs] Geddes to Ballykinler, while not meeting Sgt Geddes' full expectations, was the best compromise under the circumstances. However, the chain of command has remained alert to the couple's circumstances and work is under way to provide a more acceptable and convenient solution for him and his family.



Alternative school of thought

I FEEL well qualified to discuss the issue of Service schooling having attended boarding school myself and as a father with two daughters who have taken the same route in their education.

Being the son of a soldier, I was subject to all the vagaries of moving school every two to three years until I went to The Duke of York's Royal Military School (DYRMS) in Dover at the age of 11.

The school used to be wholly subsidised by the Government to allow for non-turbulent schooling for the sons of soldiers.

Today the school caters for the sons and daughters of all ranks from all three Services. Parents do pay towards the education of their children there, but it is nothing like the amount required to send children to a public school – indeed the cost is usually about ten per cent of the average fee.

The MoD could save a fortune if Service parents opting to send their children to board had to first apply for places at DYRMS or its sister school – Queen Victoria School (QVS) in Dunblane – and made all those not wishing to consider them meet the full cost of their children's education.

The main argument for not using these schools seems to be "they are too far away". Too far from where exactly?

Away from parents serving overseas, yes, but why is there a need to find a boarding school that is two miles down the road from



Picture: Mike Weston

Highly recommended: Students get to grips with chemistry at The Duke of York's Royal Military School

grandmother? It is a spurious argument because schools will in any case contact the parents if a problem does arise.

Both DYRMS and QVS have plenty of experience of dealing with military families. They understand that mum or dad may have to go overseas at short notice and that trooper flights get delayed.

And perhaps, more importantly, the children at the schools can offer support to each other having all experienced what it is like to have one or both parents in the Armed Forces.

I estimate that this change in policy would save millions. – **Flt Lt (Retd) G A Chipperfield, BFPO 47.**

'Visa verification, please'

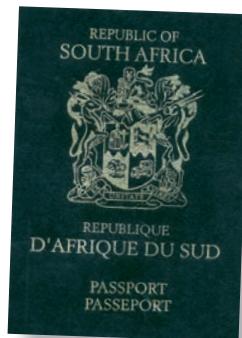
I AM a Commonwealth soldier serving with the Royal Engineers and was told that I was to deploy to Canada on exercise. I hold a South African passport, which means that I need visas for a large number of countries.

When I went to the regimental admin officer about deploying on exercise I was given a Nato travel order and told to arrange and pay for everything that was necessary to satisfy the Canadian High Commission requirements.

As a result I am out of pocket by £106 – the £85 cost of a multi-entry, temporary residence visa; a £10 charge incurred for arranging a bank draft for the payment and £11 on special delivery postage.

I find it hard to believe that I have been solely responsible for arranging the visa. Surely there is a system in place that caters for soldiers holding non-British passports.

When I deployed on Op Herrick I didn't even have to think about the administration of travel, everything was taken care of by others. – **Name and address supplied.**



Brig Mike Griffiths, DPS(A), replies: I have already stated in previous responses that if you require a passport or visa to travel on duty then it will be funded by the MoD.

The question is whether you actually require a visa to travel to British Army Training Unit Suffield. Any British Army soldier with a MoD 90 and passport (including a South African passport) can travel to Canada on duty without a visa.

To smooth the process it is advisable for soldiers in your position to also make use of a Nato travel order.

That said, if you genuinely need a visa for duty travel and have been advised by the Canadian High Commission to get one then you will be able to reclaim the costs.

Your admin office should have done more than tell you to sort it out yourself. If you need a visa then you do need to apply for it personally, but they should have provided the appropriate advice.

PS . . .

THE subject of medals is and will always be an emotive one to those who have not received what they believe they are entitled to.

The Reserve Forces now awards a tri-Service long service medal – the Volunteer Reserve Service Medal (VRSM). The VRSM does away with the outdated use of post-nominals by officers – a subject of much contention in the past. The qualifying service for the VRSM does not have to be continuous and breaks of up to three years are allowed. However, a unit CO still has to recommend the individual for the award.

The Regular Forces should follow the Reserves and introduce a tri-Service award for long service, with qualifying criteria to suit full-time service.

The Canadian Armed Forces introduced such a medal in 1949 – the Canadian Forces Decoration – and in 1998 the Australian Armed Forces instituted the Defence Service Long Service Medal. – **Maj J Hurst, R Welsh (V).**



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'I won't be driven to wed'

CAN a British soldier who is based in Germany and has a valid European Union driving licence drive a Germany-bought vehicle, with German insurance, on the German net?

If not, why not? The reason I ask is that my German girlfriend and I have recently purchased a car.

We decided not to "British Forces Germany" (BFG) the vehicle as it would have prevented my partner from driving it because she would not be entitled to the associated benefits, such as tax-free fuel.

However, I have been warned by provost staff that I am not permitted to drive the car unless it is BFG registered.

We can't afford two vehicles and both need a car to get about. None of this would matter if my girlfriend and I were married and I feel that I am being forced into marriage just to comply with Army rules. — **Name and address supplied.**

Lt Col (Retd) Terry Wee, S02 G3 Licensing (BFG), responds: Had the soldier rung the BFG vehicle licensing office's customer service number his question would have



"Do you, Ingrid, take this man, to have and to hold, including his BFG registration?"

been answered. There is no reason why he cannot drive his girlfriend's car if:

- the vehicle is registered on the German net in his girlfriend's name;
- he is insured to drive the car;
- he does not put BFG tax-free fuel in the vehicle;
- he ensures that he is fully conversant with German road traffic regulations.

Huge cost of car clanger

I HAVE been living in Germany for a few years now and, until recently, had managed to keep on top of arrangements with regards to the BFG car registration and renewal process.

However, I have spent much of this year away from Germany on a course in the UK and did not realise that the BFG on my car had run out.

While I fully accept that this is my own fault, I am extremely put out by the fact that I now have to recover my car by trailer back to Germany (at enormous expense) in order to abide by the legality of travel, before flying back to the UK to continue my course.

I will then have to fly back to Germany the following weekend in order to drive my car back to the UK.

Why can't there be a facility in the UK capable of carrying out German road worthiness tests? This would help out those who unwittingly find themselves in my predicament, negate the need to de-register cars during stays in the UK and save the

huge expense and aggravation of having to get back to Germany.

Living in Germany has many perks, but the rigidity of the BFG vehicle system can make the whole thing infuriating and very expensive. — **Name and address supplied.**

Lt Col (Retd) Terry Wee replies: The responsibility for ensuring that a vehicle is roadworthy is that of the registered keeper/owner.

Personnel who are going back to the UK for an extended period should check their vehicle registration documents before they depart to ensure that the road worthiness and registration will remain current until they return to BFG.

If it is not, then it is possible to get a road worthiness test and renewal of registration done before they depart.

For legal and cost reasons it is not possible to set up a BFG test centre in the UK to deal with the small number of cases that fall into this category.

I LEFT the Royal Signals as a radio systems operator (class two) in 2004 on pay increment level seven. I re-enlisted in August 2008 as a veterinary technician (RAVC). I have been informed by various parties that my current pay is incorrect as I have dropped back down to increment level one. My previous time served has been carried forward so why has my pay not done the same? I have been to see the clerk and phoned Glasgow, but to no avail. — **Pte Dawn Handley, RAVC.**

Brig Mike Griffiths, DPS(A), writes: I'm very disappointed that you've been unable to get an answer to what is a straight-forward question regarding your position. I've registered your details with your manning authority at the Army Personnel Centre and can confirm that your incremental base date has now been backdated.

HAVING recently moved back to the UK after a long spell of service in Germany, I thought it was prudent to switch my contents insurance policy to a company on home soil.

I approached my bank – Lloyds TSB – who, on learning that I live in a married quarter behind the wire in Grantham, told me that they would not insure me as I lived in barracks and then rather abruptly ended the conversation.

If this is true, I wonder how many soldiers have invalid insurance policies.

Can you shed any light on why Lloyds won't insure military personnel in my situation? — **WO2 A N Snow, Grantham.**

Gareth Gridland, Lloyds TSB Home Customer Services, writes: I would like to apologise on behalf of the staff member who gave incorrect information by refusing a quotation.

I can assure *Soldier* that we do insure contents of military personnel staying in barracks in the UK and Northern Ireland. I have sent a communication to all of our staff, confirming the above, to avoid any confusion.

I WAS very pleased to see that your article on conscription, "Citizen soldiers" (July), recorded the fact that National Servicemen served in Palestine. There is a misconception that conscription did not begin until the 1950s, but by that time I and many others had already completed our National Service.

I was conscripted in January 1947 and served with The Parachute Regiment in Nahariya and Haifa. By 1949 I was in Hannover and my "demob" was deferred for three months because the Berlin Airlift was in full swing and many were expecting a third world war.

National Servicemen were full-time soldiers and served in Korea, Kenya and Cyprus et al, so it was very pleasing to have *Soldier* acknowledge our contribution. — **Tony Costello, North Ferriby, Yorkshire.**



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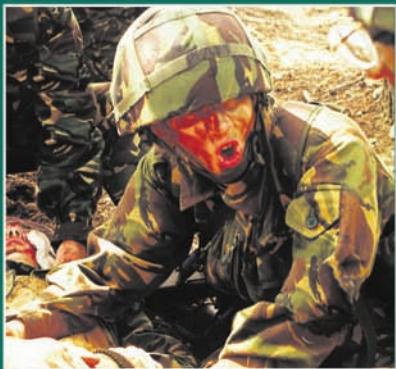
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You may still be able to claim ordinary compensation even if you have had an AFCS pay out. A civil claim can often bring about much higher payouts than the AFCS payment. You should seek expert legal advice to make sure you don't lose out.

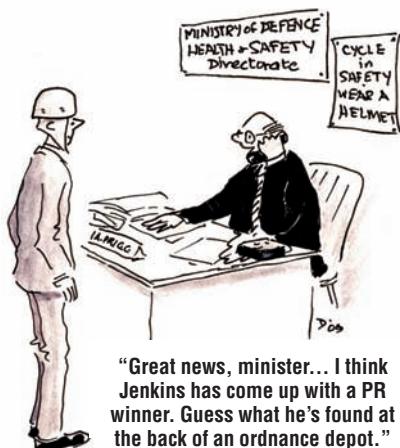
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A national panel of solicitors supports The Royal British Legion and specialises in accident claims for members of the Armed Forces.

Heads-up on safety idea



IN these days of renewed vigour in re-establishing core values – including soldiers' state of dress and the length of their hair – I believe the issue of cycling headgear should be addressed by the chain of command.

Sadly in the past few years a number of Service personnel have lost their lives in bicycle accidents and numerous more have been injured.

The majority of riders in the Army appear to refrain from wearing a helmet when either in or out of uniform.

Not only does this present a real risk of serious head injury, but, when the rider is in military dress, it sets a poor example to younger cyclists.

One possible way to alleviate this situation would be to make the wearing of cycle helmets a standing orders requirement. I believe that the British Army should go one stage further and encourage the production of regimental helmets – surely a challenge for every regimental secretary worth their salt. – S Wilson, Germany.

Fine-tuning fitness test

AM writing in response to the letter from Sgt Collins (KRH) asking whether an alternative to the Physical Fitness Test (PFT) could be devised for soldiers who are downgraded, "Downbeat about downgrading" (July).

A team from the REME Arms School, along with medical and Army Physical Training Corps (APTC) staff at Arborfield, have devised and are trialling just such a system. It is early days in the development process but here are the basics:

Creating one test for every soldier who is P3 Limited Deployable (LD) would be difficult, so we are designing three types of assessment. The test taken will depend on whether the soldier has an upper body, lower body or back injury.

Like the PFT, each assessment has three separate events – to be completed one after the other – with age and gender factors built in.

They require the same strength, core stability and aerobic capacity to pass as the PFT, but don't stress any injury.

The strength tests are based on body mass, so there is an incentive for the injured soldier to stay strong and to keep their weight down.

We hope to design a scoring system,

a little like the old Basic Personal Fitness Assessment, that will allow medical and rehab staff to set a recovering soldier realistic goals to achieve. This is in addition to the 100-point standard that will mark a PFT-equivalent pass.

Soldiers with complex injuries or whose downgrading is not injury-related can, with medical advice, complete the most appropriate test for them.

With consultation between the soldier, the chain of command and the medical and APTC staff, we hope that the biggest benefit will be motivational.

The Army regains a soldier who, while accepting his or her limitations, has a renewed incentive to stay deployable and the individual, by meeting a set fitness standard, can get their self-esteem back.

Running this programme should not be a problem for any unit with a unit health committee or injury working group.

Our first trials, using a mix of P3 LD and fully fit soldiers, make us very hopeful of success – the tests are definitely not an easy alternative.

More local trials are coming and, with the right staffing, we hope to get the system adopted more widely. – Lt Col Ian Winthrop, REME Arms School.

PS . . .

CONGRATULATIONS TO

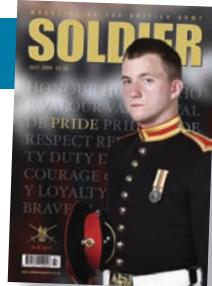
Soldier for your coverage of the issues facing gay and lesbian troops (July). Serving gay personnel in both Iraq and Afghanistan have expressed appreciation for the efforts now being made to make them feel as valued as everyone else. Many talented young people thinking about a career in the Army have noticed this too.

These aren't people who want to make a big thing of being gay but who, instead, are honest enough not to want to hide who they are from their colleagues.

Not being able to be yourself at work is demoralising and people always perform better when they can be themselves.

People sometimes claim they haven't got anything against homosexuals, they just can't see why they want to be singled out. They don't. They just want to be treated with exactly the same personal respect as everyone else.

All Service personnel demonstrate enormous courage in their everyday lives. It takes huge courage to be open about being gay too. I hope *Soldier* will continue to encourage people to be honest with their colleagues in one of Britain's most important workplaces. – Ben Summerskill, chief executive of Stonewall.



HAVING served for 19 years, I can empathise to a degree with the author of the letter bemoaning the advent of Pay As You Dine (PAYD), "Chips down as chef raises the steaks" (July).

However, what the vast majority of "old school" chefs fail to realise is that the scheme represents an opportunity for them to enhance their retail and customer skills in preparation for civilian employment.

With National Vocational Qualifications now available in retail and customer services, PAYD can only be a good thing for military caterers in the long run.

I am currently serving in my second PAYD unit where the diversity of customers – soldiers, civilians and families – highlights

an area in which we as caterers were previously falling short.

Pre-PAYD a monthly mess meeting, a comments book and an occasional visit from the orderly officer were the only means of customer communication.

Today we are talking daily with those we feed to ensure that the service provided meets their own demands, therefore ensuring their return custom.

As caterers it is our job to ensure that PAYD works. I am sure there are a lot of chefs out there who would disagree, but like it or not it is here to stay.

Embrace the change and get as much personal development as you can from PAYD. – Name and address supplied.

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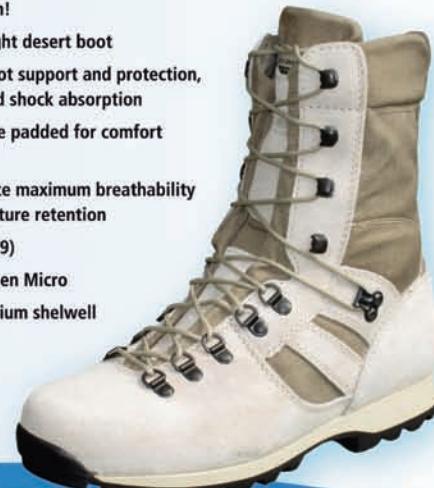
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HOME TRUTHS

A PERSONAL view from Sue Davies, Director of Communications for the Army Families Federation. Log on to www.aff.org.uk for more information on the Army Families Federation



Picture: Cpl Steve Wood (RLC)

Digital welfare: The Army Families Federation is urging troops to register ArmyNet guest accounts for their loved ones before heading out on operations

‘Ease worries of those at home’

A FEW weeks before taking over as Chief of the General Staff, Gen Sir David Richards admitted the Army is going to be working in Afghanistan for the foreseeable future. In his words, the UK will be committed to the theatre in the shape of “deployment, governance and security sector reform for the next 30 to 40 years”.

Just as families have had to readjust to the day-to-day realities of increased operational tours, the AFF has spent the last few months reassessing what an Army family is and what its changing needs are.

In brief, the typical Army spouse is demographically profiled as female, with an average age of 33 and just over three quarters have dependant children.

But soldiers themselves are not just spouses, they are also somebody’s son, daughter, brother, sister, cousin or best mate. And as they head off to face Taliban bullets, roadside bombs and other dangers, there is a legion of people left at home worrying about them.

Unfortunately, soldiers are particularly bad at relaying information back to their loved ones and, once the soldier has deployed, some families may have no idea where to turn for support. Unit welfare

officers (UWOs) do a great job with the families that they know about but, no matter how good they are, they are usually just a two or three-strong team dealing with a whole range of diverse issues.

At the AFF we are aware that the very use of the word welfare stops a lot of people from approaching a team that is professional, confidential and best placed to help.

Even if pointed in the right direction some will simply walk the other way.

The issues facing welfare agencies are, as ever, wide-ranging. UWOs will rightly focus on the high-impact issues of casualties and fatalities, and understandably may not have the time or resources to deal with other problems.

Some partners will fall outside the normal unit system as spouses may be on detached duty or between formal postings. It is not always clear to the families where they should go to get advice and support. Now, more than ever, all agencies supporting the extended military family must work together, ensuring that dependants become

aware what is out there to help them.

It could be argued that welfare support has never been better. But if families don’t know how to, or are unwilling to access that support, at what point will we all need to rethink how to provide it?

Another 30 years in Afghanistan (and who knows where else) is going to increase the strain on the system. As well as slugging it out with the Treasury, the Army will have to look at more creative and cost-effective ways of delivering support as well as finding new ways of communicating it to families.

In the meantime, if you are about to be deployed, a plea from the heart – sign up your partner or your next of kin (mum, dad, brother or sister) as a guest user on ArmyNet. They’ll then have access to useful information with only a few clicks of the mouse.

And if you are worried about those you love seeing how much you have in your back pocket when you meet up for drinks on pay day, remember that you can always hide your salary slip. ■

‘A plea from the heart – sign up your partner or your next of kin as a guest user on ArmyNet’



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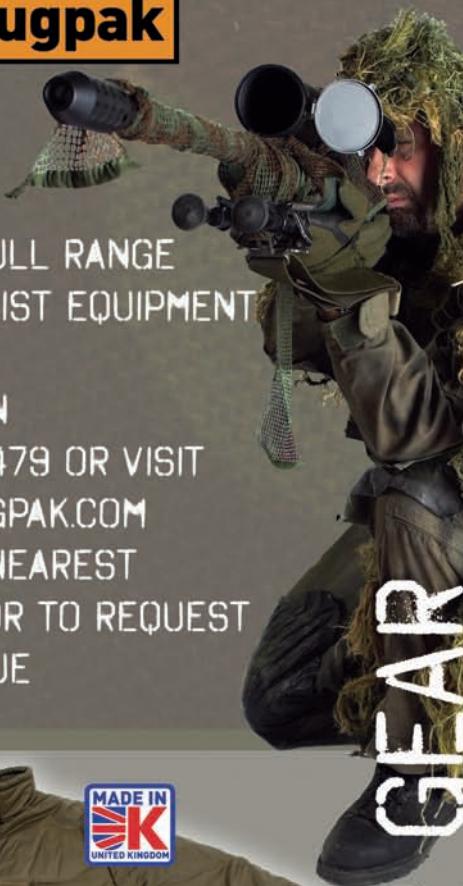
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TEN details have been changed on this picture taken by *Soldier* photographer Graeme Main at Basra Palace.

Circle the differences in the left-hand image and send the whole panel to **HOAY 814, Soldier, Ordnance Road, Aldershot, Hampshire GU11 2DU** by September 30.

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

Name: (Give initials and rank or title)

Address:

July competition: First correct entry drawn at random and winner of the £100 prize was **J Fulton**, Merville Barracks, Colchester. Runners-up **Miss K Williams**, Fareham, Hampshire and **Mr M Smith**, DE&S, Copenacre, each win a £25 gift voucher.

The ten differences were: DPM on helmet; screw on rear sight; screw on laser sight; pin on gun body; trigger guard; velcro on body armour; button on cuff; vent on gun barrel; strap clip on barrel; pin on fore sight.



AS the next Strategic Defence Review looms on the horizon, high-flying MP Kevan Jones found himself in the sights of some of our wittier satirists after his jump with the Red Devils.

The Minister for Veterans was pictured in our August issue, hurtling earthward strapped to a burly para's belly.

As Kev isn't wearing the super-cool helmets and shades of his fellow skydivers, it is possible – just about – to make out his facial expression, which says it all.

While *Soldier* accepts that a 120mph descent with nothing between you and the Almighty can be uncomfortable, it is impossible to resist the thought that something else was going on up there.

Mr R Taylor of Cambridge set the ball rolling with a possible discussion between Kev and his instructor. "Let's talk about ex-paras' pensions. Did I hear you say you'd get us a 50 per cent increase?".



Bargain mad Billy was thrilled to be a special guest on the Afghan version of *Cash in the Attic*

WIN A BOOK: Write your own caption for the photo above and send it to us by September 30. The best, in our opinion, will win a copy of Sean Longden's *T-Force: The Race for Nazi War Secrets*, which is reviewed on Pages 92-93 of this issue.

But Simon Harrison of Ludgershall in Wiltshire took the winning entry with "**Are you comfortable, minister? I believe you wanted to discuss savings in Army parachuting**". He wins a copy of *Operation Snakebite: The Explosive True Story of an Afghan Desert Siege* by Stephen Grey.



Picture: MoD/Crown Copyright

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Army Families Federation: 01980 615525

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Career Transition Partnership: 0207 766 8020

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

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

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

Family Escort Service: 0207 463 9249

Forces Pension Society: 0207 820 9988

Joint Service Housing Advice Office: 01722 436575

Medal Office: 94561 3600 or 0141 224 3600

Mutual Support (Multiple Sclerosis group): 07962 023654; www.mutualsupport.org.uk

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

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

Royal British Legion: 0845 7725 725

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September 5-6: Duxford Air Show. Cambridge. Information and tickets: www.iwm.org.uk/duxford

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Until September 6: 170 Years of Conflict in Afghanistan Exhibition: The Gurkha Museum, Winchester, Hants.

Until September 6: Remembering the Great War. Imperial War Museum, London. Admission free.

September 12-13: Royal British Legion County Rally and Military Heritage Weekend at Oakhampton Army Training Camp. Free entry. Exhibits and events for the whole family. Come and show your support and appreciation for the Armed Forces past and present.

September 19: Salute to the '40s Blitz Ball. The Historic Dockyard, Chatham. Tickets are £15 and available by telephone 01634 823826 or online at www.thedockyard.co.uk

September 24: Band Concert. Guards Chapel, Wellington Bks, London starting at 1900. The Coldstream Guards Band. Tickets are £15 and available from the Toy Soldier Centre or The Guards Museum, Wellington Bks, Birdcage Walk, London. Telephone 0207 414 3428.

SEARCHLINE

2010 is the **150th Anniversary of the Cadet Movement**, a milestone that is being marked by events throughout the UK next year. As part of the preparations for Cadet 150 we are trying to track down former cadets. If you were in the cadets please make yourself known to the Army Cadet Force Association, Holderness House, 51-61 Clifton Street, London EC2A 4DW, email headmarcom@armycadets.com or visit www.armycadets.com or www.cadet150.org

Michael James Bell is looking for his father **Sgt Noel Bell (REME)** who was serving in Munster, Germany in the late 1970s. His parents divorced in 1982 when his father deployed to the Falklands. Email michael2kernal@yahoo.co.uk

Waterloo 200 is approved by the Government to oversee the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo. The organisation is looking for serving soldiers of all ranks who are direct descendants of someone who fought at Waterloo. If they have a medal so much the better. Contact Janice Simmonds at Public Relations (Army) on 0207 218 3588 (mil 9621 83588) or email DMC-PRArmyGroup@mod.uk providing your name, rank, unit, contact details and family connection to the battle. For more information on Waterloo 200 visit www.waterloo200.org

Lesley Johnson, grandson of RSM Sydney Johnson, is seeking the family of **John Pardoe (Pardor)** to return a photograph. John was born on October 27, 1903 and joined the 60th Rifles in September 1932. He died on March 9, 1933 in a training accident. Contact Lesley by email at leejw1@btinternet.com

Edmund Hedges seeks former members of C Troop, 3 GHQ Royal Signals, Egypt and Cyprus, 1955-56. **2nd Lt Ian Blair, Reg Atkins, John Ball, Chuck Graner, Alan Greenhalgh, Dennis Griffiths, Ted Hollands, John Morrison, Tom Pitter, Ken Poysden, Ray Quirk, Lofty Reed.**

Please Google ISBN 1-84683-072-9 and share Edmund's memories of Fayid and Episkopi. Email edmundhodges@btinternet.com

Judy Morse is trying to trace **Lt Derek Johns, Welsh Regiment**. Stationed in Barmouth, Wales from October 1942-44, then possibly transferred to the Army Air Corps as a Lt before he transferred to the Reserves in 1946. Contact Judy by email paws.rubhay@talktalk.net

35 Signal Regiment (V) WOs' & Sgts' Mess will in the near future be disbanding. Would any person wishing to reclaim their presentations made to the mess kindly contact WO1 (RSM) Balmforth before September 30, 2009 or they will be auctioned after this date and monies donated to charity. Phone RSM Balmforth on 07817 468348 or email 35sr-rhq-rsm@mod.uk

Where are you **Cpl (Tel) Terry RTR**, originally based with 2 RTR in Fallingbostel until 2008? Diana Ferrari wishes to make contact to find out if you are fit and well. Contact by email ottoferrari@hotmail.com

Sgt Roy Lawer is looking for his ex-officer commanding from Op Granby 2. **Col Anthony Anthistle** was OC 5 Armed Wksp REME as well as OC LSG(ME) Wksp REME on Op Granby 2. Retired in 2006 and joined the Bristol First Bus Company. He would remember me by the name **Pte Baldrick**. I am seeking Col Anthistle in connection with the Op Granby 2 tour. Email roy1683@msm.com

REUNIONS

Armourers' Association: Reunion dinner on September 5 at the Victory Services Club, London. Membership is open to all armourers, gun fitters and weapon artificers, serving or retired. Contact the secretary, Chris Dennis, on 01905 755334 or email willow18@tiscali.co.uk

7 Armoured Workshop REME: Reunion September 3-6, at Fallingbostel. Did you serve there between 1986-1992? Collection from airport, accommodation, messing and events have been taken care of. Contact Chris Fletcher by email chris.fletcher@options-for-life.com or phone 0049 5161 941215.

Men of Quebec: 250th anniversary of the Battle of Quebec. A reunion and family day at Roberts Barracks, Larkhill, Salisbury on September 12. Men of Quebec and partners contact Lt Nicholas Sharp on 01980 845757 or email nicholas.sharp348@mod.co.uk or Sgt Zak Thorpe on 07841 906427.

Royal Hampshire Regiment: Reunion luncheon for Territorial battalions, September 26, relocated to Newburgh House, Winchester SO23 8UY, midday for 1300. Contact Maj Ian Taylor, 4 Cedar Wood Close, Fair Oak, Eastleigh, Hants SO50 7LN, phone 02380 694771 or email ian.p.b.taylor@btinternet.com

Royal Devon Yeomanry: Reunion dinner on October 17 in Barnstaple. All past and present members and attached ranks of the Royal Devon Yeomanry Artillery and D Squadron, The Wessex Yeomanry. Ladies please attend. Contact the PSAO D Sqn by phone on 01271 345471 or email rwxy-dsqn-psao@mod.uk

289 Para/Cdo Regiment/Battery: All ranks reunion October 24 at Napier House, Grove Park, London. Open to all personnel (and partners) who served in 289 in any formation and rank. Contact Capt B W Exley, 265 Bty RA, Napier House, Baring Road, London SE12 0BH, phone 0208 860 1444 or email 106-265-psao@mod.uk

93 (E Lancs) Signal Squadron (V): 40th anniversary dinner will be held on October 24. Preceded by Evensong in Blackburn Cathedral on September 27 at 1600. Contact Capt Dale Ikin on 01254 262444 or email 38sr-93-psao@mod.uk

Ammunition Technicians & Examiners: AGM and reunion lunch October 24. Contact Bob Graham on 07765 965477 or email ammotechs@yahoo.co.uk

Alexis Soyer Dinner: October 29, Worthy Down Officers' Mess. Officers who have completed the Food Service/Food Supply Officers' courses or are currently in a FS supporting role are eligible to attend. Contact Capt M Peters or Mrs N Driver on 94271/2294 or 01962 887287/887294 by 12 Oct.

South Nottingham Hussars: Reunion, remembrance dinner and church service on November 7-8, at the TA Centre, Bulwell Nottingham. Past and present members with partners welcome. Remembrance service at St Mary's Church. All ex-members of HM Forces with families welcome. For dinner tickets contact Capt C Dibb by phone on 0115 926 8063.

57 Battery 32 Regiment/39 Regiment: All ranks reunion December 5, at Wagon Lines, Royal School of Artillery, Larkhill. Contact LBdr Russell, 57 Bty, 32 Regt RA, Robert Bks, Larkhill, Wilts SP4 8QU or phone 01980 845055, email 57bty@yahoo.co.uk

Singapore Schools: Reunion for former pupils of all military schools, to be held on March 20, 2010, at the Ramada Hotel, Hatfield. Contact singaporeschool.reunion@googlemail.com or visit www.singas.co.uk

RAMC Reunited: Reunion for former RAMC members (National Service, Regular, TA or widow(er)). You and a partner are invited to attend on February 12-14, 2010 at the Royal Court Hotel, Coventry. Contact Mick McCran, 132 Nightingale Crescent, Lincoln LN6 0JZ enclosing a C5 SAE or email michael.mccran@ntlworld.com

COMPETITIONS

Mammut, winners: Miss L Walsh, HQ 4 Div, Aldershot; SSgt C Holcombe, HQ 4 Div, Aldershot.

Mountain Fuel, winner: G Coney, Shaftesbury, Dorset.

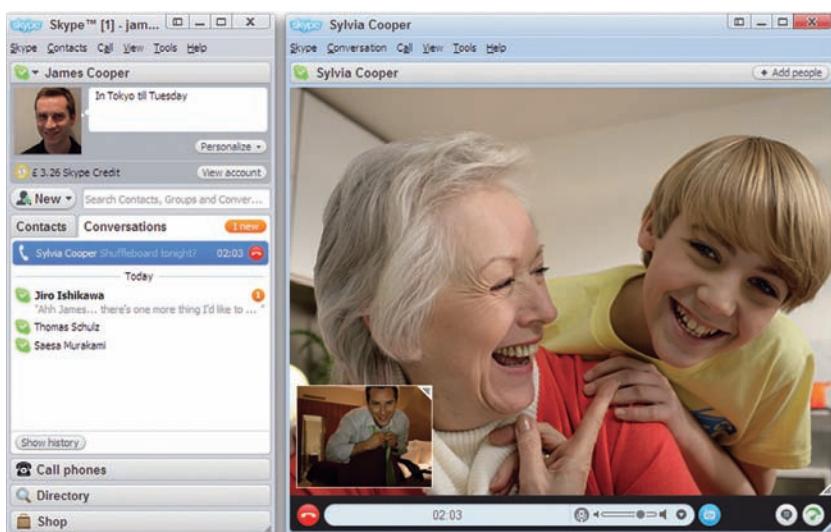
ROADSHOW DATES

The Army Presentation Team wants to hear from members of the public who would like a personal invitation to attend its dynamic roadshow, which begins with a reception, is followed by a presentation and questions-and-answer session and finishes with a finger buffet.

Military personnel will answer all your questions about the British Army. Call 01276 417000 or email your name and address to apt.mod@btinternet.com

September: 22, Stafford; 23, Birmingham; 30, Hereford. **October:** 14, Brighton; 15, Gravesend; 21, Horsham. **November:** 3, Workington; 5, Southport; 16, Chelsea; 17 Barnet; 24, Isle of Man; 26, Hounslow.

SKYPES THE LIMIT



Family ties: Skype makes it easy for computer users to stay in touch wherever they are in the world

Digital dialogue

IT'S not until you're thousands of miles away from home that you often realise how much you miss the little things in life – whether that's chatting about the latest footie results, catching up with mum over a cuppa, kissing your partner goodnight, or just being asked "how was your day?"

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of a button. It's as simple as that.

To make the most of your *Skype* call experience it's best to use a *Skype* certified headset, which provides much better sound than built-in or stand alone speakers and microphones. And for an even more special connection, you can use a webcam to make free video calls to anyone else on the *Skype* network, so you speak face-to-face almost as if you are there.

Soldier has teamed up with *Skype* to keep military families connected,

and has two great prizes up for grabs. The lucky winner will receive a *Skype* Certified Logitech

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Answers to **Soldier**, Parsons House, Ordnance Road, Aldershot, Hampshire GU11 2DU or by email (comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk) to reach us by September 30.

Soldier readers can download *Skype* to their computers (Windows, Mac or Linux) or mobile phone free of charge at www.skype.com ■



Web watch

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Access to full-text online information resources including Jane's, the ALIS catalogue to search for articles, books, CDs, DVDs and request items online, details of specialised information services and locations of all Army Library and Information Centres.

www.recoverypnp.niceboard.com

A site where REME recovery mechanics and friends, serving and retired, meet for chat and banter.

www.forceshomes.co.uk

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www.army.mod.uk

The information provided contains practical advice on health-related topics and guidance on how to adopt healthy lifestyles.

www.baff.org.uk

British Armed Forces Federation, an association aimed at representing staff in the three Services.

www.armywivesunited.co.uk

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

www.sftf.mod.uk

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

www.armedforces.co.uk

Over 2,000 pages of Defence information, including defence projects and equipment, technology information, military books and defence supplier's details.

www.militarymayhem.net

Military Mayhem Show, Farming World, Faversham, Kent, August 22-23 2009 – supporting Help for Heroes.

www.aff.org.uk

The Army Families Federation (AFF) is the independent voice of Army families and works hard to improve the quality of life for Army families around the world - on any aspect that is affected by the Army lifestyle.

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www.veterans-aid.net

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www.erskine.org.uk

Erskine, caring for ex-Servicemen and women. The charity is currently caring for more than 1,000 veterans, young and old, throughout Scotland.

www.blesma.org

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www.nivets.org.uk

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Rebecca, blonde hair, blue eyes, slim, curvy figure, good company, honest and loyal. Enjoys aerobics, travelling, nights out and watching football. Has her own business and is seeking pen pals, any age group. P057

Mei, 5'2", (30), a warm bubbly fun loving outgoing person. Chatty with a GSOH – your perfect screensaver! Enjoys sharing happy time with friends and family, loves festivals, music, shopping, days out, seeing her little girl grow up, eating & drinking out, trying out new experiences and likes to be carried along with the swell of the crowd. Would love to make contact with single soldiers, 28-40 to share some chat about life's adventures, please enclose a photo with reply. P058

Nikki, 5'10", (30), slim, toned, sporty and has a great smile. Enjoys taking her MTB to extreme places, flying her power kites, motorsports, camper vans, the beach, open spaces and The Killers. Would love to make contact and get to know single soldiers 28-44, to share some chat about life's adventures, please enclose a photo with reply. P059

39 year old mum of three. Thought it might be nice to correspond with some of our Armed Forces. Loves writing and with time on her hands would like to put it to better use. Enjoys anything that involves her children, days out, sewing, reading, meeting friends and writing letters of course. Seeking pen pals, any age group. P060

Helen, (39), single, fit, petite, professional female seeks pen pals with similar interests: travelling, trekking, walking, cycling, swimming, music, eating and drinking the odd glass of red, socialising with friends and generally living life to the full. P061

Rhoda, 5'3", (21), long black hair, petite and educated. Enjoys reading, visiting places of interest, eating out and net surfing. GSOH, friendly, honest seeking genuine friendly pen pals, 25+. A photo would be very much appreciated. P062

PEN PAL REPLIES:

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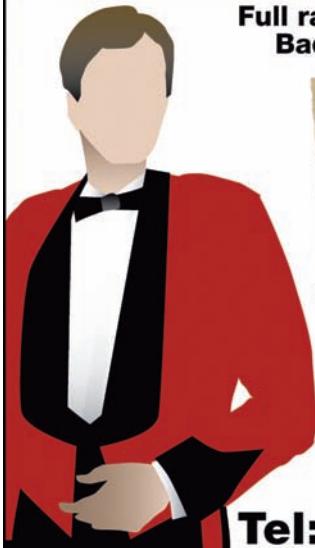
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Applications are invited for the next Directorate of Joint Commitments (DJC) sponsored long languages courses in Arabic, Pashto and Farsi/Dari at the Defence School of Languages, Beaconsfield, which are planned to start in July 2009 and January 2010.

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Officers of any rank up to OF3 (Maj/Lt Cdr/Sqn Ldr) and Ratings/Other Ranks at any level may apply. The courses are open to both regular and reservist service personnel of all service branches and specialisations. Applications must be endorsed by the volunteer's Commanding Officer and personnel authority.

Selection for the courses is by interview and candidates must have completed a Modern Language Aptitude Test (MLAT) to the required standard or hold a formal qualification in a foreign language (minimum level: A Level Grade C).

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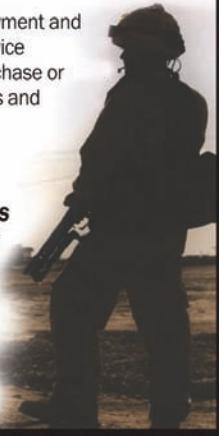
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On the scent: Tom Hanks tracks a Vatican-based secret society in *Angels and Demons*, out on Blu-Ray and DVD on September 14

Demon dress sense

Garishly-dressed Papal protectors take centre stage in new Dan Brown adaptation

Report: Richard Long

THE Vatican's Swiss Guards have always proved to be a popular attraction for tourists and amateur photographers thanks to their unique and colourful style.

With their yellow, red and blue striped uniforms, which are nipped at the waist and have large sleeves and billowing pantaloons, they resemble no other Army in the world as they patrol the home of the Pope 24/7.

That iconic image has now found its way on to the big screen in *Angels and Demons*, Ron Howard's thrilling follow-up to author Dan Brown's smash-hit *The Da Vinci Code*.

Expert symbologist Robert Langdon (Tom Hanks) is again in the thick of the action as he follows ancient clues on a heart-racing hunt through Rome to find four cardinals kidnapped by the secret society, the Illuminati.

Langdon and physicist Vittoria Vetra (Ayelet Zurer) find suitable allies in their quest courtesy of the Swiss Guard as commander Richter (Stellan Skarsgård) and Chartrand (Thure Lindhart) fight to save the Vatican.

The character of Richter personifies the Swiss Guard as he harbours the utmost dedication, respect and fidelity to the Catholic Church.

But as the plot gradually unravels, he is far from happy about the prospect of working alongside new colleagues.

Skarsgård explains: "As head of the Vatican's security organisation, with four kidnapped cardinals and a bomb in the Vatican, Richter's in trouble, but he's a cool character."

"He tries various ways to figure it out. He is a very controlled person and obviously religious and we don't know at various points if we can trust him entirely, certainly Langdon and Vetra don't."

"Richter isn't happy about having to work with Langdon either. Richter despises him and his views about religion are completely different, so he considers him an enemy he has to put up with to save the church."

The Swiss Guard owes its existence to the future Pope Julius II who, as a papal aide in 1478, convinced Pope Pius to sign an alliance with the Swiss after being particularly impressed by the warriors' skills.

Later, as Pope, he brought in 200 men in January 1506, the year the first stone was laid at the new St Peter's Basilica.

The Swiss Guard is the world's smallest military corps and is very specific about who can join its ranks.

Recruits must be aged between 19 and 30, at least 174cm tall and must agree to a two-year tour of duty.

Potential Vatican soldiers must be Swiss citizens who attended military school in their native country and be observant, unmarried Catholics of a good moral background.

While neither actor could join such illustrious company – Skarsgård being a Swedish national and Lindhart hailing from Denmark – they also missed out on the opportunity of wearing the famous uniform.

"Sadly enough for some reason they put me in a suit. I like those colourful pants. It would have been fun," Skarsgård said.

Lindhart added: "The Swiss Guard is like a calling – it is more than a job – it is like becoming a priest or a monk, in a way."

"While the traditional uniform is colourful and interesting, Chartrand has a duty, one he takes seriously – he is a modern Swiss soldier."

● *Angels and Demons* is available on DVD and Blu-Ray from September 14.

From 1950's Hollywood to angry scarecrows, crack out the popcorn for this month's movie releases...

Messengers 2, out on DVD Sept 21

FILMS about murderous scarecrows usually get my endorsement, but this cliche-ridden monstrosity can stay at the back of the barn. John Rollins is a down-on-his-luck farmer whose fortunes are miraculously turned around when he puts up the straw man in his corn field. The scarecrow fixes Rollins' crops and somehow manages to kill anyone who threatens the farm, such as the estate agent trying to foreclose the land. Ripping bits from other horror films and badly repackaging them has resulted in a shoddy release, but watching the hilarious special effects when the scarecrow is on the move raises a chuckle.



Cliff Caswell, Soldier

The Big Knife, out on DVD now

STARRING Jack Palance as Charlie Castle – a virtuous movie star trying to make films worthy of his stage background after fearing he has sold out to Hollywood – this intriguing film follows the attempts of creepy studio head Hoff (Rod Steiger) to stop the actor from leaving by wrapping him up in a blackmail plot over a hit-and-run death in his past. As ever with re-released films, *The Big Knife* shows its age, but it is easy to imagine that the moral stance it takes over the immoral nature of life in Hollywood's fast lane was quite brave in its day. Palance's portrayal of Castle's self-doubt makes this an enticing proposition.



Stephen Tyler, Soldier

Sexy Killer, out on DVD Sept 14

DESPITE its promising title, this bizarre Spanish offering is definitely one best left to the presumable hordes of fans of the niche serial killer vs zombie movie genre. The titular *Sexy Killer* is medical student Barbara. When people at her campus begin to be slaughtered, it becomes clear that petite Barbara is in fact a bloodthirsty murderer. Then the film gets really weird – Barbara's fellow student Tomas inadvertently invents a machine that brings the dead back to life as flesh-eating zombies. When done well – see the *Evil Dead* or *Scream* series – the comedy horror genre is good fun. This effort falls well short of the mark.



Cliff Caswell, Soldier



Hard to miss: The Swiss Guard and their unique uniforms are an unmistakable sight in the Vatican, which serves as the backdrop to *Angels and Demons*

Amsterdamned, out on DVD Sept 28

A "TOTALLY uncut" first-time UK release for this questionable Dutch horror does little to detract from some of the rosiest acting seen this side of a **Nicholas Cage** movie. Following a convoluted plot about a serial-killing diver lurking in Amsterdam's canal network, the film relies entirely on shocks and slashes throughout a painful 108-minute running time. The blood and gore is enveloped by a paper-thin plot about Amsterdam's authorities trying to stop the killer before mass hysteria grips the Netherlands, but the Dutch are more likely to be whipped into a murderous rage at the fact that one of their compatriots came up with this drivel.



Stephen Tyler, Soldier

My Own Worst Enemy, out on DVD now

HOLLYWOOD A-lister **Christian Slater** switches to the small screen for this nine-episode American TV series about a middle-class family man who lives a second life as a US secret agent. The slightly laboured twist is that neither of Slater's alter-egos are aware of one another as he has been implanted with a chip that allows his handlers to switch between mild-mannered Henry and super spy Edward. Playing out like a dumbed-down version of *Fight Club*, *My Own Worst Enemy* is entertaining viewing as Slater's two personas get into various scrapes around the world. Definitely worth a watch.



Richard Long, Soldier

Look Back in Anger, out on DVD now

RELEASED as one of three classics from veteran British director **Tony Richardson** – the lesser-known *Mademoiselle* and *Joseph Andrews* completing the set – *Look Back in Anger* is a fantastic piece of cinema which takes a long, hard look at the British class system of the 1950s and the frustrations that it provoked. **Richard Burton** stars as Jimmy Porter, a man in a marriage to someone well beyond his meagre social standing and trapped in a dead-end job. **Mary Ure** matches Burton's emphatic performance as wife Alison as the film bubbles along nicely before reaching its climax. Very highly recommended.

Stephen Tyler, Soldier





Soaring high: A host of iconic Second World War aeroplanes are available for players to fly in *IL-2 Sturmovik: Birds of Prey*

European sky wars

Take part in history's greatest airborne confrontation in latest console flight sim

Preview: Cliff Caswell

IT WAS one of the most defining military encounters of the Second World War – a titanic clash between two forces that took place in broad daylight in the skies of Europe.

On one side were the Allies of the United States Army Air Force, the RAF and pilots of the Soviet Union. Ranged against them was the German Luftwaffe, a formidable fighting force that was as large as it was proven in combat.

Thousands of men lost their lives in the brutal 1940s era. But it was also a time when the fighting aircraft came of age, when the stuff of science fiction became science fact and when jet and rocket fighters altered the nature of aerial combat forever. And it is against this backdrop that flight sim *IL-2 Sturmovik* takes place.

Already a familiar series on PC, developer 505 Games has worked to make this latest incarnation, subtitled *Birds of Prey*, playable in console form. And from the preview *Soldier* was given they have been entirely successful in this goal. The title looks stunning, has historical accuracy aplenty and features a skill level that can be tweaked from

arcade-style shooter to realistic simulation.

A raft of aircraft from the period are included, ranging from the iconic Supermarine Spitfire and North American P-51 Mustang to the volatile Messerschmitt ME-163 rocket fighter.

"*Birds of Prey* takes place between 1940 and 1945 and features six major campaigns including the Battle of Britain, Battle for Europe and the fighting over Berlin," said 505 Games spokesman Mark Allen. "There are 50 missions which range from dogfights to bomber escort duties.

"The environments in the game were lifted from satellite imagery before being modified by using reconnaissance footage and aerial photos from the 1940s era – overall we have placed something like 25 million objects in the gaming world."

Birds of Prey certainly looks the part. From high altitude aerial engagements to low-level dive-bombing attacks, the degree of detail on both the aircraft and ground structures is impressive. The dogfights also bear an uncanny resemblance to the newsreel footage of the 1940s era, complete with smoke trails, explosions of flak, blazing engines and crews taking to their parachutes to escape stricken aircraft.

"When you are in the air you have the ability to give commands to your fellow pilots," said Allen.

"You can issue orders such as 'attack the primary target' or 'form on my wing', which have the desired effect in battle.

"There are four different settings in which you can play the game – in arcade you have the benefit of four interior and exterior views and your aircraft can take a lot of damage. Contrast that with the simulator setting, which is about full-on flying with no corrections made for you, and you can only see out of the pilot's view.

"The cockpits in the game are fully recreated from the schematics of the era. You can visit a virtual hanger and look at fighters and bombers in 3D to see how they were used during the war."

A demonstration of the *Birds of Prey* single player campaign, set during the Battle of Britain, clearly showed the remarkable scale of the action. But it was the hands-on multiplayer demo in which the game truly excelled.

We battled it out in three sessions against other gaming hacks and were pleased with the slick pace of the action. In a world where decent console flight sims are few, *Birds of Prey* heads the pack. The developers should be praised for having the courage to unleash a title that has the depth of a combat simulation while managing to keep the casual shooter onside. ■

From Eastern Europe to mythical islands, we round up the winners and losers of the gaming world...

The Conduit, Wii

FIRST previewed by *Soldier* in June, the final version of this Wii-exclusive first-person shooter has proved to be a decent little number that will fill more than a few spare hours. Players are placed in the role of Michael Ford, a Secret Service agent charged with battling alien forces that – you've guessed it – are bent on zapping humankind. Graphically, the game is pretty solid, with a well-rendered range of enemies and satisfying explosions, although the levels look monotonous in places. The controls are simple to use, making shooting enemies on the hoof good fun. You could do a lot worse than this.



SSgt Dan Cooper, RE

ArmA II, PC

A TITLE from the developers behind the original *Operation Flashpoint* titles, *ArmA II* is extremely good but just lacks the polish of a world-class offering. Set in Eastern Europe around the fictional area of Chernarus, players are plunged into command on a vast battlefield. Developer Bohemia Interactive has worked hard to give players a full arsenal of kit from tanks to fast air. But the title is let down by the number of systems, which makes life complicated. *ArmA II* is a remarkable game overall but not without flaws that detract from your enjoyment. I hope Bohemia will address the problem areas.



WO2 Craig Turner, LD

Risen, Xbox 360 & PC

PLAYERS have the opportunity to become marooned on a dodgy island and deal with some unpleasant natives during this latest excursion into the realms of Tolkien-esque fantasy. *Risen* is a third-person role playing game that gives you complete freedom to explore your surroundings and make friends and enemies as you see fit in the same way as *Oblivion*. *Soldier* was given a tour of a playable demo of the game and was impressed, although it was clearly still a work in progress. But considerable thought has gone into the story of this one and, if you're a fan of the genre, it could be worth a look.



Cliff Caswell, Soldier



Flying nightmares: Soviet fighter-bombers go on the offensive against German ground targets as the action intensifies over the Eastern Front

GI Joe, Xbox 360 & PS3

ONE of the more surprising movie franchises of the summer lends itself to the inevitable computer game spin-off. And true to form for this well trodden path the transfer is less-than-spectacular. With gameplay that is simple at best there is little challenge here and the key to success seems to be an ability to merely hold down the shoot button. Frequent interruptions giving completely useless information from the mobile headquarters ruins any continuity and the regular cry of "Go Joes" every time a villain bites the dust makes you lunge for the off switch. You will be well advised to give this turkey a miss.



Richard Long, Soldier

Cursed Mountain, Wii

A WELL-rendered adult adventure game, *Cursed Mountain* is a nightmarish third-person affair in which players have to slog their way up the Himalayas in search of a missing brother. Along the way it becomes obvious that the place, and your sibling, are not all you thought them to be. *Soldier* previewed several levels of this curious title and found it to share some similarities with the GameCube horror classic *Eternal Darkness: Sanity's Requiem*. Graphics are first rate, the environments are stunning and the combat system – which requires you to make mystic symbols with the Wii controllers – works well.



Cliff Caswell, Soldier

Colin McRae Dirt 2, Xbox 360 & PS3

THE late rally driver Colin McRae continues to inspire a new generation of video game petrolheads, with this polished racing title maintaining the high standards associated with his name. *Dirt 2* provides a full tool kit for players to indulge in competitive motorsport around the world, with cars including the Subaru Impreza mainstay among the vehicles on offer for your dream encounters. *Soldier* was given some hands-on time with a demo of this Codemasters title and we were particularly impressed with the highly slick multiplayer options. *Dirt 2* is definitely one for those with a competitive streak.



Cliff Caswell, Soldier



Two's company: Craig and Charlie Reid, better known as The Proclaimers, return with a new album and tour. *Notes & Rhymes* is out now.

Clocking the miles

After four decades together The Proclaimers are still happy to walk side-by-side

Interview: Heidi Mines

MENTION The Proclaimers and the annoyingly catchy, twice-released *I'm Gonna Be (500 miles)* is the song that will undoubtedly pop into your head.

The anthemic [read incredibly cheesy] track has enjoyed gold and platinum sales success and is a well-loved staple at student unions, mess events and weddings.

It is therefore more than a little disappointing to learn that the Scottish twins responsible have not yet practised what they preach.

"No, I have never walked 500 miles," laughed Charlie Reid, when *Soldier* posed the lone question prepared ahead of our interview slot with Scotland's most famous exports.

"I suppose I have covered that distance in my lifetime but the longest I have hiked is about 20 miles and, compared to the soldiers who walk for hours with heavy backpacks and weapons, that does not seem like a lot."

While Charlie and brother Craig, now 47, clearly lack the stamina for soldiering, their persistence in pursuing a pop career deserves

begrudging respect. Having formed their first band, Happy Hassler, at primary school, the guitar-strumming Scots have gone on to enjoy commercial success on both sides of the Atlantic and their self-penned songs have so far generated eight albums – the latest of which, *Notes & Rhymes*, is out now.

The Proclaimers' tracks have also provided the inspiration for an award-winning new musical, *Sunshine on Leith*, which was written by Stephen Greenhorn. The production tells the tale of two soldiers who return from Afghanistan to Edinburgh and follows the fortunes of the infantrymen as they adjust to life back at home with their families and loved ones.

"I was really moved by the play, it very cleverly uses the lyrics to our music without taking over the narrative," said Charlie, whose father completed his National Service with the Army.

"We have always admired the British Army and we always will do. I think that the soldiers do a great job in the most taxing places in the world."

"I think what military personnel have to go through in Afghanistan would test the mettle of anybody and we are proud of any man or woman who serves out there."

And so remarkably, with the musical likely to

introduce a new generation to The Proclaimers' back catalogue, it seems that the siblings have not yet reached the end of the track.

Indeed the brothers' decision to sing in their regional accents – often the source of much amusement and bemusement – has marked them out as unlikely trend setters.

The chart success of Paolo Nutini and Maximo Park is testament to the fact that "home town" voices are in vogue.

That the band is still playing – and together – after more than two decades has come as little surprise to Charlie.

"Music is what we do and you don't have to be a professional to enjoy music," he told *Soldier*. "If we are still able, I hope that we will carry on performing live into our 70s."

"We'll play festivals for as long as we are fit enough to do so."

"I think that it must be tough to keep a band together, especially if you have four or five members," he added. "I guess there will always be a fall out somewhere along the line."

"But because we are brothers – twins – we see each other all the time anyway."

"Working together is easy and it is not as hard for us to stay together as it is other bands." ■

From Pixie Lott to punk, we advise whether to turn this month's offerings up or off...

Turn It Up, Pixie Lott

FRESH-faced **Pixie Lott**, who hails from Essex, became a household name when her debut single *Mama Do (Uh Oh, Uh Oh)* reached number one in the UK singles chart in June – a rare feat for a female artist without the aid of a reality TV show. The singer has crammed a lot of experience into her 18 years. She began singing in church before winning a scholarship to a respected theatre school and later performed in London's West End. Her voice is strong, soulful and more than capable of handling the light-hearted, catchy pop found on *Turn It Up*. With eleven tracks, this debut record is certainly a promising start. Let's see if, like a good bottle of wine, she gets even better with age.



Cpl Tom Robinson, RLC

Nothing Personal, All Time Low

THE American punk band **All Time Low** have released their second offering *Nothing Personal*. The album has already been a big hit on the other side of the Atlantic selling more than 60,000 copies in its first week of release. Combine the powerful and impeccable voice of **Alex Gaskarth** with the fact that the band have already toured with **Plain White T's** and **Fall Out Boy** and it looks as though the big-time beckons. But as much as I like the album, the songs are all too familiar to any other punk band and it sounds like the same old thing that every other alternative group produce. If you are looking for something different that will stand out from the crowd then this isn't the album for you.



Tamsin Wooldridge

Anthology 1975 – 1984, Rainbow

AT long last a collection not to be missed. **Richie Blackmore** and co have treated fans to 28 tracks of pure classic rock. All the well-known anthems are represented such as *Since You've Been Gone* and *I Surrender*. However, it is their lesser-known tracks that showcase the true versatility of **Rainbow**. *The Temple Of The King* shoulde...rs and *Stargazer* champions, not for the first time, the supreme vocal talents of **Ronnie James Dio**. The thunderous, express train delivery of *A Light In The Black* features one of many trademark guitar licks from Blackmore, the **Deep Purple** legend. Take my word for it, this is a musical feast that will leave you hungry for more.



Steve King, MoD



Double vision: Legendary Scottish duo The Proclaimers return with new album *Notes & Rhymes* and admit that they are yet to walk 500 miles

La Roux, La Roux

LATEST music sensation **La Roux**, French for the red-haired one, are a male and female 1980s throwback, synthetic-pop duo from London. Singer **Elly Jackson**, the daughter of actress **Trudie Goodwin** aka *The Bill*'s June Ackland, has a unique voice that leaves you wanting more. And if you liked singles *Quicksand*, *In for the Kill* and *Bulletproof* then you will not be disappointed with the rest of this Mercury Music Award-nominated album. I personally think the record does not quite make the grade as far as all time classic albums go, but it's not bad for a couple of cockneys. Definitely worth buying if you have some spare cash lying around the house.



Cpl Bernie Smyth, REME

Ready For The Weekend, Calvin Harris

THE long-awaited follow up to *I Created Disco* has finally been released on Columbia Records and it certainly does not disappoint. **Harris** started making music at the age of 15 on an old Amiga computer in the Scottish town of Dumfries, and has come a long way from his days of stacking shelves at his local Marks & Spencer. Rubbing shoulders with showbiz luvvies, including Radio One's **Zane Lowe**, the 20-something star is proving his worth in the music industry. Featuring hits *Ready For The Weekend* and his number one collaboration with **Dizzee Rascal**, *Dance Wiv Me*, the album is filled with great tunes that will keep you permanently hitting repeat.



Heidi Mines, Soldier

Tomorrow, Sean Kingston

THE *Beautiful Girls* singer returns with his second album, *Tomorrow*, which is a much more upbeat and classier record. Teaming up with stars such as **Good Charlotte** and **Wyclef Jean**, the teen platinum-selling star is set to soar to the top of the charts with massive tracks *Fire Burning* and *Ice Cream Girl*. To mark the new release, **Soldier** has teamed up with Sony to give away five copies of the album. To stand a chance of getting your hands on one, just answer this question: **How old is reggae sensation Sean Kingston?** Answers on a postcard to the address at the front of the magazine or by email (comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk) to reach us by September 30.



Courtesy of Sony BMG



Spy story: Military historian Sean Longden details the Second World War missions of the British military's elite espionage experts

Licensed to meddle

How James Bond's creator inspired the formation of a covert crew of saboteurs

Review: Maj Neil Powell AGC

IT IS hard to believe that such a thing existed in late 1944 – a secret British unit conceived by Ian Fleming (the creator of James Bond), littered with veterans of campaigns such as Market Garden and tasked with operating behind enemy lines to secure secret German technology before the Russians could get their hands on it. But exist it did.

In July 1944 the Allied High Command gave a top secret order to raise a "Target Force" – an elite unit whose mission would be to work independently to seek out the suspected German technological advances that might give Hitler an advantage. *T-Force* is the story of that adventure. Compiled using previously unseen archive material it is a book that details how, as a commander in the Royal Navy in 1942, Fleming conceived an idea to create a special intelligence unit.

Although treated with some initial contempt by the Army and Royal Air Force, the unit developed from being an intelligence assault asset into a special engineering formation before taking on the official title of 30 Assault Unit (AU).

The men of 30 AU performed well in the Mediterranean campaign of 1943/44 and again in France a year later, providing intelligence on U-boat designs and production, German maritime mine charts and equipment reports on enemy ships. These successes led the hostile Army and Air Force to recognise the merit of such an asset and in September 1944, 30 AU started to morph into T-Force.

Although the Allies had identified most of the technical experts needed to carry out such work it still required a military unit to provide the force protection. They found a solution in the casualty-depleted ranks of 5th Battalion, The King's Regiment. Having played a vital role on D-Day it soon became a transit unit, located behind the front line and used to home the "sick, lame and lazy" prior to their redeployment or demob.

The Kings were quickly joined by the 1st Buckinghamshire Battalion and T-Force was officially born and set for action.

Joining the war effort around the time of Operations Varsity and Plunder (the missions to cross the Rhine in March 1945), the covert force was given a free hand to locate and exploit German technology. This book details these adventures using archival material and personal

accounts of the men of T-Force.

It describes the discovery of a secret nuclear bunker and a working jet fighter factory. It also examines the hunt for German scientists including Dr Werner Von Braun, who created the V1 and V2 and would go on to become influential in America's space programme.

They captured Otto Hahn, Germany's top expert on nuclear fission, and led the last Allied advance of the war in Europe to capture Helmut Walther (the man who inspired Fleming's *Moonraker*).

Interestingly, many of T-Force's escapades later formed the basis of Fleming's post-war writing, featuring not only in *Moonraker*, but also *Thunderball* and *Octopussy*.

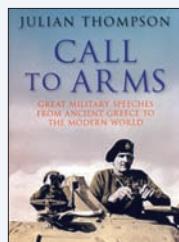
Influential in the rapid demise of the German Army at the close of the Second World War, T-Force became a crucial player in setting the foundations of the structure of the Cold War and the subsequent shape of the Western world in the 40 years that followed the end of hostilities in mid-1945.

Written by an "historical investigator", this is a great book and has all the elements of a riveting page-turner – at times you have to stop and remind yourself that you're reading a piece of factual history and not a 007 thriller. ■

From Alexander the Great to gung-ho gunners, this month's must and must-not reads...

Call to Arms by Julian Thompson

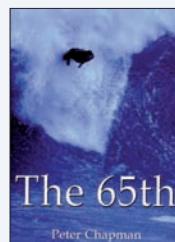
HAVING led 3 Commando Brigade during the Falklands War, Julian Thompson – now a respected military historian and author – is a man who knows a thing or two about inspiring troops. In *Call to Arms* he analyses the historical background and consequences of more than 50 speeches given by military leaders, from Alexander the Great's address in 333 BC through to Lt Col Tim Collins' speech before the 2003 coalition invasion of Iraq. Complete with biographies of each commander, this is a superb piece of military analysis which spans the history of global conflict and represents outstanding value at £15.



Maj Eddie Elms, AGC

The 65th by Peter Chapman

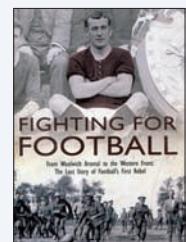
SET in an amusingly fictional near-future, this book charts the fortunes of The 65th Royal Horse Artillery, a regiment based on the North Devon coastline and with a history of success on the battlefield. An asset of the Federal Republic of Britain, the 65th are unwilling targets of initiatives to cut military spending and the government's plan to regain control of the lawless West Country. Dishonourable and noncompliant, the soldiers join forces with the locals to resist the state. Written by former British Army officer Peter Chapman, *The 65th* is an entertaining novel and well worth a read.



LCpl Chris MacCallum, Int Corps

Fighting for Football by George Myerson

IT normally takes me a matter of days to finish a book, but *Fighting for Football* – read a couple of pages per sitting – took a gruelling four weeks. I had hoped that the subject matter would be interesting and when that proved not to be the case I pinned my hopes on the title being written in a manner which gripped my attention. It didn't. Rather than being a book I just couldn't put down it was one I couldn't bear to pick up. If I was forced to say something positive about *Fighting for Football*, it would be that a lot of research has gone into its production. My verdict? Give it a wide berth unless you're a masochist.



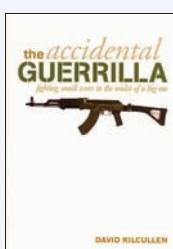
Maj Jonathan Craig, PWRR



Fact to fiction: The derring-do of T-Force's shadowy soldiers heavily influenced the "career" of Ian Fleming's silver screen spy, James Bond

Accidental Guerrilla by David Kilcullen

A SHORT pithy, review such as this could never do justice to this excellent book. **David Kilcullen** delivers a fascinating account of his years as an officer in the Australian Army and of working on secondment with the British and US. The author shares his experience of command, which ranges from taking charge in East Timor through to advising Gen Petraeus in Iraq and Afghanistan. His experience of soldiering combined with a sharp intellectual interest in people make this book an essential read for anyone who aspires to a greater understanding of our current operating environment.



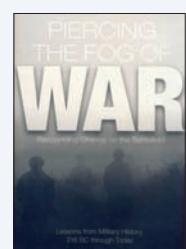
The Twelve by Stuart Neville

HAUNTED by the souls of the 12 people he has murdered, former paramilitary killer Gerry Fegan sets out to avenge their deaths and save his sanity in this debut novel from **Stuart Neville**. Set against the backdrop of Northern Ireland, what *The Twelve* lacks in suspense it more than makes up for in atmosphere, transporting the reader back to the streets of Belfast during the height of the Troubles and serving up a gritty and graphic account of life as a paramilitary fighter. Although the plot is somewhat predictable, this book will provide an entertaining read to all those who have walked the streets of the Province.

Capt Vicki Seth, AGC (ETS)

Piercing the Fog of War by Brian Steed

THIS well-researched title is a detailed academic analysis of the complexities of warfare. Examining a wide historical range of battles and engagements it represents a useful reference tool. Some of the example accounts from ancient history, however, are rather obscure and the use of headed and bulleted paragraphs does not make for an easy end-to-end read. The best part, albeit rushed, is the battle for Grozny in 1994/95, which highlights the total asymmetry of both protagonists. Overall, a useful read but one that over complicates the essential issue for the commander; how not to get caught-out by the adversary.



Lt Col Andy Gladen, RE

Maj Matt Hayward, Scots DG

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Bad weather grounds Army title challenge

RAF reign: Despite a promising start by the Army's squad, wins from, among others, Sqn Ldr Jon Arnold in the open class competition secured the Royal Air Force the 2009 Inter-Services gliding crown

Picture: Flt Lt Nick Smith, www.cloudrider.co.uk



Army stars (clockwise from top left): Sgt Julia Cartwright (R Signals); SSgt Mark Wiseman (AGC); LCpl David Olusile (3 LSR); the women's 100 metres final

Ahead of the field

Men cruise to victory as women take it to the wire at athletics finals

Report: Richard Long

Pictures: Graeme Main

DETERMINED performances in both track and field helped the Army secure its seventh successive Inter-Services athletics crown by the narrowest of margins.

While the men coasted to victory – finishing 45 points clear of their nearest rivals – it was the women who endured a day of nail-biting anxiety before finally defeating the Royal Air Force by a single point.

The Army started the meeting at Tidworth Oval in fine style with Cpl John Osazuwa (3 LSR) retaining his hammer title with an impressive throw of 54.47 metres.

Further success swiftly followed in the javelin, where Cpl Mark Wearing (3 LSR) took maximum points thanks to his 54.70 metres effort.

Such dominance proved to be the pattern of the day for the men, who finished on 175 points with the RAF second on 130 and Royal Navy on 78.

But it was in the women's competition where the day's real drama was to unfold.

RAF star Cpl Laura McGawn was a constant thorn in the Army's side, powering to victory in five events including the 100 metres, 100 metres hurdles and javelin.

But the Army had a star of their own in Sgt Julia Cartwright (R Signals) who won the 400 metres hurdles and high jump and scored welcome points in the 100 metres hurdles and long jump.

Sgt Shan Morgan (APTC) set the standard in the first track event, dominating the women's 5,000 metres to win in 18min 22sec, more than two minutes ahead of her nearest rival.

"It was quite a lonely race to be

honest," she said. "The girls started at a slow pace that I just could not keep.

"I was at a comfortable pace of around 1min 28sec per lap which was all I needed to do to win."

LBdr Amanda Jones (32 Regt RA) gained wins in both the 800 metres and 1,500 metres, where Morgan added a second place finish to her earlier victory.

But the Army could not pull clear of the dogged RAF and victory was only achieved in the last relay race of the day.

The final scores saw the Army on 133 points, the RAF on 132 and the Navy a distant third on 65.

Speaking after the competition Maj (Retd) James Wood, event organiser, said: "Clearly it was nice to win both categories – particularly the women's in what was the tightest of margins – and I would like to acknowledge the spirited way in which the Navy and RAF conducted themselves." ■

It's a stick up

Under strength Reds steal Services success

AN ARMY squad severely weakened by the demands of operational commitments triumphed against the odds in the Inter-Services lacrosse competition.

With just 11 players available for the tournament in Portsmouth the Service combined grit and determination with skill and aggression to secure convincing wins over the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force.

Unrelenting pressure in the opening match against the Navy saw the Army race to a 2-0-interval lead but a spirited second half from the hosts kept the contest close before a late brace secured a 4-0 win.

The RAF provided a sterner test thanks to its huge squad that made good use of rolling substitutions to avoid fatigue.

But the powerful defending and considerable size and strength advantage of the Army was simply too much for the whippet-like RAF side, who suffered an unexpected 3-0 defeat.

Army team spokesman Capt Paul Horne (RA) said: "We put in a super effort throughout the day, especially when one takes into account the limited squad available to us.

"Through sheer grit, determination and no small amount of violence we carried the day to become champions."

● Any new players – male or female – interested in joining the team should contact hallswothj710@jadteu.mod.uk



● Sgt Eddie Howarth (R Signals)

THE OFFICIAL BRITISH ARMY FITNESS GUIDE

ASSESSING YOUR OWN FITNESS LEVEL

THE first step of any fitness programme is to determine your starting point so that you can be sure you are healthy enough to begin exercising and that you work at a level of intensity that is appropriate for your physical condition.

CHECK BEFORE YOU START

Becoming more active is safe for most people, but in some instances it is advisable to check with your doctor before you begin. Start by answering the following seven questions. If you are between the ages of 15 and 69, this questionnaire will tell you if you should consult your GP before you start. If you are over 69 years of age, and are not used to being active, you should definitely have a health check before exercising.

- Has your GP ever said that you have a heart condition and that you should only undertake physical activity recommended by a doctor?
- Do you feel pain in your chest when you do physical activity?
- In the past month, have you experienced chest pain when you were not undertaking physical activity?
- Do you ever lose your balance

because of dizziness or do you ever lose consciousness?

- Do you have a bone or joint problem that could be made worse by a change in your physical activity?
- Is your doctor currently prescribing drugs (for example, water pills) for your blood pressure or for a heart condition?
- Is there any other reason why you should not undertake physical activity?

IF YOU ANSWERED YES...

...to one or more questions, talk with your doctor before you start becoming more physically active.

DELAY BECOMING MORE ACTIVE IF...

- You are not feeling well because of a temporary illness, such as a cold or a fever. Wait until you are better;
- You are, or may be, pregnant;
- You are recovering from an injury.

IF YOU ANSWERED NO...

...to all questions, you can be reasonably sure that you can start becoming more physically active right now. Be sure to start slowly and progress gradually – this is the safest and easiest way to go.

Soldier readers can buy the Official British Army Fitness Guide, published by Guardian Books, for the discounted price of only £8.99 plus postage and packing (RRP £12.99). Visit guardianbooks.co.uk or call 0845 606 4232 and quote "Soldier".



SPORT SHORTS

ORGANISERS are appealing for competitors to sign up for next month's Tri-Services Kitesurfing Championships in Anglesey.

All ability levels are welcome with training days taking place from October 21 to 23 prior to the championships, which will be held on October 24 and 25 at Rhosneigr.

Anyone interested in taking part should contact Jim Edwards on 94342 3760 or email edwardsj851@mod.uk

ARMY fencers gave encouraging performances at the sport's British Championships in Sheffield.

2nd Lt Chris Kent (RA) finished 28th in the men's foil, with Pte Max Weedon (RLC (V)) ranked 61st in a field of 112.

In the men's epee, LBdr Lee Spiers (RA) maintained his current form with a 19th place finish which saw him rise to 24th in the national rankings, while the Army men battled to achieve third place in the team event.

Lt Naveen Rahman (Int Corps) secured a 30th ranking in the women's foil, while Capt Jenni Goodman (RADC) finished 33rd in the epee and the women's team achieved a deserved fifth place among 14 squads.

THE Army Rugby League Race Against Time and Senility raised more than £5,000 for Help for Heroes in its annual fixture with Yorkshire Veterans.

Legends Barrie McDermott, Dean Sampson and Lee Jackson were among those who took to the field at The Jungle, home of Super League side Castleford Tigers.



Lord's and masters

Webb and Boynton inspire Army XI to victory at the home of cricket

Report: Richard Long
Pictures: Steve Dock

A STUNNING display with both bat and ball guided the Army to a comprehensive six-wicket victory over the Royal Navy at Lord's.

The emphatic win at the world-famous venue saw the team retain its Inter-Services title at a canter and proved a fitting way for skipper Maj James Fulton (RMAS) to end his Army cricket career.

With both sides enjoying success over the Royal Air Force earlier in the week the Lord's showdown emerged as the tournament decider.

After losing the toss and being asked to bat the Navy made a solid start to the match, but a burst of wickets in quick

succession saw them reduced to 33-3.

Maj Alex Senneck (JSCSC) applied constant pressure on the batsmen and conceded just 12 runs in an economic ten-over spell that also brought the added reward of two Navy wickets.

A conservative 50-run stand between Cpl Cullum Smith (USSO Blandford) and captain Lt Cdr Paul Snelling (DE&S) repaired the early damage and gave the Navy a platform from which to attack.

But when Smith fell to Cfn Jonathan Boynton (REME) the Army resumed control and the Navy slumped from 111-4 to a below par 139 all out.

Spinner Boynton earned the man of the match award for his figures of 4-29

while SSgt Stephen Hole (James Project Warminster) and LCpl David Wade (R Signals) finished with two wickets each.

The Navy needed early victims if they were to defend their meagre total but Sgt Stuart Houghton (R

Signals) cracked a flurry of boundaries on the way to a brisk 24 as the Army stated their intent.

Fulton suffered a disappointing day with the bat, making just one run before falling lbw.

His departure brought Sgt Dan Webb (CJSU) to the crease and the hard-hitting right-hander ruthlessly ended any hopes of an unlikely Navy victory.

The 27-year-old smashed ten fours and a six in a knock of 60 off just 40

'It is fantastic we have the opportunity to play at Lord's'



balls and when his wicket finally fell the Army only needed a handful of runs to seal the win.

Speaking to *SoldierSport* after collecting the Inter-Services trophy, Fulton said: "I am really delighted for the team. They have worked really hard throughout the summer and they deserve this emphatic win."

"Having restricted them to 139 we were confident without being too complacent. Although it was a low score we could not take it for granted and had to bat well."

"Boynton has bowled well all year and he was no different today. Webb played a fantastic innings after we lost three early wickets."

"It is fantastic we have the opportunity to play at Lord's. It gives us the chance to show what we are capable of to a wider audience and it has been a dream come true for me to finish here."

From left, Big hitter: SSgt Stephen Hole on his way to a quick-fire 32; **Spin King:** Spr Jacques Prinsloo keeps the Royal Navy's attack in check; **Howzat?** Army wicketkeeper Sgt Stuart Houghton makes a confident appeal

ARMY V ROYAL NAVY, LORD'S CRICKET GROUND, THURSDAY, AUGUST 6

NAVY – 139 ALL OUT (45.3 OVERS)

MNE D UPTON c Senneck b Wade 15
 LT T BURT c Dixon b Senneck 35
 LT J BATLEY lbw b Wade 0
 CSGT S NEEDHAM b Senneck 0
 LT CDR P SNELLING c Hole b Boynton 34
 CPL C SMITH c Prinsloo b Boynton 26
 LCPL A HAW c Fulton b Boynton 4
 LT J PARKER c Prinsloo b Hole 11
 CAPT T O'KEEFE c Fulton b Hole 0
 ET(ME) S LOUIS c Houghton b Boynton 0
 MA(O) G FREEMAN not out 3
 EXTRAS 11

NAME	O	M	R	W
LCPL D WADE	6	1	36	2
MAJ A SENNECK	10	4	12	2
CAPT S BOOTH	6	0	20	0
SGT I REDFERN	6	1	10	0
SPR J PRINSLOO	7	3	17	0
CFN J BOYNTON	7	0	29	4
SSGT S HOLE	3.3	0	10	2

ARMY – 140-4 (21.5 OVERS)

SGT S HOUGHTON c Burt b O'Keefe 24
 SSGT I DIXON c Batley b Parker 5
 MAJ J FULTON lbw b Parker 1
 SGT D WEBB b Haw 60
 SSGT S HOLE not out 32
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 SGT I REDFERN, LCPL D WADE,
 SPR J PRINSLOO

NAME	O	M	R	W
LT J PARKER	7	2	26	2
CAPT T O'KEEFE	5	0	33	1
MNE D UPTON	2	0	12	0
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ET(ME) S LOUIS	2	0	21	0
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Weight of the world

Army stars take on elite opposition ahead of push for London Games

Interviews: Richard Long

Picture: Steve Dock

OLYMPIC judo hopefuls faced a serious test of their 2012 credentials when they locked horns with the world's best fighters in Rotterdam.

The Judo World Championships, which were due to take place as this issue went to press, pitted competitors from more than 40 countries against one another in what is considered to be the sport's biggest tournament outside the Olympics.

With the Army boasting an ever-expanding judo programme the Service saw three of its star players representing their home nations at elite level.

Cpl Abbas Salihu (9 Regt RLC) led the charge for Nigeria while Fus Victor Ahiavor (1 RRF) and Tpr Emmanuel Nartey (1 RTR) were both flying the flag for Ghana.

The proud trio visited *SoldierSport* on the eve of the tournament to talk about their hopes for Rotterdam and their long-term goals for 2012.

Salihu said: "My training has gone very

well. The World Championships is a big event, second only to the Olympics.

"Anything can happen, it will be good experience for me. I hope to qualify for the Olympics and I have to start building points from now.

"I have done a few tournaments and training camps and I am very pleased with my preparations.

"The regiment has been fantastic in terms of support. The Army Judo Association coaching has been tremendous and I have some great people around me."

Rotterdam was Salihu's first attempt at World Championship glory but the 27-year-old is no stranger to the international stage having competed at the African Championships and Commonwealth Games.

Ahiavor also made his world debut in Holland and was hoping for a top ten finish in the 81kg category following a successful performance at the African Championships in March, when he was ranked fifth in the continent.

He said: "I want to go in with these guys

and see if I can deliver. I know some of the African teams but in terms of the rest I don't know what it will be like.

"I feel like I am in good form and I am looking forward to the challenge."

Nartey, the most experienced of the trio, was hoping to improve on his two previous appearances at the tournament, the best of which saw him reach the quarter final stage in 2005.

"I am in top form at the moment," said the confident player, who will compete alongside Salihu in the 73kg category.

He added: "It will be one of my last tournaments for Ghana and I am determined to give it my best shot and my coaches think I am in great shape.

"My programme started in April. I have had camps in Brazil, France and Germany and it has been going really well."

After the tournament Nartey will switch allegiances to Great Britain as he aims for a place on the 2012 team.

He explained: "I want to concentrate on becoming the British number one. If I carry on training hard with focus and spirit everything should be good in the end."

● For results from the championships, visit www.judo2009.com ■

Fighting focus: Army judo stars (from left) Fus Victor Ahiavor (1 RRF), Cpl Abbas Salihu (RLC) and Tpr Emmanuel Nartey (1 RTR)



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Waiting game: LCoH Danny Carter (HCR) rigs his glider and finds time to read a book (inset) as rain and overcast skies delay take off from Keevil Airfield

Grey skies ground gliders

Rain halts Army charge for breakthrough win at aerial championships

Report: Richard Long
Pictures: Mike Weston

A WEEK of varying weather proved frustrating for Army fliers as they attempted to take the Inter-Services gliding crown for the first time.

The Service started the competition in fine style with SSgt David "DJ" Graham (REME) winning the first two tasks in the sports class, which left the team just four points behind the strongly-fancied Royal Air Force.

But three days of rain left the gliding aces grounded at Keevil Airfield and the early momentum was suddenly halted.

When flying resumed Graham continued his charge with a third victory but his hot streak ended in the remaining two tasks and he finished second in the individual rankings.

The RAF produced consistent scoring to take the title and a strong showing by the Royal Navy saw them take second spot.

SoldierSport met the Army team midway through the competition to learn more about the airborne discipline and the rivalry within the Services.

"Army gliding has been around for more than 50 years going back to the Second World War," explained Graham.

"But the Army has never won this competition. The RAF always wins but it is getting very close. They have the advantage of having more clubs and more people to choose from."

"I came here quite confident that I would do well but I am a little bit overwhelmed by the success I have had."

"It is a cracking sport and everyone competes on a level playing field. It is the most fun you can have with your clothes on."

The opening task followed a 220km course that Graham completed in 2hr 29min at an average speed of 97kmh, the equivalent of around 60mph.

He was flying an LS4 glider that has a ratio of 40 to one, which means for every foot it drops in altitude it covers a distance of 40 feet.

As the craft gradually falls the pilot has to find rising thermals to maintain their height.

At the start of each day pilots are given a task that follows set locations on a map and their progress is monitored via GPS.

A maximum of 1,000 points can be scored by competitors on each task but deductions are made for infractions such as missing turning points or flying in designated airspace. ■

OPEN SKIES

WITH two fleets of aircraft in the UK – based at Anglia Gliding Club and Wyvern Gliding Club – and one in Germany, would-be pilots in the Army have plenty of opportunity to take to the skies. The Service holds seven introductory courses each year and for £150 newcomers receive five days of flying and a 12-month membership that includes all fees until the pilot goes solo.

Army team member Capt Alec Watt (RA) said: "The important message is that gliding is accessible to all ranks. People may think it is too expensive or it is an officers' sport but it is not."

"Through gliding you can realise any aspiration you have for aviation. You get a different view of the countryside, it is an exciting team sport and it gives a great sense of personal satisfaction."

Fellow pilot Sgt Pete Yeo (KRH) added: "It is a fantastic sport and it is pretty cheap."

For more information on Army gliding and the courses on offer, email artycentgts03@effects.mod.uk

SPORT SHORTS

SEVEN soldiers based in Colchester have tackled the epic Arch to Arc challenge to support Help for Heroes.

The relay triathlon saw competitors running from Marble Arch in London to Dover, before swimming the Channel to Calais and ending with a cycle ride from the French port to the Arc de Triomphe in Paris.

All of those who took part were from 7th Parachute Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery of 16 Air Assault Brigade.

They decided to raise money for the charity as a way of saying thank you for the support given to LBdr Ben Parkinson, who was badly injured in Afghanistan when the vehicle he was travelling in struck a landmine.

THE Army's parachute team swooped to a deserved victory in the Canopy Piloting National Championships.

Maj Alastair Macartney (RLC) took gold in the speed, silver in the zone accuracy and bronze in the distance events and with at least two team members on the podium in each discipline the overall title was secured.

It was also a record-breaking day for WO1 Spencer Hogg (RLC) whose 149.99-metre run in the distance event smashed the previous record by more than nine metres.

Cpl Wez Westley (AAC) took silver in the same event and LCpl Sean Sutcliffe (RE) secured bronze in the zone accuracy competition.

While the Army jumped to victory in Germany, Cpl Deane Smith (RE) enjoyed success at the World Games in Taipei.

With fifth place finishes in the speed and accuracy categories and an eighth in the distance event, he finished the competition ranked as number eight in the world.

Smith said: "I am pretty pleased. We certainly had some challenging conditions, there was a typhoon and I went from days with no practise to jumping in front of huge crowds."

His attention will now turn to the World Championships in South Africa later this year and he has planned to complete at least 400 jumps ahead of the event.

A KEEN motorcyclist and former Serviceman is hoping to raise £50,000 for the Army Benevolent Fund by making his way from London to Iraq on two wheels.

William Allan, of Croydon, who served with The King's Royal Hussars, starts the 6,467-mile route on September 12 and hopes to complete the challenge within three weeks.

The former Army man's ambitious ride will take in 14 countries and he is travelling without any back-up.

To sponsor Allan, visit www.trans-european-challenge.co.uk

Alpine aces

THE imposing setting of Bavaria's mountains provided military personnel with a gruelling test in the 2009 Exercise Alpine Challenge.

Battling through torrential storms competitors crawled, hiked and climbed more than 80km in the arduous competition, which also featured a 10km cycle route and a fast-paced 500m canoe across Lake Grunten.

Germany-based 12 Regiment, Royal Artillery won the tri-Service challenge thanks to the efforts of Capt Andy Parker, Lt Lucy Mason and WO2 Tony Smith (pictured) in the mixed A team.

They stood out as the only group to reach every single checkpoint on the course and became the first mixed team



in history to win the event.

The success proved to be a personal victory for team leader Capt Parker, who was competing in the exercise for the fifth time.

He said: "It was great to win this after five years of competing. I had come second before but the feeling you get from winning is amazing. I knew we had a good chance as we put together a really excellent team – I'm so proud of them."

Exercise Alpine Challenge is the most difficult military orienteering trial and allows personnel to hone essential skills such as leadership and map reading.

The tasks also enhance competitors' ability to withstand the rigours of operations and rapid deployments.

Not-so-magnificent sevens

A PACY Army squad suffered quarter-final heartbreak in the Middlesex Sevens as they slipped to a slender 17-12 defeat against eventual champions London Irish.

Twickenham again played host to the traditional curtain-raiser for the new Rugby Union season and the venue saw some of the biggest names in the Sevens game going head-to-head for the title.

With all 12 Guinness Premiership teams taking part, the well-drilled Reds – along with an invitational Help For Heroes side – provided a stern test for their professional rivals at rugby's HQ.

The Army – beaten finalists in 2008 – made a spectacular start in the tournament's opening match, recording a thumping 24-0 win over an inexperienced Bath team.

Despite London Irish providing a tougher test for the military men in the quarter-final, the Army scored an early breakaway try.

But with England internationals Nick Kennedy, Peter Richards and Steffon Armitage all showing their class the Exiles quickly overturned the deficit and hung on for victory despite conceding a late score.

The Help For Heroes side – led by England Sevens coach Ben Ryan – enjoyed a 29-21 win over Sale Sharks in their opening match before crashing to a 34-5 defeat against Newcastle Falcons in their quarter-final. ■



Picture: Roger Thompson



Centre of attention: Maj Nell Mead (RAMC) and LCpl Lawrence Tere (RAMC) both enjoyed singles victories at the Inter-Services Tennis Championships

Mixed fortunes

Women triumph as men slip to narrow defeat at SW19 tournament

Report: Richard Long
Pictures: Steve Dock

THE grass courts of Wimbledon provided mixed fortunes for the Army in its bid for glory at the Inter-Services Tennis Championships.

While the women secured victory by the narrowest of margins, the men failed to capitalise on an impressive opening round in the singles competition as they fell two points short of the Royal Navy.

After two days' competition the women found themselves tied with a determined Navy team on seven points but a countback on sets saw them triumph 16-15.

Maj Nell Mead (RAMC) was in fine form with an opening victory over Navy challenger Surg Lt Cdr Jo Cooke.

This was followed by a dominant display against Royal Air Force top seed Cpl Rhae McCartney, who struggled with the powerful hitting and aggression

of her opponent in a 6-3 6-2 defeat.

Speaking after her second win of the day Mead told *SoldierSport*: "I am very pleased, it was a good match.

"The courts have been playing beautifully which certainly helps the tennis. I have won both my matches in straight sets, which I am delighted with, and everything is going well."

However, her successful run ended in the opening round of the doubles as Cooke and the Navy gained their revenge, but the tournament did end on a high with a straight sets win against the RAF top seeds.

Men's number one LCpl Lawrence Tere (RAMC) enjoyed a fine tournament debut as he recorded back-to-back victories in the singles.

Big things were expected of the South Pacific Islands Davis Cup player, but the newcomer's pedigree was tested in a difficult opening match with the Navy's Cpl Adrian Talbot.

After losing the first set Tere, who hails from Papua New Guinea, showed his class and battled back to take the second before cruising to victory in the third as his opponent tired.

Speaking to *SoldierSport* at the famous SW19 setting, Tere said: "It was quite difficult actually, especially on this surface. I normally train on hard courts so it takes some getting used to.

"I was pleased with the win. The longer the match lasted the better I felt.

"This has been the first year I have been able to play in the championships, previously I have not had the chance due to work. It is great to be here."

Tere then defeated RAF number one Flt Lt Chris Evans but, like Mead, had a mixed day in the doubles.

Navy number two CPOPT Steve Losh finished the tournament unbeaten and helped secure an overall 8-6 win over the Army, with the RAF finishing on four points. ■

final word



We asked soldiers from 1st The Queen's Dragoon Guards what it was like to mix it with the Taliban in Musa Qala

INTERVIEWS: JOE CLAPSON
PICTURES: MIKE WESTON

SGT PAUL OWEN (QDG)

We had a successful tour. We were in Mastiffs in Musa Qala, they were awesome and gave us a lot of self-confidence. The vehicles are doing their best to compete with the IEDs, but they can always be improved. We didn't want for anything, we had weapons, ammo and quality vehicles. However the food was absolutely awful because of a problem with logistics.

LCPL BEN SCHOFIELD (QDG)

We were at a patrol base in Musa Qala and our job was to hold that position. We got hit pretty much everyday. Everything was minimal because of the confined space we were working in, and with water it was either for washing or drinking. I was showering once every five days. But we weren't there for a giggle, we were there to keep the Taliban away.



CPL IRENE JURCZENKO (RAMC)

It was one of the hardest tours I have ever been on. I was the squadron medic and one day an RPG airblast injured three men. One had a bleeding throat, one had a lacerated main artery and the other major internal injuries. Working together we saved all these guys – that was the pinnacle of my career. I never want to do anything like it again, but I'm proud to know that I'm capable of it.



LCPL MIKE BEAL (QDG)

I feel like we achieved a lot in Musa Qala. We helped establish two patrol bases which gave the local civilians more breathing space to live. The Mastiff is great, it definitely saved lives. At one point I was contacted about ten days in a row by IEDs and I'm still here. For driving from A to B, the Mastiff is excellent. I don't think the latest losses are the fault of the kit at all.



TPR ERIC MOKUOANU (QDG)

The CVRTs (Combat Vehicle Reconnaissance (Tracked)) were showing their age but at least they've got the new ones now. The food was good because the Americans took over. It's always good for morale if you've got a good cookhouse. For me just getting to Afghanistan was a success and overall I enjoyed myself – it's better than being stuck in the UK.



LCPL PAUL GALLAGHER (QDG)

Our objective was to stop the Taliban transporting weapons through the area. The fact that the Taliban knew we were there stopped a lot of weapons getting up north. All the locals said they felt a lot safer knowing we were there. I had rejoined after a break and the tour helped me get back into Army life. I definitely enjoyed the tour, but the state of the CVRTs let things down.



LCPL MIKE DODD (QDG)

It was a lot harder than I thought it would be. We had significant achievements out there and anybody who says the Army has achieved nothing is talking nonsense. The locals were coming out and being a lot more friendly. In terms of kit, it is my personal opinion that the body armour is too heavy. If it was lighter we would be able to last a lot longer out on the ground.



TPR JOE FORD (QDG)

I worked on the Jackal and CVRT. I enjoyed Jackal a lot more because they were reliable and had a lot more menace. We lost two of our boys out there and we had to pick ourselves up. I've matured a hell of a lot and learnt to rely on myself to get out of problems. Drills and skills must be on form, so as not to let the team down. Attention to detail makes a lot of difference.



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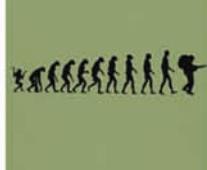


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