

SOLDIER

MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH ARMY

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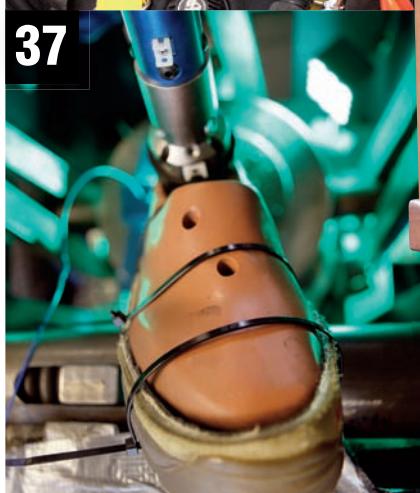
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Cover picture (left): Gdsm Charlie Leonard (Gren Gds) takes part in Exercise Prairie Thunder 3 at the British Army Training Unit Suffield

Picture: Graeme Main

Background image: The Challenger 2 main battle tank flexes its muscles on the Canadian grasslands (pages 25-27) Picture: Graeme Main

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Hot shot (right): Sig Sudin Gurung (R Signals), winner of HM The Queen's Medal at the Army Operational Shooting Competition (page 12)

Picture: Alan Keating



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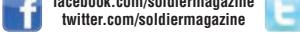
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"Almost there, Stanley... now we need to programme in the 'let go' bit."

● Parade ground to podium – pages 40-43

Hacking the pace of change

WHAT a fantastic few weeks it has been to bury bad – or indeed any sort of – news. If personnel weren't feeling sufficiently unsettled by the wait for redundancy announcements, I expect that watching the Murdoch-crazed media skim over crucial details of our long-term equipment and staffing reforms (pages 8-9) was the tipping-point at which many Servicemen and women were left feeling quite devalued. Are those who are not in theatre invisible?

As barbed debate around the phone hacking scandal continues, personnel across the ranks appear to have been anything but distracted from their varying visions of what the British Army of ten years' time might look like.

Debate has begun. And in close succession to Lord Levene's Defence Reform Review, which called for sweeping changes to the running of the MoD, the publication of the Future Reserves 2020 report (page 7) has made incredibly real the era of flux that is now upon us.

So how are these changes being received across the Service? And will those staff who remain after the redundancy rounds (page 23) be able to adapt to a new-look British Army?

The manning changes outlined in FR20, namely to increase the number of Reservists serving our country, certainly seem to have been greeted with tolerance so far. Even in my short time as editor, I have heard many full-time soldiers pay tribute to the crucial role of the Territorial Army on operations in Afghanistan.

Former Field Army Commander, Lt Gen Sir Graeme Lamb, told the *Daily Telegraph* recently that extending the scope of our Territorial component would create "a new personnel concept" that will "harness throughout their working life the individual and collective talents of the people we have carefully recruited, selected, trained and educated."

If the troops exercising at the British Army Training Unit Suffield in Canada (pages 25-27) are anything to go by, this is a sentiment echoed by serving soldiers and officers alike.

Chatting to personnel on Exercise Prairie Thunder 3, I met a captain who, after a number of years retired from full-time service, decided to rejoin as a Reservist. Why? A close friend of his who was due to deploy to Afghanistan had died suddenly. Moved by the committed intent of his friend to undertake the Helmand mission, the Londoner decided to return to the Army in order to finish the job his pal had been unable to.

If such commitment is the measure of your average Reservist, I for one will be viewing this overhaul with optimism.

As we stare towards the future, battling what is perhaps a characteristic aversion to change in the military, having an open mind seems crucial. This necessity has shown itself to be something of a theme in this month's issue.

In an interview with *Soldier*, movie star Dominic Cooper explains how playing Saddam Hussein's son altered his whole perception of the war in Iraq (pages 46-47). Civilian staff at Imperial College, London, show that it isn't just the military working hard to minimise the impact of IEDs in Helmand (pages 37-39). And accident investigators explain that they don't operate in the world of finger-pointing that many people consign them to (pages 30-31).

With the security of Lashkar Gah handed back to Afghan forces last month (page 11), it is clear that change is upon us. And if my own conversations with personnel are a flavour of forthcoming response, I think the chain of command can feel confident that you, our intelligent and ever-professional soldiers, will hack it really rather well. – **Sarah Goldthorpe, Editor**

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Picture: Sgt Rupert Fere, RLC

Fox commits to 'formidable' future force

SIGNIFICANT and wide-ranging changes to the structure of the British Army have been revealed by the Defence Secretary.

Following an independent review of Reserve forces across the Services, Dr Liam Fox announced plans for a 120,000-strong Army with a Regular-to-Reserve ratio of 70:30 by 2020 (page 9). To meet this vision, £1.5 billion will be invested in growing the Territorial Army over the next decade.

On the same day, the minister announced the outcome of a military base review (page 8) and committed to increasing the department's equipment budget by more than £3 billion after 2015 (page 9).

Taken together, Dr Fox said the changes formed the Government's long-term vision for the make-up of the military – called Future Force 2020.

He said: "This commitment to increase defence equipment funding after 2015 will ensure the Armed Forces

remain a formidable fighting force on the world stage.

"I am determined to maintain Britain's position in the international premier league and to ensure that our Army, Royal Navy and Royal Air Force are given the tools they need to do their vital work."

The Chief of the Defence Staff, Gen Sir David Richards, added that the changes represented a "key step forward" in the radical transformation programme being undertaken by the MoD.

He said: "If we get it right, this will result in a modern, hard-hitting joint force still capable of operating at the divisional level across the full spectrum of conflict."

Mark Phillips, research fellow at the Royal United Services Institute, said that although many people interpreted an increase in Reserve soldiers as a cost-cutting measure, the change would allow the British Army of the future to benefit from the cyber, culture

and intelligence skills of people who currently work outside the Service.

"FR20 is therefore right to call for rebalancing," he added. "Undoubtedly there will be risks involved, but these are manageable provided there is political and institutional willingness to develop a more sophisticated approach to force generation."

The increase in equipment spend was announced two weeks after the Defence Select Committee found that the MoD could not account for around £6 billion-worth of equipment.

In a report published on July 4, MPs said the department was unaware of the location of radios worth £184 million and could not provide evidence of the existence and condition of assets.

Chairman James Arbuthnot MP said: "This is not some abstract problem existing only on paper: equipment is needed by troops in the field and proper logistics are an essential part of effective military operations."

Base decision 'balancing act'

MAJOR Army bases will be built up in Scotland and the east of England as British troops are brought back from Germany, the Government has announced.

Units will initially take over MoD sites to the south of Edinburgh including Kirknewton and Glencorse as well as the Royal Air Force base at Cottesmore in Rutland when it is vacated in 2013, under plans to structure fighting capability into five 6,000-strong multi-role brigades (MRBs).

Existing Service clusters in the south west around Salisbury and Catterick in Yorkshire will account for the remaining three formations.

Under plans announced in last year's Strategic Defence and Security Review, all 20,000 UK personnel based in Germany will return home by 2020.

Up to half will be re-based in Britain by 2015.

The first regiments returning are set to arrive at Pirbright in 2013, as well as Aldergrove in Northern Ireland and former RAF and Army bases in

to are the right ones."

RAF Leuchars near Fife is due to become an Army base and is expected to house two major units and a brigade headquarters after 2014.

Troops will also be stationed further north in Kinloss from 2014 and eventually on the east coast in Arbroath when the Royal Marines based there are moved to south west England.

In a bid to dispose of high value sites that are no longer needed, Craigiehall, Redford and Dreghorn barracks in Edinburgh and Waterbeach in Cambridgeshire will be sold.

Dr Fox added: "We will make efficient use of bases that become available for alternative uses; we will sell estate that is valuable and makes no sense to keep and protect vulnerable communities and increase the defence footprint.

"Most importantly of all, this plan will deliver a basing laydown for the future for our Armed Forces that offers them stability and enables the delivery of military capability."

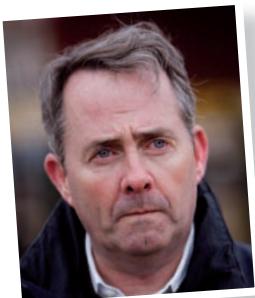
Proposals for restructuring the Army's personnel and support function under Project Avanti were also revealed.

The Service will maintain all ten regional brigade headquarters but HQ 2nd Division at Edinburgh, HQ 4th Division at Aldershot and HQ 5th Division at Shrewsbury will be disbanded and replaced with a single two-star command unit in Aldershot.

Changes to the Army's base layout will also see Northern Ireland-based 19 Light Brigade disbanded.

Detailed planning work with local authorities will now begin to take the proposed changes forward.

MILITARY MANOEUVRES



'We looked at this very carefully'

Defence Secretary, Dr Liam Fox

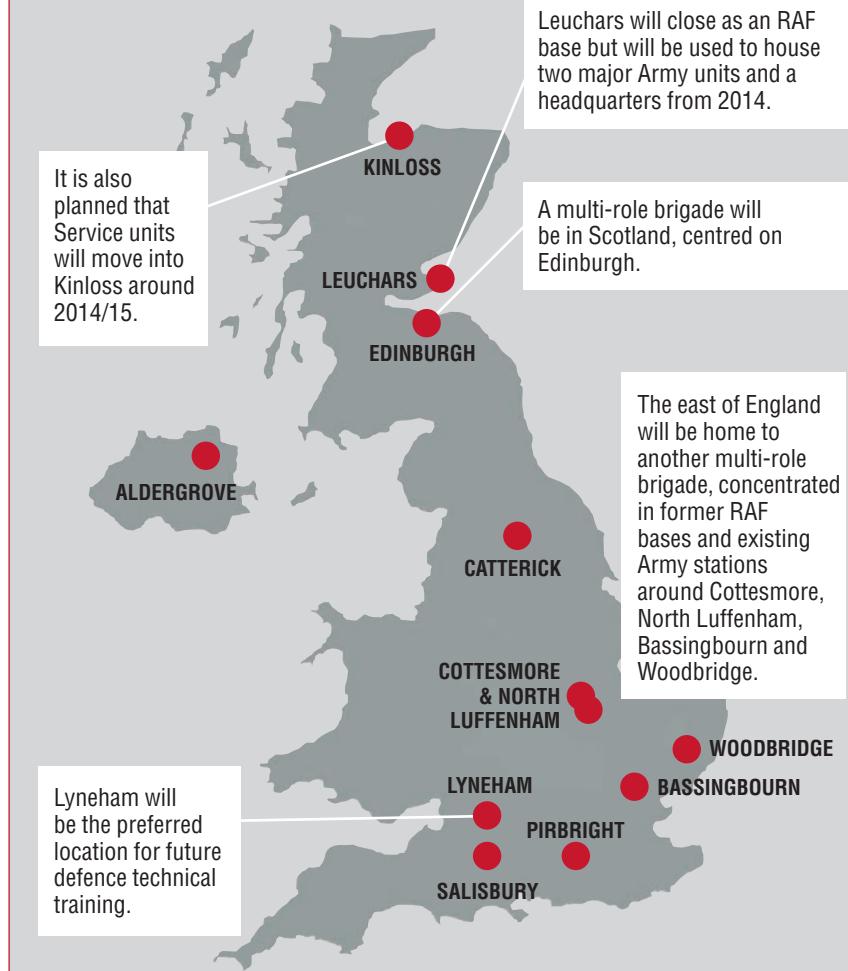
North Luffenham, Bassingbourn and Woodbridge from 2015 onwards.

Defence Secretary Dr Liam Fox said operational needs of the future Armed Forces was one of the main factors behind the changes, in addition to ensuring brigades are located close to suitable training areas.

The MoD is already in discussion with the Scottish government about possible sites and plans for a new training area for the multi-role brigade that will be centred in the country.

"This has been an incredibly complex decision and has inevitably been a balancing act," explained Dr Fox.

"There were many different options and permutations across the UK but we have looked at this very carefully and are sure that the conclusions we have come





Reservist boost for Service

RESERVE forces will play a bigger role in the British Army of the future.

A £1.5-billion investment package will revitalise and boost the capability and trained strength of the Territorial Army over the next ten years, the Defence Secretary has said.

Dr Liam Fox announced the proposals as the independent Future Reserves 2020 report recommended the numbers of part-time and full-time soldiers be rebalanced to make the Service more cost-effective.

The MoD will set out plans for a 120,000-strong Army with the aspiration of achieving a ratio of 70 per cent Regulars to 30 per cent Reserves by the end of the decade.

This would see the number of full-time personnel drop to 84,000.

The study into the future structure of Reserve forces proposed a recruiting and training surge to boost the number of TA troops to 30,000 by 2015, an increase of 10,000.

Chief of the Defence Staff, Gen Sir David Richards, said rebalancing the UK's Armed Forces would enable the MoD to plan for the future with a greater degree of certainty.

“Using the Reserves as an integral part of the overall forces available to Defence builds on the ‘one Army’ concept that has been successfully employed over the past decade of operations in Afghanistan and Iraq,” the general added.

The Future Reserves Study 2020 noted that while the contribution of



Picture: Mike Weston

Quality reserve: TA soldiers from The London Regiment get ready for deployment to Afghanistan

volunteer troops to current operations had been outstanding, the wider TA was badly configured and had been neglected due to financial pressures.

The independent review was commissioned by the Prime Minister and carried out by Vice Chief of the Defence Staff, General Sir Nicholas Houghton, former TA officer and Tory MP Julian Brazier and retired lieutenant general Graeme Lamb.

Gen Houghton described it as “a once in a generation opportunity” to change the way Reserve Forces are organised for the better.

He added that it would enable Armed Forces to better meet the security challenges of the future”.

The report recommended bolstering British part-time units to a Regular-Reservist ratio comparable to other Nato countries.

Part-time personnel currently account for less than 20 per cent of UK Servicemen and women, whereas in Canada and the United States the figure is 35 per cent, and 25 per cent in Australia.

The committee's findings also suggested that TA troops could be deployed to deal with a wider range of military tasks including “homeland security” and major incidents in the UK, making use of highly skilled personnel such as stabilisation specialists, linguists, cultural advisors and cyber experts.

NEWS IN BRIEF

COMBINED COMBAT

■ DESERT Rat soldiers from 7th Armoured Brigade have linked up with their French counterparts on a headquarters exercise across the Channel.

Exercise Flandres was held at a military training base near Mailly-le-Camp and involved 1,500 military personnel, including 450 British troops, working together to build a closer operational relationship.

The serial follows a similar exchange in March when personnel from the Coldstream Guards visited the country.

CAR CRASH IN SENNELAGER

■ A SOLDIER has been killed and several others injured in a car accident in Sennelager, Germany.

Eight troops were hit by a vehicle in the incident, which left one soldier seriously injured. German police are investigating the crash.

Incoming kit confirmed

ARMED Forces equipment will be boosted by a £3 billion budget increase after 2015, the Defence Secretary has confirmed.

Dr Liam Fox said the commitment to increase future spending by one per cent a year in real terms would allow the MoD to procure key pieces of kit over the coming decade.

The Secretary of State confirmed the department would buy 14 extra Chinook helicopters as well as three new Airseeker signals intelligence and surveillance aircraft from 2014 onwards.

Upgraded Warrior armoured vehicles and the development of a Global Combat Ship are also included in the plans.

Extra funds will also finance upgrades to the new Queen Elizabeth class aircraft carriers and initial spending on the Joint Strike Fighter fast jets, known as Lightning II, from 2020 onwards.

Dr Fox promised the programme would turn the “unfunded aspirations” of the last government into “real contracts and real equipment” to bolster British troops for the future.

The plans are part of ongoing work to implement recommendations made in the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR), which addressed a multi-billion pound deficit in the department's finances.

“For the first time in a generation, the MoD will have brought its plans and budget broadly into balance, allowing it to plan with confidence for the delivery of the future equipment programme,” said the Secretary of State.

A fully funded and balanced ten-year equipment plan is due to be published by September, with the National Audit Office set to carry out an affordability analysis on it – the first of its kind.



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Troops hand over Lashkar Gah

BRITISH forces have formally passed responsibility for security in the capital of Helmand province to their Afghan counterparts.

Lashkar Gah is the fourth of seven districts in the country to be transferred to local army and police control in a key milestone on the road to complete withdrawal of coalition forces.

Defence Secretary Dr Liam Fox paid tribute to the UK troops involved in training, partnering and mentoring home-grown soldiers and policemen over the past five years.

"They have achieved great things and their resolve, determination and professionalism in taking the fight to the Taliban and developing the local forces has undoubtedly made Great Britain a safer place," he said.

"We have a solid base to build on as we work with our Afghan and international partners towards full transition – security, governance and development – over the coming years."

Dr Fox added that the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) had proven they were capable of protecting local people in the area and foreign troops would no longer be involved in routine patrols.

"The ANSF already provide security in Lashkar Gah and the capacity of local government is improving," he said.

"By 2014 they will be in the lead for all such operations across Afghanistan and UK Servicemen and women will have moved from a combat role to one of support."

In an open letter, provincial governor Gulab Mangal said the sacrifices made by coalition troops would never be forgotten by local communities.

He added: "I am especially proud that the people of Helmand, like the other places in Afghanistan, are starting to take control of this beautiful province."

The announcement came after Prime Minister David Cameron revealed that



Picture: Graeme Main

Supportive: An Afghan police officer thanks Cpl Chris Jones (AGC (RMP)) for a vehicle search lesson

the number of British troops deployed on Op Herrick would be reduced by 500 – to 9,000 – by the end of the year.

This followed an earlier declaration that 426 Service personnel would return from short-term deployments.

Mr Cameron told MPs that the UK was entering a new phase in which Afghan forces would be increasingly responsible for fighting and patrolling, while British troops focused on training and mentoring alone.

"Having taken such a huge share of the burden and having performed so magnificently for a decade now, the country needs to know that there is an end point to the level of our current commitment and to our combat operations," the Prime Minister said.

A report published shortly afterwards by the House of Commons Defence Committee warned against the withdrawal of coalition assets too soon, noting that the ANSF and Afghan government still faced "many

challenges" before a full transition could take place.

While paying tribute to those who have served in Afghanistan since 2006 the group criticised the MoD for failing to anticipate the extent to which the initial deployment of UK forces to Helmand province might "stir up a hornet's nest".

It also drew attention to what was described as insufficient troop numbers at the start of Op Herrick and highlighted concerns that pressure from operations in Libya might lead to more breaches of harmony guidelines.

The handover of security in Lashkar Gah was overshadowed by the news of several high-profile killings elsewhere in Afghanistan.

The younger half-brother of President Hamid Karzai was reported to have been gunned down by his security guard at his home in Kandahar and Jan Mohammad Khan, another close ally of the leader, was shot dead in Kabul just days later.



APACHE helicopters operated by the Army Air Corps are continuing to protect Libyan civilians from Col Muammar Gaddafi's offensive forces.

As part of precision strikes during last month, the heavily armed British gunships attacked troops involved in the repression of western Libya's population.

In one mission on July 13, the Army asset targeted three hostile road checkpoints using Hellfire missiles and cannon fire, destroying four military structures and seven vehicles.

Maj Gen Nick Pope, spokesman for operations, said that since action began

in March, British strikes had destroyed or damaged some 590 enemy objectives, ranging from main battle tanks and heavy artillery to command bunkers and secret police facilities.

"UK forces continue to make a significant contribution to the Nato-led Operation Unified Protector," he said.

"As ever, these effective air missions have relied heavily on tanker and surveillance assets, including the Sentinel airborne platform."

Reconnaissance capability has been further boosted by the deployment of four extra RAF Tornado GR4s.



“IT DRIVES YOU SLIGHTLY MAD WHEN YOU LOOK THROUGH THE EYES OF A MANIAC FOR HOURS A DAY BECAUSE YOU START TO THINK LIKE THEM”

– BRIT STAR DOMINIC COOPER REFLECTS ON PLAYING SADDAM’S SON, PAGES 46-47

Pictures: Steve Dack



On target: Personnel faced a series of challenging Helmand-based scenarios during the Army Operational Shooting Competition at Bisley and Pirbright

Military sharpshooters hit the mark

SERVICE marksmen faced a strict examination of their skill and accuracy at arms during another hard-fought Army Operational Shooting Competition.

More than 200 soldiers took to the ranges at Bisley and Pirbright for the annual contest, which featured a host of matches and serials based on the challenges personnel now face on the ground in southern Afghanistan.

The event has undergone significant changes in recent times and the evolution continued in 2011 as competitors faced 17 different scenarios

that covered aspects such as night shoots, rapid-fire drills and engaging moving targets.

One of the key additions this year was an exercise which tasked troops with defending a forward operating base.

Four-man teams raced through the Pirbright woodland before manning firing points in a building and shooting at targets in the distance.

“All of these matches replicate scenarios from the contemporary operating environment,” competition coordinator Maj Clem Cleminson (SASC) told *Soldier*.

“The forward operating base serial is similar to what our guys face in Afghanistan. They need to have quick reactions and they will find themselves in a defensive situation against a static and fleeting enemy.

“All of these matches are more advanced than the annual combat marksmanship test. It is the best measure of where these soldiers are in terms of operational standards.

“The individuals concerned can then go back to their units with a view of how to raise the bar across the board.”

Personnel were shooting at targets from ten to 800 metres away in a series of individual and team competitions that offered prizes for those with the best accuracy. The event also had an international feel, with visiting troops from Canada and Oman joining their UK counterparts on the range.

For young soldiers in the British Army, the contest proved to be a valuable training exercise ahead of future operational deployments.

“I think it is a great experience,” explained Cpl Ian Frain (4 CS Bn

REME). “You come here and learn how to shoot.

“It teaches you how to fire at moving targets, which is what we have to do on operations. There is also a physical side to it. On some of the advance-to-contact matches you can cover two-and-a-half kilometres before firing; it is hard work but fantastic training.”

Teammate Cfn Josh Potter also spoke in glowing terms about the competition.

He said: “It is very beneficial. This is a lot more operations-based and I would highly recommend it to anyone who can get the time off work to compete. The physical side is really good. You run around and get out of breath; that is what we will face in Afghanistan.”

“We prepared well beforehand but I did not expect it to be this tough. We are doing four or five shoots a day, which is training you may not get elsewhere. This competition has given me greater confidence in my shooting and I feel much more advanced compared to six months ago.”

RESULTS

■ Individual standings: 1, Sig Sudin Gurung (R Signals); 2, WO2 Cook (Int Corps); 3, Sgt Devprakash Gurung (R Signals); 4, Capt Bharat Shrestha (R Signals); 5, Sig Robin Gurung (R Signals); 6, Cpl Durga Gurung (R Signals); 7, LBdr Gowin (RA); 8, Sig Ramesh Rai (R Signals); 9, Pte Ramesh Gurung (RLC); 10, Cpl Khagendra Tamang (R Signals).

■ Inter-unit standings: 1, 2 Sig Regt; 2, 1 RGR; 3, 30 Signals.



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Improved Warrior gets theatre thumbs up

UPGRADED tracked troop carriers have saved British soldiers from serious injury just weeks after arriving in theatre.

More than 70 of the armoured Warrior vehicles used in southern Afghanistan have been given a £40 million facelift to boost their mobility and bomb-blast protection.

Personnel from 3rd Battalion, The Mercian Regiment were the first to benefit from the enhancements when a patrol in the Durai East region of Helmand province was struck by an improvised explosive device.

All those travelling in the carrier escaped without serious injury despite the force of the detonation being big enough to knock the 40-tonne machine onto its side.

The improved Warrior has a new modular protection system that allows on-board defences to be customised to combat changing operational threats.

It also boasts Formula One-derived brakes and enhanced suspension and seating systems.

Maj Charlie Hunt (RTR), requirements manager for tracked vehicles at Defence, Equipment and Support, said: "Guys in theatre have been using words like 'awesome' to describe it because around 30 updates have been made for protection, comfort, air conditioning and manoeuvrability."

"The Warrior is very important – it's a key part of our arsenal.



Picture: BAE Systems

Track change: A beefed-up Warrior is readied for loading onto a C17 Globemaster at RAF Brize Norton

"The guys in the back are the infantry being delivered to their objective."

Pete Howland, the chief engineer at BAE Systems who oversaw the project, said the improvements allowed commanders to strike a balance between mobility and protection, depending on the operational environment they face.

"There is a mix of threats out there so we have given the Warrior the modularity to respond," he added.

The urgent operational requirement upgrade is the latest in a series of

adaptations made to the vehicle since it was first deployed to Iraq in 2005.

Protective plates and bar armour have increased the troop carrier's weight and other modifications include: clever seating design to improve mine protection and comfort; better driver vision with three periscopes providing a wider field of view and night-vision capability; increased low-speed mobility and climbing performance; enhanced air conditioning and the provision of on-board wire cutters.

LEAGUE OF GENTLEMEN			
	SWAG	FORCE FOR GOOD	QUIDS IN
1	£100 million	MAGNIFICENT MILESTONE People up and down the UK have helped a four-year-old charity reach an extraordinary stage in its fund-raising endeavours	Help for Heroes
2	£12,000	TOTTENHAM TOUR Three REME warrant officers cycled from Newcastle FC's stadium to Tottenham Hotspur's home ground in London, taking in every Premier League football club along the way in a 630-mile trip	ABF The Soldiers' Charity
3	£5,000	SCOTLAND CIRCUIT A four-man team from The Royal Scots Dragoon Guards cycled 1,250 miles around Scotland to raise money for the regiment's welfare charity	Caring for Courage
4	£3,000	WINDY WATERS Veteran Martin Dunford navigated 66 miles of the Highlands of Scotland in a coast-to-coast canoeing challenge that saw him tackle eight-foot waves and gale force winds during a three-day mission	Honour Our Troops, ABF The Soldiers' Charity and Diabetes UK
5	£1,000	X-FACTOR ACTION 14-year-old Rachael Morton and 15-year-old Amy Carnall impressed friends and family by staging a pop music show in Beighton near Sheffield	Help for Heroes

■ ONLY those with the keenest noses will have sniffed-out the solution to July's tricky spine line competition.

Inspired by a feature on military canines, we were looking for the names of the chief executives of some popular and well-loved UK doggy institutions.

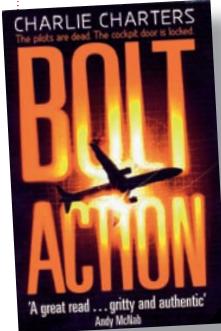
(Claire) Horton, (Richard) Leamon, (Clarissa) Baldwin and (Rosemary) Smart head up Battersea Dogs Home, Guide Dogs for the Blind, Dogs Trust and the Kennel Club respectively.

This month we have five copies of Charlie Charters' *Bolt Action* to give away.

To stand a chance of winning, tell us what links the words on the side of this month's issue.

Answers to the usual address or comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk by August 31. Winners will be drawn at random and the usual rules apply.

Good luck!





Picture: Sgt Ian Forsyth, RLC

Home from home: Rfn Linden Woodford (3 Rifles) makes himself comfortable at Tedworth House

Soldiers start road to recovery

INJURED personnel have been settling into their new surroundings at Tedworth House after the Army's Personnel Recovery Centre opened its doors to residents last month.

The historic site in Wiltshire offers accommodation to 29 Servicemen and women and the capacity will rise to 50 when the second phase of an extensive building and refurbishment programme is completed next year.

One of the first to arrive at the facility was Rfn Linden Woodford (3 Rifles), who suffered shrapnel wounds to his stomach and internal organs following a firefight in southern Afghanistan in 2009.

He said: "Having a place like this means a lot. After receiving my treatment in Birmingham and then Headley Court I was stuck at home for six months.

"I didn't dwell on things but being here just speeds up your improvement.

"You have your own personal recovery officer who is always talking with you about what is going on and you have everything you require.

"All the contacts you need for your future are here and it keeps your mind occupied by doing things."

Tedworth House offers a range of medical, welfare, education and rehabilitation facilities that are aimed at preparing personnel for a return to Service life or a new career outside the Armed Forces.

The centre forms part of a wider defence recovery capability that will include similar establishments in Edinburgh, Colchester, Catterick and Plymouth to meet the needs of injured soldiers.

Bombardier's bullet brush



SERVICEMAN Bdr James Hallam (RA) had a lucky escape when the strap of his helmet was hit by a Taliban bullet in Helmand province.

The 27-year-old has been in theatre since April with the Warthog Group and the Royal Marines of 42 Commando.

But on his first patrol with the Brigade Reconnaissance Force in an insurgent area east of Lashkar Gah, the soldier came under fire from enemy fighters.

"I could hear the bullets whizzing past me and all I was focusing on was firing back," Bdr Hallam said.

"I knew that one had come pretty close to me because I heard the noise, felt the heat and the force of it knocked me over.

"But it wasn't until later that I realised just how close it'd come."

The bullet had hit the underside of his helmet, severing the strap. It left no mark on his head.

"I am a seriously lucky guy," a relieved Bdr Hallam added.

NEWS IN BRIEF

REPORTER RATES RIFLES

■ A NEWSPAPER reporter has paid tribute to personnel from 1st Battalion, The Rifles who he said saved his life.

Bournemouth Echo journalist Stephen Bailey was on a two-week press trip to Helmand province to see the Dorset Infantry battalion in action.

But three days into the visit he was taken ill with severe heat stroke.

He collapsed and was later flown to Birmingham's Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

In an article of thanks published in the daily newspaper, Bailey praised to the troops, doctors and nurses who assisted him.

"I was lucky the soldiers were so well drilled and professional," he said.

"The nurses who helped me were fantastic – reassuring and attentive.

"While I'm sure I was just one more patient to them, I will always remember the professionalism and care of the people who helped me from a dusty Afghan roadside all the way back to a fifth floor hospital ward in Birmingham."

TROOP TAX RELIEF

■ COUNCIL tax relief for overseas troops has been doubled by the MoD.

Those posted abroad on eligible operations, including Iraq and Afghanistan, will now receive a 50 per cent discount on their bills.

The change forms part of the Armed Forces Covenant. It has been extended to personnel deployed in the joint operational area in support of Op Ellamy, who are now also eligible to receive the operational allowance.

BRIGADE CAP BADGE BENEFIT

■ GURKHA clerks have been given their own cap badge in a bid to boost their career prospects.

The Gurkha Staff and Personnel Support company has been formed under the command of the existing Brigade of Gurkhas.

Personnel from the unit will be able to compete for skilled posts within the Adjutant General's Corps after five years of service.

Their clerical training will also be brought in line with the wider Army.

The move follows a wide-ranging review of terms and conditions of service for the brigade.

CHINOOK CRASH APOLOGY

■ DEFENCE Secretary Dr Liam Fox has said sorry to the families of two Royal Air Force pilots who were wrongly blamed for the Mull of Kintyre helicopter crash in 1994.

Flight lieutenants Jonathan Tapper and Richard Cook were accused of gross negligence over the accident, in which 29 people died.

But a fresh review found they should not have been held responsible.

"I would like to apologise on behalf of the MoD for the sorrow which was caused to them by this finding," Dr Fox said.

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ARMY



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IN MEMORIAM



Hldr SCOTT MCLAREN (20)
4TH BATTALION,
THE ROYAL REGIMENT OF SCOTLAND
KIA JULY 4 – AFGHANISTAN

PERSONNEL from 4th Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland are mourning the loss of a determined and accomplished colleague who died while on operations in Helmand province.

Hldr Scott McLaren was based at Check Point Salaang, in the Nahr-e Saraj (South) district, where he was tasked with holding and securing a vital bridgehead that had been established as part of Op Omid Haft.

On the morning of July 4 the 20-year-old was reported as missing. An extensive search was mounted and his body was found later that day.

The Edinburgh-born soldier joined the Army in 2009 and was posted to 4 Scots in Germany after completing his basic training.

"He quickly became the most reliable and

conscientious member of his platoon, always happy to take on extra work and always the first to volunteer for any task," said Lt Col Alastair Aitken, CO of 4 Scots. "Whether on exercise, on operations or just on a night out with friends he was a man who put 100 per cent into everything he did with a real sense of dedication to both work and colleagues."

Lt Simon Taylor added: "Hldr McLaren would always push himself to his limits to be the fittest and the fastest in his company, driven by the desire to be the best soldier that he could be."

The Serviceman leaves behind his parents James and Ann, sister Kirsty and brothers James and Ross.



LCPL PAUL WATKINS (24)
C SQUADRON,
9TH/12TH ROYAL LANCERS
KIA JULY 16 – AFGHANISTAN

A DETERMINED and intelligent Serviceman who proved to be the embodiment of a counter-insurgency soldier has been killed while on patrol in Helmand province.

LCpl Paul Watkins, of the 9th/12th Royal Lancers, was operating in an area west of Gereshk when his team was targeted by enemy fire and the 24-year-old was fatally wounded.

He joined the Army in 2007 as a Foreign and Commonwealth soldier from South Africa.

After completing basic training he was posted to the 9/12 L and served on Op Telic 12, where he was part of the mentoring and training team to the Iraqi airborne forces.

Lt Col William Fooks, commanding officer of the 9/12 L, said: "LCpl Watkins was absolutely

someone you'd want on your team and by your side: tough, hugely dependable and determined yet compassionate.

"When all around him was frenzied activity, he would be serenely and reassuringly calm.

"Combined with his arid sense of humour and his disarming grin, a big problem very quickly became no problem at all."

Maj Simon Doherty added: "Naturally gifted, courageous and a born leader, he worked hard in everything he did to help deliver his part in establishing peace in central Helmand."

LCpl Watkins leaves behind his mother Jill, father Rod and brothers Luke and Simon. In a statement, the family said: "He was proud to be a soldier; he died doing a job he loved."



CPL MARK PALIN (32)
1ST BATTALION,
THE RIFLES
KIA JULY 18 – AFGHANISTAN

A HUGELY respected soldier with a passion for family life, football and the Army has been killed by an improvised explosive device.

Cpl Mark Palin, of 1st Battalion, The Rifles, was involved in an operation to clear and exploit a cache of bomb components in the Nahr-e Saraj district of Helmand province.

As the second in command of a 12-man multiple, he was guiding his men on a patrol when he was caught in the blast.

The 32-year-old joined the Service in 1996 and went on to serve in Northern Ireland and Iraq.

Lt Col James de la Billiere, commanding officer of 1 Rifles, said: "Cpl Palin was a battalion personality through and through.

He thrived on the friendship of many and was generous to a fault in the friendship he gave in return.

"This was the very essence of the man; always putting others first and taking huge enjoyment in making others smile and laugh, no matter how difficult the circumstances."

Cpl Palin was an avid Tottenham Hotspur fan and played football for his battalion. He leaves behind wife Carla and his young son Lennon, along with father Paul, brother Matthew and sister Louise.

In a statement, the family said: "He was a devoted family man who adored his son and was so looking forward to the birth of his daughter. He will be deeply missed by all who knew him."

Diamond decoration for troops

A NEW medal to celebrate the Queen's 60 years on the throne will be presented to military personnel next year, Culture Secretary Jeremy Hunt has announced.

Regulars and Reservists who have completed five full years of employment on the Diamond Jubilee, February 6, 2012, will receive the one-off decoration.

Other recipients will include living holders of the Victoria and George Crosses, members of the royal household, emergency services staff and the Prison Service.

The Chief of the Defence Staff, Gen Sir David Richards, said: "This honour recognises the important and difficult job our Armed Forces have carried out defending our nation and its interests, both at home and abroad.

"It is a fitting tribute to their dedication and professionalism."

Prior to Mr Hunt's statement, some speculation had surrounded the question of whether all personnel will be eligible for the medal.

In a letter to *Talkback* last month, ex-Metropolitan Police officer Nick Johnson

said: "I believe the decoration should be awarded to all serving and retired members of the Armed Forces, emergency services and any other 'eiusdem generis' whose contribution through their period of service has been during the Queen's reign."



“IF WE'D BEEN BEATEN BY A BETTER AND MORE TALENTED TEAM THEN I WOULD NOT FEEL SO DISAPPOINTED”

– ARMY CRICKET BOSS LOOKS BACK IN ANGER, PAGES 86-87



Picture: Sgt Steven Hughes, RLC



Royal reception for returning heroes

THE Duchess of Cambridge enjoyed a joke with troops during her husband's first official engagement with 1st Battalion, Irish Guards at their barracks in Windsor.

The Duke of Cambridge, who became the colonel of the unit earlier this year, presented operational medals to the soldiers on their return from a gruelling six-month tour of Afghanistan.

Speaking to the assembled parade, he said: “I am proud to be your colonel. I am humbled by the thought of the sacrifices that you and your

families have made and the losses you have suffered – all in the service of our country.

“Along with thousands of others back home, I followed your tour in Afghanistan with a mounting sense of awe. You have done honour to the name of your great regiment.”

The previous day a statue of a guardsman wearing Osprey body armour was unveiled in Windsor town centre.

It was made using metal salvaged from figures of Saddam Hussein's generals in Basra.

The artist behind the monument, Mark Jackson, left the Army in 2003 after eight years in The Parachute Regiment.

He said: “I wanted to highlight the quiet courage and nobility that's required of these guys on tour.”

His father, Gen Sir Mike Jackson, a former Chief of the General Staff, added: “Regardless of who sculpted it, the statue is magnificent.”

“But the fact that my son is the artist behind it makes me hugely proud.”

Toughened technology to track kit

BRITISH troops are being equipped with the latest all-weather laptop computers to help them keep tabs on key pieces of kit.

The MoD has signed a £30 million deal to provide the Services with 12,500 portable PCs that are built to withstand rain showers and dust storms and cope with shocks, vibrations and drops from over one metre.

The toughened machines use the Joint Asset Management Solutions (James) capability, which was rolled-out last year.

Defence Equipment and Support project manager Stewart Ward told *Soldier* the computers would allow personnel to track any of the nine million pieces of Armed Forces land-based equipment from wherever they are in the world.

“The James system will help look after assets from vehicles to small arms, basically anything with a serial number, which could be on the parade ground in Wimborne or on the front line of Afghanistan,” he said.

“It knows where it is, where it has been, what it has done and what state it is in.

“If you need a 30mm gun it will tell you where one is available and whether it is on a Warrior or a Scimitar.”

Mr Ward added: “This gives visibility of assets from the front line all the way back to the depot, and brings the whole of defence into a single view for the first time.”

New laptops have already been dispatched to personnel from 4th Mechanized Brigade and the next batch will be delivered to troops at the British Army Training Unit Suffield in Canada this summer.

Peter Molyneux, from manufacturer Getac, told *Soldier* the “ruggedised” hardware had been designed specifically to meet the requirements of the Armed Forces.

“Our guys out there [on operations] will be working in difficult environments and the computer is an important tool so it has to work.

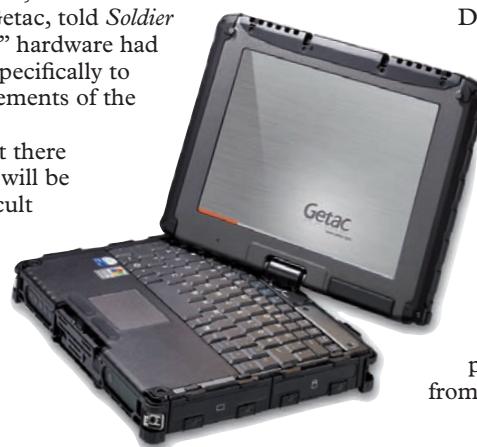
“It looks

rugged and it is – it weighs two kilos because it has to have structural integrity,” he said. “We can't have nice little curved edges on there. This has bumpers on the corners which protect it.”

“It's a notebook-tablet hybrid – troops can use the keyboard for data input in an office and the touchscreen is very effective in the field.”

He added: “The MoD wanted something that could survive. If it gets wet or dirty it continues to work. It can be switched on at -10 degrees and still work at +55 degrees.”

Dutch troops in Helmand are already equipped with similar computers, which have proved their worth by surviving IED blasts. In one case, a laptop deflected shrapnel from its position on a vehicle dashboard, protecting passengers from injury.



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THE BIGGER PICTURE

PERSONNEL from 12th Mechanized Brigade put one of their prized Challenger 2 battle tanks to the test across the plains of the British Army Training Unit Suffield in Canada. Although not currently being used in theatre, the impressive 62-tonne vehicle is playing a significant part in troops' foundation training ahead of their deployment to Helmand province on Op Herrick 16 next year.

Picture: Graeme Main



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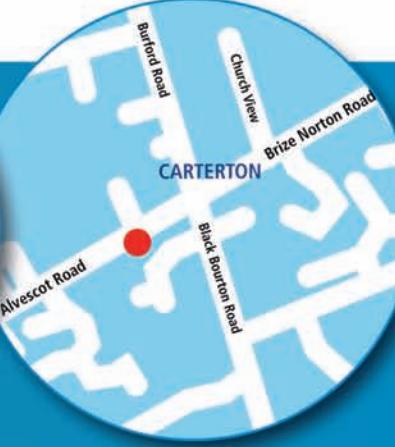
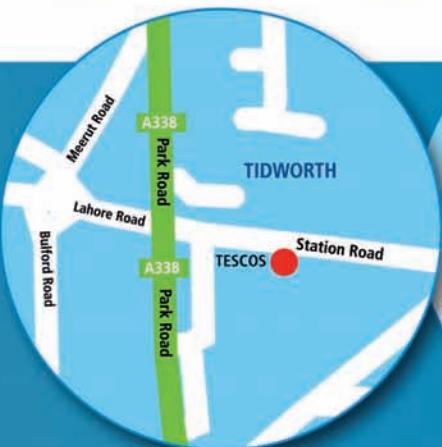
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Redundancy: the next step

THE first phase of cuts to the British Army's military workforce will take effect at the start of next month, and personnel are being urged to identify their notifying officer in preparation for the move.

Earlier this year hundreds of troops from across the Service applied to bring their careers to a premature end. But not all of them will be successful.

Applicants find out on September 1 if they are to be offered a redundancy package. Hundreds of others will lose their jobs involuntarily on the same day.

Brig Richard Nugee, Head of Army Manning, explained how the termination of roles would be handled and the process staff must follow.

"There will be up to 1,000 personnel being made redundant in tranche one," he said.

"Something like redundancy is far too important to hear about via a letter or email, which is why we want to ensure it is done face-to-face."

"The immediate commanders of Servicemen and women will act as notifiers. On the whole, they will be commanding officers but it is slightly more difficult with people serving in places far away such as the



“SOMETHING LIKE THIS IS FAR TOO IMPORTANT TO HEAR ABOUT VIA LETTER OR EMAIL, WHICH IS WHY WE WANT TO ENSURE IT IS DONE FACE-TO-FACE”

– BRIG RICHARD NUGEY, HEAD OF ARMY MANNING

Congo or elsewhere – someone has got to tell these men."

The brigadier urged those eligible to identify their notifying officer as soon as possible this month.

"On September 1, the notifiers will have 24 hours to tell someone whether or not they are going to be made redundant," he added.

"The key thing is that soldiers have a part to play in this; they need to know who this person is. They should not just wait to see if somebody tells them."

Servicemen and women who are made redundant will receive a leavers' pack that will give full details of what the next steps are and any entitlements, including information on pensions and resettlement.

The manning boss explained why some of those wishing to continue in the Army would not be able to, despite there being plenty of volunteers.

"Certain parts of the Service did not have any applicants and we wanted to reduce the surplus there, so we had to go for people that didn't apply," he said.

"Similarly, in other areas we have had to keep on people that wanted to leave because we need them to stay – they are too important to let go."

Cuts in tranche one will impact on all

ranks of the Army but will not include personnel who have been in the job for less than eight years.

"Redundancies are taking place right across the Service and there's no rank that isn't being looked at, apart from young officers," the brigadier said.

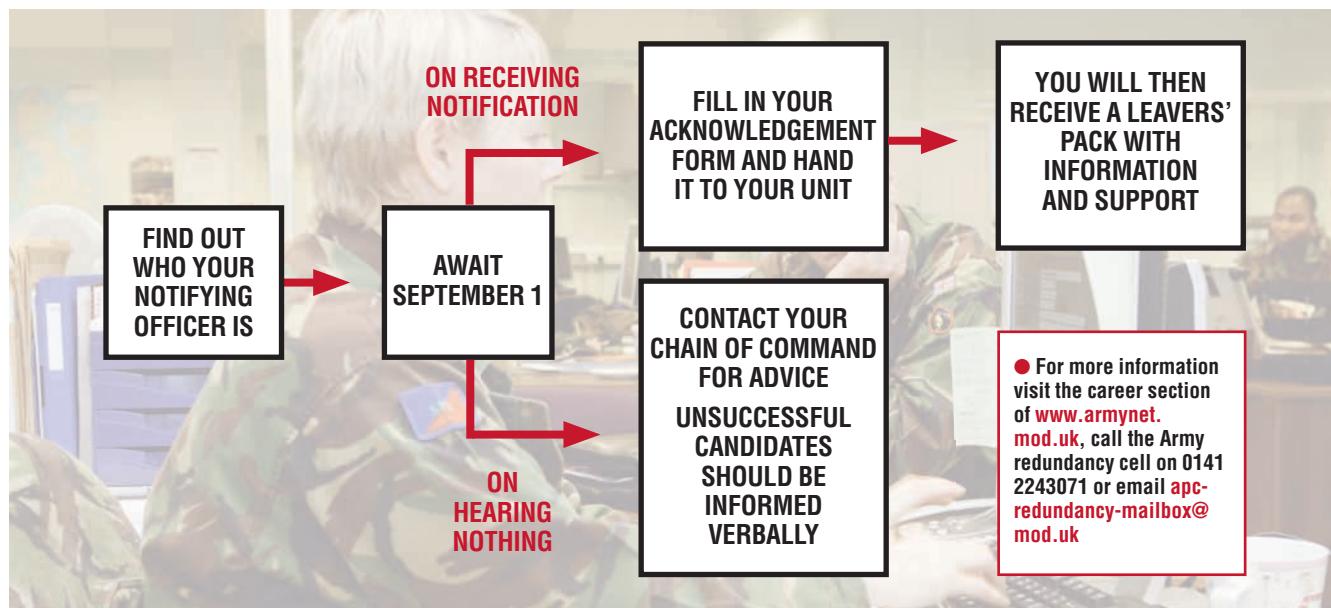
Last October the MoD announced that the Armed Forces would be cut by 17,000 by April 2015 under terms set out in the Strategic Defence and Security Review – 7,000 from the Army, 5,000 from the Royal Navy and 5,000 from the Royal Air Force.

REMEMBER

● **Soldiers serving on operations who successfully applied for redundancy will be required to finish their tour of duty before leaving the Service.**

● **Individuals who receive a notification letter must complete and sign the attached acknowledgement form and hand it to their unit notification officer.**

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ARMY



FUTURE FIGHT

CANADA READIES TROOPS FOR POST-HELMAND COMBAT

Report: Sarah Goldthorpe
Pictures: Graeme Main

AFGHANISTAN-themed scenarios may dominate the vast prairies of the Service's training base in southern Canada, but their lessons will reach far beyond Operation Herrick.

Soldier visited 12th Mechanized Brigade during Exercise Prairie Thunder 3 – a tough 20-day serial at the British Army Training Unit Suffield (Batus).

In addition to undertaking gruelling live-firing manoeuvres, IED patrols, ambushes and obstacle crossings, troops due to deploy to theatre next year interacted with Afghan actors playing both civilians and insurgents.

The course later culminated in a force-on-force tactical effect simulation exercise.

"This gives us the best possible foundation training we can hope for," explained commanding officer Lt Col Alex Potts (KRH).

"It is absolutely what we all joined the Army to do and although this is time away from our families, we all take a lot of professional satisfaction from it."

"The exercise gives us skills we can adapt for mission-specific training and experience that will be relevant after Afghanistan."

12 Mech Bde was assigned the role of a Nato task force from the fictional "United Western States".

Their mission was to remove the enemy from an oil and gas-rich district named Khalia. >>



Split into several battlegroups, troops fought an insurgent force played by 250 personnel from the same brigade.

"This is about turning young 18-year-olds into resilient soldiers who can stand living in conditions in patrol bases in Helmand," Lt Col Potts said.

"Low-level leadership can also be practised.

"I'm taking these guys to theatre next year and the motivation to get this right is all too clear to us."

Civilian interaction in foundation training exercises is a relatively new concept, according to incoming company commander Maj Jim Green (Gren Gds).

The role-players created complex situations that troops deployed to Sierra Leone, Iraq and Afghanistan have all found themselves dealing with in recent years.

"We have been undertaking 'influence patrols', talking to the local community and security forces, and that's a big change in exercises like this," Maj Green said. "We have gone out and spoken to civilians and developed a relationship within a village.

"We are considering cultural issues. War zones are traditionally areas of people waving guns, but the battlefields of today have civilians in them.

"A lot of this is about looking after and protecting that population, which is useful even at the lowest level. Guardsmen learn that if we are approachable, local people will come and talk to us but if we're aggressive they won't.

"If you go back ten years that element of training was always missing."

He added: "I'm really pleased with how this has gone. The exercise is deliberately progressive and introduces more things as we go along.

"It's fast and furious and we put officers and NCOs who have a huge amount of experience of Afghanistan together with those who have none.

"I don't think the majority of troops here will realise the relevance of this exercise until they get to that landscape.

"You can fit every single other British Army training area inside Batus."

"We can fire around the forward operating bases by 360 degrees which we can't do in the UK."

Lt Col Roly Walker (Gren Gds), commanding officer, was leading the opposing force in the serial.

"This is a very demanding exercise for all troops," he explained.

"There's a huge amount of training to be gained from the enemy side too. You can give much more responsibility to junior leaders and commanders and it's a good way for them to learn to out-think their enemy."

Following early morning IED patrols, troops from the "Nato" force explained how they were being tested by their opponents.

LCpl Bradley Jones (Gren Gds), who has deployed to Afghanistan twice before, said he had



Key player: A Challenger 2 battle tank shows its strength despite not being deployed in theatre



Blowback: Mortar fire is directed towards enemy forces from a mock forward operating base



learnt more command skills.

"You have to think a lot about your blokes, making sure they are always ready to go," he said.

2nd Lt Johnny Hathaway-White (Gren Gds) added: "So far the exercise has proved to be pretty realistic.

"It has been useful to utilise the experiences of guardsmen from theatre, which are much greater than my own."

Squadron leader Maj Julian Smith (KRH) said: "This has been a fantastic opportunity to integrate with other attached arms

and it's one of the only places where we can do live firing properly – you can get from one side of Salisbury Plain to the other in a couple of hours.

The serial's political situation and community interaction might closely parallel that of Op Herrick, but what it teaches will undoubtedly extend further into the future. The Challenger 2 main battle tank, for example, played a key role in last month's exercise despite the fact it has never been to Helmand province.

"At times it's hard to get the blokes out of the Afghanistan mindset," admitted Capt Tom Gibbs (KRH).

"For example, when there is an injury the troops expect helicopters to come and pick them up because that's what happens there.

"But that isn't always going to be the case. The breadth of things that can happen here is much larger."

Capt Chris Green of the London Regiment was playing an "influence officer" in the enemy force, helping to spread propaganda to people acting as media representatives. He echoed Capt Gibbs' sentiments.

"It's important that we don't become too theatre-specific," he said.

"Of course you need to train for the war you are fighting but you also need to train for the unexpected.

"If the Army becomes too limited in its training we may not be able to respond to the next threat. Lessons learnt in Afghanistan may not be appropriate elsewhere."

12 Mech Bde commander Brig Justin Maciejewski said: "The foundation we lay here in Batus will set our brigade in good stead for Operation Herrick next year but, more importantly, for what lies beyond – whatever that may be.

"This is a world-best training area which is ensuring we train a world-best army." ■

ABOUT 12TH MECHANIZED BRIGADE:

- **7,700 SOLDIERS**
- **LARGEST BRIGADE IN THE FIELD ARMY**
- **FIRST FORMATION TO DO TRAINING ROTATIONS UNSUPPORTED BY ANOTHER BRIGADE**

Digitally dangerous

Soldiers warned to stay safe online

Report: Sharon Kean

HINK before you share is the message at the heart of a hard-hitting campaign targeting social media-savvy troops.

With growing numbers of Armed Forces personnel, their families and friends using websites such as Bebo, Facebook, YouTube and Twitter to keep in touch, the risk of giving away too much personal information has never been greater.

As a result, the MoD has launched a 21st century version of the "careless talk costs lives" initiative, warning that even Facebook walls could have ears.

A series of short videos has been distributed around the defence community, showing how soldiers and their loved ones could be putting themselves in danger.

Pippa Norris, the MoD civil servant behind the internet-safety drive, told *Soldier* the material was deliberately "gritty and scary".

"We needed to create a real sense of danger or people wouldn't listen," she said.

"The scripts highlight the tipping point at which a small detail becomes too much information, which can pose a threat to someone's security."

One clip shows a mother breaching operational security by posting a Facebook update about a VIP visit to her son's forward operating base in theatre.

The sketch shows her drinking tea in her front room

with a masked figure, suggesting how she has unwittingly put Servicemen and women in danger by sharing this news.

The most unsettling of the four films features a soldier's "tour video" being posted on YouTube. Soon after, the subject starts being followed by a masked man.

"In the past, Royal Navy personnel have published arrival and departure times for ships into ports and troops have given away equipment data and locations of personnel movements and forward operating bases," said Norris.

The head of the Defence Online Engagement Group revealed that in some cases security breaches had resulted in attempted abductions, leaks of confidential information to the press and even hate campaigns against troops' families.

She said that among those most at risk were unmanned aerial vehicle operators, Apache pilots and snipers, some of whom have been threatened because of the high value of their intelligence-related work.

The seriousness of the issue has prompted MoD officials to update social media guidelines issued to soldiers.

"We're not saying don't use it, but use it safely," Norris emphasised.

"We want people to keep in touch with families and friends and blog and talk about who they are and what they do, but we have a duty of care to help them do that safely."

A page on the department's website called "personal security online" contains the latest advice for troops and their loved ones, as well as campaign videos, audio files and posters, which have been sent to every British military base, station and garrison in an effort to spread the message far and wide.

Social media safety will also be incorporated into phase one training for recruits and other learning resources for serving soldiers.

Maj Gen John Lorimer said that such websites had become a vital way for the Service community to keep in touch and stressed that personnel would not be banned from using them.

"MoD headquarters has its own Facebook, YouTube and Twitter feeds and we see no reason to stop our people from tweeting or posting on their personal pages," he added.

"But we want them to be aware of the risks that sharing too much may pose."

"You don't always know who else is watching in cyberspace."

You don't always know who else is watching in cyberspace



● For more information about how to stay safe visit <http://www.blogs.mod.uk/>

A close-up, high-contrast portrait of a man's face. He has dark hair, a mustache, and a goatee. His eyes are looking slightly upwards and to the right. The lighting is dramatic, with strong shadows on one side of his face.

ABF

THE SOLDIERS'
CHARITY

**HELLO. MY NAME IS PHIL FANTHOME.
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Interrogation: Field investigator WO2 Chris Fletcher (REME) photographs damage to the engine of a Challenger 2 battle tank (above) and takes measurements with a vernier assisted by Cpl Dave Blayney (REME, below)

Report: Sarah Goldthorpe Pictures: Graeme Main

HEALTH and safety “tyrants” have long endured the wrath of the British public, accused of curbing people’s freedom to work, live and play.

But a group responsible for probing British Army breakdowns – from greasy engines to broken rope – say they are anything but a force to be feared.

The Serious Equipment Failure Investigation Team (Sefit) is run by personnel from across the REME.

With bases in both Germany and the UK, the little-known unit of less than 20 people examines any incident where a technical error is suspected.

Field investigator WO2 Ian Barracough told *Soldier* that his department’s work could sometimes be misunderstood by troops.

“The job can be a bit *CSI*-like, but we are not here to catch people out and we don’t point fingers,” he said.

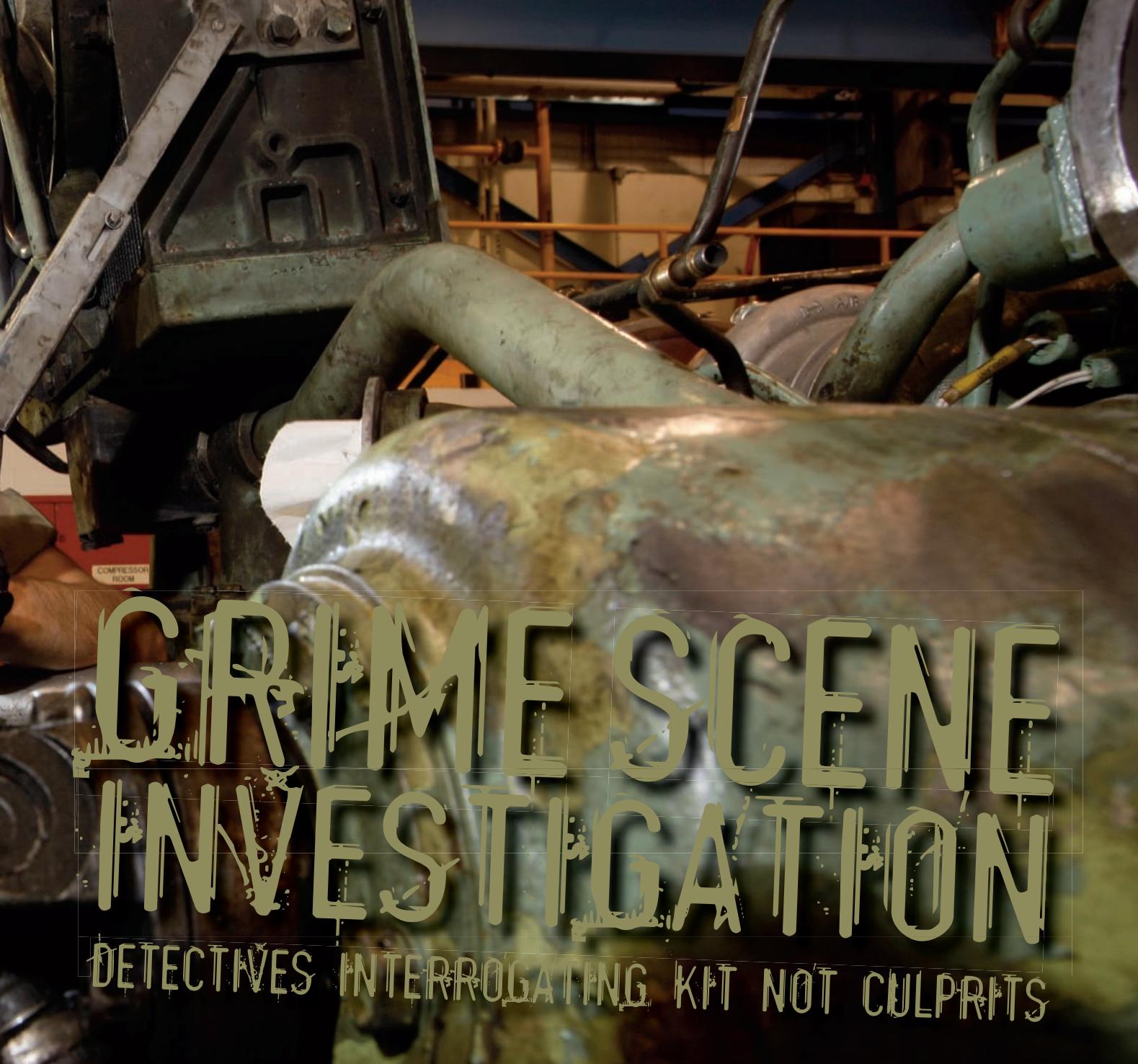
“Where an engineering fault is suspected in an incident we are called in to investigate. We work around the equipment and start

looking to get a grasp of what’s happened.

“Then we take witness statements and prepare a report, which makes a number of recommendations to project teams so things can be made safer in future.”

Incidents that the group can deal with





GRIME SCENE INVESTIGATION

DETECTIVES INTERROGATING KIT NOT CULPRITS

involve a mix of kit – from faulty dental X-ray machines and assault course ropes to armoured vehicles.

An additional member of Sefit's staff, who is based in Helmand province, is called to action every time a vehicle is damaged by an improvised explosive device.

Feedback is sometimes passed on to equipment manufacturers in order to inform future modifications and if an incident causes injury the unit liaises with the special investigation branch of the Royal Military Police and the Land Accident Investigation Team.

"We are independent and that's important," said WO2 Barraclough, one of two Sefit personnel based at the British

Army Training Unit Suffield in Canada.

"We know that when we turn up to an incident the guys are sometimes going to be shaken up. We try to calm people down and explain that we are not the police or there to arrest them, we just want to get to the bottom of the engineering side of things.

"When we mention the safety aspect of what we do people are usually onside."

WO2 Chris Fletcher added: "I think our relationship with other areas of the Army has improved. People used to think we were on a witch-hunt but we are the go-between for users and manufacturers."

Members of the unit can be called as expert witnesses at inquests and the group's significant influence across the

Service was further demonstrated recently when a potential fault was discovered in a widely-used vehicle.

"We found a problem on a Land Rover, which was losing its steering," WO2 Fletcher explained.

"We put a notice out to the entire Army straight away which said that use of Land Rovers had to stop until it had been properly inspected."

The notice was later withdrawn following an examination.

Whether reasons for equipment failure are down to human error, maintenance faults or defects, Sefit can answer technical enquiries from any personnel.

"It can be a difficult job," WO2 Fletcher said. "And there are people whose backs go up when we approach them."

"But I think generally Servicemen and women realise we are here to help."



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Jacket pictured: Comfort at -10°C
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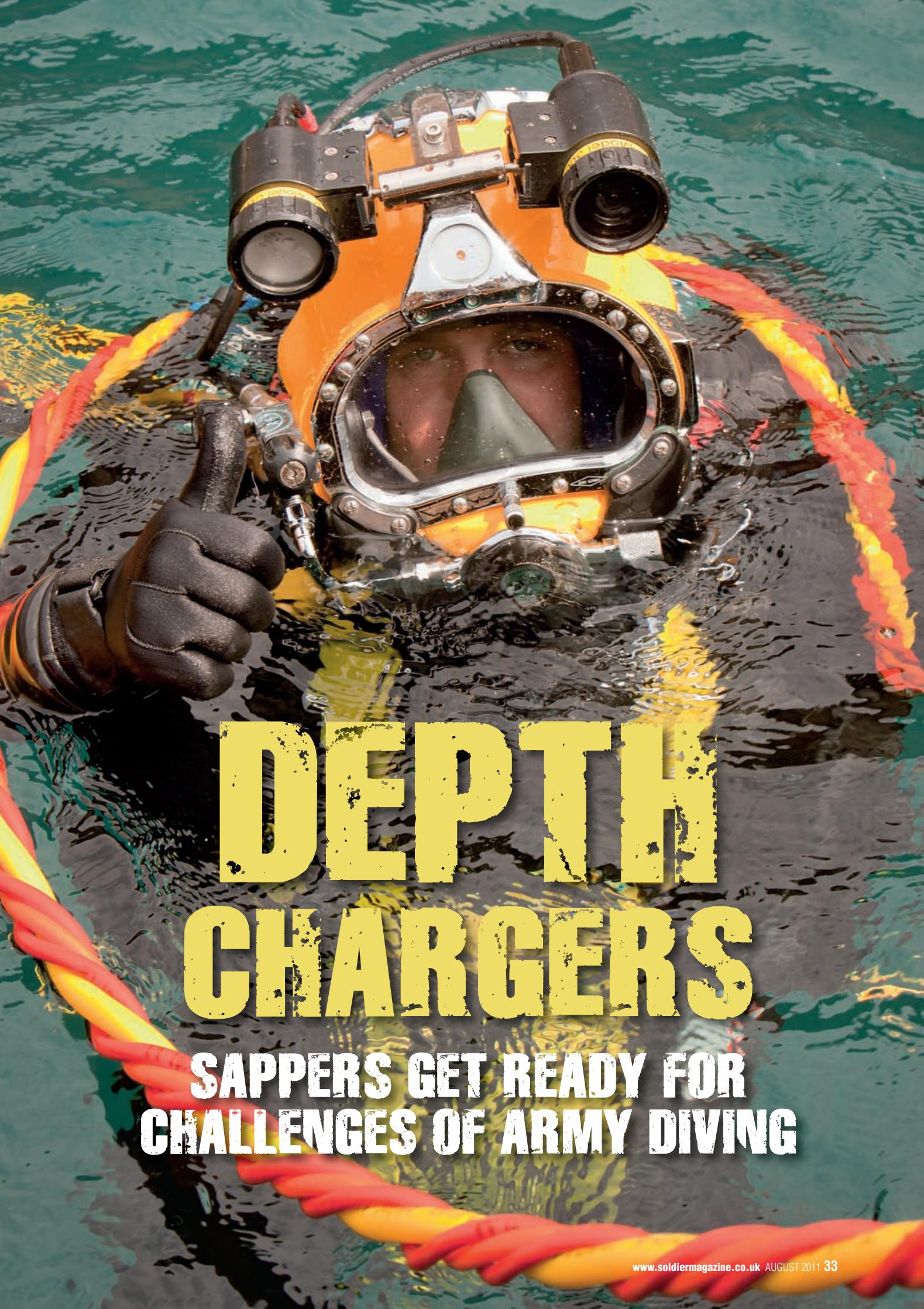
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Photographer - Igor Palamarchuk, Model - Victoria Perstneva

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DEPTH CHARGERS

SAPPERS GET READY FOR CHALLENGES OF ARMY DIVING

WITH ever-increasing demands being placed on the Army's impressive arsenal of manpower, there has never been a greater need for personnel to excel in a variety of tasks.

While "soldier first" remains the mantra for all Servicemen and women, their trades and secondary roles also play a key part in the success of operations and exercises around the world.

For Royal Engineer divers there is no exception to this rule and these highly-skilled sappers have proved themselves to be the very definition of a flexible force.

Their ability to plummet to depths of up to 50 metres and carry out assignments ranging from vehicle recoveries to demolition work is impressive enough, but this is merely an accompaniment to their day job.

As well as proving their worth as divers, they have primary trades to focus on, along with their commitments as soldiers, meaning they have a three-pronged approach to their busy Army careers.

To earn their place in the water, candidates must pass a selection phase and then complete a basic diving course before moving onto a challenging advanced programme.

This six-week schedule helps personnel master the open space diving system as well as teaching them how to operate key tools such as hydraulic cutters, breaking equipment and thermal cutting systems.

They also learn a host of new skills including underwater concreting and advanced reconnaissance, which can be used to locate submerged vehicles in theatre.

Soldier visited the sappers at the National Diving and Activity Centre in Chepstow during the fifth week of their training to find out more about their art.

"We are not full-time divers," explained Capt Steve Crosby-Jones (RE), the diving officer who coordinates serials for the basic and advanced courses.

"As well as completing their training they will still be sappers on the ground. They can be used for their recovery capability but it is a secondary trade.

"In theatre, the diving teams have been doing a variety of work. This includes body recoveries, the salvage of weapons from the bottom of wells or canals and underwater demolition tasks.

"They are a team and asset that are crucial to operations, especially when guys lose equipment such as rifles and radios.

"There is no other capability that can recover that kit."

While divers have proved to be a valuable resource in theatre, they are not deployed in this role alone.

"Diving is very much an as and when resource," the officer said. "Some

operational tours will inevitably have more serials than others.

"But every theatre we have been to – Iraq, Northern Ireland, the Balkans – divers have been used. It is a capability that is there and if we take it away, we will never get it back."

The Defence Diving School runs four basic and two advanced courses a year and there is a healthy competition for places.

As well as being open to the Royal Engineers, the programme welcomes troops from 17 Port and Maritime Regiment, Royal Logistic Corps.

"It definitely builds their teamwork. If they do not work as a group they will not pass," Capt Crosby-Jones added.

"We do not have any problems when the guys come back for the advanced course. When they leave they are fully qualified and they are here because they want to be."

Once they have completed their training the soldiers go back to their regiments and join diving teams, where they pass on the knowledge they have gained.

They also have the option of returning to complete a diving supervisors' course.

Trainee LCpl Daniel Brown (RE) has been determined to make the most of the opportunities available and has set his sights on further progress in the future.

He said: "Since I did my basic course I have stayed in the diving world. After passing that, all I have done is dive.

"I would never have got into this if it had not been for the Army. As I went through my training I heard stories about how difficult this course was and that made me want to sign up.

"It took me quite a while to get a place as it is so popular. At my last unit there were a lot of fit guys who were keen to try this kind of thing. I was one of the lucky ones who got on it.

"My next step is to do the supervisors' course and if possible I would like to come back to the school to work as part of the support staff."

For LCpl Dylan Jones (RE) life below the surface has provided welcome variety from his day job as a carpenter and joiner.

"It is just something I fancied doing," he explained. "The money [specialist pay] is an incentive but it is another string to my bow."

"The basic stage was fast and furious but this has been quite good. There is a lot to learn but it is a relaxed environment to work in."

And he now feels fully prepared to put his skills into practice in Afghanistan, if the call comes.

He said: "It is something we have trained for. You don't want to be going in to pick up a body, but it is a possibility.

"I am confident I could go out there and get the job done. This is fantastic training and I am pleased to have gone down the diving route." ■

THEY ARE A TEAM AND ASSET THAT ARE CRUCIAL TO OPERATIONS



TAKING THE PLUNGE

Royal Engineer divers get to grips with life under the water during their six-week advanced course

Out of the blue: Cpl Craig Cardy (RE) makes his way back to the surface at the National Diving and Activity Centre in Chepstow



DEPLOYING ON OP HERRICK?

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Watch the 4-minute video at www.bfps.com/deploying which explains everything. And for more detailed information on the kit you need visit www.bfps.com/digitaltv Here you can actually order and pay for equipment online and pick it up from BFBS in Bastion on arrival. BFBS Technology staff in Afghanistan have supplied hundreds of aerials, connected them to hundreds of poles, and made up miles and miles of co-ax for people! They also can supply TVs and Freeview boxes, and pretty much anything else you could need in theatre. So if you do find yourself needing additional equipment, cable, connectors or an aerial during your tour, then just get online at www.bfps.com/digitaltv/buyitonline

TV in other locations

Outside the main bases in Helmand, at the smaller FOBs, you will get BFBS TV channels via communal satellite TV and at smaller PBs there may currently be no BFBS TV provision. But it is still worth taking your laptop because this is where BFBS Technology's latest invention comes in - BFBS iPlay...



BFBS iPlay

You can download programmes to your laptop or even your PSP and take them with you to watch when you want. You can even share with friends if you've got a memory stick. And the beauty of it is that it doesn't need an internet connection. BFBS sends around 8 new TV programmes to the iPlay system each day, along with newspapers and magazines.

At Camp Bastion you can load-up from the iPlay unit in the EFI or the BFBS Radio station, and there's also a BFBS iPlay cabin at FOB Shawqat.



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You just need a normal FM radio

You have your very own BFBS Radio Station in Camp Bastion, broadcasting live and local across Afghanistan on 102.4. There's BFBS Radio 2 as well, which includes news and current affairs from BBC Radio 4 and sport from Radio Five Live. And the BFBS Gurkha service.

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BLAST JAB

SCIENTISTS JOIN
COUNTER-IED CAMPAIGN



Report: Sharon Kean
Pictures: Steve Dock

IN the ever-evolving mission to keep soldiers safe on operations in Afghanistan, knowledge is power.

Which is why the explosive work of a small group of civilian scientists and military medics could prove invaluable.

By simulating the effects of bomb blasts in a laboratory, a team of specialists at Imperial College in London is working out the best means of protecting troops and treating those injured by the Taliban's weapon of choice.

Led by Prof Anthony Bull and clinical experts Col Jon Clasper and Capt Adam Hill (both RAMC), a small band of bioengineering brothers is breaking bones, pulling tendons and blowing up boots in a bid to establish what happens to the body and kit worn by soldiers during a blast.

Cadavers and artificial legs are fitted with footwear and mounted in purpose-built apparatus. They are hooked up to an array of sensors and high-speed cameras which record experiments that mimic the impact of an explosion.

"People were getting heel injuries so we are measuring the shock-absorbing capacity of that part of their footwear because if the boot absorbs more, the foot takes less," explained Prof Bull during *Soldier's* visit to Imperial College's "Blast Lab".

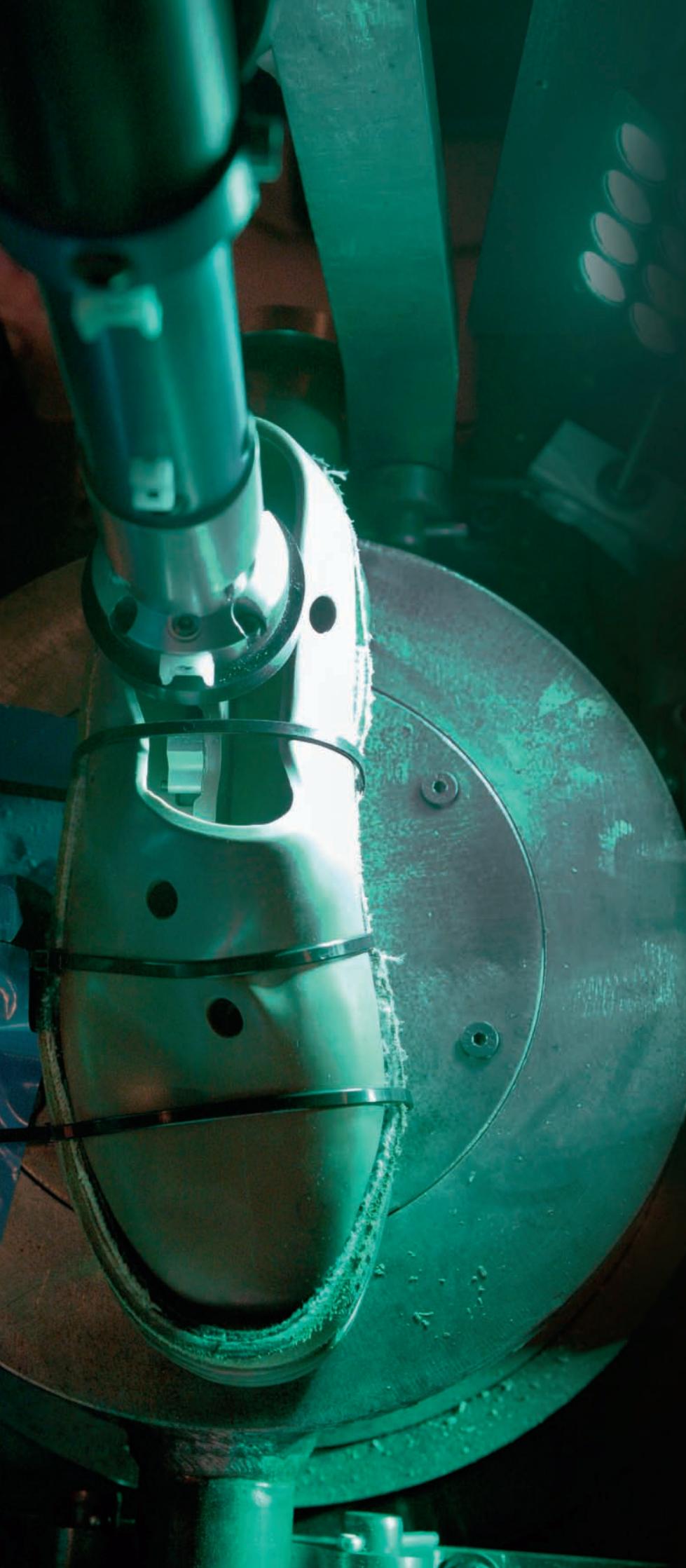
Known as a high-energy drop test, the experiment shows which boots' soles perform best. Scientists can use computer modelling to test hundreds of special rubbers, allowing them to determine which materials might work even better.

Early results have already been passed to MoD teams responsible for buying kit and to footwear manufacturers in a bid to help them devise the most effective protective gear.

Although the programme is still in its infancy, one company has already produced a prototype for military boots incorporating a previously unused material in the heel.

"We are investigating how to mitigate serious injuries by lessening the damage in the first place," said Prof Bull.

The team's work is also helping doctors develop cutting-edge treatments for those



wounded during a conflict.

"We are looking at what happens to cartilage, ligaments, bones and joints when people suffer blast wounds," explained the professor. "So we built a rig that can replicate the sort of injuries seen on the battlefield."

A separate "floor pan deformation rig" is used to test how different passenger seating positions in a vehicle might affect the nature of injuries sustained during an explosion.

"A big lump of metal represents the floor of a vehicle and we can accelerate it at the speed which simulates it being blown up," added the professor.

High-speed photography shooting at 16,000 frames per second is used to record experiments and X-ray scans of body parts – before and after the "blasts" – let the researchers determine the level and type of damage done.

"We already have really good follow-up data on what happens after certain injuries," said Prof Bull.

"So we can accurately relate the type of wound at day one to what it will be like in five years time."

This has enabled scientists to determine which parts of the body are most vulnerable or hardest to repair.

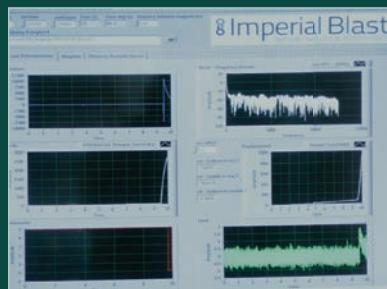
The aim is to advise how equipment might be designed to minimise the damage to these "devastating anatomical zones", deflecting impacts to areas that might be more easily reconstructed.

Blast Lab experts have also been assessing crash-test dummies to work out which ones represent the most realistic model of a human body – invaluable information for those designing and developing military vehicles.

The team's wealth of knowledge is already helping redesign the kit protecting troops in theatre and it could soon influence the methods used to treat those wounded on the battlefield.

By making giant strides in their hi-tech laboratory, this Army-civilian union is doing its best to ensure soldiers can step out on patrol with added confidence. ■

PUTTING FOOTWEAR TO THE TEST



simulator above a pressurised impact plate.

3. Sensors and high-speed video equipment record the simulated blast.

4. Data such as velocity and force of impact are beamed back to the scientists' computers.

The Anti-Vehicle Underbelly Blast Injury Simulator is used to test the performance of soldiers' boots during an explosion. Scientists mount different models of footwear in a rig before releasing a compressed spring which generates a force that impacts the sole in a similar way to a bomb blast under a vehicle. The level of shock and vibration experienced is recorded, along with the damage caused.

1. Boots are cut up and the soles attached to the foot of a dummy leg or cadaver.

2. The leg is mounted in the



PARADE GROUND TO PODIUM

Military science spurs sporting success

Report: Sharon Kean

TOP kit used by front-line soldiers is helping some of Britain's best athletes boost their chances of winning Olympic gold.

World-class cyclists and winter sports stars are among the hopefuls using hi-tech defence assets to blow away their international rivals.

Other disciplines have recruited some of the brightest minds behind modern military hardware to enhance their coaching, techniques and equipment.

Sophisticated laser-beam technology used by troops to distinguish friendly forces from enemies was installed at Manchester Velodrome 18 months ago and it now serves the quite different purpose of helping elite track cyclists to train.

Elsewhere, the complex software found in unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and warships has been transplanted into laptop computers used by the Great Britain sailing team to plot routes.

Both innovations are the result of a five-year partnership between defence specialists BAE Systems and UK Sport – the agency set up to support high-performance athletes. >>



Owen Evans, who is managing the project on behalf of the defence contractor, told *Soldier* that 20 different sports had benefited from the £1.5 million initiative, which gives competitors access to military equipment and expertise.

"It's been a wonderful success so far and it's exciting because this is real engineering in Olympic sport," he said.

"We built a sled for Amy Williams who won a gold medal at the Winter Games with the skeleton bobsleigh team and we've helped Paralympic athlete Shelly Woods, who broke the 1,500-metre world record last summer and finished second in the London Marathon this year."

Dr Scott Drawer, UK Sport's head of

research and innovation, said that Armed Forces' kit was well suited to the intensity of sporting environments as a result of rigorous testing in extreme conditions.

"Skeleton bobsleighs travel at 140 kilometres per hour, two centimetres from the ice, and experience gravitational forces of five to six on the corners," he added.

"In sailing, wireless technology has to withstand saltwater corrosion and be able to transmit real-time data.

"There are many similarities between the stress people are under in theatre and when training for sport – it's the physical and psychological strain that comes with constantly putting the body in very tough situations."

As well as shaping athletic equipment, battlefield technology and know-how can boost coaching capabilities. Consequently, the knowledge benefiting sportsmen and women stretches beyond the unique arrangement between UK Sport and BAE Systems.

A wireless monitoring system called Equivital, which measures factors such as heart rate and body temperature, was originally developed to help commanders keep tabs on front-line



Tracking targets

Battlefield: State-of-the-art laser detection systems used to determine friendly forces from the enemy

Sports field: Timing system used to track cyclists in training

A battlefield identification system capable of distinguishing friend from foe has been evolved into a smart timing device for Team GB cyclists. Lasers shine across the track and, when broken, send a signal to a computer recording their time. A credit card-sized chip attached to the bike's front wheel hub identifies the rider by a unique barcode and allows split times and velocities to be beamed back to the coach's laptop instantaneously. With accuracy to 1/1,000th of a second, any improvements in performance can be quickly identified and matched to changes in training regime or bike set-up.



Fast figures

Battlefield: Computer software used in UAVs and warships

Sports field: Strategy planning and performance measurement in sailing

Clever technology used in UAVs and warships is helping top-flight sailors cruise to victory. Data analysis programmes evaluate weather conditions and performance statistics to predict optimum racing strategies. It is the same process that converts information recorded by UAVs into facts and figures used by commanders and intelligence officers to plan operations. The Project Drake software can accurately forecast readings for wind speed and direction hours in advance, enabling sailors to plot the most competitive routes around a course.





troops. It is now routinely used to check the performance of professional athletes.

Methods of dealing with heat stress in the ranks also helped track cyclists cope with sweltering conditions at the Athens Olympics in 2004.

Between races competitors sat in "cooling chairs" with their hands immersed in cold water – a strategy originally devised to assist Service personnel wearing chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear protection.

"For endurance sports, thermal stress is one of the big limiters to performance," said Dr Drawer. "We've also used military clothing – the hyperthermic blankets the Armed Forces carry in cold environments helped Amy Williams at the Winter Olympics.

"If you stand around in the cold you lose heat so she would warm up and then wrap up and, as a result, her sprint times were consistently closer to her maximum."

The scientist revealed that research into the impact of bomb blasts on the brain is of particular interest to those in the combat sports world who are keen to learn more about the effect of kicks and punches.

In a reciprocal example of high-performance technology being transferred to the troops, work with Paralympic athletes to improve their movement techniques is helping wounded soldiers.

"We looked at how effectively the body was moving in a wheelchair by measuring the forces generated by the hands pushing the wheels," Dr Drawer explained. "The power is generated from the upper body so we looked at how it was being applied and where, and what had the best effect. Now they are using that at

Headley Court in rehabilitation sessions."

Parallels with the uniformed world extend to mysterious new gadgets, which will remain a closely-guarded secret until after the 2012 Games has taken place.

"A lot of things I can't tell you about because we believe they give Britain a competitive edge – much like with the military," said Dr Drawer.

What isn't secret, though, is a shared desire to provide equipment and training that give the best chance of defeating opponents – whether in an Olympic stadium or an operational theatre. ■



Design excellence

Battlefield: Fast jet cockpit configuration

Sports field: High-performance sleds

Scientists specialising in maximising human performance have used their experience of designing fighter jet cockpits to create bespoke skeleton bobsleighs fine-tuned to fit the finest UK athletes. Detailed interviews with coaches and 17 of Britain's top medal hopefuls determined precise measurements and vital requirements of the blueprints. Computer modelling refined the sleds by testing the effect of different stresses and forces on various parts of the structure, optimising them for the rigours of the sport. Designs were tweaked to make them stiffer, stronger and lighter in key places and precisely measured and weighted to make them responsive to movements. Defence engineers then used their knowledge of constructing Typhoon fast jets to build the sleds from a combination of high-grade steel and carbon fibres.



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EYE-OPENING ENCOUNTER

BRITISH ACTOR TELLS SOLDIER
HOW STARRING ROLE SHOWED HIM
SACRIFICE WAS NECESSARY IN IRAQ

Interview: Sharon Kean

IFIND it very embarrassing how little I or other people know about something that is so much a part of our recent history," admits Dominic Cooper.

The star's latest film – *The Devil's Double* – has seen him delve into the murky world of Saddam Hussein's inner circle.

And in doing so, the actor has come to the conclusion that behind what was a very unpopular war in Iraq lay a legitimate need for military action.

Set in 1980s Baghdad, the movie paints a terrifying portrait of the impulsive violence and reckless brutality exercised by the country's ruling family during their reign.

The 33-year-old Englishman explained to *Soldier* that making the film had proved a steep learning curve for him.

"When you see the full horror of what that regime did you realise why it was essential that it was overthrown," he said.

"You discover a little bit about what they were capable of and that the Iraqi people could no longer be treated like that."

Due for release just months after the official end of Op Telic, *The Devil's Double* is a timely reflection on the motivation behind one of the most controversial UK Armed Forces deployments in recent history.

In 2003 British troops joined an American-led international mission in Iraq that was sanctioned by the United Nations after Saddam Hussein failed to comply with Security Council resolutions regarding access to his country by inspectors of weapons of mass destruction.

Evidence of Hussein's military capabilities remains the subject of ongoing debate but his regime was ended as a result of the ensuing operation, which involved thousands of UK personnel – 179 of whom

made the ultimate sacrifice.

Having gained personal insight into the unsavoury house of Hussein, Cooper has contemplated whether *The Devil's Double* might make some British viewers think again about UK involvement in overthrowing the family's rule.

"We have men fighting these wars yet we know very little about the culture of the people that we are fighting," he said.

"Any awareness of how Iraq was run and how people were treated so inhumanely is a good reminder of what these often very young guys go through for our country."

He added: "It's good to have got at least some sense that they [Hussein's regime] were absolute criminals and needed to be removed."

"Our brave troops did that because it was their duty, and they did an incredible job."

The film tells the extraordinary true story of Iraqi army lieutenant Latif Yahia, who was ordered to become a body double – or fiday – for Saddam Hussein's eldest son, Uday.

Latif's character – along with the viewer – is thrust into a world of drugs, bloodshed and blondes, providing insight into the lifestyles of some of the most powerful people in Baghdad. He witnesses Uday committing repeated acts of violence and torture, which according to interviews given to the BBC by Yahia himself, are representative of actual events.

Cooper, who has also starred in *Mamma Mia* and *An Education*, takes on both leading roles in the film.

And while the actor is clear that the movie

is based on fact – Yahia eventually fled Iraq and went on to publish his incredible tale – it is as much about his own interpretation of the characters.

"It does drive you slightly mad when you're looking through the eyes of a maniac for so many hours in a day, because you start to think like them," Cooper said.

"Saddam had complete control but never wanted to hand over power to his crazed lunatic son because he felt he was incompetent – that's what *The Devil's Double* is about."

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While UK combat operations ended in 2009, British personnel remained in Iraq at the request of the country's government to help build up the nation's armed forces.

As he announced the official end to that mentoring mission, Defence Secretary Dr Liam Fox paid tribute to the commitment of Service personnel and described southern Iraq as an area "transformed" from the dangerous place it was.

As an on-screen snapshot of this country before 2003, *The Devil's Double* should resonate with all those involved in Op Telic.

But Cooper believes the film will appeal to a much wider audience too.

"It will be interesting to see how it is taken in the Middle East, especially with reference to what's going on there at the moment," he added.

"People have had enough of being so oppressed and are standing up for what they believe and wanting change."

"This is a story that happened some years ago now, but it's still so relevant." ■

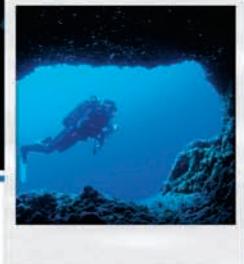


● *The Devil's Double*,
directed by Lee Tamahori, is
in cinemas from August 12



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SERVICE SAILORS EMBARK ON
NEW CHALLENGE AS SUCCESSFUL
STREAK CONTINUES



Report: Richard Long

AFTER an energy-sapping but triumphant campaign in 2010, one could forgive the crew of *British Soldier* for taking it easy on their return to the water this season.

Last year the sailors enjoyed an unprecedented run of success that saw them win a number of international racing certificate awards and finish second in the prestigious Royal Ocean Racing Club championship rankings.

As well as earning the respect of their peers, the crew's achievements received a glowing endorsement from the Service community as they lifted the best team crown at the Army and Inter-Services Sports Awards.

But instead of resting on their laurels, this dedicated group has sought a new adventure on the high seas and is currently competing in the inaugural Atlantic Ocean Racing Series.

Members have just returned to UK shores at the end of a pulsating Trans Atlantic Race, one of seven events in the series, and speaking during a rare spell on land, skipper Lt Col Nick Bate (QRL) told *Soldier* the crossing had been a tremendous adventure for his personnel.

He said: "It was 18-and-a-half days at sea and was quite different to anything we have done before.

"We did not get any big storms but it was very challenging. We had thick fog for about ten days but we still had plenty of wind.

"The key thing was being able to sail at night and in the mist. Normally you can sail by the stars or pick a point on the horizon for guidance but we could not do that so it was very difficult.

"The guys learnt a lot and it turned out to be great fun. For the last 36 hours we were neck and neck with an American crew as we raced to the finish. That was a fantastic experience."

At the time of going to press the final standings were still being calculated but the officer said there was far more to be gained than simply winning or losing.

He explained: "We are not that bothered by the precise position, it was just an amazing race to be part of.

"It was great fun but the main thing was to get new people coming through the ranks. They now have the bit between their teeth and they can take the sport on for years to come."

With the Atlantic adventure complete, *British Soldier* is now preparing for the next stage in the series, the Rolex Fastnet Race, which starts on August 14.

The events have come thick and fast this season and the crew has already competed in the Annapolis to Newport Race and the Royal Ocean Racing Club Caribbean 600, which brought further success.

You are away from immediate assistance and you do not have the option of leaving the boat and going to shore

Lt Col Bate said: "We were the second smallest boat in the competition but we finished in the top half of the whole fleet and we won our class.

"It was quite punishing, with some heavy winds. It was warm and sunny but the breezes made it hard work.

"The guys flew themselves out there to compete, with each individual paying their own way, and that shows how focused and committed they are.

"Having seen the series advertised I thought 'this is what we should be doing'.

"I mentioned it to the senior members of the Army Sailing Association and they were happy to go with it, as long as it did not cost more than we would spend in a normal year of racing.

"Our sponsors Fujitsu have offered fantastic support and for them it has been very good exposure."

At the end of the competition *British Soldier* will have covered more than 13,500 miles with a total of 77 soldiers having served on-board.

It has also lent itself to adventurous training exercises, with crews sailing from Antigua to Florida and then up the east coast of America to North Carolina.

Lt Col Bate explained how soldiers from all ranks have been involved in the series. He believes they have learnt a great deal from the experience.

"We have guys with good race credentials

and we have been happy to take them along," he added.

"I am keen to see youngsters come in and say they will take the boat on.

"It is not just about the racing, there is a lot of administration, they have to assemble the crew, ensure the boat is stocked and that the sails are ready to go.

"Out of this crop of youngsters we have found those people."

The skipper has also been keen to highlight the parallels between the sport and the crew's day job as soldiers.

He said: "The Army ethos is about bringing guys together and working as a team.

"On operations they have to work when they are tired with the elements against them, which is what we are doing here.

"You are away from immediate assistance and you do not have the option of leaving the boat and going to shore. You have to make it work and that is what Service life is all about.

"There is a lot of excitement and fun but it is tiring and demanding. People are working under pressure and that suits the Army ethos perfectly." ■

● To follow the progress of *British Soldier* in the Atlantic Ocean Racing Series visit www.transatlanticrace.com





High seas adventure:
The British Soldier crew
take to the water for the
Royal Ocean Racing Club
Caribbean 600 event
Pictures: Tim Wright



The Atlantic Ocean Racing Series features seven challenging events with *British Soldier* taking to the waves for the...

1 Royal Ocean Racing Club Caribbean 600 – has established itself as one of the 'must do' offshore races and has attracted competitors from all over the world. The course weaves through 11 Caribbean Islands and is designed to test speed, agility and guile. The Army crew enjoyed an outstanding race and won their class.

2 Annapolis to Newport Race – a total of 71 entries were made for the 2011 competition, making it the largest fleet for 28 years. Set on the east coast of America, the course ran south on the Chesapeake Bay for 120 miles to the Bay Bridge Tunnel, then turned 20 miles into the Atlantic and then up to Newport for a total of 473 miles.

3 Trans Atlantic Race – departing the USA in late June, *British Soldier* spent 18-and-a-half days at sea before arriving in the UK at Falmouth.

4 Rolex Fastnet Race – 2011 marks the 44th staging of the competition, which is seen as one of the great ocean challenges. More than 350 entrants have already signed up for the event, which leaves Cowes on August 14 and follows a 608-nautical mile route round the Fastnet Rock off the coast of Ireland and then back to Plymouth.

5 Biscay Race – hosted by the Royal Yacht Squadron, this stage features a 600-mile race from the Solent to the Bay of Biscay, in northern Spain. The event takes place in September.



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Report: Joe Clapson
Picture: Graeme Main

LUCRATIVE criminal industries on the coast of Sierra Leone are being smashed by the country's burgeoning army, thanks to support from British personnel.

In a bid to support a nation damaged by war, the International Military Assistance Training Team (IMATT) is advising the maritime wing of the West African republic's armed forces.

UK-led and staffed by personnel from across the three Services, this experienced group's uniformed advisers work closely with those responsible for defending the country's 210-mile golden shoreline.

"The main focus of the maritime wing is patrolling fisheries and countering the narcotics trade, illegal immigration and general crime at sea," explained Lt Cdr Ed Carpenter (RN).

"In 2010 we accrued over £6 million in fines.

"The legal department at IMATT then works to ensure that money brought in by prosecuting criminals is fed into Sierra Leone's central government coffers, for use elsewhere."

All waters from the coast of Sierra Leone out to a 200-mile boundary are under the impoverished nation's ownership, an area which boasts sought-after fish, minerals and oil.

In recent years these seas have proved a safe-haven for traffickers of drugs and humans.

But now the maritime wing is making such practices increasingly difficult.

CPO Robert Okoh (Canadian Navy), a member of the IMATT unit, said that because of sparse funds it was imperative to look after the force's existing resources.

"I teach soldiers there how to use their boats properly and maintain them," he said.

"There's no money to buy new fibreglass kit so we are encouraging them to appreciate what they do have."

All Sierra Leonean army personnel must have carried out at least two years' infantry training before being posted to the maritime wing. Once there, they learn seamanship skills including boat handling and safety drills.

As well as defensive duties, sailors conduct crucial search and rescue missions, which can include anything from collecting broken-down vessels to rescuing people who are in danger.

In the last two years the unit has saved more than 1,000 lives in the Atlantic Ocean.

But this is just one part of a much larger effort to tackle crime in the region's waters.

The Joint Maritime Committee, now seven years old, brings together stakeholders including

the national army wing, military port authority and navy revenue authority.

Using funding from the US and UK, the multi-agency organisation has created a state-of-the-art base with a live radar and vessel monitors.

Derek Deighton, outgoing senior adviser at the wing, said: "There are more than 300 boat inspectors to make arrests and the Attorney General has just agreed to create a special maritime court that will process prosecutions much quicker than the old system."

The committee also plans to liaise with neighbouring countries to make the coastline a no-go area for criminals.

"Work here is very much regional and the idea is that we will start to look at sharing information with places like Ghana, Senegal and other countries," said Cdr Deighton.

"If the sea remains porous that's where the bad guys will go."

It might only be small, but

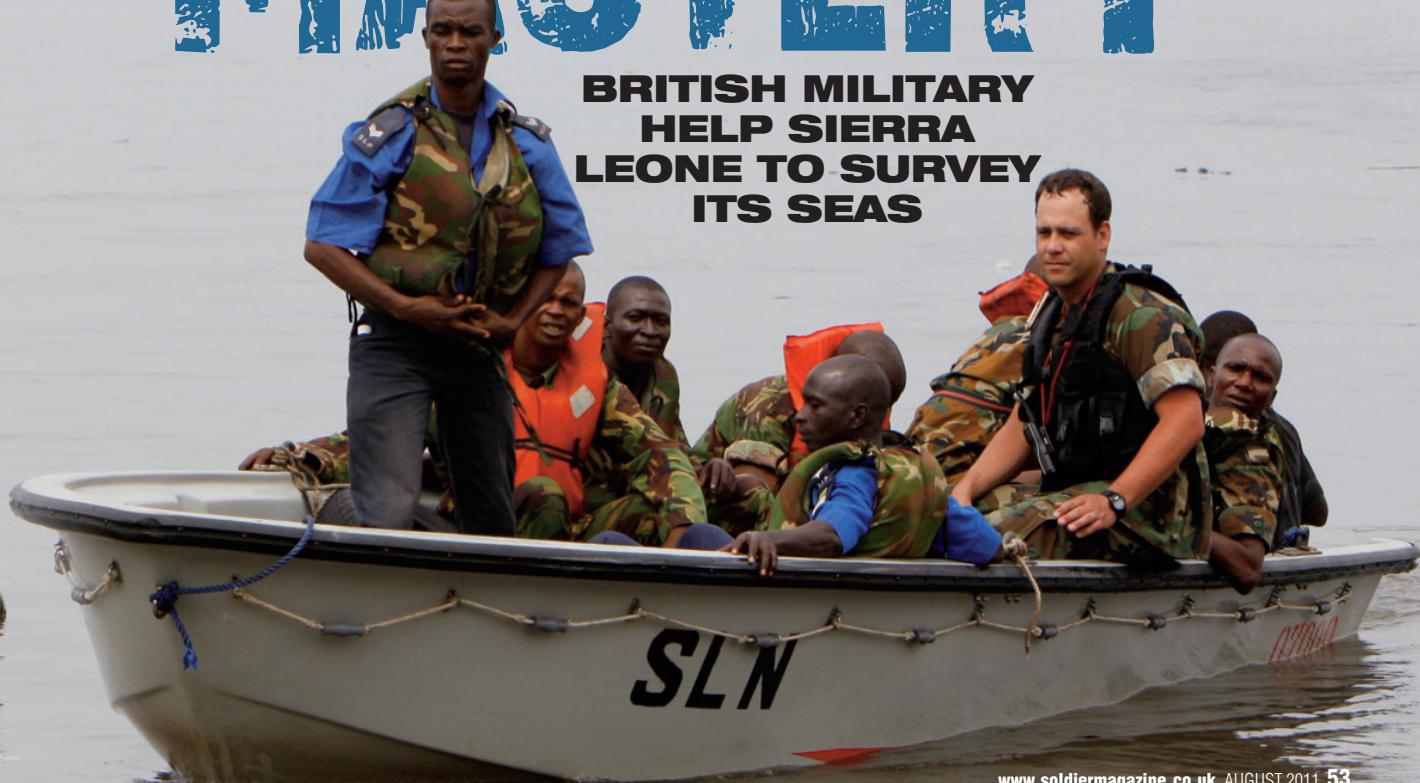
Sierra Leone's maritime wing is playing a significant role in protecting a major source of the country's food and future wealth.

And it is crucial advice and assistance from the British-led training team that ensures this is possible. ■

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REMAINS
POROUS
THAT'S
WHERE
THE BAD
GUYS
WILL GO**

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HELP SIERRA
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Attack helicopter personnel lay siege to *Soldier*

I WAS delighted to see the front cover of your July edition depicting a silhouette of an Apache attack helicopter alongside the headline "The shape of success".

We in the Army Air Corps are extremely proud of the significant contribution that the airframe is making to Defence in Afghanistan and now on operations over Libya.

Indeed, we are particularly pleased to have fielded this critical capability as a land-centric weapons platform, as soldiers for soldiers with a mutual understanding of the complex land and littoral environment.

As such, and as the commandant of the Army Aviation Centre and station commander at Middle Wallop, I was somewhat disappointed to see the Service's flagship publication still writing and referring to Apache training and operations being delivered from bases at "RAF Middle

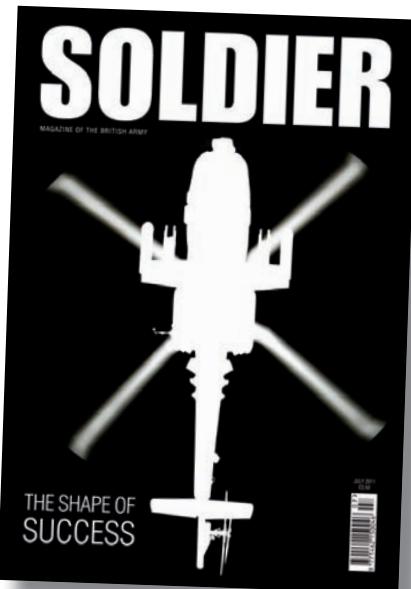
Wallop and RAF Wattisham" in the text of the attendant article.

Middle Wallop relinquished its Royal Air Force status more than 50 years ago on October 1, 1958 and Wattisham Airfield has been in the hands of the British Army since 1993.

Those in the AAC take pride in our heritage and status in the Army and rather wish the media could get this simple detail right. – **Col Murray Whiteside, Commandant Army Aviation Centre, Middle Wallop.**

● **Congratulations on winning the prestigious Chartered Institute of Public Relations award, but RAF Middle Wallop and RAF Wattisham – I think not!**

Joe Clapson may well be the Apache's next target. – Maj (Retd) Gary Hickson, 660 Sqn AAC, RAF Shawbury.



Estate mistake is an embarrassment

I AM sure I will not be the first to write to highlight some fundamental errors in your story on the 100,000 flying hours clocked up by the Army Air Corps-operated Apache, "Elite equipment".

The achievements of the corps and in particular the Attack Helicopter Force is definitely worthy of recognition in an article such as the one featured in July's edition of the magazine.

Unfortunately, all credit was lost by *Soldier*'s constant referral to the Royal Air Force throughout.

Initial conversion to type flying training is undertaken at the Army Aviation Centre at Middle Wallop and followed by a

conversion to role course conducted at the home of the Attack Helicopter Force, Wattisham Station.

Wattisham has been the base of two AAC regiments and a REME battalion since 1993/1994.

Other than a small RAF survival equipment section in support of flying, the entire Attack Helicopter Force is made up of Army units and personnel.

Please give credit where it is due and do not place the AAC as a sub section of the RAF.

Soldier of all publications should know where the corps sits within the military. – **WO1 (RSM) D Wight, 5 Regt AAC.**

● Whilst pleased to see yet another article extolling the virtues of the British **Armies** Apache AH1 in combat, I was horrified to realise that *Soldier*, The magazine of the British Army, could have made such an editorial error.

How could the magazine of the British Army label two army airfields as Royal Air Force stations?

Neither, Wattisham **Airfield** or Army Aviation Centre Middle Wallop, have been **RAF**[-owned] for some years now.

Personnel from the three services are generally at pains to identify these type of errors from [in an effort to prevent them from appearing in] the civilian media but to find it happening in your own **services** magazine [is disappointing/appalling?]. – **Craig Eagles.**

The editor, putting down her copy of *RAF News*, types: As demonstrated by the grammatical and factual inaccuracies in your letter, people make mistakes.

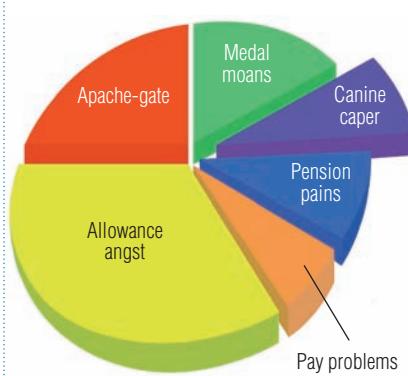
Joking aside, the editorial team takes great pride in the attention to detail and accuracy usually delivered by *Soldier* and is as frustrated as those featured on this page that an error found its way into print.

We too are extremely proud of Apache and the remarkable personnel who serve with the helicopter – be it in the cockpit or in the maintenance of the airframe – hence its star billing in July's issue. To irritate those who deliver this asset in support of operations in Afghanistan and Libya was certainly not our intention.

Rest assured we will not make the same mistake twice.

Slice of Service life

This month's ruminations from the ranks...



TIGER TROUBLE

I AM writing to get a broader opinion on a uniform issue that is currently causing much debate and frustration.

For five years I was a cadet in a unit under the identity of PWRR and during this time we wore a tiger on our combat shirts.

Upon returning to the Army Cadet Force as an adult instructor, I was horrified to learn that I would no longer be allowed to display a tiger on my shirt on the grounds that it is a Tactical Recognition Flash (TRF).

I always believed that the tiger was a battle honour awarded to the regiment for its service in India.

We (our unit staff) have spoken to high-ranking officers in the PWRR and they also think it's extremely disrespectful to the regiment to have the tiger removed from the uniform. — *A slightly irritated adult instructor.*

Brig Mike Griffiths, DPS(A), responds: There may be confusion here between arm badges and TRFs.

It has long been policy that ACFs and Combined Cadet Forces do not wear the TRF of an affiliated regiment or corps, but the tiger was never a flash of PWRR or any other unit.

The tiger is a regimental arm badge of the PWRR (awarded by George IV in 1826 to a forebear regiment of the Royal Hampshire's to mark 21 years of active service in India) and worn on all uniforms by those in both Regular and TA battalions.

There are a number of arm badges authorised for wear by ACFs and CCFs. Granting of authority rests with the Army Cadet Executive Group at HQ Land Forces.

I don't know why your ACF no longer wears the tiger but it is possible that it may have been previously worn without the right authority. I recommend your ACF seeks fresh permission.

Rant over rank recognition

As a senior NCO in a very busy battalion I know that there are bigger issues in the Army right now, but the following has been annoying myself and many others for years.

Why, in peacetime, do we persist in allowing rank slides that are hard to distinguish? A number are difficult to read unless you are standing one foot away and staring directly at the wearer's chest (which in itself can cause offence).

For example, The Rifles have their regimental symbol at the base of the slide, which at distance or a quick glance looks like an officer's pip.

Some units have a bigger major's crown than others while some have a smaller warrant officer's crown than others. This can lead to confusion unless you happen to know the individual wearing it.

All these slides do is serve as a potential source of embarrassment and possible disciplinary issues, especially for junior soldiers who are picked up for failure to pay the correct compliments.

Why can we not have an Army-wide policy of standardised rank slides that are easy to spot from a distance with predominantly white markings on a plain background? If nothing else this will save a little money as only one design of each would need to be produced.

And before some of the older regiments and corps begin crying about tradition, I hardly think that such a minor change would destroy the moral fibre or proud history of their respective units. — *Name and address supplied.*

Brig Mike Griffiths, DPS(A), responds: You raise an interesting question. In combat uniform there are two forms of authorised rank slide.

The first is a plain slide with generic



Major headache? Exhibit one, a Rifles rank slide

rank insignia without any regimental or corps embellishment. The item is issued free to all and is to be worn by everyone when on operations.

The major's crown is a little smaller than the WO2's crown but the two are easily distinguishable.

The other form of rank slide is the regimental/corps variant.

These are provided at personal expense and designed by each unit, although each design must be approved by the Army Dress Committee.

You may be interested to know that a corps recently proposed a change which, in the committee's view, made the slide confusing and too busy and as a consequence the requested alteration was not sanctioned.

You are correct to say that the insignia on some regiments' slides are quite small and The Rifles are one such example.

However, rank on the slides is very much regimental business and most are based on long historical traditions. Pressure for change should therefore come from within the unit.



MY unit has a new squadron sergeant major who insists that all personnel wear RLC stable belts when in Combat Soldier 95 uniform (CS95). These items are not issued from our clothing store so doing so means having to buy them out of our own pockets.

Equally, why is it we have to purchase our own Tactical Recognition Flash (TRF)?

There seems to be an increasing number of items which have to be self-funded. — *Name and address supplied.*

Brig Mike Griffiths, DPS(A), writes: Arms and Service directors determine their own dress regulations, with approval from the Army Dress Committee.

Stable belts, TRF and formation flashes are not issued at public expense (although this may change – see response across page). The initial issue of flashes is usually on arrival in the unit and then maintained by the individual thereafter.

Stable belts are normally purchased by

soldiers through a President Regimental Institute arrangement, are not a scaled item in clothing scales for the Army and should, in theory anyway, not be worn in CS95. I believe that Director Royal Logistic Corps has recently published revised regulations which reflect this.

You are correct in thinking that personnel should not be forced to purchase a non-publicly funded item of clothing or dress.

Slash flashes to save cash



Partners: A French Army instructor discusses tactics with a British soldier from 1 Coldstream Guards during Exercise Gaulish earlier this year

UNEASY OVER UNION

I HAVE listened to the news over the past few months on Britain's bilateral treaty with France and I am sure that I'm not the only person in the Armed Forces to notice a wee problem with the arrangement.

For those who have not yet figured it out, the issue is the Falkland Islands, known by certain others as the Malvinas. It was the French that supplied the Argentinians with Exocet missiles before, during and indeed after the 1982 conflict.

With this in mind, will our cousins across the Channel still be keen to share assets in the event that the Argentinians opt to re-invade the Falklands?

Do the powers that be really believe our French partners will allow us to use their prized aircraft carrier, *Charles de Gaulle*, to retake islands under the fire of missiles they supplied? — Cpl Kirkwood, 1 LSR.

SELECTIVE STANCE

I AGREE that you produce an excellent magazine, "Soldier shines" (July), but I take issue with Gen Sir Peter Wall's statement in the same issue. In the news article on the Land Warfare Centre Conference, the Chief of the General Staff is quoted as saying "wars pick us, we don't pick them".

Didn't Tony Blair and George Bush pick a fight with Iraq over alleged weapons of mass destruction and didn't they also "invade" Afghanistan post 9/11? And what about Libya? — Geoff Dickman, ex-TA.

SPREAD THE SERVICE

I WAS disappointed to read the *Talkback* letter regarding potential locations for units returning from Germany, "Moving north would be costly option" (July). I found it patronising and divisive.

Approximately ten per cent of the Army is recruited in Scotland. Is it alright for the Scots to make long journeys to visit family and friends but not okay to ask others to do this in the opposite direction?

Some might suggest the fairest way would be to station ten per cent of the Army in Scotland. I would not go as far as this, but I would suggest that the Service be spread out more, to reflect better where it is recruited and to reconnect with some of the places where Regular soldiers are strangers.

With airlift, it is no longer necessary for troops to be stationed a day's journey from the ports on the south and east coasts. — David Campbell, London.

AS I sat reading my assignment order and began thinking about the prospect of having to change my Tactical Recognition Flashes (TRFs) again, it struck me how much money is wasted on such uniform accoutrements.

Given that we all wear a cap badge that clearly identifies who we are and what organisation we belong to, why are these emblems required?

Based on every soldier in the Regular and Territorial Army each wearing a £1 TRF on six items of clothing and tailoring costs of £1 per badge, their use costs a minimum of £12 per head.

Factor in the fact that personnel exchange two items of clothing a year and that ten per cent of the Army is posted every two years and the total sum swells to £2 million.

The true figure is likely to be much higher as those on operations have to change TRFs each time they deploy in support of another command or battlegroup.

If we are to persist in wearing these unnecessary badges, why don't shirts and combat smocks come sporting Velcro?

This simple change would mean badges could be recycled without the need for tailoring. — Name and address supplied.

Maj Allan Law, SO2 Mat Sp, HQ Land Forces Support Branch, responds: The use of "touch and close" (Velcro) fastenings has been under serious consideration for some time.

As a result items in the new personal clothing range, which replaces the Combat Soldier 95 uniform, will be fitted with such a system.



"That's the 20th jacket we've ruined, Harry... the Velcro is still too strong."

The windproof smock, jacket and under body armour combat shirt will feature such a fastening.

There are various options as to how best to fit the range of badges to the uniform and these are also being considered.

These include the provision of blanking plates which can be worn with badges fitted, or not; easily moved across the range of clothing or be fitted with items such as the International Security Assistance Force flash.

The durability of the touch and close fastenings has yet to be proven.

Also, a proposal has been made for the provision of TRFs and formation patches at public expense and this is being explored by the chain of command.

Guidance for novice parent, please

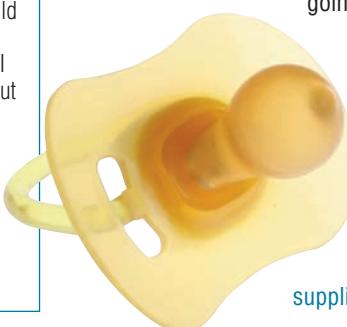
I AM currently serving on Op Herrick and have some questions regarding policy on paternity leave.

The guidance I have been given in theatre is to take rest and recuperation (R&R) around the time my wife is due to give birth and that this break will count as my paternity leave.

However, I will not be able to do so as the R&R window will have closed by then.

I have been advised that the chances of being at the birth are slim and that I will have to complete the tour and two weeks of decompression back at my unit before going home.

If this is true my first child will already be seven weeks old when I see him or her for the first time. — Name and address supplied.



Brig Mike Griffiths, DPS(A), replies: R&R is not holiday nor is it to be granted as paternity leave. It is an additional period of absence granted to personnel to provide time out of the line and to recharge.

On the occasion of a birth during operations, commanding officers will, wherever possible, try to coordinate a soldier's period of R&R with the expected due date of a baby in order to allow a soldier to be with his wife.

In your case this does not look possible due to the R&R window being closed. But have you asked anybody?

Paternity leave rules are quite complicated. The simple answer is that you are entitled to two weeks of paid holiday at the time of the birth of your child. COs, however, have the discretion to defer this time off if operational circumstances require it.

If this happens then the leave should be granted as soon as possible and can be added to post operational tour leave. If you want more detail it is contained in JSP 760, chapters 19 and 22.

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Picture: Sgt Steven Hughes, RLC

Personnel march to defence of Scotland

I WOULD like to offer a reply to the letter you published in last month's edition about the future basing of units returning from Germany, "Moving north would be costly option".

As SO2 Firm Base in Scotland I thought I might add some informed context to the author's opinions and speculation.

There are currently some 14,000 Regular personnel from all three Services located in Scotland, the majority of whom enjoy being in the north.

One of the principal reasons for liking being in Scotland is the excellent support that we receive from the country's people and from the government there, both nationally (Holyrood and Edinburgh), regionally (from all 32 local authorities) and locally (from councils).

Of note was the offering from WO1 Earnshaw, "Service salute to Scottish show of support", printed directly above the letter in question that focused attention on this very subject.

I am not suggesting that there is a lack of support south of the border but merely that, as WO1 Earnshaw points out, public appreciation manifests itself in a unique and often spontaneous way in Scotland.

The suggestion that for many serving soldiers the cost and distance of travelling home from a base in the north would be significant is of course divisive.

The reality is that nine per cent of the Army is Scottish, as is ten per cent of the Armed Forces.

These 15,000 personnel, many of whom serve outside Scotland, regularly travel home on leave.

The author suggests there is limited employment for spouses here. The true situation is that Scotland currently has the highest employment rate in the UK – 71.2 per cent. Added to this is the excellent work the Scottish Government has undertaken to validate and transfer English and other qualifications to their nation, particularly for

● AS an exiled Scot who is happy working for the MoD in the south of England, I felt that I had to reply to the letter entitled "Moving north would be costly option".

I am a little bit concerned about the lack of understanding displayed by the author. Are they not aware that Inverness has an airport, as does Edinburgh? Both of these hubs, which are well served by main roads and railways linking the RAF bases close by, fly to locations throughout the UK.

Scotland even has motorways nowadays as opposed to dirt tracks.

I find it hard to believe the writer's claims that travelling from Germany to central England is quicker than going from Scotland (north, south, east or west) to central England unless of course the correspondent is discounting time spent waiting for and travelling on the ferry, or time spent waiting for and travelling on Eurostar. I also find it hard to believe that getting from Germany to central England

nursing and teaching.

Ultimately, future basing decisions will be made on what is best for defence, not what is best for Scotland.

The "interests of the soldier" are well served now by being based in the country and we are on a path of continual improvement. I would be happy to convince the author of the benefits of being here if they wish to visit. – **Maj D Curry, SO2 FB Plans, HQ 51 (Scottish) Brigade.**

is cheaper than travelling from any part of Scotland to central England.

There are a couple of things for the author to think about. While they infer that "hasty decisions are made to please the Scots", have they considered the Scottish soldiers who have to travel from one of the most south-easterly points of England occupied by the Army?

The 5th Battalion (Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders) of The Royal Regiment of Scotland is based at Howe Barracks in Canterbury. I don't recall any articles submitted by their soldiers complaining about the cost or inconvenience of travelling home.

I believe those personnel, along with the majority of soldiers, accept that they can and will be posted to meet the needs of the British Army, regardless of where they come from.

If the author wants to live nearer to "home", why don't they resign from the British Army and choose exactly where they want to live as a civvy? – **Name and address supplied.**

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'Let us customise our work clothes'

AS an Army recruiter with 20 years of colour service, I deal with the general public on a daily basis.

I regularly visit schools, galas and community events and do so wearing Combat Soldier 95 uniform, which – at last – is now almost obsolete.

However, there is a rumour doing the rounds that, for those personnel not required to get their hands dirty day-to-day, there is to be a re-introduction of barrack dress. If this is true, can the powers that be please think long and hard about the actual design and use of this attire?

My job is primarily to keep the British Army in the public eye and the wearing of another dreary uniform with no medal or

cap badge recognition is in my view a lost opportunity.

In the US military there has long been an emphasis on badges and bling, with even newly-trained privates having a number of decorations displayed on their shirts.

I believe such an approach serves to demonstrate an individual's achievements within the military community.

If only I was given a pound for every time I was asked what operational tours I have deployed on during my own Army tenure.

A simple unisex shirt for summer and jumper for winter annotated or embroidered with a soldier's medals, qualified trade and means of showing courses completed and years served would address this and make the wearer proud of their achievements.

I know such a proposal will ruffle quite a lot of traditionalists'



“THIS APPROACH SERVES TO DEMONSTRATE AN INDIVIDUAL'S ACHIEVEMENTS WITHIN THE MILITARY COMMUNITY”

feathers, but I have spoken to a large number of old and bold soldiers and also young lads and lasses fresh out of training and they all agree that it is time for a more modern, customised uniform.

We already pay for our stable belts and miniature medals, so why not let personnel pay to tailor their uniform to reflect their personal achievements?

I am not for one minute asking the MoD to let me show off my medals daily but I have only worn my number two dress once in nearly six years (excluding Remembrance Sundays), which means that these prized possessions are, in the main, shut away in a tin marked to be opened on my retirement.

Why can't we have a smart walking out uniform which will attract a second look and make us proud to wear it?

Think of the recruiting tool. A young girl or lad of 19 years or so who has completed an operational tour would turn far more heads wearing a 21st century uniform than a pair of itchy trousers and cream or olive shirt emblazoned with only rank and name. – Name and address supplied.

Brig Mike Griffiths, DPS(A), responds:
The Army is indeed re-introducing barrack dress as an alternative to combat uniform.

The former has always been an authorised order of dress but in recent years and with the tempo of operations, most officers and soldiers have preferred to wear the latter.

A new trouser and skirt design was introduced as part of the Future Army Dress (FAD) project for two reasons.

Firstly, for those in the Service who work with Royal Navy and Royal Air Force counterparts, whose default order of attire is a form of barrack dress – comfortable shirt, trousers and shoes. It was felt that, in this situation, combat clothing was out of place and the Army needed a practical equivalent.

The revised items have been on issue for almost two years and you will see them being worn in MoD Main Building, HQ London District and in other headquarters.

Secondly, barrack dress was felt to project a better and smarter public image of the Army than combat uniform, particularly for officers and soldiers who are seen by the general population when they stop off at the supermarket or bank on their way to and from work.

Last year commanders discussed at considerable length whether to wear our medal ribbons in barrack dress and all three of the Services unanimously agreed that it was inappropriate for the British Armed Forces.

The view from the Army was not just based on the thoughts of senior officers; the regimental sergeant majors' convention debated this very issue and not one delegate was in favour.

As part of the FAD programme a more comfortable and practical number two dress was issued to all ranks with the intent that this should be worn on more occasions than in the past, particularly as this uniform is specifically designed to show off medals and qualification badges.

I agree that a young soldier, fresh from a number of operational tours and with medals on his chest, turns a few young and old heads in the high street.

Slipping on the updated number two uniform is a much more comfortable option than previously and perhaps as a recruiter you should consider wearing this form of dress.

LET ME LEAVE ON A POSITIVE NOTE

I HAVE just begun the last three months of my 13-year service. According to my unit's admin office, I will not be permitted to take my full 20 days of terminal leave as I will only have 15 days remaining in the Army by the time my resettlement course has finished.

Why can't the additional five days be taken in advance of resettlement? I've read the regulations and can't see any reason why not. – Name and address supplied.

Brig Mike Griffiths, DPS(A), replies: The rules state that terminal leave is to be granted, where possible, in the last 20 working days of paid service.

Therefore, if the dates of the resettlement cannot be changed, and providing that your CO is in agreement, I see no reason why the balance of your leave is not taken at a convenient time prior to attendance on your course.

Continuity of Education Allowance Important Announcement - CEA



At present the current Continuity of Education Allowance is as follows:

Junior School Year Groups 3 to 6 - £4,482 per child per term

Senior School Year Groups 7 to 13 - £5,833 per child per term

This year Independent Schools Fees will increase between 3% and 5%.

Your basic pay is only likely to go up by around 1%. Therefore of importance to you, as a parent considering whether to opt for a Boarding Education for your child, is how much will you be expected to have to contribute per term.

The graph on the left shows what % of Forces parents contribute personally each term, per child, towards their child's boarding education termly fees.

So you can see 10% contribute over £3,000 per term! At present our parents, on average, this year, contribute £1,013 per child per term. **BUT that's going to change.** We don't know what the CEA amount changes will be. Will it go up at all? Will it go up by just 1% or will it go up in line with likely school fees? We are proud that we have over 200 Forces children currently boarding with us. We don't want that number to fall but to increase! We have the answer...

With our Charitable Foundation's backing, we are able to guarantee for the coming Academic Year, starting in September 2011, that whatever our boarding fees become and whatever the CEA Allowance becomes, your parental contribution per term, per child will be reduced and will be no more than £795.

Use the MOD's ChildCare Voucher Scheme ~ your termly contribution could fall to under £500 per term

Register your child with us and do not get CEA entitlement ~ we will refund our Registration Fee in full

We aim to only increase the £795 maximum personal contribution per child, per term, in following years, in line with the % Forces pay increases. This reduced contribution now means we rank as one of the most competitively priced boarding schools for Forces in the UK and you get a school that is increasing in size, has spent over £45m in recent years on improvements and upgrades, where the Academic results are brilliant and where children are happy, confident and successful. We have 800 boarders and 400 day pupils.

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Pro-pooch lobby's argument lacks bite

FIGURED the dog debate was worth another visit after reading the letter from Capt James Morgan, "Barking mad", in June's issue of *Soldier*.

As a member of the Royal Navy who recently came into a tri-Service environment for the first time, the Army practice of allowing pets in the workplace was new to me and, as such, I looked up the policy.

Put simply, the official line is that, assuming there are no specific objections, it is down to the commanding officer's discretion whether or not dogs are permitted on site.

The office in which I work harbours a generally unhygienic hound whose presence is largely unwelcome. Unfortunately, the owner happens to be a major and, consequently, there is no desire to promote resentment by making a formal complaint.

Like many things in the military, the nuisance is grinned and borne until it becomes literally unmanageable. We approached that point when a sergeant in the office started to suffer with dermatitis problems and we now have a canine-free zone in our building.

The author of the aforementioned letter makes the bizarre assertion that the original *Talkback* complainant must be "the only non-dog lover in the Army".

I don't see how such a supposition could ever be realistically substantiated,



■ BEYOND SPURIOUS REFERENCES TO TRADITION, THERE IS NO VALID REASON FOR HAVING ANIMALS ON CAMP■

particularly when my own experience is to the contrary.

I can wholly appreciate that dogs are often considered members of the family, but they're not members of anyone else's family and many don't want to be bothered by them.

I could also comment on the logical conclusion of such an argument leading to

people bringing in cats, goldfish, spiders or terrapins as members of the family, but it would be overstated.

Furthermore, I could comment on rank playing its part as I've yet to observe a single private who is allowed to bring his dog to work.

Ultimately, however, what I find most frustrating is the erstwhile mentioned policy. It assures us that there are many cases for and against canines in the workplace, yet I've still to come across a single lucid argument for the practice.

Beyond spurious references to tradition or the sentimental discourse often found in letters such as "Barking mad", there is literally no valid reason for having animals on camp.

There are, however, several strong reasons why they should be dismissed, such as hygiene, allergies, nuisance factor, repressed frustration, resentment or the next occupant of an office requiring the whole place to be cleaned.

If one cannot reliably take care of their dog without bringing it to work, I'd posit that the owner should be assessing why they have the animal in the first place.

Put bluntly, I don't want my colleagues suffering medical issues because of a long-standing practice that nobody can reasonably justify. — CPOCT Chris Whyte, CDC Pool, Chicksands.

DOG-TIRED CUSTOM

IN his hypocritical attack on a young soldier who voiced a concern about dogs in the workplace, Mr De Landah, "Writer in the doghouse" (June), showed a degree of blinkered ignorance.

Just because his great-grandfather was a Serviceman and was pictured with a dog in 1880 does not mean it is appropriate 130 years and five generations later.

Is he suggesting that we bring back other military traditions like flogging and walking to battle in dress uniforms?

Many Service customs have fallen by the wayside over the years and the practice of inflicting pets on others in the workplace is one that should go the way of smoking.

To quote the author himself, "it is indeed a sad letter" when someone sees fit to criticise another in such a personal manner without proffering much in the way of reasoned argument.

Capt James Morgan's reply, "Barking mad" (June), far better expressed his side of the debate. While I agree that "the regiment is the soldier or officer's 'home' and he or she must feel at ease within it", I would counter that many do not feel at ease in the presence of animals.

Should these individuals suffer just so those with dogs can be more at home when not at home? — WO1 (ASM) S Hughes, TFSU(G), BFPO 19.

Don't deny veterans a Diamond

I WAS a serving soldier when the Queen's Silver Jubilee Medal was awarded and I recall my unit being provided just two — one was presented to the youngest soldier and the adjutant "copped" the other.

As a result of normal leaving conditions and the huge redundancy programme of the early 1990s, many Servicemen and women also missed out on the monarch's Golden Jubilee award.

With that in mind and considering how rare diamonds are, it would seem both appropriate and fair if all who have served during Her Majesty's reign were to be judged eligible to wear next year's decoration.

Extending the qualifying criteria to encompass Armed Forces veterans need not trouble the Government "bean counters" if those who no longer serve are permitted to purchase the medal. — D N Pinder (veteran).

The editor types: At the time of writing, *Soldier* and staff at the MoD Medal Office are unaware of any provision for ex-Service personnel to buy and wear the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal. Read page 17 of this issue for details on the qualifying criteria for the decoration.





APPOINTMENTS

Lieutenant General: N P Carter (late RGJ) to be Commander Field Army in January 2012.



COMPS

Spine line winner: Sgt A Stiles, BATSUB, BFPO 12.

Armed Forces action figure winners:

Cpl R Fox, ATC(P), Woking; Sgt S Rose, DST, Leconfield; Ms T Gellatly, Blairgowrie; Ms J Moseley, Army Inspectorate, HQ LF; Mrs L Yates, DECC, Aberdeen; SSgt M Knighton, Herford Medical Centre, BFPO 15; A Jones, Arborfield; Lt Col M Wright-Jones, CO Personnel Recovery Unit, BFPO 825; L Bradshaw, Burnley; A Beaven, Thatcham; Ms S Stronach, HQ 2 Div, Edinburgh; R Wells, D(RDY) Sqn, RWXY, Barnstaple; Sgt A Morris, ACIO, Barnstaple.

Tall Dark Stranger winners:

G Crandles, Edinburgh; Sgt J Dunwood, 2 Signal Regt, York; Spr S Garbett, 39 Engr Regt, Waterbeach; WO2 V Bannister RQMS, CVHQRA & HQ Woolwich Station; Ms E Hutchinson, Harrogate.

The Fighter winners: Cpl S Bighi, DSL, Beaconsfield; J Watson, Netheravon; Miss A Neilson, HQ 145 (S) Bde; M Hall, Tonbridge.

Don't Look Now winners: Mrs J Hawkes, HQ Hereford Garrison; S Smith, Networks Team, MoD Corsham; Miss K Waddy, Colchester; Ms J Barnes, Rochester; J Dickinson, 217 Tpt Sqn, Leeds.



DIARY

August 5-7: The Gloucestershire Steam & Vintage Extravaganza at South Cerney Air Field, Cirencester. Family and concessionary rates available. For information and tickets visit www.steamextravaganza.com

August 8: Malayan Scouts SAS book launch. Memoir of the Malayan Emergency 1951 at the Chorlton Library, Manchester at 1830. Speaker Dr Joseph Durkin, author.

September 3: Soldiers' Support Group 40s Day event at Darwen Market Square, Darwen, Lancashire, BB3 1BG (1000-1700). Includes a commemorative parade at noon, brass bands, singers and amateur boxing display. Free coach and car parking. For more information call 07951 460414 or 07970 215399.

September 3-4: The Duxford Air Show. Enjoy the sight and sound of the celebrated British single-seat fighter aircraft in the year that marks the 75th anniversary of the Spitfire's inaugural flight. An advanced booking discount is available via www.iwm.org.uk/duxford

September 17: Help for Heroes charity event. A mixture of live music from eight to ten different bands plus DJ at The Boro Bar,

Oundle Road, Woodston, Peterborough PE2 9PJ, from 1100-0100, children welcome until 2100. Further details from www.theborobar.co.uk

September 17-18: Salute to the 40s returns to the Historic Dockyard, Chatham. Naval, military and Home Front re-enactors, wartime vehicles and lots more. Adult tickets £11, concessions £9.50. Book by calling 01634 823815 or email groupsales@chdt.org.uk



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Armed Forces' Christian Union: 01252 311221; www.afcu.org.uk

Armed Forces Humanist Association: www.armedforceshumanists.org.uk

ABF The Soldiers' Charity: 0845 241 4820

Army Welfare Service: 01980 615975; www.army.mod.uk/welfare-support/welfare-support.aspx

Army Families Federation: 01264 382324; mil 94391 2324; www.aff.org.uk

British Limbless Ex-Service Men's Association: 0208 590 1124; www.blesma.org

Career Transition Partnership: 0207 766 8020

Children's Education Advisory Service: 01980 618244; enquiries@ceas.detsa.co.uk

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

Family Escort Service: 0207 463 9249

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

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): 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

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

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

South Atlantic Medal Association: 01495 227577

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

The Not Forgotten Association: Tel – 0207 730 2400/3360; Fax – 0207 730 0020



INTELLIGENCE

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

DIB 52/11: Launch of the Armed Forces community covenant scheme

DIB 53/11: US troop reduction in Afghanistan welcomed by PM and CDS

DIB 54/11: Publication of the Defence Reform Review

DIB 55/11: Increase in council tax relief for eligible personnel on operations overseas

DIB 56/11: PUS writes to Defence personnel about pension changes and long-term reform

DIB 57/11: Announcements on drawdown of troops in Afghanistan

DIB 58/11: Extension of the payment of operational allowance to Op Ellamy

DIB 59/11: Publication of the Mull of Kintyre review

ABN 32/11: Land Forces Civilian Voluntary Early Release Scheme 2011/12

ABN 33/11: Unit-level participation on Facebook and social media registration

ABN 34/11: Establishment of the Gurkha Staff and Personnel Support company

ABN 35/11: Changes to council tax relief

ABN 36/11: The command and care of wounded, injured and sick personnel and an update on the Army Recovery Capability

DIN 2011DIN01-146: Manpower substitution – agency workers

DIN 2011DIN01-147: The Army Dependents' Trust annual report

DIN 2011DIN01-148: Changes to the Armed Forces Pension Scheme 2005

DIN 2011DIN01-149: Service life insurance

DIN 2011DIN01-150: Grading assessment during recruitment

DIN 2011DIN01-151: MoD/NHS Agenda for Change pay grades

DIN 2011DIN01-152: Tri-Service Fiji Support Network brief for UK-based Service personnel

July 13-14, 2011

DIN 2011DIN01-153: Publication of revised Cadet Force JSPs 814, 313 and 535

DIN 2011DIN01-154: Council tax relief increase following covenant commitment

DIN 2011DIN01-155: The Professional Engineering Institution Churchill Medal Award

DIN 2011DIN01-156: Ramadan & Eidul Fitr

DIN 2011DIN02-009: Enterprise Gateway Service incident reporting and management

DIN 2011DIN02-010: Suspension of individual EGS access

DIN 2011DIN02-011: Contract security

DIN 2011DIN03-021: Measurement, computing and reporting of atmospheric pressure: adoption of the Hectopascal as the unit of measurement

DIN 2011DIN03-022: Volunteers required for the Army's new Military Assistance Group

DIN 2011DIN03-023: Withdrawal of the T999 Bill of Lading

DIN 2011DIN04-087: The use of electronic signatures on JAMES

DIN 2011DIN04-088: Management of ground fuel cards

DIN 2011DIN04-089: Introduction into service of maintenance staging for the Sea King helicopter MK 3, 3A, 4, 6 and 7

DIN 2011DIN04-090: Sea Survival Equipment Log – planned maintenance schedule 1-5986-000

DIN 2011DIN04-091: Declaration of out of service – various equipment

DIN 2011DIN04-092: Declaration of out of service – various equipment

DIN 2011DIN04-093: Request for medical support to exercises

DIN 2011DIN04-094: Transformation of the Defence Fuels Group

DIN 2011DIN04-095: Declaration of out of service – various equipment

DIN 2011DIN04-096: Defence support to National Citizen Service projects

DIN 2011DIN04-097: New UK interim vehicle rental services

DIN 2011DIN04-098: Equipment tables, scales and schedules

DIN 2011DIN04-099: Provision of driver services for the collection and delivery of roadworthy MoD vehicles within the mainland UK excluding Northern Ireland

DIN 2011DIN04-100: HMS *Dauntless* and *Diamond* in-service support arrangements

DIN 2011DIN04-101: Declaration of maintenance policy

DIN 2011DIN05-031: The Bribery Act 2010

DIN 2011DIN06-012: JSP 375 Volume 2 & 3 – health and safety handbook updates – and JSP 392 – radiation safety handbook updates

DIN 2011DIN06-013: Road traffic accident/ incident reporting

DIN 2011DIN06-014: Insurance arrangements for MoD vehicles – a back-pocket guide

DIN 2011DIN06-015: Cross Government contract for the supply of first aid at work training by St John Ambulance

DIN 2011DIN07-113: Joint Service biathlon shooting instructor & coach courses

DIN 2011DIN07-115: Exercise Arctic Express 2012 – exercise instruction

DIN 2011DIN07-116: Recording of foreign language skills (not obtained through Service training)

DIN 2011DIN07-117: Ex Rucksack 12 – exercise instruction

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Continued on page 66.



NO. 837

JUST HOW OBSERVANT ARE YOU?

TEN details have been changed on this photograph of the grand opening of the Gunners Today exhibition at the Firepower Museum, Royal Arsenal, Woolwich.

Circle the differences in the left image and send the panel to **HOAY 837, Soldier, Ordnance Road, Aldershot, Hampshire**

GU11 2DU by August 31.

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

The results will be announced in the

October issue.

June's competition: First correct entry drawn at random and winner of the £100 was **D Fleming**, Trowbridge, Wiltshire.

Runners-up **Daun Malloy**, Imphal Barracks, York and **P Morris**, AFCO Edinburgh win a £25 gift voucher.



DIN 2011DIN07-118: MoD-sponsored cadet force activities indemnified by MoD

DIN 2011DIN08-010: Accounting arrangements 2011/2012

DIN 2011DIN08-011: JSP 891 personal cheque encashment

DIN 2011DIN09-007: *The Sun* Military Awards



REUNIONS

144 Para Medical Sqn/144 Field Ambulance/23 Para Field Ambulance OCA:

Past and present reunion dinner at the TA Centre, Hornsey, London N8 7QT on August 13. Further information from WO2 Bill Hounsome on 07762 490583/01732 743807 or email bill_hounsome@hotmail.com

45 Field Support Squadron RE: Reunion on September 3 at the Chiltern Hotel, Luton. Contact Gordon Brady, 51 Whippelley Ring, Luton, Beds LU1 5QS or phone 07929 167451.

Military hovercraft: Did you serve in the Inter-Service Hovercraft Unit, 200 Hovercraft Sqn, Far East Det or 539 Assault Sqn RM? If so, you are invited to attend the 50th UK Military Hovercraft weekend at Brownhaw, Gosport on September 10-12. Contact Brian Russell, 24 Jellicoe Avenue, Alverstoke, Gosport PO12 2PE, phone 02392 584371 or email Brianatjellico@aol.com

Army musicians: All ex-Army musicians are invited to rally at Kneller Hall for a march past with serving CAMUS personnel and a reunion lunch on September 16. Starts at 1100. Details from Maj John Carter on 0208 744 8652 or corpssec@hq.dcamus.mod.uk

Royal Hampshire Regiment: Annual reunion luncheon for all Territorial battalions on September 24 at Newburgh House,

Winchester. Contact Maj Ian Taylor, 4 Cedar Wood Close, Fair Oak, Eastleigh, Hants SO50 7LN, 02380 694771 or ian.p.b.taylor@btinternet.com

Welsh Guards Mortar Platoon: Reunion at the United Services Mess, Wharton Street, Cardiff on September 30. Partners welcome. For further information email Keith Lewis at rkl1wg@yahoo.co.uk or call Gareth on 01443 402189.

Calday Grange CCF: 60th anniversary on October 1, with a parade and black-tie dinner. Further information from Maj Adcock at ccf@calday.wirral.sch.uk

18 Regiment RA: Reunion on October 8 at Charnwood Arms Hotel, Beveridge Lane, Bardon Hill, Coalville, Leicestershire LE69 1TB. Details from D Mathews on 02476 349167 or Peter Saunders on 01435 812731.

Royal Horse Artillery: Reunion dinner and AGM will take place at The Artillery Centre, Larkhill on October 8-9. Contact Richard Whiteway, The Hideaway, 18 Immenstadt Drive, Wellington, Somerset TA21 9PT or phone 01823 665650 or email rhaassn@hotmail.co.uk

Queen's School Rheindahlen Association: Reunion event at the Holiday Inn, Telford on October 14-15. Phone 01934 418998 or visit www.queenschoolrheindahlenassociation.co.uk

ROADSHOWS

The Army Presentation Team wants to hear from members of the public who would like a personal invitation to its hi-tech roadshow. The event starts with a drinks reception, is followed by a presentation and questions and culminates with a finger buffet. There will be a range of military personnel on hand to answer any of your questions. Call 01276 417000 or email your name and address to apt.mod@btinternet.com with the event you are interested in attending.

August: No presentations. **September:** Guildford, Crawley and Rochester (dates TBC).



SEARCHLINE

Rhoda Kirkpatrick is seeking information about her cousin, 23917491 **L Bdr David Edward Tilbury**, who was killed in action on October 27, 1971 at Rosemount RUC in Northern Ireland. Email kirkysgirl@yahoo.com

Author Ryan Gearing is producing an anthology of **poetry** written by men and women from all three Services. Poems should be sent to Tommies Guides, Menin House, 13 Hunloke Avenue, Eastbourne, East Sussex BN22 8UL or to sales@tommiesguides.co.uk

David Stewart is trying to trace fellow comrades of his late father 22722258 **Cpl Robert Muirhead Wilson (RAOC)**. He served from 1952 until 1954 and was based in Tripoli from January 1953. Contact David at 9/12 Smithfield Street, Edinburgh EH11 2PG or phone 0131 477 6387.

Where are you chef **John Clark (aka Clarky)**? Last known whereabouts was 16 Regiment, Woolwich in 1999/2000. Wendy Hennell is trying to find you. If you wish to get in contact email wendy.hennell@hotmail.co.uk

Ex-Rhodesian Army engineer (Patrick McCosh) is trying to find former colleague **Michael Peters** who joined the British Army in 1980 when he left Zimbabwe. Michael was a sergeant in 1993. His parents were Ron and Margaret Peters. Contact Patrick by email at patrick@west.co.zw

Former MoD civilian Udhams Dillon is trying to locate **Lt Col A Pratt (RA)** who was serving in Hong Kong in 1982/83 as Chief G4 Qdg. Udhams retired in July 1983 and emigrated to Canada. Contact by email at jeobala@rogers.com or write to 311 Dixon Road, Apt 809, Etobicoke, Tronto M9R 1S3, Ontario, Canada.

104 FS Battalion REME requires Territorial Army volunteers for Op Herrick 16 (tour dates between April and October 2012). Contact the ROSO via your company PSAO. Selection weekend on **September 9-11, 2011**.

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Picture: Steve Dock

Sense and Service mobility

HERE'S a great question in the Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey – "would you like to own a house?". Yes, of course I would and I'd also like one of those shiny new BMWs and a designer wardrobe. But can I afford to own a property where we're currently posted? No. And I can't stretch to the posh car or Gucci clothing either.

Moving around every two years means that just as Service families settle into one house, we're already thinking about the next one and 'twas ever thus. Mobility has been part of Army life for centuries, when following the flag used to mean literally that. Although, we do have it somewhat easier now than the occupants of original "quarters" – single barrack rooms split into four by a curtain for each family.

The Strategic Defence and Security Review last year included the development of the New Employment Model (NEM) and, judging by the way this term is bandied about as being the solution to all ills, it will be an impressive piece of work. Once it has been implemented the world will definitely be a better place, or at least our little bit of it will. Allegedly.

In official speak: "The NEM seeks to provide terms and conditions of service (including career structure, pay, pensions, allowances and accommodation options) that better balance the expectations of Service personnel and the demands placed on them and their families. One specific

aim will be to improve domestic stability, which benefits spouses' employment and children's education. The NEM will recognise that where mobility is required for Service reasons, appropriate support and compensation should be available. Policy changes will be implemented from 2014 over a period of about ten years. The programme will seek to maximise stability and reduce dependency on publicly-supported accommodation."

As mobility causes the majority of problems for Army families this should be great news. But I have to admit to struggling with the concept of stability. My husband is in a corps. We trickle post (the royal "we" that is – he gets posted, me and the kids trickle along behind) and we have the grand total of 11 moves in 16 years under our belts. Except for one moment of madness when we did purchase our own house to live in, we've always lived in Service families' quarters and still do.

The MoD's Future Accommodation Project will develop options for a different approach to provision, which it hopes will better meet needs for affordable and good quality properties. Again, in principle, this is great news. The stock we have at present is old and in need of some significant investment, which in this climate is unlikely to be forthcoming.

There is no doubt that Army housing

is likely to face significant changes as the MoD encourages soldiers and their families to use privately rented or owned accommodation as their mobility decreases. Revisions could dramatically alter the way our families live their lives, in both positive and negative ways. It raises questions about welfare provision, the future of child education allowances and fundamental changes to patch life.

I have to admit to struggling with the concept of stability'

AFF and our sister federations in the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force have just closed a survey to determine what it is that families want from where they live.

There is no doubt that the initial suggestion of change in the long term has met with significant opposition and downright suspicion. I am not the only one who struggles to imagine a life in the Army that does not involve moving every couple of years.

But this is an opportunity to ensure that the defence estate is fit for purpose and meets the needs of the modern Army family. We cannot allow the decision makers to assume about how we want to live on the basis of the "would you like to own a house" question.

Overwhelmingly, families need the New Employment Model to prove that stability is a reality not an aspiration, otherwise this will simply be seen as one more cost-cutting exercise dressed up as progress. ■

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Newcastle's Ignition Festival is on August 6 and 7. We have great acts such as Calvin Harris, Echo and the Bunnymen, Miles Kane, Howard Marks, Feeder, Doorly, Kissy Sell Out with many more to add.

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An advertisement for Garrison FM. At the top, the 'Garrison FM' logo is displayed, with 'G' featuring a small silhouette of the British Isles. Below the logo is a map of the United Kingdom with various radio tower icons. Each tower is associated with a station name and frequency: Glencorse (1287 AM), Edinburgh (98.5 FM), Catterick (106.9 FM), Leconfield (87.7 FM), Wattisham (1287 AM), Woodbridge (1287 AM), Salisbury Plain (106.8 FM), Bassingbourn (1287 AM), Colchester (107 FM), Aldershot (102.5 FM), and a final tower without a visible frequency label. At the bottom left, a hand holds an iPhone displaying the Garrison FM app interface. To the right, a computer monitor shows the Garrison FM website. Text at the bottom encourages listeners to 'Get the new... IPHONE APP' and 'Listen online... GARRISONFM.COM'.

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AUGUST'S SCORCHERS

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P82 BOOKS **RED HOT READING**



Graphic: *Sucker Punch* is released on Blu-Ray and DVD courtesy of Warner Home Video

War inside the mind

Zach Snyder's *Sucker Punch* is a feast for the eyes but falls down on its storyline

Review: Joe Clapson

THIS is a movie that scores heavily on the beautiful women and visual effects front, but fails miserably with a plot that is so thin it brings cheap lavatory tissue to mind.

In keeping with his past films, director Zach Snyder (*300*, *Watchmen*) has taken inspiration from graphic novels to create battle scenes of epic proportion with a picture-perfect cast.

In *Sucker Punch*, it is the raunchy attire and masterful artwork that retains audience interest.

The appealing Emily Browning (*The Uninvited*) plays Babydoll, an innocent young girl who has been sent to a mental asylum by her step-father.

There the wide-eyed bombshell faces being lobotomised by a less-than-conventional doctor, before we are thrown into her hyper-creative mind via computer-generated imagery and Snyder's comic book illustrations.

Jenna Malone, who plays Rocket, spoke to *Soldier* about her role in the fast-paced movie, large parts of which are figments of Babydoll's multi-coloured imagination.

"I felt like my character represented hope in

Babydoll's psyche but maybe a loss of innocence too," Malone said.

"Whereas Blondie (Vanessa Hudgens) represents the fear and insecurity in her mind. Amber is innocence and Sweet Pea is the strength. There are so many different layers."

The cast members explained how they developed their impressively-toned body shapes, which are unashamedly on show at all times.

"We had three months of training where we were just in the gym sweating and working and so at night it was beautiful to have a glass of wine and talk about the inner, deeper realities of what we were doing," said Malone.

Browning added: "Six to eight hours a day, about five days a week for three months we were working out. The first two weeks were hell – I was crying and calling my mum every night."

In Babydoll's mind she is being kept prisoner in an orphanage where the girls provide titillation for clients, but she is determined to find freedom.

Luckily enough, her thoughts transport her to a weird monk-type figure who says she will escape this life if she finds five key items. Predictably, the movie becomes a tale of locating those objects.

Amid erotic dances we are taken on a journey through flashbacks to huge First World War battle

scenes as the girls fight to find an escape route.

Bouncing actresses in basques and knee-high boots battling gas-masked German soldiers in trenches is certainly one way to deflect attention from the soulless, one-dimensional script.

The provocative dress of the female cast will no doubt bring adverse comments from feminist ranks, but Jamie Chung (Amber) refutes any suggestion that there is a negative portrayal of women in the film.

"Come on, let's be serious," she said. "If you are fantasising about being a superhero, how are you going to look?"

"There's nothing wrong with being comfortable, being sexy and still being powerful."

Oscar Isaacs, who plays bad guy Blue, added: "They [the women] didn't feel exploited, they were kicking ass and were completely in control."

"I grew up with comic books and the dudes always have huge pecs and muscles and that's kind of like the genre's aesthetic."

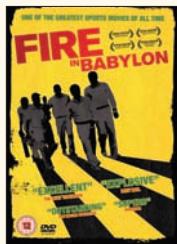
For those who enjoy watching pin-up women prance around in short leather skirts, wielding swords and spraying bullets into monsters' faces, this one is for you. If not, give it a miss. ■

● **Sucker Punch** is out on August 8

From world-beating cricket legends to a sinister landlord, *Soldier* checks out the latest DVD releases...

Fire in Babylon out now

THROUGH interview and period footage, this documentary captures the passion and spirit of the West Indies cricket team's ascendancy of the mid-1970s under the leadership of Clive Lloyd and Viv Richards. It demonstrates how the squad linked the disparate Caribbean islands, generating a platform for the anti-apartheid movement and bred self-belief. The film shows lightning fast and unapologetic bodyline balls; the fierce fire-with-fire fight against the Australians and of course the World Series Cricket win. Even if you don't care for this sport, you'll cheer every victory and wonder how the racist views of the day endured.



Capt Neil Johnson, AAC

Season of the Witch out now

THE brutal warfare of the 14th century Crusades is given the Hollywood treatment. After years of battles, two heroes played by **Nicholas Cage** and **Ron Perlman** become disillusioned with the constant killing and decide to desert and return home. However, they are captured en route and given the choice of either escorting a witch to a remote abbey for trial or death. Choosing the former, they set off on an eventful journey that involves fighting off hordes of wolves and battling their companion's mind games. This is an all-round excellent film – solid storyline, brilliant acting and a nice little twist at the end.



Rodge Tapply, ex-RE

Lake Mungo out now

A FILM that revolves around a teenager, Alice Palmer (**Talia Zuckerman**), who tragically drowns in mysterious circumstances on a family day out. People begin to question her death when they see silhouettes and images of her in photos and videos and her secret life is unravelled. The movie is a "mockumentary"-style ghost film similar to *Paranormal Activity* and although it is low budget and initially slow, it does pick up with plot twists that leave the viewer intrigued and determined to find out how things will end. In order to get the full shock value it is well worth watching until the credits stop rolling.



Daniel Crowder, Greater Manchester ACF



Formidable females: The impressive comic-book effects of *Sucker Punch* are accentuated by a stellar cast of eye-popping fighting women

Henry of Navarre out now

AN HISTORICAL epic, *Henry of Navarre* charts the life, loves and death of the French King Henry IV through the mid-to-late 16th century. The film captures well this tumultuous period in history in which the Protestant Huguenots fought Catholics for religious freedom. Overly long at two-and-a-half hours, the movie does have a few tedious moments but generally the brutal close-up action scenes, twisting plot lines and vividly portrayed love life of King Henry keep you engaged. Put aside the subtitles and this film, based on the novel by **Heinrich Mann**, becomes truly entertaining.



Capt Marc Claxton, R Signals

The Resident out now

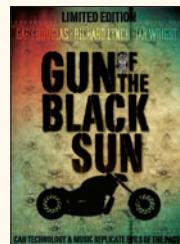
THIS is a very engaging psychological title which, although not quite a horror, does get under your skin enough to unsettle you. It features **Hilary Swank** as an attractive doctor who needs to rent a new apartment. She ends up chancing upon an absolute bargain, moves in and makes herself at home. Unbeknownst to the young medic, the landlord uses secret passages to spy on her in the bath, spike her nightly bottle of wine and sleep under her bed. The guy has got more issues than the *Beano*. Although not a "lads' night in" film, it is worth a watch with your other half on the sofa with the lights off.



Spr James Dobbs, 101 Engr Regt

Win... Gun of the Black Sun

HERE is an independent fantasy adventure in which a neo-Nazi megalomaniac attempts to use violence and crime to resurrect and rule an Aryan race. A Luger pistol linked to the Third Reich, music, car chases and fast motorbikes all play key roles in this film, as does ex-footballer **Ian Wright** in his first feature. *Soldier* has teamed up with the people behind *Gun of the Black Sun* to give five copies of the DVD away. To be in with a chance of winning, tell us which Premiership club Wrighty scored 185 goals for. Answers on a postcard to the usual address or send an email to **comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk**



Closing date: August 31



Life in the fast lane:
The eagerly-anticipated *Formula One 2011* will be available on all formats from September 23

Start your engines

Developers return to grid with fine-tuned follow-up to winning formula of 2010

Preview: Alasdair Baverstock

THIS new arrival on the grid is the hotly-anticipated follow-up to Codemasters' monster hit from last year, which created a stunning re-enactment of the high-octane world of Formula One.

With such success in mind, the developers have built on the tried and tested foundations of the previous game and, while only minor changes are evident in the driving simulator itself, everything that surrounds your cockpit has been expertly polished for a podium finish.

The improved graphics and lighting are impressive and the non-driving aspect has been deepened to enhance the experience away from the circuit.

As well as consulting with your race team on your car's specifications and the track conditions, the game tries to simulate the all-round life of a Grand Prix driver.

You'll now have to attend press conferences and read what the media really think of you. I know what you're thinking but, no, sex scandals aren't included.

The single-player mode has not changed drastically. Other than a clearer presentation, the only noticeable difference from the in-car perspective is the customised steering wheels that are specific to each team, which is a nice addition to an already detailed aspect.

What is evidently advanced, however, is the multi-player option, and it is in this department that the new arrival far outstrips its predecessor.

A split-screen mode for local play and an easier online experience firmly back up the "go compete" tagline that decorates the cover and BBC Radio's voice of Grand Prix racing David Croft, who also serves as the title's commentator, has described this offering as "the most competitive Formula One game ever released".

So carefully thought out is the web-based experience, the developers boast, that even when you get disqualified, you can still watch the action unfold as a spectator from the on-board cameras of other competitors.

Sounds thrilling, although I'd personally rather spend the time waiting for the next race doing anything other than being taught why I crashed out by superior drivers.

From the perspective of a casual player, the game is difficult and while some claim that the

experience blends simulation and arcade perfectly, I am hard pressed to envision it next to the Slush Puppy machine at my local leisure centre.

If pick-up-and-play racing games like *Mario Kart* are your thing, this game is not for you. It's a demanding mistress, requiring both an interest in Formula One and a dedication to the driving experience on offer.

But the rewards are there for anyone willing to put the time in.

"Like with real racing cars," said Anthony Davidson, the driver-turned-pundit who has been consulting on the game, "it takes time to get to grips with it."

"The driving experience is very realistic, but there are certain aspects that the programmers can never include. The thing that slows you down in the real world is fear for your own life and that's impossible to instil in a game, no matter how involved the player is."

If you're actively looking for a realistic racing game, love Formula One, or enjoyed last year's title and want a more social racing experience, this game is a must-have.

If, on the other hand, you're after something that takes a little less effort and has a little more chill-out factor, you'll want to steer well clear. ■

From punishing personal trainers to disappointing dogfights, we check out the best and the rest of the new releases...

F.E.A.R 3 for all formats

FEAR was the last emotion I felt while playing this game, the first was disappointment. I was expecting something that would keep me on the edge of my seat with shocks, horrors and not nearly enough ammunition.

Instead, I found myself shooting millions of rounds at the same four enemies over and over. The visuals are nice but the gameplay is pretty standard and, apart from one or two gems, the level design feels like it's been done before. As a first-person shooter it lacks the polish of *Modern Warfare* and as a horror it pales in comparison with the likes of *Dead Space*. An average shooter at best.

Lt Neil Dickie, 105 Regt RA (V)



UFC Personal Trainer for all formats

THE home workout market is awash with DVDs from celebrity fatties who have shed a few pounds and feel generous enough to share the secret of their success. While these regimes deliver limited results, the *UFC Personal Trainer* takes getting fit to a whole new level. This title delivers painstaking, full-body programmes that combine aerobic exercise with muscle-specific strength training. Each move is demonstrated on screen and players are tracked to ensure they meet their targets, so there is no slacking. This is a welcome addition to the workout world and should see Coleen Rooney et al grasping at new revenue streams.

Andrew Simms, Soldier



Red Faction Armageddon for all formats

BOASTING a loose storyline that sees a human colony on Mars under attack from a vicious and violent alien force, *Red Faction Armageddon* could easily be dismissed with a "been there, done that" approach. But scratch beneath the surface and there is a lot more to enjoy from this title. Carnage and destruction are the ultimate selling points and it seems as though there is no end to the list of buildings and structures that can be demolished. There is a huge array of weaponry to aid this quest, which equates to hours of fun. The multi-player function extends these options further and help make this game a surprising hit.

Joe Clapson, Soldier





Pole position: Codemasters capture the thrills and spills of Grand Prix racing, along with the busy media circus away from the track, in *Formula One 2011*

Infamous 2 for PS3

RELUCTANT hero Cole McGrath returns for the second chapter of this best-selling franchise that has been developed exclusively for PS3. Blamed for the destruction of Empire City he retreats to the historic settlement of New Marais in a bid to discover his full super-power potential and save humanity from a dark enemy known as The Beast. This is a fine third-person adventure that offers a superb character-driven storyline and stunning design. The gameplay is smooth and easy to master and anyone who enjoyed the title's predecessor should definitely consider this excellent offering.



Richard Long, Soldier

Air Conflicts Secret Wars for all formats

THIS game is far from genre defining, spectacular or impressive, however, it is strangely enjoyable. *Air Conflicts Secret Wars* could have easily been a PS2 title with its poor graphics, clichéd dialogue and repetitive missions. But there is nothing like having a dogfight in a Spitfire against the German Luftwaffe. The flight mechanics are sound and each individual plane feels distinctive, while the multi-player function allows you to re-enact aerial battles from the First and Second World Wars. However, the novelty of dogfights soon wears thin and the fun is spoiled with awful structure which feels like laziness on the part of the developers.



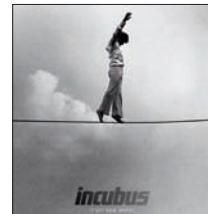
Lt Neil Dickie, 105 Regt RA (V)

Dynasty Warriors: Gundam 3 all formats

THIS title is the 25th release in the *Warriors* series and on the evidence offered here it is hard to see this painstaking run extending much further. If repetitive and mundane button bashing is your thing then *Gundam 3* certainly ticks all the boxes, but for those who expect an element of thought and imagination in their games this is a huge disappointment. A wealth of online co-op missions and a lengthy solo campaign offer a glimmer of hope but ultimately this is a tired and lacklustre affair that simply does not compare to the infinite array of more exciting action titles already on the market.



Richard Long, Soldier



Walking tall: Incubus make a brave break from the norm on *If Not Now, When?*, which has just been released on Epic Records

Relaxation therapy

Energy-charged American rockers adopt mellow change of direction for new album

Review: Richard Long

WITH more than a decade of hard rocking and touring to their name it seemed almost inevitable that time would eventually catch up with Incubus.

Having sold 13 million albums worldwide and with a string of hits behind them, the Californian quintet have taken a somewhat laconic approach to their seventh record, *If Not Now, When?*

Singer Brandon Boyd openly admits this is a break from the norm and said the band was determined to make their first release in five years sound like nothing that had gone before.

He added: "It's darker, slower, more rich, more refined and more involved than anything Incubus has birthed to date."

"We have essentially been searching for a sense of balance between all of the possibilities inherent in crafting a song. I believe that for many years we have been searching for something different. Something unique, both to the world and to us as a band."

The process and end result is far removed from the raw energy of the group's first album

S.C.I.E.N.C.E. which was pure, hard-driven rock.

Since then, Incubus have slowly mellowed and their sound has gradually slipped towards the mainstream and inevitable commercial success.

"When we recorded *S.C.I.E.N.C.E.* we were but wee lads overflowing with enthusiasm and energy," Boyd explained.

"We'd never really toured, we'd never had an audience other than our family and friends.

"We ended up touring around America and Europe quite relentlessly for over two years. By the time we sputtered, coughed and crawled our way home we were exhausted.

"We then began writing songs for our second album, *Make Yourself*, a record that, when finished, evoked a kind of head-scratching reaction from us.

"We had unintentionally helped to define a new sub-genre of music with the previous one.

"It then seemed almost counter-intuitive to produce a rock and roll album filled with melody, restraint, thoughtfulness and, God forbid, singles.

"It was met with trepidation by our newfound listeners. We even got nervous at certain points that perhaps we had made a mistake in trusting those instincts to keep moving in a more song-orientated direction.

"But a few months after its release, things began slowly arcing towards success.

"In the end, our creativity had pointed us in the right direction. *If Not Now, When?* is the coalescing of this slow arc."

In Boyd's own words, this is a slow album. The days of furious guitar riffs and screeching turntables are now long gone and their new material is more akin to Coldplay in the alternative music sphere.

Lead single *Adolescents* is probably the most familiar-sounding track due to its up-tempo approach, while *Switchblade* offers a welcome injection of energy.

The title song sets the scene early, providing a blissful opening for what follows. *Promises, Promises* maintains the stripped-back and mature vibe and *Thieves* hints at a more orchestral feel.

One of the most impressive aspects is the strength of Boyd's voice and the chilled-out approach allows his talents to flourish, rather than battling roaring instruments to be heard.

Incubus should be commended for their brave change in direction and while these songs are pleasing and enjoyable enough, it is hard to escape a yearning for the adrenalin-fuelled anthems of the good old days. ■

From venom-fused rap rock to a magical spell from a one-time wizard, we check out the best of the rest...

When The Sun Goes Down

WELL Selena Gomez has come a long way since her early days as the star of Disney's *The Wizards of Waverly Place*. This is her third album and I was quite surprised at just how good it actually is. She has worked with an A-list team of writers and producers, including **Katy Perry** and **Britney Spears**, and it shows throughout. This is well put together and each track is upbeat, fresh and very catchy. With single *Who Says* reaching the US Top Ten and earning more than 30 million views on YouTube it's not hard to understand the speed with which Selena and her band are gathering global momentum and recognition. A first-rate group, who I suspect have a lot more to deliver, and a first-rate album.

Rodge Tapply, ex-RE



Permanent by Jessica Clemons

THE first UK release from **Jessica Clemons** comes after a month-long tour supporting our very own Army band **The Soldiers**. There is no doubt she has a strong and soulful voice and this is showcased over the course of an album which includes a number of well-written and slickly-produced ballads. There are also some more funky and rocky numbers, notably *Relentless* and *Here I Am* which, together with the title track, are the three single releases. *Permanent* is a very pleasant listen when taken as a whole. There are no stand-out songs and don't expect any smash hits but, nevertheless, it is worth a listen and it will be interesting to see how her career progresses over the next few years.

Pat Jordan, ex-RAMC



Get Your Heart On by Simple Plan

FIVE-piece Canadian pop-punkers **Simple Plan** return with their fourth studio effort *Get Your Heart On*. This will no doubt please existing fans but it's hard to imagine that they will win many new recruits. The lyrics are bland, unadventurous and cheesy at best. A variety of guest vocalists, including **Natasha Bedingfield** of *Unwritten* fame, lend a much-needed hand and her appearance on *Jet Lag* easily makes it the best song on the album. It is quite catchy and lacks the **Avril Lavigne** sound that plagues the other tracks. *Last Man Standing* may not be a great tune but it does have a meatier rock edge that is lacking throughout the rest of this run-of-the-mill offering.

Ray Kalaker, ex-RE





Returning heroes: Californian quintet Incubus have ended their five-year absence from the alternative music scene with the release of *If Not Now, When?*

The Bomb Shelter Sessions

SINCE forming in 2010 **Vintage Trouble** have not stopped. A prestigious slot supporting **Bon Jovi** on their greatest hits tour has honed their playing skills and this debut album is a throwback to the classic soul and blues/rock era of some 50 years ago. **Ty Taylor's** vocals are developing the dusky blues rasp that is reminiscent of past legends and their guitar work has a unique southern drawl. Despite releasing singles *Gracefully* and *Nancy Lee* there are no outstanding tracks but this offering deserves more recognition. Citing the likes of **Otis Redding** and **The Rolling Stones** as inspirations means the bar has been raised. The first jump on the journey has been made.



Steve King, Soldier

Gold Cobra by Limp Bizkit

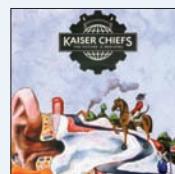
ROCKERS **Limp Bizkit** have defined a genre with their fusion of hip hop and metal and return from a hiatus with this new release. As with the back catalogue, if you can tolerate the ostentatious and somewhat contrived petulance, the reward is a well-written and executed guilty pleasure. Although I doubt this will be as significant as their other offerings (pun intended), the sound is still big and interesting; notable tracks include *Gold Cobra*, *Get a Life* and *Shotgun*. This is a great album with all the subtlety of a punch in the face from a collection of middle-aged men acting like angry teenagers who have just been told to get up and go to school. It shouldn't work, but it does; so go and buy a copy.



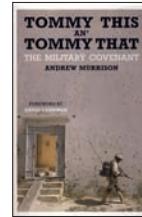
Capt Fraser Dowling, AGC (ETS)

The Future is Medieval by Kaiser Chiefs

FOLLOWING a self-imposed break, the **Kaiser Chiefs** return with their fourth album, *The Future Is Medieval*. In a break from the norm, the band released a host of songs on their website and chose their own and fans' favourites before releasing the record. Something of a gamble? Not on the first listen. The Brit award-winners are still the same group that pounded our senses with the likes of *Ruby* and this doesn't appear to be much different. Yes they may have lost some momentum, however, the stomp-along sounds are still in place and they accompany a few more soulful and relaxed tunes. It may not hit the heights of earlier releases but it's a decent record that is well worth a listen.



WO2 Mo Morris, RLC



Covenant case study: All royalties from the sale of *Tommy This an' Tommy That*, priced £14.99, will be donated to The Royal British Legion

Relationship advice

Former surgeon commander puts the nation's bond with its Forces in the spotlight

Interview: Sharon Kean

THE military covenant may have only just forced its way into UK legislation but the ethos behind it is as old as soldiering itself. And it is this extensive history that Royal Navy medic-turned-front-line Tory MP Andrew Murrison attempts to set out in *Tommy This an' Tommy That*.

Political posturing aside, the timing of such a book, which questions what the nation is doing to honour those who sacrifice all in service of their country, is apposite and its author is certainly well-qualified to explore the story of Britain's bond with its Armed Forces.

Able to offer a 360-degree perspective having served on Op Telic in 2003, established David Cameron's Military Covenant Commission in 2008 and been elected as member for South West Wiltshire last year, Murrison argues that the public's burgeoning sense of support towards its troops has never been timelier.

"It has become extremely important over the past ten years because of events in Iraq and Afghanistan," he told *Soldier*. "I thought it was

important that somebody sat down and tried to describe its history, where it is at the moment and where it's going in the future, because I think it's something that's going to evolve.

"Having served both as a Regular and Reservist for most of my adult life, and been a Defence spokesman for my party, I thought I was reasonably well-placed to write the book."

The title begins its history lesson in medieval Britain and moves through successive monarchs, charting how society and politics have impacted on the well-being of Service personnel over the past two centuries. Importantly, Murrison does his utmost to make clear exactly what the covenant is.

"I would say that it is the obligation that the public, chain of command and government have to the men and women who serve us and by extension, their dependants," he said. "And that applies whether or not you agree with the mission."

With that principal in mind, Murrison's book is dedicated to the Royal Air Force bomber command unit whose controversial Second World War operations destroyed entire German towns.

"The men who were engaged with that honoured the covenant just as much as the fighter command [Churchill's "the few"]," he explained.

"People are quite capable of teasing apart their

antipathy towards a mission and their admiration for those who are sent to prosecute it.

"At the end of the day, in a democracy Service personnel are sent on operations by a legitimately-elected government and they deserve our support, particularly given the extraordinary things that they do."

"Military service is quite unique. There's no other trade or profession that compares with it and that means that we have to honour the covenant."

In addition to charting its history, *Tommy This an' Tommy That* considers what the future might hold for this unique relationship. Predictions dating back almost 100 years suggest that with the advent of new technology there may come a time when such a bond will become redundant.

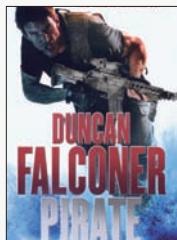
"If soldiers are as safe as the man on the Clapham omnibus, why should we have a special arrangement with them?" Murrison said. "But we're a long way from that. Here we are with people in Afghanistan closing with and killing an enemy at the end of 12 inches of cold steel."

"That is quite apart from the experience that the rest of us have and under those circumstances we have to have a special deal with the Armed Forces and I don't see an end to that in the near future."

From problem pirates to an Afghan solution, a flick through this month's literary releases...

Pirate

by Duncan Falconer



A PLEASURE to read, I enjoyed every page of this novel and my only gripe was that it came to an end. While a work of fiction, *Pirate*'s plot focuses on the very real dangers of being captured and held hostage in Somalia. **Duncan Falconer**'s story of a Special Boat Service veteran, John Stratton, and his against-all-odds mission to overcome terrorist keepers is the stuff of Hollywood blockbusters and is up there with the finest of its genre. *Pirate* is the perfect holiday read – escapism at its best and not overly taxing on the brain. I'm hoping that Falconer, a former Special Forces soldier, decides Stratton will return to action.

Anthony McNally, ex-12 Regt RA

Black Watch

by Tom Renouf

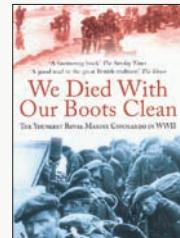
THE author brings a light human touch and emotion to the recounting of the 51st Highland Division's Second World War campaign. *Black Watch*'s first couple of chapters provide an interesting insight into the cultural backdrop that produced the courageous soldier who retains Himmler's watch. The book not only contains the author's personal recollections but those of his comrades who took part in bloody and sometimes desperate battles as the Highlanders moved out from Normandy towards the Rhine. Well written and difficult to put down, this is definitely one for the summer holiday packing list.

Capt Marc Claxton, R Signals

We Died With Our Boots Clean

A REALLY good and worthwhile read that tracks the exploits of the youngest Royal Marines commando to see action during the Second World War. From basic training to deployment during D-Day and beyond, **Kenneth McAlpine**'s story is told with the wry sense of humour typical of a British soldier. While war is war, *We Died With Our Boots Clean* serves to highlight how the way in which it is fought has changed. However, the issues facing troops have endured and many of the topics explored in this book – equipment, discipline, dress and rations – will resonate with those in uniform today.

WO2 Jason Agostini-Green, AGC (SPS)





Informed view: Andrew Murrison has first-hand experience of the military covenant – both as a Serviceman and front-line politician

Picture: Steve Docks

If The Allies Had Fallen

EDITED by **Dennis Showalter** and **Harold Deutsch**, this detailed set of alternative scenarios considers the possible outcomes if the Allies had lost major campaigns in the Second World War. Pearl Harbour and a second decisive Japanese

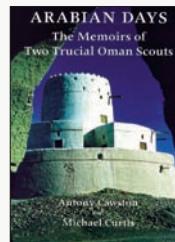


strike is one such examination. But, despite the depth of factual research, the accounts are based upon "if" and "would have". There is nothing wrong with postulating alternative outcomes. However, fictional scenarios set against the greatest historical event of the 20th century that was guided by Allied grand strategy and fine operational art, sit rather uncomfortably together.

Lt Col Andy Gladen, RE

Arabian Days by A Cawston and M Curtis

THE Trucial Oman Levies were raised by the British Government in 1951 for internal security duties and the protection of oil interests. In 1956 the force was renamed the Trucial Oman Scouts. This book is the joint memoir of **Anthony Cawston** and **Michael Curtis** and



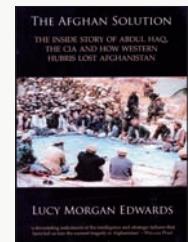
Anthony Cawston and **Michael Curtis** who had fairly conventional British Army careers until they were posted to the Middle East. Both developed a deep interest in the Arab world and on leaving the Army continued their civilian life in the area until retirement. A fascinating and colourful account of two Scouts. See the reviews pages on soldiermagazine.co.uk for an exclusive reader offer.

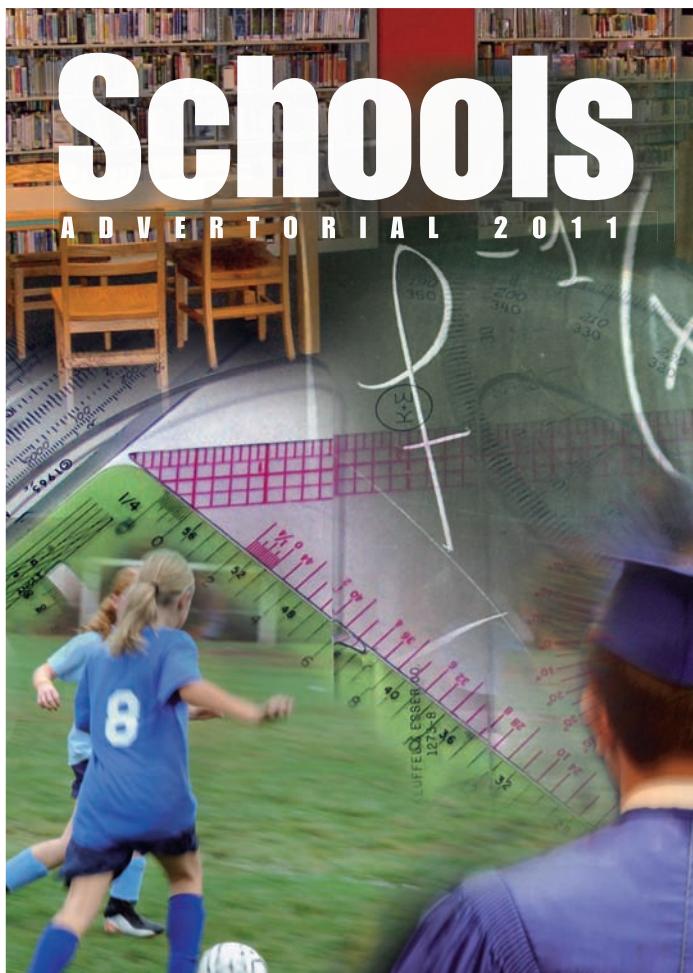
Lt Col (Retd) Dawson Pratt, ex-R Signals

The Afghan Solution by L M Edwards

ABDUL Haq, a former Mujahideen commander, had a plan to overthrow the Taliban and oust elements of al-Qaeda with the aid of a number of defectors, provided the West would make available a relatively small sum of money and weapons. This strategy was due to come to fruition not long after 9/11, an event that Haq had warned of in 1992 when the West started to pull out of its embassies following the fall of communism. **Lucy Morgan Edwards** argues that if it hadn't been for "the American need for revenge" losing the support of tribal moderates, the lives of hundreds of soldiers and civilians could have been spared.

Sgt Wallace Stephenson, Int Corps





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SOLDIERSPORT

Picture: Graeme Main

FLYING HIGH: PEDAL STARS ENJOY LIFE IN THE FAST LANE AS SERVICE CYCLING GOES FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

ALSO IN THIS MONTH'S ISSUE...



P86 **TWENTY20**
ARMY CRASH TO HEAVY
DEFEAT AT LORD'S



P89 **CRICKET**
WOMEN MAINTAIN
WINNING STREAK



P90 **ATHLETICS**
DISAPPOINTING DAY AT
FORCES SHOWDOWN



P95 **SWIMMING**
MIXED FORTUNES FOR
AQUATIC ACES





T20 SCOREBOARD

Inter-Services Twenty20
Lord's Cricket Ground, London

NAVY vs RAF

Navy 146-5 (Urmman 73 not out)
RAF 148-4 (Diver 52, Cessford 39)
RAF win by six wickets

ARMY vs NAVY

Match abandoned due to rain, both sides awarded one point each

ARMY vs RAF

RAF 142-7 (Adcock 43, Cessford 40, Watson 21, Hudson 3-23, Govender 2-29, Burwell 1-8)
Army 104 all out (Senneck 46, McCabe 2-4, Magee 2-12, Morris 2-40)
RAF win by 38 runs and are crowned 2011 champions



Batting collapse sees Reds suffer at Lord's

Report: Richard Long

Pictures: Graeme Main

A DISMAL top order batting display ensured the Army returned empty-handed from another disappointing Inter-Services Twenty20 cricket final at Lord's.

The Reds crumbled to a miserable 104 all out as they fell well short of the imposing 143-run target set by a ruthless Royal Air Force side that excelled with both bat and ball.

Skipper Maj Alex Senneck (R Signals) was the only player to find any form at the world-famous venue, smashing six fours in a defiant innings of 46.

But with wickets tumbling at the other end his side was never in contention and the airmen sealed a comfortable 38-run victory.

The RAF gave a strong indication of their intentions by emphatically sinking the Royal Navy in the tournament's opening fixture.

A prolonged spell of heavy rain ended any hopes of play between the Senior Service and the Army, meaning the match was abandoned as a draw.

When the weather finally

'We woke up the next morning thinking we just did not perform'

cleared, the Reds found themselves taking to the middle for a title-decider against a much-improved team that was comprehensively beaten in last year's competition.

And a repeat performance looked to be on the cards as the airmen struggled early on and slipped to a below-par 2-2 from the first four overs.

Opener Flt Lt Tim Adcock steadied the ship before retiring with a leg

injury, leaving all-rounder SAC Graeme Cessford to launch a boundary-laden counter-attack.

The right-hander cracked four sixes and two fours in a rapid-fire score of 40 as the champions-elect emphatically started to turn the match in their favour.

But Cessford fell to fast bowler Gnr Sherwin Govender (RA) as he tried to up the pace and a flurry of wickets seemingly tipped the balance back towards the Army.

However, a determined Adcock returned to the crease to inflict further damage in a composed knock of 43 and with Cpl Richie Williams launching the final ball of the innings for six, the momentum was clearly with the RAF as they finished on 142-7.

In response, the Army struggled to find their rhythm as the impressive Cessford opened with a maiden.

Govender put the first runs on the board with a classy drive through the covers for four but the left-hander fell leg before to spinner SAC Rob

Magee as he attempted a wild heave through the on side.

Fellow opener Lt James Hudson (RA) became Magee's second victim shortly after, before Rfn Michael Lewis (2 Rifles) was caught behind as the stuttering start continued.

Sgt Dan Webb

(Defence School of Intelligence) was then run out for five and LCpl Jonathan Boynton (REME) departed in the following over for just two.

Wicketkeeper Sgt Stu Houghton (R Signals) perished as he attempted to clear the inner circle and the Army run chase slipped to an embarrassing 37-6.

However, Senneck and WO2 Stephen Hole (REME) stopped the rot with a well-crafted 49-run partnership, but when the latter was bowled by LCpl





Key wicket: RAF batsman SAC Graeme Cessford launched a series of enormous sixes before he was bowled by Army all-rounder Gnr Sherwin Govender (RA)

Ash Watson the recovery came to a crashing halt.

SAC Sean McCabe drove the final nail in the Reds' coffin when Cessford caught Senneck on the boundary, before the spinner trapped Spr Jacques Prinsloo (RE) leg before to finish the innings on 104.

Speaking after the resounding defeat, Army manager Lt Col Phil King (RLC) told *SoldierSport* that his players simply failed to cope with the pressure of the grandstand occasion.

He added: "The RAF, on balance, were the better side.

"We needed to play the Navy as a warm-up; they benefitted from the extra game but that is not an excuse for our poor performance.

"For some reason our batting line-up misfired. They are better players than

that. It all came down to the pressure of the situation and we have to use this as a learning experience.

"Alex Senneck aside, our top seven imploded. Being four wickets down for only 30 runs meant we were never going to recover.

"To chase down a score of 142 you have to head into the second ten overs with wickets in hand.

"We reached that stage with half our side dismissed.

"We were always two or three wickets light and that made it difficult to have a proper launch at the end.

"Considering the start they had, I think the RAF would have been ecstatic with their total.

"Cessford produced what we know he is capable of, it could have gone horribly wrong but it came off for him

and the momentum swung firmly in their favour.

"I thought our bowling unit was in good order. Senneck and Capt Oli Burwell (RA) produced a fine opening spell and Hudson proved what a class cricketer he is by taking three wickets.

"We now need to get back on track, build on the performance at Lord's and improve as a team.

"If we had been beaten by a better and more talented team then I would not feel this disappointed.

"But we woke up the next morning thinking we just did not perform and that is so frustrating."

The Army will be looking for Inter-Services revenge when they lock horns with their Forces rivals in a three-day 50-over competition at Uxbridge starting on August 2. ■

SPIN KING

SLOW bowler Lt James Hudson (RA) proved to be the Army's most potent weapon with the ball as he claimed three RAF wickets. The officer dismissed destructive opener Flt Lt Tim Adcock for 43 and was among the team's stand-out fielders. Unfortunately, his form was not matched with the bat



BLOWN AWAY

ARMY batsman Gnr Sherwin Govender (RA) was the first player to fall victim to the RAF attack as the left-hander was trapped leg before for just four runs. The Reds struggled for momentum throughout their innings and a lack of partnerships saw them crumble to 104 all out



DANGER MAN

AFTER a subdued opening the RAF were struggling at 2-2 after four overs. But a vicious assault from SAC Graeme Cessford saw them post a competitive total of 142-7. The all-rounder smashed four sixes and two fours in a rapid-fire 40 and then claimed 1-15 in a superb bowling spell



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Army continue winning run

Report: Richard Long
Picture: Steve Dock

THE Army women maintained their grip on the Inter-Services Twenty20 cricket crown by inflicting crushing defeats on their Forces rivals.

Cpl Amanda Potgieter (REME, pictured) was once again the star of the show with the bat, cracking two rapid-fire half centuries to propel her side to a convincing victory at RAF Uxbridge.

The Reds were in commanding form in their opening match against the Royal Navy, who stuttered to a below-par 117-6 in an innings that lacked any fluidity.

Gnr Cat Williamson (RHA) returned excellent figures of 2-29 with the ball and Capt Mel Vaggers (AGC) ensured the stranglehold was maintained with a superb spell of 2-23.

With Potgieter showing a deft touch in the middle, the Senior Service were never in contention and the right-hander finished unbeaten on 61 as the Army

cruised to 119-2 in reply.

Vaggers capped a fine all-round performance with a supporting knock of 38.

The Army's dominance continued against the Royal Air Force, who crashed to a 77-run defeat after posting a paltry 85-7 in a lacklustre chase.

Potgieter was the chief tormentor as she bludgeoned an unbeaten 86, while Cpl Eddie Koff (RE) added 25.

Pte Vanessa Haydock (RLC) ripped through the opposition batting to claim 4-17 and seal another tournament success.

Manager Lt Col Sarah Streete (R Signals) was encouraged by her team's performance, especially as a number of key players from last year were missing.

"We had a lot of people away on operations and around half the squad are newcomers who are still learning the game," the thrilled officer told *SoldierSport*.

"For them to come in during

'If you get runs on the board it makes all the difference'

their first season and do so well is really pleasing.

"You can never tell how a game of Twenty20 will pan out; any side can suffer a batting collapse.

"We knew we had strength in depth and our training went very well, so we are delighted. If you get runs on the board it makes all the difference.

"We also have a great coach this year in Capt Frank Greenwood (R Signals). He is very enthusiastic and has put in a lot of hours in terms of extra bowling and batting sessions in the nets."

The women enjoyed a busy month in July.

After retaining their Twenty20 crown they slipped to a heavy defeat against a strong Marylebone Cricket Club side but were on course for victory against Wales Under-19s before the unseasonal weather intervened.

The team was playing in the Inter-Services 50-over competition as this issue went to press. ■

Misfiring Reds drop the baton

Report Richard Long
Pictures: Graeme Main

THE Army returned empty-handed from the Inter-Services athletics championships for the first time in 18 years following a disappointing day of track and field action at a wind-swept HMS *Temeraire*.

While the Reds struggled to make the grade, the Royal Air Force celebrated a superb double thanks to a series of determined performances that earned narrow victories in both competitions.

The light blues posted a challenging total of 158 points in the men's event – an effort that saw them finish four points clear of the Army – while the women enjoyed similar success by recording a score of 125, which gave them a five-point lead over their rivals.

Despite having home advantage, the Royal Navy finished a distant third as their athletes struggled to impose themselves against strong opposition.

Blustery conditions at Portsmouth ensured record-breaking performances were at a premium but LCpl Scott McKivitt (RLC) secured an early victory for the Army thanks to a throw of 49.43 metres in the hammer.

Field sensation Pte Osman Muskwe (3 LSR) started a busy day of action by retaining his javelin title and then finished second in the long jump behind teammate Pte Tala Gaye (Scots), who dominated the

'This result has given us a wake-up call, when you win year after year you can become complacent'

competition with a leap of 7.37 metres.

The all-rounder stormed his way to a comprehensive win in the high jump and scored welcome points in the triple jump and discus in what was an outstanding individual showing.

Capt Richard Smith (RADC) took gold in the 400 metres hurdles to give the Army an early win on the track and Olympic bronze medallist Sgt Musa Audu (3 LSR, pictured left) showed his class to claim the 400 metres crown.

However, the RAF dominated the remaining races, taking gold and silver in four events to build a healthy points total that was ultimately too strong for the Army, despite their best efforts.

Joint manager Maj Martin Annis (RAPTC) told *SoldierSport* his team had been hit by a number of withdrawals but was pleased to see new blood joining the sport's ranks.

He added: "Obviously we were

very disappointed. We have held the title for so long but we were missing a lot of athletes for this competition.

"Sgt Lee Okoroafo (RLC) was taking part in the Nigerian championships ahead of the African Games. He competes in the 110 metres hurdles, javelin, discus and high jump so there was a big gap there.

"We were also light in terms of our middle- and long-distance runners, that is something you cannot afford to be.

"But the RAF produced some great results in events we thought they would not do well in, so they deserve a lot of credit for what they achieved.



LEAP OF FAITH

THE Army men celebrated a superb double in the long jump with Pte Tala Gaye (Scots) claiming gold thanks to an effort of 7.37 metres. The athlete shattered the winning distance from last year's event and was just 15 centimetres short of setting a new Inter-Services record.



A STAR IS BORN

NEWCOMER Sig Alex Turbitt (R Signals) made an encouraging tournament debut with a fine showing in the field. She won the javelin with a throw of 39.42 metres, finished a close second in the shot putt and scored welcome points for the women in the discus competition.



HURDLES HERO

WITH the RAF athletes displaying fine form on the track, Army victories were few and far between at HMS *Temeraire*. But Capt Richard Smith (RADC) stopped the rot and ensured the Reds took gold in the 400 metres hurdles. The officer retained his title from 2010 in an impressive time of 54.8 seconds.





Ahead of the field: Sgt Danielle Hodgkinson (AMS) picks up the pace in the 800 metres but the Army struggled against the might of the RAF at Portsmouth

"A few of our guys underperformed but we also had some new faces in the team and that gave them a good introduction to Army athletics.

"This result has given us a bit of a wake-up call. When you win year after year you can become complacent and this has made us realise that we cannot rely on the same people to score points every time."

Middle-distance runner Sgt Danielle Hodgkinson (AMS) was the star of the show for the women as she celebrated a double in the 800 and 1,500 metres.

The Reds also dominated in the 5,000 metres, where Pte Nicola Van Staden (RE) and Sgt Shan Mansfield (RAPTC) claimed the top spots.

In the field, newcomer Sig Alex

Turbitt (R Signals) enjoyed a fine debut by taking the javelin title, along with second place in the shot and fourth in the discus, while Sgt Silvren St Helen (AMS) was runner-up in the long jump and triple jump.

Speaking after the event, ladies' team manager WO2 Tanya Jacobs (RLC) said she was disappointed with the outcome and admitted key absentees had also hit her squad hard.

She said: "We were missing athletes due to work and operational commitments but we did our best.

"In the end we were only five points behind but my athletes put in all the effort they could.

"You have to credit the RAF, they have some fantastic competitors and are

no longer the walkover they once were.

"It was the first time Alex Turbitt had competed for us and she did very well. She is quite new to the Army and she is one of a number of good young girls coming through.

"Our middle-distance runners were brilliant for us. Danielle Hodgkinson and Shan Mansfield were in outstanding form and they gave us a real boost.

"We are hosting this event next year so we have to do the double. We are hoping to put on something special to coincide with the Olympics.

"If everyone is available we should not have any problems. The RAF have a strong team but we can match them. We will have the title back next year." ■

DISTANCE DUO

ARMY runners were in dominant form in the middle- and long-distance races. Pte Nicola van Staden (RE, far right) and Sgt Shan Mansfield (RAPTC) obliterated the field in the 5,000 metres as the Reds recorded a comfortable double, with Van Staden winning in a superb time of 18min 40sec.



ALL-ROUNDER

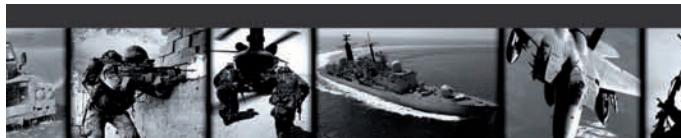
MULTI-eventer Pte Osman Muskwe (3 LSR) was the star of the show for the men's team with wins in the high jump and javelin. He continued to impress with a second-place finish in the long jump and then added to his personal points haul in the discus and triple jump.



DOUBLE SUCCESS

TRACK sensation Sgt Danielle Hodgkinson (AMS) led the way for the women's squad in the middle-distance events. After retaining her 800 metres crown in a time of 2min 18sec she stormed the field in the 1,500 metres, finishing three seconds ahead of teammate Sgt Shan Mansfield (RAPTC).





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SPORT SHORTS

FIGHTERS from 39 Regiment, Royal Artillery have celebrated a successful season in the ring that culminated at the gunners' annual boxing championships.

Over the course of the competition the team fought in 16 bouts, recording wins on 11 occasions.

They also walked away with individual honours for 2nd Lt Heather Spain, who lifted the female lightweight title, and LBdr Varey, who was crowned heavyweight champion.

EQUESTRIAN stars from the Army Medical Services received the royal seal of approval following a superb performance at the Inter-Services show jumping competition.

The event was held as part of the Royal Windsor Horse Show and saw riders competing with 28 teams from the Army, Royal Navy, Royal Air Force, police and cadet forces.

The AMS A team – consisting of Maj Teri Maison (RAMC), Capt Laura Davis (RAMC) and Cpl Danielle Toole (QARANC) – progressed to the finals after easily negotiating the contest's qualifying stage.

Toole jumped in the deciding round and after a fast, clear effort the trio finished second behind the Defence Animal Centre.

Their endeavours saw them lift the Queen's Plate, a prize for the highest placed non-mounted regiment, while Toole won the accolade for best overall performance.

The AMS are looking for new members to join their team. Anyone interested in taking part should email Nicola.Rush588@mod.uk or Danielle.Toole785@mod.uk

SSGT Edd Chwieseni (22 Sig Regt) was named runner-up in the Combined Services Chess Championships following five days of competition in Gosport.

The NCO lost to eventual winner WO Andy Hammond, from the Royal Air Force, but was able to celebrate being crowned Army champion.

Chwieseni has also qualified to represent the UK at the Nato Chess Championships in Lithuania.

For information on taking part in the game email fleet-n6c4mso3@mod.uk

MORE than 50 personnel visited Marsh Farm Fisheries in Godalming for the annual Army Angling Federation (Coarse) Competition.

Greg Victor (ex-RA) won the individual category, with WO2 Nick Simpson (1 Yorks) finishing as runner-up.

Dynamic duo LCpl Gaz Evans and Pte Scott Rispen (both MPGS) were triumphant in the pairs' event ahead of Simpson and partner Sgt Mick Herbert (Mercian).

A FIELD of 300 athletes helped to raise nearly £5,000 for SSAFA Forces Help at the annual Wattisham Station triathlon.

The event featured a 300m swim, a gruelling 20km on-road cycle race and a 5km run and was open to Service personnel, novice competitors and triathlon club members.



Hotshot: Sgt Andrew Tongue (3 Para) takes aim at the Army Target Rifle Championships in Bisley

Shooters hit the mark

Report: Richard Long

Picture: Steve Dock

ARMY marksmen have celebrated a long-awaited victory in the Inter-Services target rifle competition thanks to a series of record-breaking performances on the ranges at Bisley.

The Royal Air Force have dominated the annual contest in recent times but a tournament-best score from their challengers in the short-range match saw them pushed on the back foot.

The Service sharpshooters showed deadly accuracy to post a total of 1,177 points out of a possible 1,200 and maintained their form in the long-range event, where they compiled a score of 1,152 to lift the trophy.

"I am absolutely delighted, it is the first time we have won this in a very long time," team captain Maj Hugh Burden (REME) told *SoldierSport*.

"We had some really good training sessions beforehand and we came out with the right mental approach and it paid dividends."

"We spoke about staying calm and maintaining our professionalism and that is what we did."

The officer praised the performances of Sgt Jonny Wallace (AGS (RMP)) and Maj Rupert Riley (RA) in the shorter format, while Capt Alex Gill (R Welsh) excelled over the longer distance.

The Inter-Services contest came

at the end of a busy week, which also saw Maj Rob Philipson-Stow (RHG) crowned Army individual champion.

Despite enjoying a successful spell, Burden is appealing for new blood to join the team and help them fulfil a busy list of fixtures.

He said: "We need more members. I am missing four really talented shots due to operational commitments. Three others have just started career courses.

"The corps and regiments support us very well, they give guys time off work and often cover the entry fees needed for our competitions.

"There is a significant correlation between operational shooting and target sports, so the cross over is there. If they understand shooting they can come here and perform well."

Wallace spoke glowingly of the Service set-up and believes it holds a distinct advantage over other clubs.

"I started in the sport with the cadets. I competed with them for four years before joining the Army," he said.

"Shooting was one of the biggest aspects of life in the cadets. My coach put me in touch with the Army team and it has been a home from home."

"This is the cheapest club to shoot with in the UK and it offers fantastic opportunities for soldiers."

Anyone interested in taking part should email Maj Burden at atsccaptain@gmail.com ■

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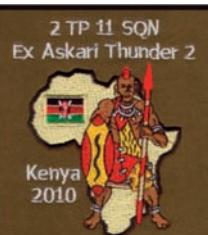
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Picture: Steve Dock

Making a splash: After claiming 106 points from 12 events, the women's team were able to celebrate victory at the Inter-Services Swimming Championships

Women show clear water to rivals

THE Army women produced some scintillating form in the pool to dominate proceedings at the Inter-Services Swimming Championships.

A superb team performance saw the athletes finish 33 points clear of the Royal Navy as they powered their way to ten victories in 12 events.

While the women celebrated it was a different story for the men, who finished a disappointing third as the Senior Service claimed top spot.

Operational commitments took their toll on the diving contest but the Royal Air Force had a full squad available and

duly triumphed in both events.

The airmen then took gold in the water polo after beating the Army 19-2 and the Navy 13-3.

The swimming season has also seen the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst achieve notable success in the water at a number of Service competitions.

The squad began their search for silverware at the Lake Bala Open Water Championships in Wales, where swimmers braved chilling temperatures to claim the one-kilometre crown in the Inter-Unit showdown.

They continued to impress at the

Aldershot Garrison Sports Centre pool, where they produced a series of determined performances to become runners-up in the Inter-Unit water polo tournament, finishing behind defending champions 11 Signal Regiment.

However, the peak of their success was in the traditional disciplines, where they won the men's and women's competitions at the annual Army Swimming Championships.

The cadets broke the academy record for the 4x100 metres freestyle and the women's team were undefeated in relays throughout the competition. ■

SPORT SHORTS



■ INJURED soldier Rfn Michael Swain (3 Rifles) has helped launch the first-ever SSAFA Forces Help Ride of Britain.

The 21-year-old was joined by model Nell McAndrew at the unveiling of the event, which will see members of the public and Armed Forces personnel cycling 500 miles from London to the Scottish capital Edinburgh.

Anyone interested in taking part in the arduous challenge, which starts on September 21, should log on to the website www.ssafa.org.uk/rideofbritain



■ RUGBY players from 16 Regiment, Royal Artillery had the honour of representing ABF The Soldiers' Charity at the national corporate sevens tournament.

The competition was staged at Leicester's Wellford Road Stadium and the gunners showed emphatic form to qualify from the group stages.

A strong Hilton Hotel team was defeated in the semi-finals but the Service stars met an immovable object in the final, as they lost 35-0 to a superior G Force side.



■ PRINCE Harry helped steer the Army polo team to a hard-fought victory over the Royal Navy in the annual Rundle Cup match at Tedworth House.

More than 4,000 people watched the contest at the historic venue near Tedworth Garrison and saw the Army Air Corps captain open the scoring within two minutes of the start.

Despite strong play from Sub Lt Hiro Suzuki, the Senior Service was unable to cope with the Army's barrage and the final score was 8-5¹2.

Saddle stars hit top gear

Growing numbers equate to success on the circuit for flourishing Army sport



Pictured from top, **Leaders of the pack:** More than 140 personnel took part in this year's Army cycling championships, which featured 14 disciplines including the men's road race; **Off-road adventure:** As well as excelling on the circuit, success has also been reported by the downhill mountain biking team, with numbers continuing to rise; **Looking up:** The sport has seen a dramatic increase in members over the past year and more than 650 soldiers are now involved, with further riders expected to follow.

Pictures: Steve Dock and Graeme Main

Report: Richard Long

SERVICE cyclists gave a stunning display of pedal power during an energy-sapping week of competition at the annual Army championships in Aldershot.

More than 140 riders took to the saddle for the event, which featured 14 races ranging from 25-mile time trials to cross-country mountain biking.

ATpr Kieran Murphy (4 AAC) was named overall champion thanks to some heavy scoring across a number of disciplines, while Musn Anna Long (Band of the Life Guards) took the award for most improved cyclist.

Army Cycling Union chairman Maj Matt Woodeson (1 R Anglian) told *SoldierSport* entries for the competition were down compared to previous years but he believes the sport is in a healthy position and will move forward.

"The number of women taking part has increased, which is good to see," the officer said.

"They are the future and we are looking for more people to get onboard and race for the Army."

"A lot of junior talent has been identified and those people have been issued with their own wheels."

"We have to provide bikes and equipment for junior soldiers and officers so they can progress."

"We now have strength in depth and we expect our riders to do well."

"Numbers from the Infantry were down this year for obvious operational reasons, but the Royal Engineers and Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers showed they have some real talent coming through and they have clearly invested in youth."

"One of our biggest problems is that we have limited resources, which makes life difficult."

"But we are pushing hard and we are determined to succeed."

The Army Cycling Union has gone from strength to strength over the past year, with membership numbers rising from 400 to 650.

Woodeson expects that figure to top the 700 mark and said the organisation is looking for a major sponsor to help support future developments.

"Cycling in general is on the up, it is a huge growth market," he said.

"In the civilian world bikes are just selling out. That trend is now coming to

the military. Personnel see it as a good sport to get involved with."

"However, it is expensive and that is why we provide race bikes for the more junior soldiers."

"As a sport it promotes qualities such as fitness, determination and courage, I think that is a good thing as far as the Army is concerned."

"It is becoming more popular as fuel prices are so high, people start to cycle and once they get hooked the performance curve can be quite quick."

"You can become a decent rider in a relatively short space of time."

As well as staging a successful Army tournament, the team romped to a convincing victory in this year's Inter-Services competition.

"We absolutely trounced the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force," a delighted Woodeson said.

"The Senior Service was really going for it but we dominated the field and took the first, second and third positions. It was a fantastic all-round performance from the squad."

While the traditional disciplines have continued to flourish, the downhill mountain biking team has also reported a surge of interest over the past year.

The growing enthusiasm was evident at the Army championships in Tidworth, where Lt Tim Fleming (29 Cdo Regt, RA) took top honours ahead of Cpl James Heal (RTR) and Cfn Matt Forster (REME).

"This competition was a huge success and we are now in a much more healthy position," said secretary Cpl Tim Upston (Rifles).

"We have a strong set-up with at least ten hard-core people involved."

"We have two civilian companies offering sponsorship and there is another deal to come next season."

"There was an article in *Soldier* about the team last year."

"Word of mouth has also been spreading and we have been a lot more visible at races, which has helped to build the interest."

"In 2010 I was the only one who competed in the Combined Services events, now we have eight riders."

"They have been getting some good results and the future is looking extremely bright."

More information about how to get involved in all disciplines of the sport can be found on the Army Cycling Union page on Armynet. ■

'We now have strength in depth and we expect our riders to do well'

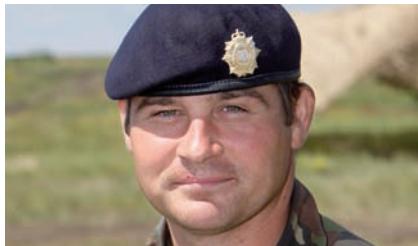


final word



Is it safe for soldiers to use social media? We asked 12th Mechanized Brigade troops exercising in Canada for their views

INTERVIEWS: SARAH GOLDSBOROUGH
PICTURES: GRAEME MAIN



Cpl Chris Northey (RLC)

I haven't used Facebook in a while because of information that my friends have put on there. I'm thinking about getting rid of it to be honest. Photos taken on tour and ops have been uploaded and I don't like it. A lot of troops like to be seen online holding weapons. I've had to tell people they shouldn't post stuff. Facebook should ask you to approve pictures of yourself.



Tpr Mervin Mitchel (KRH)

I use Facebook but I am aware of the sensitivities with it. Every time I log on I make sure I keep the things I'm saying quite short. Mostly I use the website to find out what other people are doing. But being careless on social networks can compromise what you are doing as a soldier. You never know who could be targeted on there so it is important to try and stay safe.



Tpr Matthew Winstanley (KRH)

I didn't start using social networks until last year. I visited Africa and the Falklands back-to-back so I was away for months and decided to join Facebook then. But if you put yourself on there anyone can use the information they find. I message my mates to ask how they are. It's very dear to use your phone abroad so it's good to use the internet instead.



Cpl Bobby Prince (RAMC)

I use Facebook, Myspace, Yahoo and Hotmail but I separate work and friends' emails into different accounts. I think we need to be careful with social media. I don't put anything about the military on there. My friends and family know what I'm doing in the Army and they know they can ask me anything. I don't need to put every detail on Facebook. You can still stay in touch.



Cpl Liam Kennedy (KRH)

I don't use social media; I think it's more hassle than it's worth. I suppose it is a nice way to keep up with friends but there are a lot of problems with it too. I use the phone to speak to my wife and parents instead. With anyone else I just tell them when I'm going away and that I will talk when I'm back. Soldiers should be made aware of the dangers with Facebook – especially younger lads.



Pte Adam Nodwell (RLC)

I use Facebook to keep in touch with people but I think the biggest issue is with photographs. I don't generally put stuff on there about my job but there may be a few slips – none that cause any problems though. Troops shouldn't be stopped from using it. You can't take away something as basic as socialising on the internet just because a handful of people get it wrong.



Pte Danielle-Marie Lewis (RAMC)

I've used Facebook more since I have been in the Army. When I'm away it is the only contact I have with home unless I want to run up a massive phone bill. With mates in Afghanistan it's the only way you can catch up, by sending a quick email now and again. I don't think military life should go on there. Personal messaging is better as people cannot see what you've written.



Capt Bob Hicks (REME)

Social media is a bit of a double-edged sword really. On the one hand, I am proud to be in the military and don't want to lie about that or hide it from people. But I know I shouldn't put some things on there. I think I have my Facebook security settings right. Guys seem to be aware of the risks but they really need to be able to make their own decisions about how safe they want to be online.

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