

MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH ARMY

SOLDIER

APRIL 2007 £2.50



INCOMING

**Extra UK troops
head for Herrick**

PAY BONANZA

**Junior ranks get
inflation-buster**



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ARMY

MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH ARMY

SOLDIER

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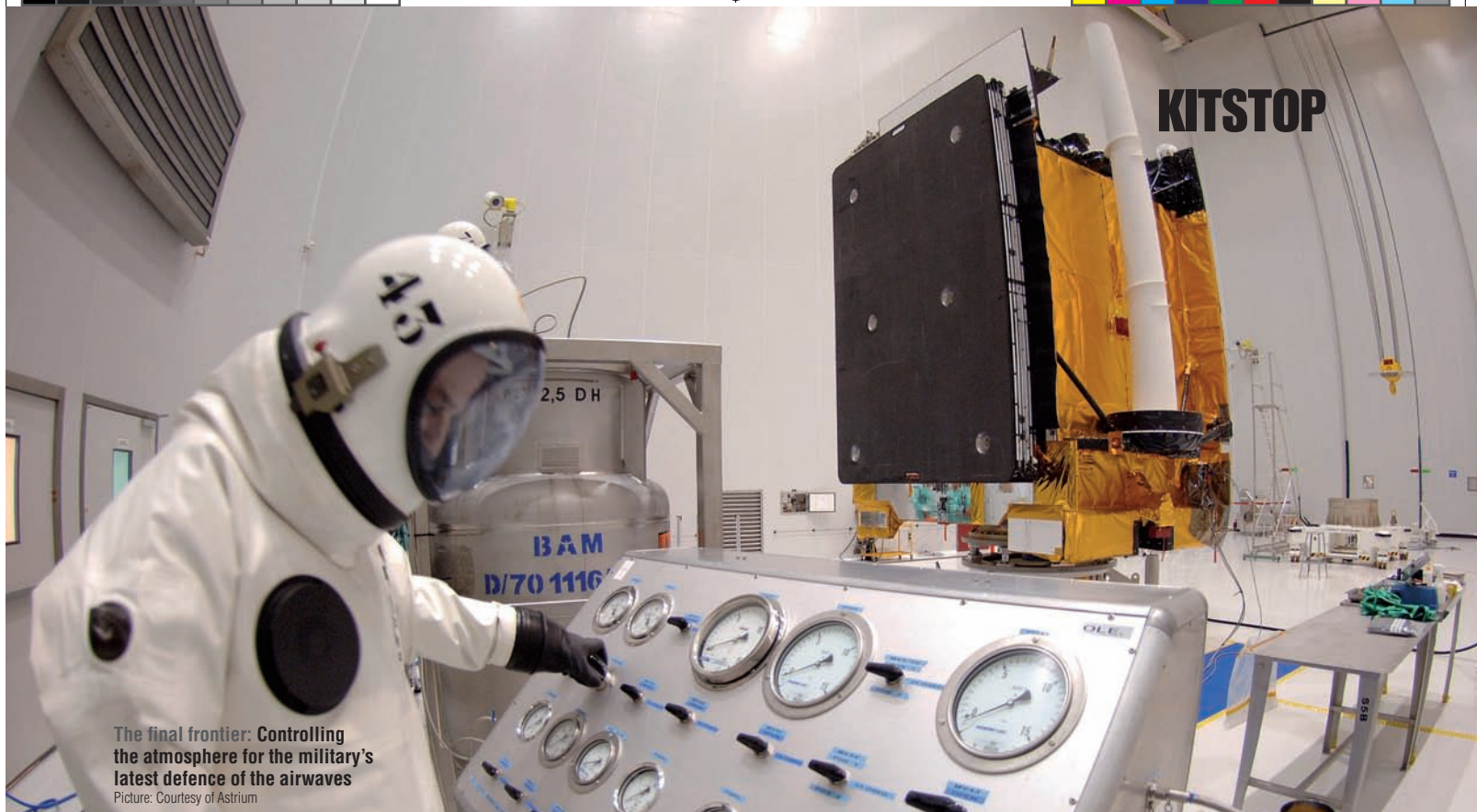


Cover picture (left): A Royal Air Force Chinook delivers supplies to troops in Helmand province, Afghanistan. British reinforcements are on their way to the area to bolster the Nato force there. See Page 7
Picture: PO (Phot) Sean Clee RN
Background image: Recruits to 47 Air Despatch Squadron go through their exacting drills. See Pages 29-31
Picture: Steve Dock



ARMY





The final frontier: Controlling the atmosphere for the military's latest defence of the airwaves
Picture: Courtesy of Astrium

Securing space

Skynet 5 satellites to block hostile jamming of military transmissions

Report: Karen Thomas

COMMAND and control communications between the UK and operations just got an extra wrapping of security courtesy of a new satellite orbiting the earth at 36,000km.

Skynet 5A, the first of a three-satellite constellation, blasted out of French Guiana last month and launched a new era in heavily protected long-haul military transmissions.

Built to Nato standards by Paradigm in a £3.6 billion private finance initiative (PFI) with the Ministry of Defence, the Skynet 5 satellites are fitted with world-leading anti-jamming antenna that will block any interference signals. It's a step that takes the provision of communications by a commercial enterprise to the edge of the battlefield.

Each satellite promises more than four times the power and capacity of the outgoing Skynet 4 constellation currently used by the MoD to communicate with commanders in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The upgrade will mean more sophisticated and bigger data signals (such as those used to carry voice, pictures and video) can be transmitted swiftly across the globe. More importantly, dispersed elements of deployed forces can broadcast information to each other safe in the knowledge that enemy forces cannot tap in and snoop or disrupt the communications.

The two satellites, 5A and 5B, which will be launched later this year, will essentially be mirrors, reflecting communications sent from a source in one area of the globe into space and bounced towards their ground destination. The third, 5C, will be a spare and is due for blast-off in early 2008.

Together, they will be the most powerful X-Band satellites in orbit. Used primarily by military organisations, the X-Band sits in the microwave band (as opposed to short, medium and long wave) of the electromagnetic spectrum and can handle vast amounts of communication traffic. The full Skynet constellation will have a payload of up to nine super-high frequency (SHF) and 15 ultra-high frequency (UHF) channels.

Back on earth, Paradigm will be responsible for extensive ground infrastructure for the satellites, including mobile terminals that can be transported over land.

Malcolm Peto, managing director of Paradigm, claimed the satellites would deliver mission-critical communications services "faster and better than ever". He added: "The best Armed Forces in the world deserve the best communications service and that is what we will provide with Skynet 5."

The company's satellite services also provide round-the-clock telephone and internet access for more than 13,000

Servicemen and women as part of the MoD-funded welfare package for those deployed on operations worldwide.

The WELCOME – welfare communications everywhere – service enables the forces to use 400 telephones and 200 computers housed in camp cabins in theatres such as Afghanistan, Iraq and Kosovo for 30 free minutes each week.

More than 24 million minutes of welfare calls – equivalent to 45 years' worth – are made each year but soldiers should note that these transmissions are not secure and care should be taken with the information they reveal over the phone or internet. ■

Space support: Skynet 5 at a glance

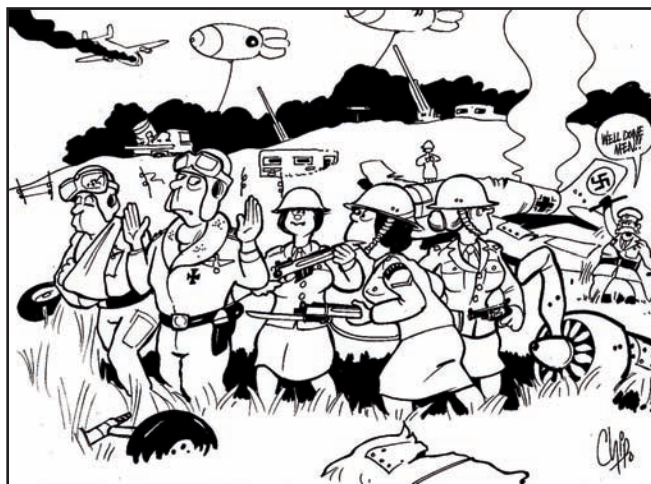
- World-leading anti-jamming antenna
- Solar array spans 34 metres
- Most powerful X-Band in orbit
- 15 SHF and 9 UHF channels
- Orbital position is 1°W, 53°E
- A service life of 15 years

Picture: Courtesy of Paradigm



NO. 785

HOW OBSERVANT ARE YOU?



TEN details have been changed in the latest in the series of drawings by our cartoonist, Chip. Circle the differences in the left-hand image and send the whole panel to **HOAY 785, Soldier**, Ordnance Road, Aldershot, Hampshire GU11 2DU by April 30.

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

Name: (Give initials and rank or title)

Address:

February competition (No 783): First correct entry drawn at random and winner of the £100 prize was **Sgt S A Cooper**, HQ Squadron, 1 (UK) ADSR. **Mrs J Tomlinson**, 28 Engr Regt Wksp, and **WO2 M S Taylor**, Bloxham, Banbury, each win a £25 gift voucher.

The ten differences were: Machine-gun rear sight; third hand grenade; pair of eyes in pill-box; barbed wire post; gun on tank; soldier's helmet; bullets on sandbag; tunic button; webbing strap; cable drum label 'D10'.

freeze frame

Winner of our February competition (inset) SLUGS featured prominently in the captions suggested for our February picture, but we opted for the off-the-wall "**Scientists feared that the new Challenger 2 airbag might have a few drawbacks**", submitted by WO2 G McLorie, Med Branch, HQ 4 Div, who will receive a prize book.

We also liked "**The development of the Trojan Slug prototype was going well**" from Claire Silman, HQ Defence Food Services School in Aldershot, and "**That's it lad, sprinkle the salt over the top . . . that should kill this slug thingy**" from W Baker of Grantham.

Other worthy contenders included "**No, Mr Tattle, this is not part of a recycling system for all the hot air spouted in Parliament**"



from P Clarke of Wokingham, Berks; "**Do you think this prototype land submarine will work, Sir?**" from S Pengelly of Plymouth; and "**Hey presto, drop two of those blue tablets into the generator . . . remarkable**



Merging the APTC with the Parachute Regiment suddenly made sense to Sgt Bloggs when he began his freefall training course

WIN A BOOK: Write your own caption for the photo, above, from our January 1956 issue and send it to us by April 30. The best, in our opinion, will win a copy of *Heart of Oak*, the latest Adam Bolitho adventure from Alexander Kent, the master of salty tales of daring at sea. (William Heinemann, £17.99.)

results" from G Arran of Rhyl, Denbighshire. Simon Harrison of Ludgershall came up with "**Architects deny problems with new SLAM accommodation in windy weather if occupants aren't heavy enough**". ■

SOLDIERSPORT

DRAGON'S DEN

**Welshman steps into
Army rugby hot seat**

Pressure position: Army Rugby Union's new head coach WO2 Andy Price (WG) accepts that losing to the Royal Navy at Twickenham on May 5 could cut short his reign. See Pages 82-83

Picture: Graeme Main

SHEFFIELD STEEL

**Rifleman targets
big-time boxing**



Interview: Richard Lenton
Picture: Graeme Main

WHEN Wales took the Six Nations by storm in 2005 playing a typically Welsh brand of entertaining, expansive rugby, it was supposed to signal a new dawn for the proudest of rugby nations.

However, when Mike Ruddock's Grand Slam-winning side attempted to repeat the feat 12 months later, the flair and artistry that made them such a surprise package had become all too predictable, and there was very little substance to their style.

Army rugby's new head coach, WO2 Andy Price (WG), is a proud Welshman who was brought up marvelling at the prodigious talents of fellow countrymen JPR Williams and Gareth Edwards.

Being a Monmouth man, Price's ideology is typically Welsh – he wants to see imaginative rugby that thrills the crowds. However, the new man at the helm is pragmatic enough to realise that walls need to be plastered before fancy decorative touches can be applied.

While Price hopes that the Army play entertaining rugby during his tenure, his philosophy is much more English by nature: "I want to win. I'm not doing this job to finish second."

And, when you consider that Price will ultimately live or die in rugby terms on the outcome of one match, it's an understandable objective.

"The England coach, Brian Ashton, has got five internationals in five weeks and he'll be judged on that," the 37-year-old former front row forward told *SoldierSport*. "I'll be judged on one game – the Army versus the Navy."

"It doesn't matter what else I do. It's our centenary year and as part of the celebrations we're playing the Barbarians, which is a fantastic honour. However, if I lose that game I won't be out of a job, but if I lose to the Navy at Twickenham then I'll be down the road."

"It's pretty rough to be judged on 80 minutes because if the other team is better than you then what can you do?"

"But the pressure to win is understandable because we're the biggest Service numerically and therefore I've got a bigger pool of players to choose from."

The Army have won the last five showdowns with their Navy counterparts, and Price believes that he has enough

talent at his disposal to make the very thought of losing the May 5 showpiece unthinkable.

"Where we're lucky is that we're a complete team," explained the former Army U21 coach, who has been coaching in and around the Army's elite teams for the past seven years.

"The Army has a quality squad and quality back-up so we can play a complete, expansive game."

"We've got the people to do it and that's what will beat our opposition. I've picked a squad of 29 which gives me two players for every position and we've got a massive amount of quality."

Price compares the pressure he is under to maintain the Army's superiority over their great rivals to that facing England's football coach Steve McClaren, whose every decision comes under the microscope.

And, like McClaren, Price feels that he is also there to be shot at by a public who believe they could do a better job.

"Whenever you play representative sport someone will want to stick a knife in your back."

"Everyone can pick a different team because we're all experts. As soon as Steve McClaren announces his England squad everyone in the country immediately criticises," he said. "And in terms of Inter-Services sport, we're Manchester United – everyone hates us. The Navy and Royal Air Force want us to lose whenever we play."



"Therefore there's a lot of weight and pressure for success and, in my opinion, we're duty bound to provide it to those who are sat watching the game on operations. People in Iraq and Afghanistan will stop work to watch the game. If I can send them just half a teacup of morale I'll have done my job."

"In my eyes soldiers are our shareholders and we're duty bound to provide what they want," he said.

"Some people think that outlook generates too much self-induced stress but a lot of people pay a lot of money to watch us play."

Far from being overawed by the associated pressure the job brings, Price is revelling in his "dream" opportunity.

"I always thought about being involved in the Army set-up in a coaching capacity, but I never thought I would be in a position to front it and I'm honoured to have been asked to do so," said Price, who has drafted in Army Rugby League boss Sgt Sean Fanning (RAMC) as his defensive coach and WO1 Andy Sanger (RE) to hone the attack.

"A lot of people have asked me 'are you nervous?'. But, just like when I was asked the same question on my wedding day,

the answer's no because I know what I'm getting into.

"In the past an absolutely fantastic professional set-up has been put in place and now I'm the man who's been asked to keep it going in the right direction. That's my challenge.

"I've got big boots to fill because the Army has enjoyed a period of unprecedented success, but I've come in with my eyes wide open.

'In terms of Inter-Services sport, we're Manchester United. Everyone hates us and wants us to lose whenever we play'

"The secret of our success has been the quality of our players, not just in terms of skill but their quality as soldiers and as men. They are fantastic people who are fiercely loyal to the

Army and to their sport and invest a lot of their own time and effort. They do the hard work – I'm just the figurehead."

While Price admits feeling empathy with McClaren, his sporting background is similar to that of former England boss Sven-Goran Eriksson in that he succeeded as a coach despite failing to hit the heights as a player.

"I was injured as a teenager and so didn't really play to a

decent level," he explained. "I turned to coaching at 22 and haven't looked back. But to succeed I've needed support from the Army.

"Being in the Welsh Guards has helped enormously. We're a proud regiment, and as Welshmen rugby is key. If you don't play it you watch it.

"The Welsh Guards gave me a sabbatical to further my coaching horizons. It allowed me to coach at the Celtic Warriors Academy and at Gwent Dragons, where suddenly I found myself dealing with professional players and people aspiring to be stars of the future.

"Coaching at that level and working with players of that ability, has accelerated me to where I am today, so I can't thank my regiment and commanding officer, Col Richard Stanford, enough." ■

Book your seats for this year's Army v Navy clash at Twickenham by calling the ticket hotline on 01252 334415 or visiting www.armynavymatch.org.uk

Welshman Andy Price tackles the pressures of Army sport's top job

Dragon's den



VOX POP

The high life

The regular feature in which we ask soldiers for their views on a hot topic

We asked members of 47 Air Despatch Squadron, Royal Logistic Corps, about the highs and lows of an increasingly important job

SSgt Dave Jelly, RLC

I'm an air despatch liaison officer. Now is the very best time to be at this unit. We are involved in more countries, and doing more re-supply drops, than at any time in my career.



We are also getting a lot of feedback from the guys on the ground who tell us that what we are doing is making a lot of difference – they are depending on us.

Cpl Duncan Case, RLC

I've been in the Territorial Army for 12 years and all of them with 47 AD Sqn. The diversity of work and the adventurous training here are great. In civilian life I work for a mobile phone company. I was recently on a two-week camp at RAF Lyneham on my despatch crew commander course, but I have not yet been away on operations.



Lt Chris Wood, RLC

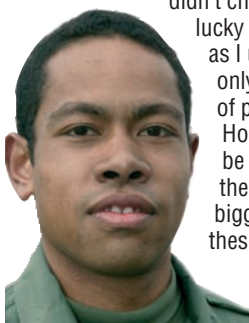
As an officer, the high points in this unit stem from being able to work in a unique trade and corps. Whether you are on operations or exercise, the pace of life is relentless.



However there is also a family atmosphere here. I'm only doing two years and it will obviously be very sad to leave, so I am determined to make the most of my time.

Pte Vese Vatucicila, RLC

I recently had my first training flight and I was very nervous. My stomach was churning around a bit on the way out but thankfully I didn't chuck up. I'm very lucky to be at 47 AD Sqn



as I understand they only take a handful of people a year. Hopefully I'm going to be able to see some of the world and get a bit bigger with lifting all these heavy loads.

Pte John Denton, RLC

Our operational tours last three months, and you are probably looking at doing at least one or two of them every year. As a result, you do get a lot of travel. I've been to Belize and recently came back from an exercise in Las Vegas. I've always served here and I'm not moving anywhere else. There's no other unit like this.



Cpl Taff Williams, RLC

I have been here for the past 12 years and you really cannot beat it. You get to see stuff that nobody else in the Armed Forces gets to see.



But you have to do a lot of training to get here. We're a small unit covering Iraq, Afghanistan and the Falklands, so we're away a lot. But we also get to do exercises in places such as Las Vegas.

Cpl Stu Bunston, REME

I'm an aerial delivery equipment inspector and one of four REME personnel here. We maintain the platforms and the fleet of vehicles the unit uses.



There are no operational tours for our personnel, although we go on exercises with the unit. I've been to Italy and Newquay and Oman is coming up, although I only have another six months left to serve here.

SSgt Dougie Ford, RLC

I'm the training wing staff sergeant here and an adventurous training guru. The high points of life in the squadron for me are the overseas training trips.



On average we only take around half the applicants coming through selection; many of those who come straight from training stay for their whole career. It is a good place to be, and we have a great relationship with the Royal Air Force.

Pte Mitchell Pikett, RLC

Life here has its ups and downs. The ups are being able to get away a lot. I've been in the Army five years and have been on two tours in Basra and one in Kandahar.



Although going away is brilliant, the downside is the working hours, but you have to get on with life and just make sure that your job gets done.

Interviews: Cliff Caswell Pictures: Steve Dock

Coming up . . . in **SOLDIER**

Flashback: British veterans speak out on the 50th anniversary of nuclear tests in the Pacific and, 25 years on, heroes of the Falklands campaign return to the jagged peaks of Mount Kent

UNDER

Sinbad heralds police progress

A UK-backed operation in Basra has helped clean up the Iraqi Police Force, according to Defence Secretary Des Browne.

He told fellow MPs that Op Sinbad, a dual action to root out corruption and promote reconstruction, had led to an improvement in the standards of the local law enforcers. However Mr Browne admitted that there were still concerns over militia infiltration in the Iraqi Police. He also said that the force was "further behind in its development" than the Iraqi Army, which had been leading the later stages of Op Sinbad.

Hercules safety: Protection measures on the C-130 Hercules transport fleet are being looked at "with great urgency", Armed Forces Minister Adam Ingram has confirmed.

Responding to a question from Labour MP James Gray, Mr Ingram said an improved defensive aid suite was being fitted across the fleet where it was "practicable and required". Protective foam suppressant was also being installed in wing tanks of the aircraft, Mr Ingram added.

Afghan reconstruction: A provincial reconstruction team led by 28 Engineer Regiment has started work on more than 100 projects in Helmand province, Mr Browne told the Commons. Responding to a question from MP Brian Jenkins, Mr Browne revealed that work under way included repairs to schools and the refurbishment of farm equipment. A generator was also being provided at a hospital in the capital Lashkar Gar.

Territorial Army: A proposal to raise the upper age limit to serve in the TA is currently under consideration, Veterans' Minister Derek Twigg has confirmed.

Responding in a written answer to a question from Mark Pritchard MP, Mr Twigg said he would tell the Commons when a final decision was made.

Staffs pursue Palace raiders

Counter-strike nets arsenal of bombs and rockets

TERRORISTS who launched a strike against Basra Palace got more than they bargained for when they found themselves hit by a determined counter-attack.

Troops from the 1st Battalion, The Staffordshire Regiment battle-group arrived on the doorstep of the insurgents just hours after their raid, netting a huge weapons haul.

Commanders have declared Operation Phoenix a great success, claiming it sent a message to terrorists that any attacks on British bases would be met with a robust response.

The action began after troops unearthed information on the whereabouts of the Basra Palace attackers, after which a force was sent to the Al Jameat district of the city.

The soldiers came under attack from rifle rounds and rocket-propelled grenades as they approached their target building, where they suspected weapons were being stockpiled.

An arsenal of arms, including kit used to make roadside bombs plus mortars and

rockets, was later discovered by soldiers, hidden in a vehicle at the property.

Army spokesman Maj David Gell was confident that the action had dealt a blow to terrorists and sent out a clear message to any attackers that they would be caught. He added: "In terms of what we found there is no doubt the operation was a success.

"The fact that we found these weapons, which could have been used for mortar attacks or roadside bombs, means we have disrupted rogue militia elements."

Maj Gell also emphasised that any other would-be terrorists could expect a swift visit from British soldiers if they launched attacks on multinational forces. "Above all I believe the operation demonstrates the ability of UK forces to deal with the threat of indirect fire attacks on its bases robustly and swiftly," he said.

Operation Phoenix was the latest in a series of successful actions launched against terrorists, during which arrests have been made and huge weapons hauls discovered.

Hotel handover

THE increasingly capable Iraqi Army took another step towards assuming full responsibility for Basra's security when local troops began arriving at new barracks in the city.

The soldiers, from the Iraqi 10th Division, rolled through the gates of the Shatt al Arab Hotel in their Humvee personnel carriers before attending a flag-raising ceremony.

The former hotel-turned military base is currently home to the 1st Battalion, The Staffordshire Regiment, which will continue to train and mentor local security forces.

But in February Prime Minister Tony Blair announced that British bases in and around Basra would be handed back to Iraqi control as the British operation was scaled down.

Army spokesman Capt Ollie Pile said that the arrival of Iraqi troops at the Shatt al Arab Hotel was a significant development and a sign of ongoing progress.

"This is another important step for the Iraqi Army as they develop their capabilities



ties and gradually take responsibility for their own security," he added.

"It is pleasing that the move went so smoothly and offers encouraging signs for the future as everybody continues down the road towards Iraqi self reliance."



UPDATE



Fallen hero honoured: War widow Lorena Budd was presented with her late husband's Victoria Cross by the Queen at Buckingham Palace Picture: Fiona Hanson

Proud possession

Emotional day for widow of Paras' Victoria Cross winner Cpl Bryan Budd

THE widow of a hero Para who assaulted Taliban positions in the face of withering fire has spoken of her pride on being presented with his Victoria Cross.

During the ceremony at Buckingham Palace, Lorena Budd, the wife of Cpl Bryan Budd, said that the memory of her husband had been honoured by the award presented by the Queen.

In a statement read on her behalf by Lt Col Stuart Tootal, CO of the 3rd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment, Mrs Budd added that it had been an emotional day.

Mrs Budd's statement continued: "The award of the Victoria Cross recognises his conspicuous gallantry, inspirational leadership and supreme valour.

"Tragically, acting in the finest traditions of The Parachute Regiment, he made the ultimate sacrifice by laying down his own life. However, he did so doing the job he loved. Bryan was a loving husband and father to our two daughters Imogen and Isabelle. He will always be missed, but his memory continues to live on," the statement concluded.

Remembered as a highly respected and popular NCO, Cpl Budd was awarded

the VC for two acts of conspicuous gallantry during 16 Air Assault Brigade's deployment to Helmand last year.

In the first, on July 27, he risked his life to save a wounded comrade lying exposed in open ground by charging

Taliban positions in the district centre of Sangin. The second act, also in Sangin a month later, tragically claimed Cpl Budd's life when he charged into withering fire, inspiring the rest of his platoon to attack and overwhelm the enemy.

Mastiff satisfaction

TROOPS serving at the sharp end of operations in Iraq have been giving the thumbs-up to the meaty Mastiff troop carrier following its recent debut in theatre.

They reckon the 27-tonne vehicle, which can carry six soldiers plus two crew and can be armed with a machine-gun, 50mm cannon or grenade-launcher, is worth its weight in gold.

Speaking in Iraq, Mastiff company commander Maj Dan Bradbury of the 1st Battalion, The Yorkshire Regiment, said the 6x6-wheel-drive troop carrier had inspired a new confidence. "The soldiers love it," he added. "It is a real investment in their protection."

The officer's views were shared by Mastiff driver Pte Ciaran Castles, Royal Logistic

Corps, who went on to describe the vehicle as "an all-round good bit of kit."

He said: "It's enjoyable to go out there because you feel more safe and you know, if it comes down to it, that you've got the extra armour to protect you."

As previously reported, Mastiff is one of two new armoured vehicles in Iraq. The other, a re-worked version of the FV432 called Bulldog, is also being used on patrol.

Defence Procurement Minister Lord Drayson listened to troop's views on the vehicles during a trip to Basra. He said: "This visit will inform the decisions I have to make. The situation in Iraq is changing rapidly and it is important that we keep pace with this and provide our Forces with the support and equipment they need."

Badge eligibility extended

ELIGIBILITY for the veterans badge has been extended to include all who served up to December 31, 1984, Veterans' Minister Derek Twigg has announced.

The new cut-off date means that all those who served during the Falklands conflict in 1982 can apply. Launched in May 2004, the badge was initially issued to those who fought in the First and Second World Wars.

Military crosses

WHEN soldiers from The Light Dragoons deployed to Afghanistan last month they carried a little piece of home in their pocket – hand-carved crosses sent with love by a group of Norfolk churches. Regimental Padre Jason Clarke, who presented the crosses to the soldiers, said: "They are a beautiful gift, a symbol of love from the local community and a little piece of home. The soldiers were deeply touched."

"They will undoubtedly have tough days ahead when they are missing home and it is on those days that they can put their hands in their pockets and know that even though they are thousands of miles away, their local community has not forgotten them; that they are with them in spirit and praying for their safe return."

Answering service

PARADIGM has improved its communications services by enabling families and friends to leave voicemail messages for soldiers who are on operations overseas.

Up to ten messages per person, each up to two minutes long, can be saved to individual accounts. The messages are charged by the second at a rate of 50 pence per minute, but the person receiving the messages is not charged for retrieving them.

The voicemails can be saved for up to 60 days.

Home town visit

PROUD soldiers from the Germany-based Queen's Dragoon Guards paid a flying visit to the UK when they took to the streets of Cardiff to exercise their freedom of the city.

The regiment, which served as part of 20th Armoured Brigade on Op Telic 8 in Iraq, was greeted by hundreds of well-wishers lining the streets.

The parade was inspected by Cardiff's Lord Mayor, Councillor Gareth Neale, who told the soldiers: "It's good to welcome you back to march through these streets."

Lt Col Anthony Pittman, CO of the QDG, was equally pleased to be on home soil. He said: "We're only detached geographically, not spiritually, from Wales."

Gunners fall in Helmand

Artillery mourn loss of commando colleagues

BRITISH troops remained resolute in their commitment to bringing stability to Afghanistan despite a black month during which several colleagues were killed.

Three commando-trained soldiers were among the personnel who died in the region in March. The deaths came amid ongoing Taliban attacks against British positions. Several Royal Marines also lost their lives.

LBdr Ross Clark and LBdr Liam McLaughlin were both killed by enemy rocket strikes in the Sangin Valley, Helmand province, on March 3.

Five days later a grenade attack on a base in the same area claimed the life of WO2 Mick Smith. All three soldiers were serving with 29 Commando Regiment Royal Artillery.

Remembered as a determined, intelligent and motivated man, LBdr Clark joined the Army in 2002 and proved himself capable during the war in Iraq the following year.

The 25-year-old, who was born in Zimbabwe, was posted to 148 (Meiktila) Commando Forward Observation Battery in 2004 after completing the arduous selection course.

He also proved his mettle on exercises in Norway, Belize and the USA. He was tipped for promotion on his return from Afghanistan and his commanders were convinced that he was set for a promising military career.

LBdr McLaughlin, who was known as Paddy, had served in the Army for five years and passed the All-Arms Commando Course on his first attempt.

The 21-year-old worked at the Regimental HQ in Plymouth before moving to Poole to join 148 Battery in



● LBdr Ross Clark and LBdr Liam McLaughlin

2004. He proved himself to be a highly capable soldier on a string of exercises around the world and had also gained his parachute wings.

Veteran soldier WO2 Mick Smith had served on several operations, including Northern Ireland, Iraq and Afghanistan, during his 22-year Army career.

The 39-year-old was well qualified in many outdoor pursuits including mountaineering, skiing and parachuting, and was remembered for being an inspiration to his soldiers in the field.

He had been in southern Afghanistan since last September, working as the team commander of an artillery and air support observation party in Helmand.

Paying tribute to the three soldiers, their CO, Lt Col Neil Wilson RA, said all had been committed and popular members of the regiment.

Lt Col Wilson said of LBdr McLaughlin: "Paddy was a real character – that rare combination of natural verve and determined professionalism that is a pleasure to be around. He undoubtedly had a bright future ahead of him."

He said LBdr Clark "was a determined young man who epitomised the standards of professionalism against which we measure ourselves. He had begun a rapid progression through the ranks."

Lt Col Wilson said the loss of WO2 Smith had been an "enormous blow". He added: "Sgt Maj Smith was an indomitable character and institution both within his battery and the wider regiment. He defined the levels of professionalism and commando ethos we demand of our soldiers."



● WO2 Mick Smith, 29 Commando Regiment RA

● Guns in action – Page 15



Sought-after skill: The next-generation of British Army snipers will be trained centrally at the Infantry Battle School in Brecon, South Wales Picture: Graeme Main

Snipers in demand

Sharpshooter course aims to satisfy increase in operational requirement

A NEW generation of specialist Army crack shots is on the cards following the creation of a re-engineered sniper course at the Infantry Battle School in Brecon.

The latest eight-week package features a packed syllabus covering skills including map reading, observation, physical fitness and stalking.

Commanders are confident that the course will produce a highly proficient breed of snipers, a discipline now in huge demand in theatres such as Iraq and Afghanistan.

As well as receiving the best training, soldiers making the grade are also assured of the best kit. A new rifle, currently undergoing trials, is being introduced next year and will give the Army a lethal edge in combat.

Maj Marcus Braithwaite-Exley, Scots, OC Direct Fire Division at Brecon's Support Weapon's School, said battalions had been responsible for training their own snipers, but with high-intensity operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, military chiefs had decided that a new and more robust approach was needed.

Maj Braithwaite-Exley added: "We now have a central basic sniping course here at Brecon and it has been proving very popular. We only had 20 in the first intake but by the third 56 soldiers had applied for 40 available places.

"Our next intake is not until July, but

we already have 39 names down and 25 per cent of the places for the course in November are already filled."

Maj Braithwaite-Exley stressed applicants to the sniper course could expect a tough time, adding that the highest soldiering standards were required. They need to be extremely fit and have strong powers of observation as well as being highly capable with a weapon.

He said: "There is a lot to learn and understand. In particular there is a lot of work on navigation skills. You have to be

able to get into enemy territory without being detected, move to a firing position and escape. And while soldiers will be used to firing the SA80 weapon, here they will be equipped with the L96 7.62 rifle, which has more sophisticated sights."

The popularity of the course was testament to the high esteem in which the sniper role was held, said Maj Braithwaite-Exley.

"People are very quickly realising the importance and lethality of the sniper on military operations."

JPA ready for launch

THE Army was preparing to march into the paperless office age as this issue went to press with the arrival of Joint Personnel Administration.

The system, which will ultimately mean all troops doing their admin on computer, was due for initial roll-out on March 26 before becoming fully operational by the end of July. Professional clerks will initially be the only soldiers using the system, before it is gradually introduced to units across the country in the weeks ahead.

A spokeswoman for the JPA team said that lessons had been learnt from the introduction of the initiative to the Royal Air Force and Royal Navy. She added: "The

message is we are very much on track. Soldiers will notice a massive difference with JPA and will soon start to see terminals in their locations.

"They will have all the support they need from admin staff."

Assistance will also be available from a specialist helpdesk open from 0700-1900 Monday to Friday.

As previously reported in *Soldier*, JPA has received a generally positive response from the troops involved in the system trials. But while most were happy about taking responsibility for their own admin, there were concerns about issues including computer availability.

Army's elite signallers to get extra £16 a day

SPECIALIST pay for Special Forces communicators has been hiked by more than 60 per cent to £16.34 a day.

The significant rise – by £6.52 from last year's £9.82 – is the largest increase of specialist pay announced in tandem with the 2007 military pay scales. It reflects the increasing operational demands made on Britain's elite soldiers in theatres such as Iraq and Afghanistan.

It is hoped the large award, which would be available to anyone completing the UKSF communicators' course, would be a major recruiting tool for 18 (UKSF) Signal Regiment. In an effort to attract recruits from other cap badges the unit is circulating posters highlighting the new special pay.

The SF pay award, which was announced separately from the Regular Army scales, shows that a top-range warrant officer in the Special Forces will earn £53,958 a year basic, nearly £11,000 more than an equivalent rank in the Regulars (£43,077).

An SF corporal at the top of the range will receive £39,850, nearly £9,000 more than the £30,573 his Regular counterpart will be paid. The most junior SF private will receive £30,180 a year.

● Full details of the 2007 military pay award appear in Pages 43-47.

Overpayments written off

THE Treasury has agreed to write off four-figure overpayments to more than 400 senior NCOs inadvertently placed on an "advantaged" rate when the complex final piece in the Pay 2000 follow-on work jigsaw went "live" in February last year.

The work ensured soldiers could be moved seamlessly between higher and lower pay bands. Some of those involved received large backdated lump sums.

They have now reverted to their correct rate and been told that they will not have to repay the money, bringing to a close a chapter in which there was anxiety for those who were "advantaged" and dissatisfaction for those who were not.

Two killed in Basra attacks

Gunmen claim lives of courageous infantrymen

COMMANDERS and soldiers have been remembering two brave and professional colleagues after they became the latest troops to give their lives in Iraq.

Rfn Daniel Coffey, who was serving in the 2nd Battalion, The Rifles, was mortally wounded after being ambushed while returning to his base in Basra on February 27.

On March 4 it was announced that Pte Johnathon Wysoczan, of the 1st Battalion, The Staffordshire Regiment, had died after being wounded on a patrol a week earlier.

Remembered as a hard-working, quick-witted and brave soldier, Rfn Coffey had signed up with The Devonshire and Dorset Light Infantry after joining the Army in 2005.

The 21-year-old Exeter-born soldier had already served on Op Telic 8 with 20th Armoured Brigade but volunteered to return as soon as he completed his seven months. He deployed to Basra City with 2 Rifles in January.

He had been returning to base after mentoring Iraqi police officers when his vehicle came under fire from two gunmen. Despite receiving the best medical care, he later died from his injuries.

His CO, Lt Col Justin Maciejewski, said the soldier had made a huge impression. He added: "We are proud as broth-

er riflemen to have served with him. The fact that he volunteered to return to Iraq for a second tour of duty only two months after a seven-month tour with his previous regiment is a humbling testament to his dedication and selfless commitment."

Pte Wysoczan, who was 21 and from Stoke-on-Trent, joined the Army in February 2006, signing up for 1 Staffords after completing his Combat Infantryman's Course in Catterick. He deployed to Basra with B Company on Boxing Day last year.

The young soldier had been on top cover on the way to checking out a possible terrorist mortar firing position when he was shot on February 28. He was evacuated to the UK but died of his injuries.

Lt Col Tim Sandiford, CO of 1 Staffords, said Pte Wysoczan had lost his life protecting his soldier colleagues, which was "testament to his courage".

The commanding officer added: "Pte Wysoczan was an enthusiastic and determined soldier.

"He clearly loved his chosen profession and it was an honour to have served with him.

"He had not served with the regiment for long but he made an immediate impact. Cheeky, charming, confident and professional in equal measure, he will be sorely missed."



● Rfn Daniel Coffey



● Pte Johnathon Wysoczan

Supremo for air bridge?

CONTROL of the military air bridge to operational theatres could be given to one senior officer as part of an overhaul of Royal Air Force transport procedures.

Armed Forces Minister Adam Ingram told MPs in the Commons that an "end-to-end review" was being conducted.

"First we have to identify the component parts, where the weaknesses are, how they can be addressed and who then can take ownership of the process," he said. Making a senior officer responsible was an option, he added. Mr Ingram was speaking

during an exchange with Conservative MP Mark Lancaster, a major in the Territorial Army, who proposed that one person be responsible for air transport.

Maj Lancaster, RE (V), has been vocal on the Commons floor on the subject of the air bridge since experiencing delays on his return from a six-week tour in Afghanistan.

He told *Soldier* he was confident the issue was being taken seriously despite concerns that the deployment of 1,400 extra troops to Helmand would place additional strains on the air bridge.



UPDATE



Career option: Army PTIs will have another string to their bow

Commando guns have Taliban in their sights

THE guns of 29 Commando Regiment RA roared on Helmand's front line in the latest push to drive Taliban from the north of Afghanistan's troubled province.

Royal Artillery combat units covered ground and air assaults by multinational troops during Op Achilles, a mission targeting Taliban extremists and drug traffickers holed up in the region.

The 105mm guns of three light troops went into action as fire support teams coordinated Apache attacks to ensure air superiority.

Lt Col Neil Wilson, CO of 29 Regt RA, also saw the first fruits of his gunners' Afghan National Army (ANA) training efforts, as the ANA artillery was launched into action. He said: "This new ANA firepower was put to the test when three ANA DC-30 gun crews, mentored by troops from 29 Regt, provided fire support during one of the first phases of Achilles in the town of Garmsir."

The operation's goal is to secure the area so the government can rehabilitate a dam and powerhouse to improve water, irrigation and electricity supplies.

Healthy option

PTIs given new role under Government initiative

SUPER-fit soldiers are in the front line of a new move to keep the Army in top shape.

In future, instructors passing out at the Army School of Physical Training at Aldershot will also qualify as Army health trainers in support of the Government's Choosing Health initiative.

The Department of Health is aiming to create 1,200 health trainers by 2008 to provide information and back-up to help the public make more informed choices about their health.

Although most of the new breed of trainers will be civilians employed by NHS primary care trusts, the Army has agreed to provide a number as part of its own Health Promotion Action Plan.

As respected fitness professionals, Army Physical Training Corps (APTC) personnel were identified as the most suitably qualified role models to take on the role of Army health trainers.

To qualify, instructors complete an e-learning package drawn up by military and civilian experts and accessed through the Defence Learning Portal.

The seven-stage programme tackles a wide range of topics, from diet and nutrition, injury prevention and dental health to alcohol and substance misuse.

Health trainers will be able to advise soldiers on lifestyle choices and direct them towards wide-ranging support via links with unit medical officers and other members of the unit health team.

Lt Col Ian Horn, Senior Master at Arms of the APTC, said the health trainers' programme would be rolled out in stages, at first to trainee APTC instructors, then to all existing corps instructors by the end of 2007, and eventually to the All Arms PTIs at unit level next year. He encouraged people to access the training package on the Defence Learning Portal.

Lessons learned from inquest

THE Ministry of Defence has apologised for the "confusion and upset" caused by the handling of evidence at the inquest of a soldier killed by friendly fire.

In a statement released after a coroner delivered a verdict of unlawful killing on the death of LCoH Matty Hull, of the Blues and Royals, the MoD said it would do everything possible to ensure that lessons

were learned. A dedicated team has been set up to support coroners and bereaved families at inquests, and to make sure that relevant evidence is available.

The pledge came after controversy surrounding the release of video cockpit footage from the US A-10 "tankbuster" aircraft that opened fire on the soldier's convoy in southern Iraq on March 28, 2003.

Grenadiers will bolster Londons

A TERRITORIAL Army company from The London Regiment will become the first to integrate Regular soldiers in an operational role when it deploys to Afghanistan in late April.

As part of 12 Mechanized Brigade on Operation Herrick, the composite Somme Company will have a force protection role at Camp Bastion in Helmand province.

A platoon of Grenadier Guardsmen will bolster the TA troops in what is seen as the first practical use of the One Army concept in action. The tour will also be the first time the Londons have deployed in their new role as direct reinforcements to the Guards Division, to which the regiment belongs.

Maj Milan Torbica, OC Somme Company and a police officer in civvy street, said troops had mobilised early to give them more time to prepare. He praised the "absolutely superb" support from the Grenadier Guards as being key to pre-deployment training.



From science fiction to science fact – the US Army's cutting-edge vision of the soldier of the not-too-distant future

Set to stun



Report: Andy Simms

STUN guns, cloaking devices and deflector shields – once the stock-in-trade of Hollywood sci-fi movies – represent the US Army's cutting-edge vision of the soldier of tomorrow.

Led by a team at the Army Natick Soldier Research Development and Engineering Centre in Massachusetts, the cream of America's academics have been busy helping the US military transform these science fiction-inspired technologies into science fact.

Among the hi-tech gadgetry being developed by the multi-million dollar research project, dubbed Future Warrior Concept, is a chameleonic camouflage suit, which has the ability to reflect its surroundings, and a robotic exoskeleton.

If such devices sound like they belong in a galaxy far, far away, it's because they do. The science behind the next-generation camouflage is known as the "Predator effect" because it was inspired by Arnold Schwarzenegger's space-travelling nemesis in the film of the same name, and the concept of soldiers using robotics on the battlefield was "lifted" from Sigourney Weaver's intergalactic thriller *Aliens*.

'Nothing speeds up the development of new and advanced technology like war'

However, Future Warrior's equipment specialist Jean-Louis "Dutch" DeGay, a former captain in the US Army's 75th Ranger Regiment, insists that the project is grounded in reality and that many of its innovations could be rolled out across the US military as early as 2025.

"We're already trialling equipment and technologies that did not exist a few years ago," he said. "The Air Force has just debuted its new stun gun and five years after the concept of an exoskeleton was first discussed we have fully-functioning prototypes."

"Five years ago nobody thought that we'd have a portable hydrogen fuel cell, but we've got them now," Dutch told *Soldier* at the Natick Soldier Centre – a facility responsible for all the science and technology that goes into everything that an American soldier wears, carries, consumes, lives in and lands on the ground in. "They're functioning and we're just trying to make them smaller. And if I'm honest, nothing speeds up the development of new and advanced technology like war."

With the US Army already the envy of allies and enemies alike, *Soldier* took a closer look at how Britain's comrades in Iraq and Afghanistan may line up on the battlefield in 18 years' time . . .

Super-strength soldiers

The claim – Nano-muscle fibres woven into the textiles of combat fatigues, which expand and contract with electronic stimulation, will give soldiers the capability to load or lift greater weights. One of many uses predicted for this strength amplification technology on the battlefields of the future is the rescue and recovery of casualties.

"If I'm with a guy who is 6ft and weighs 170lb and he gets shot, and I'm just a 5ft, 95lb female, there is no way I'd be able to recover him or do little more than just look at him lying on the floor," explained Dutch. "However, using the nano-muscle fibres I'd have no problems picking him up and carrying him to safety."

The science – Researchers have reportedly already developed a technique to create artificial muscle fibres using carbon nano tubes woven into a yarn a mere 2 microns (2 millionths of a metre) thick. Each fibre has a strength equal to 100 times that of equivalent human muscle fibres. In addition to military uses, it is expected that this technology will have revolutionary consequences for the prosthetic limb and robotics fields.



Water-tight design

The claim – Thanks to the hydrophobic and hydrophilic coatings on his uniform, the infantry soldier of 2025 will be able to walk in and out of water without getting wet.

The waterproof suit will also work in reverse – allowing the soldier to draw in water if required.

The science – Samples of nano hydrophobic and hydrophilic coatings are currently being tested at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in Boston.

The process of locking-out and drawing-in water involves molecular repulsion (hydrophobic force – a fear of water) and attraction (hydrophilic force – a love of water).



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Head start on the enemy

The claim – The next-generation combat helmet will completely encapsulate the soldier's head, without restricting visibility. Ballistic inserts will provide added protection and an on-board respirator will allow the wearer to breathe filtered air no matter where they are.

Traditional “look down” displays or monacles will be discarded in favour of stereoscopic cameras, which will be used to broadcast real-time information and images on to the interior of the helmet.

An automatic voice translation device means soldiers will have the ability to say “I come here in peace, take me to your leader” in any language.

The science – Aside from the real-time voice translator, which is being developed both academically and commercially, much of the helmet's technology can already be found inside the cockpit of an F16 fighter jet.



Bullet-proof bootnecks

The claim – With a combat suit that incorporates “fluidic” body armour, heavy kevlar plates will be retired from active service in 2025. This lightweight alternative, a gel composite containing nano carbon tubules which become rigid once stimulated electrically by an on-board computer, will dissipate the shock of a blast across the body.

“We’re salivating like Pavla’s dogs about this one,” admitted Dutch. “We’re talking about head-to-toe body armour which weighs only 16-18lb and can be worn all the time. It will give complete protection instead of just covering the vital organs.”

In addition to stopping bullet and shrapnel strikes, the “live” body armour will also be used to protect injuries.

For example, if a soldier breaks a bone during combat, the armour can be stimulated locally to the injury, providing both an instant splint and hard cast.

The science – Another potential product of the significant advancements in nano technology. However, there remain big question marks over how the armour will “sense” the strike of the round. While the strike itself could ultimately prove the trigger for stimulation of the nano tubules, the displacement of air caused by an imminent strike is also being considered.



Robo-Rangers

The claim – In addition to harnessing nano technology, the next-generation infanteer will be able to perform super-human feats using an external robotic system, which will amplify their strength by more than 300 per cent.

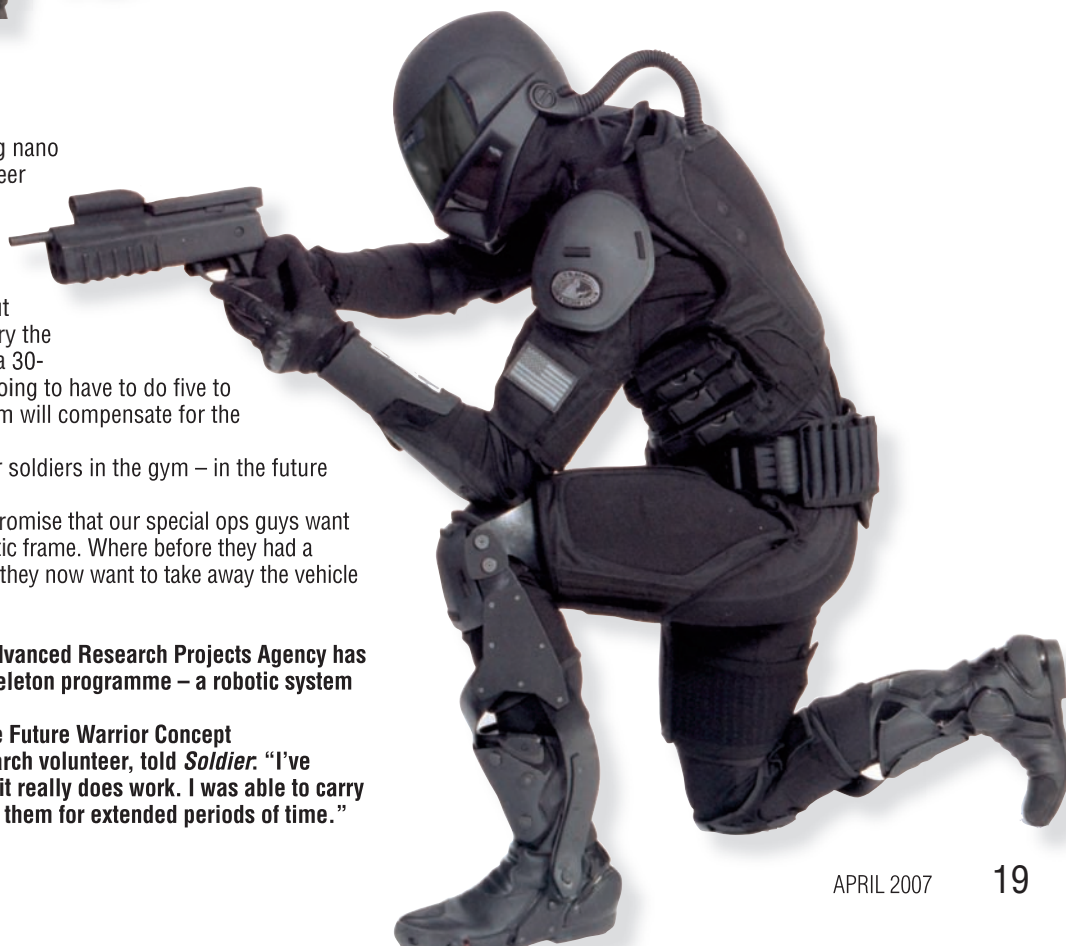
“In 2025 I won’t have to worry about load or mobility as the system will carry the weight,” said Dutch. “If I’ve got to do a 30-mile road march, no sweat. I’m only going to have to do five to ten per cent of the work and the system will compensate for the rest and walk that 30 miles for me.”

“Historically we’ve had to ‘build’ our soldiers in the gym – in the future we won’t have to.

“The technology shows such great promise that our special ops guys want to bolt weapon systems on to the robotic frame. Where before they had a Humvee carrying a 50-calibre weapon, they now want to take away the vehicle and become a walking gun platform.”

The science – America’s Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency has already invested millions in an exoskeleton programme – a robotic system that soldiers “step into”.

PFC Joel Aldridge, a member of the Future Warrior Concept demonstration team and human research volunteer, told *Soldier*. “I’ve actually trialled the ‘exo-hopper’ and it really does work. I was able to carry loads upwards of 300lb and walk with them for extended periods of time.”





War games

Gritty edge to British Army's exercises in Falklands »

Ready to go: Tornado F3 crews
prepare to fly into action at Mount
Pleasant as another exercise looms

Report: Cliff Caswell
Pictures: Graeme Main

SHELTERING in a bunker beneath the driving winds and frequent stinging rain of the dying Falklands summer, the missile crews silently monitored their quarry.

The targets were on the radar – two aircraft at low level approaching from the west. Above the bunker the launchers revolved smoothly, their electronic brains following the signals and waiting for confirmation of a foe.

Then the dots appeared against the billowing clouds, racing towards the emplacement. They came silently at first, then the scream of jet engines filled the air as the two aircraft broke off over their target and raced into the distance.

If these Royal Air Force Tornado F3 fighters had been hostile, the chances are the crews would have been spiralling earthward or reaching for ejection handles. Underground, the Rapier crews had locked on. If live warheads had been fitted, the attackers would have been downed.

Unlike most exercises, however, the live missiles in this war game were bunkered just a few yards away, ready to be loaded in double-quick time. Amid this endless daily game of track-and-lock is a serious mission to deter any aggressors with designs on the Falklands and to repel them back into the South Atlantic if necessary.

"We have to be on a war footing here the whole time," acknowledged Capt Rob Wood, ops officer at 30 Battery, 16 Regiment Royal Artillery, which looks after the Rapiers close to the burgeoning British base

at Mount Pleasant – one of two permanent emplacements on the islands.

"Our system has Tracker radar and is very effective with a near 100 per cent kill rate. It's probably one of the most capable air defences in the world."

Although the missiles are ready, it has been a quarter of a century since anyone fired in anger on the Falkland Islands. But the military mission, and the resolution to deal with aggressors, has not changed in 25 years.

Like the Cold War face-off between Nato and the Warsaw Pact, the aim of this deployment is to prevent hostilities from starting. Since its recapture from Argentine forces in 1982,

this tiny dependency some 8,000 miles from the UK has been locked in an endless cycle of rehearsal for battle.

It is a mission, however, which has brought highly beneficial military spin-offs. The lessons learned as a result of the conflict continue to be used in modern deployments, while the training opportunities offered on the islands are some of the best available anywhere in the world.

Brig Nick Davies, Commander British Forces South Atlantic Islands, told *Soldier* that the training package offered on the Falklands was unique.

"There are excellent facilities where naval gunfire and aircraft can be used on exercise, and there are great live-firing opportunities," he said.

"In addition the tactics developed

back in 1982 still apply now – for example the use of low-level infantry sections and the requirement for close medical support. These have been

modified for use in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"The quality of the equipment troops carried in such a harsh environment back in 1982 also taught us lessons, and there has since been much more of an emphasis on

personal kit issued to soldiers."

Learning to operate within an inter-Service framework is also a key part of the Falklands experience for the Army. Troops must get to grips with new challenges such as spending time at sea – the only way of travelling to the outlying settlements of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands.

"We usually find the soldiers are quite sick at first, although they generally love being on board," said

‘Our system has Tracker radar and is very effective with a near 100 per cent kill rate’



Lt Cdr Ian Lynn, in charge of the offshore patrol vessel HMS *Dunbarton Castle*, as he prepared to head out to sea.

"The troops are surprised by how flexible the crew of the ship have to be. There's only one person on board who has just one job and that's me."

However Lt Cdr Lynn said the Royal Navy personnel gained experience from the Army. "They give us a taste of their work by taking our guys onto the range," he said. "It's great because we get to understand each other's worlds."



Certainly the Falklands embodies the essence of tri-Service co-operation. And although 25 years has passed since the islands were recaptured from the Argentine military junta, few personnel here question the importance of the mission in this remotest of operational theatres.

Since the war, the islanders have built a strong and prosperous economy, flourishing on the sale of fishing rights and a growing tourism industry. The dependency, which had a miniscule income just three decades ago, now generates tens of millions of pounds each year.

Touring troops often remark on the warm reception they receive from residents and their pride in being part of a mission that began more than two decades ago.

Curiously, the embodiment of the mission is summed up on the



Falklands flag, which bears the words "Desire the Right". It could not be a more fitting motto for those serving on this most unique of deployments. ■

Main picture, lock and load: A Rapier ground-to-air missile battery close to the British base at Mount Pleasant keeps a permanent watch over the South Atlantic skies

Above: Keeping track: Controllers are constantly tested by Tornado F3 crews, who play the enemy in daily war games





"And which unit did you serve with at . . . erm . . . Jutland?"

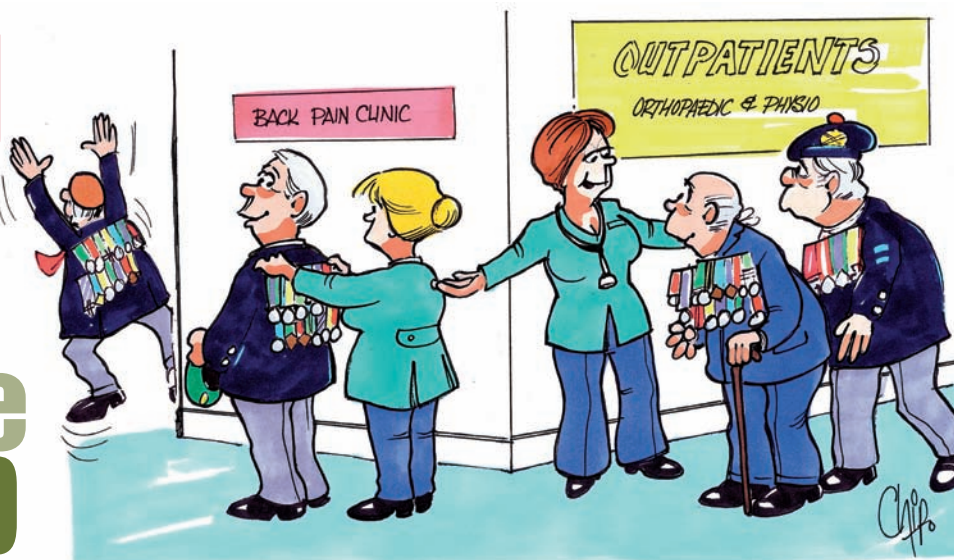


"I must admit that I hadn't realised that two years' National Service at Chipping Sodbury was so . . . erm . . . dangerous."

Bling Brigade

Chuckle
with **Chip**

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"This way, gentlemen, for the miracle cure for stooped posture."




"Geez . . . I hope we never get like the Brits . . . they've got goddam medals for everything."



"And we welcome another new group this year . . . the primary school association of battlefield tour visitors."





Running at altitude: Cpl Colin Hughes
RLC, despatch crew commander,
stays focused on the drop zone during
a series of arduous manoeuvres over
southern England

Wild blue warriors

Recruits joining 47 Air Despatch
Squadron face a baptism of fire in
preparation for worldwide operations »

Report: Cliff Caswell
Pictures: Steve Dock

THE atmosphere on the flight deck of the Hercules was intense as the aircraft powered through the rain at 130 knots, hugging the contours of the hills.

Headphones buzzed with information. Altitudes, locations, speeds and throttle settings. Lines were drawn on maps and there were succinct discussions about escape routes and bad weather evasion tactics. Every so often the flight engineer leaned across to move switches, steadying himself as the aircraft pitched and banked.

Downstairs, in the belly of the beast, the trainee soldiers were occasionally caught off balance by the motion as they prepared to do their job. Tethered to the aircraft with safety belts, they raced against the clock to free the cargo and stand by for the drop zone. The vomit-inducing ride made the task a physical and mentally-demanding challenge.

With the side-doors of the C-130 open, the fields were vast and intimate. Sheep could be seen running from the shadow of the aircraft while directions were visible on road signs. But as the lights turned from red to green, the load was hurled out on schedule and on target.

Back on the ground a short time later, there was satisfaction that the

fledgling members of 47 Air Despatch Squadron had come through their first flight successfully. "Nobody was sick, and that's a good sign," remarked one instructor as the troops disembarked for the terra firma of RAF Lyneham. "Normally you do find that some of them get ill."

Coping with air sickness is just one of the challenges at this small, yet increasingly important, Royal Logistic Corps unit. Anyone passing selection can expect to be put through a demanding training package, which includes air and sea survival techniques and escape-and-evasion tactics.

They can also be assured of a hectic pace of life. Last year the squadron dropped more tonnes of equipment

than at any time in the last six decades. Personnel are on operations at least once a year as well as taking part in exercises.

"We're in a very privileged position in that we have our own training wing," said Maj

Lucy Giles, RLC, OC of 47 AD Sqn.

"There we can assess people for their potential to join the unit – and they can expect a four-day experience.

"There are mental and physical agility tests and candidates also face a gruelling board of officers chaired by a Royal Air Force wing commander. We're hard nosed – you will not be accepted if you are not up to standard. This is not only a challenging job, it is a way of life."

With the 140-or-so troops in the

squadron now responsible for supporting two dangerous operational theatres, Maj Giles's assessment is accurate. The training must be demanding to reflect the current pace of deployments – and the fact that the lives of soldiers in remote areas of Iraq and Afghanistan are depending on the unit.

But the OC was delighted that personnel in 47 AD Sqn had risen to the growing demands of their job, putting in long hours to make sure supplies were topped up.

"What we do is mission critical," Maj Giles added. "If the guys on the ground don't get ammunition, they are going to have all sorts of problems."

Anyone embarking on a career in air despatch, however, can expect a highly rewarding job, in which they will learn a wide variety of diverse skills.

"There is a lot to take on board," admitted SSgt Dougie Ford, RLC, who helps look after the training wing at the unit. "As well as being a class three driver, you may need skills such as being a crane or JCB operator.

"As you are going to be flying over hostile territory, you could also be prone to capture and need to learn land and sea survival techniques too."

The selection and training package has consistently netted high quality candidates. Capt Jim Hallsworth, the ops officer, said those selected for the unit needed to have the right aptitude for modern deployments.

"Afghanistan really saw the rebirth of air despatch and it has since gone from strength to strength," he added. "We've dropped 400 tonnes in both Afghanistan and Iraq since last July and are constantly on ops."

Back on the ground, however, the trainees with 47 Sqn AD were undaunted by the prospect of ops and were relishing the challenges ahead. Despite the rough flight, there was elation at completing the first run.

"I was very nervous," admitted Pte Vese Vatucicila, RLC, as he stepped off the Hercules. "My hands were shaking and it didn't help that I had to sort out knots on the loads. My stomach was churning around on the way out but thankfully I didn't chuck up – it was a great experience."

It would only be a few hours before Pte Vatucicila and his trainee colleagues were back on the aircraft for another drop. A debriefing, another load and more flying hours were on the cards for those vying to earn their wings.

They need to get up to speed quickly. With troops increasingly operating from remote areas and in inhospitable conditions, the despatcher's skills can mean the difference between life or death for soldiers on the ground.

And with the stakes so high, failure is not an option. ■

● The high life – see Vox pop, Page 90

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Main picture: Door-dropping: In a test of nerve, trainees with 47 AD Sqn move to the C-130's ramp in preparation for a low-level delivery. Left: Despatchers stand by to hurl supplies from the side hatch

Report: Karen Thomas
Pictures: Steve Dock

OPERATION Mutay was 16 Air Assault Brigade's first strike against Taliban fighters hunkered down in Nowzad, a town in Afghanistan's notorious Helmand province.

The dangerous mission's objective was to secure and search a suspected Taliban leader's compound built like a maze and providing near perfect cover for the enemy to open fire from all directions.

The one big advantage the troops had over anti-coalition forces was air supremacy and the ground-based forward air controllers (FACs) who were coordinating close air support fire power. Unlike forward observation officers who work with static artillery, FACs call down fire from fast jets covering one mile every eight seconds, bombers and Apache attack helicopters to support soldiers fighting ground battles.

The Royal Air Force dropped 71 500lb bombs and launched 1,400 rockets last year, making the FAC increasingly indispensable in rapidly

but accurately pinpointing targets while preventing blue-on-blue and civilian casualties.

The need for land and air forces to seamlessly work together was recognised after Telic 1 when the Joint Air Land Organisation (JALO) was set up at Strike Command. But as the need for highly skilled FACs escalates, it falls to the Joint Forward Air Controllers Training and Standards Unit (JFACTSU) at RAF Leeming to produce the human goods.

Capt Barry de Goede, a FAC from the Household Cavalry Regiment, praised his JFACTSU training for providing a solid skill set in rules of engagement, voice procedures and coordinating attacks.

FACs were in such demand during Herrick 4 that he spent fewer than five days in a row at Camp Bastion.

"FACs are a valuable commodity because they are the vital link between air cover and the ground war," he told

Soldier, defining the role as matching the ordnance effect to the situation unfolding on the ground.

"The RAF was exceptional. When you were in trouble you were never denied air support."

In the three-pronged assault on Nowzad, Capt de Goede was attached to a platoon from 2 RGR attacking from the north-east.

But the main thrust into the target compound was made by a company of paratroopers accompanied by Staff Cpl Shaun Fry, another FAC also from the Life Guards. He commended the team spirit of different cap badges working together while emphasising the need for the FAC to

understand the bigger picture beyond the immediate task in hand.

"You must know the mission because if it's winning hearts and minds, putting a rocket into the side of a house is not going to help," he explained, adding the FAC has other weapon systems at his disposal, including mortar fire on the

'You must know the mission because if it's winning hearts and minds, putting a rocket into the side of a house is not going to help'



Multi-tasking: Student FACs coordinate air attacks using helicopters and fast jets on the Otterburn ranges, while keeping an eye on the bigger battle picture

ground that could do the job adequately instead of dropping a bomb.

"The FAC course is outstanding and teaches you everything you need to know but the experience in theatre teaches you to think on your feet and use a bit of common sense to adapt to your situation."

Staff Cpl Fry won the Military Cross for his bravery on Operation Mutay and two subsequent actions while on his 2006 tour.

Back in Nowzad, the Taliban hit Capt de Goede's Gurkha platoon before it could get close to its objectives and the Chinooks delivering Staff Cpl Fry and his company of paratroopers to the target compound set down in a hot landing zone. Staff Cpl Fry recalled for *Soldier* his FAC role in the ensuing fight for the town.

"As soon as we hit the deck the whole place erupted – it was as if the world and his wife had opened fire on us.

"We secured the compound with the support of Apache helicopters but then got reports of people gathered in a nearby orchard.

"I went with my platoon to see who it was and we immediately came under

heavy fire – we all got it, nobody was left out.

"We ended up being pinned down for about two hours by Taliban attacking us at close range from behind the orchard wall. I brought in the Apache for some close combat but it eventually had to go back to Camp Bastion and re-fuel.

"A B1 bomber sent by Capt de Goede did a show of force over the enemy but it didn't stop them.

"Eventually we were given the order to get out. We had taken the Taliban's flank and taken out some snipers but we were still under attack, so I stayed with my Fire Support Team commander to cover the withdrawal.

"I had a couple of A10s to support the troops bugging out under fire but I had to hold off calling the pilots onto the targets.

"One platoon, also engaged in the fighting, was too close and I couldn't risk hitting them.

"Once everyone had got out, I confirmed the target to the A10 pilot and then ran as fast as I could through enemy bullets and hid behind a wall just 250 metres away.

"Throughout the mission, I had to keep a level head. I had the opportunity to dump a 500-pound bomb but refused to do so because of the risk to 'friendlies' close to the target area.

"But at the back of my mind I also knew that I was the platoon's FAC and the troops were relying on me to support them.

"If I didn't call in the air support it would be like having a rifleman who couldn't fire his weapon." ■





You dozy lot

It's official, Army recruits need extra time in bed to maximise alertness

Report: Karen Thomas
Picture: Steve Dock

TEENAGE recruits could be hitting the snooze button on their early morning alarms as the MoD considers introducing protected sleep time to improve performance.

New research suggests adolescents are "biologically programmed" to snuggle under that duvet because their brains undergo massive development during puberty and need more of sleep's regenerating properties.

Body clock scientists maintain sleep deprivation could be a major cause of "Kevin the teenager"-type behaviour, including sullenness and mood swings. They believe it could also have a major impact on alertness and mental ability.

Researchers discovered that a couple of hours' extra kip and mid-morning starts greatly improved attitude and performance at school.

Soldier understands that the Army is to hold clinically-observed trials among young recruits while schools and colleges in Britain are also discussing a later start to their day to combat teenage tiredness and irritability.

Trials of a protected nine hours of sleep – claimed to be necessary for optimal alertness in teenagers – are

likely to go ahead this spring for recruits aged 20 and under at an Army Training Regiment.

A senior recruiting officer confirmed they would evaluate the effectiveness of changing the training pattern, with *Reveille* sounding at 0800 and the working day beginning an hour later.

He said: "The Services have an obligation to recruits, whatever their age, to ensure they have the appropriate rest needed to function at 100 per cent.

the initiative as "pandering to the whims of teenagers under the guise of infringing their human rights". An officer told *Soldier* the system was "unworkable on operations where the enemy won't be having a two-hour lie-in".

An important advantage of the trials is that they are expected to help bring the UK more firmly in line with European legislation on the length of the working day. The Royal Air Force and Royal Navy are also considering a later start for

their teenage recruits and will monitor the Army situation closely.

There will be no concession for older soldiers because the research indicated no enhancement to their performance from longer sleep periods.

The MoD was due to issue a statement on protected sleep for teenagers at the start of April.

What do you think of teenage protected sleep? Email your comments to mail@soldiermagazine.co.uk ■

Why the teenage brain needs a lie-in

By Roger Highfield Evolution but profound changes take place by the time of puberty, bed times. She estimates that to be optimally 13, and most of all from his 15-year

In the press: How the *Daily Telegraph* reported the researchers' findings

"We appreciate there might be a few teething problems, especially for the 18- to 20-year-olds deployed to theatre, but this is about getting the best from soldiers and the benefits greatly outweigh any temporary inconvenience."

The research clearly demonstrated that teenagers sleep more soundly in a slumber-friendly environment, which might include low-level lighting, air-conditioning for hot summer nights and fleecy duvet covers. If the experiment is seen to work, barracks across the country could be modified to incorporate lighting and temperature control systems.

But the trials have ruffled feathers among senior ranks. One NCO branded

End of teenage early birds?

- Nine hours sleep for optimal alertness
- *Reveille* moved to 0800
- Work beginning at 0900
- Air-conditioning and sleep-friendly lighting in accommodation blocks

Method man

Acclaimed stage and screen star speaks of his military influences

Interview: Cliff Caswell

WITH a grandfather who served during the First World War and a dad who was in the Royal Canadian Air Force, actor Michael Ironside has never been short of material when it comes to portraying Hollywood's most gritty men of action.

Growing up in a family that has given generations of military service, he has always had somebody to talk to about life on the front line.

It is research which has proved invaluable whenever Ironside has been called on to play Forces roles on the stage and screen.

The acclaimed star of blockbuster movies *Top Gun*, *Total Recall* and *Starship Troopers* told *Soldier* that he felt at ease when stepping into the boots of military characters.

"My father always used to tell me that I was something of an anachronism and that I would have looked the part in a wartime uniform," the 56-year-old Toronto-born actor said with a smile.

"But seriously, when you have grown up with all that reference material in your family you can do a lot of research. It was never difficult for me to go and talk to people."

His family's tours of duty have certainly paid dividends. In a career spanning more than three decades he has forged a reputation for versatility, carrying off action heroes and serious roles with equal aplomb. Another of his talents is that he also writes his own material.

"The first acting job I did back in 1974 was actually a play about a First World War soldier on his way home," Ironside reflected. "It was interesting for me because my grandfather served at Mons in Belgium with the British Expeditionary Force."

"But if you play a role like that correctly, and you've taken on the attitude and you're wearing the uniform, you tend to find that a lot of the acting will be done for you."

However, it was after landing a part alongside emerging stars Tom Cruise and Val Kilmer in the 1986 box office smash *Top Gun* that Ironside's military knowledge propelled the aspiring actor to international fame.

Following in the footsteps of his airman father, who served in the UK as a gunner on a Stirling bomber during the Second World War, Ironside won wide acclaim for his portrayal of brash US Air Force flying instructor Lt Cmdr Rick "Jester" Heatherly.

Top Gun also featured one of Ironside's most quoted cinematic scenes when, after being shot down by Cruise's Maverick in a mock dogfight to the taunt "Yehea, Jester's dead", Heatherly uses a loophole in the rules to land his opponent on the CO's carpet.

"Everybody seems to remember one line from films," the actor laughed. "In *Top Gun* it's 'Yehea, Jester's dead' and it's

'See you at the party' in *Total Recall*."

"In *Starship Troopers* it's 'Do it Rico, do it' and, believe me, there's nothing like walking through an airport and have somebody bellow that one at you."

Away from Hollywood, Ironside has more recently turned his military expertise to the ever-expanding video game industry, providing a voice and personality to agent Sam Fisher in Tom Clancy's acclaimed *Splinter Cell* series.

The actor helped design the character, who is an ex-US Special Forces soldier, from the outset, giving him a cynical streak and making him a near-anti-hero. The creation of Fisher was another string to the versatile actor's bow.

"I really came into the *Splinter Cell* job through the back door," Ironside recalled. "About seven years ago I was approached to do some gaming work, which I first thought was just going to be one of those beep-beep *Pacman*-type affairs."

"But when they showed me Fisher I suggested we work up the character. I wanted him to be a world-weary man who was mistrustful of authority."

"I think it worked. *Splinter Cell* was certainly a wonderful experience and great to be a part of."

Despite his versatility in performing, Ironside admitted that being involved with several different genres of film, television and theatre had made him an enigma to some.

Despite playing men of action in movies such as *Total Recall* and the 1980s TV mini-series *V*, and taking a role in the horror flick *Reeker*, he stressed that acting remained a serious business.

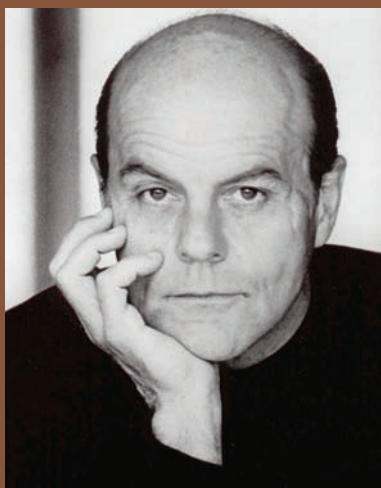
"If I'm around actors who play serious roles, they tend to see me as an action actor, whereas the action guys see me as a serious player," he said. "I'm one of these guys who respects good action, and I always treat what I do very much as a craft."

With his wealth of acting experience, a rich family heritage and an ability to bring complex characters to life, Michael Ironside has become a favourite with audiences around the world. Military influence, it seems, is invaluable in acting the part. ■

'The first acting job that I did back in 1974 was actually a play about a First World War soldier on his way home'

Michael Ironside: Filmography

2006: *The Veteran*
2005: *Reeker*
2004: *The Machinist*
2000: *The Perfect Storm*
1996: *Starship Troopers*
1993: *Free Willy*
1991: *Highlander II*
1990: *Total Recall*
1986: *Top Gun*
1984: *V: The mini series*





Michael Ironside – MY ARMY

Iron man: Michael Ironside, pictured in *The Veteran*, has forged a reputation for playing Hollywood's hardest heroes and villains

Pay rates for Other Ranks

HIGHER BAND						LOWER BAND						
	Daily Rate 2006	Annual Rate	Monthly Rate 2007	Annual Rate	Annual Increase	Daily Rate 2006	Annual Rate	Monthly Rate 2007	Annual Rate	Annual Increase		
WO1	Level 7	£114.17	£41,672.04	£3,589.73	£43,076.76	£1,404.72	£107.74	£39,325.08	£3,387.55	£40,650.60	£1,325.52	RANGE 5
	Level 6	£112.45	£41,044.20	£3,535.65	£42,427.80	£1,383.60	£104.78	£38,244.72	£3,294.49	£39,533.88	£1,289.16	
	Level 5	£110.48	£40,325.28	£3,473.71	£41,684.52	£1,359.24	£101.92	£37,200.72	£3,204.56	£38,454.72	£1,254.00	
	Level 4	£108.54	£39,617.16	£3,412.71	£40,952.52	£1,335.36	£99.97	£36,489.00	£3,143.24	£37,718.88	£1,229.88	
	Level 3	£106.58	£38,901.72	£3,351.08	£40,212.96	£1,311.24	£98.03	£35,780.88	£3,082.24	£36,986.88	£1,206.00	
	Level 2	£104.78	£38,244.72	£3,294.49	£39,533.88	£1,289.16	£96.09	£35,072.76	£3,021.25	£36,255.00	£1,182.24	
	Level 1	£102.76	£37,507.32	£3,230.96	£38,771.52	£1,264.20	£94.26	£34,404.84	£2,963.71	£35,564.52	£1,159.68	
SSgt-WO2	Level 9	£105.62	£38,551.32	£3,320.90	£39,850.80	£1,299.48	£96.77	£35,321.04	£3,042.64	£36,511.68	£1,190.64	RANGE 4 WO2 levels 5-9; SSgt levels 1-7
	Level 8	£104.13	£38,007.48	£3,274.05	£39,288.60	£1,281.12	£94.63	£34,539.84	£2,975.35	£35,704.20	£1,164.36	
	Level 7	£102.67	£37,474.56	£3,228.15	£38,737.80	£1,263.24	£93.42	£34,098.24	£2,937.30	£35,247.60	£1,149.36	
	Level 6	£101.21	£36,941.64	£3,182.24	£38,186.88	£1,245.24	£92.01	£33,583.68	£2,892.98	£34,715.76	£1,132.08	
	Level 5	£99.02	£36,142.32	£3,113.39	£37,360.68	£1,218.36	£88.03	£32,130.96	£2,767.83	£33,213.96	£1,083.00	
	Level 4	£96.82	£35,339.28	£3,044.21	£36,530.52	£1,191.24	£86.85	£31,700.28	£2,730.74	£32,768.88	£1,068.60	
	Level 3	£94.63	£34,539.84	£2,975.35	£35,704.20	£1,164.36	£84.86	£30,973.92	£2,668.17	£32,018.04	£1,044.12	
	Level 2	£92.42	£33,733.32	£2,905.86	£34,870.32	£1,137.00	£82.19	£29,999.28	£2,584.21	£31,010.52	£1,011.24	
	Level 1	£90.24	£32,937.60	£2,837.32	£34,047.84	£1,110.24	£81.13	£29,612.52	£2,550.90	£30,610.80	£998.28	
Sgt	Level 7	£90.18	£32,915.64	£2,835.43	£34,025.16	£1,109.52	£83.30	£30,404.52	£2,619.11	£31,429.32	£1,024.80	RANGE 3
	Level 6	£88.52	£32,309.76	£2,783.24	£33,398.88	£1,089.12	£82.67	£30,174.48	£2,599.31	£31,191.72	£1,017.24	
	Level 5	£86.86	£31,704.00	£2,731.05	£32,772.60	£1,068.60	£79.91	£29,167.20	£2,512.53	£30,150.36	£983.16	
	Level 4	£85.20	£31,098.00	£2,678.86	£32,146.32	£1,048.32	£77.88	£28,426.20	£2,448.70	£29,384.40	£958.20	
	Level 3	£84.14	£30,711.12	£2,645.52	£31,746.24	£1,035.12	£77.10	£28,141.44	£2,424.17	£29,090.04	£948.60	
	Level 2	£82.06	£29,951.88	£2,580.13	£30,961.56	£1,009.68	£75.21	£27,451.68	£2,364.75	£28,377.00	£925.32	
	Level 1	£79.99	£29,196.36	£2,515.04	£30,180.48	£984.12	£73.29	£26,750.88	£2,304.39	£27,652.68	£901.80	
Cpl	Level 7	£81.03	£29,576.04	£2,547.74	£30,572.88	£996.84	£72.87	£26,597.52	£2,291.18	£27,494.16	£896.64	RANGE 2
	Level 6	£79.30	£28,944.48	£2,493.35	£29,920.20	£975.72	£72.34	£26,404.20	£2,274.52	£27,294.24	£890.04	
	Level 5	£77.69	£28,356.84	£2,442.72	£29,312.64	£955.80	£71.77	£26,196.00	£2,256.59	£27,079.08	£883.08	
	Level 4	£75.86	£27,688.80	£2,385.18	£28,622.16	£933.36	£71.21	£25,991.64	£2,238.98	£26,867.76	£876.12	
	Level 3	£74.13	£27,057.48	£2,330.79	£27,969.48	£912.00	£70.67	£25,794.48	£2,222.00	£26,664.00	£869.52	
	Level 2	£70.67	£25,794.48	£2,222.00	£26,664.00	£869.52	£67.38	£24,593.76	£2,118.57	£25,422.84	£829.08	
	Level 1	£67.38	£24,593.76	£2,118.57	£25,422.84	£829.08	£64.48	£23,535.12	£2,027.37	£24,328.44	£793.32	
Pte-LCpl	Level 9	£70.67	£25,794.48	£2,222.00	£26,664.00	£869.52	£59.17	£21,597.00	£1,860.42	£22,325.04	£728.04	RANGE 1 LCpl levels 5-9; Pte levels 1-7
	Level 8	£67.38	£24,593.76	£2,118.57	£25,422.84	£829.08	£57.10	£20,841.48	£1,795.33	£21,543.96	£702.48	
	Level 7	£64.48	£23,535.12	£2,027.37	£24,328.44	£793.32	£54.60	£19,929.00	£1,716.73	£20,600.76	£671.76	
	Level 6	£61.65	£22,502.28	£1,938.40	£23,260.80	£758.52	£52.36	£19,111.44	£1,646.31	£19,755.72	£644.28	
	Level 5	£58.79	£21,458.28	£1,848.47	£22,181.64	£723.36	£50.26	£18,344.88	£1,580.27	£18,963.24	£618.36	
	Level 4	£53.17	£19,407.12	£1,671.78	£20,061.36	£654.24	£47.69	£17,406.84	£1,499.46	£17,993.52	£586.68	
	Level 3	£49.45	£18,049.32	£1,554.81	£18,657.72	£608.40	£43.85	£16,005.24	£1,378.72	£16,544.64	£539.40	
	Level 2	£44.79	£16,348.32	£1,408.29	£16,899.48	£551.16	£41.55	£15,165.72	£1,342.56	£16,110.72	£945.00	
	Level 1	£39.24	£14,322.60	£1,306.42	£15,677.04	£1,354.44	£39.24	£14,322.60	£1,306.42	£15,677.04	£1,354.44	
	New Entrant Rate of Pay											
	£33.32	£12,161.88	£1047.66	£12,571.92	£410.04	£33.32	£12,161.88	£1047.66	£12,571.92	£410.04		

Territorial Army

TA rates of pay are the same as those for the regular Army less the appropriate X-factor abatement. You can work out your rate as follows:

- 13% X-factor – FTRS (full commitment) – same as regular rates
- 5% X-factor – TA, FTRS (limited commitment) –

multiply the regular rate by 105, then divide by 113

- 0% X-factor – FTRS (home commitment), NRPS –

multiply the regular rate by 100, then divide by 113



Picture: Cpl Ian Forsyth/RLC

Specialist pay and allowances

SPECIALIST PAY

£ per day

	Rate	Reserve Band Rate		
		75%	50%	25%
SP(Flying)^a				
Initial rate	12.95	9.71	6.48	3.24
Middle rate ^c	21.97	16.48	10.99	5.49
Top rate ^c	34.93	26.20	17.47	8.73
Enhanced rate ^d	41.12	30.84	20.56	10.28
Enhanced rate ^e	38.87	29.15	19.44	9.72
Lieutenant Colonel^b				
On appointment	36.06	27.05	18.03	9.02
After 6 years	33.80	25.35	16.90	8.45
After 8 years	31.54	23.66	15.77	7.89
Colonel^b				
On appointment	27.61	20.71	13.81	6.90
After 2 years	25.91	19.43	12.96	6.48
After 4 years	24.21	18.16	12.11	6.05
After 6 years	21.40	16.05	10.70	5.35
After 8 years	18.58	13.94	9.29	4.65
Brigadier^b	11.27	8.45	5.64	2.82
Non-Commissioned aircrew (trained)				
Qualified as Army aircraft commanders				
Initial rate	12.95	9.71	6.48	3.24
Middle rate ^f	21.97	16.48	10.99	5.49
Top rate ^f	34.93	26.20	17.47	8.73
Enhanced rate ^g	41.12	30.84	20.56	10.28
Army pilots^h				
Initial rate	6.77	5.08	3.39	1.69
Middle rate ⁱ	14.64	10.98	7.32	3.66
Top rate ^j	17.46	13.10	8.73	4.37
Army aircrew				
Initial rate	6.77	5.08	3.39	1.69
Middle rate ⁱ	14.09	10.57	7.05	3.52
Top rate ^j	18.58	13.94	9.29	4.65
Diving Pay				
Army compressed air diver	7.89 (Cat 2)			
Army diver and Army unit diving supervisor	10.70 (Cat 3)			
Army diving supervisor	18.58 (Cat 4)			
RLC air despatch pay^k				
Lower rate	4.50		2.25	
Higher rate ^f	7.32		3.66	
JHSU crew pay	4.50		2.25	
SP(Mountain Leader)	9.58	7.19	4.79	2.40
SP(Para Jump Instructor)				
Less than 8 years' experience	7.32	5.49	3.66	1.83
8 or more years' experience	10.70	8.03	5.35	2.68
SP(Para)	5.07	3.80	2.54	1.27
SP(High Alt Para)^l	9.58		4.79	

SEPARATE pay tables are available for the groups listed below and are published in the AFPRB report and also available on the Army website (www.army.mod.uk) and on the MoD Intranet.

- Pilot Employment Stream (Army)
- Medical and Dental Officers
- Veterinary Officers
- Chaplains
- MPGS

a: Flying Pay is not payable to personnel on the Professional Aviator Pay Spine.

b: Army pilots who are not qualified as aircraft commanders do not receive the officer rate of Flying Pay but receive the Army pilot rate of Flying Pay.

c: After 4 years on the preceding rate.

d: Payable only to pilots in the ranks of Squadron Leader and below who have received the top rate of Flying Pay for 4 years.

e: Payable only to Weapon Systems Officers and observers in the ranks of Squadron Leader and below who have received the top rate of Flying Pay for 4 years.

f: After 4 years on the preceding rate.

g: Payable only to pilots who have received the top rate of Flying Pay for 4 years.

h: Army pilots not qualified as aircraft commanders.

i: After 9 years' total service, subject to a minimum of 3 years' aircrew service.

j: After 18 years' reckonable service.

k: Also payable while under training.

l: Rate applies to members of the Pathfinder Platoon.

PAY AWARD 2007

RETENTION: For the second year running outflow from the Armed Forces increased in 2005-06 to 18,140, compared with 17,600 in 2004-05. The increase is largely due to 500 personnel made redundant by the RAF. Army trained outflow decreased.

THE numbers choosing to leave – formerly known as Premature Voluntary Retirement (PVR) and now called “voluntary outflow” – rose. Exit rates for officers have increased since 2004-05, and a hike in applications suggests a further rise in 2007. But the position for other ranks is less clear, with falling outflow rates from the RN and Army and applications falling or flattening out.

EVIDENCE presented to the AFPRB suggested that, on balance, most personnel appeared to be satisfied with Service life. Postive factors influencing retention included job satisfaction, job security, promotion and career prospects, and pension entitlement. Negative factors included the effects of operational commitments and overstretch, and Service lifestyle. A single tri-Service attitude survey is to be conducted from 2007.

RECRUITING: The Armed Forces face a number of challenges in recruiting and retaining capable people. The reducing supply of youngsters not in full-time education means the Services will need to improve their share of the recruitment market and, as further and higher education draw in more young people, the Forces will need to develop more flexible entry points and training routes. Increases in labour supply will mainly be from older people, females, ethnic minorities and migrant workers – groups not traditionally attracted to the Armed Forces or ineligible to join.

COMMITMENTS: The Armed Forces were resourced to sustain one “medium scale” and two “small scale” operations but had operated above this level for the past five years. Given the heavy involvement on ops of the Royal Marines, Infantry, medical specialists and elements of the Support Helicopter Force, “harmony” guidelines were breached, with the Army reporting that almost 15 per cent of personnel exceeded 415 days involuntary separation over 30 months. Average tour intervals in the Army, set at 24 months, had reduced between March and June 2006 in the Infantry, RAC, RA, RE, R Signals and RLC.

LEAVE: The Army saw a fall in leave days lost and surpassed its targets for post-operational leave. There was also a decrease in average weekly working hours, hours on duty and number of unsocial hours worked. Although there was a fall in those working excessive hours (70 hours or more), 17 per cent of junior officers were affected.

NATIONAL MINIMUM WAGE (NMW): With new NMW rates introduced on October 1, the number of working hours required for junior ranks (aged 22 and below) to fall below the minimum rate is 51 hours, while for those aged 18-21 it is 62 hours.

ALLOWANCES

£ per day

Longer Separation Allowance		Unpleasant Living Allowance	3.10
Level 1 (up to 400 days)	6.22	Northern Ireland Resident's Supplement	
Level 2 (401-700 days)	9.72		5.96
Level 3 (701-1000 days)	13.24	London Rcrmnt and Retention Allowance	
Level 4 (1001-1300 days)	14.52		3.57
Level 5 (1301-1600 days)	15.64	Experimental Test Allowance (per test)	2.50
Level 6 (1601-1900 days)	16.76	Experimental Diving Allowance^a	
Level 7 (1901-2200 days)	17.87	(Lump sum per test)	
Level 8 (2201-2500 days)	19.55	Grade 5	278.96
Level 9 (2501-2800 days)	20.67	Grade 4	139.48
Level 10 (2801-3100 days)	21.79	Grade 3	104.61
Level 11 (3101-3400 days)	22.90	Grade 2	69.73
Level 12 (3401-3700 days)	24.03	Grade 1	13.95
Level 13 (3701-4000 days)	25.14	Additional hourly rates	
Level 14 (4001+ days)	26.26	Grade 5	55.79
Unpleasant Work Allowance		Grade 4	13.95
Level 1	2.32	Grade 3	10.45
Level 2	5.72	Grade 2	6.97
Level 3	16.88		

TALKBACK

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

Our wives deserve their own medal

SOLDIERS, rightly, are given recognition for their service to their country and for selfless acts of valour.

But it upsets me that there is no official recognition for the effort spouses put in when supporting their soldiers on operations, often coping on overseas postings far from their immediate families.

I saw during my time as a unit welfare officer the strain it puts on families. With the tempo of

operations as high as it is, it takes a very special partner to put up with this lifestyle.

Wives spend as much time separated as soldiers. I have been married for 19 years in the Army and my wife

has followed me faithfully during that time. I have received five medals, including an LS and GC, and it would be nice for our spouses if they too were recognised for the service they put in. – **Capt Dennis Sharrocks, Ballykelly.**

PRIZE LETTER



"It's a new idea to keep us sweet. This one's called the Grass Widow Medal, for lengthy separations, and this one's an LS & GC – it stands for Long-Suffering and Good Companion – Medal."

PS...

I NOW understand why one of your readers referred to the Queen's Volunteers Reserves medal as the "Colonels' Medal". Over the last three Queen's Birthday and New Year Honours lists it has been awarded to the Army 17 times, but only twice to other ranks. There were only nine ORs among 70 names in the last New Year list.

I recall when those awarded the BEM matched those for the MBE. What has happened? Have ORs stopped doing the kind of work that merited a BEM or are they being overlooked? – William Brown, (ex Airborne Forces), Wellington, Somerset.

Advance in reverse

IT annoys me that whenever we go away on duty and have to stay in non-military accommodation we are eligible to claim for only 80 per cent of the cost in advance.

Why must the soldier use his own resources and then have to claim the subsequent 20 per cent back later?

It might sound petty but when the sums involved are large it could mean the use of an overdraft or even exceeding credit limits.

Why is the full amount for food and accommodation not paid in advance and then on return from the duty, receipts handed in? If the advance payment has not been fully utilised then the remainder will be returned. – **Name and address supplied.**

Brig Jamie Gordon, DPS(A), replies: You are not quite correct in your statement regarding advances in subsistence claims as advances of travelling expenses are normally restricted to 90 per cent of the anticipated claim, except that 100 per cent advances may be made to lance corporals and below and for collective arrangements.

You should also be aware that with the introduction of JSP 752 (Tri Service Regulations for Allowances), the policy on Payments and Advances changed on April 1 and now can be up to 100 per cent of the anticipated subsistence expenditure. This change in policy is an example of how our allowances have been simplified and are now better targeted under JPA.

Further detail may be found in JSP 752 Chapter 3, Section 1, Part 3.

MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH ARMY
SOLDIER

Est 1945 – incorporating the
Territorial Army Magazine

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CiB
AWARD WINNER
2006



SOLDIER is published by the Ministry of
Defence and printed by St Ives (Andover) plc.

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SOLDIER - Magazine of the British Army



"A tank you call it, Frobisher? Another of your useless inventions . . . we need a battle-winner, boy, not a smelly toy."

● Future force warrior – Pages 17-19

Wounded and still waiting?

MEDIA reports that several thousand British soldiers wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan have had to wait up to three years for compensation have been rebuffed by the Veterans Agency (VA).

It was claimed that some soldiers were living in poverty because their injuries prevented them from working and they had received no compensation payouts.

Anyone wounded before April 2005 falls within the old War Pension Scheme (WPS), under which claims could be made only after the individual had left the Service. We have been told this caused the delay in two of the cases reported.

Both soldiers were injured in 2004 but did not leave the Army until late in 2006, when work started immediately to get them the war pension payments they deserved.

The VA (to be known as the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency from April 1) tells us it has been in regular contact with both men and that they have now received their war pension awards.

Anyone injured today would come under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme, which replaced the WPS in 2005. AFCS claims usually have to be made within five years of the

FIRST SIGHT

injury but can be filed while still in uniform. Tax-free lump sums of £1,000 to £285,000 are available and claims take an average of 35 working days from claim to decision. A confidential helpline – 0800 169 2277 – is just a phone call away and one-to-one support is available throughout the UK.

The process is even more simple for those medically discharged.

We will be looking at the issue in more detail in a future edition.

'Agency defends accusations of long delays'

OUR debate on bling medals, which began in December and filled pages in the January, February and March editions, has moved to our website. Log on to www.soldiermagazine.co.uk, click on YOUR LETTERS in the menu and follow the links.

What has emerged is how many of you believe time in uniform, particularly National Service, should be recognised by a medal. Of the last 50 letters and emails received, just 12 opposed the wearing of commemoratives. In other words, 76 per cent were in favour. ■

APRIL 2007

5

No sign of new kit

I AM on Op Herrick in Afghanistan and while in Camp Bastion at the start of the tour we were told we would receive three new pieces of equipment – Meindl desert boots, a new sleeping system and, most important of all, the new Mark 6a Kevlar helmet.

We are now in the last month of our tour working out of one of the forward operating bases. Some of the lads have received the boots, others the Mk 6a helmet but some of us are still wearing Mk 6 helmets which don't give the same protection.

We have also been told the sleeping bags will be issued to us when we return to Bastion, which is all a bit late. We are working with the Royal Marines who have all three items of equipment.
– Name and address supplied.

Brig David Martin, DLO Logistic Commodities Cluster Leader, replies: It is not possible for me to comment on the specifics of this individual's experience. However I can provide some background. We constantly review the equipment issued to troops to ensure we are providing the best kit we can.

We issue new kit as soon as we are able to, which means it can be issued to troops who have already been deployed. As new equipment is issued, there will inevitably be



Improved protection: The Mk 6a helmet

situations where some troops have received a new item and others have not.

The key is to ensure that appropriate prioritisation is applied, so that those who need it most, get it first.

The Mk 6a helmet has only recently been developed. It is being issued to theatre in batches as quickly as it can be manufactured. I understand theatre policy has been to

give priority to those in the dismounted close combat role (your reader doesn't say whether this applies to him).

For those who cannot get a good fit with the in-service boot, Meindl desert boots have been provided for those in the dismounted close combat role. They also have been issued to theatre in batches as quickly as they have become available from manufacture. (For troops in other roles, Magnum Lightweight Patrol boots have been issued as an alternative.)

The sleeping system referred to is not a general issue item; in fact, it is still being trialled with 3 Commando Brigade. As is normal practice, it will not be brought into service unless or until the results of that trial show it to have been a success.

We continually look for ways of improving the performance of all kit. Hence, it is important that the defect reporting system and chain of command is used to highlight problems. Submitting

feedback using the correct channels is the best way to help us provide equipment that best meets your needs.

WHY do we have to wait until we are deployed on operations before we receive our equipment? It should be issued to us before we go. Further, the Mk 6 helmet is not a ballistic helmet, whereas the new Mk 6a is and we are not going to get that issued until we are actually in Iraq.

And why do we have to manage with few resources on operations, unlike the US Army whose kit and equipment is so much superior to ours and plentiful.
– Name and address supplied.

Brig Martin replies: Your correspondent is inaccurate in stating that the Mk 6 "is not a ballistic helmet". The Mk 6 helmet is made of ballistic nylon and is designed to provide ballistic (fragmentation) and impact (bump) protection for the wearer.

The Mk 6a helmet is an improvement on this design, and is made from a mixture of ballistic nylon and Kevlar. It also has new internal furniture to make it more comfortable to wear.

It is currently being procured and issued to both Iraq and Afghanistan and it is intended that all those on operations will be issued with this helmet in due course.

Finally, I would like to reassure your reader that we take the safety and security of our personnel very seriously and always seek to ensure that they are provided with the most appropriate equipment in order to undertake the tasks required of them.

Where's my crock of gold?

I JOINED the Army in January 2005 and was entitled to a "golden hello", for which I am still waiting.

I was also overpaid Get You Home Allowance (GYHA) while on Op Telic 7 and asked many times for it to be stopped. It took eight months to sort out and I'm faced with a large sum to pay back. Surely the pay clerks should have noticed the error.

When you owe the Army money, they take it back at once, but when they owe you money they take as long as they want.
– Pte N Walker, 3 Lancs.

Lt Col Douglas Wren, CoS Recruiting Group, replies: The Golden Hello (GH) scheme, running since October 2003 and due to complete in June, seeks to attract and applicants who have gained specific

qualifications relevant to their chosen trade and who bring a sought-after skill into the Army. It is open only to UK passport holders and is payable on completion of Phase 2 Training.

The value ranges from £500 to £8,000. A Defence Information Notice (DIN 02-052) issued in February sets out clearly

the stages to be followed, who is responsible to manage applications, and how payments will be processed. It has taken a long time to pay Pte Walker his Golden Hello and we apologise for this and to others who are waiting. Those eligible should have seen the money in their bank accounts by the end of March at the latest.

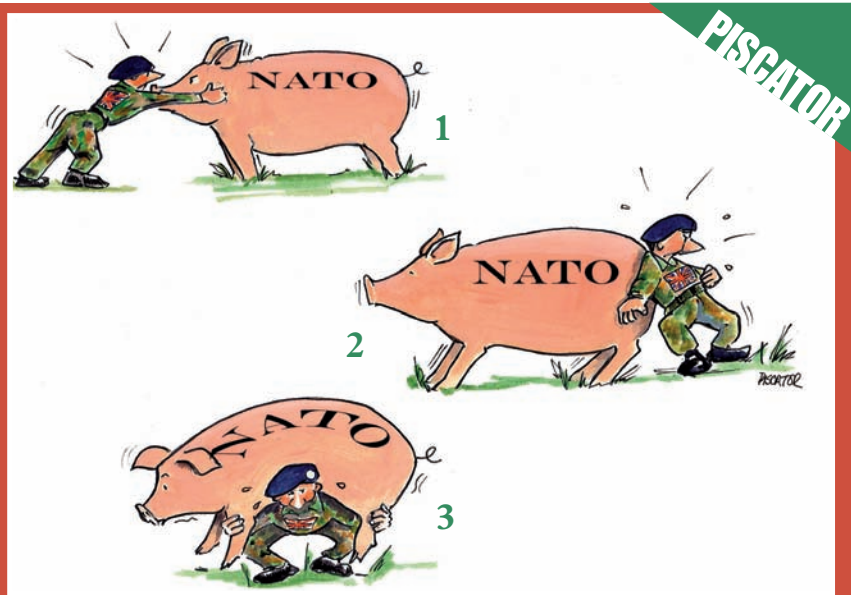
I SERVED in the Regular Army from 1983 to 1994 and hate the fact that I

have no medals to show for my service. I was on Op Granby 2 in the first Gulf War, arriving in theatre in March 1991 just after the ground war stopped, but received no medal despite spending many months based there. – Name and address supplied.

Your bling letters at **TALKBACK online**
www.soldiermagazine.co.uk/mail_archive/index.htm

I BELIEVE there should be an official National Service medal. I completed

two years of National Service, followed by three in the reserves, after that I did 23 years with the Territorial Army Voluntary Reserve and the Territorial Army – surely 28 years deserves an official medal. – J M Cockburn, ex-RAOC, West Lothian.



THE YEAR OF THE PIG



ARMY BENEVOLENT FUND SUPPORTING THE BEST



Join Bhaji the elephant in the Army Benevolent Fund's delicious new fundraising initiative, the World's Biggest Curry Lunch. ABF supporters and messes around the world will host a curry lunch for friends, family and colleagues to raise money for the ABF in the week of April 16. Free fundraising packs are available so check the ABF web site for details at www.armybenfund.org or email bigcurry@armybenfund.org

Call 020 7591 2000 or visit www.armybenfund.org

My policy doesn't do stress disorder

I SIGNED up with Pax Insurance several years ago. In September 1991, after working with the Army War Graves Teams in the first Gulf War, I was diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

I was medically discharged with PTSD last February and approached Pax Insurance, to be told that PTSD was not included in the cover. This was never made known to me.

How come the MoD still has Pax Insurance as the No1 in-house insurance?

If two Service soldiers covered by Pax are involved in the same incident, with one losing a limb and the other suffering from PTSD, both will be hospitalised and medically discharged, with the MoD accepting that both discharges are attributable to service.

The man with the missing limb receives a payment from Pax for the loss of the limb and time in hospital

while the other receives nothing.

I'm not saying Pax is not a good insurance. – **Name and address supplied.**

Jane Hyde, Pax Insurance, replies: *We have every sympathy for the person concerned and for his suffering. The Pax personal accident policy is designed and priced to provide financial benefits to people who have suffered an accidental bodily injury resulting in a permanent disability.*

The policy does not cover psychological or psychiatric conditions, including PTSD. This exclusion is clearly defined in the Pax policy's terms and conditions.

We are not currently aware of any personal accident policy that covers PTSD. This and similar conditions are not bodily injuries and as such are far more complex as regards assessment of risk, cause, diagnosis, degree of any condition and whether it is likely to be temporary or permanent.

Not all housing stories are of horror variety

I AM a MoD civil servant and my husband is a serving soldier and I wanted to comment on the current housing situation.

Although we read that Service accommodation is sub-standard there are many positives in my own situation. I am registered disabled and this was a worry when we got married last year, as I feared I would end up in a house unsuited to my disability.

We contacted Defence Housing Estates to explain our situation well in advance of my husband's move to a new unit and found them very helpful.

We were given a range of houses to look at and when we had chosen one they made all the adaptations without delay. The only thing I had to provide was proof that I was registered disabled.

None of the houses we were offered were of poor standard and our current house is classed as grade 2 only because the garage is not attached. I would like to think my experience was the norm.

I think in some areas there are pressures on good housing, but please can you publicise the system when it excels in its duty of care to Service families, as in my case. – **Name and address supplied.**

No bonus for guards

WHY are Military Provost Guard Service (MPGS) soldiers not awarded loyalty bonuses (£5,500 at the five- and eight-year points) in line with other troops. We are Regular soldiers albeit on local engagements. – **Sgt A Fraser, RNAS Yeovilton.**

Commodore Angus Ross, AFPAA Director of Operations, replies: *Sgt Fraser acknowledges that the MPGS and the general service soldier are on different contracts and, not surprisingly, receive differing terms and conditions of employment. The Military Local Service Engagement (MLSE) Contract is initially for three years and is renewable upon satisfactory performance.*

There are currently no plans to introduce a bonus into the MLSE contract of employment; any changes to this situation would be at a policy level above and beyond the remit of AFPAA, who implement pay and allowance policy, rather than making or changing it.

ID failed to get us into Akrotiri Naafi

I WANT to raise an issue concerning the British Sovereign base at Akrotiri. My wife and I were in Cyprus on holiday in December and on a visit to Larnaca stopped at the military base to use the Naafi.

I presented my ID card and explained to the Cypriot guard that I needed a vehicle pass to visit the Naafi.

I was told I could not enter the camp or use the facilities as I was not posted to that base. His supervisor said I needed a member from the base to chaperone us.

I understand the need for security, but if a serving soldier with his ID card can't use the facilities of a British Sovereign base, something is wrong. Is this the norm? – **Sgt Weddell, 5 Scots.**



"Don't blame me, mate, it's regs."

J2 Security, HQBFC, responds: The overriding principle of security of any military establishment is that no person should be permitted to enter unless they have a legitimate reason to do so. British Forces Cyprus All Island Pass System (AIPS) policy is clear in this regard:

"The AIPS exists to support a critical and objective assessment of BFC's requirement for an individual to enter a BFC establishment. As such only a strictly necessary requirement will suffice for the issue of such a pass.

Passes will not be issued for social access or for access to commercial enterprises or

facilities on BFC establishments. Therefore, unless there is a proven need, which is to the benefit of BFC, for an individual to enter an establishment applications will necessarily, be unsuccessful."

Sgt Weddell was not on legitimate business and therefore had no right of access. As the policy states that passes will not be issued for access to commercial facilities Sgt Weddell's party were rightly denied access. In addition, all goods sold in the Naafi are duty free and as such only personnel stationed in Cyprus are eligible to purchase them.

A palace it isn't

I AM stationed in Palace Barracks, Holywood, Co Down, where we have soldiers living in deplorable conditions. If they were prisoners Amnesty International would be on the case.

We send these lads to Iraq and Afghanistan, only to have them come home to quarters classed as "transit".

Northern Ireland's days as an operational tour are long gone, but the problems with barracks are not. Refurbishment work is going on in some buildings but the transit blocks, which house 70 per cent of the company, are not going to be improved.

Incidentally, the WO's and Sgts' Mess is one of the best messes I have seen.

– **Name and address supplied.**

Brig Jamie Gordon, DPS(A), replies: Your point is well made. The accommodation issue is not confined to Northern Ireland. Through

years of under-funding and competing demands, far too high a proportion of our soldiers' accommodation is below standard. This is recognised by the chain of command.

As with other theatres, the standard in Northern Ireland varies widely; it has both good and bad Soldier Living Accommodation (SLA) and Services Family Accommodation (SFA), but as you highlight, 55 per cent of the junior ranks' SLA at Palace Barracks is grade 4 for condition. All JR SLA at Palace Barracks is programmed in this year's budget for modernisation to Type Z en suite standard.

The £13.5m project is due to deliver 379 of these rooms by 2010. In the interim the ablutions in the grade 4 accommodation will be refurbished, providing some improvement. I am sure your QM has conducted a grading board to ensure your soldiers' accommodation is accurately graded for charge and that they are not financially penalised.

120mph crash is warning to every driver

WHILE I respect the comments of Sgt Craig Tomlin ("Many thanks, Headley Court", Feb) in relation to the care provided by the MoD to rehabilitate injured soldiers, I am curious about how he sustained his injuries.

In his letter he said they were down to hitting a tree at 120mph.

Perhaps he was driving on a German autobahn and thought it safe to go that fast. I'm inclined to think it is reckless and dangerous driving which could carry a ten-year driving ban or imprisonment. If he was the passenger he should have asked the driver to stop and got out.

The MoD spends money and man hours educating soldiers on the principles of safe driving techniques to ensure that they don't come to harm

More letters at TALKBACK online

www.soldiermagazine.co.uk/mail_archive/index.htm

- I want to spend my last six months near my home
- Aussie service counts for nothing in my pension
- Rules aren't helping me with my final move
- I'm undervalued as an Infantry specialist
- Confusion reigns over my medical discharge
- No marriage in Queen Victoria's army

and it is well publicised that more soldiers are killed in traffic accidents than on operations, most in private vehicles and especially on motorcycles.

Sgt Tomlin received free medical attention which could have been given to a soldier who had been injured on ops, not on a frolic in his own time. This should be a lesson to us all.

If he was involved in a freak accident and was blameless he has my full sympathy and I wish him all the best in his recovery. – **WO2 (SQMS) P D Rowles, Master Driver, HQ 143 (West Midlands) Brigade.**

PS...

AT a recent association dinner, the feeling was that any future coronation medal should be issued not only to current members of the Armed Forces but also, as a mark of recognition and thanks, to veterans who served between the coronations. Australia has produced a defence medal for serving soldiers and veterans. – **Daniel Riccio (Irish Guards 1987-92), South Wirral.**



TALKBACK

Our fuel bills don't add up

I HAVE have been stationed in Hameln for almost three years now. In my first year I paid summer and winter rates for fuel and light and incurred a £30 debit at the end of it.

This year they introduced winter rates throughout the year to avoid the possibility of residents having a debit at the end of it. I live in a block of eight flats with communal facilities such as a washing machine room in the cellar, so imagine my surprise when this year's bill revealed a debit of £107.

As I am in Afghanistan, I rang my wife and she told me that most families on the estate had received a debit, one for more than £200. How is that possible when the husband is in camp all day, the kids are at school and his wife works in Osnabrück all week?

The Housing Station Commandant's Office (HSCO) told us this was correct, but to add insult to injury I discovered that most families living in three-bedroom houses are in credit.

A colleague in Afghanistan received £250 yet I live in a three-bedroom flat and he lives in a larger, three-bedroom house, so please explain that one. – **Cpl W Best, Hameln.**

Kevin Houghton, Command Army Infrastructure Organisation, HQ Land, replies: Fuel and light charges were split between winter and summer rates in the past, which meant the pay system, through which they were deducted when serving abroad, had to be updated, manually, twice a year.

With the introduction of JPA, the winter



"Honey, there's a man from HSCO at the door . . . something about our dramatic drop in electricity consumption."

and summer rates were combined and evened out to provide a year-round flat rate.

The costs of utilities have risen over the past two years, affecting fuel and light charges around the world, and this is the most likely cause of the author's debit.

I note his concern about residents in three-bedroom houses and we are looking into the system to ensure the rates are accurate and fair. They should be set at a level that you would expect to consume in a house in the UK.

I will certainly scrutinise the details of the shared accommodation in Hameln to assure myself that the introduction of the flat rate has not had a detrimental effect on shared facilities in general. I will also be asking for information for all credits that have been made in the past year so I can assure myself that the rates are not biased.

Almost exemplary?

I AGREE with WO1 (QMSI) Miller ("Criteria for LS and GC is out of date", Jan), but it seems things may have changed a little since my time.

As a private due for promotion the following week, I was caught driving without a qualified driver and without L-plates. I was fined £12 by Salisbury magistrates and the Army stopped my promotion and awarded me a regimental entry.

A minor infringement, but an almighty punishment.

At my 16- and 20-year points I was invited to write letters of mitigation, but on both occasions I was refused a Long Service and Good Conduct Medal.

Six months before I left the Army the LS and GC was finally refused, even though my red book discharged me with "exemplary conduct". – **S Galpin (ex-WO2 RAMC), Wyke, Bradford.**

Ciggy ban in vehicles is justified

I AM alarmed at the lack of thought for others of the soldier whose letter on smoking appeared as a PS (Feb).

Smoking is banned in military vehicles for the health and comfort of others, whether in the United Kingdom or Iraq. It has nothing to do with what may or may not be waiting for you outside the vehicle.

Why should non-smokers have their health put at risk by having to breathe in another person's cigarette smoke? And why should their clothes smell of stale smoke for the rest of the day just because one inconsiderate individual wishes to feed their nicotine addiction by lighting a cigarette in an enclosed environment?

When the ban comes into force for the rest of England a work vehicle used by more than one person will be a no-smoking zone. – **WO1 G Newman, RAMC, MDHU, Frimley Park**

Confusion over mental health team

AT the risk of being pedantic, I would like to point out that the description of the "Army's Department of Community Mental Health" (Head start, Feb) may cause confusion.

There are a number of Army DCMHs, as well as Royal Navy and Royal Air Force ones. They are small, non-deployable units staffed by mental health professionals and administrative support staff, Service and civilian.

Their role is to provide education, advice and clinical services on psychological problems to Service populations within their catchment area.

I believe the particular DCMH that should be credited is in Colchester.

A deployed mental health unit, comprised of uniformed mental health staff drawn from DCMHs is usually called a Field Mental Health Team.

May I congratulate Rod Eldridge and his colleagues on their achievement – as well as *Soldier* for placing this vital topic before the audience that most needs to see it. – **Steve Micklewright, 243 (Wessex) Field Hospital, RAMC.**

We're staying put

But we lose the old support systems while our soldiers do the commuting

HAVING just endured a significant birthday, I found myself going through a small mid-life crisis which made me reassess my 17 years as an Army spouse.

During that time I've lived in ten quarters and worked in a variety of jobs. I've enjoyed moving and although I was disappointed not to be able to follow a career, I felt lucky because my husband was in steady employment and I could take time out to raise our two children.

All in all I thoroughly enjoyed everything about Army life . . . until my children's education started to suffer because of our transient lifestyle. The crunch point for me was when I told them that they would be moving schools for the third time in an academic year (even worse was the fact that because of the moves they covered the Romans *ad nauseam*).

It was definitely the time to think long and hard about whether to opt in or out of accompanied service, to buy a house for the family to live in permanently or to send the children to boarding school.

After possibly the most difficult decision we've ever made as a family, we decided to go down the boarding school route and I must admit that after five years of stable education they are both doing brilliantly. I never thought I would choose this road for my children but it's amazing how we've all adapted.

Family life now seems to be a roller coaster ride of intense periods of full-on parenting followed by stretches of being able to go to the pub whenever we want – which I admit we've taken

full advantage of. The Army is still very keen to promote accompanied service, however the expectations of spouses have changed considerably over the past decade and many spouses now want to follow their own careers.

Double incomes mean many families are able to buy their own homes, which also means that once their children get to secondary school age many are choosing to stay put while their serving soldier commutes.



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

Ten years ago this was the exception rather than the rule but it's definitely on the increase, particularly for soldiers serving in Great Britain.

This has changed the dynamics of the traditional Army community and, with the advent of super garrisons, this will probably become the norm in these

areas. I wonder if this new way of life will also mean an end to the old fashioned expectation that Army spouses look after each other in their community – particularly during deployments.

I'm not saying the old ways are the best and that things shouldn't change but it would be a great shame to lose our sense of community spirit in the name of progress. Even the most independent of spouses can feel the need for a bit of extra support from the system while their loved one is on operations, and from speaking with families of deployed personnel, those who seem to be best served are those whose soldier is with a regiment or deployed unit.

They receive structured support from the regiment and, because other spouses are in the same situation, families on the patch give each other mutual support.

Those who slip through the cracks in provision are the families of individual augmentees or those who live in their own homes – particularly if their soldier is doing an operational tour between postings. AFF Central Office was recently visited by Under Secretary of State for Defence Derek Twigg and I heard him ask a couple of our co-ordinators what the main issue was for families in their areas.

I fully expected housing to be top of their lists, but they both said "deployments". Furthermore it wasn't overstretch which was causing the most angst, it was the provision of welfare support for the more isolated families who felt unable to cope while their serving spouse was away.

There is a huge amount of support available for Army families to tap into but it's very confusing finding out how to access it. According to last year's Continuous Attitude Survey, more than 70 per cent of Army spouses were "not satisfied" with

the level of welfare support they were receiving and nearly half didn't even know who their unit welfare officer was.

At the last AFF conference, this issue was highlighted as a particular problem for families living in Greater London. So it was great to hear that plans are afoot to provide a one-stop-shop phone number for this area which families can call if they are having problems. If it is a success, what about expanding this service across the Army? ■

"It would be a shame to lose our sense of community spirit in the name of progress"

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

MANAGE YOUR MONEY

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



Complain!

CPL G wrote to Credit Action to complain about bank charges he and his wife had been hit with. "I missed one payment by a day," he said, "but we were stung with huge extra

interest and fees because we exceeded our overdraft limit and the bank had to write to us."

This subject is receiving serious attention and a growing number of people are asking for the charges to be reduced or withdrawn.

Many complain to the Banking Ombudsman, which sounds daunting but isn't. Sites like www.moneysavingexpert.com have proformas you can fill in.

So far not one complaint has been turned down by the Ombudsman, so it is worth the effort. I expect banks to reduce charges when challenged because they are reporting huge profits and this is an embarrassment.

Some tips to avoid the hassle:

✓ Try and make as many regular payments as you can by standing order or direct debit.

✓ If your balance is showing £50 and you take out £40 in cash you could still be in trouble if you forgot the cheque for £30 you signed the day before.

✓ If you know you have expenses coming up, such as holidays, get your bank to agree a temporary increase in your overdraft.

✓ Put money aside for unexpected costs.

More and more banks are likely to end free banking so be prepared to shop around. In the UK we are more likely to divorce than change our bank accounts, so keep alert. You could be quids in if you do. ■

**0800 1381111 or
www.creditaction.org.uk**

Garrison guide

Aldershot

COMEDY

Monday, April 2 – The Goodies Still Rule OK!: Tim Brooke-Taylor and Graeme

Garden, The Hexagon Theatre, Reading
Tuesday, April 3 – Steve Punt and Hugh Dennis (Punt and Dennis), Beck Theatre, Hayes

Thursday, April 12 – Fame: Ricky Gervais, Portsmouth Guildhall, Portsmouth

Sunday, April 22 – The Electric Comedy Club: Brian Higgins, Paul Kerensa and Dave Ward, Electric Theatre, Guildford

Saturday, April 28 – Camberley Comedy Club: Grant Stevens and guest comedians,

Camberley Theatre, Camberley

LIVE MUSIC

Sunday, April 1 – Toby Jepson and Sacred Heart, Tumbledown Dick, Farnborough

Friday, April 13 – Roy Wood, Camberley Theatre, Camberley

Wednesday, April 18 – Gerry Cross The Mersey: Gerry Marsden, Camberley Theatre, Camberley

Friday, April 20 – Voulez Vous, Camberley Theatre, Camberley

Saturday, April 28 – Tony Smith, Jagz – At The Station, Ascot

THEATRE

Thursday, April 12-21 – Pete and Dud: Come Again, Yvonne Arnaud Theatre and Mill Studio, Guildford

Monday, April 16-21 – High Society: The Musical, New Victoria Theatre, Woking

Thursday, April 19-21 – The Play What I Wrote, Princes Hall, Aldershot

Friday, April 20 – Jim Fixed It For Me, Yvonne Arnaud Theatre and Mill Studio, Guildford

Thursday, April 26-28 – Larking About With Lear, Yvonne Arnaud Theatre and Mill Studio, Guildford

Catterick

COMEDY

Tuesday, April 3 – Mark Little, Billingham Forum Theatre, Billingham

Friday, April 6 – Jimmy Carr, Middlesborough Town Hall and Crypt, Middlesborough

Saturday, April 7 – Jo Brand, Middlesborough Town Hall and Crypt, Middlesborough

Friday, April 20 – An Audience With Arthur Smith, Gala Theatre, Durham

Monday, April 30 – Steve Punt and Hugh Dennis, Grand Opera House, York

LIVE MUSIC

Tuesday, April 3 – Minxx, Elgin's Bar, Redcar

Tuesday, April 10 – 50th Anniversary Tour: Marty Wilde, Darlington Arts Centre, Darlington

Thursday, April 12 – Alexander O'Neal, Civic Theatre, Darlington

Wednesday, April 25 – Dougie McLean, Darlington Arts Centre, Darlington

Saturday, April 28 – talentSTAR 2007: The Deciders, Darlington Arts Centre, Darlington

THEATRE

Thursday, April 5-8 – Chimera: Spirit Of The Horse, Skipton Auction Mart, Skipton

Monday, April 16-21 – Acorn Antiques: The Musical, Darlington Civic Theatre, Darlington

Monday, April 16-21 – Joseph And The Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat, Grand Opera House, York

Tuesday, April 24-28 – Beamish Boy, Gala Theatre, Durham

Thursday, April 26 – Shakers, Darlington Arts Centre, Darlington

Colchester

COMEDY

Thursday, April 5 – The Comedy Club: John Ryan and Junior Simpson and guest comedian, Waterfront, Chelmsford

Saturday, April 7 – Phil Cool, Spa Pavilion Theatre, Felixstowe

Thursday, April 12 – Reginald D Hunter, Colchester Arts Centre, Colchester

Saturday, April 21 – Lucy Porter, Colchester Arts Centre, Colchester

Thursday, April 26 – Norman Lovett, Wivenhoe Town FC, Colchester

LIVE MUSIC

Sunday, April 1 – Lemar, The Ipswich Regent, Ipswich

Saturday, April 14 – Clutch, Colchester Arts Centre, Colchester

Saturday, April 21 – Diamond Head, The Twist, Colchester

Monday, April 23 – Folk Club: County Down's Colum Sands, Colchester Arts Centre, Colchester

Monday, April 30 – Folk Club: Pete Morton, Colchester Arts Centre, Colchester

THEATRE

Wednesday, April 11-14 – Vincent In Brixton, Mercury Theatre, Colchester

Sunday, April 22 – The Best Of British Mediumship: Colin Fry and Tony Stockwell, Brentwood Leisure Centre, Brentwood

Saturday, April 21 – Travels With My Aunt, New Wolsey Theatre, Ipswich

Wednesday, April 25 – I Miss Communism, Colchester Arts Centre, Colchester

Friday, April 27 – Swan Lake, Vienna Festival Ballet, Spa Pavilion Theatre, Felixstowe

No.1 for Entertainment

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



Famous face: Catch Ricky Gervais's stand-up act at Portsmouth on April 12

Bulford/ Tidworth

COMEDY

Thursday, April 12 – Fame: Ricky Gervais, Portsmouth Guildhall, Portsmouth

Saturday, April 14 – Reginald D Hunter, Theatre Royal, Winchester

Friday, April 20 – Richard Digance, The Lights, Andover

Thursday, April 26 – Jeremy Hardy, The Lights, Andover

Friday, April 27 – Next In Line: Laurence And Gus, Rondo Theatre, Bath

LIVE MUSIC

Sunday, April 1 – Barenaked Ladies, Southampton Guildhall, Southampton

Friday, April 13 – Sgt Pepper's Only Dart Board Band, Arc Theatre, Trowbridge

Monday, April 16 – Yourcodenameis: Milo,

Joiners Arms, Southampton

Saturday, April 21 – The Bowie Experience, Talking Heads, Southampton

Wednesday, April 25 – The Levellers, Salisbury City Hall, Salisbury

THEATRE

Monday, April 2-7 – Starlight Express, Mayflower Theatre, Southampton

Thursday, April 12 – The Elephant Man, Salisbury Arts Centre, Salisbury

Monday, April 16-21 – One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest, Mayflower Theatre, Southampton

Sunday, April 22 – An Evening With Alan Titchmarsh, Theatre Royal, Winchester

Wednesday, April 25-28 – The Rat Pack, Mayflower Theatre, Southampton

DEFENCE DIARY

APRIL

12: Army Rugby Union Centenary Dinner, London Hilton Metropol. www.army.mod.uk/aru

18: Don't lose your vote, closing date for registration for May 3 elections. www.aboutmyvote.co.uk

21: Falklands: Sustaining an Invasion – The Friends of The Royal Logistic Corps Museum are hosting a day of lectures examining the logistic operations that sustained the Falklands invasion and enabled victory. Tickets cost £25 and are available from the RLC museum on 01252 833371.

MAY

11: Central Band of the Royal Air Force charity concert for RAFA Wings Appeal and Surrey Air Cadets at Dorking Halls, Dorking, Surrey. Tel: 01306 887171.

20: The Royal British Legion London Poppy Walk – To sign up or for more information contact Rebecca Davies on 0207 3027124 or at rdavies@britishlegion.org.uk

31: Last Post: Aden 1967 (40th anniversary lecture by Col CD Parker), 1900 for 1930 start at Airborne Forces Museum, Aldershot. Tel: 94222 4619.

JUNE

12: Tickets for the Household Cavalry Pageant in London are now on sale. The event will mark the official opening by the Queen of the Household Cavalry Museum on Horse Guards Parade. Book online at www.ticketmaster.co.uk or call 0870 4000848. Tickets are priced £20, £40, £60 and £80.

28: Royal Review of The King's Troop Royal Horse Artillery at 1430, Cavalry Parade Ground, Hyde Park.

JULY

14-15: Royal International Air Tattoo, RAF Fairford, www.airtattoo.com

AUGUST

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

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



Picture: PO (Phot) Sean Clee RN

Reinforcements on their way: Infantry soldiers from 1 R Welsh and a Warrior company from 1 SG will bolster British troop numbers in Afghanistan to 7,700

Only the beginning

Extra troops deploy as Chief of the Defence Staff warns of long campaign

DEMOCRATIC government is starting to take hold in southern Afghanistan in the wake of success against the Taliban, senior military officers have maintained.

Air Chief Marshal Sir Jock Stirrup, the Chief of the Defence Staff, told reporters that British forces had achieved “remarkable things” in the progress of the region.

But he warned that troops in southern Afghanistan would need to build on the success in the future, highlighting that the operation would “go on for some years”.

ACM Stirrup was speaking shortly after Defence Secretary Des Browne announced the deployment of around 1,400 extra UK soldiers to the region.

The manoeuvre battalion, which will include elements from the 1st Battalion, The Royal Welsh and the 1st Battalion, Scots Guards, will bolster the British presence in theatre to 7,700 personnel and provide support throughout southern Afghanistan.

Endorsing the decision to send extra troops, the Chief of the Defence Staff said

AT A GLANCE: AFGHAN REINFORCEMENTS

1 R Welsh: Infantry elements

Scots Guards: Warrior company

19 Regt RA: Regimental HQ and light gun battery

5 Regt RA: Brigade Surveillance Group

39 Regt RA: Guided Multiple Launch Rocket Systems troop

In addition: Four extra Harrier GR9s; Four Sea King helicopters; one C-130 Hercules

the commitment would help British forces maintain the initiative they had seized.

He added: “We went into southern Afghanistan to help Nato set the conditions that would allow the democratically-elected government to project its authority and reconstruction to flourish. We knew the mission would be tough.

“But since last May we have made good

progress against our strategic objectives. Given that we are only months into a campaign that will go on for some years, this is of course only a beginning; it is nevertheless a good beginning.”

ACM Stirrup said troops needed to build on their initial success, underlining their resolve against the Taliban and commitment to the Afghan people.

“This uplift in UK capability will enable us to retain the initiative our forces have seized and to maintain the momentum they have established,” he stressed.

“It will enable us to meet Nato’s requirement for troops who can work flexibly, providing commanders with greater opportunity to support the Afghan military while they develop the skills and confidence to assume this task themselves.”

He acknowledged that extra commitment in Afghanistan would place significant demands on soldiers and their families, but he was confident that force reductions in Iraq and other theatres would allow the Afghan deployment to go ahead with “some reduction” in overall operational commitment.

Games

A P R I L R E V I E W



Tech troops: Players must use the latest equipment to their advantage to stand any chance of defeating the rebels



Ultimate warriors

Special forces unit issued with the latest kit for hazardous Mexican deployment

Report: Cliff Caswell

AFTER a fierce firefight in which we traded rounds with a group of rebel troops, there is a sudden burst of chatter over the radio.

"Mortar rounds incoming. Take cover. Take cover."

The shouts of fellow troops have an urgency that sparks panic as a series of earth-shattering explosions start tearing up the ground. We crouch behind rocks to avoid the random blasts.

In the chaos, it's impossible to see where the terrorists are firing from, but from the amount of activity, there are more than a few of them out there. Moving forward to a nearby quarry and taking refuge behind the machinery should give us the cover to sort out the problem.

Setting up shop behind a crane, we can get the toys out. In this case, the *Soldier* team will issue orders to an aerial drone for a three-dimensional picture of the surrounding area.

The terrorist mortar crews have nothing to match it; they are no longer invisible and should be easy prey.

The unmanned Predator-like drone is part of the impressive kit list in the latest outing in Tom Clancy's *Ghost Recon* stable, released this month on the Xbox 360.

The follow-up to last year's award-winning debut of the franchise on the new generation of consoles, *Advanced Warfighter II* takes the theme of high-tech battle a step further, giving players access to equipment tipped to become a feature of operational theatres in the not-too-distant future.

There are remote-controlled re-supply wagons, known as Mules, where you can arm yourself to the teeth on the move or make sure you're not overburdened. The aerial drone, which was a feature of the original game, has also been beefed up with superb quality landscape mapping.

But this is just the beginning. The so-called Cross Com, which gives players

the ability to issue orders to multiple units, has been made more user-friendly and expanded with extra options.

Players can now try their hand at being a forward air controller, summoning fast jets to rain death on the enemy, while the display can also be magnified to see the bigger picture of the battlefield.

The new features further enhance the credibility of the *Ghost Recon* franchise and the team behind the game at software house Red Storm have certainly done their homework.

The influence of Christian Allen, the title's creative director and a former military policeman with the United States Marine Corps, is also evident. A small arms coach, he served as a driver and gunner on a Humvee armoured vehicle and was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal for his law enforcement work.

Certainly the efforts of Allen and his team have paid off. From the exclusive preview played by *Soldier*, *Advanced*



Warfighter II is more than just a sequel, offering enhanced gameplay, quality graphics and more scope for players to plan and execute operations in the way they want.

The plot follows on from the previous game, in which the élite US unit, The Ghosts, were sent to Mexico amid concern over a violent uprising. In the latest instalment, which is set seven years in the future, the unrest has escalated into a full-scale civil war between loyalists and rebels.

The story provides all the ingredients for some intense single and multiplayer battles. The environments where the skirmishes take place are richly detailed, the soundtrack evocative and the gameplay extremely slick.

The artificial intelligence of friend and foe has also been enhanced – team buddies now give a more accurate commentary of enemy location while insurgents will size up the situation and attack, flank or retreat realistically.

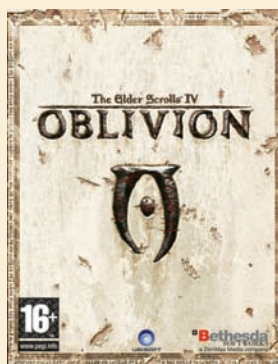
All in all, French publisher Ubisoft has pulled another winner out of the bag with this one. Having successfully re-invented the *Ghost Recon* franchise for the new generation of consoles, the latest title is destined to be another classic. Fans will definitely not be disappointed. ■

SOLDIER - Magazine of the British Army



WIN: Rogue Trooper games and books

THE cult sci-fi comic *2000 AD* has provided an abundance of material for video games over two decades. *Judge Dredd*, *Strontium Dog* and *Slaine* have all had their day and now *Rogue Trooper*, soldier of the future, has landed. We're offering two copies of the game on PS2 and six graphic novels for the winners of our competition. To enter, just tell us who played *Judge Dredd* in the 1995 film. Send your answer on a postcard to the address at the front of the magazine. Usual rules apply. Closing date is April 30.



The Elder Scrolls IV, Oblivion, PS3

THE LONG-awaited third generation PlayStation was due for release in Europe as this issue went to press with *Oblivion* as one of the launch titles. And, if it sets the tone for future games on the console, Sony should have some strong sales. Already released on Xbox 360, this first-person adventure puts players in a rich Tolkien-like world populated by an abundance of different races. Players get to choose whether to be law-abiding citizens or run riot and risk the wrath of bounty hunters and other undesirables. Good stuff.



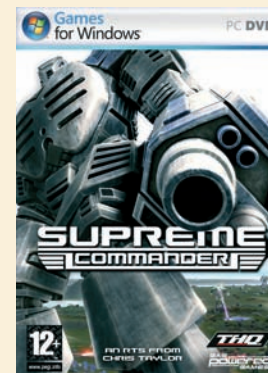
Battlestations Midway, Xbox 360

FIGHTING back after the horror of Pearl Harbour, this action-cum-strategy offering gives players the grim task of wresting control of the Pacific back from the Japanese empire. You get to plan and execute strikes against the enemy and even jump into the action both on the waves and in the air. It's pretty slick as an actioner but lacks the meat to give it any real punch in the real-time strategy arena. If you're looking for zapping enemy ships and shooting down Zero fighters by the bucketload, however, this should float your boat.



Grand Theft Auto: Vice City Stories, PSP

THE latest in the ever-popular and always controversial gangster series, *Vice City Stories* puts players in the shoes of a US Army soldier sucked into a web of corruption by his less-than-savoury senior NCO. The result is yet another carjack and shoot-out epic which, while technically faultless, does become repetitive after a while. If you haven't lost your appetite for the endless parade of gangster-themed games – and you enjoyed the original *Liberty City Stories* – you'll have fun with this one.



Supreme Commander, PC

MILITARY strategists should be pleased to hear of the latest real-time strategy offering from THQ, which puts them in the commander's chair. This latest title, however, is a complex offering and is likely to take time to get into. Billed by its makers THQ as delivering the most advanced features of any RTS game, players get to co-ordinate ground, naval and air attacks across some large battlefields. Units available include heavy bombers, submarines and aircraft carriers. Certainly the ingredients are there for some explosive encounters.



Sega MegaDrive Collection, PSP

AS a child whose first console experience was tainted by a faulty MegaDrive on Christmas Day, I had mixed expectations for this collection, writes David Hedley. But playing games such as *Sonic* and *Golden Axe* is no less fun than it would have been all those years ago. With the enhanced novelty for PSP users, the *Sega MegaDrive Collection* delivers a simple approach. If you want complex storylines or graphics then this isn't for you. But if you are happy with a classic style then this is a bargain at £20. Definitely one for nostalgia freaks.

Music

APRIL REVIEW



Dance floor damage, above: Pearce's collection of monster tunes and videos is having a deep impact in the clubs
On tour, right: Primed to take your requests, go to www.davepearce.co.uk for dates and venues of Pearce's UK tour

Picture: Adam@wkdphotos.com



Army anthems

Dance DJ's Sunday night electronic empathy for squaddies

Interview: Karen Thomas

SLAKING the nation's vampiric thirst for euphoric tunes, dance anthem impresario Dave Pearce always spares a banging track for down-in-the-dumps troops.

The Radio 1 DJ's Sunday night show breached the mainstream airwaves, unleashing on the unenlightened masses a music genre with roots in the 80s subversive acid-house underground scene.

But Pearce's two hypnotic hours of electronica, ranging from timeless trance to dance floor funk, also found an appreciative audience of soldiers.

"Many squaddies text in, usually

moaning about cleaning their kit, and I've had quite a few Forces personnel come up at my gigs to request a tune prior to going on active service," the award-winning DJ told *Soldier*, adding that *Insomnia* by Faithless and Public Domain's *Operation Blade* would hit his deck if he was gigging in Helmand or Basra.

"I'm really happy dance music has connected with so many people because it puts everybody in a good vibe. There's enough negativity and depressing music out there for people who want to be miserable."

Underscoring his upbeat connection with the people are Pearce's multi-million selling compilation albums, the latest of

which is a double CD with bonus music videos on DVD. *Dave Pearce Dance Anthems 2007* reflects the ethos of the show, delivering "something that will cheer you up whether you're in the car or having

a party with your mates". Favourites like Paul Oakenfold's evocative *Southern Sun* contrast with Pearce's personal favourite and hot tip for 2007 Alex Gaudino, whose *Destination Calabria* is already doing some serious dance floor damage. But the replay button is most likely to be hit on the videos, which include Eric Prydz's now iconic raunchy aerobic session set to *Call On Me*.

Despite the accolades, awards and worldwide clubbing venues clamouring for his turntable talent, Pearce continues to live up to his down-to-earth persona that earned him the title The People's DJ.

He grew up listening to the likes of George Clinton and Funkadelic, and took to the radio at an early age.

"I started DJing on pirate radio at 14 so my parents were not very enamoured by my brushes with the law," explained Pearce, who chills to a wide variety of sounds ranging from U2 to Hard-Fi. "Even after all these years, and being on Radio 1, they still enquire when I'm going

COMPETITION: *Soldier* has five copies of the *Dave Pearce Dance Anthems 2007* compilation CD/DVD to give away. To stand a chance of winning, just tell us who had a number one hit with *Put Your Hands Up For Detroit*. Was it a) Eric Prydz, b) Booty Luv, or c) Fedde Le Grand? Usual rules apply. Closing date is April 30.



to get a proper job. The alternative probably would have been journalism, as world events interest me greatly."

Experiencing the harsh realities of the world was also a teenage event for the 17-year-old Pearce DJing in India.

"It was a fantastic and life-changing experience. Coming to terms with the enormous wealth of the Bollywood stars versus the horrendous poverty of the people living on the streets of Bombay was a phenomenal situation to deal and wrestle with in your mind."

Still, the encounter did not tarnish Pearce's taste for the exotic and he's keen to try mixing it up in China, although his favourite venue remains London's Ministry of Sound.

"The main room enables you to have a total blackout on the lighting and the sound system is one of the best in the world. It's a dream for any DJ to play there," he enthused.

Keen to continue the battle to influence those unaware of how important the dance scene is to UK culture, Pearce nevertheless counts his career blessings.

"To have been involved in the advent of hip-hop, then house music and later trance was a very lucky experience. It would be great to find an exciting new genre but three styles in a career is pretty lucky." ■

For more reviews, go to
www.soldiermagazine.co.uk

SOLDIER - Magazine of the British Army



Pocket Symphony (Air)

POCKET SYMPHONY does not immediately stand out as an **Air** album. Clearly a break from the group's normal style, they appear to have moved away from the electronic beat of previous work. But although the album does bear similarities to *Talkie Walkie*, *Pocket Symphony* does not follow the sound of the duo's critically acclaimed second album, *Moon Safari*. None of the tracks immediately jumped out as obvious chart releases. This studio work is more likely to appeal to regular fans of **Air** as a group and those who enjoyed the musicianship of the *Talkie Walkie* album.

Lt Jim Berry, 1 R Irish



We Are Pilots (Shiny Toy Guns)

THIS American band has a unique sound on a very different album – sort of electro-pop meets rock. It works surprisingly well with a good mix of lead vocals sung by Chad Petree, who was also in **Slyder**, and Carah Faye Charnow of the Los Angeles rock hardcore scene. With Jeremy Dawson on keyboard, Mikey Martin on drums and the firing pin in the rifle, Mark Saunders, who is legendary for working with the **Cure's** David Byrne and **Erasure**, mixed the tracks into an album that is very, very good.

Pte Chris Annear, MPGS



Neon Bible (Arcade Fire)

FOR some unknown reason, **Arcade Fire** is one of those bands surrounded by great expectations. Tickets for their London warm-up gigs fetched obscene amounts of money on eBay with grandmothers being sold to finance the purchases. *Neon Bible* is what happens when you turn a small town church into a studio, fill the fridge and write and record a few songs in your own time. There are many words to describe this album – ambitious, dark, captivating, innovative – but the only way to give it the justice it deserves is to listen and enjoy.

Cpl Ray Kalaker,
RETDU (B)



CopyCats live in Oxford

IF you are after some thumping classic rock from the likes of the **Rolling Stones**, **Dire Straits** and **Queen**, with a dash of modern chartbusters **Franz Ferdinand** and **Red Hot Chili Peppers**, for a fab night out, then look no further than the **CopyCats**. Modestly underselling the group as "just a pub band who do it for the love of music", **Cpl Tom Robinson, 151 Tpt Regt RLC**, finally confessed his guitar and vocal roles to *Soldier* after three years as one of our reviewers.

Playing to a packed and appreciative audience of all ages, vocally versatile lead singer Phil Wilson belted out timeless favourites



Our Earthly Pleasures (Maximo Park)

THIS is the long-awaited second album from indie-rock band **Maximo Park**. The music is driving, energetic and melodic. The singing is powerful with good use of harmonies and imaginative lyrics. The guitar creates a tuneful riff perfectly complemented by the keyboards with the drum and bass powering the music forward. The band has mentioned the **Pixies** and the **Smiths** as major musical influences – perhaps, but **Maximo Park** have their own unique sound and style. I enjoyed this album from start to finish. Excellent.

Pte Patrick Jordan,
RAMC

backed up by some serious strumming from Telic 1 veteran Tom Robinson and Ian Straughair. Chris Stephens plucked on bass and Nick Ribeiro stroked the skins in an infectious enthusiastic performance. The band has an extensive track list of covers that will suit everyone with a taste for sounds that still inspire generations of music-lovers. After two 45-minute sets, the **CopyCats** proved themselves to be a whole lot more than just a pub band.

For booking information, phone 07976 593518 or email copycats_oxon@yahoo.co.uk.

Karen Thomas

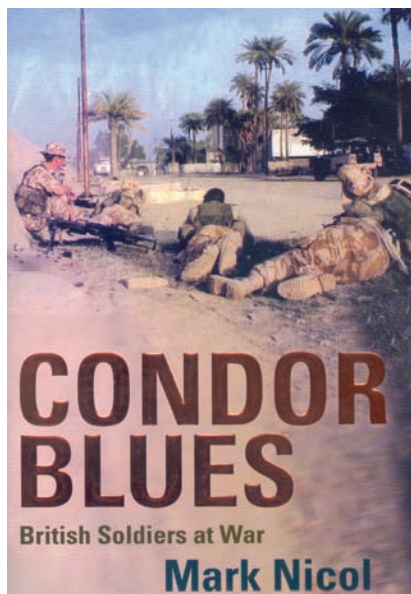


APRIL 2007

77

Books

APRIL REVIEW



Warts-and-all: What two platoons of Argylls thought of their lot while involved in the training of Iraqis in Maysan province in 2004



Hell with flies

An uncensored account of self-discovery, courage and fear in Iraq

Condor Blues: British Soldiers at War by Mark Nicol (Mainstream, 317pp. £17.99.)

Review: Chris Horrocks

CALL it what you like – blunt, direct, plain-spoken, no-holds-barred, no-punches-pulled, warts-and-all, the brutal truth – one thing is a dead cert.

This narrative of events surrounding two platoons in Iraq in 2004 would not find its way into a recruiting brochure.

One image which scars the memory is that of distraught soldiers carrying from the battlefield the broken bodies of the Iraqis they have killed in a firefight.

Throughout the reported conversations, the F-word abounds, but then, it could be argued, to sanitise reported speech would

make it sound like a vicarage tea-party.

As for the bigger picture, readers should be allowed to make up their own minds about a controversial strategy which tragically is still claiming lives, so to quote the publisher's blurb is not to cast judgement.

"Shocking, visceral and compelling," it declares, "*Condor Blues* is an expose of Britain's flawed military tactics in Iraq, and, at the same time, a very personal encounter with the soldiers who continue to pay the price for those mistakes."

The action centres on two platoons from the 1st Battalion, The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders who were involved in the training of recruits to the Iraqi National Guard, originally known as the Iraqi Civil Defence Corps (ICDC).

The platoons were embedded with ICDC recruits at the isolated Camp Condor, not far from Majar al-Kabir in Maysan province, where

six Red Caps were murdered in 2003.

Let author Mark Nicol set the scene. "The characters are working-class junior soldiers, their 'Angry Dad' sergeant [Sgt Paul Kelly] and a clique of well-heeled officers," he writes. "The ICDC were a fledgling organisation drawn from a corrupt, tribally divided society; the Argylls were thrown into the most absurd and dangerous of situations."

"This is an uncensored account of self-discovery, courage and fear. Some of their behaviour was regrettable. I ask the reader not to judge individuals harshly. This was the land dubbed 'Hell with flies'."

The author makes the characters – the likes of Neneh, Keegs, Kev, Wellsy and Kelly – come to life on the page, reflecting all their moods, from boisterous humour to emotional devastation.

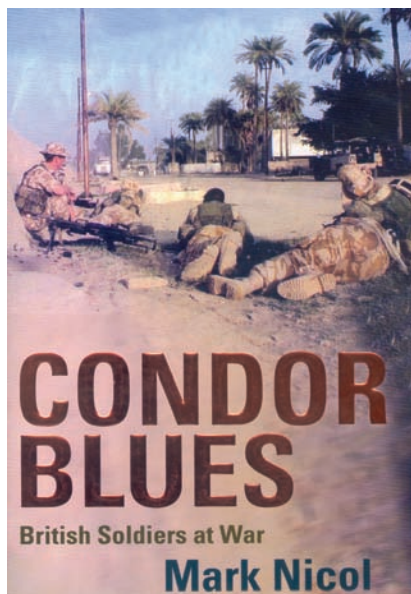
Much of the book is presented as dialogue to lend immediacy to the narrative. Punctuated as it is by all those F-words, it seems as crisp, spontaneous and authentic as any of the current crop of war novels. But how has Nicol

Soldier ordering service

BOOKS mentioned on these pages are available from Helion & Company, who can also supply 14,500 in-print military books and operate a free book search; p&p is extra. Major credit/switch cards taken. Allow 28 days for delivery. Helion & Company, 26 Willow Road, Solihull, West Midlands B91 1UE, England (tel 0121 705 3393; fax 0121 711 4075). Email books@helion.co.uk Website <http://www.helion.co.uk>

Books

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Much of the book is presented as dialogue to lend immediacy to the narrative. Punctuated as it is by all those F-words, it seems as crisp, spontaneous and authentic as any of the current crop of war novels. But how has Nicol

Soldier ordering service

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managed this, writing as he did years after the events took place? It is not a criticism to describe his method as both dramatic and dramatised. Much of the raw material is taken from interviews with the characters between October 2005 and December 2006. Those whom he could not contact were "described in detail" by others.

"While I have sought to create an evocative, lyrical narrative," he says, "I have also stayed true to the facts. Thus, Condor Blues is a work of non-fiction."

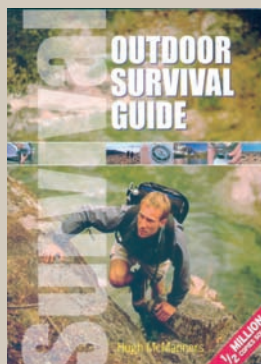
Nicol alleges that some actions during the Shia uprisings of 2004 lacked the diplomatic touch. "The British Army prides itself on its intelligent approach to conflict," he says, "yet hundreds of the very people whose hearts and minds commanders were seeking to win were killed."

"This was to the dismay of the Argylls' hierarchy, as one of its senior officers remarked: 'We were there to encourage peace, not to start another war. It was about understanding the culture, people and customs, not trying to conquer. A different approach to dealing with the insurgents and their leadership could have produced different results.'"

This is a book to be taken seriously – warts, F-words and all. ■

For more reviews, go to
www.soldiermagazine.co.uk

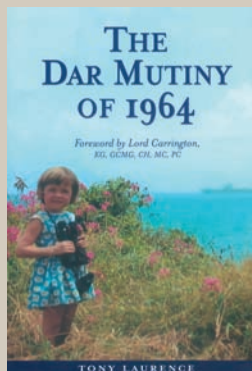
SOLDIER - Magazine of the British Army



Outdoor Survival Guide by Hugh McManners

THIS is an excellent book, written by an author with 18 years' service in the British Army behind him, writes **Maj Mike Peters AAC**. Extremely well illustrated and pitched at such a level that it will suit beginner and expert alike, this book is a comprehensive look at all of the skills you will need to survive whether you find yourself in the desert, the jungle or even shipwrecked. Six illustrated chapters add up to the ultimate accessory for providing life-saving knowledge.

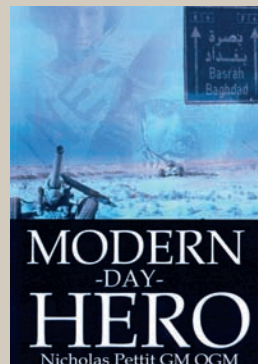
Dorling Kindersley,
192pp, £12.99



The Dar Mutiny of 1964 by Tony Laurence

FIRST-hand account of a forgotten post-colonial "incident", during which the army of the newly-independent Tanzania mutinied. But prompt, firm and brief military action by British forces – in the shape of 45 Commando Royal Marines and two Royal Navy warships – quelled the mutiny in days, to the relief of the local population and expatriate civilians. Shades, then, of the successful British intervention in Sierra Leone of more recent times.

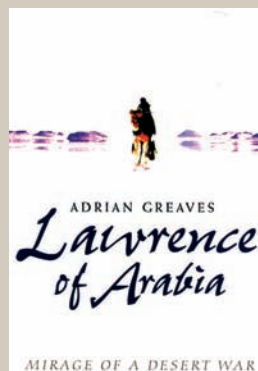
Book Guild,
243pp, £16.99



Modern Day Hero by Nicholas Pettit

OUR June 2004 coverage of operational awards included on the first page an account of how WO1 (RSM) Nick Pettit RE rescued four RAF personnel from a Land Rover damaged in a minefield in southern Iraq. He cleared a route to the vehicle, carried an injured man to safety and led the others out of danger. For his courage and leadership, Pettit was awarded a George Medal to go with a previously-won Queen's Gallantry Medal. This is the frank story of a brave man's military career. He now teaches excluded and autistic children.

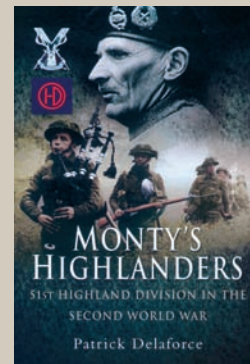
Pegasus, 231pp, £8.99



Lawrence of Arabia: Mirage of a Desert War by Adrian Greaves

JUST when you thought there was nothing new to read about T E Lawrence along comes another biography. As this enigma spread many untruths about himself, it must be the devil of a job sifting fiction from fact 70 years after his death. Some myths dispelled: Lawrence was never tortured by the Turks, and neither was he the first to dynamite Turkish troop trains. He was also far more ruthless in battle than he portrayed himself – and he turned down a VC.

Weidenfeld & Nicolson,
260pp, £20



51st Highland Division in the Second World War by Patrick Delaforce

THIS is the story of one of the most famous divisions ever to feature in the British Army's order of battle, writes **Maj Mike Peters AAC**. It follows the highlanders from the debacle of St Valéry in 1940 through every campaign of the Second World War. Montgomery ("Of the many fine divisions that served under me, none were finer than the Highland Division") took the 51st into every battle he fought; they never let him down. Worth the price.

Pen & Sword,
240pp, £19.99



The Price of Peace: Just War in the 21st Century edited by Charles Reed and David Ryall

GEN Sir Richard Dannatt, Chief of the General Staff, provides the foreword to this thought-provoking argument that the "just war" tradition, though still relevant, needs to be reworked to respond to the climate of terrorism. "The swords have not become ploughshares," writes Gen Dannatt, "but in an innovative way more akin to pruning hooks; they are being used to try to contribute to prosperity and stability and not merely to threaten or destroy."

Cambridge University Press, 340pp, £15.99

APRIL 2007

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What the Press has been saying

● **HEARING** experts have confirmed what anybody who has ever stood too close to a bagpipe band has long suspected; the noise they make is louder than a jet aircraft taking off. The Wick Royal British Legion Scotland Pipe Band will issue all its members with earplugs after music at one of its practice sessions was recorded at 122 decibels – two decibels louder than a private jet. – *The Times*

● THE poignant diary of a private at the bloody Battle of the Somme in 1916 has fetched £7,360 at auction. Walter Hutchinson wrote it in waterlogged trenches on the first day of the carnage after more than 62,000 men fell dead or wounded. – *Daily Mirror*

● A **LUCKY** Royal Marine has told how he escaped death from a Taliban rocket by “jumping in the air like Elvis” so the speeding missile flew underneath him. The commando, who had moments to react as the 130 metres-a-second RPG hurtled at him at knee height, did an airborne splits to dodge the killer rocket. – *The Sun*

● **ARMY** recruits are being given a drilling in basic literacy after research suggested that about half of the 12,000 people taken on each year have the reading ability of a child aged 11 or younger. – *The Times*

● **DRILL** sergeants tempted to punish idle or insolent recruits with 100 press-ups or a three-mile run will now carry cards to remind them that the “horrible little swine” must be treated more gently. The pocket guide to instructors’ behaviour is aimed at stamping out bullying and harassment in the Armed Services. – *The Times*

● THE home of the Chelsea pensioners is to admit women for the first time in its 300-year history. The first women will move into the Royal Hospital beside the Thames by the end of next year. They will wear the uniform of scarlet coats in public and blue tunics in the grounds. Women members, like men, will have to be former soldiers who are more than 65 years old and receive an Army pension. They must also be single. – *Evening Standard*

● A **LETTER** written by a soldier during the First World War was sold at auction for £1,040. Its author was Capt Noel Chavasse of the 10th Battalion, The King’s Regiment, the only soldier to receive two Victoria Crosses for bravery during the Great War. – *The Times*

Goodbye to Banja Luka

Job done, British troops bid farewell to Bosnia

SOLDIERS serving in Bosnia were remembering a decade-and-a-half of British involvement in the former war-torn theatre as they prepared to quit the country this month.

More than 600 troops, mainly from the Banja Luka-based Welsh Guards, were on their way home as this issue went to press, marking an end to one of the longest deployments of recent years.

Politicians are satisfied that Bosnia, which was gripped by a vicious civil war during the mid-1990s, has taken significant steps on the road to long-term peace.

Free and fair parliamentary and presidential elections were held last year while far-reaching defence reform has seen the creation of a multi-ethnic military force.

The departure of British troops, who have been under the command of the European Union, was made possible by the improving security situation in Bosnia. Overall the EU is slicing its commitment by more than half, from 6,500 troops to 2,500.

In announcing the British withdrawal, Armed Forces Minister Adam Ingram praised soldiers who had served in Bosnia over the years as “courageous and professional”.

He added: “The EU decision is in accordance with clear military advice that the situation is stable and the local authorities are able to deal with all but the most serious incidents.

“Our Armed Forces have done an

exceptional job. We owe them a debt of gratitude. They are working extremely hard at the moment and I am pleased to announce this drawdown which will go a little way to easing the pressure they are under.”

On the most recent Bosnian deployments, British troops have been helping to recover illegal weapons and to combat organised crime. But local authorities have increasingly become more adept at running these types of operations themselves.

Despite the drawdown, UK Forces will retain a skeleton staff in theatre for a short time until the new EU operational structure gets up-and-running.

● **Ten soldiers from the Welsh Guards have set themselves the gruelling challenge of cycling, canoeing and running from Banja Luka Metal Factory to their base in the UK.**

The group will cycle 1,300-miles from Banja Luka to Calais, kayak across the English Channel, and then run into London.

It is hoped the venture, named the Iron Guardsman Challenge, will raise more than £25,000 for three worthy causes – the Army Benevolent Fund, SAMA 82 (the South Atlantic Medal Association) and Everyman (testicular cancer) – and increase awareness of the 25th anniversary of the Falklands conflict, during which 36 members of the battalion were killed.

Cyprus sign Sodexho

SODEXHO Defence Services has been named as the preferred bidder for a contract covering a wide remit of services for British Forces Cyprus.

The so-called multi-activity deal (Project Gibson) covers areas as diverse as retail, leisure, food supply and accommodation services. It is anticipated that the company could begin providing services in the summer.

Sodexho Defence Services’s managing director, Andy Leach, pledged a package of

investment for British Forces on the island. “We are delighted to have been awarded preferred bidder status,” he said.

“We are planning a significant programme of investment in the leisure and retail facilities across the island.

“Our aim is to provide services which improve the quality of daily life for Service personnel, their families and our staff.”

The Sodexho contract will spell the end of Naafi’s long relationship with British Forces based on the island.



UPDATE



Picture: Mike Weston

Parity: Under the new terms and conditions of service Gurkhas will get equal rights for equal risks and Nepalese women will be eligible to join the ranks

On an equal footing

Gurkhas to be granted same entitlements as their British Army colleagues

GURKHAS – the brave soldiers from Nepal who have helped Britain fight wars for almost 200 years – have been granted the same entitlements as the rest of the Army.

Following an MoD review, their terms and conditions of service will be brought in line with their UK counterparts. Work is also underway to see how Nepalese women can be recruited.

One of the most significant changes is that serving Gurkhas and those who retired on or after July 1, 1997 (when the Brigade of Gurkhas moved from Hong Kong to Britain) will have the opportunity to transfer from the Gurkha Pension Scheme to the main Armed Forces Pension Scheme (AFPS).

Those who do transfer to the AFPS will have the chance, though not the guarantee, to complete 22 years' service. At the 22-year point a rifleman would be entitled to an immediate annual pension of £6,600. Those who leave before then will be entitled to a preserved pension, payable at retirement age. This contrasts with the Gurkha Pension Scheme, designed for retirement in Nepal, which pays an immediate annual pension, albeit at a much lower rate. Those who retired before July 1, 1997 may not transfer.

Gurkhas will be paid full UK rates and commissioned Gurkhas will transfer to normal Army officer pay scales. Those who have served at least five years may apply to transfer to other regiments and corps. The standard 30-day annual leave entitlement will replace the Gurkhas'

Nepal long leave of five months every three years, but those with less than three years' service can access a package which assists young soldiers from overseas to maintain contact with their families.

Gen Sir Richard Dannatt, Chief of the General Staff, said: "This is a historic day for the Brigade of Gurkhas. I am delighted that serving Gurkhas will have the same terms and conditions of service as their counterparts in the wider Army. Their contribution to operations around the world has been and will continue to be a major contribution to Britain's defence commitments."

Lt Gen Sir Philip Trousdell, Colonel Commandant of the Brigade of Gurkhas, welcomed the results of the review. "It meets the needs and aspirations of the modern Gurkha soldier based in the UK,

Brunei and Nepal, and those currently deployed on operations," he said.

In line with the wishes of the Nepalese Government, Gurkhas will continue to be recruited in Nepal and remain as Nepalese citizens during their service in the brigade.

Gurkha recruitment, selection and training regimes will be retained until they can be aligned with British systems.

Gurkhas will continue to serve in formed units consisting entirely of Gurkhas, except for British officers and a few specialists, and units will remain a part of the brigade. At the end of their service, Gurkhas will be offered the choice of discharge in Nepal or in the UK.

● Full details can be found at www.army.mod.uk/brigade_of_gurkhas/

Negligence charges dismissed

TWO more defendants facing allegations relating to the death of an Iraqi civilian have been acquitted of all charges at a court martial in Bulford. Maj Michael Peebles and WO2 Mark Davies, both of the Intelligence Corps, were found not guilty of negligently performing a duty.

The remaining defendant, Cpl Donald Payne, 2nd Battalion, The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment, had earlier pleaded guilty to a charge of inhumane treatment of a person. He is to be sentenced on April 30.

In all seven defendants had been charged

with offences relating to the death of Iraqi civilian Baha Musa while he was in British custody in Basra.

The MoD said the judgement was important, adding that it would need "time to consider the serious implications".

The statement went on: "In very difficult and dangerous circumstances in Iraq our forces do a superb job. However we need to maintain both operational effectiveness and the public's trust and confidence. If, as a result of this trial, which is still ongoing, lessons need to be learned, we shall do so."

Sheffield steel

Serving soldier has his mind set on a second career in big-time boxing

Interview: Richard Lenton

IT IS almost mandatory these days for a promising young boxer fighting out of Sheffield to adopt a flashy, switch-hitting style.

From Herol Graham to "Prince" Naseem Hamed and Junior Witter, the Steel City has produced a plethora of world-class fighters capable of bamboozling their opponents by launching bombs from both orthodox and southpaw stances.

The latest new kid on the block, Rfn Ross "The Boss" Burkinshaw (3 Rifles), who grew up idolising featherweight legend Hamed, is no exception.

The 20-year-old had grizzled veterans of the fight scene purring with enthusiasm following a sensational professional debut last November.

Burkinshaw, who boxes in the 8st 6oz bantamweight division, completely overpowered and outclassed Welshman Robert Bunford within the opening minute of his first paid assignment at Barnsley's Metrodome Leisure Centre.

However, while most boxers insist that they "don't get paid for overtime", Burkinshaw admits he regrets ending proceedings so quickly.

"It was great to stop him in the first round but I wish it had gone on longer so I could have showcased my skills," said the rifleman, who sold 256 tickets for his professional bow, making him an instant hit with his promoter Frank Maloney. "Making my debut was

the best feeling ever. Glynn Rhodes (Burkinshaw's trainer) was saying 'you've got to enjoy tonight because you only get one debut' and he was right. I never wanted the night to end."

The Army boxing team graduate, who is on the verge of a top-ten ranking among the British bantamweights, followed up his demolition of Bunford by grinding out a points victory over savvy ring veteran Delroy Spencer at Leeds Town Hall in February.

Unlike many journeymen boxers, Spencer, who has more than 50 fights on his ledger, always comes to win, and he succeeded in making life a great deal tougher for the rising star, who had to dig deep to emerge with a deserved 39-38 victory.

"I made it a tougher fight than it should have been," the former Inter-Services flyweight champion told *SoldierSport*. "I should have kept it long range but I was trying to please the crowd and got involved too much."

"He gave it a good go, and the times I did catch him with big shots he would tie me up."

"Spencer told me after the fight that he thinks I can go a long way and I learned a lot from the fight. I realise now that I can't just go in there and knock everyone out, and that it's not such a good idea to just try and entertain the public."

Despite his assertions to the contrary, the fact is that boxing is an entertainment business, and The Boss is already attracting attention after generating a considerable amount of excitement during his fledgling professional career.

Burkinshaw was led to the ring in Leeds by a bugler and half a dozen colleagues from his Edinburgh-based battalion, and Frank Maloney has promised him an appearance on Sky TV next time out.

"Sky wanted to see what my entrance was like, how the crowd responded and how I fought and they weren't disappointed," Burkinshaw said. "They've also got some footage of me as a 14-year-old, shadow boxing behind the scenes at one of the big fights, saying

that I was going to be a pro.

"They're hoping to use that in a feature some time."

As an amateur, Burkinshaw reached the ABA finals in 2005, won two Inter-Services titles and was ranked fourth in Britain. However, his intention was always to punch for pay after training with top professionals from the age of ten at the Glynn Rhodes gym.

"I started out doing jujitsu at Hillsborough Boys Club, but soon turned to boxing and had my first fight as an 11-year-old," said the infantryman,

'I want to win the English title by the end of 2007 and the British title within two years'

Fighting chance

OLYMPIC and World champion martial artists will go head-to-head at London Dockland's Excel Centre next month as they battle to be crowned "master of the mats".

The series of super bouts has been arranged as part of this year's Seni Show, Europe's largest combat sports exhibition, which will take place in the capital on May 19-20.

Tickets for the annual event, which will also feature ultimate fighting, boxing, thai boxing and wrestling contests, are priced at £8 (adults) and £5 (children) for a daily pass and £13.50/£6.50 for a weekend pass.

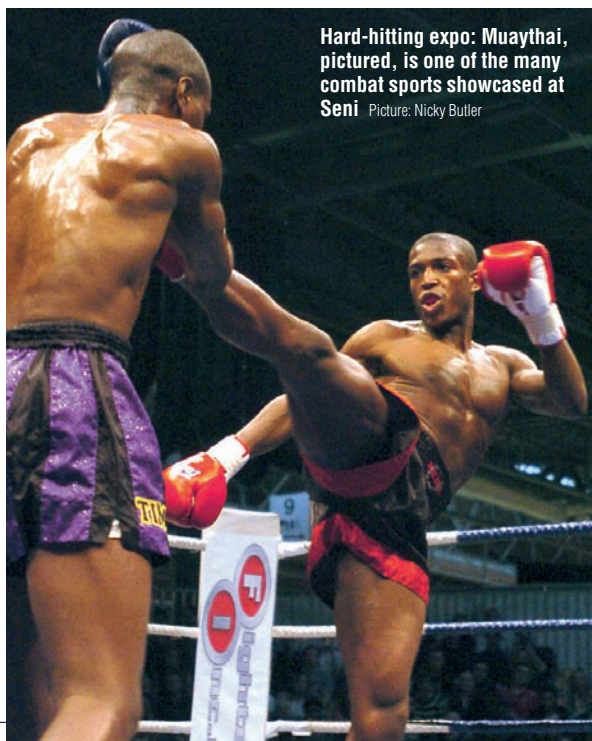
Fight aficionados can book their tickets through Ticketmaster on 0870 6077477 or online at www.senishow.com

However, five lucky *SoldierSport* readers will be able to attend the showpiece event without having to open their wallets.

To stand a chance of wrestling one of five pairs of tickets from us, simply tell us the English translation of the Japanese term "seni". Is it a) fighting fit, b) fighting spirit or c) fighting talk?

Winners will be drawn at random from the correct entries received by April 30. Usual rules apply.

Hard-hitting expo: Muaythai, pictured, is one of the many combat sports showcased at Seni Picture: Nicky Butler





who proposed to his girlfriend Becky in Gran Canaria immediately after his professional debut.

"I've always been around the pros. I used to train with Ritchie Wenton, Herol Graham and Paul "Silky" Jones and I used to carry Clinton Woods's British, Commonwealth and European title belts into the ring for him.

"I also got to know Naz really well. I was sponsored by Naz's brother Nabeel at 14, and I was chilling in the changing room with him before his last fight against Manuel Calvo. It gave me the taste for big-time boxing and it's where I want to be."

It would be some story if Burkinshaw could achieve anything like the success enjoyed by Hamed, who reigned supreme as the world's top featherweight for the best part of six years.

But The Boss is hardly short of confidence and firmly believes that he has what it takes to compete at title level.

"I want to win the English title by the end of 2007 and the British title within two years," he said. "Hopefully I

can then move on to a world title. I'm a good boxer, I know I can do it."

In the interim, Burkinshaw insists he has no intention of ducking a fight . . . whether it be in the ring or in the line of duty.

"I'm committed to making a name for myself in boxing, but I also realise

Unbeaten run: Rfn Ross Burkinshaw (3 Rifles) recorded his second professional victory over Delroy Spencer at Leeds Town Hall

Picture: Action Images/John Clifton

that my Army career is paramount, and if I'm asked to go to Iraq tomorrow then I'm ready." ■

TA retain top gun title

FOR the second successive year the Territorial Army beat off competition from around the world to lift the Lexington Green championship trophy at the Armed Forces Skill at Arms meeting.

Shooting against 210 competitors from six countries, the 14-strong team produced an unerring display to defend their title, finishing ahead of the Regular Army in second and US Army Reserves in third place.

Queen's Medal winner Sgt Dave

Fenwick (5 RRF) was again in fine form, top-scoring for his team and securing the honour of champion individual shot.

Team skipper Capt Peter Cottrell (3 PWRR) said: "It was an outstanding result and a proud achievement for the team. We achieved this result with minimal training, proving that teamwork really does matter. In the two key matches that comprise the Lexington, the team produced consistent scores to win by a convincing margin."

Lucky black cat

Sunderland idol happily put his nine lives on the line for British soldiers

Interview: Richard Lenton

WHEN I arranged to interview Peter Reid I was looking forward to hearing tales of his legendary tussles in the midfield engine room of Everton over a few pints of something cool and fizzy.

Unfortunately for me, the former Goodison Park enforcer was only 24 hours away from completing a month's abstinence from the demon drink, and his self-satisfied glow was enough to convince me that he wasn't about to fall off the wagon.

So instead of a back-street boozier, I caught up with Reid at Sky Sports' studios in London where the former England international, who managed Manchester City, Sunderland, Leeds and Coventry City, now works as a pundit and matchday summariser.

He'd just flown in from Manchester to talk about that night's Premiership action and had been handed the keys to a none-too-shabby hotel room nearby. It's fair to say that life is treating the man christened "Monkey Heed" by Newcastle United fans pretty well.

On top of the punditry work, the ever chirpy Reid is also a man in demand when it comes to celebrity-style assignments, and it was one such "gig" that found him facing an audience of soldiers in southern Iraq last summer.

It was an unforgettable experience for someone whose patriotism came gushing to the fore when he spoke reverentially of Britain's peacekeeping soldiers.

"You see on TV what the lads go through out there, but it's not until you go that you fully appreciate what they do," he said. "The heat is so oppressive. I was dripping with sweat just from

standing there and can't imagine what it must be like in full body armour.

"It opened my eyes to what soldiers go through and filled me with a great feeling of pride in our Armed Forces.

"We have a reputation for having the best Army in the world and, when you see what they're doing, you can't argue. Our lads wear that uniform with enormous pride.

"However, I'm not sure our troops get the appreciation they deserve back at home. You don't hear about the amazing things that they do on a day-to-day basis so that ordinary Afghans and Iraqis get a chance to live a normal life in freedom.

"I was delighted to be able to go out there, tell a few stories and speak with the lads – even if some of the younger guys were much more impressed with the two young models who went with me.

"The Newcastle fans among them weren't shy about giving me some stick over my Sunderland days either."

From Basra, Reid flew to Afghanistan, where the likeable Scouser was forced to endure something far more frightening than a two-footed tackle from his great Liverpool rival, Steve McMahon.

"I was at Camp Bastion and there were rockets going off and at five o'clock one morning I woke up to gunfire. I was petrified," he admitted. "That was, until I was told by someone in my billet that it was just the lads shooting on the range. I thought there was an attack imminent."

The most dangerous situations Reid encountered during his much safer career playing the beautiful game occurred on the battlefields

of Old Trafford and Anfield, where the diminutive midfielder tangled with the likes of Bryan Robson and Graeme Souness during Everton's halcyon years of the mid-1980s. Under Howard Kendall's astute leadership, the Toffeemen won two league titles, an FA Cup and a Cup Winners' Cup.

"The likes of Robbo and Souness were very tough customers, very physical. It was certainly a lot tougher than today," explained Reid, who joined Everton from Bolton in a cut-price £60,000 move following a spate of injuries.

"We worked hard and played hard, but it was a different game then. Let's just say we refuelled our bodies a little bit differently than they do today. We had great camaraderie and a great side at Everton under Howard Kendall."

However, Everton's glorious era under Kendall almost came to a premature end when fans

demanding his sacking following a poor start to the 1983-84 season.

"He was reputedly one game away from the sack, but we went on to win the FA Cup that year with a lot of young players and then won the league for the first time the year after," said Reid. "All credit to clubs and boards of directors who have kept faith with their manager and stuck by them."

From the tone of his voice it's obvious that Reid feels let down by certain boardroom figures during his own managerial career.

He took his first step into the dugout – as a player-manager – at Manchester City in November 1990. Despite twice finishing fifth in the old First Division and ninth in the inaugural season of the Premiership, Reid was surprisingly axed the following October.

"The chairman, Peter Swailes, acted a bit hastily," Reid insisted. "We had a lot of good young players coming through and if we'd been able to go after the players I wanted we could have built something worthwhile."

From City, Reid moved on to Sunderland, where he twice guided the Black Cats

"I was delighted to go out there, even if some of the younger guys were much more impressed with the two young models who went with me"





Picture: Craig Prentis/Allsport

That winning feeling: Peter Reid celebrates promotion to the Premiership with Sunderland following a 2-1 victory over Birmingham City on May 9, 1999

to the top flight during his seven years in the North East. It's hard to believe now, but, on New Year's Day 2001, the Wearsiders had risen to the giddy heights of second in the Premiership.

"When we were second we needed to buy top international players to take the next step, but we weren't in a position to financially and we ended up seventh," he added. "The following season we only just avoided relegation and then the year after, nine games in, after the chairman had given me money to spend, he decided to sack me. It was a crackers decision.

"We were fourth from bottom of the Championship when I went there and we managed to get a stadium and training ground built because of the success the club had while I was in charge. Whenever I go back there it fills me with an enormous sense of pride."

After being handed his P45 by the Black Cats, Reid was hired for a seven-game salvage mission by a Leeds side in free fall, and managed to keep the club in the Premiership. But, after being persuaded to stay on at Elland Road, Reid was axed early the following season.

"I didn't realise how bad their financial plight was. I was told that if I sold players I could reinvest, but it

wasn't the case," he said. "They've gone into burn-down because of the money they spent previously and it's hard to come back from where they are now, struggling in the Championship."

The 50-year-old has now been out of the game for two years, and if he has a care in the world then he's doing a masterly job of hiding it. But, despite the comfort of the Sky commentary box, and the trials, tribulations and pressure associated with life in the dugout, he remains keen to dust off his managerial overcoat.

"I would love another crack, but it would have to be the right club and with an ambitious chairman who had a three-year plan," he told *SoldierSport*. "You can't build a team in six months."

Reid was recently hailed as an ideal candidate to succeed Peter Taylor as England U21 boss, but he was overlooked in favour of Manchester City manager Stuart Pearce.

Reid glows with pride when he talks about playing for his country, adding: "It's the biggest honour you can have. I've got 13 caps, I played in the World Cup in Mexico in 1986, and playing against someone like Maradona was amazing. Even though he cheated

England with his first goal, he was incredible," said Reid recalling England's 2-1 quarter-final defeat to Argentina.

"I still have nightmares about his second. I was half a yard away from him but I could not even get close enough to foul him."

Reid looked to have established himself as a regular in the England side in

Mexico, but was once again hampered by injury on his return.

"I've no regrets. When I ruptured my knee ligaments early on in my career at Bolton I was told to fear the worst – that I would never play again.

"Everything I've achieved since has been a massive bonus." ■



SPORTDIARY

ATHLETICS

May 16 – REME championships (Tidworth); 19 – TA cross country championships (Sennybridge).

BOXING

April 17-20 – Army individual championships (Aldershot).

FENCING

April 17-20 – Army championships (Aldershot).

FOOTBALL

April 1 – Crusaders Vets v Crusaders (RMAS, ko 1400).
May 3 – BA(G) six-a-side championships (Gutersloh); 10 – Army six-a-side championships (Aldershot).

GOLF

April 11-20 – Army women's US tour; 21-22 – Army v Dorset (Broadstone GC).

HOCKEY

April 17-18 – Army Cup (Aldershot); 24-26 – Inter-corps championships (Aldershot).

LAWN TENNIS

April 14 – Army v Hampshire (Aldershot).

MODERN PENTATHLON

April 11 – Army modern triathlon championships (RMAS).

NETBALL

April 1 – Army v CD Phoenix (Away).

ORIENTEERING

April 18 – ML(S) event (Longleat); 25 – ML(S) Event (Fonthill).

REAL TENNIS

April 1 – Army v Seacourt (Away); 21 – Army v Hatfield (Hardwick).

RUGBY UNION

April 4 – Army v Barbarians (The Stoop), Army v Colchester (Away); 11 – Army v Harlequins/Bath (Aldershot); 22 – Combined Services U23 v Leicester Tigers (Welford Road); 25 – Army v Royal Air Force (Aldershot), Army veterans v RAF Vultures (Aldershot), Army women v Royal Air Force (Aldershot).

SAILING

April 1 – Warsash 4 (Solent); 6-8 – RORC Easter regatta (Solent); 15 – Warsash 5 (Solent); 21 – North sails tab tower race; 22 – Warsash 6 (Solent).

SHOOTING

April 1 – Small-bore inter-division final (Bisley), Target rifle: Army v Surrey (Bisley); 1-2 – Scottish air pistol championships (Tulliallan, Scotland).

SPORT CLIMBING

April 16-20 – Army championships (JSMTC(I) Angelsey).

TABLE TENNIS

April 23-24 – Inter-Services championships (Aldershot).

TUG OF WAR

May 16 – REME championships (Tidworth).

VOLLEYBALL

April 17-18 – Army championship finals (Aldershot).

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

Golden Brown

Last gasp goal secures silverware for the Army

Picture: Graeme Main

AN exquisite volley deep into injury time from the left boot of talismatic striker Pte Mick Brown (RLC) stole the Army a 1-0 victory over the Royal Air Force and secured the Reds a third successive Inter-Services title at Aldershot.

So often the Army's hero, Brown's predatory strike in the eighth and final minute of injury time followed a dominant display from the RAF who, having scored five unanswered goals against the Royal Navy, needed only a draw to lift the championship silverware.

It was a result the airmen looked destined to achieve, or improve on, during a tense second half in which they forced a series of acrobatic saves from Army number one LCpl Terry Burton (RLC) and a goalline clearance from the defending champions.

It was only after the visitors were reduced to ten men on 77 minutes – Cpl Ian Matthews (RAF Wittering) seeing red for lashing out at Brown – that the Army began to look

threatening. But despite the numeric advantage, Capt Steve Bates's squad looked to have run out of time in their search for a winner when the RAF won a corner in injury time and attempted to shield the ball by the corner flag.

It was an act of gamesmanship that the visitors would regret.

Refusing to bow to the Blues' time-wasting tactics, Cpl Keith Emmerson (AGC (RMP)) broke through the human wall, stole the ball and burst across the halfway line before dissecting the RAF's back four with a pin-point pass into the path of the ever-vigilant Brown.

Hotshot Brown, who scored the Army's winner against the Navy at Fratton Park in front of a 1,560 crowd a week earlier, again showcased his finishing skills, rifling home from the edge of the penalty area.

Speaking after the match, a relieved Army skipper Cpl Wes O'Connor (R Signals) said: "We're obviously delighted with the win.

"I feel for the RAF as they created a lot more chances than us, but we got the goal and we're dead chuffed." ■

'I feel for the RAF lads as they created a lot more chances than us, but we got the goal and we're dead chuffed'

Retirement party

Report: David Hedley

OUTGOING Army U21s football coach SSgt Paul Douglas (RE) celebrated his retirement from the Reds' dugout by securing a second successive Inter-Services title with a 5-0 mauling of the Royal Navy at Aldershot.

Signing off after two seasons of service, Douglas was treated to a relatively stress-free 90 minutes on the touchline by his players, who showed little in the way of hospitality to their visitors.

Despite a slow start, once LCpl Chris Kettleon's (REME) free kick had found the bottom right hand corner of the Navy net on 28 minutes, the defending champions never looked in danger of surrendering their crown.

Indeed, within five minutes of breaking the deadlock the Army had doubled their lead – OCdt Nick Barnes (OTC Loughborough) beating everyone in the air to powerfully head home. And Barnes almost made it three on the stroke of half-

time, stealing possession in the Navy's penalty box before rattling the woodwork.

However, any hopes of a Navy comeback were torpedoed four minutes after the restart when their goalkeeper's miskicked clearance struck the back of Sig Kev Cameron (R Signals), who duly turned and struck the ball on the half volley into an unguarded net. Kettleon claimed his second, and the Army's fourth, from the spot with a quarter of an hour remaining, before a goalkeeping howler – a missed swing at a tame back pass – completed the rout in injury time.

Speaking to *SoldiersSport* after the match, Douglas attributed the comfortable victory to his side's hard work on the training field. "I think our fitness told in the end. We went to watch the Navy and knew that their fitness wasn't the best, so we spent a week working on getting the ball, passing it quickly and keeping the match at a high tempo.

"The boys put in 120 per cent and they've been rewarded for their efforts."



Match-winning footwork: Pte Mick Brown's (RLC) goals at Fratton Park and Aldershot's Military Stadium won the Army a third successive Inter-Services title

Anyone for cricket?

Help England by spending your leave at Lords

MARYLEBONE Cricket Club are inviting members of the Armed Forces who will be on annual leave between May 16-20 and/or July 18-22 to act as seating stewards for England's Test matches against the West Indies and India at Lords.

Stewards will be required to be on duty in uniform on each day of the matches and in civilian clothing on the day preceding to receive formal crowd-safety training.

Subsistence and food allowance will be provided by the MCC and a travel allowance, based on the cost of a second-class rail fare from

duty station to Lords, may also be claimed. Applications are invited from all non-commissioned ranks and personnel interested should contact WO2 Lee Murrell by no later than April 14 at 3 Regiment AAC Workshop, Wattisham Airfield, Ipswich, Suffolk IP7 7SD or tel 01449 728363.

● THE Army women's cricket team will be holding trials on May 11-12. Any players interested in joining the reigning Inter-Services champions should contact Army team manager Maj Ruth MacGill on mil 94329 4138.

TABLES

MASSEY TROPHY – DIV 1

	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
RLC	10	5	2	3	11	17
RA	8	5	1	2	13	16
R Signals	7	4	2	1	8	14
RE	7	4	2	1	7	14
REME	8	3	4	1	9	13
Infantry	9	2	1	6	-11	7
AMS	9	0	0	9	-35	0

MASSEY TROPHY – DIV 2

	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
APTC	10	8	2	0	27	26
RAC	9	5	1	3	-4	16
AGC	9	4	1	4	16	13
AAC	8	3	2	3	10	11
Int Corps	9	3	2	4	4	11
CAMUS	9	0	0	9	-53	0