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SOLDIER

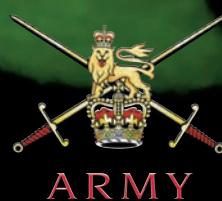
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Cover picture (left): Under the veil of darkness – Pte Kevin Tait, 47 AD Sqn, RLC.

See Pages 29-31 Picture: Graeme Main

Background image: The British-led Helmand

Task Force has been taking the fight to the

Taliban in southern Afghanistan's Sangin

Valley. See Pages 17-19 Picture: Cpl Adrian Harlan RLC



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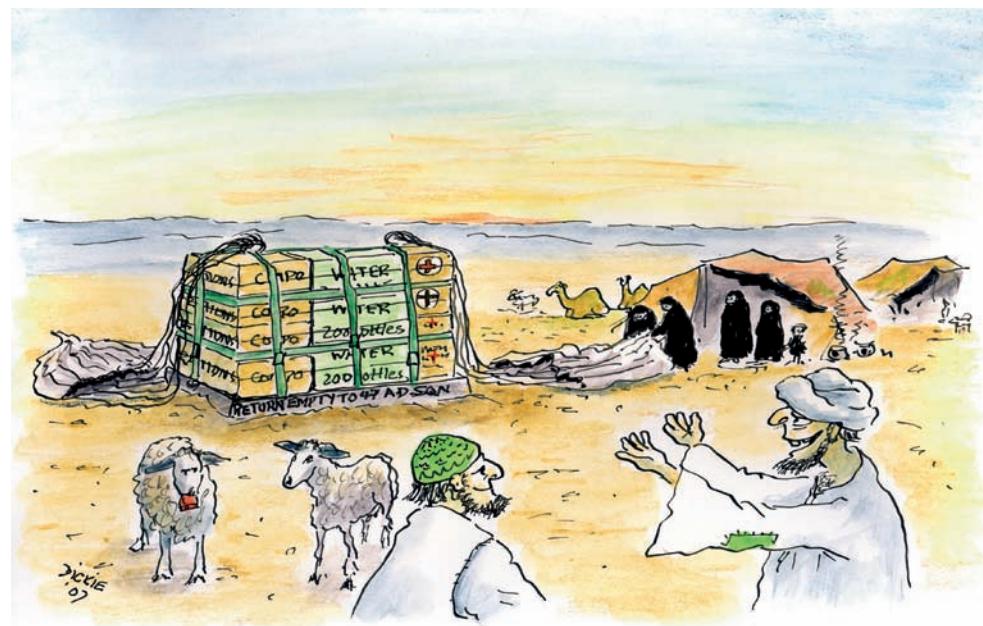
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"It's a miracle! A gift from above, my friend. I heard a loud thump in the early hours, looked out and there was everything we need."

● Dark skies – Pages 29-31

Packing up our Troubles

OPERATION Banner draws to a close on the last day of this month, bringing to an end the British Army's longest continuously-running military operation.

For the past 38 years, the Armed Forces have supported the police in public order and counter-terrorism in Northern Ireland. Their sacrifice has been immense.

Throughout the Troubles soldiers operated in difficult, dangerous situations, often in the face of extreme provocation. Their lives were under constant threat.

Our tribute to them begins on Page 21.

Terrorists took every chance to attack – from opportunist sniping to large-scale bomb and mortar attacks. Innocuous objects concealed deadly devices aimed at passing patrols. It was not only those on duty who were at risk. Servicemen and women living off-base, even on leave, had to be constantly wary.

Getting into a car without checking it could prove deadly. Changing a route to work became routine.

Soldier will be featuring the key events of Op Banner and giving an insight into the past, present and future of the Army in the province. A look back, told through the reports that appeared in this magazine, will

FIRST SIGHT

become available on our website in early July. Go to www.soldiermagazine.co.uk and click on FLASHBACK.

Have you got a personal account of your service in Northern Ireland that we can include on our website? Send it, with pictures, to Andrea Webb (see address on this page) or email awebb@soldiermagazine.co.uk, to reach us by July 20. Include your rank, name, unit and dates of Northern Ireland deployment(s), though we won't publish them if you ask us not to.

Recently we received an open letter to the Army. "I am so sorry," it said, "that so many of your dear friends and colleagues had to pay the supreme sacrifice [on Op Banner]. Their memory will never be forgotten. I also would like to say to all the wives, husbands, boyfriends, girlfriends and families who spent months apart from loved ones at home worrying – I shall be ever thankful to you all."

It was posted in Northern Ireland. ■



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Relative calm before the storm: Sgt MJ Holt, pictured at the helm of *Adventure* in the Southern Ocean, suffered a serious knee injury 2,000 miles from land

Stitched up at sea

Signallers recall anxious leg of dangerous around-the-world expedition

COOL-headed soldiers taking part in a sailing expedition proved the value of military medical training after a crewman suffered a serious injury thousands of miles from land.

Sgt "MJ" Holt of the Royal Signals tore open his knee on board the yacht *Adventure* during a lengthy stretch of the Mercury Challenge around-the-world expedition. But thanks to his medical skills, experienced seafarer Sgt Windy Gale patched up the gaping wound with 14 stitches. A doctor later gave his seal of approval to the emergency needlework.

Speaking in Gosport after completing the challenge, Maj Charles Roberts, who was skippering the boat, recalled the concern after Sgt Holt had been injured. The senior NCO, who was due to be on the yacht for seven of the ten legs of the Royal Signals expedition, had been

with a crew travelling from Cape Town to Perth when he caught his knee on a fastening used to secure rigging lines.

Nearly 2,000 miles from land and well outside of the range of helicopters, Sgt Holt had to rely on his colleagues for urgent treatment.

Maj Roberts confirmed: "It was a serious injury and we were two weeks away from Australia.

"However, we had prepared back in the UK for that type of situation. Sgt Windy Gale was one of those who had done the medical training, and he managed to put 14 stitches in MJ's knee. We had to make sure we looked after him."

Despite being immobilised with the injury for a fortnight, Sgt Holt went on to make a full recovery and later continued with the yacht to Sydney.

For Sgt Gale, who took over as *Adventure*'s skipper during the last phase of the Mercury Challenge, the successful treatment of Sgt Holt was a key achievement. "We took MJ to see a naval doctor once we got to Perth and he was very happy," he added. "It is good to know that you can give good treatment in a situation like that."

Sgt Gale was also keen to praise the crews of *Adventure*, who had coped with several demanding situations during the 33,000-mile seafaring expedition.

He said: "When you're sailing around the Southern Hemisphere, you realise what a wilderness you are in. You can go for days without even seeing another ship. But I could not have asked for a better hub of people around me."

● **Fantastic voyagers – Pages 46-47**



Deep trouble: Sgt Holt's torn knee before surgery



Windy at work: Sgt Gale's training is put to the test



Patched up: MJ shows off his battle-scarred knee

Paper talk

What the Press has been saying

● COMIC book superhero Spider-man relied on the strength of his webs to trap villains and climb skyscrapers. Now scientists have harnessed the powerful but flexible qualities of real spider webs and plan to use them to make body armour for troops. Reproduction of the silk from one of the world's deadliest spiders, the Black Widow, will be used to produce ultra-strong and lightweight armour. A study at the University of California, part-funded by the US Army Research Centre, has unravelled the first full genetic profile for the silks, which scientists will now be able to make in the laboratory. — *Daily Mail*

● AS the only remaining FTSE 100 chairman to have done National Service, Sir Christopher Bland seems fairly well qualified to put his name to a campaign for business to support Britain's Reserve Forces. The BT chairman, who leaves the post in September, visited eight of the telecom giant's employees who are serving in Iraq as part of 81 Signals Squadron. — *Daily Telegraph*

● THE Army has shrunk to its smallest size for more than 200 years, official figures revealed. The number of soldiers has slipped below 100,000 for the first time since the start of the Napoleonic Wars. Some 2,500 posts are unfilled. — *Daily Mail*

● BRITISH soldiers may be forced to use German or French bullets in future, as BAE Systems could shut down its Royal Ordnance munitions factories. The MoD is renegotiating its ammunition contract with BAE and has started to sound out European suppliers as an alternative. — *The Times*

● POLISH troops in Afghanistan will not be combat ready for several weeks after many of their vehicle keys were stolen en route through Pakistan. — *Daily Telegraph*

● THE last surviving veteran to fight in the trenches during the First World War celebrated his 109th birthday with a party at his nursing home in Wells, Somerset. Harry Patch served with the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry and fought at the Battle of Passchendaele, when he was still just a teenage conscript. Mr Patch insisted that his birthday was nothing remarkable and said he still had plenty of years left in him. He added: "I feel about 50 years old. It's a lot of fuss about nothing." — *Daily Telegraph*

Bonus boost

MoD announces increase in tax-free allowance

BRITISH soldiers heading out on operations are set to notice a difference in their pay packets after the Government announced a boost to the tax-free bonus.

The windfall has been increased by just over 3.5 per cent, meaning that Armed Forces personnel will now pocket up to £2,320 at the end of their tour.

As previously reported in *Soldier*, the operational allowance was introduced last October and is handed over as a lump sum. The latest rise will be back-dated to April.

But in announcing the increase, Defence Secretary Des Browne also revealed that personnel serving in the Balkans would no longer receive the extra cash from September 1 as a result of the "increased stabilisation" of the once troubled region. Mr Browne stressed: "We introduced this tax-free allowance as a way of recognising the increased and enduring nature of danger facing Service personnel.

"We cannot underestimate the tremendous work they are doing in Iraq and Afghanistan when separated from their loved ones in a hostile environment and they fully deserve this rise."

News of the increase in the operation-

al allowance was made as the MoD unveiled an enhanced package of measures to support bereaved military families.

Now up to seven family members – rather than five – can have their expenses paid to attend repatriation ceremonies and two can claim for attending pre-inquest hearings. Families wishing to hold a private funeral will have access to an extra £1,000 in funding.

The MoD will continue to provide funds for Service funerals but an extra tax-free allowance of £500 is now available to cover personal expenses.

Armed Forces Minister Adam Ingram also revealed that the MoD had written to the Scottish Executive asking members to explore the possibility of conducting fatal accident inquiries, the nearest equivalent to inquests, on troops killed overseas.

Currently relatives of Scottish personnel who have died abroad must travel to England as there is no provision in Scottish law for inquiries into deaths which occur outside the country.

Mr Ingram said: "I hope the law can be changed. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to all our Service personnel who have died on operations and will continue to provide the best possible support."

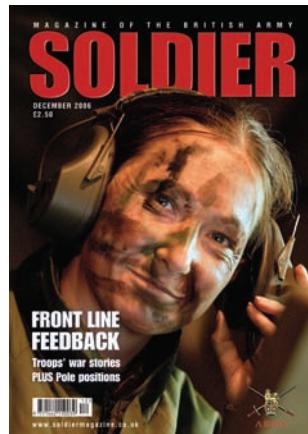
First-class read

AN outstanding magazine for an outstanding Service. That was the conclusion of the judges in this year's prestigious Communicators in Business (CiB) national awards.

At a high-profile industry gathering in Newcastle's Hilton Hotel, *Soldier* was named best internal news magazine for the second year running and an unprecedented fourth time in seven years. The CiB is the largest organisation of its kind in Europe.

Editor Andy Simms received the engraved glass award from former world record middle distance runner Steve Cram.

"It's entire presentation and quality of copywriting is much more representative of an externally focused magazine than an internal production," wrote the judges, "and that's what gives it the edge."



They added: "It also has a very refreshing element of honesty and frankness in its reporting and opinion-sharing. The sensitive approach to subjects such as Afghanistan and Iraq, which have a resilient, common sense and balanced tone, is a real compliment to the editorial team, who are writing for a reading audience actually living in these situations."

There were also awards of excellence for *Soldier* writer Cliff Caswell for his interview with chart topper James Blunt in Kosovo, and the magazine's website – www.soldiermagazine.co.uk – designed by Kath Lee. In the feature writing category *Defence Focus's* Lorraine McBride won two awards of excellence and the MoD's Defence Intranet News service was also an award winner.



Picture: Cpl Mark Nesbit RLC

A DYNAMIC duo of vehicles designed to meet the needs of the Royal Engineers have been proving their mettle on high-profile manoeuvres on the Canadian prairie.

Trojan and Titan, which specialise in clearing obstacles and building bridges, received

a baptism of fire with soldiers during Exercise Medicine Man. Troops from a battle-group built around the 1st Battalion, The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment, put the pair through their paces, and proved them capable in every respect.

Each weighing in at a hefty 68-tonnes, the

vehicles were first unveiled last year. Based on an enhanced Challenger 2 platform, they have power and speed in abundance. Trojan, pictured, can demolish obstacles and clear mines using its mechanical claw, while Titan can lay bridges in less than two minutes.

Found in translation

Student's space age gadget could give troops communication edge on ops

A TRANSLATION device straight out of an episode of *Star Trek* could help save the lives of troops and Iraqi civilians on operations, military chiefs believe.

The wrist-mounted gadget, which would interpret key words and phrases from English into Arabic, has been mooted as a possible peace-winning tool in theatre.

And soldiers from the 4th Battalion, The Parachute Regiment, were so intrigued with the innovation that they invited the inventor, Iraqi-born student Amin Ismail, to visit them at their Leeds base so they could have a closer look.

Called the Ahky, which means "speak" in Arabic, the voice-activated kit would help Iraqis understand commands at potential flashpoints such as vehicle checkpoints. It would translate phrases such as "don't shoot", "stay back" and "help will be here soon" and could be adapted to work with other languages as well as Arabic.

Ismail, a Derby University student who lived in Baghdad before he was forced

to flee in 2002, said he had wanted to design the gadget to help troops bring peace to his country.

The 21-year-old added: "It was my way of thanking British soldiers for their honourable work – people who are abandoning themselves from their loved ones and sacrificing their soul to bring freedom to the Iraqi people. Secondly it is to improve communication between soldiers and people in high-risk situations where any misunderstandings might lead to tragedy."

During his research, Ismail found that nearly 80 per cent of British troops would welcome a piece of kit like the Ahky while

two-thirds of 50 Iraqis interviewed said they would be happy for the translation equipment to be used.

The inventor is now seeking backing to transform his idea into a reality. While it is still early days for the Ahky, soldiers with first-hand experience of volatile situations in Iraq were clearly impressed with the potential of the gadget.

"This innovation is unique and will provide an interface with the local population, improving the way we communicate," said Lt Col Ben Baldwin, CO of 4 Para. "It will enhance the protection of the civilian community and soldiers."

The 21-year-old, who was engaged to be married, joined the Army in August 2003 as a Challenger 2 gunner and deployed on Op Telic 10 in May.

"LCpl James "Jay" Cartwright, of Badger Squadron, 2nd Royal Tank Regiment, suffered fatal injuries when the Warrior armoured fighting vehicle he was driving slid off a bridge and overturned in a small canal in the early hours of June 16.

● **COMMANDERS have paid tribute to a "professional and highly motivated" soldier who died in a road accident in southern Iraq.**

LCpl James "Jay" Cartwright, of Badger Squadron, 2nd Royal Tank Regiment, suffered fatal injuries when the Warrior armoured fighting vehicle he was driving slid off a bridge and overturned in a small canal in the early hours of June 16.

UNDER Big Ben

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

Equipment gripes show steady fall

REPORTS of military kit failing on exercises have been declining in recent years, according to the latest figures shown to MPs.

Statistics for 2006 reveal there were just over 1,950 Equipment Failure Reports (EFPs) for 2006 – a slight fall from the previous year and some 800 less than 2004.

Armed Forces Minister Adam Ingram stressed that the figures covered all types of equipment, from Challenger 2 tanks to wristwatches.

He said in a written answer: “The MoD greatly values and actively encourages feedback from personnel on how equipment is performing.”

Afghan air support: There have been no delays in the deployment of the Apache attack helicopter to Afghanistan, Defence Secretary Des Browne told the Commons. He also made it clear to MPs that helicopter levels were being kept under review to ensure the mission could be carried out effectively.

Responding to a further question about aircraft from Ann Winterton MP, the Defence Secretary confirmed that 15 Desert Hawk unmanned aerial vehicles had been lost in theatre.

JPA errors: Nearly 170 members of the Army were incorrectly paid during May under the new Joint Personnel Administration scheme. Responding in a written answer, Veterans’ Minister Derek Twigg said all the cases related to errors with allowances and were due to be corrected in the following month’s pay packet.

Iraqi militias: Only a small number of individuals have been involved in attacks on British forces during Op Telic, the Defence Secretary said. He indicated in a written answer that most of those who had targeted UK troops were affiliated to the extremist elements of the Jaysh al-Mahdi, set up by the Shia cleric, Muqtada al Sadr.

Selfless act

‘Natural leader’ killed while rescuing wounded

A “CHARISMATIC and inspiring” rifleman was killed as he tried to save the lives of colleagues after their patrol was attacked in Basra.

Cpl Rodney “Will” Wilson, 30, of the 4th Battalion, The Rifles was part of a search and detention operation led by the 2nd Battalion, The Royal Welsh that came under attack from small arms fire and rocket-propelled grenades in the early hours of June 7.

Despite the incoming rounds, Cpl Wilson stepped in to rescue the wounded and was hit himself. He was evacuated by helicopter to a field hospital at Basra Air Station but later died from his injuries.

The NCO’s selfless actions helped the Royal Welsh and Rifles succeed in their mission as the patrol later uncovered the largest cache of weapons yet found by 1 Mechanized Brigade, including 60 mortar bombs, an improvised explosive device and a mortar firing tube.

“Cpl Wilson was one of the outstanding riflemen of his generation,” said Lt Col Patrick Sanders, CO of 4 Rifles. “A charismatic and inspiring figure, he was

a man of immense natural talent and great strength of character.

“He had that rare gift of natural leadership that comes only to a few; clarity of thought, crisp and sure-footed decision making, strength of purpose and a happy combination of a magnetic personality and absolute self assurance that drew riflemen to him.”

Born in Rinteln, Germany, Cpl Wilson was an experienced soldier, having achieved a distinction in the demanding platoon sergeant’s battle course. He was placed in the top two per cent in his infantry peer group and had been marked out as a rising star of the future.

● **A mortar attack on a base in central Basra claimed the life of a much-respected and highly professional officer, the MoD confirmed as this issue went to press.**

Maj Paul Harding, 4 Rifles, died during a strike on the Provincial Joint Coordination Centre in the early hours of June 20.

A full obituary will appear in August’s issue of Soldier.



● Cpl Rodney Wilson

Inspirational figure

IRAQ-based troops have been remembering the contribution of a much-loved and gifted friend who was killed as he helped defend a vital resupply convoy.

Cpl Jeremy Brookes of the 4th Battalion, The Rifles died when his Bulldog armoured vehicle came under fire in the Al Tuwaysa district of Basra City on May 21.

A civilian truck driver also lost his life in the ambush after his fuel tanker was set ablaze.

Known as Jez to his friends, Cpl Brookes signed up for the Army in 2001 and was remembered as a consummate professional with high standards of fitness. The 28-year-old had originally joined The Royal Green Jackets, which merged with three other regiments to become 4 Rifles at the beginning of the year.

A section commander in R Company, Cpl Brookes was a keen sportsman and had completed the notoriously tough Marathon Des Sables in the Sahara Desert.

His CO, Lt Col Patrick Sanders, paid

tribute to the popular NCO and described him as a man of exceptional talent who was respected for his outstanding leadership qualities.

He said: “Cpl Brookes was an inspirational and much-loved figure in 4 Rifles.

“An outstanding rifleman, a charismatic and natural leader, a sportsman of exceptional talent and determination and a warm, wickedly funny and generous man, he was in all respects larger than life and an example to us all.

“He was incapable of doing anything by half-measures and lived his life to the full, seeking new challenges to overcome.

“I never saw him admit defeat in anything.”

Maj James Bryant, officer commanding R Company, added: “His hallmark was his exceptionally high standards.

“He was a genuine character, the right man for a tight spot and was at the heart of what makes R Company tick – his loss is tragic and deeply felt.”



● Cpl Jeremy Brookes



Picture: Cpl Wayne Beeching RAF

Showing a united front: Soldiers from 1 RHA and 1 IG deploy in support of their Iraqi military counterparts during a weapons search operation near Basra

Prosperity pledge

Op Telic boss promises British troops will continue to strive for stability

THE new British commander in southern Iraq has pledged his commitment to leaving the country a better place as the latest Op Telic tour got under way with a decisive blow against terrorists.

In delivering an upbeat message on behalf of 1 Mechanized Brigade, Brig James Bashall stressed that troops would do all they could to bring peace and prosperity and would continue to act against those who threatened stability.

Addressing the Iraqi people, he added: "Your security is of great importance. Criminals and terrorists hamper our efforts to assist you as well as causing injuries and damage.

"While my priority is to train and mentor your security forces, I will continue to defend my forces against militia attacks and target those responsible."

Brig Bashall also stressed that progress was being made in handing Basra back to Provincial Iraqi Control and emphasised that British troops would be on hand to offer back up.

The senior officer, who took over from 19 Light Brigade commander Brig Tim Evans last month, was speaking after his troops seized a huge cache of weapons.

Soldiers from the 1st Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery unearthed 10,000 rounds of ammo plus bomb-making kit in an underground store in Safwan just a week after arriving in theatre.

Three complete explosively-formed projectiles, which can disable armoured

vehicles, as well as night vision goggles and rifle sights were among the kit found in the arms dump.

The discovery was a huge morale boost for the troops who were satisfied they were making a "real dent" in the terrorists' capability. Their action followed the

capture of a key terror suspect by Iraqi forces. Army spokesman Maj David Gell said: "This success proves the effectiveness of Multi-National Forces patrols to deny the rogue militias the means to hinder the progress being made in bringing stability to southern Iraq."

Rifles reflections

BRITISH troops are resolutely and decisively taking the battle to the enemy in southern Iraq, a series of figures released by a battle-group suggests.

The statistics, from the 2nd Battalion, The Rifles, reveal that soldiers fired nearly 36,000 7.62 and 28,000 5.56 rounds and conducted nearly 40 strike operations in a single six-month tour. The 600 troops in the Basra Palace-based battle-group calculated they had inflicted around 140 casualties on the enemy while detaining 80 terror suspects.

On the other side of the coin, however, the British soldiers endured more than 1,000 incoming mortar rounds, were fired on with rifles and rocket-propelled grenades no less than 400 times and had to deal with nearly 30 improvised explosive device contacts. Three members of the battalion were killed in enemy attacks.

During the Op Telic 9 tour, the troops conducted a series of high-profile actions,

sending a clear message to rogue militias that their activities would not be tolerated. Among them were Op Arezzo, in which soldiers, backed up by Warrior armoured vehicles and Challenger 2 tanks, swooped on the homes of terror suspects, and Op Phoenix, in which British personnel hit back after an attack on a coalition base.

The figures were released as returning troops from 2 Rifles were reunited with their loved ones in emotional scenes at Weeton Barracks near Blackpool.

Lt Col Justin Maciejewski, CO of 2 Rifles, said: "It has been a very hard tour and we have been through a lot together, but we have finished much stronger.

"We had a tough mission but we have achieved what was asked of us. I am proud of that," he added.

"It is great to be back with our families, but our thoughts are with those still recovering from wounds or grieving the loss of loved ones."

Troops mourn loss of Helmand heroes

Fighting in southern Afghan province claims lives of four British soldiers

ENEMY action claimed the lives of four highly capable British soldiers in a black month for troops deployed in southern Afghanistan's dangerous Helmand province.

The 1st Battalion, Grenadier Guards, bore the brunt of the losses, with valued soldiers Gdsm Daniel Probyn and Gdsm Neil Downes killed in separate contacts.

Cpl Darren Bonner, of the 1st Battalion, The Royal Anglian Regiment and LCpl Paul Sandford, of the 1st Battalion, The Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters Regiment, also died as the International Security Assistance Force (Isaf) continued actions against the Taliban.

Gdsm Probyn had been involved in an operation to clear a Taliban-occupied compound near the town of Garmisir during a night-time operation on May 25.

As troops assaulted enemy positions, there was an explosion in which the 22-year-old soldier was killed. Four other personnel were injured, three seriously.

Gdsm Probyn, who was from Tipton, joined the Army in 2003 and had already completed two tours of Iraq.

He was a keen sportsman and dedicated rugby player.

His colleague, Gdsm Neil Downes, died from his injuries after an explosion hit his vehicle during a patrol with the Afghan National Army in Sangin on June 9. He had been taking part in an operation to widen irrigation ditches for local people.

Known as Tony, the 20-year-old joined the Army three years ago and had completed a tour of Iraq. He was remembered as a consummate professional and steadfast friend.

Lt Col Carew Hatherley, CO of 1 Gren Gds, said of Gdsm Downes: "Over the previous 12 weeks he had fought alongside fellow Grenadiers and Afghan National Army soldiers against the Taliban, never once flinching from his duty.

Of Gdsm Probyn, the CO added: "He was a larger-than-life character both on and off duty and was held in the highest regard by all who served alongside him.

"He gave his life in selfless service to his country and his courage is an inspiration to us all. He will be sorely missed and never forgotten."

Cpl Bonner, who was the lead signaler with A (Norfolk) Company, 1 R An-



● Gdsm Daniel Probyn



● Cpl Darren Bonner



● Gdsm Neil Downes



● LCpl Paul Sandford

gian, was killed when a roadside bomb exploded near his convoy in the Hyderabad area on May 28.

The NCO, who was 31, had served nearly 15 years in the Army and had been on operational deployments in the Balkans and Northern Ireland with his regiment's 2nd Battalion.

He joined 1 R Anglian in 2004, and later served as a member of the signals platoon in Iraq. A devout Christian, he was remembered for his compassion and courage.

Lt Col Stuart Carver, CO of 1 R Anglian, said: "Cpl Darren Bonner was a superb soldier who had a genuine compassion for his fellow men. A larger-than-life character, he has been a mainstay of the battalion for many years and will be sorely missed."

LCpl Sandford had been moving to clear a Taliban compound in the Upper Gereshk Valley area when he was shot and mortally wounded on June 6. He was pronounced dead after being flown to Camp Bastion for treatment.

The 23-year-old, who was known as Sandy, joined the Army in 2002 and had been on operations in Afghanistan and Northern Ireland.

He had recently celebrated his first wedding anniversary.

His CO, Lt Col Richard Westley, said the young soldier's death was a huge loss. He added: "LCpl Sandford died as he had lived, fearlessly leading from the front. While his loss weighs heavily on our hearts, it strengthens our resolve to pursue our goals here and strive to uphold the standards that he set and maintained."

Helicopter tragedy

A PROMISING and much-respected British Army photographer was among those killed when a US military helicopter crashed in southern Afghanistan.

Cpl Mike Gilyeat, who was attached to the media operations team, was among seven personnel who died when the Chinook went down in Helmand province on May 30. The 28-year-old member of the Royal Military Police had been filming US troops as part of a wider piece he was producing on an alliance operation around Kajaki.

Born in Hanover, Germany, the NCO

joined the Army in 2002, following in his father's footsteps. He had served in Iraq and volunteered for deployment to Afghanistan to diversify into news photography.

His CO, Lt Col Mike Smith, said: "Cpl Gilyeat was a gifted and enthusiastic member of the team who had made a real difference in the time he had been in theatre.

"Despite being an experienced and proud military policeman he was thriving in his first employment as a news photographer. He had already produced several powerful images."



● Cpl Mike Gilyeat



Firm foundations: With Taliban fighters cleared from key areas, British sappers from 26 Engineer Regiment have been helping dig vital irrigation channels

Building the peace

Soldiers move to secure long-term future by winning hearts and minds

BRITISH troops have been showing their versatility after helping to set up a wealth of reconstruction projects in southern Afghanistan.

Having ousted Taliban fighters from key areas, soldiers from 1 Mechanized Brigade set about talking to residents of Helmand province and finding out how their lives could be improved.

Several reconstruction projects have already been started, including the digging of irrigation ditches to improve water flow to isolated communities and the laying of foundations for a new school.

Sappers have also been rolling out mine awareness training for youngsters at risk from unexploded ordnance.

It is believed that there are hundreds of thousands of the explosive devices in Helmand, many dating back to the Soviet invasion of nearly 30 years ago.

Soldiers from 26 Engineer Regiment were delighted with the warm reception they received in the settlement of Gereshk after setting up the first awareness session.

Troops from the Afghan National Army received specialist instruction from the sappers before they took the lead in telling the youngsters how to mark and report mines.

Capt Anna Swan, RE, who helped arrange the session, said it was vital that

children were fully aware of the dangers of the explosive devices.

Capt Swan said: "Several varieties of mine still scar the earth and, over an average month, up to 100 Afghans are injured or killed by mines. Most of them

are women and children and, tragically, one such device claimed the lives of three children in the upper Gereshk Valley. We hope to save thousands of young lives being ended needlessly."

● **Afghan advances – Pages 17-19**

Firearms accident

A LOYAL and gifted soldier who was a "pillar of strength to those around him" lost his life in a tragic firearms accident in Afghanistan, the MoD has confirmed.

LCpl George Davey of the 1st Battalion, The Royal Anglian Regiment, died in the incident at the British base at Sangin, Helmand province, on May 20. The circumstances surrounding what happened are currently being investigated by the Royal Military Police.

LCpl Davey, who was 23, joined the Army in 2004 and was remembered for being a loyal and selfless commander who worked tirelessly for the benefit of others. Deployed to southern Afghanistan in April, the married father-of-two was a capable soldier and had proved his

bravery in a close-quarter engagement with the enemy. As a section second-in-command of 5 Platoon, B (Suffolk) Company, he had provided fearless support to his platoon sergeant during the contact.

Lt Col Stuart Carver, CO of 1 R Anglian, said the battalion's thoughts were with LCpl Davey's loved ones.

He added: "He was a popular NCO who, in true Viking style, always put his men's interests before his own. His death is a tragic loss."

Defence Secretary Des Browne echoed Lt Col Carver's sentiments. "The loss of such a promising young soldier is very tragic. I extend my heartfelt condolences to all who knew him. His family and friends are in my thoughts and prayers."



● LCpl George Davey

One for the road?



Army Alcohol Aware





Superstar line-up: The White Stripes with Chelsea Pensioners Jim Hughes, left, and Bill Bailey, right

Chelsea rock

Royal Hospital's Pensioners earn their Stripes

In the ornately decorated State Apartments of central London's Royal Hospital Chelsea, 20 Army veterans were the proud holders of one of music's golden tickets.

Just hours later, diehard fans of the White Stripes would be queuing around the block in a desperate attempt to gain access to a separate evening concert by the American band.

But as the assembled seniors, resplendent in their traditional scarlet coats, sat in their seats just metres from the stage and listened to a six-song set, it was the world-famous brother and sister act who seemed the most starstruck.

"We won't take up too much of your time, I heard it's your cocktail hour," lead singer Jack White told the pensioners after belting out a 45-minute set with sister Meg. "Besides letting us into your home, my sister and I also want to thank you for your service to your country and to the world, especially the USA."

The White Stripes organised the unusual concert ahead of their evening performance in Crofton Park, the proceeds from which were donated to the Chelsea Pensioners' Appeal.

The White Stripes deliberately scaled down their volume for the acoustic gig, but Meg's delicate percussion and Jack's skilful piano and guitar shone through on *St James Infirmary Blues*, a song originally made famous by Louis Armstrong. Knowing smiles from the pensioners greeted the performance's penultimate song, a cover of 1950s classic *You Belong to Me*.

● A total of £22.6m has so far been raised towards the hospital's £35m appeal to build and equip a new infirmary and provide modernised living accommodation.

For more information visit www.chelsea-pensioners.org.uk

● The Enemy – Pages 76-77

Queen's Birthday Honours

CBE: Brig A W E Brister, late AGC; Brig I D Cholerton, late RRW; Col D G Hayes MBE, late RGR; Col G S Lane, late RE; Brig H C G Willing, late RGJ; Brig J N Wolsey OBE, late AGC.

OBE: Lt Col C W Edwards TD, R Signals TA; Lt Col R C J Goodin MBE, R Anglian; Lt Col D J Harrison, Rifles; Lt Col D J Hudson MBE, RA; Lt Col N Johnson, RRF; Lt Col D W McCreath, Int Corps; Lt Col D F Minden MBE, RAMC; WO1 W D G Mott, WG; Lt Col T P Robinson, 9/12 L; A/Col A Wilson TD, Yorkshire ACF; A/Col J S Wilson, Derbyshire ACF.

MBE: Maj D Allen, RLC; WO1 W H Arkley, Rifles; Capt E Asquez, Royal Gibraltar Regiment; Capt C J Baines, RRF; Capt J S Beattie, Coldm Gds; WO2 M A Billingham, Para; Maj C R Boryer, RGR; Maj A M Britton, RTR; Maj M E Brown, RA; WO1 D Bunting, APTC; Maj D R Cockwell, RE; Maj D N Corrie, RLC; Maj N B Cullen, R Signals; Maj A J W Davidson, Lancs; Lt Col J F Dawson, RA; Maj D Dobson, Scots; Maj J P Donnachie, RLC; Maj J M Donovan, Scots; CSgt E Duff, Scots; Capt D N Earl TD, RAMC TA; Capt I P Felstead, PWRR TA; Maj M J Ford, RLC; WO1 H H French, Lancs; WO1 P W Golding, RE; Maj S M Gordon, RLC TA; WO1 G J Green, REME; LCpl A J Haworth, RAMC; Capt D C Hinxman, WFR; SSgt G Hobbs, RE TA; Maj J D Holman, RE; Lt Col N P Humpherson, RLC; Maj B M P Inglis, Gren Gds; Maj M G Jenkins, RE; WO2 S R L John, REME; Capt M Kirchel, REME; Lt Col C A Lockhart, RHG/D; Capt G A McGown, Scots; Maj P C Morton TD, RAMC TA; Maj C M Moye, R Signals; Lt Col M B Murdoch, R Irish, WO1 S M Nichols, IG; Maj P T Parks, RA; WO1 S A Petts, AAC; WO1 M Quaife, AGC; Capt A T G Ravera, RLC TA; Lt Col T P Renwick, RE; Maj I D Scattergood, RLC; A/Lt Col A J Sharkey, Warwickshire ACF; Capt C B Smith, Rifles; Maj S J Castle-Smith, AGC; WO1 T A Stevens, RLC; Capt K D Tharby, R Signals; Maj C Whitworth, RLC; Maj R W Woodissee MC, R Anglian; Capt L P Woodhouse, AAC; WO1 L K York, AGC.

QVRM: Maj M Bradley TD, RLC TA; Col N A Fitch TD, late R Anglian TA; SSgt H Johnson, Para TA; Maj P E Quegan, Lancs TA.



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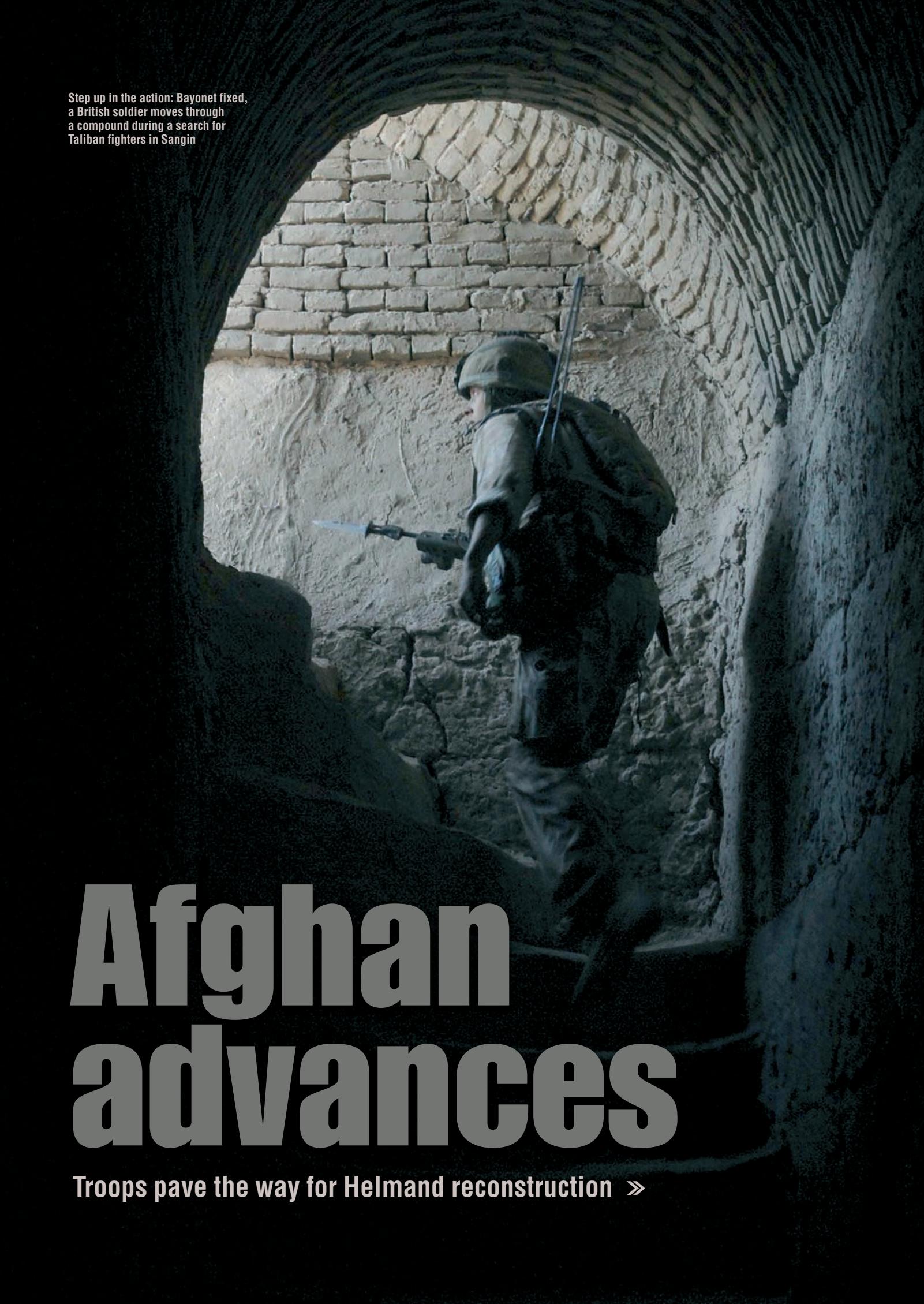
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Step up in the action: Bayonet fixed, a British soldier moves through a compound during a search for Taliban fighters in Sangin



Afghan advances

Troops pave the way for Helmand reconstruction »



Report: Cliff Caswell
Pictures: Cpl Adrian Harlen RLC

BATTLE-hardened British troops have been facing daily clashes with "a cunning and determined enemy" as they continue to wrestle southern Afghanistan from the Taliban.

According to commanders, soldiers from 12 Mechanized Brigade have been involved in frequent contacts but are confident that the fight for Helmand province is being won.

Along with allies from Nato's International Security Assistance Force (Isaf) and counterparts from the Afghan National Army, troops have been involved in a series of actions to oust the Taliban from key areas and pave the way for reconstruction to begin.

"Our soldiers have been under



Main picture, Compound clearance:
Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, The Royal Anglian Regiment and elements of 1st Battalion, Grenadier Guards drop in on a suspected Taliban position

Above right, Desert dash: A Task Force Helmand convoy throws up dust as it snakes its way through the Sangin Valley

Below right, Future plans: Dialogue with village elders will help determine the most pressing reconstruction projects

Below left, Cold calling: Pte Barney Scrivener, 1 R Anglian joins the search

contact every day," an Army spokesman told *Soldier*. "The attacks have been across the board – everything from a couple of rockets fired at a compound to sporadic firing and drive-by shootings. It has been consistent but morale among the troops out here has been very high."

In the latest of a high-profile series of ops, British commanders hinted that there would be further actions in key areas of Helmand as this issue went to press.

It was anticipated that there could be initiatives focusing on consolidating the gains already made, as well as bolstering the infrastructure to take the battle to the enemy.

The current operations are part of a wider series of actions that have proved highly successful. Soldiers recently



swept through the Sangin Valley, smashing Taliban positions and sending a clear message that the rule of law would prevail.

Among those involved in hunting down the Taliban diehards were soldiers of the 1st Battalion, The Royal Anglian Regiment.

During Op Lastay Kulang ("pickaxe handle" in Pashto), the men of B (Suffolk) Company advanced from the town of Sangin to Kajaki, clearing the area of rogue forces as they went.

Sgt Michael Woodrow said: "The first day of the operation was the most aggressive and intense. RPGs were flying around and we had two mine strikes within 24 hours. It was a long op but the lads coped very well."

The battalion's A (Norfolk) Company conducted a similar search for the enemy further north.

"Our job was to clear Taliban who we knew were waiting for us somewhere in the area," Pte Terry North explained. "It was a bit of a blower and physically demanding.

"We patrolled throughout the day but as soon as we were on the ground RPGs and small-arms fire hit us."

Pte Tom Duggy added: "It was pretty exciting because every time we searched a compound, we did not know what to expect. In the end, Taliban elements were destroyed or fled from the area."

Brig John Lorimer, the British commander of Task Force Helmand and 12 Mechanized Brigade, said his soldiers and officers were satisfied at the steady progress.

He added: "To date the operation has been very successful – we have managed to clear the areas we wished to clear and have now engaged with local nationals and tribal elders. We're helping to bring reconstruction and development. Afghanistan is a complicated environment – it's hot, the conditions are pretty difficult and, after the winter break, the Taliban have increased in numbers."

Brig Lorimer admitted the enemy was "cunning and determined" but was confident that the terrorists were being

beaten and the confidence of local people won.

"When we close with the Taliban we beat them – but the critical part is what happens after that," the commander said. "We're now into

the phase of talking to the locals, speaking to the tribal leaders, finding out what their needs are and showing them the importance of supporting the government of Afghanistan."

Brig Lorimer acknowledged that bringing the democratic ideal to some areas of Helmand would be a challenge but said that troops were committed to the task.

"It's a tough job out here, but we always knew that it would be tough," he said. "We have got an important job to do, a mission we believe in. Nato and Task Force Helmand are taking the fight to the enemy."

As previously reported, securing the Sangin Valley and weeding out Taliban resistance has been a key aim for both Isaf and Afghan National Army troops.

Last month *Soldier* revealed how a number of new bases were under construction in the town of Gareshk to consolidate the successes of Op Silicon earlier in the year. ■





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Moving on: Op Banner, the British Army's longest-running military campaign, comes to an end on July 31

Report: Andrea Webb
Pictures: *Soldier* archive

THE British Army's longest-running military campaign, codenamed Op Banner, will draw to a close at the end of this month.

The 38-year continuous commitment has involved the service of more than 300,000 soldiers and tragically resulted in significant sacrifice and suffering – 763 Service personnel were killed and 6,116 injured as a direct result of terrorist action.

Support to the Police Service of Northern Ireland (formerly the Royal Ulster Constabulary) in public order and counter-terrorist operations began on August 14, 1969 when soldiers were deployed onto the streets of Londonderry and subsequently Belfast to help restore order after a confrontation between Nationalist residents of the Bogside, police and members of the Apprentice Boys of Derry, culminated in serious rioting.

Since 1969, the sheer scale of the military's presence in Northern Ireland in response to the deteriorating security situation has been staggering. An entire generation of Servicemen and women have deployed on countless tours of duty covering the hotspots in Belfast, Londonderry, East Tyrone, Fermanagh and South Armagh.

Before violence broke out in the late 1960s there were just three infantry battalions garrisoned in Northern Ireland, but numbers rose in response to serious civil unrest and the increasing terrorist threat. At the height of the troubles in 1972 there were approximately 25,700 Army personnel deployed, with 15 battalions stationed in Belfast alone.

The countdown to the end of Op Banner began on August 1, 2005 after the Provisional IRA announced the end of its "war". Since then there has been a steady reduction in the number of military personnel and installations as part of a phased process of normalisation.

By July 31, troop numbers will have reduced to a peacetime garrison of no more than 5,000, made up of units from 19 (Light) Brigade and elements of RAF Aldergrove. The three Home Service battalions of The Royal Irish Regiment will officially disband and



Border duty: A Black Watch soldier remains vigilant at the permanent vehicle checkpoint on the main A1 road from Belfast-to-Dublin; Street wise (right): LCpl Colin Easton, BW, on a foot patrol in South Armagh in 1991

just ten military bases out of an original total of 105 will remain in use. From August 1, a new regional brigade will be formed – 38 (Irish) Brigade – made up of mostly Territorial Army personnel.

Well-known campaign infrastructure such as Bessbrook Mill, formerly the busiest heliport in Europe, the controversial but vital towers of South Armagh and the observation post atop Divis Flats no longer exist.

Although Northern Ireland is still a deeply divided society, significant political progress has been achieved in recent months.

On May 8, the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) leader Rev Ian Paisley and Martin McGuinness of Sinn Féin

took control of the Northern Ireland Assembly. This new power-sharing government, once an unimaginable concept, offers a real prospect for lasting peace.

Gen Sir Mike Jackson, former Chief of the General Staff, wrote in his foreword to an analysis of Op Banner: "The military operations which started in Northern Ireland in 1969 will, without a doubt, be seen as one of the most important campaigns ever fought by the British Army and its fellow

Services. That campaign is the longest to date; one of the very few waged on British soil; and one of the very few ever brought to a successful conclusion by the armed forces of a developed nation against an irregular force.

Service in Northern Ireland has affected a whole generation of servicemen and women

TROUBLED TIMELINE

1100s – First Anglo-Norman intervention in Ireland came in 1167. Henry II of England landed with a large army in 1171, and by 1175 had gained nominal control of most of the island.

1600s – 'Plantation of Ulster' when English and Scottish Protestants settled on land confiscated from Irish Catholics

1641 – Irish Rebellion against the Plantation resulted in inter-communal violence

1690 – The Battle of the Boyne

1801 – Act of Union binds Ireland and Great Britain

1916 – The Easter Rising organised by the Irish Republican Brotherhood. The rebellion was crushed by British forces – both sides suffered major losses.

1919-1921 – Anglo-Irish War between the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and British forces

1921 – Establishment of an Irish Free State of 26 counties, with the six counties of Northern Ireland remaining British

1956 – IRA launched six-year border campaign. British soldiers garrisoned in Northern Ireland helped the Royal Ulster Constabulary guard border areas.





"Service in Northern Ireland has affected a whole generation of Servicemen and women. But while honouring their service it is critically important to learn from their successes, which were considerable. It is no less important to learn from mistakes, where they were made, and to ensure that they are not repeated."

Many of the lessons learned during the campaign have been adapted and exported elsewhere in the world. Operations in the Balkans, Sierra Leone, Iraq and Afghanistan have benefited from the training, tactics, equipment and experience developed in Northern Ireland.

Counter-terrorism capabilities such as high-risk search techniques and equipment, world-class explosive ordnance disposal expertise, intelligence-gathering, sophisticated

surveillance equipment, electronic counter measures and developments in force protection remain a living legacy of Op Banner.

Over the coming months, the pages of *Soldier* and our website will chronicle the key events during the four main decades of the military campaign.

Next month's Op Banner coverage will focus on the Ulster Defence Regiment and its successor, The Royal Irish Regiment (Home Service), highlighting the contribution, commitment and courage of the locally recruited men and women of its ranks who were determined to "do their bit" despite the considerable threat to themselves and their families.

Soldiers, serving or retired, are invited to email recollections of their time in Northern Ireland to aewebb@soldiermagazine.co.uk ■



See Op Banner features online
www.soldiermagazine.co.uk

1967 – The Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA) formed

April 1969 – British soldiers guarded utilities such as reservoirs, pipelines and power stations against loyalist attacks



1968 – Civil Rights march in Londonderry resulted in serious rioting and is considered by many as the beginning of the Troubles



August 1969 – Battle of the Bogside: Serious rioting erupted in Londonderry on August 12. British Army units are deployed on Aug 14.

September 1969 – British soldiers constructed "peacelines" between Catholic and Protestant areas in Belfast



December 1969 – A split formed in the IRA, creating the Official IRA and Provisional IRA

Big Trouble

From peace to public disorder – veterans recall beginning of Op Banner

Report: Andrea Webb

Picture: *Soldier* archive

IT was the summer of '69 and temperatures were rising in more ways than one in Northern Ireland. Catholic civil rights demands had not been met and as the loyalist marching season approached sectarian tensions were inflamed.

On August 12, 1969, full-scale violence erupted on the streets of Londonderry and Belfast after the Apprentice Boys marched past the Catholic Bogside. The Royal Ulster Constabulary intervened and within hours the rioting had escalated.

The intensity of violence resulted in the deployment of the British Army on August 14 and 15 to relieve an increasingly beleaguered police force.

Lt Col (Retd) Mike Jelf and Lt Col (Retd) Jack Daw, formerly of the 2nd Battalion, The Queen's Regiment, were based at Palace Barracks between 1968 and 1970. Both men served in the same platoon – Mike as a second lieutenant and Jack as a lance corporal – and were among the first to be deployed on the streets of Belfast that fateful summer.

"When we first arrived Northern Ireland was a very relaxed, jolly place and for the first year it was a 'hunting, shooting, fishing and socialising' posting," Mike Jelf explained. "We lived there as if there was no border at all – the local people were lovely and we regularly headed south to Dublin.

"It was a thoroughly enjoyable place, not only for the soldiers and officers but their families loved it there too."

"Sunday night was the Naafi dance," recalled Jack Daw. "You were allowed to go down to the guardroom and sign in your girlfriend. We were there for two years and if I am not mistaken 108 officers and soldiers married local girls – quite a large proportion of an understrength unit."

The battalion busied itself with training, and deployed to Canada on Exercise Pond Jump East in 1968 but by April 1969 the situation had started to change in Northern Ireland.

"We found ourselves guarding vulnerable points (VPs)," explained Mike. "There had been loyalist bomb attacks on reservoirs and electricity supplies causing power cuts in Belfast so we were spread over the whole province.

"We finished looking after those VPs

in early July 1969," he said. "By then it was the Orange Order marching season, civil rights marches were in full swing and rioting had broken out in Londonderry. B Coy, 2 Queens deployed to HMS *Sea Eagle* (later Ebrington Barracks) at the end of July, where we watched the rioting in the city from the parade square as the RUC returned to camp bleeding and battered. We weren't deployed that weekend and returned to Palace Barracks thinking we never would be."

Finally, amid widespread disorder and destruction, the Army was deployed onto the streets of Belfast on August 15, 1969. They drove out of camp, debussed on the Shankill Road, got into formation and marched down Percy Street.

"The battalion had done riot drills for real in Hong Kong in 1967," explained Jack. "Our colonial-style formation drills weren't really designed for the situation in Belfast, where you couldn't tell who was who and didn't know which way to look at times. It was not long until we adopted a more circumspect approach."

"The place was in chaos and the situation was very tense," Mike recalled. "The scenes were reminiscent of a war zone, with burnt-out buses and cars in the streets, houses gutted by fire, gas mains roaring, the rumble of falling masonry and the streets themselves were littered with the debris of days of fighting – with every conceivable form of missile from bottles to iron bars.

"This came as quite a shock to us," he said. "Perhaps if we had been somewhere abroad it may not have been so stark – but this was in the United Kingdom in 1969.

"We started at the top of the street talking to Protestants and by the time we got half way down the population had changed and we were now among Catholics. We were welcomed by both factions with open arms.

"We had no allegiances whatsoever; we were there to be a human wall between the two rioting factions and to support the RUC and B Specials who had been facing the rioting alone until then.

"We then got down to the bottom of Percy Street and onto the Falls Road

and we stayed there for at least the next 48 hours. On the first night we slept on the streets. Then on the second night I remember a lovely lady, who lived in a very small two-up two-down terrace house, opened her door to us and said 'I have made room in the bedrooms upstairs, move some of your soldiers in here.' We did and slept on the floor.

"We were at the mercy of the local population initially and as far as generosity was concerned you couldn't fault either side."

"We didn't see our colour sergeant for about 48 hours," Jack added. "I remember our first proper meal was fish and chips, and it was just a greasy congealed mess because he couldn't get through the town to get to us and had been carrying it in the back of his truck for about a day trying to locate the platoons.

"We must have looked in a sorry state, we weren't dressed for what we were doing," he said. "We still had the old olive green uniform. Body armour appeared some weeks later. It was ex-American, last used in Vietnam and still had their names on it. We had the SLR rifle and had to take our bayonets off after the first week because they were seen as too offensive.

"We had one radio per platoon and a blanket each to sleep on."

Aside from the ongoing public order duties through the winter, the first significant operation in which the battalion was involved was 39 Brigade's cordon and search of the Falls in the summer of 1970. "This was a major operation to search and clear a whole lot of streets in the Catholic no-go areas and it was there that we suffered our first serious casualties," said Mike.

"A number of soldiers received gunshot wounds and a few civilians died. Lots of weapons and ammunition were discovered. But that operation seriously upset the Catholic population of the Falls and we weren't seen to be neutral from then on. One can only speculate that it was then that the tide turned, it was no longer just rioting, and the situation had taken a more serious step forward. The IRA had become involved."

"When I was commissioned in August 1968 my friends from

'We thought we would be there for a few days or weeks but were on and off the streets of Belfast for more than a year'



Destruction zone: Following widespread rioting in August 1969 the bruised and battered streets of Belfast were littered with burnt-out buses and cars

Picture: Keystone Press

Protection patrol, right: During the spring of 1969 Army units helped guard vulnerable points in Northern Ireland after serious sabotage to water pipelines and electricity supplies

Sandhurst were posted to Hong Kong, Gibraltar, Malta, Singapore, and Germany and I was the laughing stock, going off to Northern Ireland to an unknown barracks in Holywood." he added. "Ironically, a year later, everyone in the Infantry wanted to be there. It was suddenly the focal point for operations.

"We thought we would be there for a few days or weeks but were on and off the streets of Belfast for more than a year. We were very proud of what we achieved but it was just the beginning of Op Banner.

"We could never have imagined the situation lasting 38 years." ■



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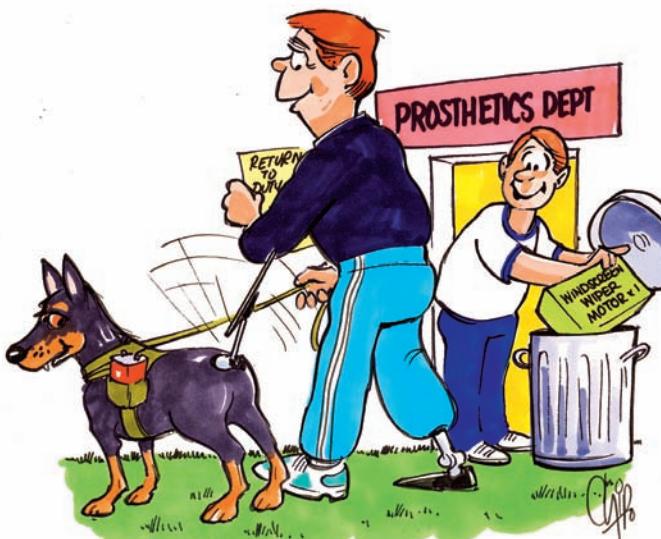
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Dark skies

Black-out for air despatchers as they head into the drop zones of Iraq ➤



Lights out: Cpl Gary Spriggs, RLC, stands by with night vision goggles as he limbers up for a mission over Iraq



Report: Cliff Caswell
Pictures: Graeme Main

IN the evening humidity of a sprawling United States air base perched on the shores of the Persian Gulf, British soldiers are taking a well-earned break.

Beer ration cards are out and the three-bottle allocation is being steadily chalked up as the night plods on. From the TV room there are cheers and groans from football supporters. Chelsea, it seems, have just scored the winner against ailing West Ham.

However for SSgt Steve Ford, who is taking advantage of a reprieve from Qatar's daytime heat by talking to his team in the recreation area outside, the next 24 hours promise to be anything but relaxing. The following evening the NCO and his Royal Logistic Corps colleagues will board a C-130 Hercules

of Lyneham-based 47 Squadron, Royal Air Force, before heading out of Al Udeid airbase for an undisclosed drop zone somewhere in Iraq.

Clad in flameproof camouflage overalls, helmet, flak jacket and wearing night vision goggles to see in the blacked-out cargo hold, the men will deliver vital supplies to British soldiers serving on long-range desert patrols.

SSgt Ford has a key job – he is the commander of 47 Air Despatch Squadron's Qatar detachment backing up troops on Op Telic. Tonight the imminent drop, as well as the safety of his crewmen, are very much on his mind.

"I have done a few of these sorties now, but I still get a bit apprehensive," he admits. "We've had a few incidences

where our observers have called out a ground-to-air threat.

"But we all know that this is an important job. On the next drop we are taking 13,000 litres of water and 1,200 24-hour ration packs out for the troops.

"We're in demand."

When the 47 AD Sqn crews first arrived in theatre four years ago, their role barely made a footnote in the acres of newspaper space dedicated to ground ops.

Pressed into action as door observers, keeping watch for hostile fire, their contribution to Telic was a limited affair. Now the situation has been turned on its head – the squadron has one of the most vital support roles.

With British troops conducting long-range desert patrols in remote areas of Iraq, air re-supply is in huge demand.

"I have done a few of these sorties now, but I still get a bit apprehensive,"



And with the onset of the punishing summer months, when temperatures can top 50C, the squadron is expecting a busy time.

But it is not a job without risk. Flying in theatre is neither simple nor straightforward and the dangers have been borne out by a steady stream of attacks on aircraft in recent years.

Last year an operational decision was made to pull the C-130 fleet back from its previous base at Basra air station and relocate it to Qatar. For the Army crews, the move has enabled them to get on with their job and the important role of packing and loading kit without the threat of mortar or rocket attack.

"We have the perfect set-up here at Al Udeid," reckons Cpl Gary Spriggs, one of the detachment's crewmen and a Territorial Army volunteer. "You have plenty of support, as well as all the equipment you need."



"As it is a safer environment here than in Iraq, you can be more relaxed and concentrate on the more dangerous and demanding side of the job when you take off."

And from details being discussed by the soldiers, the next sortie certainly promises to be demanding. Having spent days packing the rations and kit, the four-strong air despatch crew will face hours in the gruelling conditions of the Hercules and will have the ultimate task of getting the load to where it is needed.

Climbing out of Qatar, the soldiers will have little time to work with the load while the cabin lights are on. A total black-out will ensue as soon as the aircraft enters Iraqi airspace. The soldiers will then find themselves in the surreal green world of their night vision goggles as the Hercules carries them towards the target drop zone.

"We stay high for the transit into the area before the pilot descends to the drop height," says Cpl Spriggs, who has swapped his life as a civilian scuba diving instructor to take to the skies. "There are known danger areas out in theatre and obviously the pilot will aim to stay beyond the range of certain weapon systems."

"From the moment the door on the Hercules opens to when it closes takes around five minutes or so. We communicate with the troops on the ground using code words, so we know if there have been any problems or if we have been compromised."

As the aircraft climbs back up to higher altitude after the drop, the crews can then make their way back to base on the final stretch of a sortie that has taken several hours to complete.

The relentless pace of ops will continue as soon as the team lands. Their minds will now be focused on the next drop. They will be back in the hangar, packing rations and getting ready for another trip into the hostile night. They can expect little respite in

this demanding three months on tour.

But despite the high physical and mental demands of the Iraq operation, members of the small air despatch team are proud of the role they are fulfilling in theatre. And as they go through the checklists for their mission as the evening cools, nobody is in any doubt that the vital role they are playing is well worth the risks.

"It's been a very smooth mission here," sums up Cpl James Smith, a crew commander at the detachment. "The 47 Sqn RAF guys are really good to work with and we all know that we are delivering vital stores to our soldiers on the ground – it is a great feeling watching those loads go off the ramp." ■

Main picture, Final preparations: Cpl Smudge Smith secures a load as the 47 Air Despatch Squadron Qatar detachment prepares for another sortie over Iraq

Above, Supply run: Cpl Smith and SSgt Martin Holdstock pack the kit that will sustain troops on long-range patrols

Below, Fat Albert: A C-130 Hercules on a sortie over the desert



Picture: Royal Air Force

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From ABC to EOD: OCdt Georgina Kemp hopes to become one of the RLC's bomb-disposal élite after completing her studies

Report: Karen Thomas
Picture: Steve Dock

WHEN Officer Cadet Andy Bayley thought about a future beyond his GCSEs he did not imagine pursuing an engineering degree and a career in the Army.

At 16, he felt his options for further education were limited. But despite little encouragement to study A-levels and no family background in the military, OCdt Bayley will soon graduate in construction management and be off to Sandhurst courtesy of the Defence Technical Undergraduate Scheme (DTUS).

Open to sponsored students from all three Services and the Civil Service, the scheme was introduced in response to the 2001 Defence Training Review. It highlighted the need to safeguard a steady, long-term stream of engineers and logisticians into the Army.

DTUS joined forces with academic centres of excellence such as Loughborough University and the School of Engineering and Applied Science at Aston University, to give sixth-formers like OCdt Bayley the chance to study for a degree. In return for sponsoring the undergraduates to the tune of £4,000 a year, they, in turn, make a commitment to spend at least three years as an officer in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers,

Royal Engineers, Royal Signals or Royal Logistic Corps.

Like many undergraduates facing hefty debts after three or four years of drawing student loans, OCdt Bayley admitted he would not have gone to university without sponsorship but his motivation to apply to be on the scheme went beyond money. "I see my Army career as a positive thing rather than treating it as just paying back the Army," he told *Soldier*. "I know I want to be an officer, so I know I have to get a degree and that makes me motivated."

The Army's support doesn't stop once a student has chosen their degree and the bursary is in their bank account.

"Once a week we have a meeting with the CO when we discuss a progress report and upcoming coursework," explained OCdt Georgina Kemp, who is studying for a biochemistry degree with a view to a career in Explosive Ordnance Disposal with the RLC. "It makes you disciplined because you don't want to upset the CO by not handing in coursework."

Mentor and boss Lt Col Gordon Rae takes his role seriously. He emphasised the importance DTUS has in preparing well-rounded officers with life experience outside the Army.

"Our students are exposed to the real world. They must turn up to lessons and be responsible, sensible and hand in work on time," he said, adding how university

life makes them more self-sufficient.

As the Army is not just about drills and exercises, the DTUS students also get the opportunity to spend time with their unit during vacations. OCdt Bayley was on attachment in Cyprus when Lebanon's mass evacuation crisis occurred last summer and saw first hand his future role in managing such a situation.

DTUS offers an ideal solution to ensuring the Army has the high standard of engineering and technical skills it requires both on and off the battlefield. It also gives those who might not have considered studying for a degree the chance to further their education.

"The scheme is definitely a good idea," confirmed OCdt Kemp. "I would never have gone to university so I really appreciate being on this scheme, which is second to none." ■

You don't want to upset the CO by not handing in coursework

DTUS details

- Available at approved universities only
- Sponsoring corps are R Signals, REME, RE and RLC
- Sponsorship of £4,000 a year
- Weekly drill nights
- Vacation work placements with sponsoring corps
- Sandhurst officer training after graduation
- Minimum three years' Army service

Trailblazers

Army physical training instructors lead assault on nation's unhealthy habits

Report: Andrea Webb
Picture: Steve Dock

ADVANCES in medical science may have assigned some of the West's most contagious diseases to the annals of history but when it comes to the greatest causes of illness and premature death in the UK today, individual lifestyle choices are often at the root of the problem.

Take smoking for instance. This highly addictive habit kills an estimated 86,500 people a year in England alone and accounts for a third of all cancers and a seventh of all cases of cardiovascular disease. There is also evidence to support a direct link between smoking and increased musculoskeletal injury.

Although an estimated 70 per cent of England's ten million smokers want to quit, the efforts of the vast majority could fall by the wayside without expert advice and support.

In a bid to improve public health, the government has recommended the nationwide introduction of NHS-accredited health trainers – non-medical people, drawn from local communities, who will be trained to offer advice, motivation and practical assistance to those who want to adopt a healthier way of life and stick to it.

The Army – keen to reduce instances of illness and injury and maximise the number of its personnel who are fit for operations and training – has fully

'PTIs are excellent role models from a health and fitness point of view – they understand the Army's work hard, play hard ethos'

embraced the initiative and is now leading the way nationally.

Army Physical Training Corps instructors have been earmarked as the personnel most suitably qualified to take the health trainer concept forward and a specially tailored e-learning package, drawn up by military and civilian experts and accessed through the Defence Learning Portal, has already been incorporated into the PTI Class One course at the Army School of Physical Training in Aldershot.

By the end of the year, the interactive training package will have been

completed by the majority of existing APTC officers and instructors and the course will then be rolled out to All Arms PTIs from April 2008.

Once qualified, Army health trainers will be able to advise soldiers who, for example, wish to give up

smoking, increase their physical activity levels, prevent injuries, eat a more balanced diet, moderate their alcohol consumption or manage stress.

They will also be able to direct individuals towards wide-ranging support through links with unit medical officers and other members of the unit health team.

"PTIs are excellent role models from a health and fitness point of view," said training development officer Capt Mark Lewis, APTC. "Their background, expertise and diversity make them very well suited to take on the health trainer

role. PTIs understand the Army's work hard, play hard ethos. They have contact with all ranks all of the time and, armed with the right knowledge, they are best placed to bridge the gap between the military healthcare providers and serving personnel.

"The whole idea behind the health trainer is to look after your own specific community," he added.

"The issues that we face in the Army are no different from those in wider society – poor diet and nutrition, over eating, the effects of smoking, alcohol, and substance misuse.

"And although our problems may not be as acute as outside, we can't hide from the fact that we still have them. Hopefully the health trainer initiative will help us deal with them." ■

● **Healthy option – Page 90**



Kick the habit, not the bucket

● THE Army has launched its *Stand Easy – Breathe Easy* smoking cessation campaign in conjunction with this month's implementation of smoke-free legislation in England.

● MILITARY surveys show that up to 21 per cent of young soldiers start smoking within the first three months of joining the Army and that approximately 30 per cent of Army personnel are currently hooked on the habit.

● SMOKING is detrimental to operational effectiveness – it damages health and reduces fitness, stamina and endurance. Scientific evidence shows a strong link between smoking and increased injuries during training and on ops, resulting in high levels of downgradings and discharges.

● THE most common smoking-related illnesses affecting soldiers include persistent

coughing, breathing problems, raised blood pressure and poor circulation.

● SOLDIERS who smoke are also at risk of developing long-term illnesses such as cancer and are more prone to suffer heart attacks and strokes.

● ENCOURAGINGLY, increasing numbers of troops want to stop smoking.

Leading by example:
Army Physical Training
Corps instructors have
been earmarked as the
personnel best qualified
to pioneer the health
trainer concept



● MOST Army establishments within the UK and overseas now have trained smoking cessation advisers to give expert support and encouragement to those who wish to quit. Most Nicotine Replacement Therapies are available on prescription.

● FROM December 2007 all Army Physical Training Corps instructors will be qualified as Army health trainers to provide advice on the dangers of smoking, the benefits of not smoking and the key links between soldiers and smoking cessation advisers.

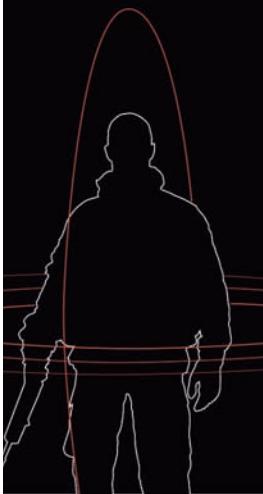
A large photograph of a person riding a bicycle, with a collage of small images showing various health-related activities like stretching, exercising, and eating fruit. The word 'HEALTH' is prominently displayed in large blue letters, followed by 'FIT FOR SERVICE FIT FOR LIFE' in a smaller blue font. The collage includes images of a person stretching, a person exercising, a person eating fruit, and a person in a green uniform with a green and white 'ARMY HEALTH' logo.

Ask your PTC! good health isn't only essential for your job; it's essential for life. A healthy life is a more enjoyable life, so it's in your interest to keep in good shape. Health affects everything you do; make sure you give yourself the best chance to live life to the full. A small change can make a big difference. After all, you're more than just a soldier.

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Bright idea: Waterwall is the world's first rapid deployment water-based blast mitigation system

Blast buster

Water-filled anti-terror tool set to report for duty with Army's EOD experts

Report: Andrea Webb

THE world's first rapid deployment blast mitigation system to use the high mass of water to dramatically reduce the effects of explosions has been launched after trials involving members of 11 Explosive Ordnance Disposal Regiment, Royal Logistic Corps.

Waterwall™ – a ground-breaking concept developed by Cintec International – comprises a range of self-inflating, water-filled structures which are capable of providing a high level of protection to people and property against a range of terrorist devices including those containing chemical, biological and radiological agents.

Manufactured from polyvinyl chloride (PVC) or neoprene-coated fabric, Waterwall structures are internally reinforced using a specialist stitching technique to enable them to maintain their shape and stability.

Before use, the structures are partially inflated with air to assist with handling and positioning. They are then filled with water, which displaces the air through a pressure relief valve.

The time needed to fill each unit varies depending on its size and the pressure of the water supply but typically takes ten minutes or less. The water can be emptied out and the unit stored for future use.

Waterwall products of varying shapes and sizes have been designed to contain and isolate devices ranging in size from a shoe to a car bomb. ■

These include the Mini Bin, Maxi Bin, EOD Bin and Ram Bag. The structural stability of the Waterwall design has also enabled Cintec International to produce a unit large enough to enclose a vehicle of up to seven tons and a range of blast panels that can be linked together and rapidly deployed to lessen the impact of explosions for checkpoint security and vehicle search purposes.

Trials conducted on behalf of the MoD and the Home Office in the UK have shown that Waterwall minimises collateral damage by more than 80 per cent. A number of Waterwall bins have already been purchased by 11 EOD Regiment, RLC to supplement the isolation bins already in service.

With prices starting from £985 for a Mini Bin, the cost-effective nature of the Waterwall range puts effective blast mitigation within the reach of every government and private organisation.

It is thought that in the future security professionals may deploy Waterwall systems in the same way as security cameras, fire extinguishers and sprinkler systems, with isolation bins being put on standby in buildings, passenger aircraft, trains and ships. ■

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- Inhibits the formation of a toxic gas cloud
- Can be pre-mixed with decontaminants to facilitate clean-up following a dirty bomb

Why Waterwall?

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- Rapid deployment
- Uses simple and inexpensive materials
- Accepts any type of water
- Easy to store, transport and use



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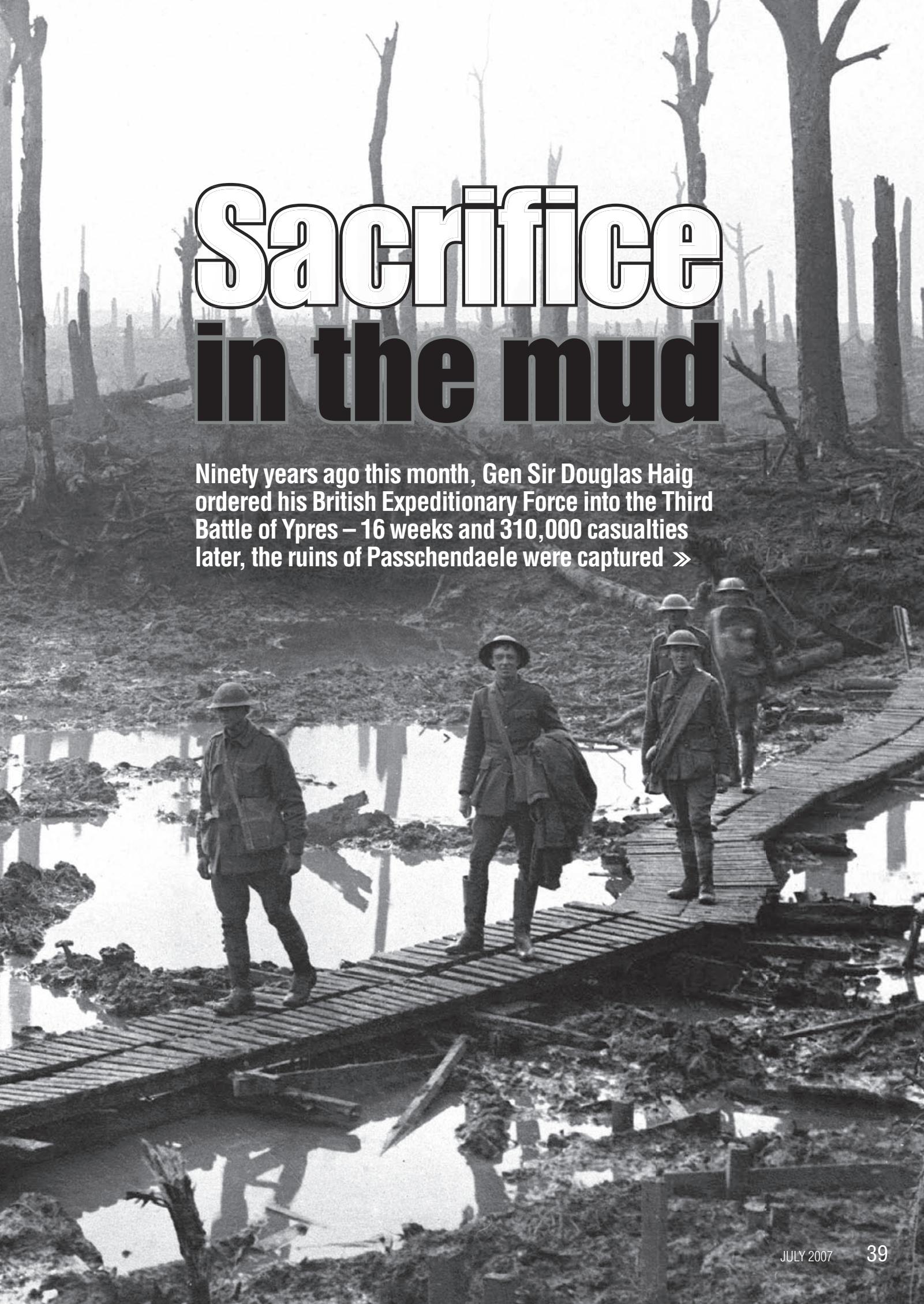


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Sacrifice in the mud



Ninety years ago this month, Gen Sir Douglas Haig ordered his British Expeditionary Force into the Third Battle of Ypres – 16 weeks and 310,000 casualties later, the ruins of Passchendaele were captured »

Report: John Elliott

THE Third Battle of Ypres began with a ten-day British bombardment which spewed five tons of high explosive onto every square yard of the front, churning up the ground over which Allied troops were to advance, destroying the Flemish drainage systems and the natural water tables below them, and ending any pretence of surprise.

When it began to rain heavily – the most sustained downpour in 30 years – the battlefield turned rapidly into a vast, muddy swamp which severely limited the mobility of the infantry and sucked up the dead, the dying, the weak and the wounded. Tens of thousands of British and Empire troops – Australia, New Zealand, Canada and South Africa also paid a terrible price – disappeared beneath the glutinous ooze during the final great battle of attrition of the First World War.

Yet eight weeks earlier the Allies had achieved a signal success with the capture of the Messines-Wytschaete Ridge after British tunnellers had planted 19 massive mines under the German trenches along Hill 60.

Haig resisted his commanders' urgings to strike immediately for Passchendaele's higher ground. Instead he spent two months meticulously planning the attack and putting his huge army in place.

Given time to prepare their defences in depth, the Germans contested every advance with machine-gun fire from impenetrable, well camouflaged

blockhouses and, for the first time, blistering mustard gas.

With the French Army in a state of mutiny elsewhere on the Western Front, the C-in-C believed he had no option but to commit the Germans to another meat-grinder of a battle. Following the carnage on the Somme, he also believed that if the fighting could be sustained at a high intensity, Germany could less afford the loss of troops than the Allies and would run out of manpower within six months. He also knew that the impending entry of the United States into the war would bring tens of thousands of fresh reinforcements to bolster his exhausted army.

But to the soldiers who fought and died on the road to Passchendaele, the Third Battle of Ypres was a nightmare. Launched across an 18km front on June 17, 1917, the Allied advance by 12 divisions made rapid gains against light German outpost lines before becoming bogged down before the main enemy positions as the heavens opened on the fertile fields of Flanders. The eventual capture by the Canadian 1st and 2nd Divisions on November 6 of what little remained of Passchendaele allowed General Haig to call off the offensive and to claim it a success.

In common with the Somme, the appalling losses sustained during the third and final battle of Ypres pierced the heart of Britain and its Empire. Hardly a village, town or city was not in mourning as a generation of brave

young men perished. The butcher's bill was enormous – nearly half a million soldiers killed, maimed or missing, drowned in the clinging embrace of the endless mud. Even today there

are people of a certain age in whom the name "Passchendaele" invokes an involuntary chill in the depths of their souls. The passage of time has brought peace and dignity to these Flemish lowlands (nowhere more so than in its many military cemeteries), and although grown men still cry when they stand in these places to learn of what happened there 90 years ago, that same passing of the decades is fast taking the Third Battle of Ypres out of frightful living memory into the softer realms of legend.

But the roll-calls of the British and Imperial regiments and corps who fought there, their precise and immaculate graves, their awe-inspiring memorials, their incredible tally of more than 60 Victoria Crosses, and not least the devotion of the firemen buglers of "Wipers", will ensure that the ghostly legions of Passchendaele's fallen are properly honoured forever. ■

“The enormous losses sustained during the third and final battle of Ypres pierced the heart of Britain and its Empire”



Clockwise from below, Battle-scarred: A soldier cautiously navigates his way through the water-filled shell holes of the Passchendaele battlefield; Brothers in arms: Commonwealth soldiers in a front-line trench; Road through hell: Canadian Pioneers lay tape through the mud for a resupply road to Passchendaele; Digging to victory: Men of the Royal Engineers working on a mined tunnel

MAKE A NOTE OF IT

TO mark the 90th anniversary of the Third Battle of Ypres, a new visitors' centre will be opened officially at Tyne Cot Cemetery on July 12. On the same day the 80th anniversary of the unveiling of the Menin Gate will be formally celebrated.

Themed weekend events and happenings have been planned in the area to mark different phases of the battle.

Other major events planned for the anniversary year include:

JULY 14-15 – Remembrance weekend to take place near the Memorial Museum Passchendaele 1917.

AUGUST 25-26 – A large Celtic cross will be unveiled on Frezenberg to commemorate the Scots who fell there. There will be an international tattoo and a dawn walk and service followed by a Highland games.

OCTOBER 4-7 – A ceremony at Tyne Cot Cemetery for fallen Australians and New Zealanders, themed walks and a rugby match in memory of All Black legend David Gallagher.

NOVEMBER 9-11 – Canadian weekend, with a book fair, remembrance concert, closing ceremony and parade from Crest Farm to the village of Passchendaele.

The town of Ieper has many attractions devoted to keeping the memory of sacrifice alive, including the superb In Flanders Fields Museum in the restored Cloth Hall, which dominates the Grote Market.

Find out more by going to:

www.visitflanders.co.uk
www.inflandersfields.be
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www.greatwar.be
www.lastpost.be
www.passchendaele.be
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THE Last Post was sounded at the Menin Gate at its unveiling on July 24, 1927. It has been sounded every evening since 2000 (with the exception of the German occupation years of the Second World War) by the town's volunteer firemen.

CANADIAN medical officer Col John McCrae, who served in Ypres during the spring offensive of 1915, wrote *In Flanders Fields*, the first lines of which – “*In Flanders fields the poppies blow, Between the crosses, row on row . . .*” – gave rise to the Royal British Legion’s poppy symbol.

THE beautiful square and Flemish houses of Ieper (Ypres or “Wipers” to generations of British Servicemen and women) may look centuries old, but the town was almost completely destroyed during the First World War and rebuilt from 1921 onwards. Old paintings and postcards on sale in Ieper reveal it not so much a town as a shapeless heap of shell-shattered rubble.

IT was reported that Haig’s Chief of Staff, Lt Gen Sir Launcelot Kiggell, visited the battlefield for the first time only after the fighting was over. When he saw the ground over which it had been fought he is said to have burst into tears, saying: “Good God! Did we really send men to fight in this?”

LT Col Winston Churchill and Pte Adolf Hitler both served in the Ypres Salient, where the latter won an Iron Cross, First Class. Churchill later wrote of Ypres (Ieper): “A more sacred place for the British race does not exist in the world” and proposed that the town be left in ruins as a permanent memorial.



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Former officer sizzles out of hit show after sausage saga

Interview: Karen Thomas

BELOWING that he was a "total shambles" on national television, straight-talking self-made millionaire Sir Alan Sugar unceremoniously gave Paul Callaghan his marching orders from *The Apprentice*.

Fired upon from all directions, the former Royal Artillery lieutenant rose above the humiliating dismissal and made a dignified exit from the hit BBC show.

But despite the Amstrad founder's grizzly persona of bawling out the candidates over their lack of business acumen, Paul believed Sir Alan's boardroom bark was not as bad as a regimental sergeant major's parade ground bite.

"I'd probably grade him about a number seven on the sergeant major scale," Paul told *Soldier*, as he likened the final firing scenes to being hauled up in front of the RSM for a dressing down. "You've got to tell the truth and that's what I did in the boardroom. I just had to play it straight and hope that Sir Alan made the right decision."

But after a disastrous day in a French market that ended in project manager Paul commanding his team to a financial loss, it was never going to be the decision the Telic 3 veteran was hoping for. Paul's task was to sell the best of British food to our gourmet neighbours, but his gamble on bulk-buying cheap cash-and-carry cheese and relying on Army cooking tricks did not pay dividends.

Unsurprisingly, chunks of cheddar the size of breeze blocks did not entice the discerning French shopper. And hapless teammate Adam Hosker was left to fry sausages on little more than a candle in an empty baked-bean tin. Unable to tempt the French with raw pork sausages, Paul then came a cropper trying to sell them to a Halal kebab shop during the Muslim fast of Ramadan. As Sir Alan observed, it was "Dunkirk all over again".

The ensuing boardroom carnage was not pretty, as Paul and Adam were compared to Capt Mainwaring and Pte Pike from *Dad's Army* before eagle-eyed Sir Alan jabbed his trigger finger in the ex-officer's direction with a scathing verbal attack. "You spend half the bloody day frying sausages on some stupid contraption that the Boy Scouts could have made. And, worse than that

Paul, you went out and lost me money. You're a total shambles. You're fired."

It was a disappointing end for someone touted as a contender for winning the show. But Paul, who is now building on an engineering degree to carve a career as a chartered surveyor, remained philosophical about standing in the reality TV spotlight.

"I knew they were going to try and draw the Army thing into it, which I found slightly irritating because we do have skills from the Army but we're more than just being an officer or a soldier. Ex-Service people have got a lot to offer and they shouldn't be stereotyped perhaps as much as I was in *The Apprentice*. But I made some good mates and, at the end of the day, it is a reality TV show and you can't take it that seriously." ■

'It's a reality TV show and you can't take it that seriously'

Reality bites



Not bad, lad

Telly's wayward recruit passes basic training and joins the real ranks

Interview: Cliff Caswell
Main picture: Mike Weston

WHEN self-confessed bad lad Sean Morris volunteered for a reality TV show about National Service, he never predicted that it would lead him to the reality of Army life.

Being berated for hours by merciless NCOs, forced on runs in full kit and subjected to the iron discipline of 1950s' airborne forces training would have been more than enough to put most off.

But for the determined 25-year-old, the experience of ITV's *Bad Lads Army Extreme* set him on a path that led directly to his local recruiting office.

And under the gaze of proud family members, friends and some familiar faces from the small screen, Sean finally fulfilled his ambition as he passed out of the Army Training Regiment at Lichfield and into the ranks of the Royal Signals.

"I've been through a thousand different emotions, highs and lows," admitted the newly qualified soldier shortly after passing off the parade square. "But I've loved the fitness and the challenge of being here."

"I'm going to Blandford in Dorset next to start my trade training as a communications systems officer and I'm up for anything they can throw at me."

Sean's optimism is infectious. Immaculately clad in his full dress uniform, white gloves and belt, he is a picture of pride and professionalism. But just a few years ago he was drifting through civilian life, and it was his grandfather, a Second World War infantryman, who suggested the solution could be the short, sharp shock of *Bad Lads Army*.

"Although I wasn't a bad lad in the sense that I had never been out of work or a lout, I really wasn't settling down and was always out drinking with the lads," Sean admitted. "My grandad served in Africa during the war and suggested that *Bad Lads Army* would do me good. He was right and I really enjoyed myself."

But enjoyable as it was, the show also proved to be testing. The third series of the ITV reality programme put 21st century lads in the shoes of airborne recruits of the Fifties, and Sean quickly found he was not in the best physical shape. "I was unfit on the show and a bit fat," he told *Soldier*. "But *Bad Lads Army* was awesome – I went straight down to the Army careers office the week after I came home."

"I took some advice from Tim Weston, who was the provost sergeant in the series, and decided the Royal Signals would be a good career choice for me as I had previously been an audio visual engineer for a civilian company."

‘Bad Lads Army was awesome – I went straight down to the Army careers office the week after I came home’



But in addition to enjoying the *Bad Lads Army* experience, Sean, who lived in Tamworth with his family before enlisting in the military, also found he had his own, more personal motives for wanting to serve his country.

"My friend, Pte Leon Spicer, was killed in Iraq and that is another reason why I joined," he confided. "We had worked together for three years before he left to join The Staffordshire Regiment. I'd never paid much notice to what was happening on Op Telic before but Leon's death annoyed me."

"I know there is every chance that I could be in Afghanistan or Iraq myself in the next 12 or 18 months. But I believe in what we are doing and, for me, that's what it is all about. I'm fully committed; it's what we do as soldiers."

During his time at ATR Lichfield, Sean quickly found the demands of professional Army life more physically and mentally testing than any reality TV show. With his career as well as his pride on the line if he failed, the 14 weeks of basic training were tough but rewarding in equal measure.

"The high points were going out on tabs and runs – at the end of the day you feel good and want to get out there because you grow in confidence."

"The low point was going out on exercise in the snow. It's horrible if your admin is bad and there were moments when I wondered why I was doing this."

"The way the training was carried

out was also very different to *Bad Lads Army*," Sean said. "If you did something wrong on the TV show, you were simply forced to get it right."

"But in the modern military the responsibility is with you – do something wrong and you are only letting yourself down. Thankfully I haven't failed anything yet."

Having lost more than a stone in weight and become leaner, fitter and more robust, Sean has no regrets about signing up for a military career. With a new sense of duty and purpose, he has set his sights firmly on progress.

"I'd really like to go for the P Company course to get my parachute wings; I know it is tough but I don't think it will be impossible if I work hard. I love the fitness side of Army life, and I'm all for as much adventurous training as I can get too."

"But before I do any of that I'm really looking forward to spending time with my family, especially my four-year-old daughter who I haven't seen for several weeks – it has been great to see her again at the parade."

Above all, Sean was determined to savour the moment of passing out from Lichfield. "Although today is just the beginning I know that I made the right choice in joining the Royal Signals," he concluded. "My grandad is proud of me, and that makes me proud too."

Main picture, Pay-back: Sig Sean Morris gives the *Bad Lads Army* Provost Sergeant Tim Weston the good news. Above, Reality check: Sean, pictured second from right, is tested on the show. Picture: TwentyTwenty/ITV

Fantastic

Adventurous signallers wave goodbye to the ocean after a momentous 12 months at sea

Report: Cliff Caswell
Main picture: Photoaction

CHAMPAGNE corks popped on the quayside at Gosport as an around-the-world sailing expedition organised by the Royal Signals received a tumultuous welcome home.

After travelling across 33,000 miles of ocean, taking part in two races and saving the lives of sailors in a sinking boat, the crews of the Challenge 67 yacht *Adventure* were satisfied by a job well done.

Scores of well-wishers, senior officers, friends and relatives turned out to welcome the soldiers into port as they cruised into the Joint Services Adventure Sail Training Centre in a fitting conclusion to the ambitious Mercury Challenge.

During *Adventure*'s year at sea, more than 100 soldiers experienced storms and extremes of temperature in ten legs of a journey that proved dangerous and demanding.

Many of those who signed up were taking to the ocean for the first time, and some had only completed their training weeks before heading

off to the yacht – an extraordinary achievement in itself.

“It has been great to see the less experienced crews developing as time has gone on,” said Sgt Windy Gale, R Signals, the skipper of the final leg of the challenge from Antigua to the UK.

“It has been a whole new world for them – for example, some have never had to cook for themselves, never mind 14 other people on a yacht at a 25-degree angle.”

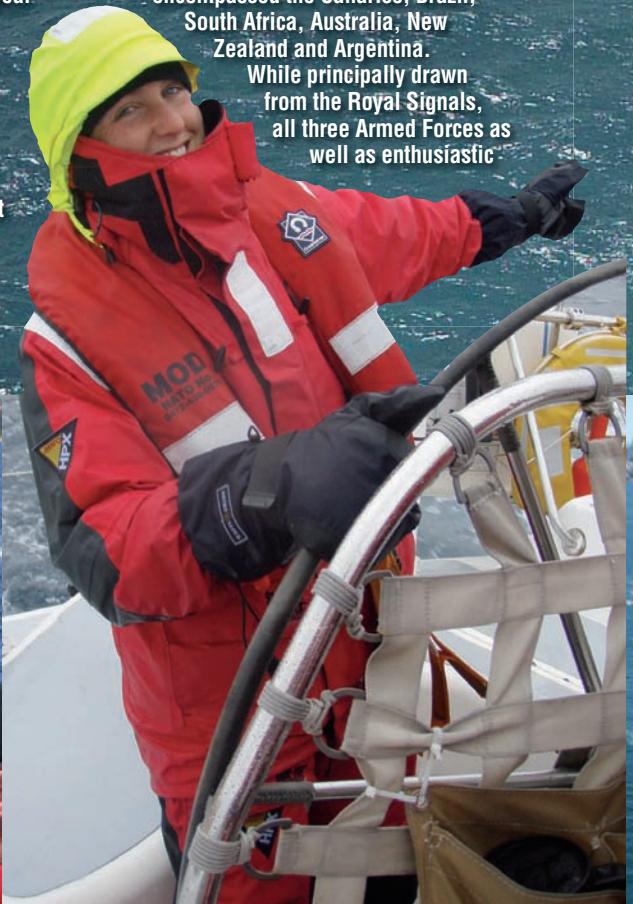
‘It has been great to see the less experienced crews developing as time goes on’

But experienced sailor Sgt Gale, who also skippered several other legs of the challenge, including the navigation of the perilous Southern Ocean, was delighted with how they had adapted.

“Adventurous training is a great tool,” he said. “You can apply the skills you learn from being out in a testing environment when you go away on operational tours.”

Two years on the drawing board, the Mercury Challenge, which was jointly skippered by Sgt Gale and Maj Charles Roberts, took the soldiers on a route that encompassed the Canaries, Brazil, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand and Argentina.

While principally drawn from the Royal Signals, all three Armed Forces as well as enthusiastic



Voyagers

civilians were also represented in *Adventure*'s diverse crews.

The more experienced seafarers took part in two of the world's most prestigious sailing events – the Rolex Sydney-to-Hobart challenge and the 2007 Antigua Race Week.

The soldiers were hailed as heroes during the Australian event when they rescued seven sailors from the stricken yacht *KoomooLoo*. Their lifesaving actions earned the military crew the coveted Rani Award for meritorious performance.

For the signallers taking part in the challenge, seeing the world and developing their skills in the demanding ocean environment was a one-off experience.

"It was amazing to take part in the Mercury Challenge," enthused Lt Freddie Holland, who sailed on the final leg of the trip back to the UK. "I never thought I'd get to do anything like this and it is great to have these opportunities."

"I have sailed from the age of eight, but never on anything bigger than a dinghy. It really gets the adrenalin going when you have waves crashing over you."

Sgt Joe Jones, who volunteered to join *Adventure*'s expedition just days after finishing his trade training, was also amazed to find himself on the high seas. "It has given me a really good first impression of Army life," he told *Soldier*.

But he admitted: "I'm not sure I would do a long sea passage again – I felt a bit sick for the first couple of days. However I would like to try out some yacht racing."

Sgt Helen Winterson, a member of the Territorial Army who was on the Cape Town to Perth leg of the trip, said that crew morale had been bolstered by the many



messages of support they had received on the Mercury Challenge website. (www.mercurychallenge.mod.uk).

"We have had people from as far afield as the USA and even Vietnam emailing and wishing us luck," she added. "This has been a truly unbelievable experience." ■

Main picture, Seeking adventure: The Royal Signals fly the flag for the British Army as they head out to open sea. From left to right, Seafaring soldiers: Plain sailing for *Adventure*'s men and women; At the helm: Keeping the yacht on course; Racing spirit: The Rolex Sydney-to-Hobart event gets under way. *Adventure* went on to rescue a stricken crew and win wide acclaim for their courage during the race; Dangerous depths: Signallers endure arduous conditions





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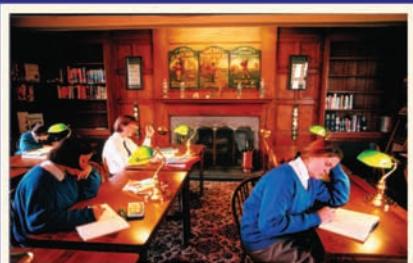
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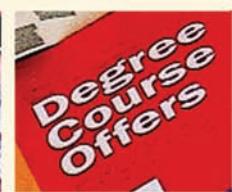


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TALKBACK

Final move cost us a packet

MY letter concerns the loss of the final assisted UK Repatriation Scheme (UKRS) from Northern Ireland under JPA.

I am due to be discharged from the Army this month so imagine my surprise when I applied in February for my final removals costs from Northern Ireland to "port of entry" as allowed in single Service regulations, only to be told that under JPA Northern Ireland was considered a UK posting and all final move entitlements had been withdrawn.

Our final move was to be made at personal expense, the same as it would be when leaving the service from a UK mainland unit.

PRIZE LETTER

At no point was I told about this by the chain of command or the resettlement people. As far as I'm aware, this new regulation has never been published so I assume many others will be faced with the problem.

How can policy come into effect which appears to be so poorly considered, especially when previous regulations recognised that inconvenient and expensive-to-cross bit of water that separates Northern Ireland from the rest of "UK postings"?

This is a lot of money – about £2,000 in my case – to expect a Service person to pay on making the transition to civilian life. I have been left feeling that it's a case of thanks for 13 years of service now b.....r off. – **Sgt P Perkins RMP, Pol Coy RMP, BFPO 801.**

Brig Jamie Gordon, DPS(A), responds: You raise

PS...

THE response to the prize letter on Pay As You Dine (Talkback, May), said 70 per cent of soldiers prefered the new regime. As I write this, a poll on ArmyNet suggests 59 per cent think it's a bad initiative, and I agree.

I am at ITC Catterick and am unhappy with the change to PAYD, as most are who eat here.

Leftovers from the hundreds of recruits who eat next door would feed the permanent staff twice over. What it boils down to is that for those of us who eat here, quality and choice of food is poorer and we pay more for it. It doesn't matter how you wrap it up . . . that is the reality. – Name and address supplied.

Brief is best

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

Before you write to us with a problem, you should first have tried to get an answer via your own chain of command. Our postal address is on Page 5.

a valid point and I regret to say that in the changeover to JPA this entitlement was overlooked, wrongly withdrawn and not made public. We have staffed a policy change and this is now in place. Your removal expenses from Northern Ireland to the UK port of entry have been met.

More letters at **TALKBACK** online
www.soldiermagazine.co.uk

I AM in Iraq where it is starting to heat up into the low 40s C. We receive Longer Separated Allowance (LSA) but have come up against problems when trying to claim for Unpleasant Living Allowance (ULA) and Unpleasant Working Conditions (UWA). – From a soldier in Iraq

Read the full letter and official response on our website

Still waiting for vouchers

MANY families need both parents to work to make ends meet. The Childcare Voucher scheme is designed to help through a scheme widely implemented by Government departments and the private sector for more than two years.

Yet the MoD continues to procrastinate, with the latest aspiration for implementation now the end of the year. This delay is hitting many Service families every month.

The excuses of JPA and DII implementation mean nothing to our partners. Why cannot a manual system be put in place until deductions can be

made directly from our pay? – Name and address supplied.

Brig Jamie Gordon, DPS(A), responds: The introduction of the Childcare Voucher scheme has always been linked to JPA roll-out because of the difficulties and risks associated with manually implementing a scheme across three differing Service pay systems. Irritating and unsatisfactory for you, but that is where we are. Better news is that implementation of the scheme on current planning is expected by the end of this year.

More information is available from a Service Families Task Force information note.

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

Bounty bummer

I WAS mobilised for Op Telic 9 with the Force Protection Company provided by the 7th Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland.

There is an appeals process for individuals and employers who find nine months away from home and almost a year (with end-of-tour leave) from work a problem.

The Territorial Army is also required to carry out "intelligent mobilisation" to assess the likelihood of an appeal.

I was not interviewed as part of the intelligent mobilisation, nor were many of my sub-unit.

My gripe is the TA bounty which I have not received because I missed the minimum number of days by one quarter of a day (in TA terms one drill night of two hours).

If 7 Scots "intelligently mobilised" me, why did they not advise me that I would be required to attend a minimum number of days (one weekend in my case) to meet the minimum criteria for my bounty of £1,300? The chain of command failed me. Four other soldiers missed out by a few days.

Our CO and training major told us during pre-deployment training we would receive our bounties for 2006/07.

– Name and address supplied.

PS...

I HAVE just read a letter from an ex-soldier who, at 40, had been told he was too old to join the Territorial Army (Talkback, May).

I'm a member of the Australian Defence Force (Army), having served 23 years in the British Army. I believe soldiers being able to serve for only 22 years is outdated. It was introduced after the Second World War and was based on the active soldiering lifespan of an infantryman then.

I joined the ADF(A) at 40. We have just undergone a major review and Regular soldiers may now serve until they are 60. General reservists (TA) can join at any age up to 50 and serve until they are 65. The British Army loses too many people each year with so much experience because of an outdated rule.

How can officers serve in the Army until they are 55? They probably made up this stupid policy in the first place. – WO2 (RQMS) Kevin Hamilton, QUR.

Maj John Varley, PS TA, HQ Land, replies: Your problem and that of the four other soldiers concerned has been resolved. Far from being failed by the chain of command, your case was raised in theatre and passed to my desk. The issue had already been raised by the Lord Lieutenant with CO 7 Scots and by John Thurso MP with the Secretary of State. Appropriate instructions were issued on May 14 to ensure you and the others will receive your bounty for 2006/07.

I carried out detailed assessments of the dates on which each of you qualified for bounty. In your case and that of another soldier, you had both completed 4.75 training days before mobilisation, leaving 7.25 outstanding.

Using the pro rata formula that converts mobilised service to out-of-camp training days, you both qualified for bounty on March 25 after completing 219 days' mobilised service. The others qualified for bounty on May 1, 9 and 24 respectively.

Your CO and training major were right and I assume they knew you would qualify with mobilisation counting in lieu of training on a pro rata basis. I can only apologise for any misunderstandings.

If you feel the intelligent mobilisation process could be improved, raise your comments with your unit when you have finished your post-operational leave.

Why charge for our blueys to Germany?

I AM attached to 1 Mech Bde HQ and Signal Squadron (215) on Op Telic 10 and based in Basra.

My parent unit is in Germany, and my wife and three children are living in married quarters. So how come I can send free e-blueys to them in Germany but not free blueys? – Name and address supplied.

Brig Jamie Gordon, DPS(A), replies:

Normally blueys can only be sent free of charge to UK civilian and BFPO addresses and Commonwealth countries. For Germany blueys should be sent to your parent unit (ie the BFPO address) and either your wife can go into the unit to collect them or your unit can deliver them to your quarter.

That said, a mechanism does exist for blueys to be delivered direct to a German civil address (assuming it is a married quarter) but only if the spouse cannot get to the parent unit's barracks. To use this system you will need to speak to the BFPO staff in theatre and register with them.

Costly uniform

DESPITE what DPS(A) said in reply to a letter ("Why should we pay for new mess dress", Jan), there is no mention of "grandfather" rights in a letter to Royal Green Jackets officers detailing the new forms of dress in The Rifles.

If, like me, you bought all the uniform you would be out of pocket to the tune of £1,500 to £2,000. Now I am being told it is useless. – Name and address supplied.

Lt Col (Retd) J-S von Merveldt, Acting Regt Sec, The Rifles, replies: The "grandfather" rights referred to in January also apply equally to The Royal Green Jackets and Light Infantry uniforms, as they do for those of The Devonshire and Dorset Light Infantry and Royal Gloucester, Berkshire and Wiltshire Light Infantry.

No 1 dress: Although frequently acquired by officers of their own choice it is only an official and publicly-funded form of dress in certain appointments. For public duties there is a pool of uniforms. Officers are not compelled to have it unless they are



"Don't know what the fuss over uniform costs is all about, Frobisher . . . I still owe my tailor for mine."

in certain appointments or on public duties. Current LI and RGJ No 1 dress can be converted to Rifles pattern. Some second-hand uniforms are available through RHQ in Winchester and The Rifles London Office in 52-54 Davies Street, W1K 5HR.

● A full response appears on our website

AFF Journal story saved me £800 in council tax

HAVING recently returned to the UK from an overseas posting, my wife and I decided to occupy a married quarter near my new place of work in central London, and to use our own house in Colchester as a bolt hole at weekends.

My request to the local authorities for a 50 per cent reduction in council tax was refused, and only a ten per cent reduction was awarded.

I happened to notice an article by Rosie Brown in the Spring 2007 edition of the Army Families Federation *Journal* which clearly indicated that members of the Armed Forces based in Great Britain and occupying a married quarter should receive no less than a 50 per cent reduction on the council tax of a "second home". It also referred to three statutory instruments, where this information is contained.

After reading the documents I was convinced the ten per cent council tax reduction on my "second home" was wrong and that I should have been awarded a minimum of 50 per cent.

I appealed, sending copies of the relevant statutory instruments and AFF *Journal* and my appeal was upheld, which will mean a saving of more than £800 a year. It also means a precedent has been set.

My thanks to the AFF, and Rosie Brown in particular, for highlighting the problem and giving me both direction and support. – WO2 P N Chadwick, London.

Hospital programme didn't tell whole story

IT is time the MoD defended itself more robustly against lies banded about by former soldiers in the media.

Of particular note was a recent BBC 2 programme "Power to the People", on which at least two former soldiers failed to disclose the excellent and extensive medical care they received following their injuries.

Although there was probably selective editing, the RCDM Birmingham visit by the programme presenter was disgraceful. Unless the MoD is properly represented in such programmes the Army will continue to be run down by a few attention-seeking personnel. – Name and address supplied.



Into the sunset



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The Army Benevolent Fund's Memorial Rose Fund Service will take place at 1400 on Wednesday, July 4 in the Millennium Chapel at the National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas. Staffordshire. If you want to know more about the service or the Memorial Tribute Rose Funds, please get in touch with Fay Ponikowski on 0845 241 4828.

Call 020 7591 2000 or visit www.armybenfund.org

Fostering blow

I HAVE been in the Army ten years and a single parent for four. As a single parent I signed up to deploy but the law requires close family and friends to be cleared by SSAFA and police-checked (CRB). This can take months.

This private fostering, as it is known, occurs when someone looks after a child for more than 28 days. As I am fulfilling my contract to the Army I think a refund of the cost of CRB checks should be made.

I have been in Cyprus for nearly 14 months and no one in my unit knew about private fostering. I couldn't deploy because of a lack of knowledge in the unit welfare office. – Name and address supplied.

Brig Jamie Gordon, DPS(A), replies: Well done for battling through the administrative bureaucracy and for fulfilling your end of the contract. I understand you are the first family to have requested private fostering arrangements in Cyprus, which falls to local authorities in England and

Wales. Overseas the responsibilities fall to commands who use SSAFA-Forces Help.

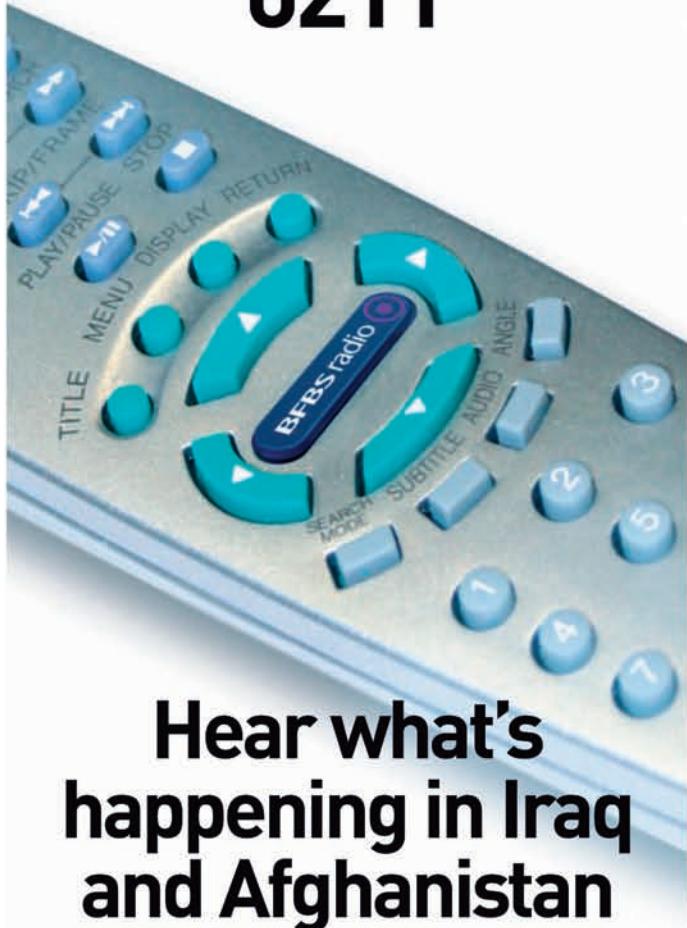
As with all Service parents the provision of childcare and private fostering arrangements is a personal responsibility and this includes the funding of mandatory checks. Close family members do not need to go through the checking process, but in Cyprus if a check is required, SSAFA-Forces Help pass on the cost to the person requiring the service.

I know it took some time to finalise the arrangements and, while there is never an excuse for unnecessary delay in processing applications, the command has a responsibility to make sure checks are carried out thoroughly.

The Army Welfare Service provides guidance on private fostering and an MoD Defence Instruction and Notice is also being prepared. Additional information for single parents is now provided on the Army Welfare and Family page on www.army.mod.uk, which has been updated to include information on private fostering.

● A full response appears on our website

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I AM a member of a busy cadet training team based in the Midlands which coaches cadets in basic military disciplines.

With Regular and Territorial Army forces being equipped with Bowman, what is happening to the Clansman kit?

In one of my Combined Cadet Force contingents we tried to run a basic signals cadre for up to 30 cadets and had to beg and borrow eight PRC 349s from around the county.

There must be a stockpile of working Clansman equipment that ACF and CCF detachments can make use of. Who should we contact to get some cadets can use? – **Name and address supplied.**

Kevin Houghton, Utilities Accounts Manager, Land AIO/U&SD, replies: The planned out-of-service date for Clansman for the Army is April 2008.

Most Clansman equipment will be disposed of by a contractor, with some equipment remaining in service to support Bowman and some non-Bowman users, such as cadets and University Officers' Training Corps (UOTCs) until a new radio system is procured.

This additional equipment will be held in pools from which UOTCs, ACFs and CCFs can draw. There is no reason why any cadet unit should be short of Clansman currently. Additional equipment should be requested through Maj Mike Foster, the ACF national signals adviser on 01392 662640.



"Back to basics, I fear, Frederick"

My Telic medal saga

I HAVE been trying to resolve this issue for several years and am at the end of my tether. I served on Ops Telic 1 and 4 with the same unit but received neither medal nor bar.

I chased it up through my admin office and eventually a medal arrived but with my rank from Telic 4 and no bar. I refused to sign for it and my unit returned it to the Medals Office. In late 2005 and through 2006 I chased the issue up, but with no joy.

In September 2006 a Telic 1 medal arrived but was marked with R for replacement. As I didn't get an original medal I am entitled to an original.

I subsequently deployed on Telic 9 and am trying to sort this out in theatre.

A letter explaining all this was sent to the Armed Forces Personnel Administration Agency (AFPAA) which said I was not entitled to an original medal as one had been issued (presumably the one my unit sent back). The agency acknowledged it had a letter from my CO stating the medal

had been returned by recorded delivery but is unable to tell me whether or not it actually received the medal.

AFPAA act as though I am trying to cheat the system out of a medal. – **Name and address supplied.**

Lt Col (Retd) Peter Lockyer, MoD Medal Office, RAF Innsworth, replies: It would appear that the soldier's unit failed to request a medal for him on the original Op Telic 1 list. Consequently, when his application was received for Op Telic 4, the MoD Medal Office was under the impression that this was his first Op Telic deployment and issued the medal accordingly, without a clasp.

The soldier was well within his rights to highlight the error and request a medal with clasp. At this point if the unit had contacted the Medal Office explaining the error, a clasp would have been issued immediately. There is no record of having received the original medal back, so as such it is considered lost.

Following a request from the soldier's unit, my staff issued a replacement Op Telic 1 medal with clasp, inscribed with a

letter R after the naming detail. Actually we should have issued a medal with clasp without the letter R as this was a first issue.

In acknowledgement of our latter mistake, I would ask the soldier to return his replacement Telic Medal with clasp to me personally, and I will exchange it for a medal with clasp and without the R. I hope this brings to a closure what appears to have been a tortuous process, which could have been avoided. I take a proportion of the blame for this, but so too must the unit.

PS...

I WAS delighted to see a picture of Maj Alan Crawford SG on the summit of Tumbledown (June). I was a cadet at Sandhurst in 1986 (SGC 863) and the first person I saw when I reported on day one was the then CSgt A J Crawford. He was an inspirational (and occasionally terrifying) figure. I recognized him immediately when I turned to Page 41, and could almost hear his voice "encouraging" 5 Platoon, Ypres Company to do better. I now teach in Scotland and am also the commander of the CCF. As I was commissioned into 2 Queens, Maj Crawford would be horrified to learn that I am now a blue suiter in the RAF Voluntary Reserve. The lessons he taught me are as relevant today as they were 20 years ago. – Sqn Ldr Jeremy Gardner, RAF VR(T), Glenalmond College CCF.

Do I pay for passport change?

THE cost of changing a name on a passport is £66 and it is a legal requirement to do so to the one that you are legally bound by.

My regimental admin office told me I was not entitled to claim this back as my marriage, to a serving soldier, was voluntary and changing my name was my choice. What if I need the passport for duty travel – highly likely for

anyone serving at the moment? – **Name and address supplied.**

Brig Jamie Gordon, DPS(A), replies: I am not sure why you have been given this advice by the RAO staff. If you changed your name through marriage and you require a passport for duty travel, then your new passport should be paid for by public funds in accordance with JSP 752.

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Blue tinge to Naafi

I HOPE you won't mind a recently retired "crab" making a comment about access to the Naafi at RAF Akrotiri (Talkback, April), but having served there until January I might be able to add to the debate.

As the RAF Officers' Mess Secretary I was responsible for ensuring that retired members could access the mess. As they were "un-entitled" they had to have an all-island pass to use the mess and could not sign in their wives. Hence, all wives of retired mess members had to have all-island passes.

It got to the stage where there were more retired members, wives and expats able to access the base than there were RAF personnel on the base. If a wife/expat was also a member of, say, the WRVS, that was another pass, as was membership of the theatre club, water-ski club etc.

Cars also had to have a pass, and I



"Take your pick."

recall on one occasion collecting and signing for nine different passes for one member and his wife to access RAF Akrotiri. A security nightmare.

The final straw was when a very senior ex-RAF officer rang me to ask where his wife's pass was for Episkopi "Dodge City" [HQ]. I explained I was the RAF Akrotiri mess secretary and

not responsible for Episkopi. I also asked why his wife would need to get into HQ British Forces Cyprus.

He replied: "She has used the hairdresser there for the past ten years, so she needs to get in to continue using him." Needless to say once I had refused him he went over my head to the station commander and got his pass.

It was no wonder that at Christmas you could not get any stamps, as the post office was full of expats posting things home and the Naafi never bothered to check ID.

Dodge City on a Saturday was like the Land of the Living Dead – you couldn't move for blue rinses and Zimmer frames.

The Army SNCO who couldn't get in to use the Naafi at RAF Akrotiri would have had to fight his way through the expats to get to the checkout anyway.

– **Graham Chipperfield, ex-Flt Lt, SO3 G1 Disc, BFPO 36.**

My trips home cost a fortune

I HAVE been posted to HQ Colchester Garrison and, because I own a home at my last posting, opted to live in the mess and commute at weekends. This avoids family upheaval and allows my wife to get on with her career.

I make a 500-mile round trip at weekends and spend more than £240 a month on fuel. But my Get You Home Travel Allowance (GYH) is only £148 a month, leaving me £92 a month out of pocket, or more than £1,000 over the year.

I feel the Army is forcing my family to take up residence at my new posting address. – **Name, address supplied.**

Brig Jamie Gordon, DPS(A), responds: *GYH Travel allowance is intended to be broadly equivalent to two return journeys a month and is paid at a daily rate; for a 500-mile round trip the rate is £7.47 per day, which equates to £224.10 per 30-day month, just short of the £240 per month that you say you are paying now. You would appear to be receiving the allowance for a return journey of 280-300 miles (a daily rate of £4.93). I gather that this has been corrected, but if not, check it out with your unit admin staff.*

My lost leave

LAST year I deployed on ops three times, completing two short tours of Iraq, each of just over three weeks with a short turn-around in between, then nine days in the UK before deploying to Afghanistan for a seven-month tour.

Returning from Afghanistan I went on post-operational tour leave (POTL) then Christmas stand-down. As I was in a specialised unit, I was teaching outside units or on military promotional courses between tours, POTL and Christmas stand-down.

I was posted in March and applied to carry over the 33 days of annual leave I was unable to take but have been told I may carry forward only 15.

MoD civil servants can apply to be reimbursed for untaken leave over ten days so why can't soldiers? – **Name and address supplied.**

Brig Jamie Gordon, DPS(A), responds: *Under JSP 760 up to 15 days' untaken leave is carried forward automatically. This appears to have happened in your case. Amounts in excess of this not taken for Service reasons may be carried forward with the approval of your CO.*

It seems that you have a strong case to

carry forward the balance of 18 days and you should apply to your CO.

Civil servants may receive payment in lieu of leave, but it is not automatic and needs strong justification. The X factor recognises that we cannot always take our leave, but your case is just the sort of evidence that we are using to justify an increase to the Armed Forces Pay Review Board.

More letters at TALKBACK online
www.soldiermagazine.co.uk

UNDER the all singing and dancing JPA system, thousands of us who travel to work from our own homes will have noticed that on the new pay statement, we have changed from Recompense in Lieu of Relocation (RILOR) to Home to Duty Travel (HDT). However I have noticed that my HDT has been reduced by 49p a day (from £4.83 a day under the old system to £4.34 under JPA). How come?

ALSO:

- We should have special allowance for living in Iraq
- Guard service refused me advance of pay
- I'm still being charged for fuel and light
- CSA is crippling me and Army isn't helping
- Learning credits not part of resettlement package
- More issues with learning credits
- I was wrongly back-charged £960. Please help



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He who shouts ...

Internal comms is so much better, so now let's sell ourselves to the nation

IMPROVING communication is a key target of the Army, not only to provide more information to soldiers and their families, but also to improve contact with the media and public.

Soldiers and families are starting to see real improvements in the way the Army communicates with them. Plans to use JPA to enable direct contact with a nominated family member (the default setting will authorise contact, but soldiers can choose to opt out) will mean units no longer have to rely solely on personnel to pass information to families.

ArmyNet has revolutionised the way we receive information via its secure web portal. For families of deployed soldiers it's a lifeline (I know, because I am one at the moment).

Forums which provide vital contact with people in the same situation, which in this time of individual augmentees and living off-patch is a real boon. A typical comment is: "My son is in Iraq at the moment but just knowing there are other people going through the same as me is a great comfort".

Most deployed brigades have their own web area within ArmyNet where you can ask for information, receive updates on the deployment and view images from home and abroad.

However, all this support hinges on soldiers registering their family as ArmyNet guest users and on the family knowing which brigade or unit their loved one is deployed with. You'd be surprised how many don't ...

Deployed units generally look

after their families but there's still an information void for families of individual augmentees (TA and Regular), parents and partners of soldiers. I know that there's no quick-fix solution, but the new welfare and admin helpline for military personnel posted to London is a great move forward.

More good news for these families – the *Journal* is being delivered direct to Army families living in quarters in the Greater London area.

There's lots of positive news about internal comms and there's recently been some fantastic coverage of Afghanistan from embedded journalists, but why does the MoD seem to be so slow at dealing with the day-to-day media? Its relentless 24-hour rolling news and appetite for comment are here to stay.

Time is key. The media wants an immediate answer but we see the same "military experts" being grilled on news programmes rather than someone from the Army.

It's such a shame as there are some brilliant orators/debaters in uniform.

I'm not saying that these ex-Servicemen don't give a good show, but the longer they are out of the Services the less relevant their opinion becomes.

I was contacted by the mother of an 18-year-old just back from Iraq. She was keen to become engaged with this new part of her soldier son's life but was appalled at how little his contribution to the safety of the nation was valued by the public. When her son's regiment returned after a difficult tour during which the unit

sustained fatalities, there was no public acknowledgment and not even the medal parade made the local newspaper.

"Why does the nation not realise what these young lads have gone through and honour them?" she asked. Sadly, I didn't have an answer.

Coverage of the Queen's Birthday Honours suggested what the media thinks honour is all about, and it's certainly not about risking your life for Queen and country. Where were the stories about some of the 130 Service personnel who were honoured for doing extraordinary things?

Maybe the furore over Service personnel selling their stories to the press has left a legacy of wariness. What a shame that the MoD didn't seem to step into the breach to push stories about Servicemen and women to the fore; or perhaps they did and the media simply didn't care?

Sadly in today's world it's all about selling yourself. He who shouts loudest gets noticed. ■

The summer issue of the AFF Families Journal is out now (cover pictured). Visit www.aff.org.uk



Want to know more about the Army Families Federation. Log on to www.aff.org.uk

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NO. 788

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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 788, Soldier, Ordnance Road, Aldershot, Hampshire GU11 2DU** by July 31.

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

Name: (Give initials and rank or title)

Address:

May competition (No 786): First correct entry drawn at random and winner of the £100 prize was **Sgt (ST) D Alexander APTC, Ingles Barracks, Mill Hill**. Runners-up **Mr Malcolm Knight, QM's Department, 25 Engineer Regiment, and SAC H Whelan RAF, Sgts' Mess, RAF Benson**, each win a £25 gift voucher.

The ten differences were: Ship's anchor chain; ship's lifeboat; driver on beach; letter D on ration box; bolt from EFHE kit 2; airplane on horizon; magazine on SLR; fin on missile; door on helicopter; insignia on airplane tail.



Winner of our May competition (inset)

WE are sending the prize book for May to Simon Harrison of Ludgershall for his very sensible suggestion: "The Army trials a new method for assessing promotability – the first-past-the-post system".

We also liked "Don't you just hate these RAF recruit selection weekends" sent in by Vince Scott, A0 299 Para Sqn RE, Wakefield.

Keith Chapman of Knightswood, Glasgow, offered: "I know Land Rover said there would be cutbacks, but this is ridiculous" and Pte M Tune of A Company, 4 Yorks, was on a similar theme with "The cutbacks had hit the Army hard, mostly in the RLC".

LCpl O'Brien, MPGS, based at RAF Linton-on-Ouse, came up with a topical slant for his entry with "When they said 'low emissions',



Col Curruthers was absolutely delighted to be getting his hands at long last on the highly lethal, battle-winning USAF Mark 2 desk spike

WIN A BOOK: Write your own caption for the photo, above, from our December 1958 issue and send it to us by July 31. The best, in our opinion, will win a copy of Michael Smith's *Killer Elite*, the inside story of America's most secret special operations team (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £18.99).

we didn't expect to be using pedal power".

And finally, Steve Pengelly of St Budeaux, Plymouth, who was obviously reminded by

our picture of cartoon characters, suggested "OK, Penelope Pitstop, looks like Dick Dastardly and Muttley are still in the lead".

Web watch

BOOKS

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www.bodyguards-bible.com

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www.blesma.org

National charity for limbless and ex-Service men and women, their dependants and widows.

www.ngvfa.com

The National Gulf Veterans and Families Association website.

www.erskine.org.uk

Erskine, caring for ex-service men and women. The charity is current caring for over 1000 veterans young and old throughout Scotland every year.

www.info@tnauk.org.uk

National talking newspapers & magazines. Difficulty reading the printed word? *Soldier* can still be enjoyed on audio format. To receive a free audio sample of *Soldier* contact the National Talking Newspaper Service on 01435 866102 or info@tnauk.org.uk

www.armywivesunited.co.uk

Free community site with message boards on a vast array of subjects that affect Army wives. Offering advice, friendship and support. Army wives united has been online for three years and has around 1,000 active members.

www.enterpriseation.com

Website launched by Redbrick, the UK's leading consultancy for Regional Entrepreneurial Development, to provide information and inspiration to home workers across the UK.

www.forceshomes.co.uk

Finding homes for military personnel. We organise your mortgage, search for your ideal property, manage the complete purchase, arrange the letting if required, and we pay all your professional and legal fees.

www.moddiscounts.com

The online version of discounts for the Armed Forces. Motoring, travel, holidays, shopping and other categories.

www.stft.mod.uk

In addition the Service Families Task Force website contains useful tri-Service information.

SERVICES

www.remerus.co.uk

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www.postedoverseas.com

Lists hundreds of BFPO-friendly companies, a forum, classifieds section and information on the EHIC and much more.

www.baff.org.uk

British Armed Forces Federation, an association aimed at representing staff in the three Services.

www.BFPOShop.com

Gift boxes, sports nutrition, toiletries, books, newspapers, 24-hr BBC news, chat forum and much more.

OPPORTUNITIES & BUSINESS

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MUSEUMS

www.rememuseum.org.uk

REME Museum of Technology.

www.armymuseums.org.uk

The Army Museums Ogilby Trust website, approved by the MoD as the definitive guide to regimental and corps museums.

www.kingsownmuseum.plus.com

King's Own Royal Regiment Museum, Lancaster

MOD LINKS

www.army.mod.uk

Official website of the British Army.

www.armyrugbyunion.mod.uk

The latest information on match reports, fixtures, ticket and equipment sales, and contact details for all Army Rugby Union teams. See how the most popular and successful sports team in the Army is doing.

www.armyaviation.co.uk

A privately-run forum dedicated to Army aviation. The forum is for ALL capbadges associated with Army aviation and all are welcome. Membership is comprised of mainly AAC personnel but would like to see more REME faces on the site.

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Garrison guide

Aldershot

COMEDY

Sunday, July 1 – Laughing Horse Comedy Club: Kevin McCarron, Jay Sodagar, Aggie Elsdon, Nigel Taylor, Grainne Maguire, Duncan Hart and Kevin Shepherd, Guildford Tup, Guildford

Tuesday, July 3-4 – Roy 'Chubby' Brown, Beck Theatre, Hayes

Thursday, July 5-7 – Mutton, Yvonne Arnaud Theatre And Mill Studio, Guildford

Thursday, July 12 – As Used On The Famous Nelson Mandela: Mark Thomas, West End Centre, Aldershot

Sunday, July 29 – Russell Brand, New Victoria Theatre, Woking

LIVE MUSIC

Wednesday, July 4 – Maltings Jazz Cafe:



Popular Brand: Woking's New Victoria Theatre plays host to a comedy heavyweight on July 29

Otis B Driftwood, Farnham Maltings, Farnham

Saturday, July 7 – Blues Brothers Tribute

Band, Indigo, Bordon

Friday, July 13-15 – GuilFest 2007, Stoke Park, Guildford, Surrey

Friday, July 20 – This Is Seb Clarke, The Live & Loud Bar @ The Star Inn, Guildford

Friday, July 27 – Hayseed Dixie, Farnham Maltings, Farnham

THEATRE

Friday, July 6 – As You Like It: Festival Players, Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, Camberley

Monday, July 9 – The Rocky Horror Show, New Victoria Theatre, Woking

Wednesday, July 11-12 – Blood Brothers: Songs from the Shows, The Camberley Theatre, Camberley

Saturday, July 14 – Rainbow, The Camberley Theatre, Camberley

Friday, July 20 – The Comedy of Errors: British Touring Shakespeare Company, Loseley Park, Guildford

THEATRE

Friday, July 6 – Comedy Of Errors: Oddsocks Theatre Company, The Lights, Andover

Friday, July 13 – Return Of The Mouse Part 3, Salisbury Arts Centre, Salisbury

Sunday, July 15 – As You Like It: Festival Players, Havelock House, Tidworth

Saturday, July 21 – Just So: Newbury Youth Theatre, Corn Exchange, Newbury

Thursday, July 26 – The Rainbow Fish: Blunderbus Theatre Company, Theatre Royal, Winchester

Saturday, July 21 – Chas 'n' Dave, Spa Pavilion Theatre, Felixstowe

THEATRE

Monday, July 2-21 – Monty Python's Spamalot, Palace Theatre, London

Sunday, July 8 – Show Tome '07, Mercury Theatre, Colchester

Friday, July 13-14 – WOW!! Tiffany Stage Academy, Mercury Theatre, Colchester

Monday, July 16-21 – The Decorator: Leslie Grantham, Mercury Theatre, Colchester

Friday, July 20-21 – A Midsummer Night's Dream: Mouth To Mouth Theatre Company, Needham Lakes, Ipswich

Bulford/ Tidworth

COMEDY

Sunday, July 1 – Andrew Bird and Lloyd Langford, The Orange Rooms, Southampton

Friday, July 6 – Danny Buckler, Mark Walker, Harvey Oliver and Stu Who? Jongleurs Comedy Club, Southampton

Saturday, July 7-14 – Newbury Comedy Festival 2007, Newbury

Friday, July 13-14 – Simon Fox, Hal Cruttenden and Christian Reilly, Jongleurs Comedy Club, Southampton

LIVE MUSIC

Tuesday, July 3 – Scouting For Girls, Joiners Arms, Southampton

Thursday, July 12 – The Hollowpoints and The Mingers, Joiners Arms, Southampton

Friday, July 13 – Lewis & The Sound Of The Suburbs, The Old Coach House, Salisbury

Saturday, July 21 – Whole Lotta Led, The Brook, Southampton

Wivenhoe Town FC Clubhouse, Colchester

Thursday, July 26 – The Comedy Club: John Mann, Gordon Southern and Rick Right, Waterfront, Chelmsford

LIVE MUSIC

Tuesday, July 3 – Rod Stewart and The Pretenders, Ipswich Town Football Club, Ipswich

Tuesday, July 3 – Lap, The Twist, Colchester

Wednesday, July 11-15 – Bures Music Festival, Bures

Friday, July 20 – Freebird, The Highbury Barn, Sudbury

Colchester

COMEDY

Sunday, July 1 – Roger Monkhouse, Rudi Lickwood, Gary Delaney and Dan Atkinson, Manor Social Club & Ballroom, Ipswich

Thursday, July 12 – The Comedy Club: Martin Beaumont, Eddy Brimson and Colin Cole, Waterfront, Chelmsford

Sunday, July 15 – Sean Lock, Pleasance Theatre, London

Thursday, July 26 – The Funny Farm Comedy Club: Mrs Barbara Nice and Craig Deeley,

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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.



Catterick

COMEDY

Sunday, July 1 – Nige (Keith Carter), Nik Coppin, Susan Hanks and Neil McFarlane, The Forum Music Centre, Darlington

Wednesday, July 4 – Agraman, Des Sharples, Phil James, Jo Dakin and Miles Pennett, Hodgson's Pub, Beverley

Thursday, July 12 – Russell Brand, Middlesbrough Town Hall & Crypt, Middlesbrough

Tuesday, July 17 – Rich Hall, Gala Theatre, Durham

Thursday, July 26 – Funny Bones Comedy Club: Steve Harris, Steve Day and Karen Bayley, Tees Barrage, Stockton-on-Tees

LIVE MUSIC

Friday, July 6 – Reverend And The Makers, Ku Bar, Stockton-On-Tees

DEFENCE DIARY

JULY

7: REME open day, Hazebrouck Barracks, Arborfield. Celebrating the corps' 65th anniversary, this free event is open from 1200-1730 and will be followed by an evening Proms concert (1830-2030). For more information contact 0118 9763486.

7-November 4: 60th Anniversary of Indian Independence – Photographic exhibition commemorating the 60th anniversary of the independence of India from the British Empire and partition of India and Pakistan. Imperial War Museum North, Manchester. Tel: 0161 8364000.

14: Manchester Military Tattoo, MEN Arena. Featuring the world famous motorcycle display team, The Imps. Tickets, £11 adults and £4 children, on 0870 1908000.

14-15: Aldershot Army Show, Aldershot. www.armyshow.co.uk

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

25-28: RBS Inverness Highland Tattoo, Fort George. www.highland2007.com

AUGUST

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

4: RAF Digby's Party in the Park. Tickets and details from 01526 327684 or www.digbypartyinthepark.org.uk

OCTOBER

1-31: Poster of Conflict – Featuring more than 300 of the most eye-catching and iconic war posters. Imperial War Museum, London. Tel: 0207 416 5320/5321.

5: Charity Boxing Night – British Army v East of England Select, ATR Bassingbourn. Tickets from £25. Tel: 01223 204363.

DECEMBER

15: Charity Christmas concert for the RBL Poppy Appeal, Parish Church, Kings Sutton at 1930. Tickets from Mike Carter on 07786 640245/01865 780124.

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

Bulletin board

Defence directory

Army Benevolent Fund: 0845 2414820

Army Welfare Information Service: 01722 436569/436461; www.army.mod.uk/aws

Army Families Federation: 01980 615525

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

Career Transition Partnership: 0207 766 8020

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

Confidential support lines: UK 0800 731 4880; Germany 0800 1827 395; Cyprus 080 91065; Falklands #6111; from operational theatres Paradigm Services *201; from anywhere in the world (CSL operator will call back) +44 1800 630854. Lines open 1030-2230 (UK) every day.

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

Family Escort Service: 020 74639249

Forces Pension Society: 020 78209988

Gulf Veterans Association: 0191 2301065

Joint Service Housing Advice Office: 01722 436575

MoD Medal Office: Medal queries to JPAC Enquiry Centre on 94560 3600 or 0141 224 3600

Mutual Support (Forces Multiple Sclerosis support group): 01666 824709

National Gulf Veterans' and Families' Association Office: (0900-1700) 01482 808730; 24-hour helpline 01482 833812; www.ngvfa.com

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

Royal British Legion: 0845 7725 725

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

Ex-Service Homes Referral Agency (ESHRA): 0207 8394466; www.eshra.com

St Dunstan's charity for blind ex-Servicemen and women: 0207 7235021; www.st-dunstans.org.uk

SAMA 82 (South Atlantic Medal Association)
Falklands conflict veterans: 01495 227577

Services Cotswold Centre: 01225 810358

SSAFA Forces Help: 020 7403 8783; Western Europe 02161 472 3392

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

Victim Support: Germany 02161 472 2272; UK 0845 3030900, www.victimsupport.org

WRVS (24-hr answer service): 02920 739016; general enquiries 02920 739016

Reunions

Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters

Regiment pilgrimage: The annual pilgrimage to Crich will take place on July 2. Remembrance service starts at 1500 and gates close at 1430. Contact Maj (Retd) M J Green, RHQ, WFR, Norton Barracks, Worcester WR5 2PA for further details.

Royal Pioneer Corps: Association reunion on July 6-8, Bicester. Ring Norman Brown on 01969 360694 or email pioneers@rpca.fsnet.co.uk

144 Parachute Medical Squadron/23 Parachute Field Ambulance: Annual reunion and past-and-present dinner at TA Centre, Hornsey, London, July 7. Ring Capt Roy Hatch on 0208 341 3664 or 07730 977989.

723 (CS) Kings Squad, Royal Marines, 1959-60: Fourth reunion to be held at Chesterfield, Derby, July 8 at 2000. Ring Taff Prichard on 02920 790233.

59 Independent Commando Squadron RE: Reunion weekend July 13-15 at Royal Marines Barracks, Chivenor. Final squadron reunion before transition to 24 Commando Engineer Regiment next year. Details available on unit website at www.army.mod.uk/royalengineers/org/59sqn/index

Joint Helicopter Support Squadron: Ex-hookers sought for 25th anniversary celebrations on July 20. Contact WO2 (SSM) Dai Andrews on 01256 702134 ext 7474 or 95235 7474 or email odijhsu-ssm@odiham.raf.mod.uk

1 Parachute Battery (Bull's Troop) RHA: Drivers' day reunion July 27, past and present members, all ranks' stag dinner, followed by families' day buffet lunch on July 28. For more details contact BSM on 01206 782737 or email richyp72000@yahoo.co.uk

AMF (LI Supply Company RAOC): Past-and-present reunion on July 28 at Ward Barracks, Bulford, of AMF personnel stationed at Bulford Camp 1987 to 1992. For details, write to John White, 4 Gedling Road, Carlton, Nottingham NG4 3FJ or ring him on 01159 530312.

Army Dog Unit (Northern Ireland): Closure parade, Shackleton Barracks, Ballykelly on Aug 1. Ring WO2 F Holmes on 0287 7721392.

TS Forward Sea Cadets: 65th birthday reunion for anyone who has been involved with the cadets, Aug 18, at Ellesmere Port Civil Hall. Ring Karen Cioma-Park on 0151 355 1779 or email karencioma@uwclub.net

Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment: Annual reunion on Sept 9 in Maidstone. For more details contact B Bartlett, 185 Park Crescent, Erith, Kent DA8 3EB.

BMH Fayid (33 Company RAMC), Suez Canal Zone 1950-56: Reunion on Sept 15-16 at the International Hotel, Burton Road, Derby. For

all personnel who served in the British Military Hospital Fayid, Suez Canal Zone. Contact Bill Lowe, The Cottage, 65 North Street, West Rainton, Co Durham DH4 6NU or email him at wgl70@yahoo.co.uk

The National Service Veterans Alliance:

Reunion will be held at the Britannia Hotel, Coventry on Sept 28 to Oct 1. All ex-National Servicemen welcome. For details ring Ken Wakeman on 0208 850 2246 or email him at kenwake@ntlworl.com

Royal Hampshire Regiment:

Reunion lunch for 4th, 1/4th, 2/4th 4th (post-war) and 4/5th Battalions on Sept 29 at Southampton University Officers' Training Corps, 32 Carlton Place, Southampton. Midday for 1300. Contact Maj Ian Taylor at 4 Cedar Close, Fair Oak, Eastleigh, Hants SO50 7LN, on 02380 694771 or email him at ian.p.b.taylor@btinternet.com

Singapore schools: Reunion for former pupils of all Singapore schools on Sept 29 at Ramada Jarvis Hotel, Hatfield. If you want to be there, email singaporeschool.reunion@googlemail.com with the name of the school and the year(s) you attended.

Queen's School, Rheindahlen: Reunion in London on Oct 6 for pupils and staff, Jan 1955 to 1980s. For details see website at www.queenschoolrheindahlenassociation.co.uk

Royal Horse Artillery Association: Annual meeting and reunion dinner at Artillery Centre, Larkhill over the weekend Oct 6-7. Attendance open to past and present members of any RHA unit. Contact Maj (Retd) R J Whiteway, HQ Dulmen Station, BFPO 44, ring 0049 2594 784438 or email rhaassn@hotmail.co.uk

Scots Guards Band: Reunion on Oct 6. For details ring Lee Dawson on 0207 414 3266 or email bsm@scotsguardsband.co.uk

8 Transport Regiment RASC/RCT/RLC: Sixth anniversary reunion to be held on Oct 20. For more information ring Capt Jimmy Aspinall on 094554 8922, 07957 966566 or email him at jimmyasp@hotmail.com

24 Field Squadron RE: Reunion to be held at end of Oct at the King Charles Hotel, Chatham, Kent for RE personnel who served between 1984 and 1988. For further details email Scott Carr at scottcarr909@msn.com

7 Parachute Regiment RHA and Airborne

Gunners: Officers' reunion dinner will be held at the Officers' Mess, RSQ Larkhill on Nov 9. Write to Capt R I Taylor RHA, F (Sphinx) Para Bty, 7 Para RHA, Merville Barracks, Colchester CO2 7SW or ring 07967 362763.

2 Army Field Ambulance and 1 Close Support Medical Regiment:

Reunion and remembrance service, Nov 9-11 for soldiers serving in 2 AFA and 1 CSMR. For more details write to Sgt Ken Collins, Medical Centre, UKSU, SHAPE, BFPO 26, ring 07902 212775 or email standatease@hotmail.com

It's all over:
Royal Artillery
personnel form
up on Front
Parade for the
last time



Farewell Woolwich

A 300-year-old chapter of Royal Regiment of Artillery history closed at the end of May when the gunners quit their much-loved regimental and spiritual home at Woolwich.

More than 3,000 serving and retired members and their families paid their fond farewells at a rain-soaked open day, garden party and sunset ceremony.

The King's Troop RHA, accompanied by the RA Band, performed their famous musical drive, the RA freefall parachute display team dropped in and high-speed motorcycle stunts of the Flying Gunners warmed up a cold and damp crowd.

Officers and soldiers marched onto Front Parade with a large contingent from the retired regiment led by Maj Gen Mike Shellard. Fd Marshal the Lord Vincent and the Master Gunner St James's Park, Gen Sir Alex Harley inspected the parade.

The Union Flag and regimental standard

that have flown over the South Arch for the past 291 years were lowered to the notes of *The Day Thou Gavest* and the *Last Post* and given for safekeeping to GOC London District and the Director RA. With their final gun salute still echoing, The King's Troop rode off Front Parade for the last time.

The building which overlooks the Front Parade has the longest continuous facade in Europe and is designated as an ancient monument. It will remain as part of the MoD Estate, housing London-based troops.

Priceless books, art and silver belonging to the Royal Artillery are moving to the gunners' new home at Larkhill. The Queen, Captain-General of the regiment, is to open the modernised Larkhill HQ next summer.

Now known as the Artillery Centre, Larkhill Garrison is home to the Directorate of the Royal Artillery, RHQ RA, the Royal School of Artillery and three Regular artillery regiments, the 14th, 19th and 32nd.

for a 50th anniversary get-together, to be held Sept 6, 2010. Ring him on 01254 774600 or email him at mauricejohn.rogers@ntlworld.com

Lt James Griffiths, formerly 1 RHF, where are you now? In 1991 he transferred to the Army Air Corps or RAF. Contact Cpl J Heenan, A and SH (R Scots), Howe Barracks, Canterbury, Kent CT1 1JN.

Roadshows

THE Army Presentation Team wants to hear from members of the public who would like a personal invitation to its hi-tech roadshow.

The event starts with a reception, is followed by a presentation and questions-and-answers session and culminates with a finger buffet. Military personnel will be on hand to answer your questions.

Call 01276 417000 or email your name and address to apt.mod@btinternet.com with the event you are interested in attending.

July – 10, Esher; 11, Woodford; 12, Watford; 24, Buxton; 25, Leicester; 26, Braintree.
August – No presentations. **September** – 11, Burton upon Trent; 12, Stoke on Trent; 13, Wolverhampton; 25, Chatham; 26, Woking; 27, Eastbourne.

Searchline

Does anyone know the whereabouts of **Kevin Brown** (birth name Gray)? His mother was Sarah (Sally) Gray, now Matthews. Kevin's wife is Nicola and they have three children. Email kay390@btinternet.com

Researcher requires help on post-war Home Guard by obtaining an accurate date, and chapter and verse, for the replacement of the orders sequence, information, intention, method, by the Nato-standard situation, mission, execution etc. Contact Col J D Sainsbury, 6 Roundwood Drive, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire AL8 7JZ.

WO Kevin Pickering APTC, where are you? Mylene Pieterse from South Africa is trying to trace you. You served in Hong Kong in the 1970s, Belfast and Germany 1973-74, and Tehran 1975-76. Also stationed in Aldershot. You received BEM on Sept 15, 1975 from Prince Michael of Kent. Contact mylene@telkomsa.net or write to her at 50 Karmin Drive, South End, Port Elizabeth 6001, South Africa.

John Thorpe has been trying to establish the identity of a military unit his grandfather included in his 1914 attestation paper. The designation appears to be "RHA VNG (Imperial)". If anyone can help him, please contact John on email jan.thorpe@transgrid.com.au

Where is **Sgt Thomas Malraney**, originally Cameron Highlanders? In 1966 he transferred to Highland Regiment. Lived in the Motherwell area. A lost friend is trying to locate him. Please ring Mrs Karen von Kalphenn (Begley) on 02392 673860.

Maurice Rogers is trying to locate members of his intake at the Junior Leaders' Regiment, Royal Armoured Corps, Bovington Camp from Sept 1960,

Competitions

Stalker (PC game), May: **Winners** – Sgt Mark Alpin, 642 Signal Troop, BFPO 52; J Mansell, Sheldon, Birmingham; Matt Cook, London; John Mill, City Quay, Dundee.

British Army Badges

By Lt Col Robin Hodges

Cap badge

THE Royal Military School of Music badge is worn by student bandmasters. There were many red faces at a massed parade in 1854 when the regimental bands were unable to play the same version of the National Anthem. Among those present was the Duke of Cambridge who, when he became Commander-in-Chief, set about improving the standard of military music. Kneller Hall was acquired to accommodate the Military School of Music and the cap badge was introduced in 1907.



Formation sign

PERMANENT staff serving at the Reserves Training and Mobilisation Centre confirm the competence of reservists to deploy and also conduct drafts of reservists into operational theatres to ensure their successful transit to the units with which they are to serve. The RTMC arm badge is worn on the left sleeve.



Specialist badge

ALL NCOs selected to train recruits have to complete a number of skills courses which involve learning how to instruct on the military subject. However, the particular skills needed to instruct civilians during their recruit training require additional skills which are gained on specialist courses recognised by the Recruit Instructor qualification.



Tactical recognition flash

ALL Gurkha soldiers are enlisted into the Brigade of Gurkhas and are trained together as infantry before some undertake special-to-arm training. All Gurkha badges are based upon crossed kukris, the traditional Gurkha fighting knife.



THESE excerpts appear in **British Army Badges** by Lt Col Robin Hodges, available from Court Hill Farm, Potterne, Devizes, SN10 5PN, tel 01380 723371. Email robinhodges@armymail.mod.uk



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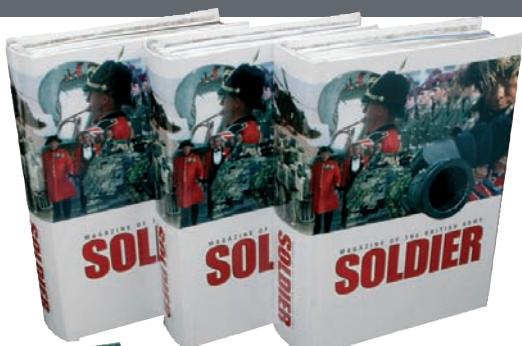
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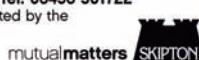
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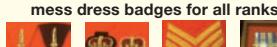
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Games

JULY REVIEW



War stories: Gamers will need to play to the strengths of their characters if they are to claim their *Hour of Victory*



Breaching Europe

Second World War actioner pits Allied teamwork against the Nazi jackboot

Report: Cliff Caswell

MORE than 60 years have passed since the end of the Second World War, but the fascination with the subject in video game form shows no signs of abating.

In the past year, Activision's *Call of Duty* has been back with another first-person shooter outing, the Normandy beaches have been stormed again in *Company of Heroes*, a real-time strategy game from THQ, and *Brothers in Arms* from Ubisoft has provided us with another squad-based tactical offering.

And now Midway has joined the melee with *Hour of Victory*, which features yet more 1940s action.

Despite bringing another Second World War-themed product into the burgeoning marketplace, the developers behind the latest title seem to have taken their responsibilities extremely seriously, striving for a new and original approach.

An Xbox 360 first-person shooter, the

plot of *Hour of Victory* revolves around three central characters, each with different abilities, which the player can swap between at will.

William Ross, a soldier with the fledgling Special Air Service, US Army Ranger Calvin Blackbull and secret agent Ambrose Taggart are each gifted with their own kit and special skills, enabling them to put their unique stamp on the mission.

Ross is a heavy weapons specialist with plenty of brawn, Blackbull's party piece is sharp-shooting and Taggart employs stealth to sneak around and wipe out opponents. But combining the trio's talents is vital if players are to stand any chance of winning against the brutal Nazi war machine.

You could be forgiven for thinking that the characters in the game are directly drawn from the pages of an Alistair MacLean novel. But Patrick Horne, who was the lead producer of *Hour of Victory*, told *Soldier* that classic wartime action and adventure stories

had been one of the key driving forces behind the project.

"We drew a lot of inspiration from classic Second World War movies from the 1960s and 70s, like *Where Eagles Dare* and *Kelly's Heroes*," he reflected. "In the game you have characters that are very different in terms of background, skill and personality."

"But while the game's story is historical fiction, the player is caught up in battles that happened. You start in North Africa in 1942 and finish in Berlin at the end of the conflict."

With the real events of the Second World War underpinning the game, ensuring the factual side of the plot was correct was of key importance for the team. "We've been working on the project since 2005 and used an ex-US Army sniper and a historian to ensure the accuracy of everything," said Horne.

"Just like movies or novels before, I believe games are reaching out to a new generation. As games become true to actual events, people are going



to remember what a significant moment the war was to the generation involved."

Certainly a considerable amount of effort has gone into *Hour of Victory*, and Midway's development team have taken the historical dimension of their work seriously.

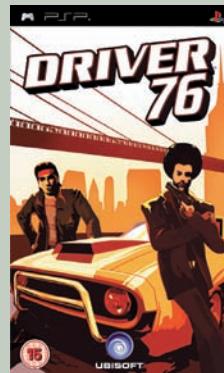
But importantly, in the endless parade of Second World War titles, a high priority has also been placed on originality.

From the demos shown to *Soldier*, graphics and sound are not in question. Overall the game, which was due for release as this issue went to press, conveys its aim of being an interactive adventure film well. Whatever the success of the final product, however, the passion of Midway's development team for the project is certainly not lacking. They are the first to admit that finding out more about the war has left its mark.

"When you spend so much time involved in learning about the events of the war, you can't help but take on a new appreciation for the sacrifices made," concluded Horne.

"It is an interesting balance for a game developer to ensure the proper reverence for the period while making sure the game is enjoyable."

"We hope we have managed to pull that off." ■



Driver 76, PSP

IT is seven years since the original *Driver* appeared on the PlayStation. Back then the game was an instant hit, focusing on pure behind-the-wheel action with a storyline of an undercover cop sent to bust a gang. But, alas, this latest instalment of the franchise fails to hit home in the same way. The format of *Driver 76* has been re-engineered to involve stealing vehicles and committing crimes, presumably in an effort to compete head on with the likes of *Grand Theft Auto* and *Saints Row*. If you want yet more of this genre, however, you'll probably enjoy.



Brothers in Arms: Hell's Highway, Xbox 360

IN the expanding market of Second World War-themed games, the team at Gearbox Software behind the latest *Brothers in Arms* title have a difficult job. But if early previews are anything to judge, they are rising to the challenge with aplomb. *Hell's Highway* gives players the task of leading a team through Operation Market Garden ("A Bridge Too Far"), a disastrous attempt by the Allies to bring an early close to the war. Attention to detail is pretty faultless and it will be interesting to see how the finished product squares up in the autumn.



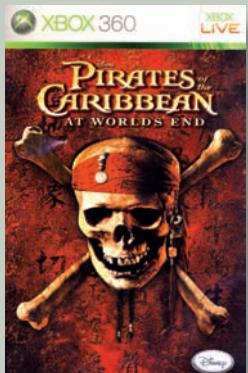
Hotel Dusk: Room 215, DS

AN unusual customer, *Hotel Dusk* wins top marks for originality but is let down by a frustrating lack of freedom available to the player. Essentially an interactive pulp fiction novel – the game even requires you to hold the DS sideways like a book – players have to move around a hotel in an attempt to solve a mystery. The experience is superbly presented and the story engrossing. But the play all too quickly becomes repetitive and the puzzles have a tendency to drive the less patient mad with frustration.



The Settlers: Rise of An Empire, PC

EVER since the release of *Populous* more than a decade ago, a generation of gamers has been captivated with strategy games revolving around building civilisations. The latest *Settlers* instalment looks set to be an impressive addition to this market. Due for release in September, there is plenty of opportunity to build and do battle across landscapes from Europe to Africa. Graphics are near perfect and considerable thought has clearly gone into the gameplay. Definitely one to watch.



Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End, Xbox 360

SPIDER-MAN 3 was a recent exception to the rule, but film tie-ins often have a nasty tendency to let you down. And this is sadly the case with the latest *Pirates of the Caribbean* game. By the standards of its stablemates in the three-dimensional beat 'em up arena, there is nothing more than mediocre fare here and what there is has been done better elsewhere. Diehard fans of the movies, however, will no doubt enjoy the swashbuckling action, decent animation and atmospheric settings.



Splinter Cell: Conviction, Xbox 360

A NEW twist in the fortunes of Agent Sam Fisher is on the cards in the next edition of the popular Tom Clancy-branded franchise out in November. Finding himself on the wrong side of the law, and framed for a crime he did not commit, the CIA master is being relentlessly hunted by the forces who created him. Latest previews of *Conviction* are hugely promising, with players having to deal with new tests such as gaining the upper hand in trading on the seedy black market and hiding from ruthless pursuers in crowds of people. It all makes for interesting gameplay.

The Enemy

We'll live and
die in these
towns

Behind the music lines: Destined for greatness, The Enemy's debut album is expected to send shockwaves through the music scene

Enemy at the gates: Recruiting support from their successful UK tour, the talented trio plan to lay seige to the top of the music charts



Enemy at large

Chart conquest within grasp of Coventry's latest music challengers

Interview: Richard Lenton

NOEL Gallagher might baulk at the notion, but when those doyens of the music press, *NME*, hail The Enemy as “the band we’ve been looking for since Oasis went to seed”, then you have to sit up and take notice.

With their exciting, ballsy brand of rock, combined with social commentary and Liam-like swagger, the comparison with the heroes of Britpop is unmistakable.

Whether the Coventry three-piece can define a generation in the way Manchester’s finest managed to is a serious long shot. But one thing’s for certain, the lads, whose street image is in stark contrast to the current crop of cravat-wearing art-house rockers, will give it a hell of a go.

Their first hit, *Away From Here*, which extols the idea of watching *Richard and Judy* instead of joining the rat race, rocketed up the charts to a peak

position of number eight. The new single, *Had Enough*, looks destined to do even better judging by its ubiquity on the radio and plethora of positive reviews, and their forthcoming debut album, *We'll Live And Die In These Towns*, is being tipped for the very top.

While most bands, Oasis included, spend years trawling the club circuit desperately hoping to get noticed, The Enemy’s rise was unusually meteoric.

Barely two years after forming, following a drunken pub conversation, the likeable teenagers are playing to packed crowds and have already supported the likes of Kasabian and the Manic Street Preachers on major UK tours. So how did it happen?

“We were having a really low night in the pub,” lead singer Tom Clarke told *Soldier*. “We had jobs we didn’t want and we were spending more in the pub each week than we were earning.

“Then I just said, ‘well I can play guitar, Andy (Hopkins), you can sort

of play bass, Liam (Watts) plays drums, let’s book a rehearsal room and see what happens’. It sounds crazy but that’s how it was.

“In the first rehearsal we wrote *40 Days and 40 Nights* and we left the room saying ‘we’ve got to stick at this, it sounds good’. I wrote *Away From Here* on the shop floor while I was working in the Co-op and we composed the tune for it in a Fiesta on the way to rehearsal.”

The lads then had a stroke of luck. The son of one of Liam’s work colleagues happened to be John Dawkins, the manager of up-and-coming London rock band Boy Kill Boy. “During his lunch break Liam stole John’s email address and started writing to him, telling him that we’d got this band together and that we wanted to record some stuff,” added Tom. “After a lot of pestering he eventually sent us to a studio. He asked us for a copy of the demo, which he loved, and that’s how



we got Grand Union Management on board."

Legendary record company Stiff were then persuaded to come out of semi-retirement to release their first hit, *40 Days and 40 Nights*, on limited edition vinyl in 2006.

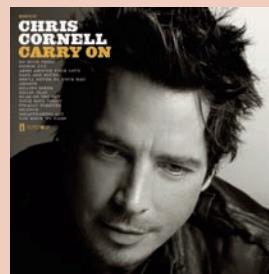
In April *Away From Here* rocketed into the top ten and gave Stiff their first hit record since the Pogues' *Irish Rover* two decades previously. On July 2 the album hits the streets, and, having been produced by the team who masterminded Kasabian's *Empire*, it has every chance of being a chart-topper. "We're really proud of it," said Tom. "As long as we've written an album that us and our fans are proud of then we're happy."

And what of those comparisons with the Gallagher brothers?

"I love them. There's no doubt that Oasis wrote a soundtrack to my generation and it's flattering that people are putting us up there with them, but I don't think we sound anything like them."

"When we speak to people in the crowd after gigs they might mention five different bands who they think we're influenced by."

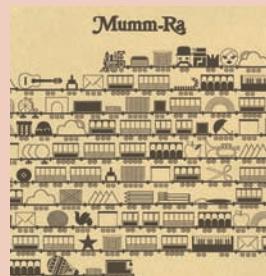
"The Oasis comparison confuses people because when they see us they're expecting to hear something off *Definitely Maybe* and that's not our sound."



Carry On (Chris Cornell)

GREAT vocals, great riffs and a great style would surely produce a great album so why did *Carry On* leave me so unsure? The ex-Soundgarden front man has combined powerful rock, country blues and a few slow, but sometimes dull, ballads. It has the soundtrack to *Casino Royale*, *You Know My Name*, and a very dubious cover of *Michael Jackson's Billie Jean*. Having said that, after the last track had finished, *Carry On* does entice you to play it again. I may have to have just one more listen.

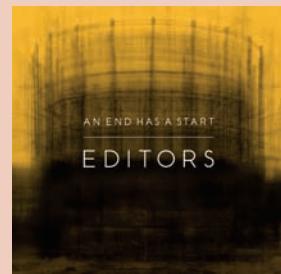
Cpl Ray Kalaker, RETDU(B)



These Things Move In Threes (Mumm-Ra)

FROM the start this album grabs the listener with its fast melodic riffs. The vocals give a slightly melancholic edge without ever descending into the depressive. The pace of the music varies as the album progresses but it never loses its energy. *She's Got You High* is the band's latest single release and promises to be a hit with its vocal layering and varied pace. Other tracks offer more aggressive guitar effects and pounding drums, giving a sound that is both tuneful and dramatic. An excellent album.

Pte Patrick Jordan, RAMC



An End Has A Start (Editors)

LYRICALLY, this album is a journey through the songwriter Tom Smith's last year, starting with an upbeat sound and ending with a more melancholy track. Poetically, he writes of *Smokers Outside The Hospital Doors* being the "saddest thing he has ever seen". The vocals and style are similar to *Divine Comedy*, so if you enjoy their work you'll like this CD. *An End Has A Start* would be most relaxing in winter – on the sofa by candlelight with a glass of wine – as it is mellow and homely. Enjoy it.

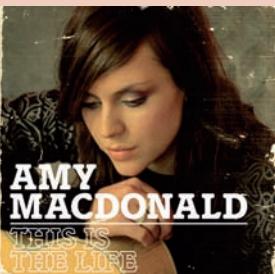
Lt Jim Berry, 1 R Irish



And Then... Nothing (Jackson Analogue)

MUSIC with no polish sums up this grungy 90s rock infusion from five-piece, *Jackson Analogue*. They decry influences or comparisons and claim that they just don't care what people think of them or how they are labelled, but similarities to the *Kings Of Leon* are hard to deny. Hey, that's no bad thing. Formed in 2004, Jackson Analogue is an absolute must for anyone who enjoys their music raw, and if you buy the group's debut album, *And Then... Nothing*, you can claim that you joined their musical journey at the beginning.

WO1 David Greaves, REME



This Is The Life (Amy Macdonald)

SCOTTISH singer-guitarist Amy follows her bouncy single *Mr Rock 'n' Roll* with a debut album. Possessing a full-bodied voice, Amy's acoustic and electric guitar playing is brazenly emotive. The songs, well arranged with a canny lyricism, are short journeys of discovery around her young yet mature soul. It's the kind of sound that should go down a storm at the summer festivals, which she is due to appear at. Forget the *Proclaimers*, this is the product of a genuine talent and could be the benchmark for modern Scottish country music.

Cpl Charlie Lloyd, RLC



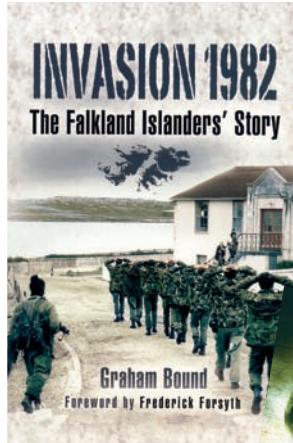
Volta (Björk)

THIS album is probably more understandable than Björk's others. It's still the infernal babbling and caterwauling but with a good musical content. Yet *Volta* is a bit more up-beat than her old stuff and features an all-female Icelandic brass section. I just don't get the style and never have – it's a different planet. If you like Björk you'll like *Volta*, but if you're looking to buy a new album and not sure what to get, I would suggest *Wham's* greatest hits before this one.

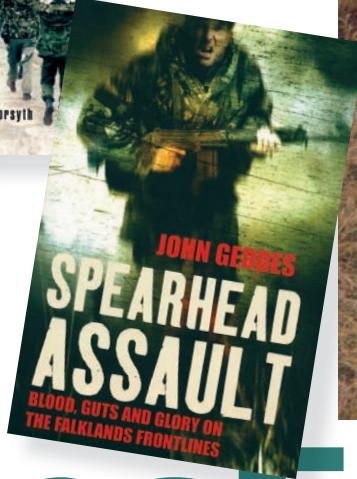
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Books

JULY REVIEW



Breakthrough:
The surrender at
Boca House, with
an Argentine
soldier, centre,
receiving
medical help.
An image from
John Geddes's
account of 2
Para's assault on
Goose Green



Reality check

Updated account of occupation sounds a note of caution 25 years on

Invasion 1982: The Falkland Islanders' Story by Graham Bound (Pen & Sword, 234pp, £19.99); **Spearhead Assault** by John Geddes (Century, 261pp, £14.99).

Review: Chris Horrocks

STORIES of reconciliation between old adversaries were a welcome feature of *Soldier* last month as the magazine marked the 25th anniversary of the Falklands War.

Although many combatants still suffer the traumatic after-effects of the conflict and the loss of comrades, others have come to terms with their experiences in the South Atlantic.

But Graham Bound, who as a native Falklander and Editor of *Penguin News*

throughout the war has the strongest possible links with the island people, sounds a cautionary note in his expanded and updated edition of *Falklands Invasion*, first published in 2002.

He gives us all a reality check as he deals with the Falklands' relationship with Argentina.

"It has changed greatly in the last few years – and not for the better," he warns. "It is impossible to conclude that the situation in the south-west Atlantic is anything other than a cold war.

"Argentina is consistently hostile to the islanders, demonising them by describing their obstinacy as the principal obstruction to the achievement of an agreement favourable to Buenos Aires.

"The dispute is now higher on the political agenda in Buenos Aires than it has been at any stage since 1982.

"And while pumping up the diplomatic pressure and populist rhetoric, the

Argentines have stepped up economic pressure, obstructing the islanders' every move to diversify and develop their economy."

Bound quotes former Falklands Governor Howard Pearce, a senior diplomat, as saying: "The beginning of wisdom for the Argentines is to recognise that they aren't going to get anywhere on the sovereignty issue."

Although many Falklanders fear the 1982 conflict could be repeated, the more optimistic disagree – men such as Fred Ford, a mechanic at San Carlos during the hostilities who used his tractor to haul supplies at the British beachhead.

"Do it again? They got a bloody nose and I don't think they would want to come back," he said.

Graham Bound is a former assistant editor with *Soldier* and now edits the Ministry of Defence magazine *DefenceFocus*. His chronicle of the war from the islanders' perspective remains one of the most readable and authoritative books on the conflict.

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>



A clue to the style and content of *Spearhead Assault* is in the subtitle, "Blood, Guts and Glory on the Falklands Frontline".

As a recce corporal with the 2nd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment, John Geddes was in the thick of the action at Goose Green, the decisive battle of the war.

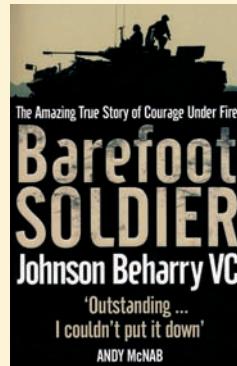
"In the last great hand-to-hand battle of the 20th century, the men of 2 Para bit off more than they could chew," goes the jacket blurb, "... but they chewed it anyway."

This memorable sentence sets the scene for the author's vivid description, told in squaddies' language, of what it was like to be on the ground, from trenchfoot, faulty intelligence, and the indiscretion of the BBC World Service in broadcasting operational information, to the shooting of a badly injured Argentine conscript to put him out of his misery.

The book is dedicated to the 17 men of 2 Para who fell in the face of "a storm of lead" hurled at them by their attackers in May 1982, including their CO, Lt Col "H" Jones, who was awarded a posthumous VC.

"I have not related every story of heroism, sacrifice and unflinching duty performed by the men of 2 Para at Goose Green," he says. "There were too many to tell." ■

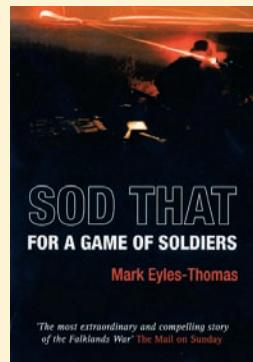
For more reviews, go to
www.soldiermagazine.co.uk



Barefoot Soldier by Johnson Beharry VC

TO mark the launch of the paperback edition of Victoria Cross-holder Johnson Beharry's enthralling autobiography, publishers Sphere have let us have three copies of the hardback to give away. For your chance to win one, tell us when Britain's highest gallantry medal was first awarded. Was it a) 1784 b) 1854 c) 1954? Answers on a postcard or sealed envelope marked "VC book competition" should reach us by July 31 and the first three correct responses drawn at random will win.

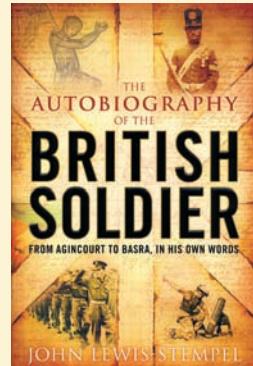
Sphere, 434pp, £6.99



Sod That For A Game Of Soldiers by Mark Eyles-Thomas

PERSONAL account by the youngest soldier to fight with 3 Para on Mount Longdon, the bloodiest battle of the Falklands War. The author and his three closest friends were all aged 17, still too young to patrol the streets of Northern Ireland. Two of his mates died in his arms and the third was also killed during the conflict. His criticism of how the Army dealt with bereaved families and the wounded is scathing.

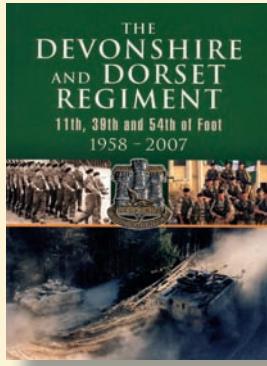
Kenton, 296pp, £12.99



The Autobiography of the British Soldier by John Lewis-Stempel

TECHNOLOGY is constantly changing but the British soldier, it seems, does not, writes **Maj Mike Peters AAC**. The 200 accounts gathered by the author take the reader on a journey with British soldiers from the blood-soaked Bosworth Field to fighting the Taliban in Afghanistan. A very good mix of anecdotes, poetry and letters that really gives an insight into the thoughts of the British soldier at war. Many readers will recognise themselves on these pages. Recommended.

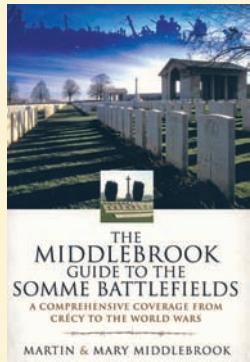
Headline, 486pp, £20



The Devonshire and Dorset Regiment

"WE have tried to cover the full range of the regimental family: the 1st Battalion, the Territorial and volunteer battalions, the Old Comrades, cadets, families and our links to the two counties through our freedom town and regimental supporters," writes Maj Gen Colin Shortis in his introduction to this history of the 11th, 39th and 54th of Foot, 1958 to 2007. And as the regiment merges into The Rifles, it is safe to say the trustees of the Military Museum of Devon and Dorset have succeeded.

Pen & Sword Military, 256pp, £25



The Middlebrook Guide to the Somme Battlefields by Martin and Mary Middlebrook

MARTIN Middlebrook's *The First Day on the Somme* is always my first recommendation as a starting point for anyone wanting to learn about the events of the British Army's blackest day, writes **Mike Peters**. This is a comprehensive and well-written guide, suitable for novice or expert. The maps, narrative and photographs take the reader across all the Somme battlefields – Crecy, Agincourt, July 1916 and the Second World War. Well worth the price.

Pen & Sword, 384pp, £25

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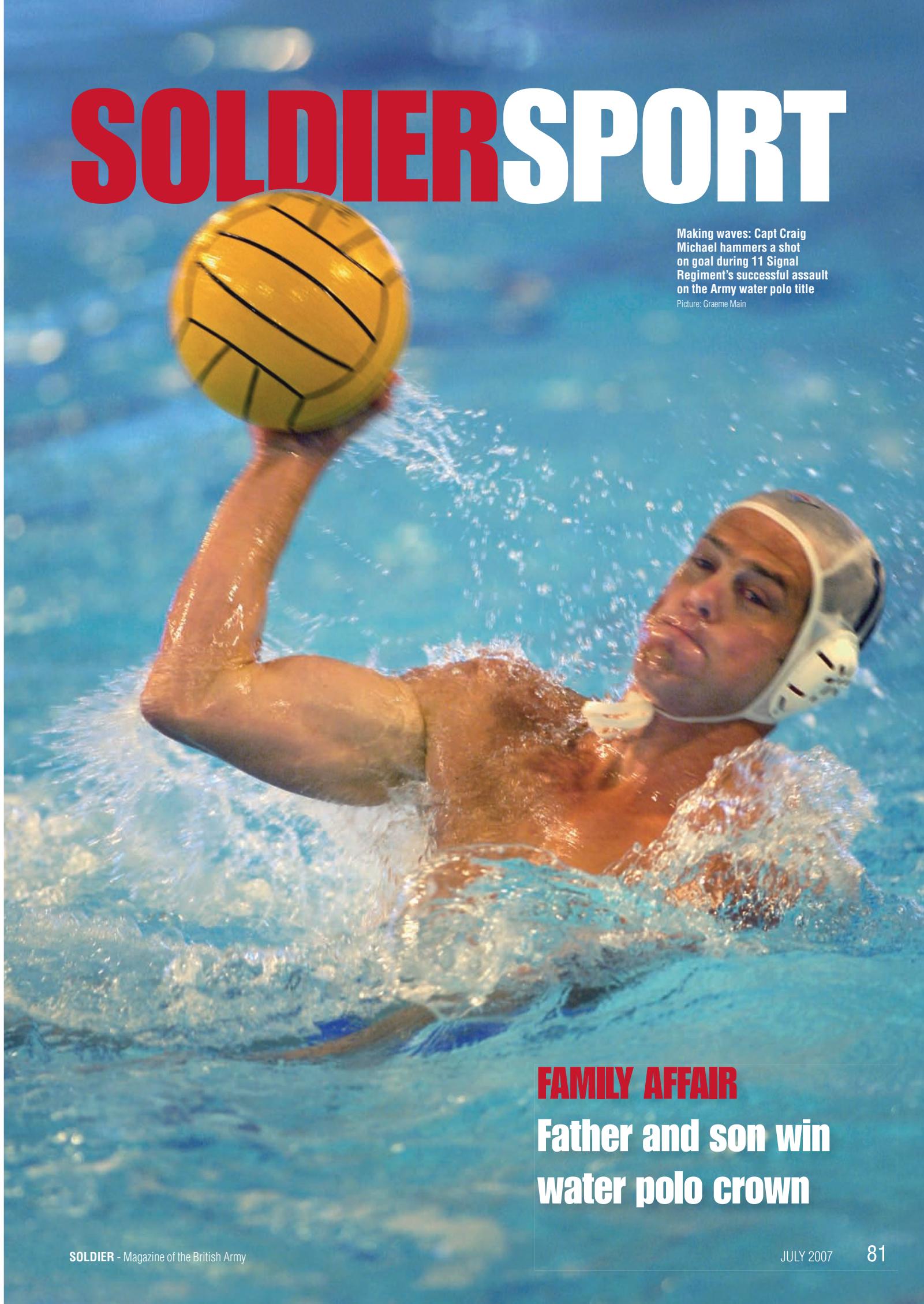
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SOLDIERSPORT



Making waves: Capt Craig Michael hammers a shot on goal during 11 Signal Regiment's successful assault on the Army water polo title

Picture: Graeme Main

FAMILY AFFAIR
Father and son win
water polo crown

Report: Stephen Tyler
Picture: Mike King

WRAPPED up warm in three layers of protective clothing, SSgt Rob Greaves stepped onto a slab of ice drifting silently through the bitterly cold waters of the Arctic Ocean.

The 24-hour-a-day sunshine that floods the North Pole in spring helped take the edge off the -25C temperatures for the APTC athlete and the 42 other hardy souls assembled at a Russian ice base for this year's North Pole Marathon.

Each runner took the threat of a polar bear attack with a pinch of salt, but the very real fact that the freezing cold ocean flowed just six feet beneath the ice under their feet was a little harder to shake off.

For Greaves and teammates WO2 Steve Boswell (APTC) and Maj Sean Greaves (RADC), facing up to such extreme conditions was part and parcel of their assault on a marathon regarded by aficionados as the most challenging in the world.

The group was not found wanting as all three of the British soldiers slogged their way to top-25 finishes, securing an inspirational victory in a team competition being fought for by

athletes from 21 countries. "The start was amazing – Steve, Sean and I raced off like we would in any normal race thinking others would follow," Greaves told *SoldierSport*.

"However, they didn't and we were out on our own for the first 50 yards with all the other competitors behind us. After that we settled into our own pace and wished each other well."

The North Pole Marathon unfolds over several laps of an arduous circuit that twists and turns through spectacular ice hillocks and vast ice floes in bone-achingly cold temperatures that rarely lift above -20C.

As if the frigid conditions were not enough, entrants also have to negotiate an uneven running surface made up entirely of ice that can see them bogged down in ankle-damaging deep snow one minute and struggling to keep their footing on the slippery floor the next.

The conditions underfoot are so treacherous that some athletes opt to tackle the race wearing sturdy but uncomfortable snowshoes rather than trail running shoes.

"I chose to take off my snow shoes during each lap when I thought it would be better to run without them," explained Greaves. "By lap six a fairly

good trail had been set and although at times the snowshoes would have helped, on balance it was best without them. I managed to run the majority of the course, but in some terrain it was difficult and striding out in a fast march was much easier.

"The terrain was out of this world, ranging from the flat landing strip to the undulating snow drifts through which you sank up to your knees.

"The sound of running on the ice was spectacular as it changed continually from creaks and groans to squeaks and echoes through the floor. It would have been easy to keep your head down to watch your footing, but making a conscious effort to look around and soak in the surroundings was amazing."

Hot water and chocolate on offer at the start line helped keep spirits up, but energy levels dropped as the race wore on and the athletes had to dig deep to find the willpower to continue.

The conditions hit Greaves hard as he entered his sixth lap, but after taking some much-needed food



On top of the world

Army runners brave icy temperatures to finish world's toughest marathon

on board he pressed on and eventually crossed the finishing line in eighth place with a time of 4hr 44min.

His brother Sean was the next member of the three-man Slalom Globetrotters to complete the race, finishing tenth in a creditable 4hr 54min. But it was the efforts of WO2 Boswell in finishing 22nd that amazed the other runners the most. Just one year before taking on the elements in the North Pole, Boswell was lying in bed unable to move as he recovered from a double hip replacement.

The team received financial and moral support from the Army Sport Control Board and Berlin Infantry Brigade Memorial Trust Fund and managed to raise more than £46,000 for the Stroke Association and the Royal Star and Garter Home.

"We are all very proud of our achievements and we all had different reasons for wanting to do them," Greaves said. "We can say that we are the team winners of the North Pole Marathon and we raised a considerable amount of money for two well-deserving charities.

"After the race, as soon as you stop running everything freezes instantly so it was vitally important to get into the

tents as quickly as possible. We all had a little bit of pain somewhere or other, but it was my toes that hurt the most."

Despite the broad daylight reflecting brightly from the surface of the ice mass, the team managed to get some sleep while runners at the back of the field covered the final few miles and completed the race.

But Greaves was far from finished. He was one of a handful of volunteers who took on the course for a second time – this time on a mountain bike in a pilot race for what is planned to become an annual event.

After mustering enough energy to get on the bike and get going, Greaves soon found that the ice gripped on to his bike's wheels, slowing his progress and making freewheeling impossible.

He also had to contend with the increasingly cold conditions as the plummeting temperature left him unable to feel his fingers or toes by the race's halfway point.

"I had thought to myself while back in the UK how hard can cycling 26 miles be? The answer to that question

was very simple – it was extremely hard and emotional," said SSgt Greaves.

"I only managed to cycle the 26 miles 40 minutes faster than I ran it, but I did finish sixth overall.

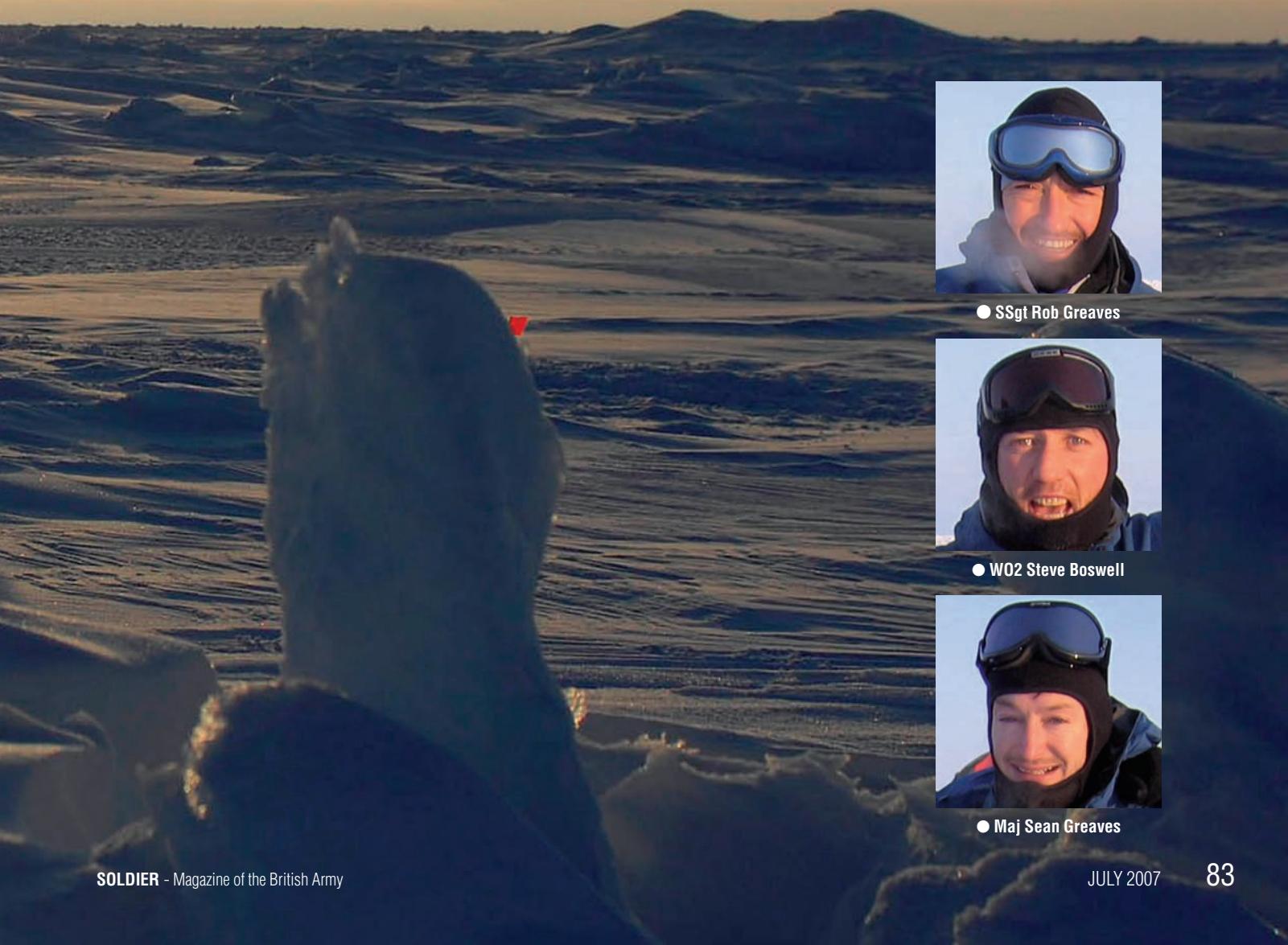
"Having run my heart out during the previous race, my legs were exhausted, my hip muscles were fatigued and to be perfectly honest I just felt like sleeping for a week.

"The conditions were demanding as the course was full of holes and lumps and every time you stopped pedalling, the bike stopped as the ice gripped the tyres.

"By the end of the race I just wanted to get out of the saddle because things were starting to hurt more and most of my face had frozen despite the many layers I had on.

"Enough was enough. I had completed two races only a handful of people had managed to do and I just wanted to eat and go to sleep."

● To donate money to the team's charities visit www.justgiving.com/northpolamarathon ■



● SSgt Rob Greaves



● WO2 Steve Boswell



● Maj Sean Greaves

SPORTSHORTS

STATESIDE SUCCESS

TERRITORIAL Army soldiers took home an impressive medal haul after travelling to the Wild West for a shooting competition against their US counterparts.

Twenty reservists from the 4th Battalion, The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment and Manchester and Salford Universities Officers' Training Corps headed to America for the Arizona National Guard combat shooting championships.

Competing against some of the state's best shooters and using unfamiliar weapons such as the M16 rifle and Beretta M9 pistol, the British contingent won two events and were runners-up in three others.

Capt Andrew Metcalfe (4 Lancs), said: "Being able to fire their weapons in competition was amazing and it was great to have picked up so many awards."

MORRIS TAKES HIGH ROAD

AN intrepid major braved a gruelling 95-mile run to raise much-needed funds for the Army Benevolent Fund (ABF).

Maj Paul Morris, of The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, ran the equivalent of a marathon every day to complete the West Highland Challenge over four days in June.

The deputy chief of staff at Folkestone's 2 (SE) Brigade HQ said: "The ABF brings an invaluable service to soldiers who continue to serve in some of the most demanding environments in the world." To sponsor Morris, visit www.justgiving.com/westhighlandchallenge

FALKLANDS REMATCH

PARACHUTE Regiment footballers battled their Royal Marine counterparts on the football field 25 years after the two sides stood side by side during the Falklands conflict.

The inaugural Falklands Cup, at Exeter, got off to a flying start when the Marines opened up a 2-0 lead before a brace of second-half goals allowed the Paras to snatch a deserved draw.

"The game was definitely a high octane affair," Royal Marines Football Association secretary Sgt Ian Michelsen said after the final whistle.

"Two goals apiece was a fitting result for an outstanding game."

Rapid racer

Burt makes a splash at slalom championships

Report: Stephen Tyler

Picture: Cpl Gabriel Marino RLC

FORMER Great Britain kayak star Capt Alex Burt coasted to a clean sweep of titles at this year's Land Command and Army canoe slalom championships in South Wales.

The international experience of the AGC paddler proved too much for the opposition as he claimed the men's open kayak and Canadian singles crowns as well as securing the Canadian doubles title with Maj Pete Francis (AGC).

Speaking after the event on the River Teifi, at Llanysul, Capt Burt said he was delighted to have won and was also pleased to see an increase in the number of competitors.

"The numbers were up on last year's championship, especially in the novice class, which is good because it means that more people are getting involved in the sport," he told *SoldierSport*.

"At the higher levels we were missing some key competitors as they were deployed on operations.

"This is something we have to live with these days when people have to work, but, at the same time, it does give the less experienced more of a chance to win a trophy."

As well as an increase in individual

The numbers were up on last year's championship, which is good because it means that more people are getting involved in the sport'

entries, the number of teams entering this year's championships also swelled thanks to newcomers from 25 Training Support Regiment RLC and even a group from 2 RGR.

"This is not something Gurkhas normally do," 2 RGR team manager Capt Tony Hellier explained. "They are not renowned for their swimming skills, although they did get better during the event. They spent a fair amount of time in the water as well as on it.

"We have just moved to the UK after being stationed in Brunei for some years so the cold Welsh water was new to them, but they are fast learners and did well after just a few days' practice."

Both the Land Command and Army unit team events were eventually won by 17 Port and Maritime

Regiment RLC.

The loggies fended off a strong challenge from the Royal Artillery to secure the inter-corps championship title, ending the gunners' four-year winning streak.

The women's Army open kayak title was won in style by Lt Mary Herbert (14 Regt RA).

Soldiers interested in taking up canoeing should visit www.army.mod.uk/army_canoeing or e-mail ACU@armymail.mod.uk

Army power play

Weightlifters raise the bar with national success

THREE Army athletes powered their way to top-three finishes in the British championships of one of weightlifting's fastest-growing disciplines.

Organisers of the British Drug Free Powerlifting Championships took advantage of the sport's rising profile to attract experienced competitors from across the UK for the 2007 tournament in Tamworth.

Among the strongmen taking part were Sgt Steve Cook (R Welsh), CSgt Steve Maden (SG) and WO2 Jules Vowles (RE).

Competing in the equipped division, each of the soldiers completed medal-

winning lifts in the squat, bench press and deadlift disciplines.

As well as securing a place in the top three of their respective categories, the talented trio's weight totals – Maden lifted 622.5kg, Cook 687.5kg and Vowles 765kg – meant they qualified to represent England and Wales at both the European and World Championships later this year.

The Army was also represented at powerlifting's European Single Lift Championships in Switzerland.

Reigning champion WO2 Neil Thomas (REME) secured second place with a 190kg bench press. ■



Wet and wild: A kayak enthusiast braves the icy water of the River Teifi in Wales during the team competition of the Army canoe slalom championships

Epic series up for grabs

EVEREST: Man V Mountain (Contender Home Entertainment), a five-part documentary series capturing the journey of 21 British Army mountaineers who risk everything in a bid to become the first Britons to conquer Everest via the notoriously difficult West Ridge, debuted on DVD last month.

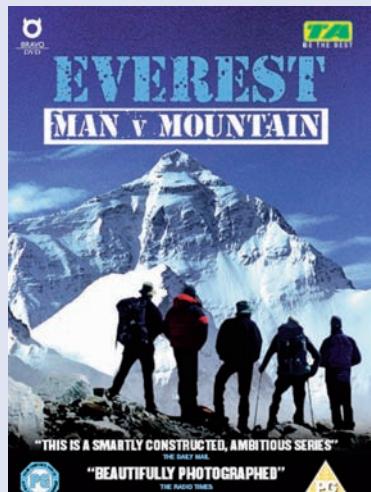
Shot by the climbers themselves, as well as professional climbing cameramen, the series follows every gruelling step of their eight-week expedition up the treacherous West Ridge. Expedition leader WO1 Dave Bunting (APTC) and his team trained for three years ahead of the climb, but nothing could prepare them for the realities of a near vertical kilometre of sheer ice, a knife-edge ridge and winds of more than

100mph – all at potentially lethal altitudes.

With spring the only season in which climbing the West Ridge is even vaguely possible, their challenge is a race against time as well as extreme weather conditions. At the furthest point of the climb, the avalanche-prone Hornbein Couloir was all that stood between them and success.

Thanks to Contender Home Entertainment, *Soldier* has six copies of the DVD to give away. To stand a chance of winning one, answer the following question. In which country is Mount Everest? a) China b) Nepal c) India.

Send your answers to Everest Competition, *Soldier*, Ordnance Road, Aldershot, Hampshire GU11 2DU by July 31. ■





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Splash back: JS Lawrence Wadham (AFC Harrogate) knocks the ball past Capt Josh Lively (3 Bn REME) during their 4-4 draw at the water polo championships

Winning relationship

Signaller father and son pool their resources to secure water polo glory

Report: Stephen Tyler
Picture: Graeme Main

ROYAL Signals water polo player LCpl Steve Griffiths gave his dad the perfect father's day present by helping him to victory in the 2007 Army championships.

Soldiers from 11 Signal Regiment saw off the challenge of the 3rd Battalion, REME, and a youthful Army Foundation College Harrogate side to claim the Army crown.

The victory was particularly sweet for LCpl Griffiths who was picked for the team by his father, water polo veteran and team captain Maj "Grif" Griffiths.

"I have been in the tournament a few times before, but this was Steve's first Army inter-unit competition and I'm happy that we have played well and won it," said Griffiths senior.

With only three sides entered in this year's finals, the winner was decided through a round robin competition.

The REME side, which had travelled from Germany to compete, was unable to cope with the power and experience of the signallers in the tournament's

opening game, eventually losing 11-1.

But they kept their heads up going into their second game against AFC Harrogate and looked on course for victory after taking a deserved 4-0 lead into the final quarter.

However, with REME running out of steam, AFC Harrogate's teenage players made full use of their superior stamina to pull back three goals and a dramatic equaliser in the final minute of play meant the thrilling game finished 4-4.

Expectations were high in the 11 Sig Regt camp ahead of the team's decider against AFC Harrogate, but the junior soldiers took a shock lead in the opening minutes of the game.

The signallers equalised soon after and both sides exchanged further goals before a score late in the second quarter gave 11 Sig Regt a 3-2 half-time lead.

The students levelled the scores soon after the break, but a brace of stunning backhand strikes from Capt Craig Michael and a further two goals were

enough for 11 Sig Regt to win the game 7-3 and take the overall title, leaving AFC Harrogate in second.

"We won the 4 Div playoffs and the southern area championships coming into the Army finals so we were quite confident," Griffiths told *SoldierSport* before sending his son to collect the championship trophy.

'We have quite a mature squad, but our expectations were high and we have done well to match them'

"We have quite a mature squad compared to the others, but our expectations were high and we have done well to match them.

"I thought Harrogate were excellent, especially when they managed to pull four goals back in the game against REME, who also put on a good show.

"Harrogate came into the game against us on a high and I don't think we were expecting them to give us such a hard match.

"They are a very young team and they forced us in to slowing the tempo of play down a bit so that we could control the game." ■

SPORTDIARY

ANGLING

July 5-6 – Army boat championships (Weymouth); 9-10 – Combined Services boat competition (Rhyl); 24-26 – Lexus team grand final (Rutland).

ATHLETICS

July 4 – Inter-unit team finals (Tidworth); 11 – Army v Surrey v Hampshire v Achillies (Tidworth); 20 – Inter-Services championships (RAF Cosford).

BADMINTON

July 7-8 – Army v Royal Navy (RAF Uxbridge).

CANOEING

July 7-8 – National sprint championships (Dorney); 18-19 – National marathon championships (Wokingham); 20-21 – Army sprint and marathon championships (Hereford).

CRICKET

July 6 – Combined Services women v Civil Service women (Aldershot); 9-10 – Combined Services v ECB Schools (Aldershot); 13 – Combined Services v MCC (Aldershot); 16 – Army v Yorkshire (Leeds); 16-19 – Women's Inter-Services championships; 17 – Army v Derbyshire (Clifton); 25 – Army v Bath (Aldershot); 26 – Army v Middlesex (Aldershot); 29 – Combined Services women v MCC women (Aldershot); 30 – Army v Royal Air Force (Portsmouth).

August 1 – Army v Royal Navy (Portsmouth).

CYCLING

July 8 – National mountain bike team time trial championships (South Wales); 15 – National mountain bike 100-mile time trial championships (north Midlands); 21 – Trek British MTB Series (Plymouth).

August 5 – Merida MTB Series (Selkirk); 11 – Army time trial series (Midlands).

FENCING

July 21-22 – British championships (Sheffield).

GOLF

July 1-4 – Army matchplay championships (Saunton); 4 – Army women v Tynley Park (Tynley Park); 5-6 – Inter-corps championships (Saunton); 10-11 – Army v RAF Strike Command (Aldershot), Army women v Police women (Fairhaven); 15 – Army v Territorial Army (Tidworth Garrison); 17 – Army women v Goring and Streetly (Goring and Streetly); 30 – Army v Whittington Heath (Whittington Heath); 31 – Army high handicap open championships (Whittington Heath).

August 2 – Army v Little Aston (Little Aston); 7 – Army women v Lloyds TSB (Army Golf Club).

LAWN TENNIS

July 14-18 – Army championships (Aldershot); 30-31 – Inter-Services championships (Wimbledon).

MARTIAL ARTS

July 21 – Inter-Services championships (Aldershot).

MODERN PENTATHLON

July 14-15 – Army championships (Sandhurst); 27-29 – British championships (Bath University).

POLO

July 12 – RMAS polo day (Sandhurst); 14 – Hackett Rundle Cup (Tidworth); 15 – Hackett inter-regiment final (Guards).

August 5 – Royal Star and Garter charity match (Royal Leamington Spa).

continued opposite...



Water board: Capt Kerry Gospel (RLC) pulls off a big jump during the UK night series masters event

Signal success

Massey Trophy victory caps memorable season

FOOTBALLERS from the Royal Signals hit top form at just the right time to secure their third successive Massey Trophy.

The habitual winners looked like they would miss out on this year's title after finding themselves languishing in the fourth and final qualifying position for the end-of-season quadrangular play-off tournament.

The defending champions had to win their remaining three games to retain the title and they were not found wanting as wins over the Royal Engineers (3-1), Royal Artillery (4-0) and the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (2-0) brought them level on points at the top of the table with the RE squad.

With both teams also sharing an identical goal difference, the title was

handed to R Signals because of their better head-to-head record of four victories from the six games between the two sides.

As well as celebrating Massey Trophy success, the signallers triumphed in the inaugural Woolwich Trophy by beating a gutsy Infantry side 7-2.

Corps coach Capt Ritchie Bell told *SoldierSport*: "We were very pleased to win the Massey Trophy this year because we have become the team that everyone wants to beat having won it four times in the last five years."

"Our players make up the majority of the Army squad as well so we have a very strong group of guys. We are on a roll at the moment but we are still looking to strengthen the squad over the summer so that we can challenge again next year." ■

Wake-up call

Skipper makes waves ahead of championships

ARMY wakeboarding captain Kerry Gospel has set his sights on a place in the Great Britain squad after storming to victory in the latest UK night series competition.

Capt Gospel (RLC) produced two clear final runs on a floodlit lake to secure first place in the masters section of the event, which was held in the dark at Belfont Lakes, near London.

A total of 38 riders took to the water, with the Army competitor fending off the challenge of seven other masters to take the title.

"A semi-floodlit lake is extremely challenging to ride in darkness," he told *SoldierSport*. "It's a completely different ballpark to riding in daylight because you can't see the water and you have floodlights in your eyes, so your senses kick in a lot more."

"There is no reason why I shouldn't qualify for the Great Britain team and I hope it will pave the way for me to go to the European Championships later this year."

Gospel said that participation in wakeboarding is growing steadily throughout the Army and he anticipates a record amount of riders taking part

in the Army championships in Milton Keynes in September.

He will then have the task of selecting a team to compete in the Inter-Services tournament against the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force one week later.

And although he is confident the Army has the ability to win the competition, Gospel wants to attract more new riders to wakeboarding to help the sport grow even further.

"I think we will certainly have a strong enough team to win. The overall standard is on the increase and I think everyone is being dragged up to a higher level," he explained.

"I do want more people to have a go. I would rather have 50 people who have never stood on a board before than one or two really good riders. Wakeboarding is so much more accessible than other extreme sports. People can just turn up and I'll give them a life jacket and helmet and get them started."

● Anyone interested in taking up wakeboarding or in sponsoring the Army team should contact Capt Gospel on 07931 343498, email armywakeboarding@hotmail.com or visit www.100th-monkey.co.uk ■

Record breaker

Paddy sets 16 world bests at international event

FORMER Army strongman Paddy Doyle continued his rich run of record-breaking form at a prestigious international fitness competition in the United States.

Ex-paratrooper Paddy Doyle returned triumphant from the World Record Breakers' Cup in New York having set 16 new bests in speed, fitness and martial arts events. The current holder of the World's Fittest Man title won a total of 53 points at the Coney Island event – more than the combined total of every other competing nation.

"I was very pleased with my performance and that I managed to break 16 records," Doyle told *SoldierSport*. "Britain came first out of all the countries and the thing I was most surprised at was how much the American crowd supported me. They gave me 100 per cent all the time which was nice because I'm not the most popular person with some of the American competitors."

Doyle prepared for the event by combining his usual martial arts and

fitness training with a series of punishing hill and mountain runs. The preparation paid off as the former amateur boxer set 15 new records in one hour.

He followed up that achievement by completing a total of 911 step-ups onto a 15-inch-high bench carrying a 40lb backpack in 60 minutes.

His success has earned him a place in the next *Guinness Book of World Records* and Doyle is already setting his sights on claiming more titles at the 2008 World Record Breakers' Cup.

"I'm having a break now, but I'm planning on doing a ten-hour fitness event soon," he explained. "I plan to continue representing Great Britain and I can't wait to get out there and break even more records next year."

"I owe a big thank you to the Army because it's the military training they gave me that has pushed me to be able to do what I do."

● To find out more about Paddy Doyle, visit www.worldsfittestathlete.co.uk ■

SPORTDIARY

continued...

RIFLE SHOOTING

July 7 – Army small-bore target rifle v Scotland (Lauder); 17 – Army target rifle championships (Bisley); 24 – Inter-Services target rifle short range match (Bisley); 26 – Inter-Services target rifle long range match (Bisley); 27 – Combined Services target rifle v Home Counties (Bisley).

ROWING

July 4-8 – Henley Royal Regatta; 17 – Combined Services Regatta (Peterborough); 20-22 – National championships (Nottingham).

August 4 – Henley Town and Visitors Regatta.

RUGBY LEAGUE

July 3 – Combined Services v Australian Students (Uxbridge); 11 – Army U23 v Prison Service; 25 – Army v Civil Service (Castleford).

RUGBY UNION

July 29 – Worthing Sevens.

SPORT CLIMBING

July 4 – Inter-Services championships (Bristol).

SWIMMING

July 3 – Army diving championships (Aldershot); 7-9 – Inter-Services swimming, diving and polo championships (Cranwell); 31-Aug 4 – Inter-Services cross-channel relay championships (Dover).

TRIATHLON

July 8 – Army standard triathlon championships (Bournemouth).

TUG OF WAR

July 15 – Women's area seven championships (Sandhurst); 18 – Inter-Services championships (RAF Cosford); 25 – Men's triangular championships (Tidworth).

WINDSURFING

July 11 – Inter-corps series event (Hayling); 9-13 – Army individual and team championships (Hayling).

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

MASSEY TABLES

MASSEY TROPHY – DIV 1

	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
R Sigs	12	8	2	2	14	20
RE	12	8	2	2	17	20
RLC	12	6	2	4	8	19
REME	12	5	4	3	12	17
RA	12	6	1	5	5	16
Infantry	12	3	1	8	-11	10
AMS	12	0	0	12	-44	0

MASSEY TROPHY – DIV 2

	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
APTC	10	8	2	0	27	26
RAC	10	6	1	3	-2	19
AGC	10	5	1	4	18	16
Int Corps	10	4	2	4	5	14
AAC	10	3	2	5	7	11
CAMUS	10	0	0	10	-55	0

Healthy option

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

We asked a selection of PTIs who were involved in the Army health trainer pilot course for their views on the concept and the e-learning package

SSgt (SSI) Sid Saunders, APTC

Coming from a field unit and knowing what the lads are like out on the ground, I was unsure about how well the health trainer idea would go down. But once I got involved, my view changed completely. I think it is something that PTIs will relate to and is a good tool they can put in their bag.



Cpl Michael Crane, 3 PWRR (V)

As PTIs we are viewed as fitness professionals, are approachable and in daily contact with soldiers so it's a good starting block to work from. I thought the health trainer package was very well laid out. I'm not a computer whizz kid by any stretch of the imagination but I didn't find it hard to follow at all.



Cpl Tanecia Dewar, RLC

PTIs are in the best position to take the health trainer concept forward. How well it is embraced depends on the attitude of those presenting it. If we are positive then there is more chance of the Army running with it. Health training is more relevant now than ever before.



WO1 (SMI) Lee Dyson, APTC

Units have been screaming out for something like this for years so I think it will be embraced by the wider Army. To link the role of health trainer with the physical training role complements the job of PTIs. The e-learning package covers a lot of topics and is supported by interesting facts and figures.



LCoH Ruel Francis, HCR

I thought we did enough about health on our PTIs course but when I saw the training package I realised it covers topics in a lot more detail. I think the Army will embrace the concept but it may take some time. It's about raising awareness and pointing people in the right direction.



Capt (MAA) Jimmy Hendrickson, APTC

Health and fitness go hand-in-hand so from a PTIs point of view the cap firmly fits. I thought the pilot course was very professional, interesting and user-friendly for the not-so-IT-literate. I think the health trainer concept will be well received and well respected by the Army.



Cpl Dean Bradley, 5 Rifles

It makes sense for PTIs to take on the health trainer role because we are involved in the physical training side of life so it will be easier to develop us rather than start people off from scratch. It's a positive move but I think it is going to be hard to get it accepted by the rest of the Army.



Cpl Dean Moss, 4 Rifles

The course was a real eye opener and gives us more tools to do our job, so as PTIs we'll be in a better position to help people and answer their questions. People do approach us a lot anyway – we can be a first point of contact. I think it's a really valuable course, a good aid to have as a PTI, and another qualification as well.



Sgt (Sl) Graeme Osborne, APTC

We're involved in health and fitness all the time so this is just another aspect of what we do as a day-to-day job anyway. Everybody should embrace this in the Army – this isn't just APTC stuff. Every SNCO should study this so they can help if someone's got a problem.



Interviews: Andrea Webb Pictures: Mike Weston

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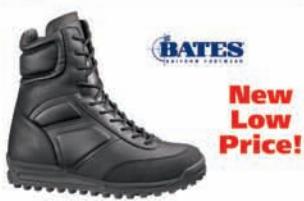
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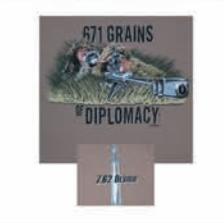
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