

SOLDIER

MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH ARMY



OCTOBER 2011 £3.50

THIS MONTH: CHERYL CHEERS CAMP BASTION
THE HANGOVER CURE **ARCHAEOLOGY ADVENTURE** RESERVIST JUDGEMENT



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SOLDIER

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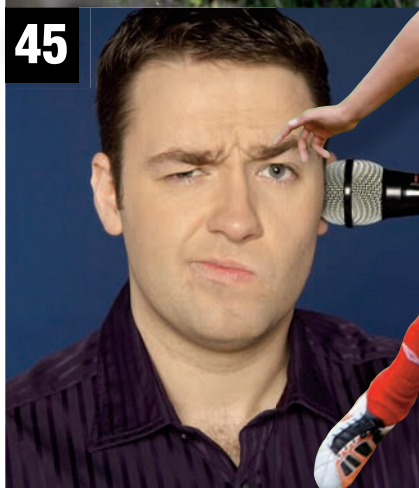
98 Final word



Cover picture (left): Computer technology is bringing a wealth of training opportunities and operational experience to British Army troops (pages 33-35, 46-49) Picture: Steve Dock

Background image: The MQ-9 Reaper aircraft being flown by a US-based crew (pages 29-35)

Picture: Cpl Steve Follows, RAF





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Est 1945 – incorporating the
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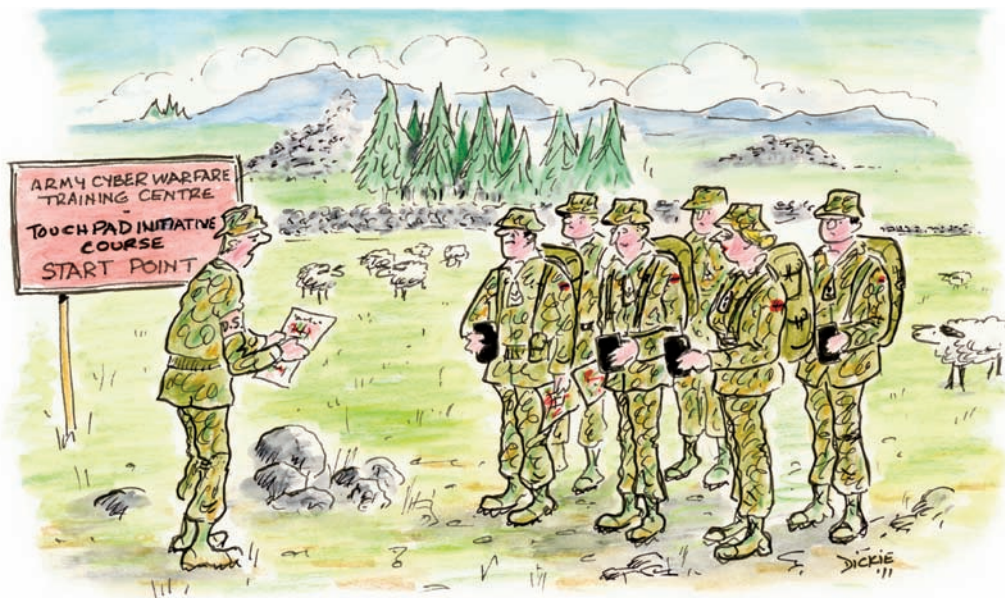
ARMY



SOLDIER is published by the Ministry of Defence
and printed by Wyndeham (Roche) Ltd. Print contract
managed by Corporate Document Services (CDS).

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"Right guys, everything you need is on your device. If ambushed by the enemy, a well-aimed blow with the edge of an iPad is known to be the most effective form of attack."

● Cyber warriors – pages 46-47

Keeping the faith after findings

THE abhorrent revelations contained in Sir William Gage's report into the death of Iraqi civilian Baha Mousa (page 7) could easily and justifiably have filled every single page of this issue of *Soldier*.

The long-anticipated, £13-million document lost nothing of its terrible sting when it was published last month, despite the tense three-year wait that our organisation and others have had for its detailed findings.

Being journalists, the temptation to follow the path of colleagues in the mainstream media with extensive analysis, comment and feedback on Sir William's findings was great.

We wanted to talk more about why some Service personnel stood by and let this man be inflicted with 93 separate wounds.

We wanted to speculate on the subsequent handling of the incident, the seeming loss of control by commanding officers involved and accusations from some media commentators of "systematic lying" around the death.

But then we thought about it a little. And we looked over the report. And we absorbed some of the coverage of the findings. The conclusion we reached was borne out by feedback from soldiers themselves in the inquiry papers.

One Serviceman told Sir William's team that he felt Baha Mousa's mistreatment had "undone" all the previous good work of himself and other troops in gaining the trust of communities living in areas of British Army operations.

Others have expressed anger with their colleagues at what came to pass.

"I have been acutely conscious of the additional pain and stress which this inquiry has put on members of the Armed Forces and the Ministry of Defence," Sir William said towards the end of his investigation.

His perception is entirely accurate. But it was a necessary stress.

Such "cowardliness" is not – and never will be – representative of the fine Servicemen and women who populate our ranks.

The number of readers who need preaching to about how wrong the actions of those two days were is so negligible, it would be nothing short of foolish to edit this issue with them in mind.

Our organisation has already done much of its soul-searching over this incident and learned many lessons.

So the *Soldier* team have instead decided to continue our usual quest to provide readers with a colourful variety of news, features and opinion.

In this issue we take a closer look at the staggering and mind-boggling advances being made by the cyber soldiers who are working to protect the entire defence network from attack (pages 46-47).

We also speak to the Birmingham-based boffin behind some explosive gaming developments for bomb disposal experts (pages 48-49).

Even during the month of the Baha Mousa inquiry report, it has proved far easier to uncover things our Service is doing well – brilliantly even – than it has been to find people who think we are doomed. From the strides being taken in welfare provision (pages 42 and 51) to sporting prowess (pages 87-97), we are an organisation committed to continual improvement.

A quick hop over the Atlantic to the US (pages 29-35) found that exactly the same can be said of those working in the most high-pressured operational environments.

I need no convincing the Army is strongly in-tune with its moral conscience and, as I hope this issue manifests, we must keep faith in our ability to do right, even when some individuals have let us down. – Sarah Goldthorpe, Editor ■

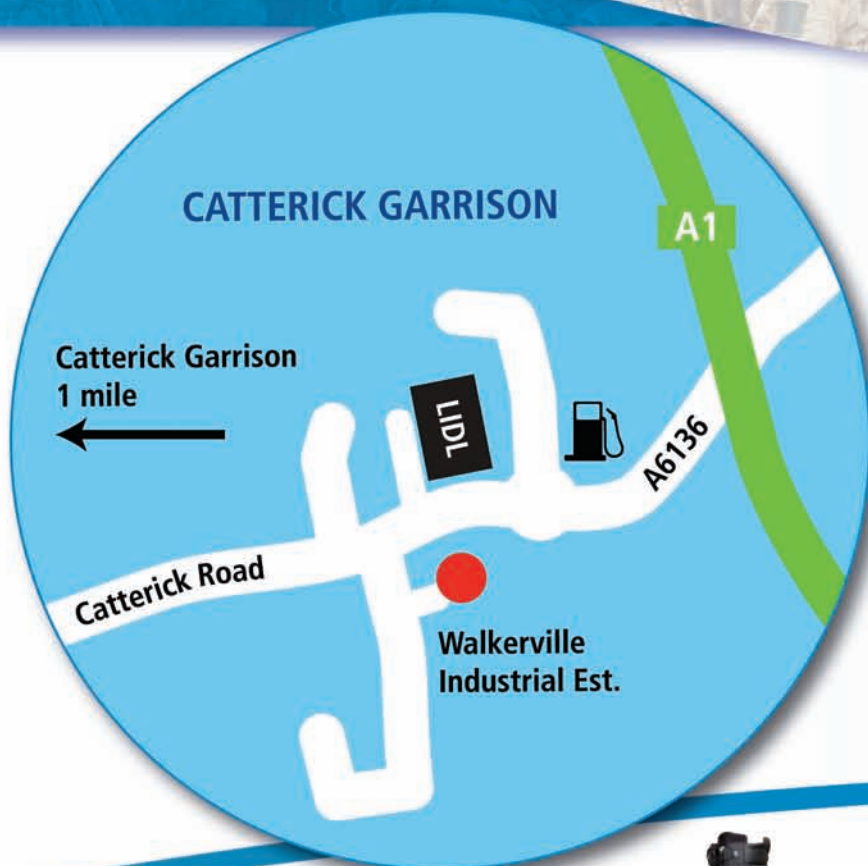
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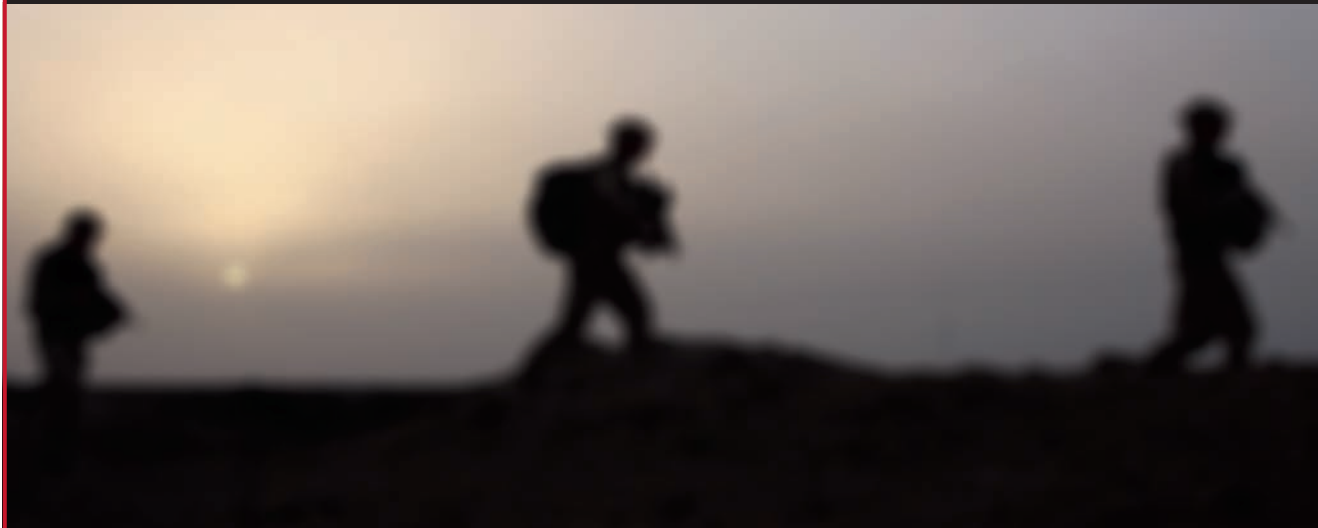
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Picture: Graeme Main

Dark day for the British Army: Troops on patrol in Basra. The Chief of the General Staff said that what occurred there in 2003 must never happen again

Baha Mousa abuse 'grave and shameful'

A DARK shadow has been cast over the reputation of the Army after a year-long inquiry into the death of an Iraqi civilian revealed he was subjected to a stream of violent and cowardly abuse from British soldiers.

The report by Sir William Gage revealed that Baha Mousa's death in 2003 was the direct result of a series of brutal acts by personnel from 1st Battalion, The Queen's Lancashire Regiment, who subjected him to beatings, prolonged spells in stress positions and hooding as he was held in custody in Basra.

Other detainees with him suffered similar treatment.

The document states that the Service was unprepared to meet its responsibilities when holding prisoners and that guidance on interrogation and tactical questioning was inadequate as it failed to safeguard against abuse.

Sir William has presented 73 recommendations to ensure similar incidents are not repeated, many of which are already well advanced within the military.

The Chief of the General Staff, Gen Sir Peter Wall, said the Army had apologised unreservedly to Mr Mousa's family and to the surviving victims. He is confident that all soldiers deploying on operations today are fully aware of the need to treat prisoners humanely and with respect.

He added: "What happened to Baha Mousa and his fellow detainees in 2003

was, in the words of the inquiry, grave and shameful.

"The nation places its trust in us and we expect our soldiers' conduct to reflect that trust, no matter how challenging the environment may be.

"Our operational effectiveness depends on this and we expect junior commanders at all levels to lead by example. We also expect our soldiers, no matter how junior, to understand the clear distinction between right and wrong in the heat of the moment.

"This did not happen in the case of Baha Mousa and others in the temporary detention facility.

"Although the challenges that British soldiers faced in Iraq in 2003 were hostile and intense, there can be no excuse for the loss of discipline and lack of moral courage that occurred."

Gen Wall, pictured right, stated that strenuous efforts had been made to transform the way personnel train for and conduct detention operations and that managing this process is now a mainstream military skill.

He said: "We demand a great deal of our soldiers who daily face threats on operations to protect Britain's safety and security. The

vast majority of them demonstrate high standards of professionalism and behaviour in all that they do. This is the essence of the Army's reputation at home and abroad.

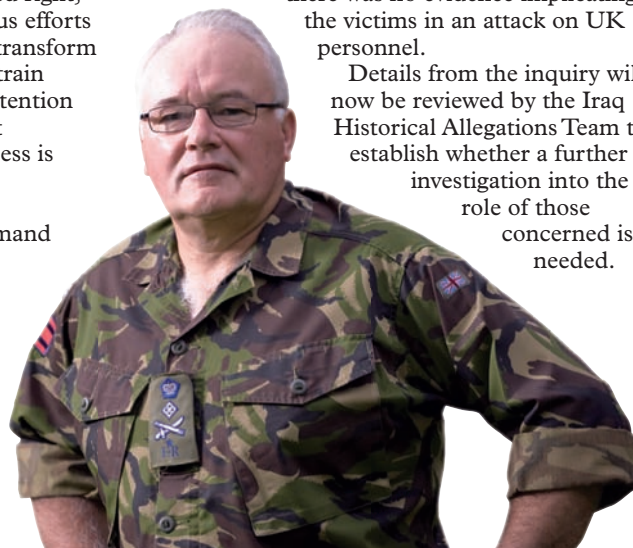
"The shameful circumstances of Baha Mousa's death have cast a dark shadow on that reputation. This must not happen again."

Mr Mousa was arrested along with nine other Iraqis at the Haitham Hotel in Basra on September 14, 2003, as British soldiers conducted a search for suspected insurgents.

He and other detainees were kept handcuffed in extreme heat and squalid conditions. The deceased had also been subjected to a violent beating.

Defence Secretary Dr Liam Fox called the report "painful and difficult" reading. His department conceded there was no evidence implicating the victims in an attack on UK personnel.

Details from the inquiry will now be reviewed by the Iraq Historical Allegations Team to establish whether a further investigation into the role of those concerned is needed.





NEWS IN BRIEF

SOLDIER DIES ON RANGES

■ A SERVICEMAN has died on the live-firing training area of Lydd Ranges in Kent.

Fus Dean Griffiths of 1st Battalion, The Royal Welsh was from Market Drayton. The 21-year-old's death is being investigated.

In a tribute, commanding officer Lt Col Stephen Webb (1 R Welsh) said: “Intelligent, fit and skillful, he was an outstanding soldier with the potential for a long and very successful career in The Royal Welsh.”

PHOTO COMP CLOSING

■ THE closing date for the Army Photographic Competition 2011 is October 3.

Entries are welcome from all Regular and Reserve personnel, staff and cadets of the Combined Cadet Force, Army Cadet Force, University Officer Training Corps and MoD civil service photographers who work directly for the British Army. Visit www.army.mod.uk/photocomp for more details.

KIT CARE COMMENDATION

■ TROOPS from 19 Regiment, Royal Artillery have won an annual Service competition which promotes the management of military assets.

The Land Forces Equipment Care Competition rewards the unit with the best record for achieving and maintaining satisfactory inspection grades and improving kit availability.

APACHE ACCOMPLISHMENT

■ AN Army Air Corps pilot has clocked up his 5,000th flying hour in the Apache aircraft during deployment to Afghanistan.

Capt Antony Thompson is nearing the end of an intense five-month tour which has seen him spend up to eight hours a day in the cockpit of his attack helicopter, protecting

Servicemen and women working on the ground in Helmand.

He joined the Royal Signals at the age of 17 before being accepted into flying

training at Middle Wallop and going on to acquire 20 years of airborne experience. He started piloting the Apache after 12 years.

“This has been a very challenging time but it makes me feel better to know that the guys and girls on the ground feel safe when we are up there watching over them,” he said.

Col Peter Eadie, commander of Task Force Jaguar, said: “Thomo's skills, experience and example continue to bring on and encourage younger pilots.”

FEARLESS FIANCEES WANTED

■ BBC THREE'S reality television show *Don't Tell the Bride* is looking for soldiers who want to get married to take part in one of its programmes.

Anyone interested should email weddings@renegadepictures.co.uk.



Picture: Daily Mirror/Pride of Britain

One of the lads: The star posed with soldiers of the Close Support Logistic Regiment at Camp Bastion

Cheryl cheers Bastion troops

POP princess Cheryl Cole has paid a visit to Camp Bastion in a morale-boosting mission.

The 28-year-old Girls Aloud star swapped designer dresses and heels for combats and desert boots during her stay in Helmand province last month.

Paying tribute to the Servicemen and women deployed there on Op Herrick, she presented a yet-to-be-revealed commanding officer with a *Daily Mirror* Pride of Britain award.

“I always had admiration for what the guys do out there, but seeing them at work was awe-inspiring,” said the Geordie singer. “Every one of them is a hero in my book.”

Kitted out with camouflage and an SA80 rifle, the pint-sized pin-up was invited to join a training exercise designed to test troops' compound clearance skills.

Task Force Helmand spokesman Lt Col Tim Purbrick said the performer had not been afraid to get her hands dirty.

“Cheryl was up for doing everything we suggested and she was like one of the lads,” he said.

“She was a little taken aback by the noise and general chaos but gamely carried on

with things.”

He added: “I’m sure plenty of celebrities probably would have rather just observed but Cheryl was in the thick of it.”

During her short stay at the military base, the former *X Factor* judge went on a mock patrol with soldiers from 1st Battalion, The Rifles and took part in cheeky stunt organised by Army counter-IED experts, where she blew up a dummy of Simon Cowell.

The chart topper also watched troops destroy some of the home-made bombs seized from the Taliban and

met members of the Royal Engineers search teams who hunt for hidden explosive devices.

“I was astonished at the way they put their lives on the line,” she said.

Lt Col Tim Purbrick added: “Cheryl has been fantastic. Nothing was too much trouble for her and it felt like she had met practically everyone on the military base.”

● Footage from the visit will be shown on the *Daily Mirror Pride of Britain Awards*, which will be screened on ITV1 at 2000 on October 5.





Picture: Steve Dock

RIFLEMAN Rocky Gurung from 2nd Battalion, The Royal Gurkha Rifles provides top cover from a Husky vehicle with a general purpose machine gun at the headquarters of the Police Mentoring Advisory Group in Nad-e Ali, Helmand province. Soldiers from the unit have been training new, elite teams of Afghan police officers. The specially trained Provincial Response Companies will be tasked with high-risk arrests and operations in areas with regular insurgent activity. From this month soldiers from 1st Battalion, The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment will take over the advisory group role.

Afghans praised after op

THE Afghan Uniform Police have continued making rapid progress in Helmand province by successfully staging their first air assault operation.

Working alongside personnel from 1st Battalion, The Rifles, the patrolmen flew deep into the Green Zone on a mission to disrupt insurgent activity in the Nahr-e Saraj district.

The move was staged during the holy month of Ramadan – during which Muslims fast between sunrise and sunset – and the officers were given special permission to break from the tradition and play a key role in securing the area.

While moving through tough terrain, the patrol searched a number of compounds that were suspected of being used as Taliban safe houses and factories for improvised explosive devices.

Troops from 1 Rifles worked in close support of the group throughout the operation, providing a secure cordon in which the searches could be carried out.

During the operation a member of the Afghan police triggered an IED in one of the buildings and, despite

being airlifted to hospital for emergency treatment, died from his injuries.

Then as the mission neared completion, the patrol fell victim to an enemy ambush and was pinned down by sustained fire.

After calling in support from their colleagues, the personnel were able to extract back to their patrol base after a 45-minute contact.



Rfn James Clark said: “When the shooting started everyone did their drills perfectly, we took a knee and didn’t fire until after we had identified the firing point.

“We held it together really well and there was no panic, it was just like being on exercise.”

Maj Karl Boswell added:

“Given this was their first helicopter assault, the Afghans were professional and robust, leading throughout.

“They are making real progress and they have performed outstandingly. This has been a massive step forward for them.”

NEWS IN BRIEF

COMBAT KIT SAVES SCOTS

■ BODY armour and ballistic protection saved the lives of two soldiers when they came under attack in southern Afghanistan.

Hldr Steven O'Neill and LCpl Jamie McKenzie were near the back of a patrol with A Company, 4th Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland north of Lashkar Gah when they were ambushed.

But they didn't realise until after the incident that they had been struck.

LCpl McKenzie said: “We were walking down a track and suddenly an insurgent just started firing from about 30 metres away.

“The trees were so thick that we didn't even see him.”

A few days later the lance corporal, who was bruised in the attack, found a bullet lodged between the plate and padding of his armour. The kit had stopped it from hitting his chest.

“I couldn't believe it,” he added.

Knee pads also helped Hldr O'Neill.

He explained: “Thinking back, I had felt a sting on the back of my leg, but at the time I was so focused on returning fire and keeping the rest of the patrol safe that I didn't register it.

“The kit may be heavy to wear on patrol in the heat and the sun but, seeing how well the body armour works, I'm glad I've got it.”

Pelvic protection saved another soldier in the same platoon from more serious injury.

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“I SKIPPED LONDON SCOTTISH LAST SEASON WHICH WAS A GREAT HONOUR, BUT TO LEAD AN ARMY REPRESENTATIVE SIDE IS SUCH A PRIVILEGE ”

– SGT DARRELL BALL (RE) REFLECTS ON NEW CAPTAINCY ROLE, PAGE 93

Jonjo hits the right note

ASERVING Infantry soldier has sung his way into the second round of this year's television series of *The X Factor*.

After a shaky start to his on-screen audition, Pte Jon Joseph Kerr (3 Yorks) dazzled judges with his rendition of *Handbags and Gladrag*s before being told he had made it through to the boot camp stage of the UK's most famous talent show.

After getting the thumbs-up from panel members Kelly Rowland, Tulisa Contostavlos and Louis Walsh, head judge and *Take That* star Gary Barlow told the Serviceman his performance showed a lot of potential.

However, he warned the 27-year-old to get his act together for the next level, which will see him spend time honing his singing skills in a bid to be selected for the show's live televised finals.

"You've got to be prepared, this is no longer you performing in front of your mates," Barlow said.

Speaking to *Soldier* as he prepared to head to a secret location for further filming, Pte Kerr said he was really looking forward to the next leg of the singing competition.

"Hopefully I can shake off the nerves because my first-round performance was a bit weak," he said.

"I don't know what I'll be singing next, I'm not sure how it works, but hopefully it will be a strong song.

"I love all music but I'll be happy if it's something with a bit of kick and emotion involved.

He added: "As long as it's not something like *Barbie Girl*, because I'd

certainly get a bit of ribbing if I ended up singing that."

The infantryman is based in Warminster with Corunna Company, 3rd Battalion, The Yorkshire Regiment.

And it was taking part in a unit karaoke competition that prompted Pte Kerr, who is known as Jonjo to his friends, to sign up for *The X Factor*.

"I was picked to represent my platoon and won it and the commanding officer said it would be a shame to hold me back, to go and do it for the lads, so I did," he explained.

"It's a good morale boost for the guys and their support so far has been excellent, especially Corunna Company. They're all behind me and it's fantastic to hear so much positivity about what I'm doing."

The hopeful has now been given time off from his military commitments to compete in the latter stages of the show.

"The support from my bosses is super, it's given me the extra motivation I need when I'm on stage and feeling nervous," said Pte Kerr.

Despite serving at the sharp end of the Armed Forces for two years, the Serviceman revealed that auditioning for *The X Factor* had proved a more daunting prospect.

Ahead of his first appearance on the hit TV show, Kerr revealed to host Dermot O'Leary that he was absolutely petrified of singing in front of the four celebrity judges.

"It's fair to say that I'm more scared of going before the judges than I am of going to Afghanistan because I've been trained for Afghanistan," he said.



Picture: Ken McKay

NEWS IN BRIEF

CUTTING-EDGE KIT SHOW

■ THOUSANDS of military equipment suppliers and specialists gathered in London for the bi-annual Defence and Security Equipment International trade show.

Armoured vehicles and weapons systems went on display alongside cyber security, counter-terrorism, fire protection and safety technology.

Defence Secretary Dr Liam Fox addressed visitors to the event, which took place at the ExCeL Centre.

In his speech, he praised the equipment on show and the support provided by the defence industry to Armed Forces personnel.

"The cutting-edge technology they [the Services] are able to call on gives them a true advantage on the front line," Dr Fox said.

State-of-the-art kit on display included the latest up-armoured tracked combat reconnaissance vehicle which boasts a raft of ballistic protection upgrades (page 36).

Lower satisfaction among ranks

PERSONNEL have reported reduced levels of morale and satisfaction with Service life in the latest Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey (AFCAS).

The annual study revealed that respondents are less happy with basic pay, pensions and allowances and believe changes within the MoD have not been managed well.

Nearly 12,600 people completed the questionnaire, which highlighted that:

- satisfaction among officers had dropped more than other ranks;
- 57 per cent were satisfied with Service life in general – a decrease from 2010;
- 47 per cent would recommend joining the military to others;
- 33 per cent felt valued;
- 65 per cent felt living accommodation represented value for money.

The survey showed an increase in contentment with personal and major

equipment and pre-deployment training.

Servicemen and women also said they were more happy with the amount of notice given ahead of operational tours.

The Directorate of Personnel Strategy has garnered Army-specific results from the data, which show that satisfaction with welfare services is high.

Regular soldiers who have worked with the Territorial Army also reported positively about their value and professionalism.

However, attitudes towards pay and allowances mirrored the findings of the AFCAS study while reduced morale and sense of feeling valued was reported across the Service.

A new Army Panel electronic survey will be launched on October 17 to gauge views on a number of topical issues.

It will be run every four months for two years, in addition to the AFCAS survey which is run each February.



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NEWS IN BRIEF

PUPILS IN MILITARY MINDSET

■ AN MoD-sponsored academy has helped to set up a Combined Cadet Force at a state high school in a deprived area of Kent.

Pupils at Astor College in Dover have been kitted out in ceremonial dress for drill practice. They are also learning to handle weapons, sea-craft and planes under the supervision of staff from The Duke of York's Royal Military School.

A total of 50 students signed up for the programme, which started in September and includes adventurous training and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

SIKH SOLDIER SALUTED

■ A COVENTRY soldier has received an award for exemplary achievement by members of his religious community.

LCpl Simran Singh of 30 Signal Regiment was commended at The Sikh Channel's People Awards at Birmingham Town Hall on September 14.

"I am proud to be both a British Sikh and a British soldier," the 29-year-old said.

SATELLITE HELPS HELMAND

■ A SECOND-hand satellite is helping to boost front-line communication between soldiers in Helmand province.

The MoD took ownership of the technology from Nato earlier this year, which has provided two extra ultra high frequency (UHF) channels allowing commanders to talk to each other and operations centres – particularly when coordinating air assistance.

Cdr Andy Titcomb from Defence Equipment and Support said: "UHF satellite communications are a valuable resource and when it became known that Nato was about to fire this into a graveyard orbit, we jumped at the chance to see whether we could take ownership of the asset and use it to support troops in Afghanistan."

The equipment did not cost the department extra money.



Picture: Graeme Main

Sorely needed: The Centre for Policy Studies report says soldiers' experience would benefit students

Troops 'could stop gangs'

SCHOOLS staffed entirely by ex-Servicemen and women could help to tackle gang culture, a new report has claimed.

Tom Burkard from the Centre for Policy Studies and Capt Affan Burki of the Royal Signals have published a proposal for the Phoenix Free School in Greater Manchester.

The pair say more state funded but semi-independent schools like this, using a mixture of qualified and unqualified teachers, would set high standards for pupils' behaviour.

Burkard said: "No one gets promoted in the Armed Forces unless they have already demonstrated the ability to inspire and train young men and women to perform complex duties under the most demanding conditions.

"Their experience is sorely needed in England's classrooms."

If given the go-ahead, the school would open in 2013 with one group of year seven pupils.

It would then be expanded over the following years.

Burkard told the BCC that Oldham

has been considered as a possible venue, but the establishment would open where it was most popular with parents and other community members.

Lord Guthrie, a former Chief of the Defence Staff, has added his support to ideas in the report, which is called *Something can be done*.

He said: "If this school is a success, then it should serve as a model for a chain of hundreds of similar schools across the country."

But speaking on BBC Radio 4's *Today* programme, Mary Bousted, general secretary of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers, said she was "amazed" by the concept.

"The idea that you can simply take the skills and abilities you have learnt in war or on the parade ground or through Army manoeuvres and those can be translated, undigested, into teaching without any further training is ridiculous," she commented.

A similar project called Troops To Teachers is run by the US Departments of Education and Defense.

To read more visit www.cps.org.uk

25,000

FLYING HOURS NOTCHED UP BY THE UK MQ-9 REAPER OVER AFGHANISTAN SINCE THE REMOTELY PILOTED AIR SYSTEM WAS FIRST INTRODUCED TO THEATRE IN OCTOBER 2007 AS AN URGENT OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENT (PAGES 29-31)



“WHEN YOU’RE MARRIED TO A SOLDIER IT’S
A WAY OF LIFE, NOT A NINE-TO-FIVE JOB”

– AUTHOR SALUTES HOME SOIL HEROES, PAGE 51



Picture: Sgt Rupert Fiere, RLC

On target: Troops from 7 Air Assault Battalion, Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers attack an enemy position during the four-week Exercise Lion Sun

Cyprus shapes incoming soldiers

THE Mediterranean island of Cyprus is continuing to play a key role in the British Army’s effort in southern Afghanistan.

Helicopter and vehicle mechanics from 7 Air Assault Battalion, Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers recently completed a four-week exercise aimed at developing troops’ infantry skills in tasks such as patrolling, clearing compounds and searching for improvised explosive devices.

It also served as a promotion course for personnel hoping to progress from the rank of lance corporal to corporal.

Maj Bob Jones, the battalion’s second-in-command, said: “This exercise has really taken our soldiers out of their comfort zone. We have worked them hard in a tough environment and climate, challenging them to learn and apply skills that are very different to their day jobs.

“Our men and women have performed exceptionally and demonstrated that REME personnel are first and foremost soldiers and tradesmen always.”

Cyprus has also welcomed personnel from 2nd Battalion, The Yorkshire Regiment, who have arrived to fill the role of the resident Infantry battalion.

The troops have immersed themselves in their day-to-day duties while finishing their pre-deployment training as they prepare to take over as the theatre reserve battalion.

Commanding officer Lt Col Andrew Roe said: “Our mission-specific training has been excellent so far. The icing on the cake will be some of the preparation

we do here on the island in the first-rate facilities we have available to us. I think we are pretty much ready to go.”

The incoming Servicemen and women replace their colleagues from 2nd Battalion, The Duke of Lancaster’s Regiment, who were based in Cyprus on the longest ever theatre reserve battalion commitment and deployed to Afghanistan on a number of occasions.

On leaving the country, Lt Col Robbie Boyd, commanding officer

of 2 Lancers, detailed the numerous achievements of his unit.

He said: “We did six deployments, set up our own combined force and had the Estonians under our command, which was a great experience.

“Our help in planning and implementing Op Moshtarak and the work afterwards meant every single 2 Lancers soldier saw genuine, tangible improvement in Afghanistan and that is something very special.”

‘Enhance welfare for wounded’

MORE thought must be given to the wellbeing of injured personnel between hospital and returning to work, a conference has heard.

Speaking at a national summit of government workers, charity leaders and medical professionals hosted by the MoD last month, Forces families explained the difficulties they had experienced while nursing their loved ones back to health.

Sandra Birchall, whose son William was seriously injured after being shot by a rogue Afghan policeman in 2009, praised the care personnel receive from the Army and unit welfare officers.

But she added: “Once we left Birmingham and came home it was a different world.

“There is no continuity and we don’t all get the right information.”

She told delegates that the “little things” – in her case getting hold of replacement medical supplies – could make a crucial and telling difference.

Sue Hawkins, whose son Ed was also

injured in Afghanistan, told the conference that administration was a problem. Important paperwork for her son went missing during the course of his treatment.

Other speakers reported fragmented communication between the NHS, MoD and government departments.

Rifles welfare officer Capt Matt Derby said: “When a soldier has left the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, the communication link between hospital, Headley Court and the unit medical and welfare office can get confused.”

Frances Shine, the mother of a Serviceman who was injured in Iraq four years ago, said that although there are many welfare organisations, nobody had told her which one to approach so she was left confused and without any support.

“No one seemed to consider the role that the family has to play in a soldiers’ recovery,” she added.

● Home Truths – page 69

WHO HELPS THOSE WHO NEED IT MOST?

SHOULDER TO SHOULDER WITH ALL WHO SERVE





“WE ARE UP TO THE JOB AS INDIVIDUALS BUT THE SUPPORT NEEDS TO BE THERE FOR US. IT’S A BIG STEP”
– RESERVISTS REFLECT ON THEIR FUTURE ROLE, PAGE 98

Indian troops' influence proves invaluable

PERSONNEL from the Indian Army have completed four weeks of UK training by carrying out a counter-insurgency exercise on Salisbury Plain.

As reported in last month's *Soldier*, troops from the 3rd Bihar Regiment visited 19 Light Brigade for a month to take part in Exercise Ajeya Warrior, a joint training programme aimed at creating a closer working relationship between the two forces.

On the last day of their trip, 100 infantry soldiers executed the mission assisted by British Chinook helicopters, Warrior armoured fighting vehicles and Challenger battle tanks.

The troops were observed by commanding officer Col Gahan Deep Singh and two other senior officers, Maj Gen Sunil Jha from the Indian Army's South West Command and Brig Sarb Jit Singh Deusi, commander of 83rd Infantry Brigade.

Maj Gen Jha said: "We want to learn from each other and there has been a real meeting of minds on this exercise. Being able to sit down and talk about different tactics, drills, the amalgamation of technology and operations has been very beneficial for both sides."

The "insurgents" overcome and captured by the Indians were played by soldiers from B (Rorke's Drift) Company, 2nd Battalion, The Royal Welsh, who were impressed by the foreign army's professionalism.

CSgt Lee Harris said: "They



Picture: Cpl Andy Reddy, RLC

Plain tactics: L/Nk Ravindra (3 Bihar Regt) leads a platoon manoeuvre during Exercise Ajeya Warrior

were very aggressive and determined and nothing was going to stop them.

"They knew what positions they needed to be in and were very quick. Many of their tactics were different from ours but they were very effective – they knew exactly what they had to do and how many soldiers to commit."

It was the culmination of a month of company-level field exercises on the training area.

However, the visit was not all work

and no play for the Indian soldiers, who enjoyed a number of cultural and sporting events that included visits to London, Longleat Safari Park and a cricket and football match.

Brig Stuart Skeates, commander of 19 Lt Bde, said: "We could not have wished for a better group of officers and soldiers to train alongside."

"This has established a relationship with the Indian Army for the future. It is always good to share ideas."

WIN

■ DETAILED knowledge of Europe's second largest country would have helped readers out with September's spine line competition.

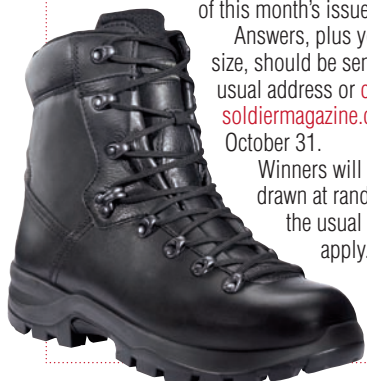
Inspired by last month's feature on Exercise Rapid Trident in Ukraine, (Leonid) Kravchuk, (Leonid) Kuchma, (Viktor) Yushchenko and (Viktor) Yanukovych have all served as presidents of the nation.

This month we have teamed up with military footwear supplier YDS to give away five pairs of their Moraine GTX boots.

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

Answers, plus your shoe size, should be sent to the usual address or comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk by October 31.

Winners will be drawn at random and the usual rules apply.



LEAGUE OF GENTLEMEN

	SWAG	FORCE FOR GOOD	QUIDS IN
1	£4,662	EX CALEDONIAN DRAGON Members of the AGC from across 49 (East) Bde, along with extra supporters, walked and canoed for 76 miles between Fort William and Inverness	ABF The Soldiers' Charity, Diabetes UK and Honour Our Troops
2	£2,500	DURHAM DANGLE More than 60 daring volunteers performed a 175ft bungee jump over the city's Palace Green next to the cathedral	ABF The Soldiers' Charity
3	£2,000	JACOBS JUMPS Rfn Paul Jacobs, who was blinded in an explosion in Afghanistan two years ago, took part in a 13,000ft parachute jump	SSAFA Forces Help
4	£1,800	HEARTS AND HEROES Four soldiers from 299 Sig Sqn battled through a 29-mile hill race on the Scottish borders, producing the individual winner and the fastest team on the day	Poppy Scotland and Hearts and Balls (a charity for injured rugby players)
5	£1,000	HANDBAGS AND GLAD RAGS The British Forces Broadcasting Service (BFBS) organised a women's clothing sale in Gibraltar to raise funds for several military charities	BFBS Big Salute

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IN MEMORIAM



SGT BARRY WESTON (40)
42 COMMANDO,
ROYAL MARINES
KIA AUGUST 30 – AFGHANISTAN

THE Royal Marines are mourning the loss of a selfless and courageous colleague who was killed by an improvised explosive device in Helmand province.

Sgt Barry Weston, of 42 Commando, was leading a patrol near the village of Sukmunda in the southern Nahr-e Saraj district when the bomb detonated.

The 40-year-old was engaged in a mission to help the national government by drawing insurgents away from the civilian population.

Sgt Weston joined the Marines in 1991 and immediately impressed as one of the fittest members of his recruit troop.

He went on to serve in a number of operational theatres including Northern Ireland,

Kosovo, Sierra Leone and Iraq.

Lt Col Ewen Murchison, commanding officer of 42 Cdo, said: "His passion for the men in his charge was obvious and he looked after their interests and welfare with a dogged determination. He was like a father to them."

"One of life's real characters, he will be remembered for his canny ability to make light of the direst situations."

Capt Chris Armstrong added: "Whether it was a story about his garden shed or the mischievous deeds of his children back home, Baz could be relied upon to lighten the most dark and difficult of situations."

Sgt Weston leaves behind wife Joanne and their three daughters Jasmine, Poppy and Rose.



LCPL JONATHAN MCKINLAY (33)
1ST BATTALION,
THE RIFLES
KIA SEPTEMBER 14 – AFGHANISTAN

AN outgoing and friendly commander who had time for everyone he met has been killed during a burst of small arms fire while on patrol with his team.

LCpl Jonathan McKinlay of 1st Battalion, The Rifles deployed to Afghanistan in June as a battle casualty replacement, having recently qualified as a mortar fire controller with Bravo Company.

He was based in Check Point Chaabak in the Nahr-e Saraj district of Helmand province

Originally from Darlington, LCpl McKinlay joined the British Army in 1996 and racked up a wealth of experience from deployments to Northern Ireland, Iraq and Afghanistan.

Lt Col James de la Billiere, commanding officer of 1 Rifles, said: "He was a man of great

character, agile of mind and was not afraid to express a considered opinion when the opportunity arose.

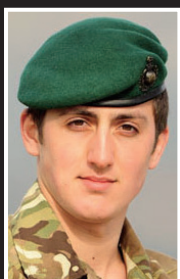
"I valued his judgement, his energy, his creativeness and his professionalism."

Maj Mike Turnbull, officer commanding B Company, 1 Rifles, added: "His mere presence on a patrol would reassure the men around him; they knew that they were in good hands."

"He was that sort of man."

The lance corporal leaves behind his wife Lisa, mother Valerie, sister Becca, daughter Megan and his stepchildren Ollie and Piper.

"He was a true friend to others and a loving husband, a real joker and my one in a million," his wife said in a statement.



MNE DAVID FAIRBROTHER (24)
42 COMMANDO,
ROYAL MARINES
KIA SEPTEMBER 19 – AFGHANISTAN

A HIGHLY-motivated marine who was excelling in his first appointment has been killed during a patrol with the Afghan National Army.

Mne David Fairbrother, a qualified team medic, had conducted numerous compound clearances as a member of an All Arms Search Team to ensure the safety of his comrades.

He was killed by small arms fire during a morning patrol in the village of Old Khorgajat.

From Blackburn, the Serviceman studied geography at Leeds University before joining the Royal Marines in November 2009.

Lt Col Ewen Murchison, commanding officer of 42 Commando, described him as "first class" and one of the most intelligent people in his unit.

He added: "He joined Kilo Company straight

from basic training less than a year ago, where his enthusiasm and commitment instantly marked him out amongst his peers.

"Utterly loyal and selfless, he had no qualms about putting himself in harm's way to ensure the safety of his fellow marines."

"Resolute in battle, he fought bravely in numerous engagements."

In a tribute, Mne Fairbrother's mother Julie said: "You were always fun loving, caring and lived life to the full."

"Not only were you the perfect son but you were my best friend and you will be in my thoughts forever."

Mne Fairbrother also leaves behind his sisters Ruth and Emily and girlfriend Melissa.

Sun sets on Royal Wootton Bassett repatriations

CROWDS gathered for a sunset ceremony at Royal Wootton Bassett to mark the end of military repatriations there.

The small market town – renowned across the world for the respect it has paid to fallen soldiers – is no longer on the funeral cortege route.

Armed Forces personnel killed on operations are now being returned to RAF Brize Norton, where a purpose-built repatriation centre has been created, replacing RAF Lyneham as the

base for such services.

The £2.8-million building includes a quiet space in which families can gather to watch the aeroplane land.

There is also a chapel of rest where people can spend time alone with their fallen before the journey to the John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford.

Gp Capt Dom Stamp, station commander at RAF Brize Norton, said: "This centre has been designed with the needs of the families and loved ones of those being repatriated at its heart."

"The importance placed on getting this right by the personnel at RAF Brize Norton is clear to see."

"This is the greatest and most humbling of responsibilities."

The decision to switch repatriations back to RAF Brize Norton was announced by the Defence Secretary in March, the same day as Prime Minister David Cameron declared that Wootton Bassett would be renamed Royal Wootton Bassett in recognition of the town's support for the Services.

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“WAR DOES NOT JUST STOP WHEN YOU GET HOME.
NO ONE KNOWS WHAT SOLDIERS HAVE BEEN THROUGH”
– DIRECTOR DEPICTS THE FULL STORY OF CONFLICT, PAGES 78-79



Humid conditions: Gnr Aiden Gill (RA) got stuck into the tough rainforest route with other dedicated troops who retraced the steps of the Borneo march

Gunners celebrate eastern achievement

TWELVE Royal Artillery soldiers have undertaken a gruelling 169-mile trek of remembrance through the Malaysian rainforest.

The team, comprising of both Regular and Reservist troops, completed the challenge in ten days, enduring wet conditions, steep climbs and humidity levels of around 95 per cent.

The expedition, between Sandakan and Ranau, is thought to be the first time the historic route of the Borneo Death March has been completed since the Second World War. During the conflict, 641 British and more than

1,200 Australian soldiers were killed as they were beaten along the trail by Japanese troops.

After learning that around 400 of the fallen were from his own regiment and its attached arms, retired gunner John Tulloch arranged the march, which was followed by the dedication of a new regimental memorial in Kundasang.

“No one in our country seemed to know about this loss of life so I wanted to make sure there was recognition,” Tulloch told *Soldier*. “What occurred was extraordinary.”

Maj Claire Curry, officer leading the

expedition, said troops had “absolutely loved” the challenge.

She added: “It was like doing star jumps in a sauna for eight hours a day but it was a brilliant experience to lead a group of soldiers through that sort of demanding environment.”

“One man told me it was the best thing he had ever done in his whole 23-year military career.”

“I think it was a long time coming and it is important we acknowledge and honour our fallen from that side of the world – I didn’t know we had prisoners of war in Borneo.”



TRIPLE amputee Cpl Andy Reid (3 Yorks) took the leap of a lifetime by skydiving over the Cambridgeshire countryside to raise funds for ABF The Soldiers’ Charity.

The organisation helped Cpl Reid after he was severely injured by an improvised explosive device in Afghanistan in 2009, adapting his home for wheelchair use by fitting a lift, wet room and decking in the garden.

The wounded soldier – who is still undergoing rehabilitation – raised nearly £500 after jumping in tandem with LCpl Frank Millerick (PWRR), a member of the Tiger’s Parachute Display Team.

NEWS IN BRIEF

IRISH INFLUX FOR SERVICE

■ RECRUITMENT in Northern Ireland is continuing at pace.

In the latest attestation ceremony, 14 young soldiers swore their oath of allegiance, 12 of whom will be joining The Royal Irish Regiment.

The success has been attributed to the hard work of dedicated recruiting teams in the region, who are continuing to process approximately 500 other applications.

CHARITY NAME CHANGE

■ MILITARY charity Project 65 has renamed itself The Veterans Charity in a bid to better represent the people it supports.

The organisation provides practical assistance to former Service personnel such as mobility scooters and transport.

INTRANET IMPROVEMENT

■ THE British Army’s internal computer network will be replaced with a more modern system from this month.

The updated version of the intranet will have a better search facility and be more intuitive to users, those operating it have said.



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Time to brush up: Melaneia Warwick from the Army Arts Society wants to get more soldiers painting

Artistic advance on personnel

THOSE deploying to Afghanistan this month may not have sketching and watercolour sessions at the very top of their agenda.

But the Army Arts Society has launched two new initiatives to get soldiers to consider the pastime during the tour and beyond.

In the coming weeks the group will send £200-worth of free art packs to troops in theatre to encourage them to document their experiences on operations in Helmand province.

The initial 50 sets, which include watercolour paints, pencils and paper, have been funded by various businesses and organisations.

Society project manager Melaneia Warwick said: "If soldiers can participate in art making while they are deployed, there's a real therapeutic benefit to be gained."

"As we have started to increase awareness of our group we've had a lot of soldiers get in touch to tell us that they sketch and paint."

"Many troops participate in the arts but I think it's true to say that it's not as centralised as it might be. So that is what we are doing; we are trying to support the practice for serving soldiers, their partners and veterans as well."

It is hoped the project will be fully operational by next year.

The art group, which organises regular exhibitions to showcase members' work, has also launched a

new competition called Serving War Artist of the Year.

It is free and open to all soldiers and selected entries will be displayed at the Affordable Art Fair in London later this month, which has chosen the Army Arts Society as the beneficiary of funds that it makes from the show.

Warwick, who is a professional artist and married to an officer from the Royal Army Physical Training Corps, said: "This is an important charity which is why myself and others do this voluntarily. We are making sure the whole Army family is included too."

"Post traumatic stress symptoms can be transferred to wives and partners so it's important they have a voice through art as well."

To enter the competition send up to three different images to melaneiawarwick@googlemail.com, including contact details and a brief description of the piece submitted.

The deadline for entries is October 7 and artwork will be judged by a panel from the society.

For more information and a membership application form visit www.armyartssociety.co.uk

GOOD DRILLS

SUPERB SUPPORT

STAFF at the Defence Medical Welfare Services charity have been warmly praised by Rifles officer Capt Matt Derby. "They are absolutely gold standard," he told delegates at the Ministry of Defence last month (page 14). "You can call them day or night and they are extremely helpful."

AIDING AWARENESS

THE Speaker of the House of Commons, John Bercow, is joining forces with Service charity Combat Stress to help raise awareness of mental illness among veterans. He will launch The Enemy Within campaign on October 10 – World Mental Health Day.



Picture: Houses of Parliament

LARGE LOSSES

THE MoD wrote off more than £110 million in losses last year, its annual accounts show. The department said in a statement that it was necessary to end some projects in light of the Strategic Defence and Security Review. "These steps were vital as they will ultimately lead to significant savings," it said.

SOLDIER SKIPS

A US soldier was arrested 125 miles from where he escaped military detention, then eluded authorities again using stolen vehicles, the American news channel CNN reported. The Serviceman, of West Virginia, was later found and taken into custody.

BAD DRILLS

57

PERCENTAGE OF MILITARY PERSONNEL WHO STATE THEY ARE SATISFIED WITH SERVICE LIFE IN GENERAL, ACCORDING TO THE LATEST ARMED FORCES CONTINUOUS ATTITUDE SURVEY (PAGE 11)



THE BIGGER PICTURE

AN officer from the Afghan National Civil Order Police accompanies a colleague from B Company, 2nd Battalion, The Royal Gurkha Rifles on patrol near to Check Point Tandar in Nad-e Ali, Helmand province. Troops there are trying to reassure and protect residents. With a population of about 11,000, the nearby town of Shin Kalay has enjoyed a summer of relative peace following joint operations by British and Afghan forces to clear the area of insurgents. Cultural and linguistic similarities between the Gurkhas and Afghans have helped to improve relations. Picture: Steve Dock





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SCI-FI

STAKE-OUT

HI-TECH EYE IN THE SKY KEEPS TABS ON THE TALIBAN

Report: Andrew Simms

BUNKERED down for the evening in a remote rural compound, a group of insurgents masquerading as Helmand farm workers prepared thoroughly for the prospect of unwelcome midnight callers.

Before taking to makeshift beds, the Taliban fighters had stashed their small arsenal of firearms and explosives in a drainage duct close to the structure's rear gate, draped heavy blankets over their motorcycles and buried radio sets in a cow's feeding trough.

These acts of subterfuge, designed to deceive any passing International Security Assistance Force patrols, were in vain.

Betrayed by their panicked reaction to the distant clatter of helicopter rotors an hour previously, the distinctive shape of the AK47s being passed for concealment and the heat still radiating from their bikes' engines, the true identity of the group was already known to the coalition troops closing in on their position thanks to the three-man crew of the fearsome British MQ-9 Reaper circling undetected above. >>



Picture: SAC Andrew Morris

Capable of providing a persistent presence over an area of interest and relaying intelligence to commanders on the ground in the form of clear, full-motion video or verbally over the radio, it is little surprise that the Royal Air Force's cutting-edge remotely piloted air system and the specialists who fly it are in such high demand.

Introduced to theatre in October 2007 as an urgent operational requirement, the aircraft have gone on to notch up a landmark 25,000 flying hours over Afghanistan.

Equipped with an array of hi-tech sensors, including radar, that collect real-time information of the battle space day and night, Reaper can carry out a wide variety of sorties in support of ground units. These can range from gathering pre-raid intelligence on target compounds to providing surveillance for routine patrols and supply convoys. If necessary, the aircraft can also strike at insurgent forces with precision-guided weapons.

With a maximum altitude of 50,000ft and

powered by a Honeywell engine that offers a low noise signature for discreet operations, Reaper is routinely providing front-line troops and commanders with an unblinking eye in the sky.

The aircraft is launched and recovered from Kandahar Airfield, however, once airborne, missions are flown remotely by crews from 39 Squadron, RAF via secure satellite communication data links from a ground control station at the Creech Air Force Base in Nevada, USA (pages 33-35).

The three-strong teams charged with flying this sci-fi-style surveillance system and pointing it where those they are supporting on the ground want it consist of a qualified pilot, sensor operator and Mission Intelligence Coordinator (MIC).

With a small contingent of seven Intelligence Corps personnel bolstering the 130-strong, tri-Service squadron stateside, it is from the "cockpit's" third seat that the Army is playing its part in the Reaper success story.

Sat in front of a bank of monitors, the

crew's MIC is exposed to a plethora of data sources ranging from pictures obtained from the aircraft's own sensors, mapping and satellite imagery to a complex secure communications system – the military equivalent of an internet chatroom relaying the very latest action from theatre.

"During a mission, the MIC's role is to manage intelligence collection to meet the supported unit's requirements, to monitor the feeds and inform the pilot of any relevant information," Maj Simon, 2iC of mission support flight, said.

"To simply look through sensors with no situational awareness would be like looking at a scenario completely blind – it is all that other information which puts what Reaper can see into operational context.

"The MIC is an integral part of the crew and the pilots would not want that person sat external to the ground control station," he added. "While the pilots and sensor operators are just



as capable of identifying weapons and insurgent tactics, the crew members' experiences complement each other.

"The tri-Service nature of the squadron works very well."

This is a sentiment shared by Wg Cdr Andy Bird, officer commanding 39 Sqn, who added: "They [Int Corps personnel] are of outstanding value. They bring an insight into supporting the Army that we as members of the RAF wouldn't intuitively have.

"That is considerably useful experience and they are able to talk to their Service counterparts in a way that, perhaps, we wouldn't – it breaks down initial barriers."

With the squadron's intelligence specialists also responsible for ensuring crews are fully briefed before each tasking and distributing any products post mission, Maj Simon insists that working with

Reaper offers a unique opportunity.

"It is a tremendous asset," he told *Soldier*. "I first saw its predecessor, Predator, operate in 2006 and was amazed at its capability then. Five years on and

Reaper is at the forefront of the remotely-piloted aircraft system community. To be at the cutting edge of technology is very exciting.

"I've visited theatre a number of times and on some of the

bigger bases you can feel remote from the campaign and what soldiers on the ground are doing day in, day out.

"Although we are so far away geographically, the fact that we can see soldiers patrolling and interact with them directly makes you feel very much part of the operation."

The Army officer's passion for the aircraft is shared by those who pilot it, many of whom have joined the squadron from a fast jet background.

Having been embedded with 16 Air Assault Brigade on Op Herrick 8, one squadron leader on 39 Sqn has first-hand experience of the demand for the platform. The previously qualified Tornado pilot said: "It was my time working with the Army that sold Reaper to me. Although I didn't work directly with the crews, I was talking to the battlegroups about what they wanted for a particular mission and the majority of the time they were asking for Reaper.

"I have seen it from a land perspective and am therefore aware of the value that the aircraft provides.

"It has a lot of persistence and the guys flying it have a strong understanding of the terrain beneath them. If there is something about to happen, Reaper can be there six or seven hours beforehand and provide a strong appreciation of the picture on the ground prior to a raid or helicopter assault going in."

Already a proven asset in the ongoing mission to detect and, where necessary, destroy insurgent targets and improvised explosive device networks, there is set to be no let-up for those in Helmand with something to hide.

With £135 million committed to doubling the amount of UK Reapers currently patrolling the skies, British forces will soon have increased capacity to conduct long-endurance stake-outs 24 hours a day, seven days a week. ■

'TO BE AT THE CUTTING EDGE OF TECHNOLOGY IS VERY EXCITING'





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THE HANGOVER CURE

REALITY OF REAPER OPS IN NEVADA DISPELS MYTH OF SUNSHINE TOUR

Report: Andrew Simms
Pictures: Mike Weston

A WORTHY contender for New York's "city that never sleeps" crown, the neon-clad playground of Las Vegas undoubtedly features high on the holiday hit list of many Armed Forces personnel.

Fuelled by the unadulterated hedonism portrayed in movies such as *The Hangover* and *Swingers*, thousands of British tourists flock to the famous strip's clubs and casinos in

search of fun, fortune and Mike Tyson's tigers.

But for those serving with 39 Squadron, Royal Air Force – the unit responsible for flying UK Reaper missions in Afghanistan – the opportunity to bathe in Nevada's desert oasis is a 36-month reality.

And although America's self-styled sin city boasts more than 300 days of clear skies every year and summer temperatures in excess of 40 degrees, deploying stateside is far from being the proverbial sunshine tour. >>





>> "I make no apologies for the fact that we have to live in Las Vegas and we do our best to ensure that families, and ourselves, make the best of the opportunities we have here," Wg Cdr Andy Bird, officer commanding 39 Sqn, told *Soldier*.

"However, our focus is very much an operational one – we are here to support 24/7 ops in Afghanistan.

"While not comparable to those experienced by personnel who deploy and leave their loved ones behind, working with 39 Sqn does have its own pressures, pressures which are often felt by our families because their partners are committed to operational missions and constant shift work."

Indeed, the pace of life for those co-located at Creech Air Base with the United States Air Force, which has pioneered the development of remotely-piloted aircraft systems and provides its UK tenants with technical support, is frenetic.

The squadron's motto – die noctique (by day and night) – is a salute to its operational commitment and not the city it shares with showgirls, slot machines and Celine Dion.

"Out here 12- to 13-hour days are the norm and we work six days on, three off," explained MAcr Cliff, who has amassed 1,500 flying hours with UK Reaper in three-and-a-half years compared with the 3,800 he clocked up with Nimrod during a 14-year

period. "The location does make up for the demands but the only time I have been this busy previously is when I've been deployed and flying constantly.

"We sustain that operational tempo over three years, not four or six months.

"While in the US we are not just at work for an hour or so and then going out."

The squadron may be deployed more than 6,000 miles from theatre but satellite technology employed by Reaper and demand for the platform from units in Afghanistan

mean that its personnel are just the press of a button and seconds away from the action.

Sqn Ldr Andy insisted that the tri-Service crews flying the aerial asset, which provides detailed images of the areas in which coalition and Afghan troops operate, were not dislocated from the Herrick mission as a consequence of distance.

"When you see people connect into the box [Reaper's ground control station], it feels and smells like being in the cockpit of a fast jet," the experienced Tornado pilot said.

"As soon as you plug in, the distance disappears and you could be in an attack helicopter or jet on top of a task or in the ops room at Lashkar Gah.

"You feel part of what you are doing

and you are – you can hear the guys on the ground in your headset, see what is happening and pick up on the urgency.

"It looks as though you are sat right on top of the action because that is what the pictures show you and your body responds to that and seduces you into thinking you are on ops."

Veteran Harrier pilot Sqn Ldr Damian agreed: "While I will never find myself in an escape and evasion scenario with Reaper, in terms of involvement in a scenario and engagement with what you are seeing, you do get the same perspective and

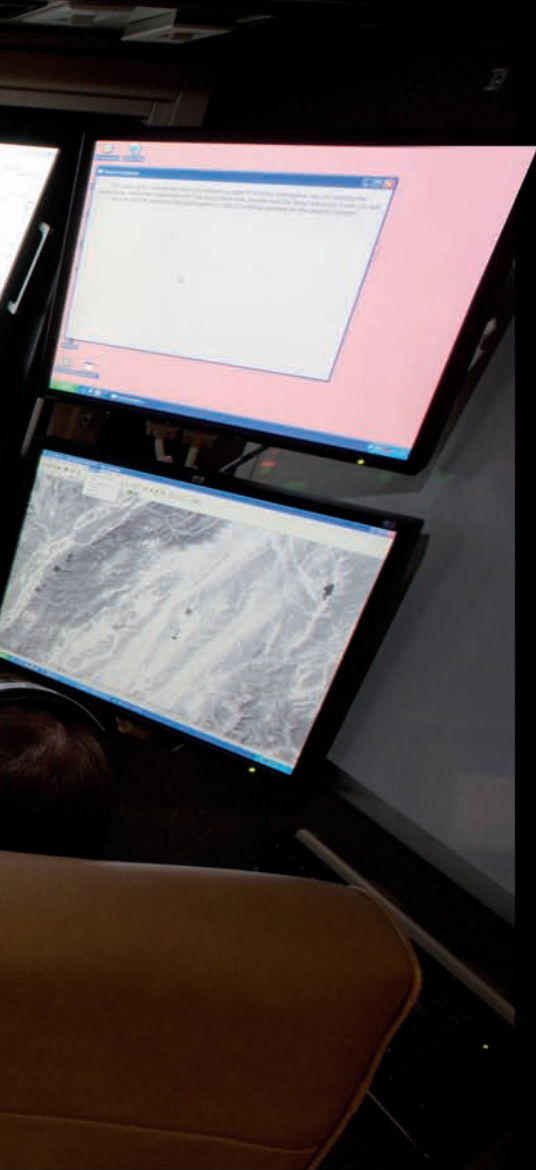
sense of priority and mission that you would in a fast jet.

"Arguably, I am more deeply involved with many more players than I would be in a manned platform and have better situational awareness. If we are having communication problems on the radio at any stage I can phone up the joint terminal attack controller on the ground – I couldn't do that from a Harrier cockpit."

The squadron's tactics and weapons expert added: "Because of Reaper's persistence, more often than not we are there pre-mission and there the next day supporting the team executing the mission.

"I feel more involved in operations than I have previously."

**'IT LOOKS
AS THOUGH
YOU ARE SAT
RIGHT ON
TOP OF THE
ACTION'**



involved in live operational missions.

"Being in work, watching an operation unfold and potentially deploying lethal force before getting in a car to drive home or pick 'little Johnny' up from football takes a mental switch," explained Sqn Ldr Damian.

"The fact that we work some distance away from where we live is very useful because it gives you that decompression time on the road before walking back into a domestic environment."

With squadron camaraderie and trained trauma management specialists on hand to provide a supporting shoulder to any member of the unit who needs it, Wg Cdr Bird said that the psychological impact of "split operations" was not a major concern.

"It is something we remain alert to and the supervisors here always debrief the guys after events," the senior officer added. "The more significant operational stress factors are those associated with working consistent shifts and through the night on a regular basis."

Despite the rigours of staffing an operational platform 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days of the year, the squadron has little difficulty in recruiting and retaining

personnel and Sqn Ldr Damian was clear as to the reason why.

"We are victims of our own success because as we prove Reaper's capability, people want it more," he said. "But anybody who is in the military would be motivated by the fact that they are supporting troops on the ground on a daily basis. I don't need to encourage guys for that."

While Reaper's hi-tech and secure communication channels ensure that geography is not a barrier to operational engagement, being based at Creech – situated far from the bright lights of Las Vegas – is not without its challenges.

The time difference between theatre and America's west coast means that if the aircraft takes to the air in daylight in Afghanistan, it is the middle of the night for those flying it.

Battling to get the better of body clocks aside, Servicemen and women face the unique situation of returning home to their families having been



RANKED

FIVE HIGHLIGHTS FROM THIS
YEAR'S DEFENCE AND SECURITY
EQUIPMENT INTERNATIONAL
TRADE SHOW IN LONDON

SUPER STEEL

THE 2011 showcase saw the launch of a new ballistic material developed by MoD scientists, which is twice as effective as conventional steel at deflecting bomb blasts and bullets.

Super Bainite, pictured left, will be turned into high-performance perforated armour plates that could be used on future front-line vehicle fleets.

Its clever chemical make-up means it can disrupt the path of incoming projectiles, reducing their impact and potency.

Thanks to an agreement signed by the MoD, the cutting-edge composite material will be manufactured in the UK, with production likely to take place in Port Talbot, South Wales.



TRACKED TECHNOLOGY UPGRADE

THE Army's Combat Vehicle Reconnaissance (Tracked) [CVR(T)] went on display boasting a raft of new enhancements made under a £30-million urgent operational requirement.

BAE Systems has upgraded the armour and re-hulled all five members of its family – Scimitar, Spartan, Samson, Sultan and Samaritan – boosting their defences against the effects of deadly improvised explosive devices.

Other Afghan-specific improvements include mine blast protection seating in every position in each variant, repositioned foot controls and a revamped fuel system.

The fleet is currently deployed on operations with the 9th/12th Royal Lancers, who are providing security in the Nahr-e Saraj (North) district of Afghanistan.

Soldiers are using the CVR(T) in its classic reconnaissance role, supporting convoys as they move around.

IN-THEATRE ENTERTAINMENT

A CHARITY that boosts the morale of soldiers by sending well-known singers and comedians out to theatre

announced a new three-year sponsorship deal with BAE Systems.

The British Forces Foundation, which has entertained troops with bands including The Saturdays (pictured left), will benefit from the £105,000 agreement announced on-board HMS *Dauntless*.

BAE Systems group managing director Nigel Whitehead said: "We are delighted to continue supporting the BFF and the excellent work that they do."



ROUTE CLEARING CAPABILITY

A NEW portable mine clearance platform, which uses a rocket-launched explosive charge to blast through bomb threats, was revealed.

The Scaleable Lightweight Infantry Clearance System is designed for rapid deployment and its modular design allows the asset's load to be spread across a dismounted team, giving an infantry section a self-sufficient capability for assault or extraction.

Users can select target lengths from 20m up to 60m, increasing the options for application, particularly in urban environments.

The system is expected to enter service at the end of the year.



FUTURE FUEL GENERATOR

A PROTOTYPE diesel generator, pictured below, was on show, fitted to the Trakkar unmanned ground vehicle to boost its battery life.

The novel fuel cell is designed for Service users requiring virtually soundless auxiliary power to enhance silent watch capability and duration.

The system is still being developed and will undergo further refinements to reduce its electronic emissions and ruggedise it, optimising the power pack to meet military requirements.

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6nts Kenya Beach & 2 day Safari Flts + 3★ hotels & game drives fr £829	5★ Cancun All-Inclusive 7nts Flts + 5★ hotel fr £699	3nts San Diego, 3nts Palm Springs & 3nts Las Vegas Flts, 3★ hotels + 7 days car hire fr £829	Langkawi £679 £839 £949
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A full-page photograph of a soldier in camouflage gear and a helmet, aiming a rifle in a forest. The soldier is in the foreground, looking directly at the camera. In the background, another soldier is visible, slightly out of focus. The scene is set in a wooded area with sunlight filtering through the trees.

RESERVIST JUDGEMENT

Part-time soldiers tested
for Afghanistan task

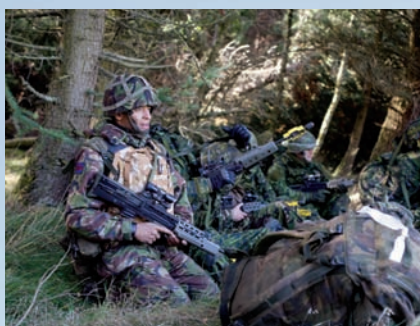
Report: Sarah Goldthorpe
Pictures: Graeme Main

SINCE the Government announced its plan for a dramatic growth in the Territorial Army earlier this year, Reservists have increasingly found themselves focused on times to come.

Personnel already balancing full-time jobs with hectic weekends of training ahead of selection for Op Herrick 16 are now faced with a third challenge – that of stepping up to an even greater role in the British Army.

It is something troops from The London Regiment appeared ready to embrace when *Soldier* visited them at their annual camp in Catterick.

After a long week working



Learning curve: A 24-hour exercise takes shape

as bricklayers, London Underground ticket sellers and project managers, the committed personnel arrived to transform the blustery North Yorkshire countryside into an Afghan battlespace.

Fresh into the field from various parts of the capital, around 250 troops tackled the two-week pre-mobilisation training exercise which included stability operations, working out of forward operating bases, community consultations – or shuras – and company-level drills.

Many in the regiment enlisted in the TA specifically to serve Queen and country in Afghanistan. And for the fittest fraction of those recruits, damp undergrowth will soon become deadly desert.

Capt Chris Green is one of the Londoners who signed up with the Helmand mission in mind.

As well as helping to train the less experienced members of his company, he is preparing himself for deployment.

“There is so much to pack into this training, we really do smash them here,” the former Regular explained. “It’s a big old commitment for anybody but the level of expertise required now is much higher than before, for both Regulars and the TA.”

Despite the need for Reservists to demonstrate better tactical awareness and an understanding of the “white side” of warfare – both addressed on this exercise

– the fortnight also provided an opportunity to teach the basics.

“We want to show them how to look after themselves,” Capt Green said.

“If someone is not tactically in the right position to engage the enemy, the Coldstream Guards can teach him that when they get hold of him next year.

“But I don’t want the Foot Guards having to teach anyone about personal administration.

“The first rule of teamwork is that you are not a burden on the rest of the group.

“Regulars know these guys don’t have the same depth of experience as them but they can give them that.”

Endurance and physical aptness were other key aims of the exercise’s lessons – and ones not to be underestimated.

Not all Reservists pass the nine-month pre-deployment process for Op Herrick and among



100
The number
of troops
deploying to
Helmand from
The London
Regiment
next year

the reasons for withdrawal are inadequate fitness levels, pressure from families and reluctance on the part of employers.

Troops have adjusted to tough weekends of training but, despite having the stamina to juggle both jobs and drills, longer exercises can throw up new and unexpected predicaments.

“This has definitely been demanding,” said WO2 Lee Bland, who is hoping to deploy for the first time next year.

“We are used to things ending after two-and-a-half days but here it carries on.

“Staying mentally focused beyond that has been arduous, but it has been very good.

“This is the first time we have had proper Osprey body armour and the guys have really felt the difference as they aren’t used to wearing that.

“It’s proving a good trial and, coupled with the weather and Yorkshire terrain, it’s the challenge we need.”

With additions from other units on the exercise, including 151 Transport Regiment and troops from Canada’s Toronto Scottish, soldiers were split into three company-sized groups.

The final test exercise featured three 24-hour scenarios focused on core infantry skills including live-fire tactical training.

At all times, personnel are encouraged to



think forward a year to the dismounted close combat roles they could have in theatre.

Also on everyone's mind was the eight-mile combat fitness test to be completed several days later.

Capt Rob Price, who deployed on Op Herrick 11, added: "This is a real good shake-out for the guys."

"There has been a mixture of Afghan-based serials and additional war fighting and you can see a change in tempo."

"This is what will happen on ops."

Pte Jason Robertson said the training was realistic enough to be giving him flashbacks to

the time he served in Helmand province.

"Troops find this a bit of a shock at first but they are starting to get used to it," he said.

"It's like a role play where we have to interact with village elders, which is the sort of thing we will be doing."

Published earlier this year, the Future Reserves 2020 report outlined how the TA will be grown to 30,000 personnel by 2020.

On the second night of the camp, MoD staff visited Catterick to talk to the regiment about this announcement and its future implications.

One of those listening with interest was Pte Steven Price Brown.

He thinks Reservists are more than equipped to sustain the future British Army.

"Dealing with this sort of intensity after moving over from civilian life shows an ability to adapt," he said.

Such flexibility may well be considered an advantage of taking on more part-timers.

But it seems that some soldiers from The London Regiment are reserving judgment on that matter for now, instead concentrating on important preparations for mobilisation to the final stages of the Afghanistan mission. ■

● Final word – page 98



Part-time prowess: Troops from The London Regiment patrol through the Catterick training area



Aiming high: Sights are set on Op Herrick 16

Report: Sharon Kean
Picture: Graeme Main

UNIT welfare officers have arguably never been more important.

Whether it is helping soldiers to sort out their finances or supporting troops' families and friends during the six-month separation of an operational tour, they are the first port of call for a plethora of issues.

And with Op Herrick showing no immediate sign of slowing, the latest crop of men and women to take up this post have their work cut out.

"It is a job unlike any other and in the vast majority of cases, officers won't have done anything like it before," explained Maj Steve Proctor (RTR), the man responsible for ensuring personnel are prepared for the task.

"Welfare is a massive subject and while these individuals are not there to solve everyone's problems, they must have the information to direct people to the right place."

Those who take on the role are usually late entry officers in their first posting.

They are briefed on everything from housing issues and healthcare providers to post operational stress management and listening to people's difficulties.

Equipped with a mobile phone that is rarely switched off, they must be available to take calls

from those in need of support at any time.

Maj Joanne Robinson (RLC) has just completed the first part of the training package ahead of taking on the job at the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps base near Gloucester.

"From my time in unit, welfare meant relationship problems, childcare and housing but now it's much bigger," she told *Soldier*.

"With casualties coming back from Afghanistan, the role in camp is so important."

An additional challenge for Maj Robinson will be dealing with the multinational families of the personnel that form the Nato headquarters to which she is posted.

"Wives must find work and children will need schools. They are not used to the UK military way of life so I will have to help with things such as paying mess bills," she explained.

Capt Alan McAleney (Scots) is the unit welfare officer at the personnel recovery unit of 145 Brigade in Aldershot.

His role is to help seriously injured or long-term sick soldiers navigate their route back to front-line service or civilian life.

"It's a massively important and understated function which is formed by just one officer and a senior NCO," he said.

"I'm dealing with soldiers' case work, from those with serious brain injuries to troops with multiple wounds going through rehab.

"I help get them ready to leave the Army if that's what will happen, building their individual recovery plans.

"There's a million different places you can tap in to for help but you have to know where to look."

Former soldier and ex-welfare officer Andrew Jackson led the most recent training course at the Emergency Planning College in York.

As part of the five-day package, trainees had to practise their listening skills in role plays with Army wives who had agreed to assist the exercise (pictured below). They were also introduced to some of the charities and agencies offering support to Forces families.

The tutor admitted that the job has never been more challenging.

"Clearly because of Afghanistan the wider family now have more of an interest – it used to be just those on the patch but now they can be spread across the UK, even the world, particularly if the soldiers are on ops," he explained.

With responsibility for up to 300 troops and their families, those filling the latest welfare officer posts can certainly expect to be busy.

"You can't relate this to soldiering," said Maj Proctor. "You have to be empathetic because you are dealing with troops in a different way.

"But it's very rewarding, especially when they come back from operations and you breathe a sigh of relief." ■

CRUCIAL COMPASSION

**Officers tasked with
keeping the home front calm
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Helping hands: Capt Al Hughes (WG) takes part in a role-play exercise during the unit welfare officer training course in York

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His second national tour is just about to hit arenas up and down the UK. Here, the plain-talking Manchester City-supporting comedian takes time out of his busy schedule to answer *Soldier's* questions...

■ Tell us about your upcoming shows.

They're just about to go into the arenas so it's a bit of a step up. I really love doing it and I enjoy adding gags in each night, but it's weird seeing myself on the huge screens behind – I always look fatter.

■ We see you have donated show passes to the Tickets for Troops charity. Why?

I do a big bit in my set about keeping our heroes happy because if they're not, then it's National Service again and you don't want people like me defending this country!

■ Soldiers can be a tough audience. Will their presence at your shows make you more nervous?

Not at all, if anything they bring a lot of goodwill to an audience and often get a round of applause when they get a mention. It's different when there's half a dozen in an audience of a couple of thousand compared to 300 Scots Guards all screaming at you!

■ Any specific anecdotes we can look forward to?

I've got a great story about meeting Cpl Andy Reid (3 Yorks) a few years ago when I had a broken ankle, which gets some big laughs.

■ Do you have any experience of the Armed Forces yourself?

I've played *Call of Duty* a few times and I have some members of my family who are in the Royal Navy but otherwise no. I flew out a few years ago to do a gig in the Falklands which was great fun.

■ Soldiers pride themselves on their sense of humour. Give us your best one-liner.

It doesn't matter what you give kids at Christmas as they always seem to prefer the box it came out of. Although, ironically, that's how I feel about kids.

■ Is laughter important in dangerous jobs?

Of course! They say if you laugh for 15 minutes a day then you can add six years onto your life. Now that might be counteracted by the stress of having the Taliban shooting at you, but it could even itself out.

■ What do you think about the way soldiers are portrayed in the British media? Is it accurate?

I think so. Even if someone is anti-war (which I'd definitely be if I was a soldier) they're not anti-soldier. It's the decision makers and that famous phrase "lions led by donkeys". I think it's harder to swallow when there's a negative story about a soldier because we like to think that every single one of them is a hero but of course, like any industry, there's a fair few knobheads, they can't all be brilliant. There are knobhead comedians, knobhead plumbers and, I bet if you're reading this now, you can think of a knobhead soldier. If you can't, then it's you!

■ Any message for those troops serving in Afghanistan at the moment?

People always say the same thing don't they? "Stay safe", "come home in one piece," etc... as if you're not thinking that all the time! "Oh, I'm glad you told me to stay safe, I was just about to wander down Sangin high street in my Union Jack shorts and England footy top." But I would say stay safe and get home in one piece.

● Jason Manford *Live* is out on DVD on November 14. His book *Brung Up Proper* is out now and his UK tour continues until the end of November.

Age: 30
Family: No thanks!
Occupation: Part-time comedian, full-time knobhead

Five minutes
with... Jason
Manford



Report: Sharon Kean
Pictures: Graeme Main

A NEW breed of soldier is emerging in the British Army. Equipped with the latest computer know-how rather than machine guns and grenades, these techno troops are taking the fight to Britain's digital enemies – sparring with smartphones and repelling rogue emails.

They are part of the MoD's growing team of cyber warriors – personnel who are trained to defend the multi-billion pound computer and telephone networks that underpin the UK's military operations.

Among the hundreds of digital defence staff working at the department's round-the-clock Global Operation Security and Control Centre (GOSCC) are Royal Signals soldiers.

Along with troops from the other two Services, they use their expertise on a futuristic front line that is regularly under attack from enemy forces.

SSgt Martin Bentley is part of the Computer Emergency Response Team, a group of skilled analysts who look out for signs of trouble.

Most potential cyber attacks are detected or reported at their desk first.

"We are trained to spot threats and are constantly active," he told *Soldier*.

"Analysts are industry trained and have the experience to know what to look for.

"Our international allies also share relevant information with us."

Seated in front of a wall of monitors, which relay up-to-the-minute information about data passing through the MoD's restricted and secret networks, they are continually on alert for suspicious activity.

"It's about seeing something and working out how to fix it," said SSgt Bentley.

"It is a lot of responsibility but very rewarding and it's nice to know this sort of thing is being done – I didn't realise there was a big brother watching over everything before I came here."

Everyone in the Army, from Apache pilots flying over Libya to commanders in Afghanistan's forward operating bases, depends on secure telephone lines and intelligence data.

And it's not just in theatre where this is important – defence attaches in foreign cities and training bases as

far removed as Kathmandu are plugged into the Army's email and intranet.

"What we do underpins operations because without communications everything would fall over," added SSgt Bentley.

To help them police this sprawling web of information, staff at the cyber hub make use of all the latest developments.

SSgt Jan Nicholas, a systems engineer, has overseen the introduction of a powerful new suite of computers and software called Watchtower, which has boosted the team's performance.

"The new set-up has the intelligence to alert us to network trends – it's got the patience that we haven't and it doesn't get tired of looking," he explained.

"It's really enhanced our capability to keep up with our adversaries, much like a new weapon would.

"It's brought the investigation time down to between five and ten minutes, whereas before it would take on average 40 to 50 minutes to gather information from different feeds.

"We now have a very well defended network, which is more efficiently policed than it was before thanks to this multi-million pound capability."

Fellow signaller LCpl Robert Purdy plays an equally important part in ensuring the MoD's computer crown jewels are protected.

**'WE WILL IDENTIFY
THREATS AND USE
THAT INFORMATION
TO UPDATE OUR
SYSTEM SENSORS'**

CYBER WARRIORS

TECH-TRAINED TROOPS ARMED WITH BANDWIDTH OVER BULLETS



He fits and maintains the sensors that pick up potential security breaches.

"I will assess websites, install the kit and go and fix any problems, wherever they are," he told *Soldier*.

The highly-secret system used to keep tabs on defence data depends on this hardware being fully functional. As each sensor is responsible for large areas, any damage could prove to be serious.

A few desks away, Cpl Gavin Partington's team is tasked with identifying new viruses and potential weaknesses in the MoD's computer networks. He said their work often reaches outside the defence community.

"We carry out in-depth analysis of malicious content by taking a code, reverse engineering it and looking at how it affects a system.

"We have forensics experts who examine kit and equipment and look for evidence of what has happened.

"We will identify threats and use that information to update our sensors."

He added: "When we have discovered new variants of malicious software we get

commercial anti-viral vendors to update their software to cope with this."

Other cyber soldiers have closer links to more traditional theatres of war.

WO2 Damian Gunn works as part of the team that liaises with front-line commanders to make sure they have the communications they need.

When new missions such as Operation Ellamy begin, or new checkpoints are built in Helmand province, he ensures they are wired up as quickly as possible.

"We talk to the locations to see how to fit with the network already there. We can get basic comms nodes – secure phones and email – in within a week," WO2 Gunn said.

The Army's cyber soldiers may be using bandwidth rather than bullets to beat their enemies but they are fighting a battle that is becoming increasingly significant.

In an age where a code war is more likely than a cold war, troops are armed with all the skill and technology needed to safeguard the security of the UK and its Armed Forces. ■



INSIDE a futuristic structure that wouldn't look out of place in a fantasy film, the cyber warriors operate 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week.

The purpose-built Global Operations and Security Control Centre (GOSCC) is tucked away down a small country lane near an historic market town. The windowless state-of-the-art building is packed with the latest computer technology and digital expertise.

Live feeds from Libya and Afghanistan are projected onto a vast wall alongside data from the military's Defence Information Infrastructure network and BBC News 24 updates.

Rows of desks and computer monitors are occupied by hundreds of Army, Navy, RAF and MoD civilian staff and experts from external communications firms are also based there.

The GOSCC defends technology that is accessed by some 300,000 restricted and secret users, ranging from ministers in MoD Main Building to commanders in Helmand.

Capt Chris Parsons (RN), the officer in charge of the cutting-edge construction, said: "This is war-winning stuff because without communications, assets such as counter-IED kit and intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition and reconnaissance would not work. The way in which we fight has become increasingly technical and reliant on access to this sort of information."

An attack on MoD systems could prevent



All things digital: The GOSCC's state-of-the-art HQ

BATTLE STATION

aircraft flying or ships sailing and, with no boundaries in cyber space, the enemy could easily strike anywhere.

Last year GOSCC's detection systems registered millions of alerts, hundreds of which required further analysis.

"It's a constant battle that is getting more sophisticated with advances in technology," said Wg Cdr David Woodfine (RAF), the officer who oversees the centre's cyber team.

"We've got to be able to keep pace with that.



Constant battle: The enemy could strike anywhere

Our watch keeping team monitor more than half a million devices, looking for where the threat might be and where there could be vulnerabilities.

"It's a new type of warfare where anyone with a PC and access to the web can be a threat."

While foreign spies, malicious hackers and internet activists represent a very real danger, a large chunk of the battle is fought closer to home.

Careless troops clicking links in forwarded emails or plugging USB sticks or iPhones into computers are responsible for a large proportion of security breaches noted by the centre.

"We want people to be aware of the dangers – if we can crack that then 80 per cent of the threat could be resolved," added Wg Cdr Woodfine.



Capt Chris Parsons

Report: Sharon Kean
Pictures: Steve Dock

In an office littered with Xbox controllers, joysticks and virtual-reality visors, the latest counter-IED training technology is being fine-tuned.

On a massive flat-screen monitor, computer-generated figures clad in camouflage move around a dusty desert village looking for signs of trouble.

But in this video game the enemies are not insurgents with AK47s or rocket launchers, they are hidden explosives and the trip wires or pressure plates that detonate them.

And the person holding the joystick is a serious gamer who knows that one day he or she will have to carry out their on-screen mission in real life.

Experts at Birmingham University are building virtual minefields to test British Army bomb disposal specialists and improvised explosive device search teams in a bid to boost their battlefield skills.

Professor Bob Stone, who leads a small group of artificial intelligence and 3D-modelling boffins, explained how the "game" was put together.

"We went to an Army training ground in Kent and walked over a one-mile route where the search patrols practise looking for command wires and disturbed earth," he said.

"Instructors at the Defence Explosive Ordnance Disposal and Munitions Search School in Kineton asked us to design a rural scene to represent Afghanistan and a virtual recreation of the route to demonstrate the level of quality we could achieve."

In just four weeks Prof Stone's team built a computer-generated Afghan village — a typical market town complete with obstacles and discreet ground signs, designed to test personnel deploying to Helmand province.

Images were bought from internet-based libraries including lifelike models of Afghan people, military vehicles and weapons designed by graphic artists, before piecing them together like a Hornby train set.

Three-dimensional bushes and trees with leaves and lawns with individual blades of grass were all added to make the simulated scene as believable as possible.

"If you want to hide a command wire in there you can," explained Prof Stone.

"It sounds very geeky but it's absolutely essential to convince these guys this could work."

The technology is so new that it has not yet been given a name.

"EOD sim", as it is known by its working title, is a capability concept demonstrator being tested by training staff in Kineton classrooms to evaluate how well it works and where in the centre's rigorous syllabus it would best fit.

In the simulation soldiers can enter the Afghan village via a bridge, over a wadi or through a poppy or wheat field.

"They pass dead goats in ditches and move from direct sunlight into dark shadows," explained the programming expert.

"There are trenches, trees, gullies and a blown-out car. Is something hidden in there?"

The idea is to prepare soldiers to observe every small detail and be aware if anything has moved or changed since their last patrol.

Even something as seemingly nondescript as a discarded Coke can could signal an enemy observation post.

"If you get the sunlight just right, these are beautiful images," added Prof Stone.

"But it's not just aesthetic charm, patterns of rocks could indicate danger and be invisible in the shade. A collection of cigarette butts in the shadow of a doorway could be a missed sign that someone has been watching you."

The IED threat in Afghanistan is not the only situation Army specialists must prepare for.

With the Olympics next year and bomb disposal teams held at constant readiness for UK-based threats, virtual environments are being designed to help the troops who could be called upon to assist civil authorities.

It is an urgent operational requirement and if this game can boost the training of explosive ordnance disposal experts then it could prove a vital asset.

"They wanted a simple town with railway station, industrial area, houses and school yards to show situations to students in the classroom," said the professor.

Instructors can build their own scenarios based on the threats posed by different types of devices — timer, command wire or victim-operated.

Following on-screen prompts and menu options they can work through threat assessments and the procedures used to make devices safe.

In the virtual world trainees can interact with witnesses and police officers and decide on appropriate cordons and positioning of incident command post vehicles.

They can also deploy bomb disposal robots

including the impressive Wheelbarrow, Dragon Runner, Talon and Cutlass.

"The guys in the Army who have seen this love the idea and they have given us a shopping list of things they want from it," added Prof Stone.

Requests include the ability to zoom in to street level and zoom out again to a bird's eye view of a scenario, marker pens to highlight areas and an on-screen range finder to measure cordons.

The developments are already impressive.

"The virtual rain is really quite good," said the expert. "It can be switched on and off by the instructors, as can the sun, so different times of day can be chosen as teachers wish."

Cleverly, the software can also incorporate footage from real-life events such as CCTV recordings of the July 7 bombings at tube stations and hand-drawn plans of incident areas.

Such is the sophistication of the imagery, video degradation can be applied to the screen view from a robot's camera, mimicking the effect of a bad wi-fi connection between the device and its command post controller.

Vehicles can be searched, with the boot of a graphical car being opened to reveal mundane items such as a road atlas and screen wash bottle.

"Just 12 or 13 years ago a computer capable of running this technology would have cost a quarter

**'IT MAKES
YOU THINK
OUTSIDE
THE BOX AND
ENABLES YOU
TO REHEARSE
YOUR OWN
TACTICS'**

Laptop learning:
Prof Bob Stone with the video game that is helping to prepare counter-IED specialists for real-life ops



of a million pounds plus £75,000 for the software and there were also restrictions on licensing," the professor said.

"But now you can run this on a £500 laptop from PC World.

"Games technology is affordable and we can distribute it free of charge."

He revealed: "We are also working on a new simulation for future bomb disposal vehicles.

"It is so unbelievably realistic as it is a blend of real and replica hardware using models of the operator's console."

Col Gareth Collett, head of defence explosive ordnance disposal and search, said: "With the IED having been institutionalised in future warfare, this software is a life-saving capability that will complement practical training and assessment.

"Those who used the demonstrator prior to deploying on Op Herrick 14 cited it as being as close to the real thing as possible. It makes you think outside the box and enables you to rehearse your own tactics, techniques and likely courses of action in a multitude of scenarios."

With such steadfast endorsement from those at the sharp end, the world of virtual explosives is on-track to boost both the skill and confidence of British troops who will soon face the real thing on operations in Helmand province. ■

VIRTUAL MINEFIELD

COMPUTER GAME MISSIONS BOOST ARMY BOMB SQUADS



Virtual reality: High-definition graphics and believable scenarios make the computer missions very realistic





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HOME HEROES

SUPPORT NETWORK OPERATING QUIETLY BEHIND THE FRONT LINE

Report: Sharon Kean

THE invaluable support network of friends and family behind the brigades of men and women serving in the Armed Forces is a key part of the military community.

Service personnel have children to look after, houses to keep and bills to pay and it is those at home anxiously awaiting the safe return of their soldier who willingly take over this role during operational deployments.

Although each experience is unique, Forces parents and partners are bonded by unfaltering commitment to those who bravely choose to serve their country.

Kitty Dimpleby is one of many women wedded to the British Army – her husband is a captain in The King's Royal Hussars.

"When you're married to a soldier it's a way of life, not a nine-to-five job," she explained at the offices of Help For Heroes where she works.

"It becomes all-encompassing and you throw yourself into it. In the military there's such a sense of community and you're proud to be part of it."

Coping with long periods of separation, often with limited communication, is par for the course in Forces families but that doesn't make it easy.

"I do genuinely believe that people who volunteer to serve in the Army in times of conflict are heroes and that people who support them are too," she said.

Dimpleby's respect and admiration for those around her has prompted her to write a book called *Daffodil Girls*, which documents the experiences of women who are married to or mothers of soldiers from 2nd Battalion, The Royal Welsh. By telling their stories, she has given a voice to a group of people who often remain behind the scenes.

"What surprised me was how hard some of the older wives still found it because I think I naively hoped that it must get better," added the author, who having been married less than two years is a self-confessed novice.

"The hardest thing is the anxiety of knowing they are in a war zone.

"But on a day-to-day level it is the uncertainty

of knowing that even if they don't choose it, they could be sent away at any point and you'll be on your own again."

Lindsay Perrin has been married to a warrant officer in the Royal Tank Regiment for nine years. She is based on the Army "patch" in Tidworth and is used to the challenges of Service life.

"You keep busy when the guys are away because you have to," Perrin explained.

"We've all been there and you just get on with it and look out for each other, whether it's helping with childcare, lending a shoulder to cry on or being a drinking partner. No one understands what you're going through quite like an Army wife or girlfriend does."

Her day-job as a civilian nurse working with military personnel has given Perrin valuable insight into the single soldier's perspective of returning home from an operational tour.

Realising unmarried troops would be arriving at empty accommodation blocks after six months in Helmand province, she came up with a novel idea.

"The married soldiers were coming back to the home comforts and luxuries they'd

been without for months, but the single ones had packed up their rooms and were moving into new housing," she said.

Perrin contacted the Best Western hotel chain to see if they could help her with a "welcome home" package.

"The company offered to donate snacks, drinks and toiletries for all the single guys so we could make up their rooms and they could have a shower, freshen up and snack without having to sort out their kit and use sand-covered items," the senior NCO's wife explained.

As well as writing books and organising homecomings, Forces families are crucial allies of military charities.

Denise Harris founded Afghan Heroes to support soldiers and loved ones affected by the current mission after her son Cpl Lee Scott (2 RTR) was killed during some of the fiercest fighting in Helmand in 2009.

"I got in touch with some of the other mothers and we did it for our boys but for everybody else's too," she said.

"We've set up support groups all over the country for returning soldiers and those who've lost people.

"Everybody needs somebody when you're trying to keep your family together – we are all there for each other."

Others cope more quietly away from the public gaze but they are no less heroic.

In the case of the thousands of Reservists and individual augmentees who join Helmand-bound battalions, families can often be far-removed from the support offered within the MoD welfare bubble.

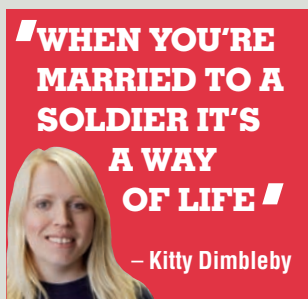
Lynn Hainge has been married to a TA soldier from 3rd Battalion, The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment for 12 years. She said the hardest thing for her was dealing with the loneliness and isolation of being surrounded by people who don't understand how the Army works.

"A lot of well-meaning friends and family asked why I let him go which annoyed me because you can't stop them," said Hainge, whose husband returned from Afghanistan in 2008.

"He signed up and if he didn't go on operations he could go to prison, so you have to be as supportive as you can.

"And as much as everyone warns you against listening to the news, you can't help it. When you hear that a British soldier has been killed on Sky and they don't name him, you worry."

The brave band of women, men and children on home turf make a crucial contribution to current operations and their stories, like those featured in Dimpleby's book, are as much a part of Forces life as a soldier's uniform. ■



Report: Sharon Kean
Pictures: Graeme Main

SOLDIERS are sharing their military discipline and leadership experience with the "hoodie generation" as part of a unique partnership with youth charity The Prince's Trust.

Forces personnel are working to help 16- to 25-year-olds from deprived areas who sign up for 12-week outward bound courses and community fund-raising projects in a bid to improve both their self-confidence and future job prospects.

It is a mutually beneficial exchange which allows Servicemen and women to sharpen their command skills in a civilian setting.

"This is a first-rate development opportunity for anyone in the Forces and The Prince's Trust gets an effective team leader and influential role model," said Maj Marianne Cursons (AGC (ETS)), who recently completed a paid two-year full-time placement with the charity before returning to her role in the Army.

Her job linked the three Services with the trust, recruiting personnel as helpers for its team programme, which works with some of the most hard to reach youngsters in the UK.

"For soldiers and officers it's a different leadership challenge – discipline without the rank structure and in an environment where you can't send someone to the sergeant major when they do something wrong," she told *Soldier*.

"You get very institutionalised in the Army, so working with a charity gives troops a chance to see what civvy street is like and to work with people on the other side."

Military personnel from across the ranks can spend anywhere between two weeks and a few months with the organisation, acting as mentors and using their personal and professional experience to help participants learn various new skills including cooperation and communication.

It is a tried and tested formula that sees

'I can see the difference it makes to troops' self-esteem and confidence straight away'

more than three quarters of young people who take part go on to find work, education or further training.

"The leadership and motivation skills needed for youth work transfer over really well from the Forces, especially from the junior ranks with younger soldiers under their command, and it can open their eyes to other opportunities," said Maj Cursons.

While a job working with youngsters might not suit everyone, the increased self-esteem that results from such placements means they are often taken up by Servicemen and women with commissioning potential or those heading for promotion cadres.

The team leader role is also well-suited to some wounded or long-term sick personnel who are unable to do their normal job.

Dan Benson – a former warrant officer with 2nd Battalion, The Yorkshire Regiment – left the Army last year after 22 years of service and took up a newly-created post at the trust. He manages a partnership with Forces charity Help For Heroes, which now funds helper placements specifically for injured troops.

"If I could go back two years I would send my guys on this because I can see the difference it makes to their confidence straight away," he said.

"They are using their discipline and command to get young people motivated which can be very difficult – they are applying their military skills in a totally different setting."

Pte Ralph Murombe (RLC) took up a short-term secondment as an assistant team leader after a health problem meant he was unable to continue as an Army chef.

Following an interview with Benson, and with the approval of his chain of command, he began work with a group led by members of the Hampshire Fire Service who were helping to run a course based near his unit in Aldershot.

"You're very protected in the Army – you don't see outside – so I've had to adapt to this situation, learning how to put commands through to the kids," he said on the last day of a trip with his group to a New Forest activity centre.

Throughout the five-day residential course many of the youngsters got their first taste of life away from home, learning to cook and clean for themselves as well as solving problems through team-building exercises including raft making, stream crossing and orienteering.

"It's very different working with civvies and kids but it's been enjoyable motivating them and getting my voice heard," said Pte Murombe.

"I'd recommend this to Army lads if they get the chance."

Before signing up for the placement, Pte

Getting a grip: Pte Ralph Murombe (RLC), pictured right, takes control of a stream crossing by rope during a visit to a New Forest activity centre with his Prince's Trust group



Murombe had been working in the post room of his unit.

Benson added: "He was a lot quieter at first but now he's leading people and I can see that his self-esteem is growing.

"He's just a private soldier but now he's taking the lead and you can observe that improvement straight away."

It was the similarities between The Prince's Trust job and his previous role as a company sergeant major and recruit instructor that prompted Benson to apply for the permanent post of "rehabilitating soldiers secondment manager" when he left the Army.

Maj Cursons explained: "We were looking for someone with a military background that would be sensitive to wounded soldiers but also with the experience of working with young people."

The former warrant officer's skills matched the job description perfectly, in a clear demonstration of how well-suited Service experience can be to employment opportunities in the wider world. ■

● Personnel interested in secondment opportunities with The Prince's Trust should contact Dan Benson by email at Daniel.Benson@princes-trust.org.uk or by calling 0207 543 1298. www.princes-trust.org.uk





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LIFE IN THE TRENCHES

**Wounded personnel take
archaeological approach on the
road to recovery**

Report: Richard Long
Pictures: Graeme Main

FOR many soldiers the world of archaeology could be best highlighted by the rip-roaring adventures of *Indiana Jones* or the complex work carried out on the hugely successful *Time Team* series.

But for injured personnel from 1st Battalion, The Rifles this engrossing discipline has proved to be far more rewarding than a simple escape from reality via the small screen.

An 11-strong team from the unit has taken to Salisbury Plain for a unique rehabilitation project that is quite different from the combat drills usually associated with this vast proving ground.

Having swapped their rifles for trowels, brushes and shovels, this dedicated group was tasked with excavating and examining Iron Age deposits from a site known as Chisenbury Midden.

The archaeological study was designed to promote new skills among wounded soldiers while also offering physical exercise and a sense of teamwork.

The project is the brainchild of Sgt Diarmaid Walshe (RAMC), a medic attached to 1 Rifles and a qualified archaeologist, who was quick to highlight its benefits when *Soldier* visited the site.

"I thought archaeology could be very therapeutic. Salisbury Plain is a beautiful area and this is a very relaxing activity," he explained.

"Some of these soldiers have been off work for two years with very little contact with the regiment. It can be quite hard to make the first step back.

"Getting them involved in a project like this teaches them new skills and helps to build their self-esteem.

"In the four days we have been working here we have seen a startling change in behaviour and attitudes."

Sgt Walshe conceded that some participants would have to leave the Army due to their injuries but said the initiative had helped them with skills such as report writing, team leading



and presentation giving, all of which could prove advantageous in the outside world.

After overcoming some initial obstacles, the medic has been delighted to see personnel making the most of the opportunity and he believes it will hold them in good stead for the future.

"There was a lot of scepticism among the soldiers to start with but they have been very surprised by it. The reaction has been overwhelming," he added.

"They all have a very positive outlook and at least half of these guys have said they would like to do further work in this area.

"We have a duty of care to our wounded and we have to ensure they are looked after. This is an innovative project that adds something different to the rehabilitation process."

As well as boosting recovery programmes, the initiative will help the work of the Defence Infrastructure Organisation, the body responsible for managing and maintaining the land.

Senior historical adviser Richard Osgood, who co-directed the study, said: "This definitely demonstrates to English Heritage that the MoD



is carefully looking after its estate.

"These soldiers have been a real pleasure to work with. They have just cracked on with things and getting them off the site at the end of the day has been hard.

"I am a layman, not a medic, but I have seen them become more confident and they have enjoyed working in a social environment. I expected great things from them and they have surpassed that."

Cpl Steven Winterton was introduced to the programme by Sgt Walshe and, having a keen interest in archaeology, was

extremely quick to sign up.

"The whole experience has been absolutely brilliant," he said. "It is not just about the study, it is about being with the blokes and reigniting old friendships.

"It has helped me massively, both physically and

‘It has been really interesting and therapeutic. Coming outside and being in a group again is very important’



Digging deep: Injured soldiers from 1st Battalion, The Rifles search for Iron Age artefacts in a ground-breaking archaeology project that has brought rehabilitation to Salisbury Plain

FACT FILE

Chisenbury Midden

- Origins of the site can be traced back to 700 BC.
- Extracts recovered during the dig include animal bones, burnt flints, decorated pottery and tools which have led experts to believe the land was used as a feasting site for local communities.
- Badgers have unearthed artefacts while constructing their setts on the prehistoric monument.
- Royal Air Force personnel from Upavon originally discovered the location during the 1940s but it was largely untouched until English Heritage got involved in the 1990s.
- Soldiers will compile a detailed report from the dig, which will be presented to archaeological experts and used to inform the future management of the site.

mentally. It took me a long time to realise I was suffering with depression from my injuries but being outdoors helps you to forget your worries; you are concentrating on something else."

Cpl Winterton suffered spinal injuries while serving in Afghanistan and is in the midst of a long-term treatment programme.

He admitted that his future lies outside the Army and the Salisbury

Plain dig has given him a clear direction for a new career path.

"I am definitely looking at the archaeological side of things," he said.

"This has opened my eyes to something I did not think was available to me.

"I am in the process of learning for the future. At the moment this is just a trial project but we want to keep this rolling so guys in Afghanistan know there is a support network waiting for them if they get injured."

Colleague Rfn Russell Dunn is also among the long-term injured and has been determined to try as many different activities as possible during his rehabilitation.

He said: "I did not know what to expect. I was just told that some badgers had been digging and pulling up 3,000-year-old artefacts.

"I heard the briefing about what was planned and thought it was a unique opportunity to do something different."



The junior soldier was wounded in a fall during training and suffered lateral tears and complex injuries to his femur.

"It has been difficult to diagnose," Rfn Dunn said. "It has been frustrating. The friends I trained with are in Helmand and I'm not. I'm almost like a spare part and that is not what I signed up for.

"Having a long-term injury is quite depressing but I have kept myself busy with educational courses in numeracy and literacy.

"This is another opportunity to make the best of a bad situation. I like history but I never thought about doing this kind of thing so I want to make the most of it.

"It has been really interesting and therapeutic. Coming outside and being in a group again is very important. You can feel quite isolated when injured so being able to work in a team is great.

"That is why I joined the British Army." ■





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Jubilee jinx strikes again

I SERVED in the British military for 30 years from March 20, 1947 to March 19, 1977.

When the Coronation Medal was struck, just three were issued to my unit despite us being on active service at the time. I had been in uniform for five years by then but missed out.

When the Silver Jubilee decoration (above left) was awarded in 1977 I had served for 30 years but was still left wanting. By the time the Golden Jubilee came round I was a veteran and again missed out on a medal (above right).

With the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal (QDJM) soon to be issued I am set to suffer the same outcome.

Before it is too late, could a review please take place and consideration be given to include all veterans and every Serviceman and woman still wearing the uniform?

The Suez Canal Medal took 50 years to be issued and it looks to me as though another long and drawn out debate has already started over the QDJM. — Mr H Whitehead, York.

Sqn Ldr (Retd) Roger Mackenzie, MoD Medal Office, responds: I have sympathy with the views expressed as on leaving the Royal Air Force after 31 years, I too had not received medals.

However, eligibility for the award of decorations often depends on when, where and for how long one served.

The final qualifying criteria for the QDJM has yet to be published, but I feel Mr Whitehead and I will once again be disappointed.

● Diamond debacle — page 65

Glad to have Mr Grumpy back

WRITE having read the recent articles in *Soldier* on the Army's campaign to end the stigma of mental illness.

Depression affects on average one in every four British people and numbers are rising.

Men and women serving in the military through times of conflict are more exposed to circumstances which could potentially lead to mental health issues.

As well as coping with the stress and anxiety of being away from home and loved ones, most are having to face life-threatening situations on a daily basis.

My father has served in the British Army for 27 years and has been on his fair share of operational tours, the latest being a six-month stint at Camp Phoenix in Baghdad, Iraq.

His departure was a tense time for all of us, nevertheless we said our goodbyes and hoped for a quiet deployment.

We were fortunate enough to be able to send regular emails in which both parties appeared calm and cheerful. We took the truly British approach and kept a stiff upper lip. However, in truth, I asked very few questions for fear of the answers.

Thankfully, dad returned home after six months seemingly well and the family breathed a sigh of relief. We all believed it was over and he was safe at home, unharmed.

It wasn't until about a month later that we started to realise that perhaps Iraq had made a greater impact than originally thought.

My dad went from being a confident, quick-witted (albeit grumpy at times) regular person to somebody I barely recognised. He was despondent, disconnected and appeared anxious about

ordinary day-to-day situations; it was a complete character change.

After months of suffering, dad finally sought help and as a family we did all we could to support him. As he went through the recovery process, we realised that Iraq was not the only tour to have an impact. A previous deployment to Bosnia was ended prematurely when my dad was flown home on compassionate leave due to my older brother being diagnosed with cancer. My

brother never recovered from his illness and I don't think that my father ever recovered from the loss.

As a family we muddled through as best we could but a second blow came when my mum was diagnosed with a similar illness while dad was in Iraq. This compilation of events turned into heavy emotions weighing down on him and that eventually had a detrimental effect on his health. However, all he needed to do was say one word... help.

Seeking assistance was probably the hardest step in his recovery stage. It took great courage and he received a wealth of support from the military, friends and family.

I would be lying if I said it was all sunshine and roses

from then on — it has been a long process — but I am thrilled to say that, two years on, that confident, quick-witted, grumpy old man I talked about is back.

I hope this inspires people to come forward and use that four-lettered word which so many are so reluctant to say. There is a great deal of help out there, all you have to do is ask. — Libby Preston, daughter of Lt Col Andrew Preston, REME.



Rallying call: Lt Col Andrew Preston (REME) has added his voice to the Army's "Don't bottle it up" campaign

"WE TOOK THE TRULY BRITISH APPROACH AND KEPT A STIFF UPPER LIP"

● I NOTICE that the paras asked to answer last month's *Final Word* question [what could be done to improve life in the British Army?] all thought they should have access to military discounts.

They already do. The *Forces Discount* book features some offers but I have used my military ID card in many UK shops and locations to get a ten to 20 per cent discount.

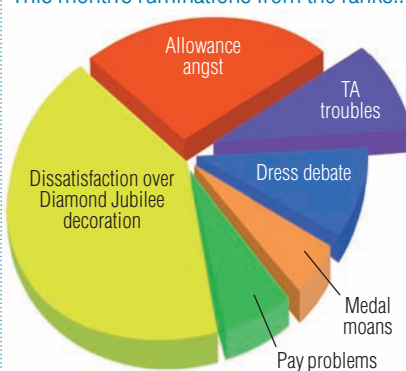
The best saving to date was a 40 per cent reduction on ski hire from a British-run shop in Tignes, France.

Discounts are often not advertised but simply asking is all that is required. Service personnel have, in my experience, as much access to discounts as any student.

The Forces railcard is also as good as any student deal. — Lt Col R D Phillip, RAMC.

Slice of Service life

This month's ruminations from the ranks...



Coveting cover to complete kit line-up

THERE is no doubt in my mind that our equipment is at the top of its game, standing side by side with some nations and far ahead of a lot of others.

The numerous articles on personal kit in this publication over the last year is testament to the amount of effort that has been invested in getting things right.

The subject that still frustrates me and has left me baffled is why, after so much thought has gone into every piece of equipment from head to toe, are we still issuing an unfit for purpose helmet cover?

I've asked my troops why they "ally up" their helmets and the answer is always the same – "the issue one is rubbish". In this instance, I have to agree with them completely.

Once fitted correctly to the Mk7 helmet, the current cover's taut draw cord obstructs the use of all non-firing assessment items such as the common weapon and Viper sights.

The same draw cord interferes with the correct fit and wear of both ESS goggles and glasses.

A further problem is the incorrect security of fit for the Helmet Mounted Night Vision System (HMNVs).

The harness fits poorly when the cover is secured to the helmet. The Mk7 has been brought into service to encompass all these factors and more.

As I've read reports from theatre and observed photographs it has become an obsession of mine to count how many troops are wearing the stipulated helmet markings (very few).

During a recent six-month tour on Op Herrick I was called a dinosaur as I forced my own troops to "un-ally" their helmets to comply with this measure.

Is there a plan to replace this unfit for purpose item in favour of a tailored cover? – Name and address supplied.

Lt Col Matthew Tresidder, Defence Clothing Team, writes: Thank you for taking the time to write in regarding your concerns about helmet covers.

I would like to assure you that the MoD takes all measures possible to ensure that the equipment and clothing issued to our Armed Forces is both right for the job and right for them.

We take very seriously any suggestion that British troops are unhappy with their helmet covers and believe they are not fit for purpose.

The department constantly seeks feedback on all kit currently in service and is aware of these concerns.

I would like to assure you that this issue has been looked into.

A new helmet cover, tailored specifically to fit the Mk7, has been developed and will be entering production very shortly.

Unfortunately it is not possible to



Picture: Sgt Alison Baskerville, RLC

Cool equipment: Maj Karl Boswell, OC A Company, 1 Rifles, uses his helmet to provide relief from the Helmand heat as temperatures soar during a joint helicopter assault with the Afghan Uniform Police

remove the drawstring altogether as otherwise a secure fit to the helmet cannot be maintained.

However, the tailoring reduces the interface problems with weapons sights, HMNVs and eye protection.

The new helmet cover is produced in

Multi-Terrain Pattern (MTP) and while it has elastic fixing parts for camouflage, these have been reduced.

The addition of nets to the helmet should not be continued as this reduces the effectiveness of the excellent performance of the MTP.

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BACKING OUR 'BLOKES'

■ I'M writing in reply to the letter in last month's issue bemoaning the use of the word "blokes" in the Help for Heroes slogan.

I am a theatre technician and have recently served on Op Herrick where I saw many casualties come through Bastion – the majority of whom were men.

I am disgusted that a lance corporal felt the need to suggest that the term was insulting towards female soliders and that others shared this view. Sorry love, I do not.

I saw guys receiving treatment for some appalling injuries and am embarrassed by the letter writer's stance. I have a lot of admiration for our guys and Help for Heroes.

Let's not confuse the issue with feminist rubbish and give the wounded the time and respect they deserve. – **LCpl V J Lewis.**

TWO TOURS, TWO MEDALS

■ I WOULD like to point out to Brig Mike Griffiths [who responded to a letter asking if there is a case for introducing a numbered bar to the Operational Service Medal (OSM) Afghanistan in September's issue] that "precedent" only exists in the law courts. Perhaps what he was trying to say was "no one has done it before so we won't do it now".

Repeat operational service is, quite rightly, reflected by the award of the Accumulated Campaign Service Medal and I appreciate that the qualification criteria has been revised in order to make it more inclusive.

That said, many Servicemen and women with repeat Op Herrick tours under their belts feel genuinely disenfranchised with a single, unnumbered medal for this theatre.

I believe that consideration should be given to allow personnel to wear the Nato International Security Assistance Force medal, with numerals, either alongside or in place of the OSM.

Before the tired old argument about "one mission, one medal" gets brought out, I can find Brig Griffiths plenty of "precedent" – dating back to the Crimean War – of multiple decorations being awarded for the same operation. – **WO2 Jim Hankey.**



Picture: Mark Owens

Scotland is not Outer Mongolia

I'D like to respond to the author of the letter titled "Moving North would be costly option" and the exchange of opinions which have followed on the pages of *Talkback*.

There are a few points in the original correspondence I would like to challenge:

● **I take exception to the writer's assertion that Scotland is too far north and subsequently a long way from home.**

I am from Inverness and have spent 14 out of 21 years south of the M4. Has this impacted on me? No, I understand that I will go to where I get posted.

● "[Rebasing in Scotland] will not provide good employment opportunities for spouses" – this just does not make sense.

The Royal Air Force seemed to manage very well up there, in fact, more than 9,000 jobs are reported to have depended on the Service staying in the country. If the Army is to swap places with the RAF then I'm sure this void of jobs will not exist.

● **The move would lead to "crippling travel costs". Why? Single soldiers will make the most of the facilities there, they always do.**

In turn, married personnel will have a house to go to at the end of the day.

Again, the RAF managed to be fully sustainable on the Moray coast, why can't the Army? Although 19 Light Brigade is now disbanding, the soldiers employed

over in Northern Ireland cope in what is a harder environment.

● As for the suggestion of Lincolshire and central England being a more suitable area, I assume that is the writer's personal preference and place of origin.

While such a location may suit them, what about those Service personnel from Scotland? Be honest, Kinloss does not meet with your own needs.

● **So what if we (Scotland) do get independence? Is the writer implying that Scotland will have it's own Armed Forces?**

It would be interesting to find out (in percentage terms) how many in the Army are from north of the border (or Outer Mongolia as some seem to think it is).

I am currently serving in Catterick, married unaccompanied, and commuting every second weekend – a 676-mile round trip. With fuel being so expensive, would it not be fair to give me a local posting?

If not, then all those who get posted to Kinloss can't moan. You can't have your bread buttered on both sides as you seem to think. As a note on posting, if I had bought a house in Aldershot I would be closer to Sennelager than Inverness.

By your reasoning everyone from central England south should get all the Germany posts. Leaving us Jocks working within a reasonable distance of home. – **SSgt Stu Martin, HQ Fitter Section Artisan, QRL LAD.**



I WRITE in reference to a news story featured in August's issue of *Soldier* about a Serviceman being saved from a Taliban bullet by his helmet.

The article refers to Bdr James Hallam and his lucky escape while on patrol with the Brigade Reconnaissance Force.

In my day (I'm 82), bombardiers were highly trained and second in command of guns in the Royal Regiment of Artillery.

Why oh why was this lad being used as Infantry? It used to be the case that gunners were gunners and infantrymen were infantrymen. What's all this nonsense about? – **P F North, ex-REME.**

Close shave: An enemy round struck the underside of Bdr James Hallam's helmet, severing the strap. The 27-year-old said: "I knew that it had come pretty close to me because I heard the noise, felt the heat and the force knocked me over."



"Yes, yes... I've read Mr North's letter in *Soldier*, but don't go getting any ideas about your humble station Bdr Eccles."

Flummoxed by Force's fashion faux pax

AS a member of 12 Mechanized Brigade, I am now wearing the new multi-terrain pattern uniform daily and wanted to share my initial thoughts and impressions.

I have yet to see an individual who looks smart in it. We have been told to wear the clothing with the shirt untucked, however, the item is not cut to behave as a jacket.

There is no shaping to take into account body forms – be it the hips of female personnel or the backside or gut of a male soldier. Consequently, the shirt gapes at the bottom of the zip and rides up as one sits and stands.

The sleeves are not designed to be rolled up and make the uniform – with all its Velcro and layers – uncomfortable to wear on a hot day.

The design has taken into account functionality in terms of pockets, pattern and presumably cost, but no one seems to have given much thought to style and how it

would look on a bunch of different-shaped Servicemen and women.

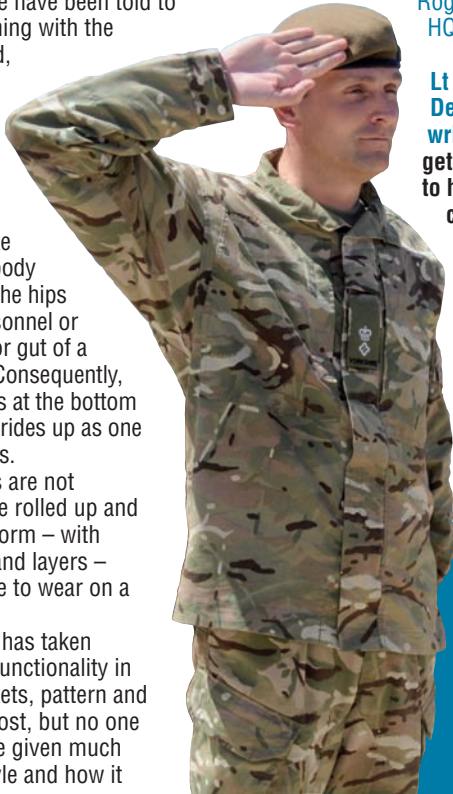
It's disappointing to know that public money has been spent on making the British Army look shabby. – **Capt F J Rogers, 12 Mechanized Brigade HQ & Signal Squadron.**

Lt Col Matthew Tresidder, Defence Clothing Team leader, writes: It is always good to get some user feedback and to have the opportunity to comment on some common misconceptions.

Combat uniform has been designed without compromise for use in the field, as the name suggests.

The jacket (not a shirt) has been fashioned to be comfortable, to integrate with body armour and

Smart or shabby?: Tell us your views on the Army's new-look personal clothing system (pictured left during a battalion handover in Cyprus) by email, post or by leaving a message on our Facebook or Twitter pages.



to allow the fitting of forearm protection and thus act as a temperate version of the under body armour combat shirt.

As Capt Rogers stated, it was designed for functionality. Compromising this to meet a subjective view of smartness was not a requirement.

It is designed to be worn loose so it is more comfortable and to allow better air circulation to aid temperature regulation.

A range for Servicewomen is currently under development to take account of the differences in the female form.

Change, especially in something as subjective as uniform style, inevitably attracts resistance and objections.

The switch from scarlet to khaki jackets in 1908 caused considerable consternation. Such resistance led to the wearing of ties under combat jackets when they were introduced to replace battledress in 1960.

I sincerely hope we have moved on from such attitudes today (although the insistence on wearing CS95 tucked in while at Camp Bastion gives me concern that this is not necessarily the case).

Our soldiers deserve a combat uniform fit for purpose and we should not worry how smart or scruffy it looks.

Of course, pride in appearance and looking orderly is part of our ethos and culture and Future Army Dress barrack wear is now available for those occasions when this is a driving concern.

Drag us out of the digital dark ages, please

FOR some time now I have been frustrated at the broadband connection speeds available to military personnel living in Service Families Accommodation in garrison towns.

I have lived in Tidworth, Hohné and currently reside in Aldershot where the absolute best I can get is a pitiful 1.7 megabit connection speed.

I admit this is not the slowest in the country and that those in rural areas endure much worse, but when you consider the majority of the population have access to in excess of eight megabits it really stings.

We are charged the same for our broadband as civilians, pay Contribution in Lieu of Council Tax and yet get less of a service.

BT says the problem lies with the distance from the exchange – which I have proven to be untrue.

Sky, on the other hand, claims the problem is down to line quality. Seriously? To the whole garrison?

And some internet service providers blame the low speed on the MoD's poor telecommunications infrastructure.

Wherever the problem lies, I would like



"Good luck trying to move him... it's the only place near camp he can get decent broadband."

to know so that I can apply pressure to get it changed.

Modern society will evolve around internet-provided services such as on-demand TV and cloud computing which

require good broadband speeds.

You can improve the fabric of a building as much as you like but if Forces personnel and their families are short-changed in the digital stakes they may be left miserable.

Let's not also forget those in Single Living Accommodation who require access to online courses for their continuing professional development.

The MoD seems to be leaning more towards distance learning yet has overlooked the fact that many soldiers have next to no internet access.

Deployed personnel rely on the web to communicate with families and friends back home.

If the broadband speed is not good in the UK then this affects connection quality and, in turn, morale.

It is high time that we looked at this issue before soldiers become second-class digital citizens.

If villages in India can get high-speed internet, surely we can do the same for our Service personnel and their families.

– **Capt Matthew Gaffney, RAMC.**

● Cyber warriors – pages 46-47

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

Discontent over Diamond 'debacle'

It was with sadness and great disappointment, but not total surprise, that I learnt I will not be entitled to the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal (QDJM).

I served in the Infantry from 1965 to 1991 – some 26 years – and from 2001 spent 11 years with the MoD Guard Service. In total I have dedicated 37 years to the service of Her Majesty, her government and our country.

I have been alive for the whole of the Queen's reign and spent more than half of my life in her service, but when it comes to the awarding of such a decoration it is disgraceful that my time appears to count for nothing.

There must be thousands of others who also missed out on the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal.

And as for the Silver Jubilee award, you had to be on speaking terms with the commander-in-chief and have the Pope's blessing to be in with a shout – or so it seemed at the time.

D N Pinder, a veteran who wrote to *Talkback* in August, offered a quite simple solution; extend the qualifying criteria to all former Armed Forces personnel on the understanding they will have to purchase the medal themselves.

I feel sure that the majority of ex-soldiers would be willing to do just that.

In the same edition of *Soldier* there was a news article on the announcement of the decoration which quoted the Chief of the Defence Staff as saying "this honour recognises the important and difficult job our Armed Forces have carried out".

The medal does acknowledge this "job" but only that done by a very small number who are currently serving.

I despair at the lack of consideration shown by those responsible for the rulings governing the award of the QDJM.

I feel the personal sacrifice I made for our country and the sacrifices made by my family in support of my service will pass without this simple form of recognition and appreciation. How sad. – **D J Smith, veteran.**

● **WITH the debate continuing to rage, I thought I would add my tuppence worth to the QDJM eligibility debacle.**

As a result of the gross mismanagement of Army personnel I am one of many captains who, despite having reached a quality line to qualify for conversion of commission, has found there is

no actual position for me to continue my Army career.

Consequently, I am due to leave the Service in December through no fault of my own and will therefore not be issued with a QDJM.

I have completed the prerequisite five years and proudly served my country in a variety of operational theatres, yet like so many others I find that I will miss out on something that is important to me by a matter of months.

Given the amount of individuals being made redundant, medically discharged or who are unable to fulfil their career due to manning limitations, the criteria for attaining the medal seems shortsighted at best and damning at the very worst.

Either the policy is reviewed as a matter of urgency or I can see many veterans raising this via other means in the near future, generating negative publicity that the Army can well do without. – **Name and address supplied.**

“**VETERANS SHOULD BE RECOGNISED FOR THEIR UNWAVERING SUPPORT OF THE ARMED FORCES**”



“**THE CRITERIA FOR ATTAINING THE MEDAL SEEMS SHORTSIGHTED AT BEST AND DAMNING AT THE VERY WORST**”

● IT will come as no surprise to veterans that the qualifying criteria prescribed for the award of the QDJM has been set in such a manner so as to exclude most of those who have served Queen and country since 1952.

Might this be because the costs of a wider qualifying criteria are prohibitive?

Or might it be another example of the shameful way veterans, and indeed serving military personnel, are treated by our lords and masters?

Like so many thousands of former Servicemen and women I am proud to have served in the British Army, in my case for 31 years. However, it now appears we are forgotten old contemptibles.

Some of us still support the MoD on the sidelines by working as civil servants.

Failure to recognise veterans' service to Queen and country only reinforces the belief that former personnel are no longer worthy of thought or consideration and best ignored.

Now would be a wonderful opportunity for those who laid out the qualifying criteria to reappraise and redress this situation. –

Name and address supplied.

● **IN response to the letters featured in September's *Talkback*, I believe that all veterans should be eligible for the QDJM.**

Many will have served in various war zones during Her Majesty's reign and may also have missed out on the Queen's Golden and Silver Jubilee Medals. The latter was issued to regiments in very small numbers and it was left to commanding officers to decide the personnel awarded them.

Veterans should be recognised for their unwavering support of the Armed Forces, be it during repatriation of the fallen, at Remembrance parades or through our continued backing of Service charities.

The Government always rolls out ex-

military personnel when they want to put on a national show and the Queen and members of the Royal Family enjoy meeting with them.

Most of us are not medal hunters but we are proud to have served our monarch and country over the years.

There are a number of e-petitions calling for the decoration's qualifying criteria to be revisited, including <http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/3747>

People should sign them because it is wrong to exclude veterans. – **M A Mullin, a retired captain, Moreton.**

● **I HAVE** read the recent *Talkback* letters on the subject of the QDJM and agree strongly with the majority of comments concerning the eligibility of injured Service personnel.

I was medically discharged after a 14-year career in November 2007, having been injured in a front-line role doing a job that I loved so much.

If I hadn't been wounded I would still be serving today and I feel very disappointed that people like myself will be left out. To those in a position to do so, please reconsider the criteria for injured veterans.

– **Name and address supplied.**

● **IN response to D N Pinder's comments in August's issue, why should veterans pay for this medal? They have served their country and the decoration should be given to them.** – **Andy Marshall, veteran.**

APPOINTMENTS

Commander Joint Forces Command:
Air Marshal Sir Stuart Peach in the rank of Air Chief Marshal from December.

COMPS

Spine line: Mr C S Rigg, JHQ; Gill Heesom, Chilwell, Nottingham; WO2 J Keogh, Loan Service Team; Jayne Hawkes, HQ Hereford Garrison, Hereford; Sgt F S Stones, 1 RMP, Wentworth Barracks.

Gun of the Black Sun winners:
Mr A Inwood, Flitwick, Bedfordshire; Alison Cameron, Errol, Perthshire; Mr P Green, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire; Mr P Wilson, Kirton Lindsey, Lincolnshire; Mrs S Franklin, Dagenham Essex.

DIARY

October 2: We'll Meet Again – The Spirit of the 40s. A commemorative concert defining the period at the Congress Theatre, Eastbourne. Box office 01323 412000 or online at www.eastbournetheatres.co.uk

October 7: As above but at the Symphony Hall, Birmingham. Box office 0121 780 3333 or online at www.thsh.co.uk

October 9: As above but at the Bridgewater Hall, Manchester. Box office 0161 907 9000 or online at www.bridgewater-hall.co.uk

October 15: As above but at the Pavilion Theatre, Bournemouth. Box Office 0844 576 8000 or online at www.bic.co.uk

October 16: Autumn Air Show – Remembering the Korean War. Imperial War Museum, Duxford. Visit www.iwm.org.uk/duxford for further information and tickets.

October 22: Salute Our Heroes concert staged by ABF The Soldiers' Charity at Borough Hall, Hartlepool. Featuring military bands and singers. Tickets priced £15, with concessions available, from the box office on 01429 890000.

October 23: We'll Meet Again – at the Royal Concert Hall, Glasgow. Box office 0141 353 800 or visit www.glasgowconcerthalls.com

October 29: As above but at the Royal Festival Hall, London. Box office 0844 875 0073 or visit www.southbankcentre.co.uk

October 30: Rededication of the First and Second World War memorial at St Andrew's Church, Laverstock, Salisbury, Wiltshire. RSVP by October 15 to Maj Hugh Montgomerie by phone 01722 336552 or email at h.montgomerie@sky.com

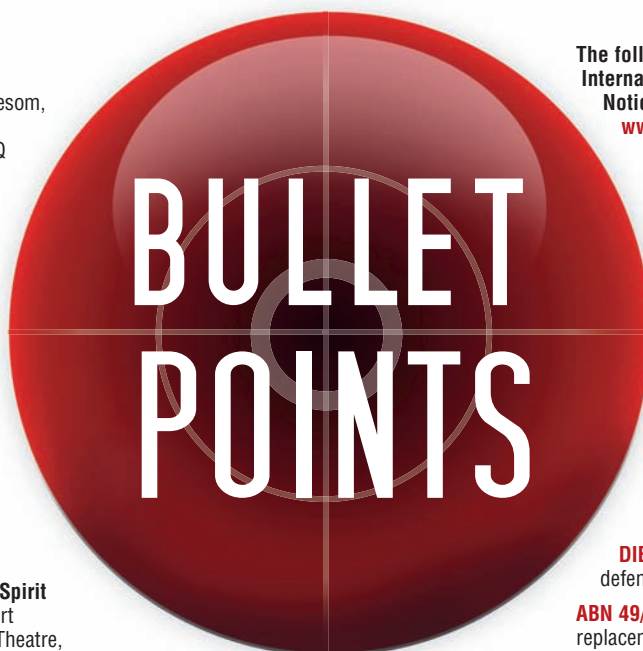
November 10: The 2011 Devon Festival of Remembrance takes place in The Great Hall of the University of Exeter, starting at 1900. Tickets priced £8 and are available from the Devon county office of The Royal British Legion on 01392 272211.

DIRECTORY

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

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

ABF The Soldiers' Charity: 0845 241 4820



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

Army Families Federation: 01264 382324; mil.94391.2324@aff.org.uk

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

Career Transition Partnership: 0207 766 8020

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

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

Family Escort Service: 0207 463 9249

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

Forces Pension Society: 0207 820 9988

Joint Service Housing Advice Office:
01722 436575

Medal Office: 94561 3600 or 0141 224 3600
Mutual Support (Multiple Sclerosis group):
www.mutualsupport.org.uk

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

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

Royal British Legion: 0845 7725 725

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

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

South Atlantic Medal Association:
01495 227577

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

INTELLIGENCE

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

DIB 74/11: Accumulated Campaign Service Medal 2011

DIB 75/11: Relocation of repatriation ceremonies to RAF Brize Norton

DIB 76/11: Armed Forces redundancy programme – announcement of Army and RAF tranche one personnel selected for redundancy

DIB 77/11: Publication of the Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey 2011 report

DIB 78/11: Publication of the Baha Mousa inquiry report

DIB 79/11: Defence reform – outline defence operating model

ABN 49/11: Defence and Army intranet replacement

ABN 50/11: Soldier voluntary transfer to student nurse training in the QARANC

ABN 51/11: Logistic career field management paper

ABN 52/11: Publication of CGS and ECAB comment on CGS's briefing team report

ABN 53/11: SDSR – Army compulsory redundancy programme tranche one update

ABN 54/11: Publication of the Baha Mousa inquiry report

ABN 55/11: Restrictions on the creation of new websites

ABN 56/11: The Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey

DIN 2011DIN10-035: Royal Navy Alpine Championships 2012

DIN 2011DIN08-013: Non-entitled accommodation rates

DIN 2011DIN07-144: Exchange programme Long Look 2012

DIN 2011DIN07-143: UKMCC (Bahrain) staff pre-deployment training

DIN 2011DIN07-139: Defence individual training management system fallback plan

DIN 2011DIN07-138: All arms unit fire safety managers course information

DIN 2011DIN07-137: Psychological operations courses

DIN 2011DIN07-136: Tri-Service language examinations

DIN 2011DIN07-135: Joint Personnel Administration login and password security policy

DIN 2011DIN07-134: Defence electronic learning centres drawdown

DIN 2011DIN06-026: Reporting accidents, affecting Army personnel, property or estate

DIN 2011DIN06-024: Updates to JSP 375 volume two and three – health and safety handbook

DIN 2011DIN06-023: Workplace supervisor radon – online training

DIN 2011DIN06-022: Joint Service Publication 403 volume two, change five amendment

DIN 2011DIN05-039: External expenditure on communication, advertising and marketing

DIN 2011DIN05-038: Provision of legal services in Scotland

DIN 2011DIN04-135: Equipment tables, scales and schedules

DIN 2011DIN04-133: Recertification of time-expired lubricants

DIN 2011DIN04-132: Declaration of obsolete rocket H/F distress red L9A1B1 Mk3

DIN 2011DIN04-131: Management accountability for ITAR equipment

DIN 2011DIN04-130: HMS *Dragon* acceptance of contract to in-service date stage two trials support arrangements

DIN 2011DIN04-129: Obsolete DS&TE PT controlled test and measurement equipment

DIN 2011DIN04-128: Declaration of obsolescence – portable user data terminal

DIN 2011DIN04-127: Recognition trainer – discontinuation and safety and environmental aspects

DIN 2011DIN04-126: Declaration of obsolescence Leyland DAF 4T UBRE

DIN 2011DIN04-125: Declaration of obsolescence Leyland DAF 4T tyre handler

DIN 2011DIN04-124: Declaration of obsolescence – Bedford four-tonne light recovery

DIN 2011DIN04-123: Declaration of obsolescence – Bedford four-tonne variants

DIN 2011DIN04-122: Declaration of obsolescence – UBRE pumping equipment

DIN 2011DIN04-121: Declaration of obsolescence and details of replacement natures – rocket hand and electrically fired munitions

DIN 2011DIN04-120: Annual census message for all Maestro- and Merlin-managed assets

DIN 2011DIN04-119: Declaration of obsolescence – auxiliary power unit

DIN 2011DIN04-118: Introduction of digital imaging into service and inclusion into operational medical modules

DIN 2011DIN04-117: Equipment tables, scales and schedules

DIN 2011DIN04-116: Declaration of obsolete – JR9080-2500 concentration mixer

DIN 2011DIN03-029: Specialist engineer support – tasking

DIN 2011DIN03-028: 2011 Defence explosive ordnance disposal policy

DIN 2011DIN01-192: Changes to the SSAFA-FH Forces Line (formerly known as the Confidential Support Line)

DIN 2011DIN01-191: Guidelines for managing non-standard working hours

DIN 2011DIN01-190: Manning priorities for the Naval Service

DIN 2011DIN01-189: Remembrance Day 2011 and The Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal

DIN 2011DIN01-188: Employment for wounded, injured and sick Service personnel

DIN 2011DIN01-187: Defence recovery placements for wounded, injured and sick Service personnel

DIN 2011DIN01-186: Royal Navy fitness test – revised instructions for the Rockport Walk

DIN 2011DIN01-185: Pension tax relief lifetime allowance – fixed protection notice

DIN 2011DIN01-184: Naval Service redundancy programme – appeals procedure

DIN 2011DIN01-183: MoD industrial 2011 pay award for grades whose terms and conditions are negotiated by the joint industrial pay committee

DIN 2011DIN01-182: MoD non-industrial 2011 pay award for grades represented by FDA, Prospect, PCS and ROA

DIN 2011DIN01-181: Pension tax relief annual allowance – introduction of scheme pays

DIN 2011DIN01-180: Winter sports travel

DIN 2011DIN01-179: Planning for retirement

DIN 2011DIN01-178: Equality and diversity – combined defence Whitley council meeting minutes – April 6, 2011



REUNIONS

Royal Signals Security Section, Oslo:

Ian Foulkes would like to contact all Royal Signals personnel who served with the section in Oslo to organise a reunion. Contact him by telephone on 01225 467376 or 07939 127380 or by email at ian.foulkes@virgin.net

Royal Wessex Yeomanry: The Semper Fidelis Dinner Club's annual meeting takes place in Babbacombe, Devon over the weekend of October 28-30. All past SNCOs who served in or were attached to the Devon and Dorsets are welcome. For more details phone 01929 403899 or email WhippitLgn@aol.com

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JUST HOW OBSERVANT ARE YOU?

TEN details have been changed on this photograph of the Duke of Rothesay saluting the new colours of The Black Watch, 3rd Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland at Fort George.

Circle the differences in the left image and send the panel to **HOAY 839, Soldier,**

Ordnance Road, Aldershot, Hampshire GU11 2DU by October 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 December issue.

August's competition: First correct entry drawn at random and winner of the £100 was **Mr R Handley**, Leeds. Runners-up: **Linda Parry**, Enisleigh, Bath and **Stephen Smith**, MoD Corsham, Wiltshire.



Royal Devon Yeomanry: Reunion dinner in Barnstaple on October 29 for all past and present members of and attached ranks to the Artillery and D (RDY) Sqn, The Royal Wessex Yeomanry. For more information contact the PSAO, D Sqn by phone on 01271 345471 or email rwxy-dsqn-psao@mod.uk

South Notts Hussars: Reunion and remembrance dinner at the TA Centre, Hucknall Lane, Bulwell, Nottingham NG6 8AQ on November 12. Tickets are available from the association secretary at the TA Centre.

19 Regiment, Royal Artillery: Regimental reunion will be held in late 2011/early 2012. If you served with the Highland Gunners then write to Maj LeFeuvre at 19 Regt RA, Bhurtpore Bks, Tidworth, SP7 7AS or email welfare19@hotmail.co.uk

57 (Bhurtpore) Battery, 32 Regiment, Royal Artillery: Reunion dinner on January 21, 2012 at Larkhill. Medals parade will also be held on the same day. Ex-members, serving or retired, are welcome. Contact Steph Manning on 01980 845577 or email btty_57@live.co.uk asap in order to gauge levels of interest.

RAMC Reunited 2012: Reunion will take place at the Royal Court Hotel, Coventry on February 3, 2012. Open to all former members, whether National Service, Regular, TA or widow(er) of a former member. Contact Mick McCran by phoning 01522 879307 or emailing michael.mccran@ntlworld.com

The 2012 Aliwal Dinner: All members of 16th/5th Lancers, 17th/21st Lancers, Queen's Royal Lancers and attached units are welcome. Event takes place on February 4, 2012 at the Telford Golf and Country Club. For more details phone 07890 207391 or email wjcfive@yahoo.co.uk

Joint Helicopter Support Unit: Old and new faces are invited to celebrate the JHSU's 30th anniversary at the Victory Services Club in London on March 31, 2012. The event costs £40 and will run from 1730 to 2330. Visit www.jhsu.webs.com for further details.



ROADSHOWS

The Army Presentation Team wants to hear from members of the public who would like a personal invitation to its hi-tech roadshow. The event starts with a drinks reception, is followed by a presentation and questions and culminates with refreshments. There will be a range of military personnel on hand to answer any of your questions. Call 01276 417000 or email your name and address to apt.mod@btinternet.com with the event you are interested in attending.

October: 4, Exeter; 5, Bodmin; 6, Portland; 18, Coventry; 19, Wolverhampton; 20, Shrewsbury. **November:** Slough, Winchester, Aylesbury, Haverfordwest, Cardiff, Wrexham, Havering, Watford, Ealing (tbc). **December:** No presentations.



SEARCHLINE

A digital sound artist working on a major new installation about the lives, triumphs and tragedies of the British soldier for the Royal Armouries Museum in Leeds is looking for people to take part in the project. Anyone who has served in the Army and is interested can contact Amie Slavin on 01522 804657 or visit www.roughdiamondproductions.com/sound-artist for more information.

Former rifleman **23245448 Robert Adams** (born 1938 in London) is searching for friends that he served with in the KRRC in Tripoli during 1957. He is looking for Alan Day (from Forest Gate), Roy Pooley, John Pascal Craney, Vic Hawkes and "Scrannage" Cole. Contact his niece Victoria Perry at barryandvicky@hotmail.com

Mike O'Brien is looking for **Ian Jones** (married to Avril), who served with the Army Catering Corps attached to Royal Signals at Blandford Camp (1962-3); Royal Engineers in Osnabruck

(1963-7) and with the City of London Fusiliers (1967-71). Contact him at 12 Condron Road, Litherland, Liverpool L21 7NZ or by phone on 0151 474 4759.

The Royal Russell School is trying to locate British soldiers who served in **Italy during the Second World War**. The school has saved a wooden table which served as a portable altar during the whole of the campaign. A blessing ceremony is being organised and veterans are encouraged to attend. For more information write to Michael Lyons at 46 Chertsey Crescent, New Addington, Croydon, Surrey CR0 0DA.

A researcher is looking for relatives of soldiers who served in **7th Battalion, The Hampshire Regiment** between 1939 and 1946, including those who may have married while the unit was billeted in Birchington, Deal and Bexhill (Cooden) between 1942 and 1944, as well as anyone in the Bournemouth area, the battalion's pre-war recruiting patch. Contact Ian Taylor on 02380 694771 or email ian.p.b.taylor@btinternet.com

Annika Hofmann is trying to locate her grandfather soldier **George Matthews**, a Londoner who was stationed in Schleswig, Germany in 1945-1947. George met her grandmother Christa Schwerm, who lived near the Stadtfeld and later in Husumer Strasse, Schleswig. Her mother was born on August 29, 1946. Contact Annika by email at Annika@kiga-english-kids.de or write to Gerhardstr.41, 24105 Kiel, Germany.

Umar Ishaq is trying to locate an officer called **Rodwick Goldsworthy** who served with his father in India from 1941 to 1947. Umar's father retired as a lieutenant colonel and moved to Pakistan. Mr Goldsworthy's wife's name was Elizabeth and their eldest son was named Andrew. Last known address was Houghton House, Playden, Rye, Sussex. Contact Umar via email at umar.ishaq@gmail.com

Mr A Bernard is trying to trace the family of **6979215 Robert Jackson** (born 1917, in County Antrim) who served with the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers before transferring to the Royal Fusiliers from 1940. Contact Mr Bernard by email at findingroots@yahoo.co.uk

WEB WATCH

www.soldiermagazine.co.uk



www.facebook.com/soldiermagazine



www.twitter.com/soldiermagazine

CLOTHING AND KIT

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SERVICES AND BOOKS

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Picture: Terry Seward

Not part of decision-making: Minister for Defence Personnel, Welfare and Veterans, Andrew Robathan, speaking at September's MoD Welfare Conference

It's time our ministers told us more

LAST month's Welfare Conference at the MoD was an interesting event, even for an old hand like me.

There is always something new to learn, a different viewpoint to hear and someone else's sad story to make you realise how lucky you are.

It was therefore a real shame that the Minister for Defence Personnel, Welfare and Veterans could not stay for the whole day, but popped in at the beginning to welcome us all to Main Building and at the end to make sure that we left.

To his credit, Andrew Robathan did open up the floor for questions. While disappointingly few members of the audience were keen to test the minister (perhaps feeling that his attendance through the day would have been a better reflection of his commitment to the subject matter), I asked about investment in rebasing.

In summary, the politician said he had not been part of the decision-making but was sure there was money somewhere for this.

I also asked about engagement with local authorities to ensure that communities can cope with the influx of Forces families.

Again in summary, someone's doing it, somewhere, but not him. Disappointing but unsurprising for a political response.

The conference reminded me of the huge range of needs that the welfare system has to address – even more so in these times of economic challenges.

One parent pointed out that she recognised little of the picture painted of family life in the military.

While her son had been safe in his forward operating base, he probably felt that she didn't need to know much about what the care network could offer her.

But as soon as he was injured, she needed to know everything and with so much else to take in, it's no wonder that parents very often feel let down and out of the loop.

Communication is the key here – the ability to pass on information effectively within the wider Forces family has still not been achieved.

And as a result of the financial pressure the MoD is under, there seems to be a reluctance to pursue this at any level other than locally.

But with the technological advances that have been made, surely it's not beyond the wit of the department to put something in place?

A colleague at the conference raised an interesting point, which I'm not sure the panel understood or addressed sufficiently.

The point was this. The Military Covenant states that: "The Armed Forces will always need to evolve to meet the challenges they face. That will inevitably lead, from time to time, to turbulence and uncertainty in the lives of serving personnel and their families. Such changes should be managed in a way which treats individuals fairly and minimises uncertainty wherever possible."

So why are ministers and some elements of the MoD subjecting Servicemen and women and their families to unbearable and

some might say avoidable uncertainty?

The first tranche of redundancies on September 1 left hundreds of people wondering what the future would hold for them. Thousands of others, spared in this round, were also left contemplating when their time might come.

As this issue went to press, the independent ministerial review into the Continuity of Education Allowance had still not been released, despite the team being given strict timelines and our being promised it.

And of course, rebasing. Although, as I said in my last column, we know a little of the "where", we still do not know much of the "who", "when" or

"how" – never mind the "how much". Further reviews of the Local Overseas Allowance are in the offing and PR12 is promising to put even more pressure on already-tight budgets.

Again, communication is so important. If ministers don't want the "prevalent dissatisfaction with the effect of Service life" in this year's Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey to get even worse, then we need to know more.

The information we get must be accessible, clear and comprehensive.

It has to answer some of those questions about what is happening to this great institution to which we belong, before we all start thinking it's a mad house and that it is time to leave. ■

'The ability to pass on information effectively has still not been achieved'

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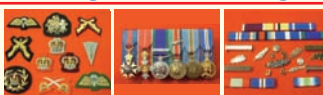
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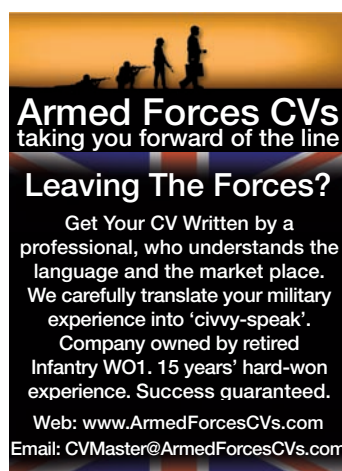
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War on film: Danfung Dennis' *Hell and Back Again* takes a wider view of the conflict in Helmand province

Home from Helmand

Dynamic director Danfung Dennis hopes to create a 'better understanding' of war

Interview: Joe Clapson

FILMS and video games often depict war as an all-action adventure where heroes defeat the enemy before moving on.

But in *Hell and Back Again*, photographer-turned-director Danfung Dennis takes an insightful snapshot of the full story of conflict, including troops' adjustment back to normal life.

One thing that sets this movie apart is its impressive high-definition footage from the front line in Afghanistan, where Dennis was embedded with US Marines from Echo Company, 2nd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment during the summer of 2009.

But alongside the up-close fighting in Helmand sits the emotional journey of Sgt Nathan Harris as he returns home to North Carolina with physical injuries and mental scars.

Speaking to *Soldier*, the director explained his reason for making a movie rather than sticking to his forte as a stills photographer.

"I had been working as a photojournalist for a number of years, covering conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan," said Dennis.

"After nearly ten years of war my pictures in print were no longer having an impact – the public had become numb to it and I wanted to create a better understanding."

Explaining how the film's plot developed, he added: "I didn't think it was going to be about just one man, but a relationship developed when a marine was killed and we ran out of water – Sgt Nathan Harris gave me his bottle."

"Then he was shot and I followed him back to North Carolina, so it became a story about him coming home."

The movie charts the marine's tough transition back into civilian life, where simple tasks such as trips to the supermarket and ordering fast food make him angry and emotional.

"War does not just stop when you get home," explained Dennis. "No one knows what soldiers like Sgt Harris have been through."

One particularly poignant scene shows the Serviceman meticulously teaching his wife how to use a handgun, while she seems nervous of even touching the weapon.

"His gun is what kept him safe over there and it's what keeps him feeling safe," said Dennis.

"I think it's touching that he's teaching his wife how to use it, but it's also quite dark and shows

that it's not easy for him to switch off."

One point that the first-time film-maker is trying to highlight is that for many Service personnel, coming home can be harder than actually operating in Afghanistan.

Flitting between the war-zone and domestic life, the movie succeeds in bringing that concept to the fore.

"Out there it's sleep, war, fight and soldiers become quite used to it and get very good at it," said Dennis.

"Then at home everything seems much more complex and without structure."

With *Hell and Back Again* the director aims to set the record straight about what military operations are really about.

"When I first went out to war I had representations of something quite adventurous and heroic – this has been drilled into the public's heads," he said.

"But the reality is quite different. There is tremendous pain and suffering."

With remarkable imagery and a compelling true story, this is an honest and revealing account of the wider experience of war. ■

● *Hell and Back Again* is out October 12

From time travelling in Thailand to giant animals fighting, *Soldier* checks out the latest DVD releases...

Assassin Rising out now

AN intriguing mix of Thai history, brutal battle scenes and time travel combine to make quite an unusual film. Recreating a period of civil war in what was then known as Siam, a group of villagers stand against an army that is hell-bent on destruction. The introduction of some time-travelling teenagers turns the tide for them. This movie is beautifully shot with stunning scenery and, while the acting is not terrible when compared to other titles in the same genre, there are some gaps in the plot. Clearly the suspension of belief is key here, but the performances are good enough and it helped to pass two hours in an entertaining way.



Cpl Jools Finch, MPGS

Blood Fighter out now

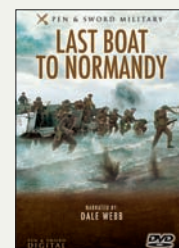
THE storyline centres around Khem, who as a boy saw his father killed in a gang fight. He uses muay thai on a daily basis to entertain the tourists who visit his uncle's bar, until a rival mob attempts to take it over and turn the place in to a boxing camp. The group is aided in its efforts by Khem's father's recently released murderer, which leads to an inevitable showdown with his son. With an avenger, a jester and a good-versus-evil storyline, this movie ticks all the martial arts boxes. The fight scenes are brutal and bloody but the film is let down by wooden acting. This is definitely worth watching if you are a fan of the genre.



Sgt Wallace Stephenson, Int Corps

Last Boat To Normandy out now

THIS is an hour-long documentary following a group of D-Day veterans on a trip to Normandy to revisit some familiar places. With direct accounts of that fateful day from the men who were there, it gives a detailed insight into what really happened and how it still lives with them. Emotional meetings between the veterans, old comrades and past adversaries is compelling viewing. The overwhelming feeling you are left with at the end is just how short an amount of time we have remaining with these men. They are all so modest about what they achieved but documenting their stories in this way will mean we can never forget their importance in history.



Cpl Jools Finch, MPGS



All angles of war: Danfung Dennis swapped still photography for moving imagery to capture stunning footage of troops in Afghanistan and back home

Mega Shark vs Crocosaurus out now

THIS was, without doubt, one of the worst movies I have ever had the misfortune to watch. With special effects that make the *Thunderbirds* look realistic and ropery actors, I am convinced this film has to be a strange joke. The plot revolves around the eponymous Crocosaurus wanting to protect her eggs from the Mega Shark who wants to eat them. The battle between the two is pretty weak, as is the part when the croc goes ashore in Miami and damages several familiar places. She even visits Sea World where Shamu doesn't stand a chance. Take my advice and spend the 90 minutes it takes to watch this film doing anything else.



Daniel Crowder, Greater Manchester ACF

Win... Kill The Irishman

AN explosive gangster flick, which follows the true story of Irish-American mobster Danny Greene (played by **Ray Stevenson**). *Kill The Irishman* takes viewers back to the 1970s, telling the engrossing tale of a man's violent rise, fall and struggle to find his place in a far from perfect world. With a supporting cast including **Val Kilmer** and **Vinnie Jones**, this is a real-life gangster film for fans of *Goodfellas*. *Soldier* has five copies of *Kill The Irishman* to give away. To have a chance of winning, tell us the name of the actor who plays the lead role. Answers on a postcard to the usual address or send an email to comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk



Closing date: October 31

Win... Spartacus: Gods of the Arena

THE House of Batiatus is on the rise, basking in the glow of its infamous champion Gannicus, whose skill with a sword is matched only by his thirst for fine women and wine. The jaw-dropping gladiatorial epic *Spartacus: Gods of the Arena* features lust, blood and sweat and is packed with more sexual tension and brutal battle sequences than any of the previous series. We have five copies of the DVD to give away to *Soldier* readers. Just tell us the name of the star who plays the lead role in this historical drama. Answers on a postcard to the usual address or send an email to comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk



Closing date: October 31



Triple threat: Marcus Fenix and Delta Squad face a new enemy species in *Gears of War 3*, which is out now on Xbox 360

Fenix's final foray

Seasoned action hero bids fond farewell in gripping finale to gaming franchise

Review: Richard Long

DEVELOPERS Epic Games have certainly saved the best for last in the immensely popular *Gears of War* series.

The third instalment in this hit franchise offers a spectacular finale to a trilogy that has brought us epic gun battles, deafening explosions and more than its fair share of blood and gore.

From the outset this title appears to have a striking resemblance to what has gone before as the battle-hardened Marcus Fenix and his illustrious colleagues from Delta Squad fight for survival on the planet Sera.

The usual array of brutal weaponry and overly muscular combat heroes are present, as is the compulsion to annihilate the Locust forces.

But there are a few surprises in store, namely the emergence of a new enemy known as The Lambent, a mutant strain of Delta Squad's old foe that sees our heroes embroiled in a three-way battle above ground and below.

However, there is more to *Gears of War 3* than simple bug swatting and the plot receives an interesting twist with news that Fenix's father

is alive and being held captive, prompting a desperate search and rescue mission.

Newcomers to the series should not be concerned about missing what has gone before as an introductory video offers a story refresher and the campaign opener perfectly sets the tone for what follows.

The action sequences are far more polished than their predecessors and the story is also improved, as is the witty dialogue and sarcastic banter between characters.

There are no real difficulties with the gameplay as this is an old-school control pad offering and, once the familiarisation is complete, the action quickly unfolds.

Combat settings vary from confined rooms that lead you straight to the enemy to vast expanses, which require a sound strategy to negotiate.

A simple point and shoot approach will be met with little success and you have to take cover and agonise over your next move to stay alive.

But these concealed positions allow Delta Squad to unleash an almighty arsenal of firepower that includes returning favourites such as the Mortar and Mulcher, as well as the massive Vulcan – an awesome mini-gun that can only be moved by two people.

Contemporary first-person shooters are often criticised for neglecting the campaign mode in favour of the ever-expanding online opportunities.

But such oversights have not been made with this title, which offers a storyline that stretches for more than ten hours and is thoroughly compelling and entertaining.

There are also three main multiplayer modes – versus, horde and beast.

The former offers a variety of possibilities in a five-a-side format including a team death match, king of the hill and capture the leader – where you hold an adversary hostage.

Horde is a straightforward mission to repel wave after wave of enemy attack and in beast you assume the role of Locust monsters in an attempt to kill your human rivals.

These options should certainly keep players entertained but publishers Microsoft have already planned ways of extending the title's shelf life.

The first of four downloadable add-ons will be released next month to provide hours of extra campaign and multiplayer mayhem.

As far as final chapters go, *Gears of War 3* is a spectacular ending to what has been a triumphant story and fully justifies its place among the games of the year. ■

From turbo-charged track thrills to an uprising of the undead, we check out the newest console releases...

Captain America for all formats

HISTORICALLY video game/movie tie-ins can be bad affairs that are thrown together at the last minute and bugged, so I approached this with caution. However, I am glad to report I was wrong as *Captain America* is quite an exciting romp.

The game is a simple offering that involves rolling through areas, solving light puzzles and smashing ten bells out of whatever is in your way. The combat sequences are fluid and a "bullet time" feature allows you to slow the action down during a triumphant finishing move. Overall, this is a good effort that is entertaining in the short-term, but lacks any replay value.

Sgt Mike O'Neill, RLC



Driver San Francisco for all formats

WHO could forget the garage section of the original *Driver*? This was a ground-breaking game, whereas *Driver 3* was just soul-destroying and awful. *Driver San Francisco* has recaptured the magic of the original and makes it a joy to play. The often twitchy running-around sections have been cut to leave a pure motoring experience and the game feels right with more than 200 licensed vehicles, from HGVs to Aston Martins. The dialogue and plot are good, with plenty of humour throughout, and the crowning achievement is the chance to recreate some of the most famous chase scenes in movie history. It's the best driving game I have.

Lt Neil Dickie, 105 Regt RA (V)



Resistance 3 for PS3

THIS title has the usual ingredients of any first-person shooter – a fanciful storyline depicting the end of humanity, a pleasant selection of weapons, a weird and wonderful cast of enemies, vast environments and fantastic gameplay. The story sees the US being invaded by the Chrimera Army with the central character Joe Capelli trying desperately to defend his home. The gameplay is easy to pick up and allows newcomers to learn the basics while advancing quickly. Thankfully, this is accomplished without dumbing down the action. The multiplayer options will also keep you glued to what is a great game.

Bdr Ryan Lewis, 7 Para RHA





Grandstand finish: Epic Games have brought the *Gears of War* trilogy to a spectacular end in what is the most enthralling and entertaining title in the series

Summer Challenge for Xbox and PS3

THE sporting bonanza that is the *Summer Challenge* athletics tournament is littered with good and bad points. This game boasts brilliant graphics and sound and is best tackled in multiplayer mode as it can become a little tedious if competing alone. This will appeal to young families wanting to square-off against each other and with skill levels ranging from beginner to advanced there is no shortage of fun. The events and teams have some limitations and the controls are quite awkward to master. But this is a brilliant promotion for the 2012 Olympics and creates awareness of the many sports scheduled for the London Games.

Cpl Neil Holbourn, R Signals



Rise of Nightmares for Xbox 360 Kinect

IF bludgeoning the walking dead is your thing, then *Rise of Nightmares* is definitely worth considering. Playing as Josh – the victim of a derailed train in the Romanian countryside – you have to fight through hordes of zombies. The movements needed to perform basic tasks take some getting used to but the limited design compensates for the poor control as simple rooms create different scenes to attack more victims. Weapons such as blades, pipes and chainsaws provide ample opportunities for bloodletting and with good graphics and fun interaction this title is very addictive.

Sgt Steve Hambling, AGC (SPS)



Deus Ex Human Revolution all formats

THE year is 2027 and you are Adam Jensen, a cyborg and full-time security chief at Sarif Industries. The basic story is some bad men are doing bad things and you need to expose them. This is both a great role-playing game and first-person shooter combined. *Deus Ex Human Revolution* is all about tactics and you cannot rely on pure firepower to get you through the objectives. There are plenty of levels and side missions to complete, the graphics are amazing and you have great control over your character. The video story is a bit annoying and if you really want to get into this you need some serious time on your hands.

Sgt Rupert Frere, RLC





Mass appeal: The Band of The Parachute Regiment have brought the music of remembrance season to life in their new album, out now

Season's soundtrack

Regimental band capture the emotion of remembrance in stirring compilation

Interview: Richard Long

REMEMBRANCE season is rightly acknowledged as one of the most poignant and reflective periods on the ever-busy Armed Forces' calendar.

With this year's commemorations little over a month away, The Band of The Parachute Regiment has released an inspired new album that perfectly captures the sentiment and emotion of this most sacred occasion.

When Poppies Fall boasts a rousing selection of hymns and anthems that typify a service of remembrance and director of music Capt David Hammond (CAMUS) believes the record can play an important role in forthcoming ceremonies.

"There are a lot of requests for buglers and military groups to perform at these events, but there are fewer Army bands available," the officer told *Soldier*.

"People can use this album instead. Remembrance services are particularly important so we decided to record the pieces required for such ceremonies.

"We have got ingoing music, hymns and *The*

Last Post – it covers the whole range and I don't think it has been done before.

"I definitely believe there is a market for it. This is a poignant time of year and there is a demand for this music."

Hammond said selecting tracks for the compilation was a relatively straightforward process and insisted the record can be enjoyed by a mass audience, rather than restricting it to military circles.

"Hymns such as *Abide With Me* are obvious tracks to put on the album, while *Nimrod* is a no-brainer really," he added.

"Anyone can buy this and use it without having an affiliation to The Parachute Regiment.

"We recorded this alongside another album and in between that we deployed on Op Herrick 13.

"But since coming back we have had a real focus on promoting the CD ahead of Remembrance Sunday."

When Poppies Fall has added significance for Musn Kate Whittaker (CAMUS), whose brother Pte Joe Whittaker (4 Para) was killed while on operations in Afghanistan.

She penned the track *Song For Joe* in memory of her late sibling and Hammond was determined to include it on the record.

"This was a song she had written before the album and I first heard it when she passed out from phase two training," the officer explained.

"I told her it had to be recorded. We reworked it slightly and she plays a solo on the piece as well. It is a fitting tribute."

Classic FM presenter John Brunning also contributed to the project by writing the title track, which was inspired by his observation of a single poppy growing in a field.

Tenor John Innes added the vocals to the piece and Hammond was delighted to showcase his considerable talents.

"He does a lot of concerts for Help for Heroes and is an up-and-coming singer with real promise," the officer said.

"He was very professional and we turned the song round pretty quickly. It is great these people were able to get involved and provide their services, it is greatly appreciated."

In such a busy period in their history, the band has succeeded in providing a stunning soundtrack to the remembrance season and will be donating proceeds from the album to The Parachute Regiment Charity.

When Poppies Fall can be purchased online now at www.airborneshop.com ■

From intelligent angst-rock to the unappealing contradictions of Cosmo, we check out the best of the rest...

The Red Album by Game

AFTER loading this offering into my car's CD player I was introduced to *The Red Album* by a surprising but welcome narrative from rap heavyweight **Dr Dre**. Following these brief words of wisdom, **Game** swiftly fires on all cylinders with *The City*, which features **Kendrik Lamar**, one of a number of guest vocalists who appear throughout. These are interspersed with further ramblings from Dre, who offers an insight into the story behind the star turn. Initially, I found this record to have an aggressive and in-your-face beat which, although I like rap music, I found a little hard to handle at times. But once it got going I couldn't get enough and found it very difficult to turn off.



SUT David Bradley, R Signals

In Waves by Trivium

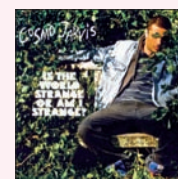
FLORIDA metal titans **Trivium** return with an ultra-tight and heavy album that boasts a new musical direction. With cracking tunes such as *Inception of the End*, *Built to Fall* and *Chaos Reigns* you'd be forgiven for thinking *In Waves* was the official soundtrack of the August riots – it certainly has the energy and anger, but thankfully features more intelligence. My only complaint is that the band have indulged too heavily in the fashion of belting vocals at the microphone. While it is well executed, personally speaking, if I require the sound of screaming in my lugs then I'll find an RSM to poke in the eye. In all, a cracking album that is best suited to a sweaty angry squat session in the gym. Buy it.



Capt Fraser Dowling, AGC (ETS)

Is the World Strange or am I Strange?

WHEN an artist is described as being "extraordinarily talented", it usually means one of two things – they are phenomenal or someone is being very generous with their compliments. Unfortunately this latest release by **Cosmo Jarvis** falls into the latter. For me *Is the World Strange or am I Strange?* was a self-answered question. Jarvis is, as **Brian Eno** suggested, a new kind of artist. His interests and ambitions appear to be never-ending, and his contradictions – which are observant yet naive, outspoken yet introspective – are a large part of his growing appeal. However, if this album is anything to go by, his appeal will be to a very small audience.



Rodge Tapply, ex-RE



Poignant paras: As well as featuring traditional anthems, *When Poppies Fall* includes an emotional tribute from Musn Kate Whittaker to her late brother

City of Vultures by Rise to Remain

THIS is an ambitious debut attempt from up-and-coming British metal band **Rise to Remain**. Although *City of Vultures* is musically accomplished with cracking production values, I couldn't help feeling that something was missing. The genre's calling card is a dark heavy verse followed by a catchy pop-like chorus and it was this catchiness that was notably lacking. Tracks worth a listen include *Power Through Fear* (if you can ignore the tuneless barked vocals that dominate the verses) and *Talking in Whispers*, which is blissfully free of shouting and stood out as the best track on the album. The overall verdict is that these rockers are not quite the finished article, but don't write them off yet.



Capt Fraser Dowling, AGC (ETS)

I'm With You by Red Hot Chilli Peppers

ROCKERS **Red Hot Chilli Peppers** return with their tenth album in what is proving to be a surprisingly elongated career. Guitarist **John Frusciante**, who made a triumphant return ahead of the hugely successful *Californication*, has departed once again and you can't help but feel that some of the driving force behind the band has gone with him. While *I'm With You* is far from disastrous, it lacks cutting edge. Single *The Adventures of Rain Dance Maggie* plods along gently without getting into gear and *Dance Dance Dance* offers a distinct laid-back groove. Ultimately this lacks the electricity of the good old days and is solid, rather than spectacular.



Richard Long, Soldier

Happy Soup by Baxter Dury

THIS is the third album from **Baxter Dury**, son of late 70s new wave punk **Ian Dury**. Baxter was always going to be likened to his father and they have the same deadpan, cockney vocals and down to earth approach. *Picnic on the Edge* has a definite Dury sound that is not too dissimilar to **The Blockheads'** *What a Waste*. Baxter's style is more passive and less feisty than his father's band. He relates semi-autobiographical tales of doomed holiday romances and seedy sex in Portugal and his lyrical playfulness and acute character ensures that the songs are anything but mundane, proving that he is different from his old man but none the less charming for it.



Ray Kalaker, ex-RE



Theatre hit: David Grindley's production of *Journey's End* is currently touring the UK. For dates and ticket details visit www.journeysendtheplay.com

Never-ending story

Distinguished theatre director adds new chapter to timeless tale of trench warfare

Interview: Joe Clapson

AN 83-YEAR-OLD story about the physical and emotional trauma of life in the trenches of the First World War continues to win plaudits despite having originally been rejected as a novel.

Journey's End, penned by Robert Cedric Sherriff and based on the writer's first-hand experiences of conflict, failed to attract a publisher on first offering but was eventually accepted as a work for the theatre in 1928.

The masterful dialogue in the play went on to receive critical acclaim in London's West End and on Broadway and this autumn director David Grindley has brought the show back to home territory for a tour of the UK.

Set in the trenches at Saint Quentin, France, towards the end of the Great War, *Journey's End* thrusts its audience into a cramped dugout where an infantry company waits for the enemy to attack.

The plot focuses on Capt Stanhope – an exceptional young British leader who has been broken by the reality of battle – and plays out over four days from March 18 to 21, 1918.

"That was the do-or-die moment for the Germans because they knew that the blockade was beginning to really affect their ability to feed soldiers and the nation," said Grindley.

"The key thing is that Capt Stanhope is only 21 years old and commands a company of 100 men with many of them older than him.

"Part of the experience of the play is the awareness that his unit is likely to face the massive German push – in the background is the understanding that hell is about to be unleashed on these men."

Of the play's chief protagonist, the director added: "He was a Jonny Wilkinson-type English hero when he left home, but has been severely affected by war and has to use alcohol to get him through the day. His emotions are shot to pieces but he is able to do his job perfectly.

"These days he would've been categorised as having post traumatic stress disorder."

Grindley, who directed Kevin Spacey in hit show *National Anthems*, has made very few changes to Sherriff's original script but his influence on casting and set design ensures the harsh nature of the Great War is laid bare for all to see.

"It would be quite easy in this play to not

portray the ages properly but I have been very clear that the audience must believe that the characters are in their late teens and early 20s.

"I really wanted to show the reality of the war so the set is incredibly small in order to show the cramped nature of the trenches."

The simple format of British soldiers sat talking in dirty uniforms and not necessarily firing their weapons is effective and hints at the mental strain put on Service personnel – past and present – when on operations.

The conversations portray perfectly the atmosphere on the front line, with discussions about bacon and the garden at home seemingly deemed as important as the battlefield strategy.

"Nothing much has changed in terms of what soldiers have to endure mentally and *Journey's End* remains a potent story," said Grindley.

"What is very powerful is how people behave while under stress and it struck me when I read it aged 19 that I was the same age as those who had served."

The act of young soldiers putting their lives on the line to protect their country inspired Sherriff to pen a wonderful piece of prose and Grindley's production is a befitting salute to a story that continues to move and entertain. ■

From Middle Eastern unrest to a Helmand history lesson, a flick through this month's literary releases...

The Arab-Israeli Wars by Chaim Herzog

CHAIM Herzog was the sixth president of Israel, a major general in the Israeli Army and the country's ambassador to the United Nations and was therefore exceptionally well placed to construct the earlier editions of this recently revised masterpiece.

Flowing seamlessly from the strategic to tactical level, the detail covered is impressive. But although comprehensive, this title is not a chore to read. The many detailed maps and images linking the text to operational manoeuvres are exceptionally complementary. Each war covered receives its own summary making every chapter an excellent stand-alone reference if required.

Capt Jim Vincent, RLC



The Fame of the Name by JP Cross

THIS historical novel is quite a tough read, weaving fictional characters and storylines against the backdrop of the British Army's involvement in Afghanistan and India during the 19th Century through to the end of the Second World War. *The Fame of the Name* will require some perseverance from readers due to confusion creeping in as a consequence of the array of names, places and time periods featured. That said, this book provides a fascinating insight into the "hill men of Nepal" and should be a must read for anybody interested in the history of the country and the background of Gurkhas.

Sgt Wallace Stephenson, Int Corps



War Correspondent by Jean Hood

IF you've ever wondered how war is reported from the battlefield, this book – packed full of dispatches, iconic images and daring stories – is well worth a read. The title documents the media's struggle against censorship and the challenges correspondents face in maintaining lines of communication and operating in extreme conditions, often braving the same dangers as front-line soldiers. **Jean Hood's** offering discusses the evolution of war reporting and the impact of technological advances over the last 150 years. The title also features profiles of well-known journalists such as Robert Capa, Larry Burrows and Kate Adie.

Mike Weston, Soldier





Young gun: James Norton assumes the role of troubled commander Capt Stanhope in the current production of R C Sherriff's award-winning play *Picture: Geraint Lewis*

Mrs Mahoney's Secret War

SET against the backdrop of bombing raids in Hamburg during the Second World War, this offering from **Gretel Mahoney** and **Claudia Strachan** chronicles how one courageous young German woman waged her own covert campaign against the Nazis. Gretel Wachtel, rebellious by nature and with a deep hatred for Hitler and his regime, embarked on a mission to aid the resistance in any small way she could. By virtue of its chief protagonist, the title offers a different perspective on the conflict from the hundreds of other historical accounts available. A light and easy read, this insightful book comes highly recommended.



Tracey Phillips, Army wife

Vortex of Conflict by Dan Caldwell

STARTING with a detailed background of the key players and moving to the decisions taken by the Bush administration, this analysis of US foreign policy is both interesting and a little worrying. The reasons for the military campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan are laid out comprehensively and are about as close to the truth as we are likely to get. Writing about contemporary matters carries the risk that by the time of publishing your book is out of date. Sadly this is the case here – the death of Osama Bin Laden and the Arab Spring will have undoubtedly changed some of the conclusions drawn by the author.



Capt Douglas Searle, RLC

On Afghanistan's Plains by Jules Stewart

BOASTING a foreword by Gen Sir David Richards, this title charts the three disastrous wars that Britain embarked upon in Afghanistan between 1839 and 1919. Written with an almost mocking tone throughout, the book highlights the selfish decisions made by the senior politicians and military leaders of the time while comparing them to the current situation in the region. **Jules Stewart** has used extracts from people who openly opposed the use of the British military to control the politics of the country. Overall a very interesting read that highlights how some lessons should never be forgotten.



Lt Neil Dickie, 105 Regt RA (V)



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SOLDIERSPORT

Picture: Graeme Main



GREEN MACHINE: ARMY GOLFERS
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“2008 WAS A MAGNIFICENT OCCASION, IT WAS A SPECIAL MOMENT TO STEP ASIDE AND LET THE SERVICE PLAYERS LEAD US ON TO THE PITCH”
– FORMER ENGLAND STAR WILL GREENWOOD (ABOVE)

North and south collide

Hemispheres' elite head to Twickenham in united show of respect for Armed Forces

Report: Richard Long
Pictures: Graeme Main

WHEN 52,000 people packed Twickenham Stadium for the inaugural Help for Heroes match in 2008, the sport of Rugby Union ploughed more than £1 million into the charity's coffers.

The contest was initially conceived as a one-off fixture but with the day proving to be an unprecedented success, a repeat performance on the hallowed turf is now in the pipeline.

England World Cup winners Lawrence Dallaglio (pictured right) and Jason Leonard will take centre stage as they lead a Northern Hemisphere XV in a highly-charged encounter with their rivals from down under.

Welsh legend Ieuan Evans completes the management team but the trio face a stern test of their credentials in the shape of former Australian fly half Michael Lynagh and ex-All Black Sean Fitzpatrick, who will take command of the Southern Hemisphere outfit.

Both teams will boast of a mix of established stars, up-and-coming talent and Service players in what promises to be a day to remember on December 3.

"I was amazed at the level of support and the atmosphere created in 2008, I was so proud to be part of that," Leonard explained.

"That is the reason why I am involved again. This is a fantastic charity that works so hard for our Servicemen and women. Nobody really knew what would come from that first game; it was such a last-minute affair.

"This time round we have a very long lead-in period and we are determined to create a great day."

Leonard could not give details about the exact make-up of his squad but did reveal that England's World Cup winning captain and

current national coach Martin Johnson has been approached.

The former prop said negotiations with a number of star names are already under way and he told *Soldier* that every effort will be made to include a healthy mix of Forces athletes.

He added: "We are looking to build a team of young players and big stars with Servicemen dovetailed in between.

"The Army has some good players with a strong Fijian core and I'm sure both sides will be interested in them.

"We want to create two teams that have very high quality as it is pointless watching a one-sided game.

"It would be unfair to have a runaway

winner, the last match was great because it went backwards and forwards throughout."

One player to already pledge his allegiance to the

cause is fellow World Cup winner Will Greenwood, who also starred in the 2008 encounter.

Although now retired from the professional set-up, he still competes in veterans' games and is determined to build on the success of the last match.

"2008 was a magnificent occasion," he recalled. "It was a special moment to step aside and let the Service players lead us on to the pitch.

"It is their day and is about us letting them know that what they do really matters. It is an opportunity to make sure youngsters grow up understanding the tremendous sacrifices members of our Armed Forces make."

But the Help For Heroes cause is not limited to the game's UK stars.

With troops from Australia and New Zealand currently deployed on operations in Afghanistan the sense of occasion will be just as strong in the opposition dug out.

"Some of the money raised will be used to help and support injured Servicemen and women back home," Lynagh said. "This is a chance for us to use our notoriety for a very real cause.

"I don't think getting Servicemen to play will be a problem, they will all put their hands up. Marquee names as an attraction is the key thing, those we have contacted love the idea but we just have to wait for a while."

Fitzpatrick added: "The Armed Forces are very much engrained in the people of New Zealand and Australia so when I was asked to get involved I saw it as a great opportunity.

"I am sure we can get the support of players from the Southern Hemisphere, they will love to be part of this."

An early booking offer for personnel can be found at www.codestorm.co.uk or by calling 02392 313899.

Tickets are also available by logging on to www.ticketmaster.co.uk ■



Help for Heroes challenge match in numbers

55

ENGLAND CAPS WON BY WILL GREENWOOD IN A SEVEN-YEAR INTERNATIONAL CAREER THAT INCLUDED WORLD CUP GLORY

1.4

THE TOTAL IN MILLIONS RAISED AT THE CHARITY'S FIRST MATCH IN 2008, WHICH ATTRACTED A CROWD OF 52,000 SPECTATORS

5

APPEARANCES BY PROP JASON LEONARD, THE WORLD'S MOST CAPPED FORWARD, FOR THE BRITISH AND IRISH LIONS TEAM



Driving force: Watford coach Tony Loughlan ensures the Army women are ready for the new season during a fitness session at the club's training ground

Hornets' heroes offer helping hand

Report: Richard Long
Pictures: Graeme Main

CHAMPIONSHIP outfit Watford have given the Army's women footballers an early season advantage by hosting an intensive training session under the scrutiny of their expert coaches.

The players travelled to the club's base at London Colney, where they were given first-hand experience of the standards required within the professional game.

After watching the Hornets' top stars work on their attacking play and close control in a small-sided game, the women took to the turf for some fitness drills and shooting practise with assistant manager Ian Woan and colleague Tony Loughlan.

Goalkeeping coach Alec Chamberlain tested the Service stoppers on their

skills between the posts before the day ended with a series of short matches.

"It was absolutely fantastic," head coach Capt Sandra Hodgson (RLC) told *SoldierSport*.

"The staff at Watford were superb, they gave us a real insight into life in the Football League.

"When our girls turned up for the Army trials week they had no idea they would be training at a Championship club, speaking to first-team players and working with top coaches.

"We are always looking at ways to make our set-up more professional. We sent out emails to a number of clubs to see if we could come along and Watford welcomed us with open arms. They have been brilliant."

The session formed part of the team's trials ahead of the new season and the squad also faced Oxford Ladies in a friendly match at Aldershot.

"Some of these girls will not be selected this time round but they will go away saying 'I want to be part of that next year'," Hodgson added.

"I have been very impressed so far. We have lost a lot of our senior players to operational commitments and around two thirds of this group are new faces to me.

"They all play for their corps sides but they are now starting to come through at senior level.

"Our aim for this season is to retain our Inter-Services title. We still have a few of the older players and with the fresh talent coming through I am sure we can achieve that."

The women start their Southern Counties campaign against Sussex on December 1.

They face the Royal Air Force in the Inter-Services on February 23 and play the Royal Navy on March 14. ■



Close control: Hornets' assistant manager Ian Woan puts the Army women through their paces



On the ball: The Reds players practise their skills on Watford's London Colney training pitch



Expert advice: Coach Alec Chamberlain shows goalkeeper Gnr Roxy Roberts (RA) how it's done

THE TEAM BEHIND THE TEAM

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*Department of Sport & Exercise Science, University of Chichester, 2010.

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SPORT SHORTS

■ **ARMY** rowing sensation Lt Heather Stanning (32 Regt, RA) saw her hopes of securing gold at the World Championships dashed by the narrowest of margins.

The officer, who was competing alongside Helen Glover in the women's pair, looked on course for a stunning victory in Slovenia only to be beaten on the line by a New Zealand crew that won by just eight hundredths of a second.

The duo lost to the same team in the 2010 final but proved they are strong contenders for Olympic success by dominating the race for long periods.

"I knew the Kiwis would come back on us but I didn't know how close it was at the end," Stanning said.

"I was too focused on my own boat to know how near we were to the New Zealand crew because it was quite rough out there. It is obviously not the result we wanted."

Glover added: "We are determined to be at the top of the podium next year."

■ **THE** Army angling team tested itself against some of the best sides in the country at the National Division One Championships.

New Junction Canal, near Doncaster, hosted the event which welcomed a strong field of 59 teams, each boasting ten members.

The Service stars had useful practise at the venue during the inter-corps competition earlier in the season but faced a tough challenge on the water's edge.

WO1 Kev East found himself next to England international Steve Hemingray, who he proceeded to beat, while Sgt Ben Bentley locked horns with Alan Scotthorne, a former world team championship winner.

Captain WO1 Dave Burns produced the highest weight of all the anglers as the Army finished 25th, a result that saw them beat the Royal Air Force.

■ **TICKETS** are now on sale for a gala night of boxing aimed at raising money for The Invicta Foundation.

Purfleet's Circus Tavern will host the event on December 3, which will feature bouts from Army regimental teams along with appearances by a host of fighters including Julius Francis, Alan Minter and Roberto Duran.

Proceeds from the evening will help an ongoing project to build accommodation for wounded personnel in Colchester.

Admission costs £35 per person, with table bookings also available.

For more information visit the website www.theinvictafoundation.org.uk

■ **MERRIST** Wood Golf Club has introduced an exclusive scheme for military personnel that offers a 40 per cent discount on membership and green fees.

Reductions are also available on golf days and functions at the site.

For more information on the offer at the Surrey-based club call 01483 238890.



Breaking free: LCpl Peceli Nacamavuto (RE) smashes his way through the Royal Air Force defence

Penalties punish league leaders

Report: Richard Long

Pictures: Cpl Andy Reddy, RLC

A DISASTROUS penalty count failed to prevent the Army from retaining their Inter-Services Rugby League crown during a testing tournament decider in Portsmouth.

Having recorded a thumping 47-14 win over the Royal Air Force in their opening fixture, the Reds were confident of securing their second scalp of the competition when they locked horns with the Royal Navy.

But a combination of ill-discipline and questionable refereeing saw the Service stars pushed on the back foot as they conceded a massive 23 penalties in the game.

A backs-to-the-wall defensive display helped the team earn a 12-12 draw – a result that saw them lift the Services trophy – but coach SSgt Sean Fanning (RAMC) was far from happy with the result.

"I am very disappointed, it felt like a loss," he told *SoldierSport*. "We went there with a strong team and there are no excuses not to win. It is a bitter pill for us to swallow."

"The Navy played out of their skin but we were massacred on the

penalty count. I do not like blaming referees but it was ridiculous.

"We have targeted our discipline levels all year.

"We gave away ten penalties in our opening match and we worked on that. We have reduced the count in every game and conceded just four when we played the RAF.

"But against the Navy we gave away 23. In the end we were lucky to get a draw as we did so much defending."

The Army ran in eight tries in their clash with the RAF, with dual code stars LCpl Peceli Nacamavuto (RE) and Spr Gus Qasevakatini (RE) among the scorers.

"The RAF came down with a better side compared to last season. We had one of our best-ever squads this year and to win so convincingly was very pleasing," Fanning said.

The coach also found time to praise Pte Danny Hunter (RAC), who excelled in his first Inter-Services campaign.

He said: "Danny was on the books of Hull Kingston Rovers. He has come in as a young lad

but is operating on another level. He is a superb talent."

The Army women retained their Inter-Services title with a

44-0 win against the RAF and a 36-14 victory over the Navy. ■



Reds' global goal

Report: Richard Long
Picture: Graeme Main

THE Army Rugby Union team will take a giant step into the unknown this month when they go head-to-head with some of the best sides in the military world.

After triumphantly reclaiming their Inter-Services title in May, the Reds have travelled to Australia in confident mood ahead of one of the biggest tournaments in their illustrious history.

The International Defence Rugby Competition will see 12 teams competing for global bragging rights in a sport that is currently basking in the World Cup limelight.

The Army face the Samoan Police and French Combined Services in a difficult pool stage ahead of a possible showdown with the Royal Navy in the quarter-finals – providing both teams qualify.

Coach Capt Andy Sanger (RE) has named a 30-man squad for the trip and is eagerly awaiting the prospect of competing in a tournament that is being staged for the very first time.

“We have had two training periods and a conditioning camp in August that went very well,” he told *SoldierSport*.

“The players are fully prepared and are looking forward to the challenge.

“It is a tough physical group. We are going there to win the competition, that is our goal and providing we perform to our potential it is achievable.

“But I’m sure New Zealand and Australia are saying the same thing.”

The event moves to New Zealand for the semi-finals and final, giving the Services an opportunity to play in the shadow of the main World Cup.

“I would think the Southern Hemisphere teams start as favourites as the competition is based in their countries,” Sanger said.

“But if we perform the way I know

we can we will compete and win matches. We can beat those teams.”

The coach will have to cope with the loss of star forward LCpl Apo Satala (Scots), who has retired from the sport, but welcomes back former skipper Capt Mark Lee (AGC (ALS)) after his absence last season.

“There are five or six players who are away on operations but we are not going to drag them back,” the officer added.

“Mark Lee is available again and he brings a lot of quality and gives us different options.

“It is a strong squad and I am happy with the players we have.”

The competition also sees Sgt Darrell Ball (RE) taking over the captaincy of the side.

The second row forward arrived home from theatre on rest and recuperation to play in this year’s Twickenham showdown and with his tour now complete is delighted to return to a new role within the team.

“Without doubt this is the biggest achievement of my rugby career,” Ball, pictured right, explained.

“I skippered London Scottish last season which was a great honour, but to lead an Army representative side is such a privilege.

“I do not want to say my goal is to win the tournament as it is going to be a difficult challenge. We are confident in our ability but we must perform out on the pitch.

“The French are going to be a physical outfit and I expect Samoa will be similar. I did not play too much last year but the nucleus of our side is the same, there is not much difference.”

The Army play the Samoan Police on October 1 and the French Combined Services on October 5.

A daily blog and full results from the competition can be found online at www.armyrugbyunion.org.uk ■

‘We are confident in our ability but we must perform out on the pitch’



TRY THREAT

AFTER running in seven tries against the Royal Logistic Corps, the Army appear to have an abundance of attacking options. Lt Dave Duffus (1 Scots, right) was at the heart of some of the Reds’ best offensive moves but he faces strong competition for a starting position in an exciting backs division



WINNING START

THE Reds head to Australia with momentum on their side. As part of their preparations for the tournament they defeated a strong Crawshays side 34-0 in Cardiff before beating the Royal Logistic Corps 52-17, with Sgt Ben Hughes (RE) appearing as a second-half substitute



HALF CHANCES

A 30-man squad has been named for the International Defence Rugby Competition and players will face a fierce battle for a place in the team. Sgt Gareth Slade-Jones (RAPTC, right) will go head-to-head with Capt Ian Martin (3 Yorks) and Cpl Tom Chennell (REME) for the scrum half berth





Anthony accepts dream job

Interview: Richard Long

AFTER a 15-year coaching career that has seen him progress from squadron level to the full Army ranks, Sgt Martin Anthony (RLC, pictured right) has finally landed the top job in Service boxing.

But instead of being eased into the post gently he has hit the ground running with a rigorous training programme that will ensure his fighters reach peak condition for their return to the ring.

The Amateur Boxing Association novice championships are already looming on the horizon but Anthony's immediate attention is on the Royal Albert Hall, the venue for this month's clash between the Combined Services and American Armed Forces.

The proud Welshman is no stranger to the expectation that accompanies his new role and is determined to make the most of the opportunity.

"It was a fantastic achievement to box on the Army team, and to become a coach and assistant was a real privilege," he told *SoldierSport*.

"So to be named head coach was a huge honour, it is my dream job.

"I have been coaching since 1996 and I have worked my way up. I am now stepping into the shoes of people like Mick Gannon and Chris Bessey.

"We have a new team. We have four

coaches who all have different ideas. There are a few people missing due to course commitments and some of the novices have gone back to work, but the door is always open to them.

"There is a lot of fresh talent coming through. There are still a few stragglers coming back and in a few weeks I should have 45 boxers on the team."

LCpl Martin Stead (RLC, pictured above) is one of a number of familiar faces returning and the top priority, as always, is to win the Combined Services championship, an event the Army has dominated for 28 years.

"I am quietly confident we can keep that run going with the lads we have available," Anthony said.

"There will be a lot of pressure, as there is every year, and I want to win that title by smashing our biggest rivals – the Royal Navy – in every contest.

"They are getting better every season so we will have to be on top of our game to secure victory.

"I also want to see our guys becoming national champions while pushing for more international vests.

"But the lads have got to perform in the ring first. Once they do that I can go to the selectors and tell them who is doing what. A lot of our fighters have

one foot in the door, they just need to get the other one in."

But transatlantic bragging rights are at stake ahead of these competitions and the Army's top fighters are

now completing their preparations for the American showdown on October 7.

Top promoter Frank Warren has organised the event in association with Tickets for Troops and the encounter will be the first time boxing has been staged at the historic Royal Albert Hall in more than a decade.

"It is a great opportunity for our guys," Anthony explained. "Not only will our seniors be in action, but some novices will be involved too.

"To box in an event that will be broadcast live on television will give them an extra lift.

"It is about giving something back to the troops. We are in the fortunate position of being here in tracksuits but some of our more experienced athletes have been away to Iraq and Afghanistan, they know what it is like.

"This will be a huge morale boost for the guys in Helmand province and we will be doing our best to win."

Personnel can apply for free entry via www.ticketsfortroops.org.uk ■





Master stroke: Pte Kimberley Woodward (AGC (SPS)) plays her way to safety on her Inter-Services debut on the challenging Berkshire Golf Club course

Golfers putt rivals to the sword

Report: Richard Long
Pictures: Graeme Main

THE lush surroundings of the Berkshire Golf Club proved to be a happy hunting ground for Army players, who celebrated a superb double in this year's Inter-Services.

In a tense opening match, the women's team fought their way to a 6½-5½ victory over the Royal Navy before dominating the greens in their clash with the Royal Air Force, which they won by a 7½-4½ scoreline.

Their unbeaten run ensured they celebrated their first tournament triumph in four years and captain Lt Col Ishbel Thomson (AGC (SPS)) was delighted with the outcome.

"We have not won this trophy since 2007 so it is a fantastic achievement," she told *SoldierSport*.

"This is the culmination of a lot of hard work over the past few years.

"We have built a squad with strength in depth and we have worked tirelessly to develop everything about our golf.

"This group has tremendous team spirit and we were determined to win."

Despite toasting Inter-Services glory, women's golf is in desperate need of new blood.

LCpl Becky Mercer (AGC (SPS)) has been playing since the age of 14 and has had a number of opportunities to progress during her Army career.

"This is my third Inter-Services

tournament," the 23-year-old said.

"It has been really good and we enjoy playing together as a team, but we need more youngsters coming through.

"It is a difficult sport and every day is different. When you play well you want to go again and even if you have a bad round you keep coming back for more."

Mercer has also represented the Combined Services team and was part of a 16-strong party that toured South Africa earlier this year.

She introduced colleague Pte



Kimberley Woodward (AGC (SPS)) to the Army set-up and the former Lancashire county player was delighted to accept the challenge.

"The Army is big on sport and golf is something I am interested in and am pretty good at," she told *SoldierSport*. "You can go and play on your own but it is also a massive team event. If your regiment is supportive, there is so much you can do and there are lots of events to play in."

The Army men followed suit with strong showings against the RAF and Navy to retain their title from 2010.

After an exciting opening foursomes competition, the Service stars found themselves tied with the airmen on two-and-a-half points.

But they dominated the singles matches to earn an 8½-6½ victory.

The success continued against the Senior Service as the team raced to a 4-1 lead in the foursomes.

Army champion Cpl Ben Churchill (RE) led the charge in the singles and there were also wins for Maj Rick Smart (AAC), in his last Inter-Services, and debutant Spr Richard Over (RE) as the squad recorded a 9½-5½ triumph.

The women's team offers coaching weekends throughout the season and new players are welcome.

For more information on taking part contact manager Diane Walters on 01252 348582. ■



World woes: Tpr Emmanuel Nartey (1 RTR, left) suffered sudden death elimination while injury hampered Sgt Abbas Salihu's (RLC, right) progress in Paris

French foray fails to deliver medal success

Report: Richard Long
Picture: Graeme Main

ARMY judo players earned vital Olympic qualifying points at last month's World Championships in Paris – despite missing out in their quest for medals.

After receiving a bye in the first round, Tpr Emmanuel Nartey (1 RTR) stunned former European champion Volodymyr Soroka with a knock-out victory in his opening contest.

The 73kg player met Belgian Dirk Van Tichelt in the third round and both men failed to score in what proved to be a close encounter. The match was decided by sudden death, during which Nartey lost via an unlucky penalty.

Speaking afterwards, he said: "I was

hoping for a medal but unfortunately I did not get one. But I am happy with my performance and I am looking forward to the remaining events at the end of the year."

LCpl Victor Ahiavor (1 RRF) suffered a narrow defeat to Rowsen Amandurdyew of Turkmenistan in the first round but has vowed to come back stronger at this month's British World Cup event.

"This was not the result I was expecting," he added. "However, I will stay positive and will keep training hard to improve my strength, conditioning and tactics."

Sgt Abbas Salihu (RLC) also received an early bye and made a strong start in his second-round clash before suffering a rib injury that added to his downfall.

The Army judo team captain told *SoldierSport*: "I now have to concentrate hard and recover from this injury. I will fight at some domestic tournaments and continue to compete at the remaining Olympic qualifying events."

Maj Simon Childs (Rifles), the Service's elite players' manager, said the World Championships proved to be especially tough this year, with each country allowed to enter two competitors per weight category.

He added: "Our soldiers can take something positive away from this.

"They must remain focused and continue to train hard in order to realise their full potential. We are on track for at least one of them to qualify for the Olympic Games next summer and that would be a fantastic achievement." ■

SPORT SHORTS



■ **YOUNG** soldiers from the Army Technical Foundation College Winchester have gone head-to-head in a keenly contested inter-squadron boxing match.

The athletes underwent a progressive six-week training programme ahead of the competition, which saw JS Ross Walker (REME) named best boxer.

An eagerly-awaited middleweight showdown between JS Jordan Boyce (REME) and JS Connor Garner (RE) decided the overall team crown, with the latter securing victory for B Squadron.



■ **SAILORS** from 2nd Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers endured a challenging time at sea in an incident-packed Fastnet Race.

After a promising start the team's jib ripped as they passed the iconic Needles off the Isle of Wight and they suffered further delays when a second sail was damaged by gusting winds.

Despite the setbacks, the 2 RRF crew finished third in the Inter-Services cup competition and were 204th in an overall field of 314 boats.



■ **NEWBURY** Racecourse is offering military personnel and Royal British Legion members free entry to its premier enclosure for the Armed Forces race day on October 22.

The event also marks the launch of the Berkshire Poppy Appeal and features seven races, including two group three contests, as well as a performance from the Royal Navy's parachute display team.

For more information on the Services race day offer call 01635 40015 or log on to www.newbury-racecourse.co.uk

England stars excel on court

Report: Richard Long
Picture: Graeme Main

ARMY netballers faced a stern test of their credentials on court when they faced the might of the England team in a training match at Aldershot.

The national side was based at the town's Garrison Sports Centre to prepare for their upcoming tour of New Zealand and Australia and challenged the Service squad in a bid to work on their gameplay, tactics

and endurance levels.

Despite suffering an inevitable defeat the Army players learnt a number of key lessons during the session and have highlighted areas for improvement ahead of next year's Inter-Services campaign.

"It was brilliant for us to see the level they play at," team captain Maj Laura White (REME) told *SoldierSport*.

"While the clock was not running it was clear they won the match. Their shooting statistics were amazing – they were over 90 per cent – whereas we were not so good.

"Our aim was to score in every quarter and that was achieved, with our highest score of seven coming in the opening period. That was quite

respectable given the standard of opposition we faced.

"They produced an awesome display of athleticism and if you weren't careful you found yourself watching, rather than concentrating on the game.

"This was a once in a lifetime opportunity for the team and there are not many Army sportsmen or women who can say they have played against their national side."

The Service netball season starts in earnest this month with the inter-unit and inter-corps competitions both being staged in Aldershot ahead of trials for the Army team.

Any new players interested in taking part should contact Maj White on 94393 6597 or email Laura.White267@mod.uk ■



final word



The Government wants Reservists to play a bigger role in the future British Army. We asked personnel from The London Regiment if they're up to the job.

INTERVIEWS: SARAH GOLDTHORPE
PICTURES: GRAEME MAIN



Capt Rob Price

The Territorial Army are up to this as individuals but the right support needs to be there for us. It's a big step up and Reservists need the whole package – including help for their families and other advice. The skill sets we have from our civilian jobs can help. I am a project manager and deployed on Op Herrick 11 as a staff officer, but ended up helping to deliver projects there.



W02 Lee Bland

I think this has been a long time coming. I have worked with Reservists from across the world and their countries seem to have learnt this lesson 15 years ago. The Territorial Army has felt under-valued for a long time. We are at the thin end of the wedge with funding but if those at the top think about this properly, we could come away with a force for the future.



Pte Jason Robertson

I'm not sure. I have worked with Regular soldiers and my opinion about this is 50/50 at the moment. The announcement is good for the Territorial Army; we are getting up to the same standard as full-time soldiers now and the sort of training we are doing is more intense. But with others being made redundant last month, I don't know whether I agree with this.



Pte Dan Willis

Obviously this is good for Reservists but it is still cuts at the end of the day. It's good to have more personnel in the Territorial Army but they shouldn't be losing Regulars; it's their full-time job so they are going to be better at it than us and I don't think we could fight anywhere with just part-time soldiers. The TA should be grown but not at the expense of the Regular Army.



Pte Steven Price-Brown

Without a doubt we are up to the job. A lot of my colleagues have proved themselves in theatre and a good soldier can be a Regular or a Reservist. This may seem like something new but it's not really; The London Regiment has a long history of integrated support. During Exercise Prairie Thunder 3 you forgot who was full-time or part-time by the end of it.



Cpl Herbert Sebukima

I think the Territorial Army soldier is more than able to step up to the mark but how will organisations take to their Reservist employees having to work more? Something has to give, and that's either going to be family or work. The Government has to find a way of incentivising employers so they think it's good to have people doing this. Terms of employment need to change.



Pte Senol Hussein

This is a good thing but it could be hard for the Service to get as many people as they need for such an increase. Not everyone wants this life; sometimes you are working seven days a week with your normal jobs as well. It won't be easy for the Government to get the number of personnel they need for this and people have the freedom to leave the Territorial Army just like that.



Maj Robert Brown

This is a good thing for Reservists but it does have its implications and the Government needs to be realistic. At the moment the Territorial Army is on the decline and instructors are being lost. If the MoD gets it right with these unfortunate redundancies, Reservists could benefit from instructors who are either leaving or being made redundant from the Regular Service.

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