

MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH ARMY

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• JUNE 2011

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SOLDIER



AT EASE

OP HERRICK VETERAN
TALKS OPENLY ABOUT
MENTAL ILLNESS

HELICOPTER HOSPITAL

OPERATIONS AT ALTITUDE





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Cover picture (left): LCpl James Dean (Gren Gds) encourages soldiers to speak up about mental illness Picture: Graeme Main

Background image: Nijmegen Company, Grenadier Guards at Wellington Barracks on the day of the Royal wedding – pages 26-27

Picture: Peter Gowling

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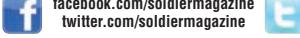
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"I want my money back. When you said the figure 'barked' I assumed you meant it was a dog's toy, not a plastic reminder of my old garrison sergeant major."

● Brand leaders – pages 51-53

Healthy outlook on troop taboo

TALKING about mental health problems is easier said than done. Those who have suffered are reluctant to discuss the topic for fear of an awkward reaction; those who haven't worry that their questions may offend.

So perhaps it is hardly surprising that an organisation renowned for its courageous and resilient personnel has an even bigger task at hand in tackling stigma around this issue.

However, it is reassuring to hear that the Army's health promotion team are taking up this challenge and, like the Servicemen and women currently deployed in Afghanistan (pages 39-45), they certainly do not seem to be shying away from their mission (page 33).

With the sustained challenges presented to our personnel in theatre, there has never been a greater need for British troops to be mentally agile.

There are certain aspects of the military mindset that make speaking up about an "invisible" or "emotional" illness seem difficult – particularly if someone has no idea why they have become unwell.

But I hope that on reading LCpl James Dean's story (pages 30-31), anyone suffering with symptoms of depression, anxiety, post traumatic stress or another psychological or emotional problem will find the strength to seek help.

As our cover star discovered, speaking to the chain of command can have surprising and comforting consequences.

Commanding officers are trained to understand mental health problems, and the notion that being unwell is a one-way ticket out of the Forces is wrong. Furthermore, there are a number of places where troops can turn for support (page 34).

To coin a phrase from a similar mental health campaign in the civilian world, "it's time to change". And isn't the British Army hearing the resonance of a phrase like that at present.

As we watch consequences of the Strategic Defence and Security Review take increasing shape, the Chief of the General Staff and his team are working hard to ensure that concerns across the Service community are being fed back to the top (pages 60-61).

Military leaders see that tough times come hand in hand with increasing debate among the ranks, and want to encourage and be involved in that discussion.

'Attitudes take time to change. I am delighted that LCpl Dean has started the ball rolling for mental health'

Changing attitudes are somewhat unavoidable in such an era of flux, but perhaps this is a by-product of circumstance we should be less cautious of and more ready to embrace.

Evolving attitudes in Sierra Leone, for example, have led to British troops in the International Military Assistance Training Team being greeted warmly by local

communities who are all too aware of the stability their presence has created (pages 47-49). This reaction seemed unfathomable a decade ago.

The Government's rebuilding of the military covenant (page 7) may not mark a dramatic shift in Britain's general feeling about our Army – troops have long had the support of their grateful countrymen and women – but Afghanistan does seem to have amplified recognition for the sacrifices made by personnel.

Attitudes take time to change. But I am delighted than LCpl Dean has started the ball rolling for mental health in this month's *Soldier*.

I can think of few campaigns more worthy of support. – **Sarah Goldthorpe, Editor** ■

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Picture: Mark Owens

Public and Forces personnel to be bonded by bill

THE moral ties between the nation, its government and the Armed Forces are to be cemented in law for the first time.

Defence Secretary Dr Liam Fox has announced plans to write the principles of the pact into an Armed Forces Bill, making clear that personnel, veterans and their families should not be disadvantaged because of the demands of serving.

The minister described the proposal as "a simple and timeless statement of the moral obligation that we owe".

While not creating any legal rights for troops, the covenant will set the tone for policies designed to improve the support available for the military community and hold the Government accountable for areas such as accommodation, healthcare and education.

In a statement to the House of Commons, Dr Fox revealed a package of measures to bolster state assistance for the Forces, which would be set out in a separate paper.

Council tax relief for personnel

on overseas operations will be increased from 25 to 50 per cent and a new grant scheme supporting joint projects between Service, veteran and community groups will be launched in July, backed by £30 million of funding over the next four years.

There will also be an extra £3 million to help aid state schools with large numbers of pupils from military families and a veterans' card introduced giving former Service personnel access to discounts and privileges.

Dr Fox announced that wounded troops with serious genital injuries would be guaranteed access to at least three rounds of IVF treatment.

Many of the measures stem from suggestions put forward by an independent taskforce led by military historian Prof Hew Strachan, which was tasked with developing ideas to help rebuild the covenant.

Further announcements regarding improvements to healthcare and housing for Forces families would be made before the summer, Dr Fox said.

The minister also revealed that discussions were under way to give the Service community better access to the property market; a study was looking at how to improve the supply of prosthetics to wounded personnel; and consideration was being given to how to ensure Guaranteed Income Payments from the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme were not required to pay for public sector social care.

The doubled Operational Allowance, pupil premiums for Service children, scholarships for bereaved families and improvements to mental healthcare were highlighted as examples of actions already taken to improve the lives of UK personnel.

Dr Fox concluded: "The obligation we owe to our Servicemen and women, set against the commitment and sacrifice which they make, is enormous.

"In the current financial climate we are not able to do as much to honour that obligation, nor to do it as quickly, as we would like. But we can make clear the road on which we are embarked."



Picture: Graeme Main

Farewell: Southern Iraq has "dramatically changed for the better" as a consequence of British soldiers' efforts in the region, according to Maj Gen John Lorimer

Troops told to take pride in Telic success

THE BRITISH military campaign in Iraq is now officially over after a mission to train homegrown sailors reached a successful conclusion.

UK combat forces withdrew from the country in July 2009 but the Royal Navy, supported by the British Army, continued to train the Iraqi Navy to defend its territorial waters and offshore oil infrastructure.

A total of 1,800 military personnel have been drilled on 50 different courses, including maritime, small arms, platform defence and maintenance training.

On completion of the operation Maj Gen John Lorimer, Chief of the Defence Staff's strategic communications officer, said the UK's Servicemen and women should be

proud of their achievements in the Gulf state.

He said: "Our legacy in Iraq is what all our



personnel have contributed towards over the last few years – we have built a successful and sustainable armed force.

"Security has fundamentally improved, particularly in southern Iraq which is a consequence of our actions. The social and economic development in the south has also dramatically changed for the better."

British forces have been working alongside US troops since 2003 to train and mentor Iraqi sailors at their main naval base in Umm Qasr.

"Training will now be handed over to the US but the Iraqis are already protecting their own oil and conducting patrols," said Maj Gen Lorimer (pictured). "Soldiers in the British Army need to feel good about themselves; over the last few years they have made a hell of a commitment."

Although Op Telic has officially finished, the UK will continue to support the Nato development mission in Iraq as the second-largest contributor, leading on officer training and education.

"We have still got people working in Baghdad in the embassy and Iraq will send officers to train in the UK, in particular at Sandhurst," the senior officer explained.

"The Gulf is a critical area for diplomatic trade and other reasons. You just have to look at the region in its entirety and see what's happened in the last four to five months to understand that security needs to be maintained."

Secretary of State for Defence Dr Liam Fox used the formal close down

of operations to reflect on the British contribution to Iraq since 2003.

Dr Fox said: "Thanks to the sacrifice, commitment and professionalism of thousands of Servicemen and women southern Iraq is an area transformed from the dangerous and oppressed place it was under the rule of Saddam Hussein and in the aftermath of his removal.

"I pay tribute to all those who served, particularly the 179 British personnel who made the ultimate sacrifice, fighting for security and stability in Iraq.

"We now look forward to a strong, long-term relationship with Iraq. The UK remains committed to a broad bilateral relationship with close links across a range of areas including the economy, commerce, defence, culture and education."

● ADDRESSING the subject of redundancies within the Army, Commander-in-Chief Land Forces Gen Sir Nick Parker has told personnel he is confident the right procedures have been put in place to reduce numbers.

"Nobody would choose this path, but everybody would expect us to keep the focus on operations while we do it and at the same time draw the Army down in a measured, organised and proper fashion," he said.

"I'm absolutely confident that we are treating people properly but I don't underestimate the pain and the upset that this will cause some."



Picture: Sgt Rupert Frere, RLC

Emerging talent: Gen Sir Nick Parker says international forces should remain in Helmand until Afghanistan's security forces can look after their own future

Transition key to British troop drawdown

THE threat to the UK from Afghanistan has reduced but British soldiers will not be withdrawn from theatre until the job is done, according to the Commander-in-Chief Land Forces.

In a message to personnel, Gen Sir Nick Parker explained that the military campaign in Helmand had filled a "vacuum" created when al-Qaeda were removed from the country, but warned of the risks of pulling international troops out too soon.

"We can only start to bring people home when we leave a secure and stable environment that is suitable for the Afghans to take forward," he said.

"If we leave too soon we will create another vacuum and that will be filled by bad people and we'll be back where we started."

Gen Parker added that rather than looking for the "perfect solution", it was the process of transitioning to Afghan governance that was critical.

"The threat to the UK from Afghanistan is much, much less than it was but we can't leave until the Afghans are in a position where they can look after their future," he said.

The comments from the former second-in-command of the International Security Assistance Force were echoed by his successor, Lt Gen

James Bucknall.

Speaking to the *Guardian*, the senior officer warned that the insurgency would not have ended by 2014, when Afghan forces are expected to take responsibility for security.

He said the date marked a waypoint rather than the end of the campaign, describing it as "a stage at which the coalition security posture changes from one that is in the lead to one that is mentoring and advising".

Lt Gen Bucknall added that long-term commitment was key to short-term progress, as without it insurgents would believe they could "wait out" the forces deployed in Afghanistan.



Milestone moment in terror war

THE death of al-Qaeda's leader is an "important milestone" in the struggle against global terrorism, Defence Secretary Dr Liam Fox has said.

Osama bin Laden (left) was killed following a US operation at a compound on the outskirts of Abbottabad, Pakistan, last month.

In a statement Dr Fox said that Bin Laden's "global terror spree" had led to thousands of civilian deaths across many nationalities and religions.

But he said the fight against terrorism was not over.

"We must continue to battle against the ideology and the organisation of al-Qaeda. In view of the possibility

of violent attacks from al-Qaeda or its sympathisers I have directed my department to maintain a high level of vigilance in all UK defence facilities at home and abroad," he added.

Prime Minister David Cameron applauded US President Barack Obama and the American Servicemen involved in the operation.

He said: "I would like to congratulate the US forces who carried out this brave action.

"I think it is a moment when we should thank all of those who work day and night, often with no recognition, to keep us safe from the threat of terror."

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Picture: Steve Duck

War-winning wagon: The heavily-armoured Mastiff is one of many equipment success stories, according to the Army’s Master General of the Ordnance

Mastiff change in standard of Army equipment

THE personal kit worn by troops on Op Herrick 14 is unrecognisable compared to the clothing, body armour and weapons issued when operations in Afghanistan began.

The senior officer responsible for Army equipment told *Soldier* that the “world-class” hardware currently used by British personnel was now the envy of other nations’ armies.

“What a soldier stands up in today is a completely new suite of kit – the only thing that would have been there in 2003 [when operations began in Iraq] would be the dog tags,” said Maj Gen Bill Moore, the Army’s Master General of the Ordnance.

Since the start of Op Telic personal protection and weaponry have repeatedly been updated, modified and enhanced, with many new items added to the British Forces’ arsenal through the Urgent Operational Requirement (UOR) process.

The heavily-armoured vehicles used by troops in theatre have also evolved in what the general pointed to as a particular success story.

“Mastiff was

introduced in Iraq and then transferred across to Afghanistan where it was joined by Ridgback [a smaller version],” he explained.

“The protective capabilities you see on those have now translated over to our support vehicles – things like Husky for the logisticians and Jackal for the recce elements – the principles have spread right the way through the Armed Forces.”

Clever construction means that the heavyweight Mastiff was effectively designed to be blown up, with external protection fitted so that parts damaged in blasts can easily be repaired or replaced.

“They go back to the REME who replace bits like the suspension and the axles and then they are back out on the ground,” said Maj Gen Moore (pictured).

“I’ve seen Mastiffs that have been blown up five times

and they are back on patrols. That’s one of the advantages of the vehicle – they can be turned around quickly.”

CHARITABLE COALITION

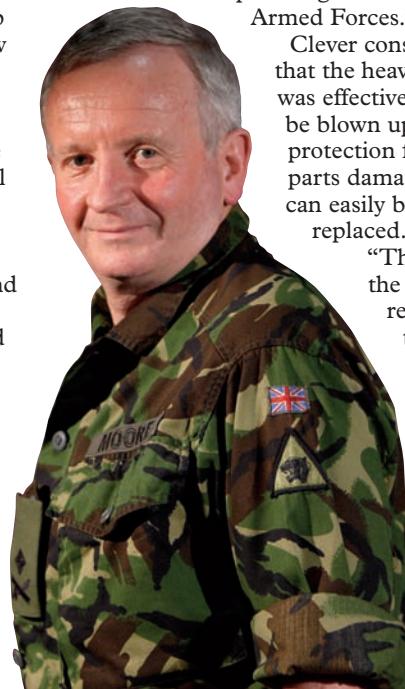
A £2.6 million donation by The Royal British Legion will help fund a new recovery centre to support blind ex-Servicemen and women in Wales and North West England.

Forces charity St Dunstan’s received the cash boost which will help pay for a specialist unit at its Llandudno Centre, equipped with 11 high-dependency beds and a rehabilitation sports gym.

The organisation’s chief executive Robert Leader said it would be named the Poppy Wing as a mark of appreciation. He added: “The unit is essential to ensure St Dunstan’s can continue in its mission to enable blind ex-Service personnel to live independent, full lives.”

Royal British Legion director Chris Simpkins said that it was an honour to support the work of a fellow charity.

“The Poppy Wing will be an important addition to the Llandudno Centre, which opens later this year and where St Dunstan’s will carry out its world-class rehabilitation and training, enabling blind veterans to overcome the challenge of sight loss,” he added.





“I YELLED ‘THROW SMOKE – GRENADE’ WHICH FORCED THE CREW TO WHIP OFF THEIR HEADPHONES, FEARING FOR THEIR EARDRUMS”
— GARRISON SERGEANT MAJOR SHARES HIS TOY STORY, PAGES 51-53

Medals mark battalion's marathon mission

THE Defence secretary has presented campaign medals to the first unit deployed to Afghanistan under his party's government.

Dr Liam Fox visited 2nd Battalion, The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment as inspecting officer for their Trooping the Colour in Cyprus.

The unit has been based in Episkopi for three years and deployed to Afghanistan continuously for more than 15 months as the British Army's theatre reserve battalion.

It has been their longest operational tour in recent history.

In an address to personnel, the minister said it had been a privilege to be present at the parade.

“As lions of England you have served with distinction in Iraq, Cyprus and most recently in Afghanistan,” he added. “I would like to pay tribute to you all, and I would also like to thank the families for their support through the tough times, the sacrifices and the good times.”

The colonel of the regiment, Brig Mike Griffiths, said: “This is the first time a Duke of Lancaster's battalion has been able to troop their colours and I am particularly pleased that 2 Lancers have chosen to take on the challenge in such short order after the conclusion of arguably the longest operational tour in contemporary history.

“The battalion was the first unit



Picture: SAC Emma Walker

Colourful occasion: Dr Liam Fox presented medals to members of 2 Lancers during a parade in Cyprus

deployed on operations by the new Government and found themselves in the thick of some of the hardest fighting of last summer.

“They acquitted themselves with honour and courage and are rightly proud of their considerable achievements in theatre.”

Dr Fox paid tribute to those killed during the battalion's deployment

— Kgn Jason Dunn-Bridgeman, Cpl

Simon Hornby, Kgn Sean Dawson, Capt Andrew Griffiths, Sgt Peter Raynor and Kgn Darren Deady.

“I would like us all to remember those in the battalion that made the ultimate sacrifice for the security of their country and its people,” the Defence Secretary concluded.

“They will not be forgotten.”

The unit is scheduled to return to the UK in late August.

LEAGUE OF GENTLEMEN			
	SWAG	FORCE FOR GOOD	QUIDS IN
1	£140,402	CHARITY CROONER Pub singer Ian Campbell – stage name Frankie Martin – performed 366 shows in 366 towns in 366 days. The 50-year-old, who featured in April's issue, visited venues across the country where he was met with countless acts of generosity as he shattered his original fund-raising target of £18,500	Help for Heroes
2	£10,000	MONEY ON THE MOVE Injured ex-Serviceman Simon Angel travelled 874 miles from John O'Groats to Land's End on his mobility scooter during a 30-day Rally for Remembrance to raise money for wounded troops	The Royal British Legion
3	£3,000	CLIMBING FOR CASH Adventurers from the British Services Antarctic Expedition 2012 took part in a climbing and kayaking competition and collected cash for charity at the Outdoor Leisure Show at Birmingham's NEC arena	Help for Heroes
4	£2,380	GROWING SUM Paderborn-based soldiers from 1 PWRR donated cash to enter a moustache-growing competition which raised funds for wounded colleagues	1 PWRR Regimental Appeal
5	£580	TELEPHONE EXCHANGE London District's HQ SQMS WO2 Stuart Gee collected and sold on unwanted mobile phones	The Royal British Legion

■ THE growing military bond between Britain and France provided the inspiration for May's spine line competition.

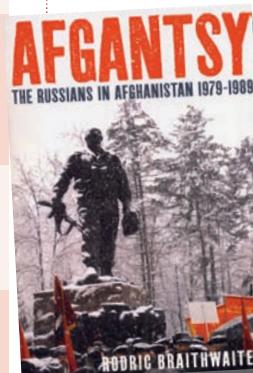
However, in a bid to remind readers that a spirit of rivalry still exists behind the political pact, the names printed on the side of the cover were a sporting swipe.

(Arthur) Grosvenor, (George) Camsell, (Emile) Veinante and Eric (Brook) were the goalscorers in England's 4-1 footballing victory over France at White Hart Lane on December 6, 1933.

This month we have a copy of Rodric Braithwaite's *Afgantsy* to give away.

To stand a chance of winning, simply tell us what links the words adorning the side of this issue.

Answers to the usual address or comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk by June 30. Winners will be drawn at random.



NEWS IN BRIEF

CASH CACHE REVEALED

■ THE Treasury has confirmed the Defence budget for the current financial year will total £33.2 billion, reflecting conclusions from the 2010 spending review.

The amount covers operations and peacekeeping costs in Afghanistan but does not include expenses incurred by UK's involvement in Libya, for which additional funds will be requested from the Government Reserve.

OPIUM OPERATION

■ AN enormous haul of drugs has been seized from a truck in Helmand province.

More than 700 kilos of dry opium was found packed into bags during a random vehicle search at a checkpoint in the Garmisir district.

"When we got the call about this incident none of us could quite believe the amount involved," said Capt Mark Shapland (RMP).

The find is the biggest ever by British and Afghan forces in the area. It is estimated the drug could have produced heroin with a street value of more than £2 million.

MODERNISED MILITARY

■ THE MoD has pledged to update the terms and conditions of service in a bid to strike a better balance between soldiers' domestic stability and the need to deliver operational capability.

Central to the improvements will be a commitment to ensure appropriate support and compensation is offered to troops who are required to relocate as part of their role.

Five project teams have been set up to look at areas including pay, pensions, allowances and accommodation provision, and are due to report back in 2012. The New Employment Model will aim to introduce changes over the next ten years, with the first improvements set to be implemented from 2014/5.

RED TAPE TO BE REDUCED

■ RULES regarding flying flags will be relaxed under new government proposals to make it easier for regimental banners to be displayed at military homecoming parades.

Secretary of State Eric Pickles announced plans to remove costly restrictions and red tape with the aim of boosting local and national identities and strengthening community cohesion.

"If people want to celebrate something that is important to them by flying a flag they should be able to do so without having to fill in forms or paying town hall officials for the privilege," he said.

Under current planning rules, only a select few flags – including any country's national flag – can be flown without express permission.

DIO DIRECTOR

■ AN initial chief executive has been appointed to the Defence Infrastructure Organisation – a body created to manage all MoD property.

Andrew Manley will stay in the role until a permanent successor is recruited later this year.



Fiery find: Channel 4's *Time Team* discovered fragments of a First World War flame-thrower in France

Sappers light up Great War dig

ROYAL Engineers based at Brompton Barracks have reconstructed a giant flame-thrower used by British troops during the First World War.

The original Livens Large Gallery Flame Projectors were assembled in tunnels under the battlefields of northern France and sprayed 100m-long jets of burning oil from hidden trapdoors located near enemy trenches.

Sappers from the Royal School of Military Engineering built a replica of the deadly weapon for a special edition of the Channel 4 television series *Time Team*, after the show's archaeologists successfully excavated fragments of one of the machines deployed in 1916.

As part of the hour-long programme – *The Somme's Secret Weapon* – Army draftsmen, welders, plant operators and fitters used their modern-day engineering expertise to simulate the flame-thrower, using in-service engines and diesel-powered pumps.

SSgt Steve Boylan (RE) described the one-off project as "experimental archaeology" and said no one was quite sure whether it would work.

"It was a trial so there could have been a ball or a jet of flame – it was quite an engineering feat," he said.

The senior NCO added that such an "indiscriminate" weapon would be banned from the battlefield today under the Geneva Convention.



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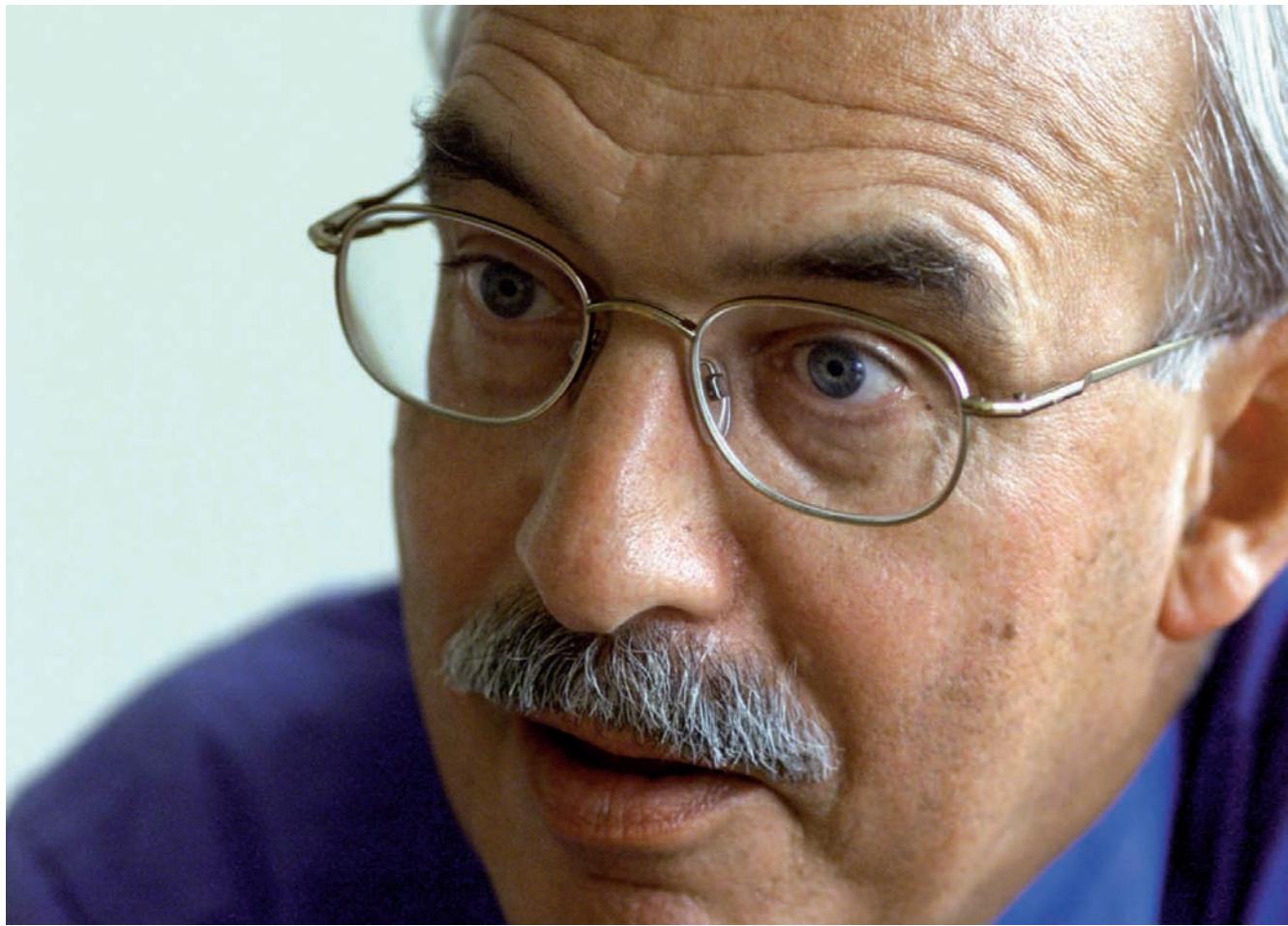
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Picture: Mike Weston

Lecturer of leaders: A "unique raconteur" and celebrated presenter, Prof Richard Holmes (1946-2011) taught a whole generation of cadets their military history

'A dapper, honourable gent with an immense brain'

FORMER Territorial Army brigadier, television presenter and high-profile military historian Prof Richard Holmes has died at the age of 65 after a battle with cancer.

Prof Holmes – described by a fellow reservist officer as "a true gentleman, who always looked after his men" – was as well known outside the Service as he was within.

The best-selling author of more than 30 military history books and biographies fronted numerous television documentaries, including the popular *War Walks* series during the 1990s.

He also led battlefield tours, using his unscripted enthusiasm and emotion to bring to life past endeavours of the British Army.

"I'm not the sort of historian who lectures at the camera," he told *Soldier* during an interview published in September 2000.

"To better understand a battle you should visit the battlefield.

"A lot of what you see is me reacting with the landscape and it does depend on emotion."

Indeed, while filming an episode at Dunkirk, he memorably stood in the

Channel, chest-deep in cold, salt water as he related to camera his account of the May 1940 evacuation.

His parallel military career saw him join the Territorials as a trooper aged 18, before rising through the ranks to the post of Director Reserve Forces and Cadets in 1997.

The senior reservist was then appointed Colonel in Chief of The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment in 1999, a post he held until 2007.

Col Patrick Crowley (PWRR), a close friend and colleague of the TA's former senior soldier, said Prof Holmes had a huge impact on all aspects of the Army.

"He helped shape the future careers of thousands of officers," he told *Soldier*, referring to the reservist officer's academic postings.

Prof Holmes was deputy head of the war studies department at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst and professor of military and security studies at Cranfield University until he retired in 2009.

"He taught a whole generation of cadets their military history and, later in their careers, officers encountered Prof Holmes contributing to lectures

on command and leadership to each staff college course at Camberley and Watchfield," said fellow academic and TA officer Dr Peter Caddick-Adams.

"Every serving general today was tutored by Holmes at some stage in their life."

In his dual roles of highest-ranking reservist and media-friendly historian Brig Holmes never lost his empathy or support for the junior ranks, according to Col Crowley.

"His aim throughout his books and television appearances of putting the ordinary soldier at the centre of things reflected his appreciation of the role of 'Tommy,'" he said.

"His ability to tell a story with captivating passion caught the imagination of all who heard him.

"Any soldier listening to his talks on battlefield tours knew that they were being educated by a unique raconteur."

Dr Caddick-Adams concluded: "What you saw was what you got: a dapper, honourable gent, with an immense brain, a spring in his step, twinkle in his eye, ever ready to help."

Prof Holmes leaves a wife, Liz, and two daughters.



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IN MEMORIAM



CAPT LISA HEAD (29)
11 EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE DISPOSAL
REGIMENT, ROYAL LOGISTIC CORPS
DIED APRIL 19

THE Royal Logistic Corps is mourning the loss of an exceptional officer who showed selfless commitment to dealing with the most dangerous threats in Afghanistan.

Capt Lisa Head, of 11 Explosive Ordnance Disposal Regiment, died at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham a day after she was caught in a bomb blast in the Nahr-e Saraj district of Helmand province.

The 29-year-old had been called to dispose of an improvised explosive device found in an alleyway frequently used by Afghans and international troops. After rendering the IED safe, the officer was fatally injured while dealing with a second device.

Lt Col Adam McRae, CO of 11 EOD Regt,

said Capt Head would be remembered as a passionate, robust and forthright soldier who was rightly proud of her profession.

He added: "She took particular pride in achieving the coveted 'high threat' status which set her at the pinnacle of her trade.

"She deployed with the full knowledge of the threats she would face. These dangers did not faze her as she was a self-assured, highly-effective operator and a well-liked leader."

Capt Head initially trained as an air transport liaison officer, deploying to Iraq in 2006 and Afghanistan in 2007. Selected for the ammunition technical officers' course she was posted to 11 EOD Regt and joined the Counter-IED Task Force for Op Herrick 14.



WO2 GRAHAM BEAN (54)
73 ENGINEER REGIMENT (V),
ROYAL ENGINEERS
DIED MAY 3 – CYPRUS

TRIBUTES have been paid to a highly professional and outstanding Territorial Army soldier who died doing a job he cared passionately about.

WO2 Graham Bean, of 73 Engineer Regiment (V), Royal Engineers, was serving on operations with the United Nations in Cyprus when he was taken ill during a mountain biking activity.

The 54-year-old was evacuated to a hospital in Nicosia where he was later pronounced dead.

WO2 Bean joined the Territorial Army in 1975 and his natural style and flair saw him swiftly promoted to the rank of lance corporal.

He was employed in a wide range of posts and locations during a varied and challenging career that included operations in Bosnia and Iraq.

After deploying to Cyprus on Op Tosca in March he was given the high-profile role of VIP visit coordinator and made a strong impression within the UN community.

Commanding officer Lt Col Richard Lyne said: "WO2 Bean was a proud family man, a trusted friend, a selfless team player and total professional who had the respect and admiration of every one of us."

WO1 Glen Lishman added: "Graham was one of the most likeable people I've had the pleasure to meet, his zest for life was always plain to see and nothing was ever too much trouble for him."

WO2 Bean leaves behind daughters Hazel and Nicola and son David, who is currently preparing to deploy to Afghanistan.



MNE NIGEL MEAD (19)
42 COMMANDO,
ROYAL MARINES
KIA MAY 15 – AFGHANISTAN

A ROYAL Marine who showed relentless professionalism and commitment to his job was killed in a bomb blast as he carried out a cordon and search operation in Helmand province.

Mne Nigel "Deano" Mead of 42 Commando was part of a mission to inspect compounds suspected of facilitating improvised explosive devices in the Loy Mandeh Wadi of Nad-e Ali district. The 19-year-old was fatally wounded as he carried out his work.

Mne Mead joined the Marines in 2008 and thrived in the demanding rigour of Service life.

Lt Col Ewen Murchison, CO of 42 Cdo, said: "He was a young man with considerable inner strength, he was selfless, warm hearted, utterly professional and took enormous pride in his job.

Despite this being his first tour of Afghanistan, he was a marksman of note and an inspiration to those who worked closely with him."

Lt Simon Maxwell added: "He was one of the finest marines in the company and was a bright hope for the future. Always quick with a joke and a smile, he was a constant source of morale in the troop. Deano was the sort of marine everyone felt at ease with and he managed to be both liked and respected in equal measure."

Mne Mead hailed from Carmarthen and joined the Marines after he left school.

In a statement, his mother Amanda said: "He had the most wonderful and warming personality, one that I have never seen in anyone else, nor will ever see again."

● A MEMORIAL commemorating the crucial work of Second World War code breakers will be built at Bletchley Park near Milton Keynes where many of the top-secret decryption operations took place.

The former site of the Government Code and Cypher School – which now houses a museum – was selected in accordance with the wishes of wartime veterans and their families.

Formal recognition of the intelligence effort follows the launch last year of a badge to honour the army of men and women who worked on an industrial scale to crack codes, including ciphers

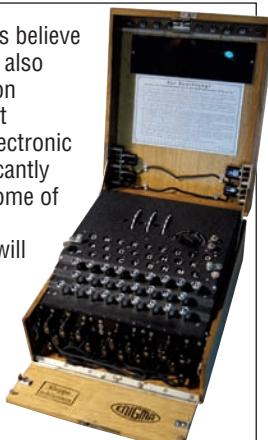
generated by the infamous Enigma machine (pictured right).

The lasting tribute to those who served at Bletchley Park and its outstations between 1939 and 1945 fulfils a commitment made by former Foreign Secretary David Miliband to honour the 9,000 civilian and Service personnel.

Commissioned by The Bletchley Park Trust and the school's modern day successor, Government Communications Headquarters, the memorial will recognise the contribution made to allied operations by those stationed at the wartime intelligence hub.

Many historians believe their work, which also led to the invention of the world's first programmable electronic computer, significantly affected the outcome of the conflict.

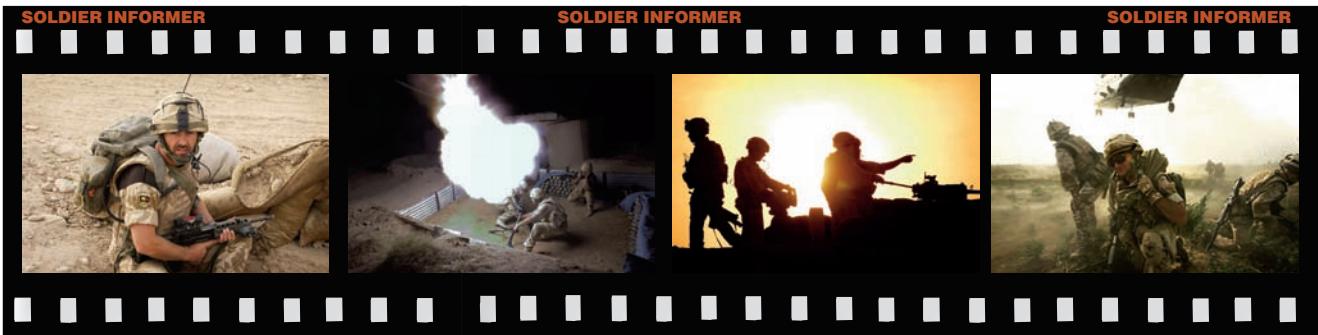
The memorial will be designed and sculpted by the artist Charles Gurrey and dedicated later this year.





“**SOLDIERS TAKE CARE OF EACH OTHER, HAVE A SENSE OF JUSTICE, RIGHT AND WRONG AND RESPONSIBILITY THAT SEEM TO BE DWINDLING FROM EVERDAY LIFE OUT OF UNIFORM**”

– PATRICK BISHOP PRAISES THE VIRTURES OF THOSE WHO INSPIRED HIS LATEST NOVEL, PAGES 90-91



BBC to broadcast Herrick home videos

A NEW television series is using soldiers' own footage to tell the story of the military campaign in southern Afghanistan.

Our War features film shot from helmet cameras, personal videos and interviews with Service personnel.

Colin Barr, executive producer of the three-part programme, told *Soldier* that his team's unprecedented access to regiments and individuals has allowed them to create an unmediated portrait of life on operations.

“It's got a different flavour to other current affairs programmes and documentaries,” he said.

“Guys gave us memory sticks and hard drives with footage and we managed to pull together the most amazing anthology of material shot by those who were out there.

“The cooperation and degree of trust we got from the MoD, units and soldiers

who told their stories was excellent.”

Many of those interviewed had not spoken about their experiences before but, having agreed to take part in the filming, found they had plenty to say.

“When you mix that in with the footage it's a powerful combination,” said Barr.

The first episode screens on June 7 at 2100 on BBC Three and follows 3 Platoon, 1st Battalion, The Royal Anglian Regiment who were based in Now Zad during Op Herrick 6. It also charts the tour of Pte Chris Gray who became the 53rd British Serviceman to die in Afghanistan.

The short series aims to cover all aspects of the decade-long campaign and contains candid accounts of troops' experiences in Helmand.

“When you see the first episode it's very dramatic and difficult to watch because it's very contact-driven and

intense,” said Barr.

“But later in the series it can also be warm and friendly, reflecting the boredom, banter and surrealness of it.”

CSgt Adam Swift (1 Cldm Gds) features in the second of three episodes and recounts his actions in Kajaki on Op Herrick 4.

“I talk about how surreal it was, it was about the calm before the storm and how we underestimated them [the Taliban],” he said. “It was a long while ago, I've done two Herrick tours since, but watching it played back I could still feel the heart rate and the anticipation before the fight.

“It's a good programme and it will be interesting to see what people think because it shows different aspects of ops.

“It's not just firefights, there's a stationary phase when the Taliban are working out your weaknesses before they hit you.”



Picture: WO2 Richard Dawson, RLC

● PRINCE Harry has been promoted to captain within the Army Air Corps after completing five years of service.

Capt Wales' advancement in rank follows his eight-month Apache conversion to type course and qualifying to fly the attack helicopter without an instructor.

As part of his training, the Prince undertook 14 day-flying sorties, testing his ability to pilot in cloud and to navigate complex and

congested airspace. The course also included ground school exercises, night flying and complex simulator training.

The final phase involved a two-week mountain sortie in the French Alps.

Capt Wales has now moved on to an eight-month weapons handling course.

The Prince will be based at Wattisham Airfield in Suffolk and undertake further training in the USA.

NEWS IN BRIEF

DECOMPRESSION DIRECTIVE

■ ALL British personnel returning from operations in Afghanistan will now be required to complete the post tour decompression package at Bloodhound Camp in Cyprus.

Previously only those coming back with formed units had to go through the 24-hour programme, which is designed to help soldiers adjust as they move from theatre to their home base.

The only exceptions to the new rule – which came into effect last month – are for those returning for rest and recuperation, troops whose tour lasted less than 31 days and anyone leaving on compassionate grounds.

BROADCASTER'S BIRTHDAY

■ ARMY radio station Garrison FM has celebrated ten years on the air by extending its coverage to a tenth location.

Soldiers of 23 Engineer Regiment and their families based in Woodbridge, Suffolk can now listen to the service, which is broadcast on 1287 AM from the newly-constructed welfare building at Rock Barracks.

NEWS IN BRIEF

ACADEMIC ASSISTANCE

■ CHILDREN of Service personnel killed in action can now apply for scholarships to cover the cost of further education in the UK.

The government-funded scheme was launched by the MoD in April and has been backdated to include the current academic year.

Financial support for further education is set at £1,500 per annum and assistance for university courses will be up to £8,240 for 2010/11.

Any child whose parent has died while on active service since January 1, 1990 is eligible.

Bereaved children can apply for the non-means tested support for study beginning from September 1, 2010 onwards.

Further details are available at <http://bit.ly/scholarshipscheme>

STERLING SUPPORT

■ MORE than 150 logistic and support personnel have returned to the UK at the end of their six-month tour of Afghanistan.

Staff from across the three Services formed the Headquarters of Joint Force Support (Afghanistan), which was responsible for all aspects of logistic and wider support planning in Helmand province.

Brig James Chiswell, commander of 16 Air Assault Brigade, said: "The significant progress that has been achieved in central Helmand over this winter has been superbly underpinned by Joint Force Support.

"As a formation they have pulled out all the stops to give us what we need."

HEIGHT OF ADVENTURE

■ WITHIN days of returning home safely after trekking to the North Pole, the Walking with the Wounded team has announced details of its next expedition. Recruiting is now under way to gather a group which will attempt the summit of Mount Everest in May 2012 in celebration of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.



Picture: Charlie Hedley/Photography

Additional top cover: A soldier makes use of existing woodland at the Warcop training area in Cumbria

Green shoots to enhance exercises

THOUSANDS of new trees are being planted across the UK in a bid to help British soldiers train more effectively.

An agreement between the Defence Infrastructure Organisation and the Woodland Trust will see shrubs introduced to training sites.

Some 40,000 trees have already been planted in Warcop, Cumbria.

The site will have 160 hectares of new coverage before the end of 2012.

Maj (Retd) Tam Campbell, commandant and range officer at Warcop training area, said the programme would provide exercise planners with more options.

He added: "The lower range area of Warcop is very open

"It's going to take a while for these trees to generate but this is part of our planning ahead.

"The coverage will allow user units to have an environment that provides

concealment both from the ground and from the air.

"This will allow preparation for any tactical type activity or live firing.

"We have created a number of areas throughout the complex."

The initiative has been funded with more than £100,000 from the North Pennines AONB Partnership.

Extra money has also been secured from commercial organisations including Waitrose and Eurocamp.

Stuart Dainton, head of partnerships at the Woodland Trust, said: "Our work with the MoD will play a significant role in helping to increase woodland cover in the UK, currently one of the lowest in Europe.

"It is a great example of working together and, while organisations have different motivations, ultimately everyone involved in this particular project has benefited from the planting of the trees."

Fires spark Army deployment

SOLDIERS from the Infantry Battle School in Brecon helped to extinguish some of the worst heathland fires for 30 years.

Gurkhas stationed at the Army training unit were drafted in to assist firefighters tackling the unrelenting blaze which swept through Wales' National Park.

Capt Ollie Braithwaite (Rifles) was the officer responsible for coordinating the military deployment, which was launched when the local services became overwhelmed by the scale of the fires.

"They were dealing with another blaze in the park that was more threatening to human life so didn't have the resources to attend," he explained.

"We deployed eight blokes with quad

bikes for the day to help ship water from bowsers to where the flames were."

He added: "The Army is always on hand to help if need be and we filled in until the Fire Service were able to generate the manpower."

The soldiers' efforts proved invaluable as the area was logistically difficult for fire engines to access, said Judith Harvey, the park warden.

"We couldn't extinguish the fire with beaters, while places we thought we had put out were reigniting ten minutes later because of the conditions."

Nearly 2,000 acres of upland common and peat bog were severely damaged and important wildlife habitats destroyed.





“REVENGE IS NOT NECESSARILY A GOOD TOOL TO MOTIVATE PLAYERS.
WE FOCUSED ON OUR OWN TEAM AND WHAT WE WANTED TO DO”
– HOW CAPT ANDY SANGER GUIDED ARMY TO RUGBY UNION GLORY, PAGES 94-95

‘I love it but I’m not Ross Kemp’

HE is known for his “drop the bomb” catchphrase, but hip-hop DJ Tim Westwood will choose his words a little more carefully this month when he broadcasts from Camp Bastion.

From May 30, the presenter will host five days of shows for BBC Radio 1Xtra in Afghanistan.

The programmes will be aired to troops across more than 20 countries on the British Forces Broadcasting Service (BFBS). The first day’s show also went out on BBC Radio 1.

Speaking to *Soldier* ahead of the trip, Westwood said he was excited.

“I really can’t wait to go out there to show some love and appreciation for the difficult job our troops are doing and the extreme sacrifices they are

making,” he added. “The shows are going to be great and I hope they make a difference.”

At the age of 53, Westwood is one of Radio 1’s longest-serving DJs. He travelled to Afghanistan for the first time earlier this year in support of the British Forces Foundation charity.

“I am so excited, man,” he said.

“When I went out there before it was a trip of a lifetime. I didn’t sleep for three days.

“I think it’s going to be a bit different this time – especially the weather – but I want to run around the camp getting shouts and messages to loved ones back home and talk about what life is like in Camp Bastion.”

The DJ – also known as the “big dawg” by his fans – said he wanted to meet as many different British Army units as possible.

“I want to make the shows entertaining, fun and relevant,” he said.

Asked if he was going to “drop the bomb”, he added: “Honestly, I think these guys have enough explosions in their lives without me playing them down the radio.

“I don’t want people to be taking cover when I’m on so I think we will use different words.”

The broadcaster is no stranger to military personnel. The security staff who accompany him to gigs are often ex-Servicemen, found through adverts the star places in *Soldier*.

“I have spent a lot of time with these people on the road – years and years,” Westwood said.



Excited: Tim Westwood hopes his shows will help to boost the morale of Service personnel

“We talk an awful lot about what they do and I love their stories.”

He explained that music, particularly hip-hop, was a key way to boost the morale of deployed troops.

“Music helps define who you are and people in the Armed Forces love hip-hop,” he said.

“That’s our common ground – it’s where we can meet.”

He added: “Honestly, if I could go anywhere on my summer holidays I would choose Camp Bastion every time.

“I love it, man. But I’m definitely not Ross Kemp.”

Westwood’s broadcast was BFBS’s second collaboration with Radio 1.

Last year the stations teamed up for a special day of messages and stories from the British military camp.

● Airwave advantage – page 43

BIG DAWG’S BIG TRACKS

ON PATROL

BMF [Blowing Money Fast] – Rick Ross



WHEN DRIVING

Game – Red Nation featuring Lil Wayne

ON DUTY

Turn My Swag On – Soulja Boy

WHEN RELAXING

Motivation – Kelly Rowland featuring Lil Wayne

SEA SUPREMACY

ARMY pilots and their Apache helicopters have proved their worth at sea by firing Hellfire missiles for the first time while flying from a Royal Navy warship.

The gunships successfully fired nine radar-guided rockets, as well as 550 rounds from their 30mm cannons, at seaborne targets during a training exercise off the coast of Gibraltar.

An established asset on operations in Afghanistan, the attack helicopter achieved a 100 per cent strike rate.

Maj Mike Neville, officer commanding 656 Squadron, 4 Regiment, Army Air Corps, said: “We showed that Apache can operate effectively from a Royal Navy ship, transporting munitions from the vessel’s magazine, aircraft upload, launch, firing and then recovering to HMS Ocean.”

Defence Secretary Dr Liam Fox said: “This milestone in Army aviation and amphibious operations demonstrates clearly the versatility of our cutting-edge military equipment. To see Apache operating to its full capacity at sea reinforces the Government’s commitment to shape and equip our armed forces to best meet the range of current and future commitments.”



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THE BIGGER PICTURE

A RECORD crowd of 62,790 cheered on as the Army romped to a 44-10 victory over the Royal Navy at Twickenham. The Reds have won back Rugby Union's Babcock Trophy after last year's dramatic defeat and wing Spr Ben Seru (RE) led the charge with a hat-trick of tries. It takes the number of Inter-Services titles won by the side to an impressive 41. Read pages 94-95 for a full report on the match.

Picture: Graeme Main





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NUTRITION



Report: Sarah Goldthorpe

*T*TRIGGERED a huge national celebration, but the Royal Wedding has also helped personnel prepare themselves for other big dates in the ceremonial diary.

Household Division brigade major, Lt Col Andrew Speed, told *Soldier*: "The troops from all three Services that participated spent many hours in briefs, rehearsals and kit preparation.

"The wedding certainly helped the Household Division prepare for events such as the state visit of President Obama and the Queen's birthday parade.

"With the Diamond Jubilee in 2012, it also gave the military a timely reminder of the excitement and patriotic fervour that is generated by these wonderful events.

"There is no doubt that experiences from the wedding will stand us in good stead next year too [at the Olympics].

"And maybe we might find enough time to catch some beach volleyball on Horse Guards."

Wedding READIES TROOPS FOR 2012



Royal wedding in numbers

- 1** million – the estimated number of spectators lining the wedding procession route
- 8** Household Cavalry state trumpeters performing inside Westminster Abbey
- 736** horseshoes needed for the event
- 40** hours spent cleaning kit by each soldier involved
- 24** million – estimated number of UK television viewers

OUT OF THE DARKNESS

Army sheds light on mental health misconceptions



Picture: Rupert Everett, RLC



P30-31 Interview: 'I felt ashamed'

P33 Stamping out stigma

P34 Support network

'IT HIT ME LIKE A WAVE'

In a bid to end the stigma of mental illness, a Serviceman reveals his suffering and recovery

Interview: Sarah Goldthorpe

WHEN 26-year-old Gdsm James Dean looked into the face of a seriously injured boy in Afghanistan in 2007, something went wrong.

Exhaustion, bereavement and separation from his family had taken their toll: he had become mentally ill.

Hours later, just halfway through his tour, Gdsm Dean returned to the UK from Camp Bastion on a casualty evacuation flight.

Speaking to *Soldier* four years on, the Grenadier Guard said he realised all was not well when his sergeant major put a hand to his shoulder and asked if he was alright.

"An improvised explosive device had gone off and I ended up attending to this three-year-old boy," Dean, who has since been promoted to lance corporal, recalled.

"I treated him but he started to get upset and

was crying for his dad.

"At the time, my daughter was seven and my son was nine. I made that connection to my own children and afterwards everything just hit me like a wave. I was away with the fairies."

LCpl Dean believes that his illness took hold after he saw a soldier die on a UK firing range.

"That was traumatic for everyone who witnessed it," he added.

'I felt ashamed for leaving other blokes on the ground'

"At the time, I just got on with things. But I hadn't been functioning properly and everything had built up."

In Afghanistan, LCpl Dean's company sergeant major was trained in trauma risk management

– a system that teaches troops to spot signs of mental distress in their colleagues (page 34).

"When he asked if I was ok I just broke down," the junior NCO said. "I knew something was wrong but I didn't know what to do."

"We went round the corner with half a packet of cigarettes and we talked."

"Once that lid got opened, I went to pieces. But I knew he understood where I was coming from."

LCpl Dean was referred to the mental health team at Camp Bastion. Still none the wiser as to what exactly was wrong with him he then discovered a guardsman in his company had been killed.

"That made me feel so bad because I had come out of the danger," he explained.

"I saw a community psychiatric nurse and he said they were going to send me back to the UK."

"I felt ashamed of myself for leaving blokes on the ground. But I came home and saw my family and kids and talked to my girlfriend. She kept

LCPL DEAN TALKS THROUGH HIS



me focused. My mum was ecstatic I was back. She didn't care how, she was just glad I was home."

LCpl Dean attended cognitive behavioural therapy sessions at The Duchess of Kent Military Hospital in Catterick.

‘I wanted to ‘man up’ and get on’

He was offered antidepressants but said he didn't want to take them. He completed several sessions there and before long was feeling better.

"I didn't want to be chemically assisted and I knew I needed to be able to feel things. My motivation was that I wanted to be back with my blokes," he said.

Two weeks later, LCpl Dean got his wish and left his home town of Newcastle for Camp Bastion once again.

Back with his company, he was surprised by how normally the other troops treated him.

"They asked me if I was okay and gave me some banter – everything was back to normal," LCpl Dean said.

"I was worried about getting labelled but I had imagined my own stigma. I think sometimes people perceive something that isn't there.

"It wasn't hard at all to explain to them what had happened.

"Your company becomes your family and if you can get past stigma then talking to mates about things can really help. That way it stops stuff building up."

When he returned to Afghanistan for Op Herrick 11 in 2009 his experiences did not get easier. A few months into the tour his friend LSgt Dave Greenhalgh was killed when an IED blast hit his vehicle.

LCpl Dean attended his friend's repatriation before finishing the tour in Helmand.

"I would have thought if any of my problems were going to resurface it would have been then," he added.

"But I had talked to the community psychiatric nurses about how to deal with things I was seeing and feeling."

Now married and enjoying Army life again, LCpl Dean is keen to encourage other troops to share their problems with each other as well as the healthcare specialists.

"Community psychiatric nurses are qualified professionals who understand my health but they don't necessarily understand me.

"Most people cannot understand soldiers' jobs unless they

have done it so talking to each other is important.

"I wanted to 'man up' and get on with it but when it comes to mental health that's not the right idea.

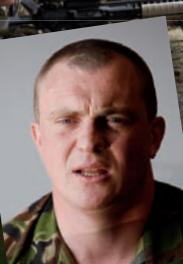
"If I noticed my rifle's magazine was broken I wouldn't go out on patrol. Your mental health is part of that same personal administration.

"If some other guy picks up and reads this article and realises that it is ok to talk to people about how he is feeling then I will be happy." ■

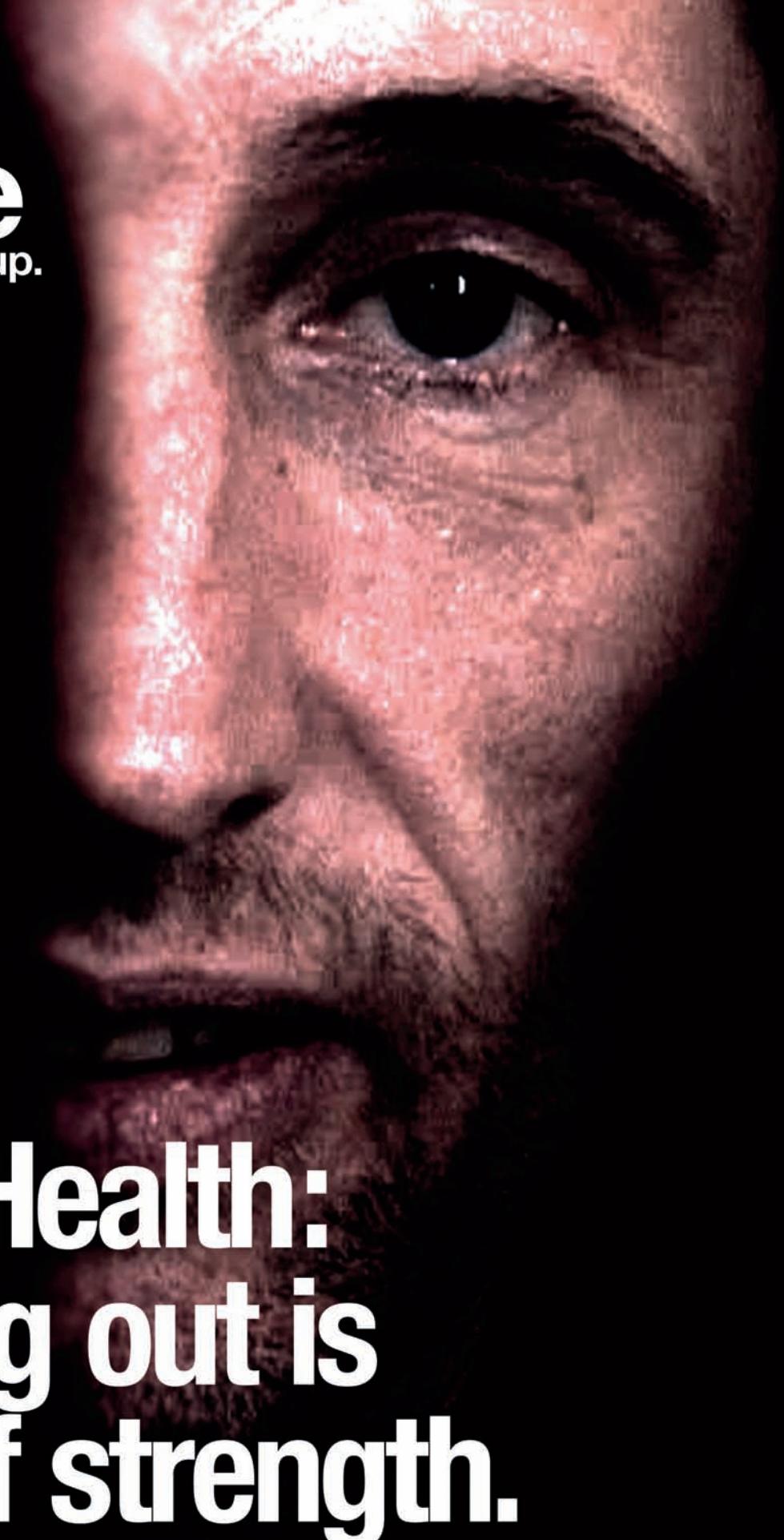


Picture: Graeme Main

EXPERIENCES IN THEATRE



Don't
bottle
it up.



**Mental Health:
Reaching out is
a sign of strength.**



ARMY



FIT FOR LIFE | FIT TO FIGHT

Interview: Sarah Goldthorpe
Picture: Sgt Ian Forsyth, RLC

MATTERS of the mind are not an easy topic of conversation for soldiers, admits Lt Col Tony Rock – the man charged with leading the Army's first ever campaign to tackle the stigma of mental health.

But the officer insists it is a taboo that troops must tackle.

"We suspect that a lot of personnel who need help don't come forward," he told *Soldier*.

"There's no difference between the level of mental illness in the Army and that of the general population, but soldiers are much more reluctant to discuss it. They see it as a fault in their own make-up."

Lt Col Rock explained that failing to seek assistance could have difficult consequences.

"Someone might turn to excessive drinking or violence, particularly in a family environment. They may also become less responsive at work," he said.

The health promotion campaign, entitled *Don't Bottle it Up*, runs until September and will include television, radio and magazine publicity.

It is rooted in various research – most notably a mental welfare survey of personnel deployed on Op Herrick 11, in which more than 60 per cent of respondents reported barriers that would stop them seeking help for conditions like post traumatic stress, depression or anxiety.

"People need to start thinking of mental health problems as an illness, not a character defect," Lt Col Rock added.

"And talking is demonstrating that you have the strength to deal with stress."

This opinion was echoed by Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg earlier in the year.

Announcing a new Government strategy to improve the UK's access to psychological therapies, the Liberal Democrat leader said: "Mental health needs to be addressed with the same urgency as physical health.

"We need to end the stigma attached to mental illness, to set an example by talking about the issue openly and candidly and ensure everyone can access the support and information they need."

Lt Col Rock explained that the chain of command is now far more aware of the impact of these conditions on personnel.

"Speaking up won't affect your career in the longer term unless there's a major problem and for most people it won't be that; it will be a short-term illness," he said.

One initiative already tackling stigma is Trauma Risk Management (TRiM), which sees soldiers trained to recognise peers who may need psychological support.

Maj Mark Kingston, officer commanding the TRiM training cell, said a total of 5,122 Forces personnel had been educated in the last three years – mostly from the Army.

"TRiM has its part to play in reducing stigma because it sees people being helped by their friends," the officer added.

"It's that 'coming out' part that many struggle with when it comes to mental health."

"But the earlier you raise a problem the easier and quicker it can be resolved."

Andrew Cameron, chief executive of veterans' mental health charity Combat Stress, praised the Army's campaign.

He said: "Every day we see first-hand the damage done to our people and their families because veterans did not seek help sooner. Our advice is don't bottle it up – get help."

STAMPING OUT STIGMA

ARMY CAMPAIGN URGES TROOPS TO TALK THROUGH TROUBLES



SUPPORT NETWORK

There are various places for soldiers with mental health problems to turn. Here are nine reasons not to suffer in silence...

Combat Stress

Earlier this year the charity launched a 24-hour helpline for advice on mental health issues in the military community. Call 0800 138 1619.



Medical officers

These are qualified doctors who offer help, support and treatment to soldiers in a variety of environments around the world.

Unit welfare officers

These people are the first point of contact for Army personnel on any issues surrounding deployments, including mental health problems. Army Welfare Service teams can also help.

GPs

Doctors are trained to recognise the signs of mental health conditions and are a good first point of contact for help and support. They can discuss symptoms and what treatment might be appropriate, including talking therapies.



Reserves mental health programme

This offers assessment and treatment and can either be accessed through GPs or by calling 0800 032 6258.

SSAFA Forces Help

Forcesline is a free and confidential support service for personnel, their families and former members of the Armed Forces. Callers can talk about anything, including personal concerns, and can get help finding other services. The line is open every day from 1030 to 2230. Calls are free from the UK, Germany and Cyprus. From the UK (main line) 0800 731 4880; Germany 0800 1827 395; Cyprus 800 91065; Falkland Islands #6111; anywhere else in the world (call-back) +44 (0) 1980 630854; operational theatres (through Paradigm's phone system) dial the appropriate access number then enter *201 at the PIN prompt.



Padres

Regardless of faith, chaplaincy support is available to all Service personnel and their families. Discussions are confidential and outside the chain of command. To contact a chaplain email epadre@armymail.mod.uk

Samaritans

Provides confidential non-judgmental emotional support 24-hours-a-day for anyone experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those which could lead to suicide. Whether a problem is big or small, or just for someone to talk to, you can call 08457 909090, email jo@samaritans.org or write to Chris, PO Box 9090, Stirling FK8 2SA.



TRiM

In the last three years more than 5,000 Forces personnel, mostly from the Army, have been trained in Trauma Risk Management (TRiM). This enables troops to identify colleagues who may need assistance after traumatic incidents. Every major unit in the British Army has a TRiM practitioner available for support.



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THE APPRENTICES

Candidates prepare for rigours of officer selection

Report: Sharon Kean
Pictures: Mike Weston

ACOURSE combining highbrow theatre trips with tough team-building expeditions is readying troops for entry to the officers' mess.

Personnel singled out by their seniors polish their "whole life" skills during a gruelling 11-week programme designed to expand horizons, boost confidence and prepare them for entry to the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst.

Maj John Foster (AGC (ETS)) told *Soldier* that the Potential Officers' Development Course (PODC) focused on aspects such as public speaking and essay writing.

Staff from the Army School of Education run the leadership masterclass, which is based at Worthy Down, the headquarters of the Adjutant General's Corps.

Between 80 and 90 candidates take part each year, with just under half of those drawn directly from the ranks and the remainder being civilians who have applied for a place at Sandhurst.

"We get a complete range, from private through to sergeant," said Maj Foster, the cadre's OC.

"Some have been in one year, others for nine years, so they are very difficult to stereotype and they arrive from a host of different backgrounds."

Would-be officers are put through a mix of physically- and mentally-testing exercises, ranging from a two-day group trek across Dartmoor to presentations for senior staff on current affairs.

Students also broaden their cultural horizons by taking in West End shows,

visiting art galleries and touring the Houses of Parliament.

Instructor Capt Chris Maycock (AGC (ETS)) explained that it was an educational experience first and foremost.

"One day they can be in suits sat in a chamber in the middle of Oxford having a debate about whether democracy should be forced on people," he explained.

"The next they could be out in the wild, learning about leadership and how it feels to take command of a group."

Thomas Bale, a potential officer (PO) and former Grenadier Guards lance corporal, took his place on the course after expressing interest in a commission and being recommended by his seniors.

"If I'd gone straight from section commander to Sandhurst I wouldn't be as confident as I am now," he said.

The cadre had changed his mindset from that of a keen NCO who has served with the elite Brigade Reconnaissance Force in Afghanistan, to a would-be leader in The Parachute Regiment.

"I always saw high ranks as a dominant, threatening force but now I've learnt that if you treat them with respect then there's nothing to fear," PO Bale added.

PO Ben Millan (a former RLC corporal) said the exercises had improved his analytical skills and changed the way he approached situations.

"They give you a topic and you really look into it and underneath it, which helps massively because it gives you underpinning knowledge that can be applied to anything," he explained.

Students are encouraged to identify their own development needs before considering how the syllabus has helped to improve them.

"We'll soon tell them if they can't identify their own weaknesses by giving some honest feedback," said Maj Foster.

"You can't just drift through it and expect it to make a difference. You have to work

at each of the training serials and get the benefit for yourself."

David Stokes, a former corporal in the Life Guards, swapped ceremonial duties in Knightsbridge for the cadre and said it had been important to get a chance to brush up his academic skills.

"If I was back at my unit I wouldn't have had the time," he added. "You are with like-minded people and staff who are trained to recognise your learning needs."

Of the serving soldiers on the course, 86 per cent go on to pass the Army Officer Selection Board. Of those who fail, the majority get through on the second attempt.

Capt Owen James (AGC (ETS)) has been an instructor on the PODC for nearly two years and has seen more than 100 personnel pass through the programme.

"We get a few sparky characters but we get all sorts really, and they just need that confidence to stand up and present themselves," he said.

"Some will find the two-day expedition challenging whereas others will find going to the theatre harder."

While the course is not strictly a finishing school for Sandhurst candidates, it does help prepare people for what to expect if they make it to the academy.

Training sergeant major WO2 Dean Reynolds (2 RRF) told *Soldier* that potential was the most important factor.

"The Army knows that everyone can demonstrate leadership – not just officers – and this is an excellent way of recognising that and giving everyone the opportunity," he explained.

Maj Foster said he was keen to spread the word about the cadre, both to commanders and soldiers.

"It's a great thing to be able to pick people from the ranks and I think there's lots of leadership potential out there," he said.

"I recommend commanding officers and company commanders push people in this direction and the earlier they decide to go for it the better." ■

● Serving soldiers interested in the Potential Officers' Development Course should speak to their chain of command or visit the Army School of Education page of the intranet for more information.



CADRE COMMENT



PO Thomas Bale

"The learning has been very fast paced, both physically and mentally.

"This course has helped me to think out of the box so I can now see myself in the officers' mess, as well as appreciating the wider Army."



Maj John Foster (AGC (ETS))

"Their ability has been identified by their units and they are very motivated and ambitious, so we as an Army need to draw that out.

"This course is excellent at extracting that potential and giving students every chance at whatever they go on to do next."

Far left, Path to success: Potential officers and former junior NCOs Thomas Bale and Charlotte Charlton navigate their way through the 11-week development course

Left, Point of order: OCdt Alex Beard and fellow students, pictured above, participate in a debate at the Old Town Hall in Oxford and a map reading and navigation exercise on Dartmoor in Devon



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HELICOPTER HOSPITAL

MEDICS OF THE SKY USE A UNIQUE APPROACH TO SAVE LIVES IN AFGHANISTAN

Report: Joe Clapson

PERFORMING intricate procedures inside a vibrating helicopter travelling at 170mph, a British medical unit works around the clock to ensure life-or-death situations have positive outcomes.

Soldier was given exclusive access to Britain's tri-Service Medical Emergency Response Team (MERT) to find out more about the role it performs in the skies above southern Afghanistan.

Sqn Ldr Shaun Pascoe (RAF), the specialist group's OC, explained that his unit operates as an extension of the field hospital, flying intensive care to the soldier rather than taking patients to a casualty bed.

"Nothing like this exists in the world – it is unique to Helmand province," said the emergency department nurse.

"In the UK you would never see the type of patients that we pick up here and the real difference is doing the treatment en route.

"If you look at the injuries we deal with, there are men and women surviving now that in the past would not have been expected to live."

Every time an emergency call comes

in, the experienced team boards a Chinook equipped with everything required for trauma surgery. They know people's lives are in their hands.

Just as in any hospital, each job will be different. But in Helmand province time is always against the patient as he or she lies miles from expert assistance.

Lt Col Paul Reavley (RAMC), the unit's anaesthetist, described how the MERT has developed from a medical taxi to an airborne emergency room.

"Our role has evolved over the last five years – we used to just pick people up and get them to hospital as quickly as possible," he said.

"But now we are definitely there to resuscitate and start treatment.

"The job description has changed because we've developed our skills and we are more able to act."

The medical consultant added: "This

style of casualty treatment on the move has not happened in any other theatre. It has been established in Afghanistan."

The crew for each "shout" consists of four clinical personnel, four Royal Air Force members providing force protection, weapons systems operators, two crewmen and a pilot.

Members of the team hone their healing skills on the ground but nothing other than real-life sorties can prepare them for the demanding job – often performed while being shot at.

"On average the MERT comes under fire on 60 per cent of its missions, including having the Chinook's rotar blades hit by rocket-propelled grenades," revealed Sqn Ldr Pascoe.

"But shooting at us doesn't count these days unless it makes a hole in the aircraft." >>

TIME IS A MAJOR FACTOR AND WITH MERT THERE IS ACCESS TO EXPERTS AND TREATMENT WHICH ISN'T POSSIBLE ON THE GROUND ,



– Pte Joanna Brownlow (RAMC)



>> The relaxed senior officer added: "We always take two Apaches with us and they take it very personally if we come under fire – they look after us."

The unit has become renowned across the world for its pathfinding approach to treating major trauma and other forces are now looking into mimicking its techniques, rather than simply focusing on evacuating casualties to hospital.

"We can put people to sleep really quickly using rapid sequence induction, which is very important in the cases we deal with," said Lt Col Reavley.

"Also, the most significant thing we've got is the rapid infusion of warmed fluid because if anyone has lost a lot of blood, it wouldn't work to give them blood at the incorrect temperature."

The speed of the Chinook is not compromised to facilitate vital treatment to patients.

"We recently recorded 170mph on a call," said Sqn Ldr Pascoe.

"If we tell the pilot we need to go quick, we go quick. Otherwise we'll request a

smoother journey because the anaesthetist might need to put a tube in or perform a tricky procedure."

The day-to-day work of the MERT, based at Camp Bastion, is seemingly non-stop with calls coming in from battlegroups across Helmand province. But its impact is clear to see.

"The first casualty I had to deal with had a gunshot wound to the lower leg and the team was there within five minutes," explained close support medic Pte Natalie Laker (RAMC).

"It's very satisfying to know that they'll be there that quick – it gives confidence to the men and reduces the pressure on the medical staff embedded with units."

Field medic Pte Joanna Brownlow (RAMC) added: "Time is a major factor and with the MERT there is access to experts and treatment which isn't possible on the ground."

Since 2007 the skilled unit has recorded more than 5,000 patient missions, ensuring numerous personnel with lost limbs receive the critical care they need

and saving hundreds of lives.

However, in a conflict in which most injuries come from IED blasts, it is inevitable that not everyone can be saved.

"The injuries have become more and more severe over the years we've been working in Afghanistan but we are accustomed to it," said Lt Col Reavley.

"The worst thing is when there is a death onboard – that's hard to deal with. It's happened twice on this tour and it's not good."

"But we will be straight back out if there's another shout."

Personnel selected for the MERT carry out two-month tours and usually return to action within a year of leaving the operational theatre.

"This is the best job in the world. The people here don't want to go home because they really make such a difference," said Sqn Ldr Pascoe.

"We are pals in adversity working very intensely together and, as much as I've got a family at home, I don't want to leave in a hurry."

THE SHOUT

THE MERT IN PICTURES



Members of the MERT live on the flight line during their 24-hour shift and must be onboard their Chinook within five minutes of receiving a call. The medical experts work quickly on casualties giving patients the best chance possible of survival while en route to Camp Bastion. They ensure fluid is administered and loss of blood is reduced to a minimum. Pictures: Sgt Alison Baskerville, RLC

Far left, Health service: Members of the MERT onboard their Chinook. Pictured left to right are paramedic Cpl Anthony Pugsley (RAF); OC MERT, Sqn Ldr Shaun Pascoe; emergency medical consultant Lt Col Paul Reavley; and paramedic Cpl Anthony Herbert (RAF). Picture: Graeme Main

Above centre, Saving lives: The MERT receives an Afghan casualty and makes a quick assessment before administering precision treatment and handing him over to the hospital at Camp Bastion. Picture: Sgt Alison Baskerville, RLC

Left, Sky surgery: MERT doctor Maj Clare Hayes-Bradley makes equipment checks prior to the team commencing its shift. She is responsible for dealing with injuries ranging from heat stroke to lost limbs and must ensure that she has kit to handle every eventuality.

Picture: Sgt Alison Baskerville, RLC



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RADIO STATION USES WORD OF MOUTH TO BATTLE INSURGENCY

Report: Joe Clapson
Picture: Graeme Main

MUSIC and news are being beamed across Afghanistan by DJs in an innovative bid to bring success in the region.

Relayed live from a patrol base in Nahr-e Saraj, Radio Lamar features four home-nation airwave aficionados.

As *Soldier* watched one of the station's interpreters broadcast to a wide area of Helmand, Lt Paul Smart (AGC (ETS)) explained how the 24-hour British asset came into being.

"Our battlegroup [2 Para] had been asking for a radio station because we had seen one used by headquarters in Lashkar Gah and we needed to get our messages out quickly," he said.

"This was set up in December last year and with it we can transmit facts about what is happening out on the ground.

"When we go out into villages people tell us they are listening for information, so we know they are hearing from us rather than the insurgents.

"There are no televisions here and almost all communication is done by word of mouth, so we need to be speaking to the people before the Taliban does."

Although Radio Lamar's output is not comparable to the sounds of Lady Gaga or Dizzee Rascal found on British dials, the station plays music from the Pashto, Dari, Indian and Iranian genres and also features programmes such as "top song" and "quiz live".

Among this content, DJs relay up-to-date messages telling Afghan nationals about operations due to be undertaken by British soldiers.

"We are able to broadcast things like the fact that a controlled explosion is about to take place," said Lt Smart (attached to 2 Para).

"It's to help inform and reassure the locals – to let them know what is going on.

"At the end of the day we have got nothing to hide and this prevents misinformation from insurgents getting out."

British soldiers provide wind-up radios for those who want to join the growing listenership and although no audience figures are available, the initiative is proving a useful method of connecting with communities on issues other than the continuing conflict.

"One of the things that features on the station is a phone-in where people ring with their top ten songs, which is a really good way of interacting with the population," said Lt Smart.

"The other day we had a new Helmand-based band playing some sort of heavy metal, which was very interesting.

"We've kept a log to show where people are listening from and it goes right across our area of operations."

The radio station has a DJ out on the ground, reporting back with sound-bites from Afghan National Army commanders and the district governors. This footprint adds more credibility to news reports.

Lt Smart said: "Radio Lamar has got music and everything else a normal station would so it's a programme people can listen to for a few messages rather than a propaganda broadcast.

"We want people to feel normal, not like they are in a war zone."

Talk may be cheap but communicating across the airwaves is certainly helping to break down the barriers between British soldiers and those they are striving to protect. ■

**IT'S TO HELP
INFORM AND
REASSURE
THE LOCALS!**

Lt Paul Smart, AGC

HOME GROWN HEROES

Afghan Army plays its part in protecting province's population

Report: Joe Clapson
Pictures: Graeme Main

AFGHAN National Army (ANA) troops are proving to be increasingly invaluable on the Helmand battlefield as they couple skills taught by coalition partners with their knowledge of the terrain to tackle Taliban insurgents.

Their new-found prowess is thanks in no small part to the training wing at Camp Shorabak, next to Bastion, where – under the watchful eye of the British Brigade Advisory Group – native recruits are readied for combat operations.

Capt Jonathan Boardman, spokesman for 1st Battalion, Irish Guards, told *Soldier* that the facility's principal aim is to build an efficient fighting force.

"The advisory group trains the ANA and assists with any problems they have, we also help sort out their organisational systems for operating out here," he explained. "There is a different language and educational level, which means we have to find Afghan ways of solving problems, rather than just telling them what to do."

Home-grown soldiers come to the training wing to familiarise themselves with the nature of the conflict before being sent to forward operating bases. They are taught Helmand-specific lessons in Pashto or Dari by local instructors who have received expert training at the Joint Security Academy South at the US Camp Leatherneck.

"British soldiers don't give the lessons, they stand a pace back as advisers," said Capt Tom Russell (AGC (ETS)), a member of the mentoring group.

"We are just here to provide assistance when we are needed."

In the past, ANA soldiers would serve in the field prior to attending any courses but now the team ensures personnel arrive at Shorabak immediately after their initial training phase.

Mentor Sgt Iain Jackson (1 IG) said: "Before, it was just older troops coming to the training wing, but the younger students are really keen to learn.

"They are much more motivated and know that they can improve as soldiers and put what they are being taught here into practice."

Hundreds of Afghans sign up to join the ANA

each week despite knowing the dangers they will undoubtedly face on the front line.

When asked by *Soldier* why they chose to pursue a military career, the response from each member was "to serve my country".

Explaining the ANA troops' stance, Capt Russell said: "It is a matter of pride for them that they have been recommended by a village elder to sign up.

"Now, as they hear from colleagues that have been out on the ground and struggled to use weapons, it really makes them want to learn how to use their equipment properly."

After spending eight weeks in basic training and four weeks at the facility in Shorabak, the Afghan troops are able to conduct their own patrols, clearing IED-riddled roads and engaging in firefights.

Suggestions that the ANA is not up to this job are refuted by British personnel.

"The feedback that we have been receiving tells us that Afghan personnel have taken control of dangerous situations while under fire," added Capt Russell.

"There are now lots of stories of them standing alongside Isaf [International Security Assistance Force] troops giving as good as they get."



"On one operation, the ANA dealt with 22 out of 30 IED finds."

British mentors believe the country's army is on the right path after years of not understanding how to deal with the explosives they found.

"The days of Afghan soldiers just pulling bombs out of the ground are over," said counter-IED mentor Sgt David Thompson (7 Scots).

"They are brilliant at spotting explosives from a lot further away than we can because they know the terrain better than us."

"We now need to give them the skills to deal with the devices and call for help rather than attempting to diffuse them themselves."

Cpl Lee Jeapes (23 Pioneer Regt) trains the ANA

specifically on counter-IED techniques.

"Afghanistan's army and police have lost lots of people and had lots of casualties from explosions – it's not just Brits and Americans. That's why training is so important," said the search team commander. "We teach soldiers to walk correctly when clearing an area, while constantly checking for ground signs."

During one such training exercise, ANA soldier Dunya Khan said:

"I think it is a very good course and we

are happy to be here learning a great deal about IEDs and explosions.

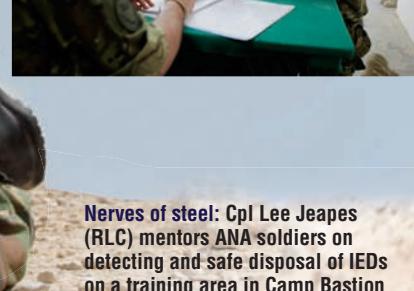
"These devices are something that have killed a lot of civilians and men in the brigade, but it's good that we are learning how to search the ground."

"We are now going to try our best to save people's lives by being professional." ■



Nerves of steel: Cpl Lee Jeapes (RLC) mentors ANA soldiers on detecting and safe disposal of IEDs on a training area in Camp Bastion

Second from bottom, Keen to learn: Afghan instructor Sgt Hayatullah lectures ANA recruits on weaponry while British troops oversee the training as advisers (bottom)



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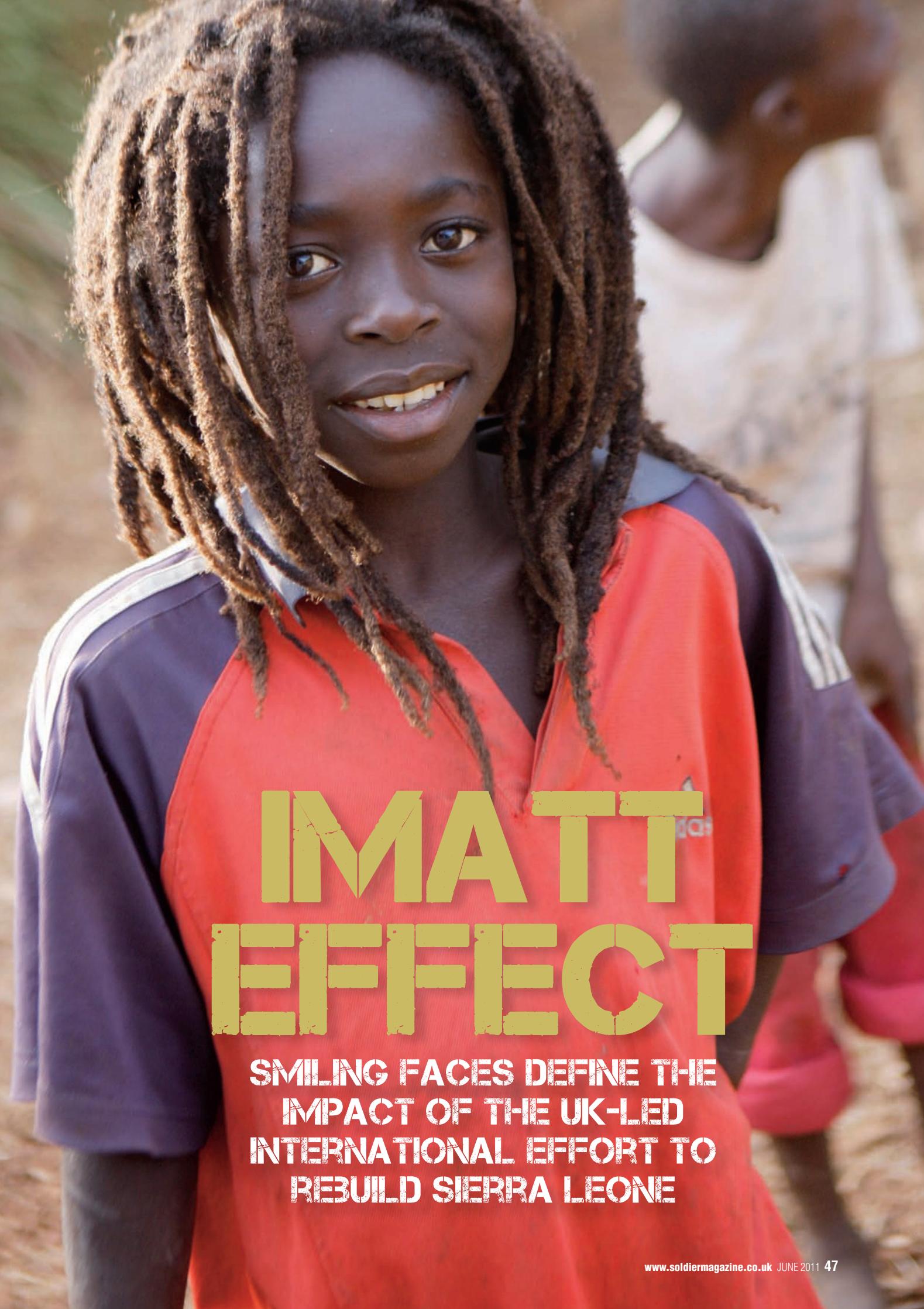


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IMATT EFFECT

**SMILING FACES DEFINE THE
IMPACT OF THE UK-LED
INTERNATIONAL EFFORT TO
REBUILD SIERRA LEONE**

**Report: Joe Clapson
Pictures: Graeme Main**

A CHILD with a beaming smile dances in the street when a British soldier acknowledges his wave. This encapsulates what the International Military Assistance Training Team (IMATT) means to the people of Sierra Leone.

Despite living in tiny houses built from corrugated iron and surviving on as little as two dollars per day, there is undeniable optimism etched on the population's faces. Locals refer to this happy disposition as the "IMATT effect".

Since 2002 the training team has worked to help the Republic of Sierra Leone Army bring stability to a country scarred by a bloody 11-year civil war.

CSgt Paul Baines (Cldm Gds), a member of IMATT based at the Benguema Armed Forces Training Centre, explained the response to British soldiers.

"We are held in such high esteem because of the work done in past years and at the present time," he said.

"If we travel up country all the kids run down the street shouting 'IMATT, IMATT, IMATT'. It's quite humbling."

Soldier joined the team on a whistle-stop tour of the nation's capital, Freetown, and surrounding settlements to meet the citizens benefitting from its presence.

As well as training soldiers in armed combat, IMATT teaches troops administration and accountancy skills and how to work with the local community.

"We have Dominic Kamara [a Sierra Leonean soldier] working as a company quartermaster and he is mentored to run the stores and pay for the centre's food, water and fuel," CSgt Baines said.

"It's about learning to handle accounts, take receipts and being honest with people – now Dominic basically runs the camp."

Wood used to fuel



the base is bought from a family living in huts on the edge of the jungle rather than from larger companies in the town centre.

"I visit the family four times each week with Dominic and the money we pay is half of what it would be in town – £5 per truckload. That pays for their kids to go to school," CSgt Baines added.

During the soldier's visit to collect the fuel, he presented a football to children living nearby.

"A simple thing like bringing a ball is unbelievable – the kids go mad and play and smile all day," said the Op Herrick veteran.

"It's different to standard Army duties but you get such a buzz seeing how happy the kids are to see us and how IMATT makes such a difference to their lives."

Little more than a decade ago Sierra Leone was on the verge of failure as a state, without much hope of gaining lasting peace and stability.

But IMATT has brought dramatic change and allowed the UK's Department for International Development (DfID) to carry out vital work.

Speaking at the organisation's offices in Freetown, Dominic O'Neil said: "A stable environment is a prerequisite for any kind of development strategy.

"That is now in place here, so we can come in and do what we do. If people are getting their limbs hacked off, we cannot work."

He added: "The military intervention brought physical security, then we pumped in some money to provide economic stability as well."

An example of how IMATT's work has paved the way for other improvements is Princess Christian Maternity Hospital, which has offered free healthcare to pregnant women since April last year.

"In the past they tried all sorts of ways to go through labour because healthcare was too expensive for them – then mothers would arrive

at hospital on death's door," said Susan Mshana, a healthcare spokesman for DfID.

"Now, because of the peace and stability right across the country, money has been released and lives have been saved."

According to Dr Michael Koroma, the hospital administrator, funding for medical services is saving hundreds of lives each day at Princess Christian alone.

"Some mothers suffering from eclampsia would die as a result but now they receive the medicine they require," he said. "Patients who needed caesarean births but lived in remote locations wouldn't be able to have them. Now they can come here."

Fatu Sheku spoke to *Soldier* from her hospital bed just hours after giving birth to a healthy 9lb

baby boy. The 25-year-old diabetes sufferer said: "To have a delivery in a hospital gives you much more confidence.

"I would've come here even if I had to pay because I would've been scared of losing my life."

In the last 11 years the UK has spent around £300 million, on top of DfID funds, on rebuilding the West African nation in a bid to provide a better future for its people.

Ian Hughes, British High Commissioner, said: "We are the largest bilateral donor to Sierra Leone and the development agenda is for the country to be as economically stable as Ghana by 2017-2020.

"We are 90 per cent of the way there and if we stop before we finish, we won't have done the job."

When IMATT was set up there was little in the way of infrastructure and very few permanent buildings.

Now Freetown is completely urbanised with electricity freely available and only 26km of unmade roads left between the city and neighbouring Guinea.

"The people here had a really traumatic experience; their country fell apart and they had no prospect of a normal life without us [the international community] helping them," concluded Mr Hughes.

"Sierra Leone is a rare success story in peace-building." ■

THEIR COUNTRY FELL APART AND THEY HAD NO PROSPECT OF A NORMAL LIFE WITHOUT US HELPING THEM



– Ian Hughes, High Commissioner

BROAD BENEFITS

Left, Mum's the word: Fatu Sheku received free healthcare during her pregnancy

Right, Fair trade: CSgt Paul Baines (Cldm Gds) accompanies Dominic Kamara as he buys wood from a family who use the money to pay for their children's education



Small things: The gift of a football causes excitement in Freetown's suburbs





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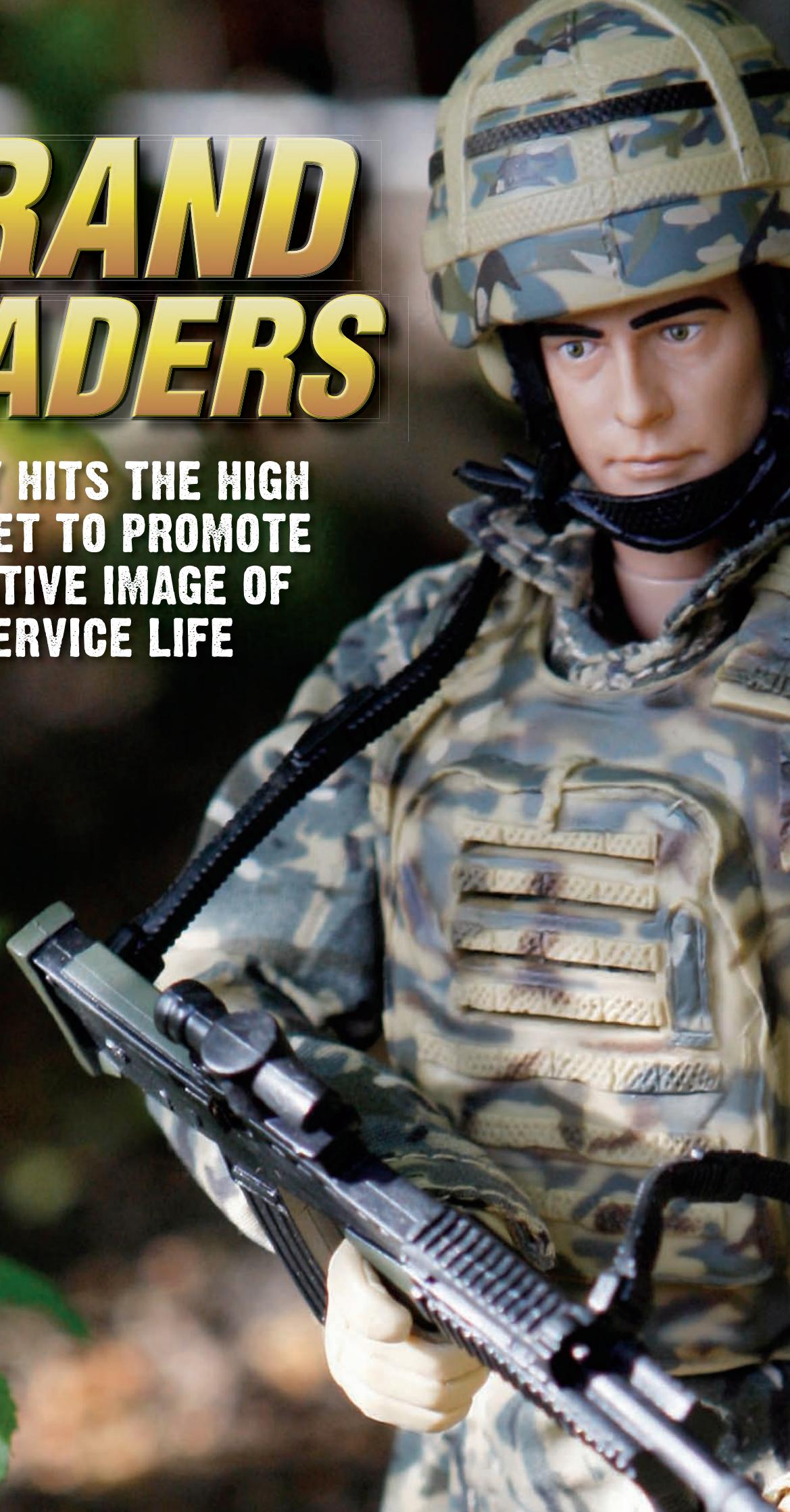
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BRAND LEADERS

ARMY HITS THE HIGH
STREET TO PROMOTE
POSITIVE IMAGE OF
SERVICE LIFE

Role models: The HM Armed Forces figures have helped enhance the Army's public profile while delivering a top-seller for manufacturer's Character Options



Report: Richard Long
Pictures: Steve Dock

IN the increasingly-competitive corporate sphere, a strong brand identity is often the key factor in determining whether a product sinks or swims.

Coca-Cola, Apple and Disney are famous the world over thanks to their iconic logos and imaginative marketing.

While the British Army is unlikely to match these multi-billion pound companies in global supremacy, it is extremely mindful of its image and perception among the general public.

In a bid to increase its profile, the Service has embarked on a number of projects aimed at bringing military life into the mainstream and one of its major players is the HM Armed Forces range.

The action figures and vehicles have proved to be huge sellers in the toy market and with new additions to the retail ranks planned for later this year; the success looks set to continue.

"These toys help to highlight the Army brand, therefore raising the Service in the public's consciousness," explained Maj Ben Walters (RRF), a member of the Army's public relations team.

"The company approached us and asked if we wanted to be involved. They were going to be producing a range of toys and we saw this as an opportunity to make them as realistic as possible, based on British soldiers and equipment.

"The project began with some fairly simple designs and pieces, such as the infantryman and other figures.

"From that initial success the selection has broadened and now includes vehicles such as the Jackal and a Scimitar-style tank. We have also got a paratrooper and an Arctic soldier and there are more in the pipeline."

To add to the realism of their products, manufacturers Character Options enlisted the help of London District Garrison Sergeant Major WO1 Bill Mott (WG) to record combat sound effects for their Infantry figure.

The experienced soldier found himself in a tiny sound booth in Soho, where he barked a sequence of familiar Army commands and phrases into a microphone.

"I sat in front of a mic and the engineer asked me to do a sound check," explained WO1 Mott (pictured right). "I asked if he wanted me to read the lines loudly and he told me to shout like I normally would.

"I yelled 'throw smoke – grenade' which forced the crew to whip off their headphones, fearing for their eardrums.

"I tried it again but lowered my voice. I'd normally be shouting orders on a battlefield or on exercise so being in a sound booth was a bit odd, but it wasn't difficult."

With the WO1 Mott-inspired Infantry soldier leading the charge, plans are now in place for an expansion of the range.

This summer marks the arrival of an Apache helicopter and last month saw the launch of a new construction toy, similar to the world-famous Lego brand.

The model men depict key roles such

as the Royal Navy helicopter pilot and the Royal Marines commando and an Army quad bike and Merlin airframe have been included in the mini playsets that accompany the figures.

"These toys are a way for the general public to relate to what we do," Maj Walters explained. "The media has highlighted a number of concerns about equipment for the Armed Forces.

"This allows us to showcase what kit is available. All the figures and vehicles are as accurate as possible and they show the breadth of kit the Army uses.

"It is not indicative of everything we do. You will not see an Army chef but you will find a paratrooper and a Jackal.

"We have an influence and say on everything that is produced.

"The wider reputational benefits are the main attraction for us. The products are of a high quality and are genuinely enjoyed by people.

"Sales have been going extremely well and we are very pleased.

"But it is not just action figures. There are Army duvet covers, curtains and water bottle sets for children, along with UK Gear trainers."

As well as enhancing the military brand, the projects have boosted Defence coffers.

A percentage from the sales is given to the Army, some of which has been spent on welfare projects such as family activity breaks.

For Character Options the partnership has been mutually beneficial as the range is now well established in the five top-selling boys' toys.

"When creating the HM Armed Forces brand in 2009, our aim was to fill the void created by the lack of military-inspired toys," brand manager Mark Hunt told *Soldier*.

"They have become very popular due to their totally-authentic features, inspiring imaginative play while highlighting the roles of this country's brave Servicemen and women.

"We have formed a strong relationship with the Armed Forces, working closely across all parts of the business from concept and developing through to marketing and PR to ensure we create the best possible product using all the resources available to us from the Army."

With an expanded range of HM Armed Forces figures firmly in the pipeline, the Service brand can only go from strength-to-strength.

And by having more toys on the high street there is no doubt the British Army will be getting the attention and public interest it so richly deserves. ■





Soldier has teamed up with Character Options to give 13 readers the chance to win an HM Armed Forces action figure. To enter, tell us the year in which the HM Armed Forces brand was created.

**Answers on a postcard to the usual address or send an email to comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk
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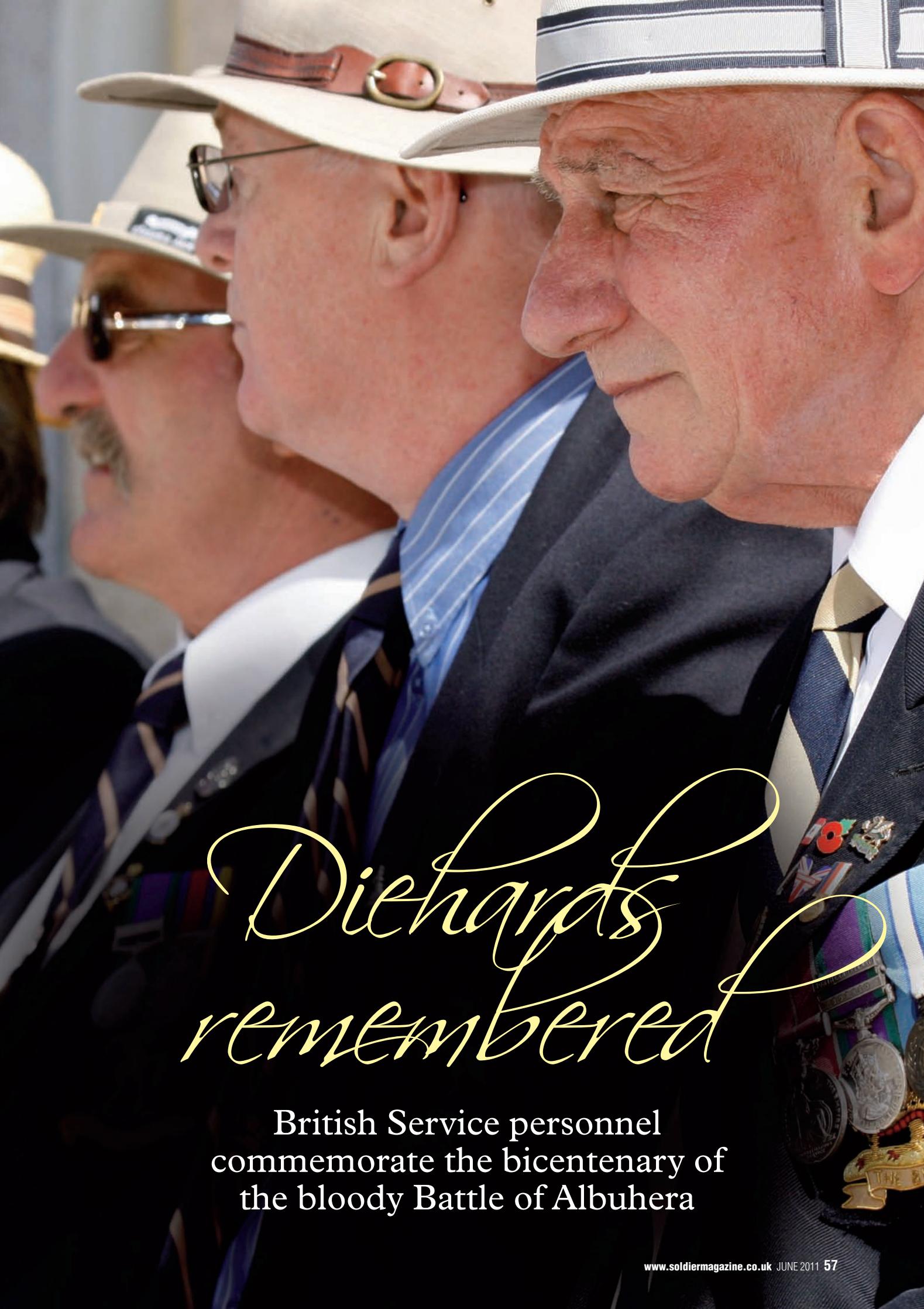
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Diehards remembered

British Service personnel
commemorate the bicentenary of
the bloody Battle of Albuhera



Report: Joe Clapson
Pictures: Steve Dock

IN MODERN times if 40,000 British soldiers died as a result of a seven-year conflict there would be outrage and more than mild interest from the media.

But in the not too distant past, such a statistic was the reality and the majority of corpses were swept into mass graves, burned or left to rot.

The Peninsular War, which took place in Portugal, Spain and southern France between 1807 and 1814 represented the greatest military effort in British history prior to the First and Second World Wars, yet many are unaware it even happened.

To add insult to injury, with the exception of a small graveyard at Elvas in Portugal, there are no cemeteries or memorials to mark the fallen.

However the Peninsular War 200 group, established in 2008 to provide a focus for the UK's contribution to the official commemorations of the bloody conflict, is now ensuring those who fought for Britain are not forgotten.

This year the organisation, led by The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment and joined by the The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, The Royal Welsh and old comrades from the The Buffs (Royal

East Kent Regiment), travelled to Spain to mark the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Albuhera.

Explaining the reasons for making the trip, organiser Maj Tony Martin (PWRR) said: "Visiting the Peninsular War battlefield is all part of our regimental history and traditions.

"It was very emotional for some to see the battlefield after learning about it in history lessons and books.

"It very much involves Portugal, Spain and Britain and people realising that the war was the first time there had been a joint army fighting a common cause."

The common enemy at Albuhera in 1811 was Napoleon's 25,000-strong French Army, which planned to take control of Spain having recently defeated neighbouring Austria.

Gen William Beresford's allied force in the region consisted of roughly 33,000 soldiers, made up of about 9,000 British, 9,000 Portuguese and 15,000 Spanish troops.

British personnel marched into battle wearing boots that dissolved in wet weather or makeshift sandals made from cattle hide. In the main they were

armed with the India Pattern Musket – similar to the Land Pattern Musket, but cheaper and less durable.

During the grisly encounter on May 16, 1811, The Buffs were left with just 15 per cent of its strength still standing and lost its regimental colour to the French enemy.

Only the 2nd Battalion, 31st (Huntingdonshire) Regiment managed to form a defensive square and repel the opposition's cavalry.

The two other brigades of the 2nd Division then came to the fore, as six battalions, including the 57th (West Middlesex) Regiment, formed up in line behind the Spanish facing south, linking up with the 2/31st.

While both the enemy units and the allied force were attempting to occupy a prominent ridge, which formed a key strategic platform, the British infantry were able to focus more of their musket fire on the French because of their chosen formation.

With their adversaries firing back and using additional artillery support, the clash became one of most deadly in the whole Peninsular campaign.

Following a four-hour battle on the

• The war was the first time there had been a joint army fighting a common cause •



Spanish field the day was won by Gen Beresford, but with significant casualties to his exhausted men.

As testament to its courage at Albuhera, the 57th earned one of the most famous nicknames in the British Army – The Diehards – and the Regiment went on to insert “Albuhera” within its cap badge.

Two centuries on, serving soldiers and retired personnel commemorated the efforts of their forebears by conducting ceremonies in respect of the British fallen.

Those that travelled through the ancient fortified towns were given lectures on the area and paid homage to those who fought valiantly upon the ground which they stood.

“PWRR had a large amount at Albuhera and to mark it we’ve adopted a local school and we give a cup to the pupil who speaks the best English,” said Maj Martin.

“On Albuhera Day there’s a big ceremony on the main square with the Spanish Army. The whole village reenacts the battle and local men join the regiment.”

The deputy regimental secretary went on to say that although the nature of the war was very different to the battles of today, it could still provide education for the future.

“I think the lessons that could’ve been learnt from the battle are of how to have unity with other countries when fighting a common foe,” he said.

“It also proved how tough the English soldier was at that time and the same continues to be true in places like southern Afghanistan.”

Information about 19th century warfare may not match the 24-hour media coverage of Op Herrick but from a 19-year-old bugler to an 84-year-old brigadier, there is a lasting respect for military ancestors.

The wider world may not realise that during the Peninsular War one-sixth of Britain’s adult population were under arms, but the 150 who marched through Albuhera in 2011 showed their knowledge and pride. ■

Above, Respect: Two Spanish soldiers in historical uniform attend the wreath-laying ceremony as part of ongoing Peninsular War bicentenaries; British Serviceman past and present paid homage to their military forebears who fought on May 16, 1811 by attending local celebrations and battlefield tours; Buglers from 2 PWRR sound the *Last Post* during a ceremony to mark the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Albuhera at the regiment’s memorial in the Spanish village.

Living history

Peninsular War 200 will be travelling to Spain to mark anniversaries of British battles against Napoleon at various events this year:

June

13-20: Battlefield tour by 97 Battery (Lawson’s Company), Royal Artillery
25-26: Visit Tarragona battle site

July

7-8: Conference on Britain’s soldiers 1750-1815 at University of Leeds

September

Tbc: Battlefield tour by the Royal Artillery Historical Society
10-11: Reenactment of Battle of Fuengirola
17-18: Visit Gerona battle sites

October

1-2: Reenactment of Battle of Sagunto
8-9: Reenactment of Battle of Bailén
28: Bicentenary of the Battle at Arroyo Molinos

For more information go to www.peninsularwar200.org



BRIEF ENCOUNTERS



Above and right, Talkback: The briefing team, led by Lt Col James Robinson (RGR), discuss issues with Army units including members of 27 Regiment, Royal Logistic Corps

Pictures: Mike Weston and CGS's BT

Below, With the boss: The group visit Gen Sir Peter Wall to discuss concerns raised during a recent presentation Picture: CGS's BT



Report: Richard Long

In an era of allowance cuts, redundancies and a general tightening of the defence budget, the link between serving soldiers and the Chief of the General Staff has never been more important.

The current level of change and uncertainty has provoked an inevitable barrage of questions from the ranks, but personnel can rest assured knowing their voices and opinions are being heard at the very top.

An experienced team – which reports directly to Gen Sir Peter Wall – has the task of canvassing such crucial feedback and no stone is left unturned when it comes to garnering information from Regular and Territorial Army Servicemen and women and their families.

"Our work is pretty much non-stop," Lt Col James Robinson (RGR), the leader of CGS's Briefing Team, told *Soldier*.

"The only time we come to a halt is when we consolidate our information and pass it back to the Army Board.

"Our aim for each period is to meet a broad selection of units based on their role and location, so we get a good cross section of Service life.

"In the present climate soldiers and their families appreciate the opportunity to be updated on what is happening in the Army. It is a very busy time and it can be difficult for them to keep abreast of the latest developments. That is where we come in."

The small team visits many different units throughout the year and each session starts with an hour-long presentation that charts what is happening within the wider military world.

Soldier witnessed their work first-hand when they visited Aldershot to speak to personnel serving with 27 Regiment, Royal Logistic Corps.

The initial presentation gave valuable updates on the mission in Afghanistan as well as discussing the implications of the Strategic Defence and Security Review.

New kit and equipment was outlined, as were recent projects to improve accommodation and medical support.

With the talking over, the assembled soldiers split into smaller groups, defined by rank, for a feedback session with their visitors.

"Our role is to facilitate communication between the units and the senior leadership within the Army," Lt Col

Robinson explained.

"We give them a presentation on current issues then we sit down in groups and listen to what they have to say.

"A lot of things are changing at the moment and there are a lot of concerns that go with that.

"Our people, both soldiers and their families, have the opportunity, through us, to raise those concerns at the highest level.

"They are completely free to speak their mind. The chain of command is not there and they are raising relevant points in front of their peers. I think they appreciate having their voices heard.

"That feedback goes to the unit commanding officer and we brief CGS and the Army Board three times a year on the issues personnel raise."

Gen Wall has been quick to stress the importance of this process. He is encouraging soldiers to engage in the sessions so an accurate portrayal of military service can be recorded.

In a message to personnel, he said: "These are testing times for our people and it is critical that the Army leadership gets the clearest possible picture of the bad things as well as the positive things about your way of life in the Army.

"We need to know what worries you and what motivates you to continue serving through the challenging campaigns which are affecting everyone.

"I attach great importance to your feedback and I want to assure you that we will design our approach to the future on what I receive from you.

"The briefing team's reports provide useful updates on what your key concerns are and then give a summary of where we are able to make progress."

The need to accurately gauge Army opinion is crucial in today's climate and CGS's Briefing Team is playing a key role in ensuring soldiers are kept up-to-date with Service developments as well as giving them a direct link to the top.

Final word – page 106

Any Army unit, Regular or Territorial, or headquarters that would like a visit from CGS's Briefing Team should contact WO2 CBT at the Army Presentation Group on 01276 417000 or 94261 5316

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What about help for post 9/11 heroes?

I HAVE a much-loved mate who suffered multiple amputations as a result of an improvised explosive device attack in South Armagh about 20 or so years ago.

His prosthetics are ill-fitting, he is never free from pain and he depends on his regimental charity and ABF The Soldiers' Charity for financial support to supplement his war pension.

You can imagine my delight when I read of the four new Personnel Recovery Centres due for construction, "Road to Recovery" (March). I assumed that at long last my friend would get much-needed help. However, that delight evaporated when I realised that the facilities – funded by considerable donations from military charities – will only provide for serving soldiers with the intent of returning personnel to duty or preparing them for medical discharge.

I always assumed that the Army had a duty of care to fund and provide for those still serving and that military charities looked after those no longer in uniform.

On digging deeper, I was also annoyed to discover that Help for Heroes only support those injured since 2001. Those wounded before, including the 6,380 who suffered dreadful life-changing injuries on Op Banner, are excluded.

Help for Heroes does not openly advertise this policy and many of my friends who give generously to the charity – often to the detriment of other charitable organisations – were unaware of this caveat.

Perhaps the MoD should review this arrangement for the funding of its legal and moral responsibilities, which through the use of military charities has created a two-tier cohort of injured veterans. – **Chas Taylor.**

Bryn Parry, chief executive officer and co-founder of Help for Heroes, writes:
When Help for Heroes was founded in 2007 it was decided that the charity would provide direct, practical support to those wounded, sick or injured post September 11, 2001.

It was felt that the other Service charities were already doing a brilliant job and there was no need to replicate that. There was a need, though, for money to be raised for capital projects, such as the swimming pool and gym complex at Headley Court.

Since those early days, the charity has caught the public's imagination and funds have continued to be collected which has enabled us to continue with both capital projects and individual benevolence.

The capital projects we have funded, such as the £3.5 million grant to Combat



Picture: Sgt Ian Forsyth, RLC

Stress that enabled them to extend and modernise their facilities, will be available for everyone they support.

It is not that men and women before 2001 aren't worthy of our help; but that there are many other places they can go to that will provide exactly what they need.

There are more than 400 Service charities that have been set up with the specific aim to look after all veterans. Forces charities work on a layering system which means that no one is left unaided.

The new Personnel Recovery Centres are primarily there to help those wounded, sick or injured since 9/11 both serving and those who have left in that time frame. Should there be any spare capacity, we would of course happily open it up to those from conflicts before September 2001.

While it might not say on our collection tins that the money goes to help those post 9/11, it is stated on the homepage of our website as a key message and is very much part of our mission statement.

The money raised by our wonderful supporters is not to the detriment of other Service charities. It has been proven that since Help for Heroes has been around, the profile and funds of other groups has also increased.

We have helped raise awareness of these other great organisations, providing grants to many that will enable them to provide the very best care to the men and women who need it. For example,

BLESMA received a grant of £100,000 for adventure training and SSAFA Forces Help received £520,000 to go towards their Homes from Home appeal.

We also work very closely with many of them, for example, we are partnering with The Royal British Legion, as well as the MoD, on the Personnel Recovery Centres.

Furthermore, Help for Heroes has tapped into a new generation of individuals wanting to donate money to support the forces – much younger people who would previously not have thought about giving but want to now because they know that the double amputee coming back from Afghanistan may be the same age as them. They can relate to it on a much greater level because the wounded are their contemporaries.

While Help for Heroes may not be able to help your friend specifically, we would like to inform you that all veterans who receive a war pension for amputation(s) are entitled to priority treatment, subject to clinical need, at NHS Limb Centres, while those who are still serving receive treatment at Headley Court.

If your friend is experiencing problems with an ill-fitting prosthesis then he should be strongly encouraged to contact BLESMA's assistant general secretary, Ernie Stables.

Ernie liaises with all the NHS facilities and represents individual BLESMA members' concerns to the appropriate centres; he could do so in this case.



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Skip the supplements on Op Massive

AM writing as both a commander on operations and as a qualified chemist to highlight what is an increasing concern within the Armed Forces – the use of workout supplements.

Such products are big business and are more popular than ever among British Service personnel, especially when deployed in Helmand province where going to the gym is daily routine and "Op Massive" is commonplace.

While most supplements are pretty harmless and merely provide the user with the extra nutrients needed to build muscle or salts needed to replenish body fluids, it is the pre-workout stimulants and thermogenic fat-burning products that I wish to highlight.

This range is developing at a rapid pace, with new compounds available on a regular basis. All are widely promoted within magazines and available through the BFPO system.

Pre-workout formulas are designed to give the user a legal "high" in order to promote increased results in the gym.

Most are based around a very high caffeine content, however, contain other ingredients designed to interact with the central nervous system.

In addition to the active contents, most of these products are filled out with a magnesium-based compound which has no positive effect, but can cause gastrointestinal issues.

Common side-effects of taking these stimulants include insomnia, mood changes and a diuretic impact which can lead to dehydration. On top of this there is the potential to develop a dependency.

Thermogenic fat burners are another commonly promoted product. They are designed to raise the core temperature of the user's body in order to increase metabolism and hence burn more calories.

- AS the mother of a soldier serving in Brunei, I would like to know why the Army will not pay for an airfare home after 12 months of service there.

I am told that an offer is made to "loan" the cost of a flight with money repaid on a monthly basis. My son chose to pay his fare home in full and was lucky enough to be able to afford to do so. However, the Army chose to send him to Brunei and if he had been posted to Germany, for instance, his journey home would have cost approximately £120. In this case it was £1,295.

Surely when politicians are travelling first class everywhere, an economy fare home for a soldier serving so far away could be paid once a year. It's disgraceful.

Any overseas allowance that has been made in the past is more than eaten up by such hefty travel costs. – Name and address supplied.

Brig Mike Griffiths, DPS(A), writes:
Personnel assigned to any overseas



This is fine when the user is in a controlled environment, however, not something to be taking for the first time in a heat-stress environment such as southern Afghanistan where the body is put under other external pressures and strenuous activity.

While these products are not illegal, they

do have an effect on the body which will differ from person to person and should be approached with relative caution by first-time users.

This letter is merely to highlight a potential problem, especially as we head into the Afghan summer. – *Capt I Burns, British Embassy Kabul.*



"Airfare yes, madam. First-class? No chance."

locations for greater than 12 months are entitled to receive Get You Home (Overseas) [GYH(O)], which is designed to help with the costs of travel back to their nominated address in the UK once during each 12-month period that they serve at the overseas assignment.

The entitlement includes funding

towards the cost of travel in the overseas country from the duty location to the nearest airport, a contribution towards the price of the airfare (up to a capped maximum rate, currently £1,296 for Brunei) and further funding towards the cost of travel from the UK airport to the nominated address. GYH(O) can be taken in conjunction with any authorised leave period during the year.

To enable individuals to book flights in advance and obtain better deals, individuals are able to claim an advance of the airfares portion of this allowance.

Your son does not have to pay back the cost of his flight unless he chooses one above the capped limit, in which case he only pays the difference. If he approaches his unit's administration office they will be able to guide him through the process of claiming the allowance.

Keep money in your Army-issue pockets

MANY of us will be receiving our first issue of Multi-Terrain Pattern uniforms soon, but while on Op Herrick 12 I noticed that a number of soldiers had purchased commercial variants of multicam clothing and pouches.

My current unit is due to deploy to theatre soon and individuals have begun to buy kit to take with them.

While I acknowledge that the items now being issued look good and replicate what soldiers have previously been paying for out of their own pockets, it will always be the case that personnel will want to look slightly different and have their own gear.

With this and the fact that some commercial items look very similar to the new uniforms in mind, will soldiers still be permitted to wear off-the-shelf kit? Clarity now will save some individuals a good deal of money. — **Name and address supplied.**

Maj (Retd) Allan Law, SO2 Mat Sp, responds: 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; and we take very seriously any suggestion that

troops are having to supplement their equipment.

There is therefore no requirement for soldiers to purchase items of kit. In addition, most commercially-available products are expensive to buy, but wear out at a similar rate to issued items, so soldiers will be out of pocket unnecessarily.

There is also a risk with buying items that are not manufactured to MoD standards. Incorrectly specified equipment could fail at an inopportune moment, or compromise the user if, for example, it has not been properly treated with IRR dyes.

Furthermore, although the differences may appear marginal, multicam is not an official UK Land Forces uniform.

Wearing another nation's clothing could result in incorrect identification of the individual.



'How can we claw back missing clothing?'

I AM trying to find out whether there is a solution to the issue of reclaiming a Territorial Army soldier's clothing and equipment when they are discharged.

Currently, in the event of a Reservist not turning up for a three-month period, we phone, text and eventually send out letters warning that poor attendance will result in discharge.

However, if that individual does not report to hand in his or her equipment and clothing, how do we legally get the kit back? At the moment it is just written off.

I find this system very wasteful, especially in the current financial climate.

It is extremely disconcerting when you have recruits and junior soldiers leaving after only just a few months of service with all of their gear.

A Regular soldier in the same circumstances would be billed accordingly. What ever happened to the one Army concept? — **WO2 M L Field, SPSI 240 Tpt Sqn, RLC(V).**

Col (Retd) Glen Gillott, SO1 Log Sec, D Log (A), replies: HQ Land Forces has

been alive to your concerns for some considerable time and Land Forces Standing Order (LFSO) 6102, the current issue being dated November 2008, gives comprehensive direction on the action to be taken on discharge and also preventative methods to be taken prior to discharge from service.

The order directs units on how to safeguard MoD assets, prevent further losses and sets out policy on storage of clothing and equipment. It acquaints units with the procedures to be followed in the event of non-return items held by TA personnel upon discharge and cadets upon leaving the Cadet Force.

It should be borne in mind that individuals may keep certain items on discharge as a Free Retention Scale and these articles should be classed as consumables; therefore there is no requirement to write them off.

Clothing exchanges in the last six months of Service are to be restricted to essential kit only.

The LFSO advises on the sequence of actions to be carried out when a soldier

does not hand in equipment, ranging from issuing letters to a home address, through to requesting that the Ministry of Defence Police visits the individual's place of residence.

Should the soldier still not conform, the option is to raise an invoice for payment against them or the parent/guardian of the cadet concerned to be passed to the Director General Financial Management, Financial Management Shared Service Centre.

On receipt, this organisation will pursue the claim and initiate the debt management process.

If the unit does not hold the authority to raise invoices the case should be passed through the chain of command to the basic level budget manager or brigade HQ budget manager.

Advice is also given on pursuing a claim through the Small Claims Court.

I can appreciate your frustrations on what can be construed as wasteful practices. There is, however, a balance to be struck between the amount to be recovered and the cost of proceedings.

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Pressing on the Defence purse

AM writing regarding the letter by Cpl Atherton concerning ironing at Camp Bastion and its associated costs, *Talkback* (April).

While not in a position to remark on the military rationale for such a directive, as part of the Operational Energy Management team I am in a position to comment on its costs.

Tasked with looking at ways to reduce the reliance we have on diesel, part of the work we have conducted is to look at expenditure of fuel in Camp Bastion and forward areas.

Taking the corporal's figures for troop numbers and ironing time needed per soldier per week as correct, approximately 332,800kWh of power would be required per year.

However, Cpl Atherton underestimated the cost of both diesel and the price of a kWh at Camp Bastion. The actual figures are £1.06 per litre, which leads to a kWh costing 36p.

This means the true cost of introducing the ironing policy for 6,000 men will be £119,808 not £37,000.

I wonder if the people who introduced this directive thought of speaking to the Expeditionary Campaign Infrastructure



(ECI) project team? This group has launched a major initiative to reduce the amount of diesel required by Camp Bastion by 50 per cent. The fuel required to power the base is currently costing more than £20 million per year.

To date 190 contractors have been killed on fuel resupply convoys. ECI hope to cut costs down, reducing the risk faced daily by those who deliver the fuel.

The significant amount of extra diesel that would be required by the new ironing policy seems to go against this excellent and worthwhile initiative. – **Ray Fielding, Defence Equipment & Support, Abbey Wood, Bristol.**

Suspicious of Spar's 'special' subsistence prices

I AM a civilian clerk at HQ Land Forces in Andover and go to the other ranks' mess (Spar shop) for my lunch and have noticed an inconsistency in its prices.

The military are able to purchase a core meal for only £1.39. As a non-entitled civilian, I pay £2.65 – significantly more but still good value.

However, the mess offers "special" alternatives but charges £3.40 to both military and civvy customers. Surely, if those in uniform are entitled to a reduction in the cost of their meal because of their duties, they are entitled to it irrespective of the standard. – **Robert Steel, Ops & Plans, HQ Land Forces.**

Hospital op stops operational payment

DURING my third tour of duty in Afghanistan I was unlucky enough to suffer a non-combat injury.

I was flown back from theatre and sent to Birmingham where I spent one day in hospital and am now awaiting surgery.

Since returning to the UK, I have been told that I will only receive a percentage of the operational bonus on a pro rata basis.

Lots of other people I know have suffered injuries and been told the same thing. Those who returned home early from Op Herrick 12, however, still received their full bonus.

Can someone please clarify the rules? – **Name and address supplied.**

Brig Mike Griffiths, DPS(A), responds:
The bonus you refer to is correctly titled Operational Allowance (OA).

During operations, where individuals have been hospitalised and do not return to theatre, they remain eligible to receive OA until the date of their projected end of

tour or the six-month point from the day of deployment, whichever occurs first.

However, the key to this continued eligibility is that personnel must be treated as in-patients which means they must have been kept in hospital overnight, rather than been admitted as day cases.

It is not clear from your letter which of these two situations applies when you were admitted to the Royal Centre for Defence Medicine at Birmingham.

Your notes should make this clear and your unit, in consultation with your medical centre, should be able to verify this for you and advise accordingly.

The regulations for OA are contained in Joint Service Publication 752, chapter 10, section 12 and the specific rules governing the entitlement to the allowance where personnel who have been injured and left theatre before the end of the projected tour can be found in paragraph 10.1207a.

T-SHIRT TROUBLES

SHORTLY after arriving at my new unit I attended a physical training (PT) session in my issued kit and was told that in future I would be required to wear a green T-shirt embroidered with the unit's badge.

This is nothing unusual and a policy I had encountered at my two previous postings, where I was provided with one of the items for free and given the option to purchase another. However, on this occasion when I went to pick up a T-shirt I was promptly asked for £8.

Like all members of the Armed Forces I am issued with T-shirts for the purpose of physical training and do not see why I must part with money unnecessarily. – **Name and address supplied.**

Brig Mike Griffiths, DPS(A), replies:
You are quite correct that everyone in the British Army is provided with PT kit and also that some units insist on their own items (such as tracksuits and T-shirts) at the discretion of the commanding officer. The latter are not provided at public expense.

The wearing of team clothing, such as badged T-shirts, can be seen as part of building an *esprit de corps* within units/sub units.

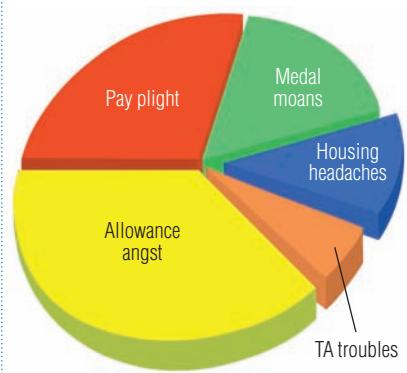
As you have already experienced, many organisations provide some of these articles from their own funds meaning that individuals do not have to pay for them or they are issued during training and maintained by the soldier thereafter.

However, some commanding officers direct that particular items of kit are to be worn and require individuals to pay for these. If this is the case in your current unit, then it is an issue for you to take up with your own unit.

Perhaps your letter will prompt commanding officers to think a little more about what they are asking you to buy. This really is a question of conscience and common sense.

Slice of Service life

This month's ruminations from the ranks...



German weaponry? British was best

N Richard Long's review of Michael Howard's book *Otherwise Occupied, Reviews* (May), he quotes the author as saying "there was no gunner in the British Army who would not have given their right arm for the German 88 as an anti-aircraft and anti-tank gun – it was better than anything we had".

Contrary to this opinion, we had the best anti-aircraft weapon of the war in the 3.7-inch heavy gun. This outperformed the 88 in every respect: higher muzzle velocity, higher ceiling (in the Mark 6 variant this was over 50,000 feet), higher rate of fire and a heavier shell.

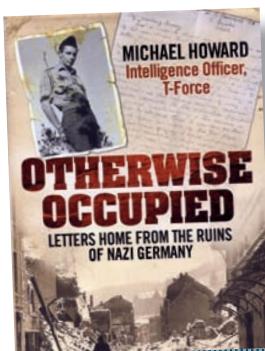
Mr Howard is on better ground with the anti-tank gun argument but only until the 17-pounder came into service.

On the few occasions that the 3.7 was used as an anti-tank weapon it was shown to be markedly superior to the 88.

During trials in Britain in 1941 its performance in this role was demonstrated to be outstanding.

German technology may have been advanced but Germany certainly held no major lead over the UK in terms of artillery.

The Nazi ground forces feared the British artillery more than any other



arm of the western Allied armies, since its flexibility and accuracy was outstanding and the weight of firepower it could bring to bear was frightening (the latter was the view of a German general in Normandy).

The 3.7, with the 25-pounder, was one of the great British success stories. What a

pity that we continue to denigrate our own achievements by suggesting that inferior German equipment was better.

Incidentally, some captured 88s were used by British gunners in Tunisia. None felt that they were using a superior asset to their own 3.7s. – Richard Doherty.

COUNTER TO SNACK ATTACK

I READ the letter from WO2 (FoS) Potts concerning Daily Rate Subsistence, "Allowance should be used as carrot for weight loss" (May), and wondered if the writer was on a wind up.

I spent 25 years in the RAPC/AGC and left the Army some 16 years ago so perhaps the rules have changed, but I doubt that very much.

The allowance has never been "extra food at the taxpayer's expense" – it is paid so that the claimant can purchase a meal while away from facilities.

Taking on food to sustain yourself is hardly extra and the rate doesn't allow for much anyway.

And what has body mass index got to do with this issue?

I would bet the correspondent is one of those thrusting marathon runners I occasionally met as they puffed their way back in to the mess after an evening "ten miler", sweating all over those of us who were keeping the profits up in the bar. – *Victor Hunt*.

WRITER IN THE DOGHOUSE

I FEEL I must reply to the "Hound 'em out" letter that appeared in April's issue and called for dogs to be banned from military camps. I hope this was an April Fool's joke.

In quarter of a century of service that was the most immature and childish letter I have ever seen printed. With all that the Army has on its plate, to pen such comments was ridiculous. Obviously the writer has far too much time on their hands.

I have asked Muslim soldiers about dogs in the workplace and far from being offended as suggested, they like it.

I am from an Army family which has unbroken service since 1880 and even on the oldest photo in our possession – a Great War shot of 9th Battalion, Royal Scots – there is a dog featured.

Also, in the briefest of replies to Cpl Atherton regarding having to press his kit, "Steaming over ironing on ops", it's almost like being in the Army, isn't it? I hope this too is an April Fool as if all he has to worry about is a bit of pressing, it is indeed a sad letter. – *Mr A De Landah, Grimsby*.

SHAPE UP NOT SCRUB UP

A LOT has been said in the letter pages of this superb magazine about dress in Afghanistan and while it is always going to be an emotive issue with the "guys on the ground" versus the "powers that be", I feel it is masking the real issue of obesity and a lack of fitness in theatre.

I was shocked to see overweight soldiers queuing for the cookhouse at Bastion who would quite clearly fail a physical or combat fitness test.

Rather than having a lieutenant colonel or garrison sergeant major (complete with pace stick) stand at the door of the cookhouse turning people away for not wearing issued boots, a unit PTI or member of the RAPTC should be directing overweight soldiers to the healthy-eating hotplate and arranging for them to attend PT sessions in the newly-built and fantastically-equipped gymnasium.

I suppose one positive of the presence of overweight personnel is that it provides evidence of decent food! – *Name and address supplied*.

Continuity of Education Allowance Important Announcement - CEA



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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CHAPTER HOUSE (Junior)	KING'S MAGNA (Middle)	QE COLLEGE (Senior)	QE FACULTY (Senior)
Tender loving care and common sense. UK's best quality boarding. Exam results well above average. Children are happy and well looked after. Small classes, caring dedicated staff. First class sport and activities. The UK's premier Junior School for Forces. We care and are not embarrassed to say so!	In our recent SAT 2 Key Stage examinations children did, on average, 50% better than those in State Schools. Our class sizes are much smaller than other schools which enables us to devote the extra time and energy in ensuring that children, of all levels of ability, achieve outstanding results. Pupils are happy and confident.	Offers traditional route to GCSE's, A-Levels or the International Baccalaureate. Superb facilities, dedicated, caring, friendly and staff. We have a history of enabling the average child to achieve success beyond what you would have thought possible. Happy, successful and confident students.	An alternative to A-Levels. Innovative BTEC qualifications directly related to your future: Sport Development and Fitness, Music Performing Arts, Technology, Business and Fashion. You can combine BTEC + A-Levels. We design individual course programme for you so you achieve your full potential.

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"Great prospectus and at last one, in fact the only one, we really believe. My wife said you 'hit the nail on the head' and address the issues that matter to parents and children."

"Thanks for sending your prospectus with details of your Forces Discounts. We have not found any independent school which can match you. You say it for real. We loved it."

Musicians have an easy life? The brass cheek of it

Picture: Steve Dook



AS the wife of an ex-musician with 34 years of service to his name and with a son in the Corps of Army Music, I was disgusted

to read the comments made about military bands in May's issue, "Are bands singing from the same song sheet?"

I know first-hand how hard band members work. Yes, they do appear to have time off but what the correspondent failed to acknowledge is that there are occasions when they get up at 0200 to rehearse before doing a full day's work.

There are also times when they have to

play at a gig late in the evening – at an hour when the writer in question is probably tucked up in bed.

Army musicians of all ranks are highly-qualified individuals who in some cases have already got a degree or even a masters in music before they join up. They have worked very hard to be part of a band.

Despite what the correspondent thinks, many of our lads and lasses have served in Iraq, Afghanistan and Northern Ireland. I suggest the writer spends a couple of weeks in the company of Guards' musicians near to Trooping the Colour to see just how hard they work. – Name and address supplied.

Puzzled by changes to public sector pensions

AM about to leave the Army after 39 years in uniform and until recently had felt slightly smug that I chose a career that provided a decent, safe pension.

It would be fair to say that when times were bad, and there were a few, it was this benefit that kept me extending my service – accepting that it made up for the poor wages, rubbish conditions and lack of Gore-Tex. Now I'm told that my nest egg will be worth less due to calculations being made using the Retail Price Index (RPI) rather than the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and as a result of tax changes to pension pot levels.

These revisions were described in a very badly-worded and confusing policy letter which was put to one side by most people as they had no idea what it said.

Can someone please explain what these changes mean to those who, like me, are a year off qualifying for a full pension and Early Departure Payments (EDPs)?

I fear that myself and others are going to face tax bills in relation to our hard-earned pensions. – Maj W Thomson, Munster.

Brig Mike Griffiths, DPS(A), replies:
All public sector retirement pensions (including EDPs from age 55 under the Armed Forces Pension Scheme 2005) are uplifted annually in an effort to keep pace with increases in the cost of living due to inflation.

From April 1, the government changed the index used to calculate this uplift from RPI to CPI. These two indexes calculate inflation using slightly different factors. For example, the latter does not include mortgage interest payments and housing costs and has historically, but not always, been lower than RPI by an average of one per cent per year.

Please be reassured that your EDP and pension at the time of your retirement remain safe. The switch to CPI will not affect the level of these benefits at that date. However, the change will mean that, once in payment, your EDP from age 55

and pension from age 65 will not grow in value as quickly under CPI as they would have had they still been linked to RPI.

I acknowledge that this will be unwelcome news, but this change was imposed across the whole public sector and is part of the government's measures to reduce the national deficit.

From April 5 of this year, the Annual Allowance (AA) by which a pension pot can increase in a single year tax-free was also reduced. I am afraid that pension taxation is a complex topic and I urge you to take the time to re-read the information provided in **2011DIN01-003** and **2011DIN01-106**, as well as the Adjutant General's letters to the chain of

command (dated October 15, 2010 and April 8, 2011).

It is calculated that the reduction in AA will only start to impact on Service personnel once an individual is promoted to lieutenant colonel and above, and does not impact at all once a pension is in payment.

Therefore, retiring as a major, it is highly unlikely that you will be affected by these changes. In taking advantage of an EDP you appear to have already taken guidance on pension matters.

However, if you remain concerned about the implications of these revisions, I recommend you once again seek independent financial advice.

BARKING MAD

I FEAR your correspondent in April's issue, "Hound 'em out", is probably the only non-dog lover in the Army.

The writer of the letter calling for pets to be excluded from military sites misses the point. He or she may not like animals but they have failed to understand the nature of the conceptual standing dogs enjoy in the workplace and the practicalities of having them on barracks.

As the owner of a pretty needy short-haired German pointer, I have a vested interest; my dog is with me at work most days and is perhaps better known in the regiment than I am. When he isn't by my side I field questions all day along the lines of "where is Ziggy?".

He is part of my immediate family and very much a member of my troop, battery and wider regimental family. This is the key point and why the Army is such a dog-friendly environment. The regiment is the soldier or officer's "home" and he or she must feel at ease within it – the Service is, after all, a family business.

There is also a difference between dogs in general and an individual badly-behaved hound. I do not like pets,



including my own, licking me and would not tolerate it.

In my experience 99 per cent of military dogs are extremely well behaved and their owners take great pains to ensure they remain so when in barracks.

It would be a sad day if Army hounds were ordered to fall out. Life on camp would be much poorer for it. – Capt James Morgan, 32 Regt RA.



APPOINTMENTS

Lieutenant General: S V Mayall (late QDG) to Middle East Advisor; R L Barrons (late RA) to Deputy Chief of Defence Staff (Ops).

Major General: J R Everard (late QRL) to Assistant Chief of the General Staff; J G Lorimer (late Para) to General Officer Commanding 3rd (UK) Division; N A W Pope (late R Signals) to Chief of Defence Staff's strategic communications officer; T B Radford (late Light Infantry) to be Chief of Staff Headquarters Isaf Joint Command in December 2011.



COMPS

Spine line winner: D Kent, Portsmouth.

The Tourist winners: Ms Catherine Sage, Frimley; WO2 Mather, 527 Specialist Team RE (Works), Chilwell; Ms Christine Cartwright, MoD Corsham; Cpl A Duncan, 2 LSR LAD, BFPO 47; Mrs Jennifer Avis, 100 Regt RA (V), Luton.



DIARY

June 1-2: RUSI Land Warfare Conference at Banqueting House, Whitehall, London. Open to all ranks, but particularly relevant to officers involved in policy and capability development and senior NCOs. Keynote address by the Chief of the General Staff, Gen Sir Peter Wall. Contact Laura Tyrell for more information on 0207 747 2619 or by email at laura@rusi.org

June 5: Concert featuring musicians from the Coldstream Guards and US Army Europe Band at The Guards Chapel, London at 1700. Tickets (£15) from The Guards Museum, Wellington Barracks, London SW1E 6HQ or from Toy Soldier Centre on 0207 976 0850. Cheques payable to The Guards Museum.

June 8: War Widows' Association, Service of Commemoration at The Guards Chapel, London at 1130 followed by a reception at the Central Methodist Hall, Westminster. Contact Mrs R Campbell at 7 Pentreath Avenue, Guildford, Surrey GU2 7TA or by telephone on 01483 852056.

June 8-9: Household Division Beating Retreat. A floodlit music spectacular at Horse Guards Parade, Whitehall, London. Tickets available by calling 0844 847 2435.

June 11: The Great Poppy Picnic. The Royal British Legion celebrates its 90th anniversary with a picnic and afternoon of fun at Ingatestone Hall, Hall Lane, Ingatestone, Essex CM4 9NR. Admission is free and parking costs £5. Gates open at noon with entertainment from 1300. Contact Lynnette Francis on 01245 348818 or Tracey Hall on 01245 240989.

June 11-12: Severnside Military Vehicle Trust Show at the Cambridge Showground, Dursley. Tickets to the event are priced at £5

(adults) and £3 (concessions) and gates open at 0930. Call 01453 890920 for further details.

June 15: Swift and Bold. The band and bugles of the Rifles and band of the Royal Logistic Corps. New season of Kneller Hall summer concerts. Gates open at 1800, tickets £10 (adults), £8 (concessions: under 16s, OAPs), £5 (MoD personnel), £40 (season ticket with chair), £30 (family ticket). Free tickets are available for injured and ex-Service personnel



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; www.aff.org.uk

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

Career Transition Partnership: 0207 766 8020

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

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

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

Family Escort Service: 0207 463 9249

Forces Pension Society: 0207 820 9988

Joint Service Housing Advice Office: 01722 436575

Medal Office: 94561 3600 or 0141 224 3600

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

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

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

Royal British Legion: 0845 7725 725

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

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

South Atlantic Medal Association: 01495 227577

Services Cotswold Centre: 01225 810358

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



INTELLIGENCE

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

DIB 34/11: Responsibility for MoD commercial function transfers to the Chief of Defence Materiel and top-level restructuring in DE&S

DIB 35/11: Operation Ellamy update (April 20)

DIB 36/11: Treasury publishes expenditure for all government departments: defence budget

for 2011/12 confirmed

DIB 37/11: Changes to the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme are now effective

DIB 38/11: The new employment model

ABN 24/11: Information about the Army Personnel Data Management Organisation

ABN 25/11: Royal Tattoo, Windsor Castle

ABN 26/11: RUSI Land Warfare Conference

ABN 27/11: Op Herrick operational decompression

ABN 28/11: Inter-Services Twenty20 cricket at Lord's on June 28

ABN 29/11: Changes to the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme

DIN 2011DIN01-108: Revised messing and single accommodation charges for MoD civilians temporarily residing in Service messes in the UK

DIN 2011DIN01-109: Staff specifically recruited for overseas service: annual uplift to monthly accommodation charges

DIN 2011DIN01-110: Armed Forces bereavement scholarship scheme

DIN 2011DIN01-111: Publication of the independent Public Service Pensions Commission final report

DIN 2011DIN01-112: Phase two of the tri-Service community social worker post (eastern Caribbean)

DIN 2011DIN01-113: MIDIT recruitment

DIN 2011DIN01-114: Senior officer's course 119 at Nato Defence College in Rome (August 29, 2011 until February 3, 2012)

DIN 2011DIN01-115: Revised maternity policy for Servicewomen in the Regular Armed Forces

DIN 2011DIN01-116: London Pride (July 2)

DIN 2011DIN01-117: Changes to

qualifications and licences pages within the civilian Human Resource Management System (HRMS)

DIN 2011DIN01-118: Changing gender on HRMS

DIN 2011DIN01-119: Application process for staff wishing to apply for the senior civil service assessment centre

DIN 2011DIN01-120: The accrual of annual leave while on sickness absence

DIN 2011DIN01-121: Accommodation booking in the Portsmouth area

DIN 2011DIN01-122: The Naval Senior Officer Network

DIN 2011DIN01-123: Change to the taxation of compensation lump sums

DIN 2011DIN01-124: Change to HRMS diversity categories (disability, ethnicity and sexual orientation)

DIN 2011DIN01-125: JSP 830 – *Manual of Service Law, version 2*

DIN 2011DIN01-126: Late Entry (LE) commissions into the Army Medical Services

DIN 2011DIN03-019: Tri-Service regulations of the mobilisation of Volunteer and Regular Reserves

DIN 2011DIN04-056: Equipment tables, scales and schedules

DIN 2011DIN04-060: Joint support chain requirements change process

DIN 2011DIN04-061: Equipment tables, scales and schedules

DIN 2011DIN04-067: JSP 482 – *MoD explosives regulations, edition 3 change 1*

DIN 2011DIN04-069: Unit maintenance management system replications – changes to support arrangements

DIN 2011DIN04-070: Cadmium corrosion within the Python system

DIN 2011DIN05-016: Departmental instructions on handling parliamentary business including parliamentary questions, ministerial correspondence and Defence Select Committee business

DIN 2011DIN05-017: Army Personnel Data Management Organisation achieves full operating capability

DIN 2011DIN05-018: Formation of the Military Air Accident Investigation Branch

DIN 2011DIN05-019: A customer guide to the FATS gate and governance procedure

DIN 2011DIN05-020: Defence Information Infrastructure (Future), the closure of user accounts and the handling of data

DIN 2011DIN05-022: Working practices for the production of media work

DIN 2011DIN05-023: Recruiting and equipping graphics, photographic and digital print staff

DIN 2011DIN07-080: TA attendance on the Junior Officer Tactical Awareness Course

DIN 2011DIN07-081: Introduction of an information interoperability awareness online training course

DIN 2011DIN07-082: Army law of armed conflict training directive

DIN 2011DIN07-083: Army survival, evasion, resistance, extraction training

DIN 2011DIN07-084: Maritime Warfare School, aviation warfare course dates

DIN 2011DIN07-085: Army inter-unit orienteering championships

DIN 2011DIN07-086: LE officer attendance requirements, military analysis programme

DIN 2011DIN07-087: Applying for modules in the military aerospace and airworthiness suite of accredited courses at Cranfield University

Continued on page 74.

NO. 835

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TEN details have been changed on this photograph of members of The Household Cavalry preparing for ceremonial and escort duties ahead of the Royal Wedding.

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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

August issue.

April's competition: First correct entry drawn at random and winner of the £100 was **Tpr Green, Eltham, London.**

Runners-up **Sgt SD Hodgson, ACIO, Lancaster** and **W02 (SSM) L Jones, Pirbright, Surrey** win a £25 gift voucher.



DIN 2011DIN07-088: Higher defence studies programme: policy for academic year 12-13

DIN 2011DIN07-090: The defence logistics management course

DIN 2011DIN07-092: Information management courses (August 2011 - July 2012) at the Defence Academy, College of Management and Technology

DIN 2011DIN10-023: Armed Forces parachute championships (July 15-22)

DIN 2011DIN10-024: Army Football Association affiliation and cup competitions

DIN 2011DIN10-025: Combined Services Ice Hockey Association annual tri-Service Command and Inter-Services championships



REUNIONS

Hertfordshire & Bedfordshire Yeomanry Association

Association: Annual reunion on June 4 at the TA Centre, Marsh Road, Luton, Beds. Ex-members including wives and partners from the following regiments: 52 Hy Regt, 79 HAA Regt, 86 Fd Regt, 135 Fd Regt, 148 Fd Regt, 191 Fd Regt, 286 Fd Regt and any former or serving member of 100 Fd Regt RA. Details on 07753 344621 or email k8putthekettleon@hotmail.co.uk

Army personnel who worked at the Services Booking Centre between December 1985 and January 1991

Association: Jane Rigby (nee Newbould) and Steve Holmes are arranging a reunion on June 4 from 1300-1800 at The William Blake, 174-180 Old Street, London EC1V 9BP. Contact Steve on 0207 210 5253 for details.

Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters Association

Association: Annual reunion will be held at Worcester Rugby Club on June 4 from 1200-1800. Past and present members of the regiment and their families are

welcome. Contact Maj (Retd) M Green, RHQ Mercian (Nottingham Outstation), Foresters House, Chetwynd Barracks, Chilwell, Beeston, Nottingham NG9 5HA or call 0115 9465415.

10 Para: Reunion to be held at the Civil Service Club, 13 Great Scotland Yard, London SW1 from 1600 onwards on June 11. Further information from Pat Sands on 07949 662654 or by email at info@skyvan.co.uk

Queen's Own Highlanders (Seaforth & Camerons): 50th anniversary gathering, Inverness on June 11-12. Visit www.cabarfeidh.com or call 01463 732343.

Gordon Highlanders: Waterloo lunch at the London Scottish Headquarters, London SW1 on June 18. Ladies welcome. Further details from Bob Harman on 0208 642 7192 or honorary secretary John Spore on 01634 231070 or email jspoorewigmore@tinyonline.co.uk

90th anniversary of The Royal British Legion: Poppy party on the Hoe, Plymouth on June 26. Further details on 01392 272211.

The Mercian Regiment: Pilgrimage to the war memorial at Crich on July 3. Service starts at 1500. Details from Maj M Green, RHQ Mercian, Foresters House, Chetwynd Bks, Chilwell, Nottingham NG9 5HA.

ROADSHOWS

The Army Presentation Team wants to hear from members of the public who would like a personal invitation to its hi-tech roadshow. The event starts with a drinks reception, is followed by a presentation and questions and culminates with a finger buffet. There will be a range of military personnel on hand to answer any of your questions. Call 01276 417000 or email your name and address to apt.mod@btinternet.com with the event you are interested in attending.

June: 7, Aberdeen; 8, Perth; 9, Edinburgh. **July:** Ipswich, Northampton, Newcastle, York (tbc).



SEARCHLINE

104 FS Battalion REME requires Territorial Army volunteers for Op Herrick 16. The deployment will cover a 12-month mobilisation period with tour dates between April and October 2012. Anyone interested should contact the ROSO, 104 FS Bn REME via their company PSAO. The selection weekends will take place on **July 1-3** and **September 9-11, 2011**.

A collector has discovered an empty **First World War 37mm shell casing** carrying the name of **Clarence M Tuieed (or Tweed)**, Battery B 123 HFA. Any surviving family members (or regimental unit) that might want the shell should contact John Eyre by email at sitea25@aol.com

Falklands war veteran Tony McNally is looking for **poetry** submissions from veterans of any conflict for an anthology. All proceeds from this international collaboration will go to PTSD foundations in the UK. Poems should be sent via email to remybenoit@gmail.com

Bill Haygarth, the son of a veteran from **2 (Cheshire) Fd Sqn RE, 1939-45**, is writing a history of his father's unit during the Second World War. The author would like to hear from anyone who served in the squadron or knows members who did, for information about their operational campaigns. Contact Bill by phone on 01943 879998 or by email at Bill.Haygarth@btinternet.com

The **Airborne Engineers Association** is looking for past and present airborne sappers. Those who have served or are serving on the posted strength of a designated Royal Engineers airborne unit are eligible to join the association. Contact Billy Morris on 01252 343617 or email steve.morris5968@hotmail.co.uk for details.

Swantje Rose is trying to locate her grandfather **Edward (Ted) Hutchings**, a Second World War soldier who served in 11 Hussars and the Durham Light Infantry. He met his wife Gerda Rose in Hamburg or Wedel in 1945. Contact Swant-je-Rose@gmx.de

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'We need more than just tea and sympathy'

THE stresses and strains of military life have long been recognised. But in more recent times, much has been done not only to diagnose and treat post traumatic stress disorder but also to address more common mental health issues among Service personnel.

The Fighting Fit report by Dr Andrew Morrison suggests many areas in which the MoD could improve its support to serving personnel and veterans.

The document states: "Fighting Fit goes further. It recognises our obligations under the military covenant and reflects the high importance placed on the welfare of the Service community by the government."

The Service community is much more than those serving and veterans.

Although it is absolutely right that the report recommended enhanced support for former personnel to make up for the previous lack of provision, it failed to address a significant segment of military society – families.

Why should we be provided with a supporting shoulder? One reason was highlighted to me by a senior figure in a mental health charity who asserted that "if a soldier comes back home from operations to a happy, stable family then he [or she] is significantly less likely to suffer from long-term mental health problems due to his [or her] experiences".

It is acknowledged that periods of deployment are very stressful times in a soldier's career. Add to this separation from loved ones and it's easy to see that

a Service family's life is also challenging and, for some, potentially damaging to their mental health.

I've heard from a number of people about their mixed feelings when their spouse comes home from tour – the joy that they are back safely but also the guilt when a friend's partner has been injured or killed.

Others tell me how difficult they find it when their children ask about their parent deploying. I know from my own experience that "will daddy die?" is one of the hardest questions to answer.

Coping with these things day in, day out, even with the support of the military community around you is hard enough, but what about those living in their own homes away from base? What about families of TA soldiers whose first contact with the Army may have been as their loved one deployed?

At the moment, if a family member living in the UK has mental health issues (and I mean anything from stress to depression or severe disorders) their first port of call should be their own GP. The MoD has no provision to support families in this situation.

But I wonder how many of you have had the same experience as a spouse who, on describing their symptoms to their doctor and relaying the fact their soldier was on deployment, was told to go home and have a bath and nice cup of tea.

There is no doubt that there are a number of very able and engaged GPs out there

who would have addressed this situation more sensitively, but if doctors have little or no experience of the military how can they understand the added pressure it puts on "normal" life?

Our mobility as Army families exacerbates the situation. I envy my friends who spend long enough in one place to build up a relationship with their doctor, who in turn is better placed to gauge a patient's mental and physical well-being.

So what can be done? Well, we have our own part to play. Ensure that you tell your GP you are part of the military community and be honest about the stresses and strains of Service life. We're all far too good at coping and just getting on with it.

Counselling is available from either private sources or through referral by the Army Welfare Service but I'd like to see this enhanced so that the mental health provision for soldiers is mirrored for their family members. This isn't just to address their own suffering; all too often we are contacted by spouses who believe their soldier has a mental health issue. They are understandably concerned about post traumatic stress disorder but don't know where to go for information, advice and support.

If this coalition government truly places a high importance on the welfare of the Service community, they must address the inequality in provision for us, the family, in this area. ■

Julian Young & Co.

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Colin Whitehead - Armed Forces, Germany 30/1/11.
 (Former 40/day man)

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Gary, (43), 5'5", happy go lucky genuine single dad of one little boy. Ex-Territorial Army, various hobbies. Big Help for Heroes supporter seeks female Regular soldiers UK and Afghanistan for correspondence and friendship, age open. P010

Polly, a nurse in her 30s looking to write to soldiers serving abroad. Enjoys music (particularly classic rock), learning to play drums, reading, films and lots of time thinking about (but not doing) motorbike test. Seeking pen pals, any age group. P011

Lesley, (41), 5'6", shoulder-length brown curly hair, hazel eyes with a good sense of humour and medium/athletic build. Enjoys playing a little bit of golf, plays and umpires netball, learning Spanish, baking, cooking, walking/rambling, spending time with her family, holidays from camping/ caravans to five star all inclusive. It's great to get away and even better to come back home. Seeking pen pals, 35-45. P012

Jan, (44), 5'4", medium-length brown hair, confident and outgoing. Enjoys canoeing, scuba diving holidays, nights out with friends. Learning to play guitar got as far as *Wonderwall* and *Angels* not quite ready to join a band, quite intelligent always studying something, sometimes even finishing the course. Seeking military pen pals, any age group, will reply to anyone who writes to me. P013

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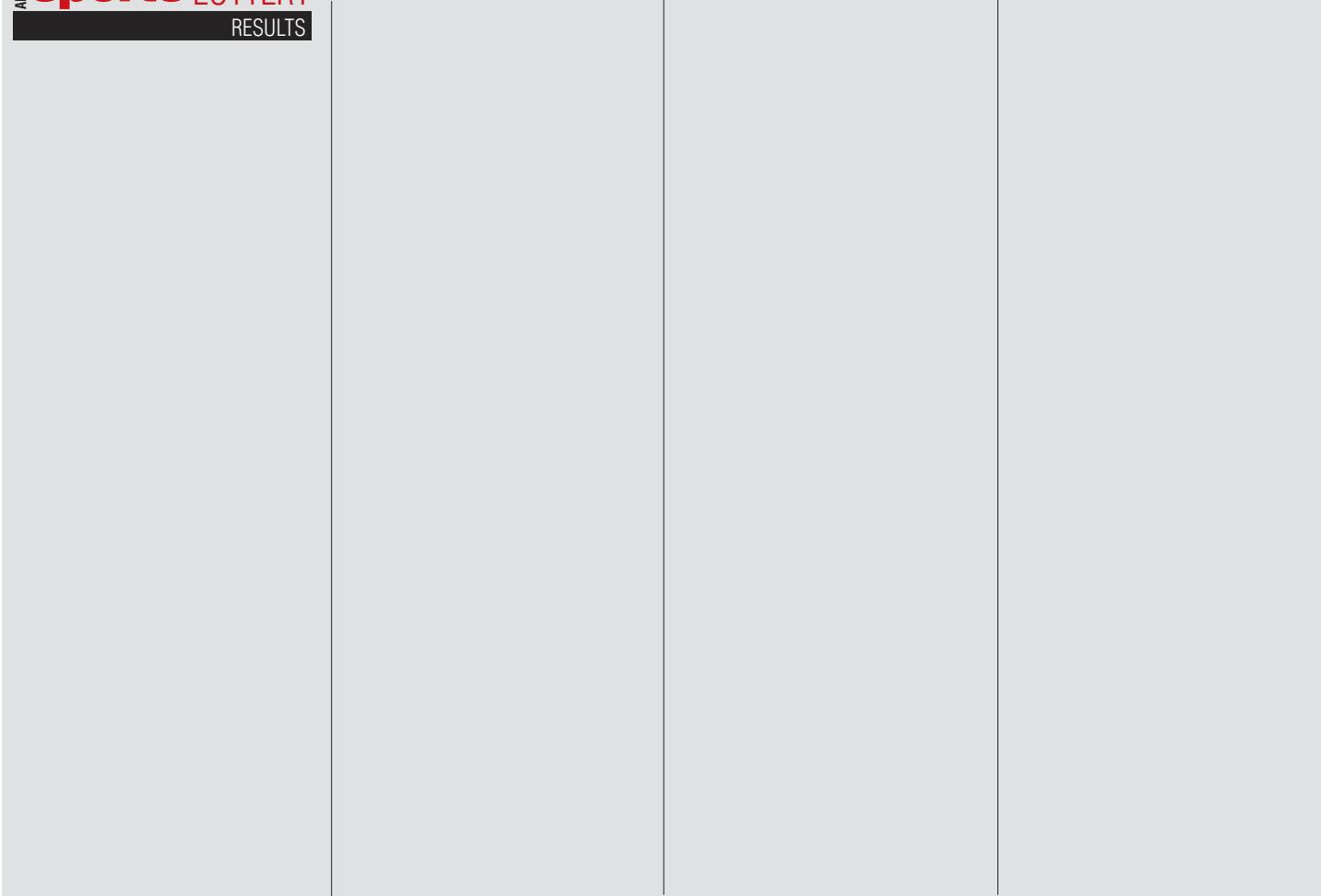
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Boxing Brothers: Christian Bale and Mark Wahlberg are outstanding in *The Fighter*, based on the life of welterweight Micky Ward

Addictive characters

Acting of the highest order brings to life a jaw-dropping true story of two boxers

Review: Joe Clapson

AN underdog battling against adversity to gain boxing glory might sound like an obvious, formulaic attempt to grab a quick buck from easy-to-please fight fans.

But although *The Fighter* does involve the aforementioned underdog – played by the excellent Mark Wahlberg – and he does achieve triumph, the ring action is very much secondary to the emotional turmoil created by his dysfunctional “white trash” family.

The movie, set in Lowell, Massachusetts, is based on the true story of 1990s welterweight boxer Micky Ward and his unhinged ex-fighter brother, Dicky Eklund (Christian Bale).

We see how dream lifestyles are not always the reality for former pro boxers, as ten years on from knocking down Sugar Ray Leonard, Dicky is an emaciated crack addict.

Bale matches an acclaimed performance in *The Machinist* with an accurate portrayal of his subject, which is both shocking and upsetting.

The film opens with the two brothers walking through town, followed by a camera crew

recording what Dicky believes is a documentary to chronicle his celebrated comeback. It transpires that he is kidding himself.

The casual dialogue between Bale, Wahlberg and their pitbull of a mother (Melissa Leo) is simple and entirely believable, setting it apart from standard sports pictures. For a boxing film there are not many punches thrown but the expertly-crafted intra-family rows are more ferocious than any act of pugilism.

A scene on the ash-stained sofas in the family home captures Micky’s situation perfectly: his role is to accept anything his mother-cum-promoter says and outside opinions are not welcome, even if he is the one putting the gloves on.

Micky suggests he might not take a fight organised by his mum and his trainer Dicky, so the bleached-blonde battleaxe asks what the problem is. Micky’s girlfriend, Charlene (Amy Adams), pitches in: “[to Dicky] Like maybe you not showing up to train, like him [Micky] having to come find you in a crack house when you’re supposed to be at the airport.”

Despite being valid, the comment is dismissed through a haze of cigarette smoke: “I’m sorry, I don’t know who you are, or why you’re talking,” says the mother-boss.

Throughout the course of the movie we see Dicky – the “Pride of Lowell” – degenerate into a spaced-out mess, but with his sycophants continuing to prop up his hero status.

Micky’s battle to be heard by his family and to convince himself that a deluded drug-addict is not the best person to handle his career proves more of a challenge than fighting an opponent.

But he remains loyal to his brother and rolls over for the houseful of idle sisters who exist to gossip, eat and smoke.

In contrast to Bale’s in-your-face character, Micky is shy and retiring and desperate not to ruffle any feathers, even if it means he misses his big chance for a Las Vegas fight.

The film shows the classic mother and hangers-on who are oblivious to the failures of loved ones. Dicky’s denial and his parent’s blinkers are holding Micky back.

This is an inspiring real-life tale of two men from a troubled background fighting their different battles to win more than a coveted boxing title in front of an adoring crowd.

Rocky is wonderful, but this is edgy, often uncomfortable and brilliant because it’s real. ■

● ***The Fighter*** is out on DVD on June 20

From Russian labour-camp escapes to comedy gangsters, *Soldier* checks out the latest DVD releases...

As Far As My Feet Will Carry Me

BASED on a best-selling novel, this powerful epic tells the true story of Clemens Forell, a German soldier imprisoned in a Siberian labour camp at the end of the Second World War. Following four years of brutal treatment he escapes but not only finds himself pursued by the Russian military, he also faces a journey of more than 8,000 miles in one of the most hostile environments on earth. The film is in German but with English subtitles, which adds to the overall effect and impact. An absolutely incredible movie from start to finish, showing what one man will endure physically and mentally in order to see his family again.



Rodge Tapply, ex-RE

The Open Door out now

THIS horror film from first-time director **Doc Duhamé** revolves around an urban legend about a pirate radio station and “The Oracle” who answers phone calls granting teenage wishes, with horrifying results. The plot centres on a young girl who wants what she cannot have and makes a request for her dream to come true. The protagonist’s life becomes a living hell as the film quickly spirals into body possession, murder and general scare tactics but unfortunately this independent movie lives up to its low budget. The scariest part is watching the uncharismatic and unconvincing young actors at work.



Dan Crowder, Greater Manchester ACF

Fink out now

A BLACK comedy gangster flick with slices from all strata of the criminal food chain; whackers, slackers, under-cover coppers, gamblers and schemers. From the opening scene a seemingly improvised narrative complements variable speed filming, unpredictable camera angles and a cracking soundtrack. The cast is fated to become entwined, despite their diverse and seemingly unrelated backgrounds and taste in handguns. Their common denominator, Fink, the city’s vengeful Mr Big, provides the pivot. If you can forgive some occasionally suspect ham acting this slapstick and gritty Australian offering packs a killer punch.



Capt Neil Johnson, AAC



Punch drunk: Christian Bale and Mark Wahlberg serve up an acting masterclass in an emotional story of two brothers fighting adversity

Win... Don't Look Now

WIDELY acknowledged as director **Nic Roeg's** finest film and one of the best British movies of all time, *Don't Look Now* has been digitally re-mastered for the first time and will be re-released on June 27. Starring **Donald Sutherland** and **Julie Christie**, this genuinely unsettling flick, set in Venice, sees a blind psychic claim to have been in communication with a couple's dead child.

Soldier has teamed up with Optimum Classic to give five readers the chance to win a copy of the Blu-Ray title. Just tell us who directed the film. Answers on a postcard to the usual address or send an email to comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk



Closing date: June 30

Win... You Will Meet a Tall Dark Stranger

WRITTEN and directed by **Woody Allen** and featuring a star-studded cast *You Will Meet A Tall Dark Stranger* is witty, inventive and out on DVD on July 11. The film follows a pair of married couples, Alfie (**Anthony Hopkins**) and Helena (**Gemma Jones**) and their daughter and her husband, through the trials and tribulations of their romantic relationships. *Soldier* has five copies of the DVD to give away, courtesy of Warner Home Video. For a chance to win, just tell us who plays Alfie in the film. Answers on a postcard to the usual address or send an email to comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk



Closing date: June 30

Win... The Fighter

THE two-time Academy Award and Golden Globe winner, *The Fighter*, is released on June 20. The inspirational underdog story tells the motivating tale of two brothers (**Christian Bale** and **Mark Wahlberg**) who, against all the odds, come together to train for an historic title match that unites their fractured family, redeems their past and brings pride to their hard-luck town. *Soldier* has teamed up with Momentum Pictures to offer five readers a chance to win a copy of the DVD. Just tell us who plays Dicky in the film. Answers on a postcard to the usual address or send an email to comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk



Closing date: June 30



On the Brink: The latest title from publishers Bethesda sees gamers battling for control of the futuristic Ark settlement

Choose your enemy

Novel approach to shooter format sees players fight for security or resistance

Review: Richard Long

In the congested market of first-person shooters there is an abundance of titles offering high-octane adventure from the comfort of your living room.

Whether it is the gripping Cold War setting of the latest *Call of Duty* instalment or the futuristic conflict of the haunting *Halo* saga, the options are almost unlimited.

Publishers Bethesda are now joining the party with their all-action offering *Brink*, a game that allows players to select their combat role and take the fight to their enemies on an engaging and dynamic battlefield.

The story is set on the Ark, a man-made floating city that is on the brink of a full-scale civil war.

Originally built as an experimental, self-sufficient and green habitat, the rapid rise of the Earth's oceans has forced the settlement to become not only home to the original founders but also thousands of refugees.

As the tension builds two groups quickly emerge, meaning security and resistance forces

are locked in a battle for control of the Ark.

Before the action unfolds players have to select the side they want to represent and the story then evolves from that biased viewpoint.

This is a welcome and original approach that ultimately doubles the enjoyment of a challenging campaign mode.

Another key feature before starting out is the vast customisation options that are available for individual characters.

The advanced settings allow for a near-endless combination of looks that makes each hero truly unique. As players progress through the story and gain more experience they are able to customise their profile even further.

Once the somewhat lengthy pre-game selections have been made, the action is swiftly transported to the Ark.

The initial familiarisation with the controls can be slightly confusing but any problems are easily negated within a few minutes of play.

The campaign mode has multiple missions, whether operating as a security or resistance fighter, and each task has a number of objectives to complete within a set time limit.

Success is ultimately determined by strong teamwork and the option of tackling different

scenarios as either a soldier, engineer, medic or operative provides the skillset needed to progress.

This is all pretty standard first-person shooter fare and the undoubted appeal of these titles usually lies with the online options that are available, and that is certainly the case here.

Brink allows gamers to move seamlessly from a single-player campaign, to a co-op with friends or an intense multiplayer that can involve up to 16 people.

This mode is the key selling point for the game and offers hours of fun once the main story is completed. A freeplay option allows competitions in public or private matches, while the challenge offers more possibilities such as escort tasks and tower defence.

Brink is not about to redefine the first-person shooter genre but it is certainly a welcome addition to this ever-expanding fold.

Fans of multiplayer and online action will not be disappointed. The mission is engaging and challenging but falls victim to being somewhat lightweight at times.

The quirky design and animation give it an edge over some of its rivals but on the whole *Brink* falls slightly short of the big hitters mentioned at the start of this review. ■

From high seas adventures to the puzzling world of *Portal*, we check out the best and the rest of the new releases...

Virtua Tennis 4 for all formats

THE grand slam of tennis titles is back for a fourth instalment and the action ticks all the boxes for sports simulation fans. This upgrade from its 2009 predecessor boasts changes to the playing styles and super shots. The former gives you the chance to become a big server like Andy Roddick or an all-rounder like Roger Federer, while super shot offers more power to unleash. The game is easy to pick up and play but more challenging to master and you can tackle a career mode, online matches or practice with some bizarre tasks. But, if you want to spend money on a tennis title you would be better advised to invest in *Top Spin 4*.



Out now

Portal 2 for all formats

DECENT puzzle games on any console are often hard to find, especially in the first-person. But this is no longer the case. *Portal 2* is more than a worthy successor to the original – featuring a brilliantly written story and quality voice acting to boot. You return as Chell and are guided by a spherical robot called Wheatley through the many levels in the game, which are all deeply challenging but not frustratingly impossible. This is a serious improvement on an already impressive title and there are many tests that will appeal to a broad range of players. Buy this and give yourself time for some serious brain-storming.



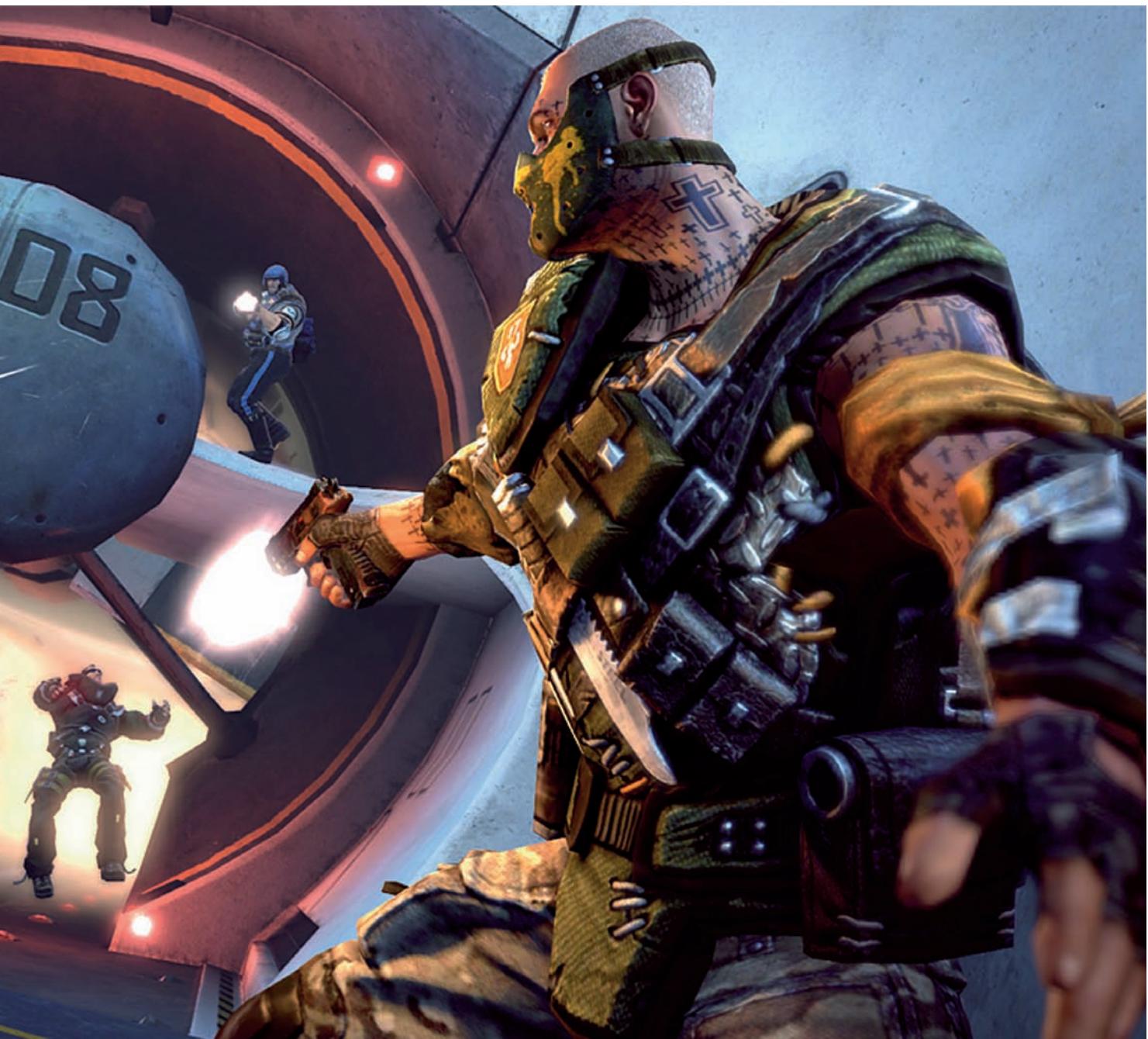
Out now

Lego Pirates of the Caribbean

BLOCKBUSTER franchise *Pirates of the Caribbean* is the latest movie series to be given the Lego gaming spin-off in this all formats release. As with other titles that have trodden this path, the result is a less-than-serious depiction of the action from the big screen. The attention to detail is superb and the comedy value is as high as ever, particularly with leading man **Johnny Depp**'s portrayal of central character Jack Sparrow. The only slight annoyance is the overly-long cut sequences, particularly at the start of the game, but they do not detract from the hours of fun that can be enjoyed in this puzzle-solving adventure.



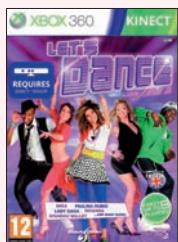
Out now



Fight of the future: *Brink*, which is out now on all formats, sees a floating city consumed by a full-scale civil war in an engaging first-person campaign mode

Let's Dance with Mel B for all formats

THE ringleader of the once-mighty **Spice Girls** fronts the latest chapter in the dance game revolution and it is no surprise to see annoying anthem *Wannabe* included among the 28 tracks. As with previous titles in the series, there is a variety of music and dance styles to perfect as professional choreographers guide players through the moves. The game boasts six stages to suit different genres and has a television show feel that includes a host and studio. *Let's Dance* is all about the social experience and this latest offering builds impressively on the successful formula that has gone before.



Out now

Thor: God of Thunder for all formats

THE cross over from Hollywood box office to the gaming world has often been a dangerous one, with the results far from spectacular at best. But *Thor: God of Thunder* comes as a refreshing exception to the rule and actually proves to be a rather enjoyable experience. The graphics offer an impressive depiction of our hero and the combat boasts a vast array of moves – from brutal hammer throws to deafening lightning strikes. This release is not going to single-handedly tip the balance in favour of the money-making movie executives, but it is a welcome break from the depressing norm.



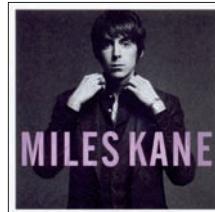
Out now

Sniper: Ghost Warrior for all formats

THIS impressive first-person shooter avoids getting bogged down in the complexities of storylines and cooperative modes to deliver a back-to-basics combat experience. Players have to adopt the guile and stealth of real-life sharpshooters to steer sniper Tyler Wells through a host of challenging missions. Variables such as wind speed and distance have to be considered when taking a shot, which adds to the realism. The only downside is the unforgiving nature of the enemy, who have an unwitting ability to detect their well-hidden opponents. This is worth checking out and brings good variety to this genre.



Out now



Willing and able: Singer-songwriter Miles Kane called in some musical favours to help record new album *Colour Of The Trap*

Rascal rides solo

Indie frontman leaves band life behind to produce retro-inspired debut record

Interview: Richard Long

AFTER spending the early stages of his blossoming music career locked in the dynamics of a band, Miles Kane has finally had the time to take centre stage and record an album in his own right.

The 24-year-old found fame as the frontman of The Rascals and achieved further notoriety with The Last Shadow Puppets, a highly-successful partnership with Arctic Monkeys' star Alex Turner.

But with such distractions now on hold his attention has been firmly focused on *Colour Of The Trap*, his 60s-inspired debut solo release.

"When you've been in a band with your mates, like I was, you've had your posse," the singer-songwriter explained.

"Even with The Last Shadow Puppets I'm with Alex and he's my partner. But doing this, at first it was a bit daunting – the whole thing of doing it all and calling the shots. You're not bouncing off anyone and that took a while to get used to."

Work on the project started last autumn, when Kane went into The Kinks' famed Konk studios in north London with Gruff Rhys, the driving force

behind Welsh rockers Super Furry Animals.

The duo formed an instant chemistry and quickly wrote and recorded four tracks, material that was the bedrock for the album.

"To say I've found myself is a bit extreme," Kane said. "But it has been that idea of finding out who you are and showing that in your songs. I think the record highlights that."

"Doing the first four tracks felt great and I've settled into it. I'm starting to do my things and talk about all the songs. I'm living the dream."

Kane also found a willing collaborator in former Oasis star Noel Gallagher, who provides the harmonies on *My Fantasy*, while French actress Clemence Poesy performs duet duties on the blissful *Happenstance*.

Producer Dan Carey (Franz Ferdinand, Hot Chip) was on hand to refine his sound and Dan the Automator (Gorillaz, Kasabian) polished the production even further from his studio hideaway in San Francisco.

But despite calling on a little help from his friends, Kane insists the album has a distinctly personal touch.

"This record is me. It's about me, I've written it about me. It has all my favourite things on it. That's it really," he explained.

"I've worked hard to get to this point. This is me, my heart and soul."

"It's been a long journey. As a kid you dream of the opportunity of doing a record on your own. I've done that now, I am very lucky and I appreciate that."

Anyone familiar with *The Age Of The Understatement*, Kane's first offering with Turner, will have a good idea of what to expect here.

The Liverpool native openly admits his love of the 60s' sound and the influence from one of music's most defining decades is more than evident throughout the 12 tracks.

Opener *Come Closer* is a compact three minutes of toe-tapping funk, while *Rearrange* follows as an almost perfect pop offering that is very easy on the ear.

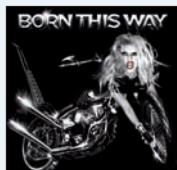
Kane proves his versatility on first single *Inhaler*, an upbeat rock number that showcases his raw-throated vocals with soulful backing from The Rev Gospel Collective, before title track *Colour Of The Trap* slows the pace down and brings proceedings to a gentle end.

On the whole this a promising debut effort that hints at a bright future. The true test will be whether Kane can escape his retro influences and find a more contemporary feel. ■

From watered-down rock to a triumphant return from pop's biggest hitter, we fire up the new releases...

Born This Way by Lady GaGa

QUEEN of pop **Lady GaGa** has achieved worldwide fame since she spectacularly burst onto the music scene in 2008 with debut release *The Fame*. Critics of her newer material have drawn comparisons to the 80s sound of her predecessor **Madonna**, but this is not necessarily a bad thing. The title track is the best example of this, but the high-energy pop offering is a sure-fire hit so who are we to argue? Rock undertones fuel the power ballad *You and I* while *The Edge of Glory* offers a euphoric finale and will inevitably be a future single as the GaGa juggernaut continues. *Born This Way* builds on the star's sound pop foundations and will be a mainstay of the charts for the remainder of 2011.



Richard Long, Soldier

Go Now And Live by We Are The Ocean

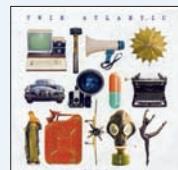
HAVING received almost continuous radio play, this London five-piece have gained credibility and support from the British public with previous album *Cutting Our Teeth* and their self-titled EP. However, the band has taken a different turn with this latest release, and for old fans it is quite a disappointing move. **Dan Brown's** trademark screaming vocals sound muted on *Go Now And Live* and seem to be stepping away from their traditional post-hardcore audio into an unwelcome, alternative pop-rock style. There are some highlights which will no doubt have crowds singing along, but all in all this is a stride away from the greatness this band has the potential to reach.



Pte Stephen McManus, 1 Yorke

Free by Twin Atlantic

GLASWEIGIAN rockers **Twin Atlantic** have had the honour of supporting heavyweights **Biffy Clyro** and **Smashing Pumpkins** on recent tours, but the release of their latest album *Free* sees them taking top billing as the headline act. Unfortunately, the time spent on the road with such prestigious company has not been able to propel their music above anything other than ordinary. *The Ghost of Eddie and Yes, I Was Drunk* are unimaginative at best while *Crash Land* provides the inevitable acoustic interlude that is designed to be a sign of versatility. This record may well enjoy commercial success but the band ultimately lack the rock credibility of their contemporaries.



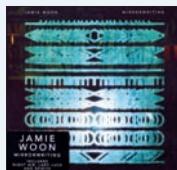
Joe Clapson, Soldier



A man alone: Rascals star and Last Shadow Puppets collaborator Miles Kane has left his posse behind to produce an album of 60s-sounding anthems

Mirrorwriting by Jamie Woon

THIS debut album from **Jamie Woon** has been three years in the making and a lifetime in the writing. The artist describes the release as "a calming record, a raft of dreamy, unsettled melancholy" and to all intents and purposes, it does exactly what it says on the tin. *Mirrorwriting* draws inspiration from folk, 80s and 90s' soul and pop, UK bass culture and the blues. The end result is an excellent ensemble which not only supports but seems to frame Woon's luminous voice in all the right places. This is a record for relaxing to, if you've had a hard day in the office and want to kick back and chill out it will tick all the right boxes, allowing you to unwind in style.



Rodge Tapply, ex-RE

Moving Pictures by Rush

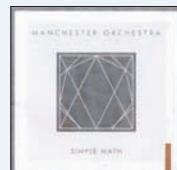
RELEASED 40 years ago, this album racked up an impressive £4 million in sales by 1998. Fast forward to 2011 and the energy captured four decades ago is still evident. **Rush** are renowned for their tight sound, both in the studio and live. This, coupled with an ability to put fantasy into reality through clever lyrics, still abates. *Red Barchetta* rattles along with vim and vigour while the eerie intro on *The Camera Eye* leads the listener on a magical journey. Many people think this is possibly the most commercial release the band has produced and it is certainly one of the Canadian trio's shortest. However, as musical genres have come and gone *Moving Pictures* still stands out, and rightly so.



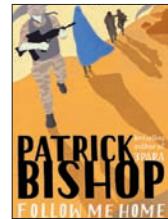
Steve King, Soldier

Simple Math by Manchester Orchestra

ATLANTA five-piece **Manchester Orchestra** have been sitting on the fringes of indie-rock's heavy hitters for some time. Their elevation to the big league will undoubtedly be decided by the success of third album *Simple Math*. While this offering contains some of their finest work to date, it also lacks the consistency of their contemporaries. Stand out tune *April Fool* is a screaming rock anthem with pulsating guitar riffs while the title track creates a welcome symphonic sidestep courtesy of its haunting strings. Promotion to the mainstream may still be some way off but that could be a positive move as they avoid the inevitable overkill from the airwaves of Radio One.



Richard Long, Soldier



Informed insight: *Follow Me Home*, Patrick Bishop's second novel, is published by Hodder and available in hardback now for £12.99

Embedded empathy

Roving reporter-turned-author's new novel attempts to mirror the military mindset

Interview: Sarah Goldthorpe

ASOLDIER'S psyche is something that is often overlooked in military fiction, according to best-selling author Patrick Bishop.

And, having begun his journalism career during the Falklands War and followed the British Army on all major deployments that have followed, the former foreign correspondent knows better than most what makes troops tick.

It is this hard-earned empathy that Bishop believes sets his new novel, *Follow Me Home*, apart from other titles.

Speaking to *Soldier*, the writer explained he had adopted a somewhat different tack for this book, which tells the story of four young Servicemen who become stranded after an ambush on a Taliban leader in Afghanistan goes wrong.

"I have been around soldiers all my working life," Bishop said.

"But despite media coverage, ordinary people don't always get what motivates troops and what makes them tick."

"When you are with soldiers you realise they have this set of values which are disappearing

from the civilian world: they take care of each other, have a sense of justice, right and wrong and responsibility that seem to be dwindling from everyday life out of uniform."

"Service personnel have a sense of virtue which is rather uplifting. I tried to convey some of that in this book."

Follow Me Home takes the reader on a journey through the minds of soldiers who are lost, without communication and with a Taliban captive and young woman in tow.

The characters' bid to return to British lines is the biggest test any of them has ever faced and it changes their lives forever.

"Writing novels is a lot harder than writing non-fiction because the only source you have is your imagination," said Bishop, who found huge success with *3 Para*, a gripping account of the battalion's first deployment to southern Afghanistan in 2006.

"Even though I have written non-fiction about what soldiers do, I think in that [medium] it can be difficult to convey the way soldiers feel and think."

"A novel is a way of doing so."

"I thought that by telling a good story I might be able to aim a bit higher and round characters off a bit."

Bishop's latest literary offering might be fiction, but it is far from materialised.

The characters are based on the author's meetings and exchanges with soldiers throughout his career – most significantly during a six-week assignment in southern Afghanistan in 2008.

While visiting the front line and back home in the UK, Bishop had conversations with personnel serving at all levels and carrying out a variety of roles.

"I could fit what they told me into context having, as a journalist, followed British Forces in action in virtually every theatre they have been engaged in since I sailed with them when they went to recapture the Falklands in 1982," he said.

Having spent so much time with Service personnel, Bishop is keen that his book accurately reflects the reality of conflict as experienced by these people.

"You can tell if something is phoney and this was about making things plausible," the former *Telegraph* reporter concluded.

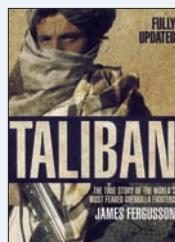
"I care how it will be received by troops. I am not a soldier and am very keen to get it right."

With that sentiment in mind, whether he has done so or not is better judged by *Soldier* readers than this reviewer. ■

From Afghan insurgents to an apocalyptic account, a flick through this month's literary releases...

Taliban by James Fergusson

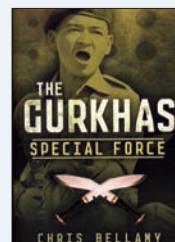
A WELL-rounded account which seeks to balance and dispel some of the media hype surrounding the eponymous group. **James Fergusson** clearly knows his subject matter – portraying the Taliban, their motives, successes and failures in an impartial way. The movement's followers are not wholly evil and while they don't come out whiter than white, they are a lesser shade of grey that we in the West often perceive them to be. The author's history of the Pashtun people provides a greater understanding of those living in the south of the country. Excellent reading for anyone interested in the Taliban or contemporary Afghanistan.



Capt Douglas Searle, RLC

The Gurkhas: Special Force

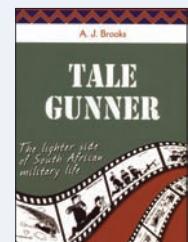
THIS excellent offering takes the reader back to the origins of Gurkha soldiers in both the British and Indian Army. Historian **Chris Bellamy** has produced a detailed and well-annotated book which explains how these rugged hill men came to be a part of our Armed Forces and how they have shown their versatility, loyalty and courage in service of the Crown. Extremely difficult to put down, I would recommend this title to anyone with an interest in the Gurkhas or how the British Raj dominated the sub-continent for so long with so little. Bellamy is to be congratulated for producing such a good book.



Andy Kay, ex-R Scots

Tale Gunner by A J Brooks

A COLLECTION of humorous and interesting anecdotes focusing on the South African National Service's (and subsequent Civilian Force Service's) various border skirmishes and the prolonged war with Angola. From accounts of the latter, readers will draw parallels with the British Army's campaign in Northern Ireland. The squaddie humour shines through although one can't help but think that the stories were probably funnier when they were told over a few beers at unit reunions. At times the laugh is lost in the translation between Afrikaans and English – although I've now learnt a number of expletives in the former.



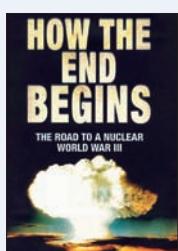
WO2 Ian Barracough, REME



Voice of experience: Patrick Bishop, pictured in Sangin during the summer of 2008, is no stranger to the subject matter of his second foray into fiction

How the End Begins by Ron Rosenbaum

THERE is no doubt that nuclear weapons are the Pandora's box of modern technology and *How the End Begins* seeks to raise awareness of the potential consequences of opening its apocalyptic lid. Written with a combination of *Dr Strangelove*-like humour



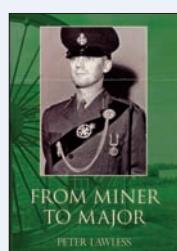
and frank horror, **Ron Rosenbaum** asks the forbidden question about the morality of nuclear retaliation and explores the possibility of complete disarmament. Peaceniks, as well as those who learnt to stop worrying and love the bomb, should be made to pick up and read this book. This is a brilliant offering from Rosenbaum on a controversial subject.

Lt Neil Dickie, 105 Regt RA (V)

From Miner to Major by Peter Lawless

FROM his days as a National Service rifleman in the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry through to leaving the Service, **Peter Lawless's** autobiography spans a 43-year career in the Light Division. Punctuated with plenty of military humour, the book charts the author's journey through the ranks and across the globe. *From Miner to Major* is an engaging personal account that gives the reader a taste of a British Army that is fast becoming a distant memory. That said, the title's narrative of constant change, operational churn and re-badging has a very familiar ring to it!

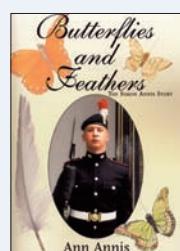
Maj Mike Peters, AAC



Butterflies and Feathers by Ann Annis

THE author has written an inspiring book on the life of her son, Fus Simon Annis, from his birth to his tragic death in Afghanistan in August 2009. Penning this title has helped **Ann Annis** through difficult times and it lays bare her grief, emotions and memories. She describes Simon as a normal, fun-loving boy and recounts his adventures, love of animals, apprenticeship in the building trade and decision to join the Army. Annis now spends her spare time raising funds for The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers and sending parcels to soldiers in Helmand. She writes as a mother – with heartfelt passion – and *Butterflies and Feathers* is a fitting tribute.

Lt Col (Retd) Dawson Pratt, ex-R Signals



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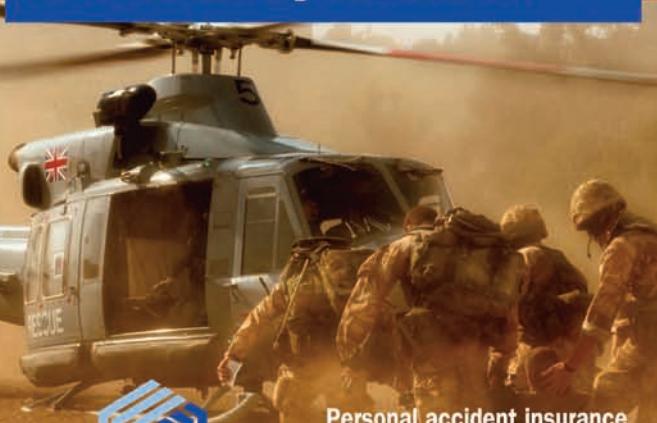
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SWEET REVENGE: ARMY STARS
OVERPOWER ROYAL NAVY RIVALS IN
TWICKENHAM SHOWDOWN

ALSO IN THIS MONTH'S ISSUE...



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P103 **SLEDGE HOCKEY**
BISONS PREPARE FOR
NATIONAL LEAGUE

Ruthless Reds rout Navy rivals

Report: Richard Long
Pictures: Graeme Main

A SCINTILLATING showing from the Army's Fijian flyers ensured the Reds exacted sweet revenge over the Royal Navy in a thrilling Babcock Trophy match at Twickenham.

A hat-trick from wing Spr Ben Seru (RE) was the highlight of a rampant 44-10 victory as painful memories of last year's narrow loss to the Senior Service in Rugby Union's showpiece fixture were ruthlessly cast aside.

Compatriots Pte Jack Prasad (Scots), Gnr Ifereimi Boladau (RA) and LCpl Apo Satala (Scots) were also in majestic form as the Army ran in seven tries during a pulsating afternoon of attacking play in front of a record 62,790 crowd.

However, the defending champions ensured the clash was not as one-sided as the score suggests and an impressive opening onslaught sparked hopes of back-to-back titles.

Skipper POAET Dave Pascoe kicked an early penalty and when centre Cpl Calum MacRae crossed for the game's first try after nine minutes the Reds were firmly on the back foot.

But as the half progressed, the Navy's grip on the contest started to loosen. Cpl Ceri Cummings (REME) rattled the post from a penalty and the marauding Boladau was stopped just short of the line after a devastating run

'I knew that if we stuck to our game plan we would be competitive and run out as winners'

through the opposition ranks.

Mounting Army pressure was rewarded just after the half-hour mark as Satala collected a flat pass from fullback Cummings to touch down in the corner.

A sensational solo try from Prasad brought the sides level as the cultured fly half jinked his way through the Navy defence before sprinting home.

Cummings kicked the extras to give his team the lead and the Service stars set about piling on the agony for their Forces rivals.

A devastating break from Prasad allowed Seru to open his account shortly after the restart, before Cummings found his range with a superbly-struck penalty from distance.

A deft inside pass from Boladau saw Seru ghost home for his second score on 60 minutes and, with the conversion

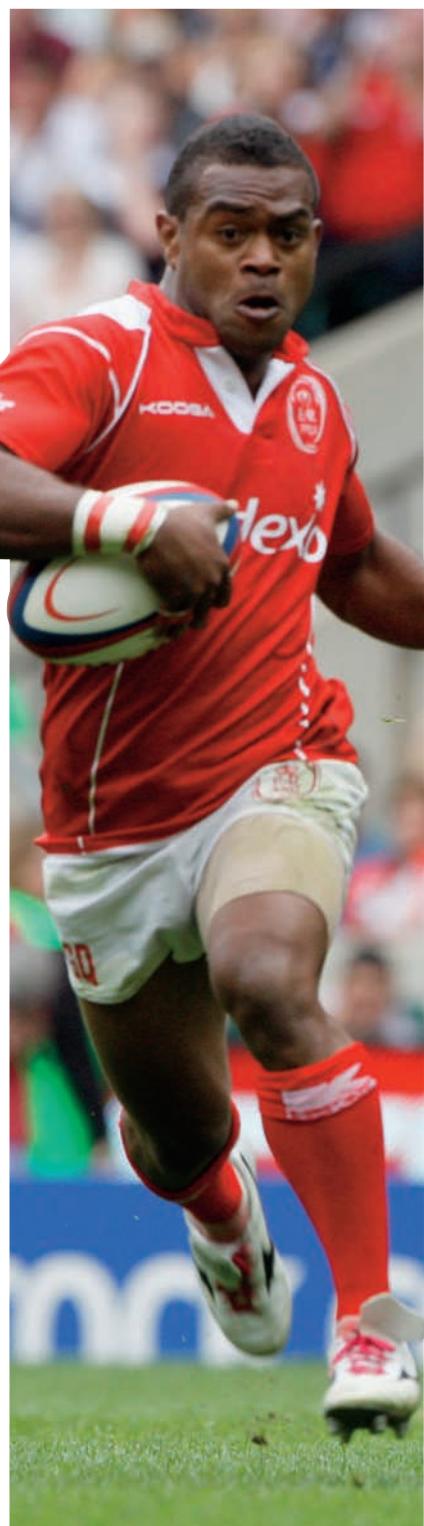
sailing between the posts, the Reds established a deserved 27-10 advantage.

Satala was on the end of a sublime cross-field passing move to crash over

for a converted try just moments later and Spr Gus Qasevakatini (RE, pictured left) joined the party with an electrifying burst into the corner as the rout continued.

Seru completed a perfect afternoon for the Army with a late score following good work by replacements Capt Ian Martin (Yorks) and Sgt Paul Llewellyn (2 R Welsh).

Boladau was named man-of-the-match for his full-blooded performance in attack and defence, while centre pairing Spr Peceli Nacamavuto (RE)



Babcock Trophy brilliance in numbers

15

POINTS SCORED BY SPR BEN SERU AS THE FLYING WINGER CROSSED FOR THREE SECOND-HALF TRIES AGAINST THE NAVY

41

INTER-SERVICES TITLES FOR THE VICTORIOUS REDS SIDE WHO THRASHED THE RAF 52-0 BEFORE TASTING TWICKENHAM GLORY

32

CAPS WON BY INSPIRATIONAL FORWARD CPL BEN HUGHES, A DRIVING FORCE IN THE ARMY'S LATEST TITLE-WINNING TEAM



Jack-in-the-box: Army fly half Pte Jack Prasad (Scots) dances through a lacklustre Royal Navy defence on his way to a sensational solo try at Twickenham

and Capt Paul Gittins (RAMC) provided a sound platform for their team's impressive offensive play.

Twickenham glory followed hot on the heels of a convincing 52-0 victory against the Royal Air Force at Aldershot's Army Rugby Stadium, with Seru scoring a hat-trick to start a scorching run of form.

After seeing his side win their 41st Inter-Services crown, coach Capt Andy Sanger (RE) paid tribute to the efforts of his players and staff, as well as the chain of command, in sealing another famous triumph.

"To win is a tremendous individual honour but it would not have been possible without their hard work and determination," the delighted officer told *SoldierSport*.

TRY TIME

THE Royal Navy made a high-octane start to the 2011 Inter-Services showdown by scoring ten points in the opening ten minutes. But a try from flanker LCpl Apo Satala (Scots) set the Army on their way as the Reds put their rivals to the sword with a devastating attacking display at Twickenham.



LOYAL SERVICE

FORWARD Cpl Ben Hughes (RE) collected a record 32nd Army cap in this year's clash with the Royal Navy and justified his selection with a powerhouse showing. The 32-year-old was one of the unsung heroes as the Reds cruised to a 44-10 victory in front of a 62,790 crowd.



CAPTAIN MARVEL

SKIPPER LCpl Mel Lewis (WG) celebrates Inter-Services success following a thrilling performance at the home of Rugby Union. The prop forward leaves the Army this year and after also lifting the Premiership Cup with 1st Battalion, Welsh Guards he has enjoyed a superb final season on the field.



SPORT SHORTS

SOLDIERS from 39th Regiment, Royal Artillery are staging a charity golf day in Northumberland to support the work of Help for Heroes.

The event will be held at Maffet Hall Golf Club on July 22 and will include prizes for best four-ball, longest drive and closest to the pin.

The closing date for entries is July 8 and more information is available by contacting Sgt Oliver Roberts on 94723 3320 or 0191 2393320.

CADETS from the Wales University Officer Training Corps will attempt to conquer the arduous Three Peaks Challenge on June 4 to raise money for ABF The Soldiers' Charity and Children with Leukaemia.

The team hopes to complete the feat in 24 hours while carrying a stretcher.

Donations can be made by logging on to www.virginmoneygiving.com/team/WUOTC

A LAST-gasp penalty from skipper Sgt Andy Gray secured a dramatic victory for the Royal Artillery in their Rugby League clash with a Castleford and District select team at the Twickenham Stoop.

The 22-20 triumph saw the gunners lift the Hopson Trophy in a match that was dedicated to the memory of colleague Bdr Craig Hopson, who was killed in Afghanistan in 2009.

The game was staged ahead of the Super League fixture between Harlequins and Castleford and saw the artillery side open a healthy lead in a strong first-half.

Tries from Chris Tipton, Inoke Levanatabua and Rob Martin gave the Service stars a 16-4 interval advantage and Abby Naulumatau added a superb solo score shortly after the restart as the points continued to flow.

But Castleford found the strength to mount a stirring comeback and the tie was locked at 20-20 before the gunners were awarded their match-winning penalty in the final 30 seconds.

The game was raising money for ABF The Soldiers' Charity and The Royal Artillery Charitable Fund and Bdr Hopson's mother Lynne paid tribute to the day.

She said: "The match is very important, not only to the Hopson family but also to Craig's friends as it's a great way for us all to remember him together in a way that was a big part of his life.

"Craig would have loved to see his corps Rugby League side play his civilian side, but I'm not too sure who he would have been cheering for."

ULTRA athlete Maj Rob Shenton (REME) has raised £3,800 for Macmillan Cancer Support by completing the toughest foot race on earth – the Marathon Des Sable.

The officer faced temperatures of 55 degrees as he covered a 254-kilometre course in southern Morocco in the space of seven days.



Ring warrior: Lightweight Spr Sanjay Marhajan (26 Eng Regt) was named best fighter on the night

Boxing's new breed

THE Army boxing season enjoyed a pulsating finale with a thrilling night of action in the ring at the annual individual championships.

Fighters from an array of units descended on Aldershot's Combat Sports Centre for the event, which features the best up-and-coming athletes in the Service.

Spr Sanjay Marhajan (26 Eng Regt) was named fighter of the night following his success in the lightweight division, while the Infantry won the corps competition.

Boxers from 2nd Battalion, The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment won the team event and exacted sweet revenge for

their controversial disqualification at last year's tournament.

Speaking after the final bell, Army Boxing Association secretary Nathan Pearce said the evening was a fine advert for the Service sport.

"I was really pleased with how it went," he added.

"The guys had to qualify through some difficult rounds to make it to the finals and that meant the quality on the night was very high.

"We had some decent and well-fought contests.

"The fighters were working hard to score points for their corps teams and that made it more competitive."

ARMY INDIVIDUAL BOXING CHAMPIONSHIPS 2011

Bantamweight: LCpl Hawkins (22 Sig Regt) beat Kgn Rafferty (2 Lancs) 12-9 on points.

Featherweight: Kgn Finlay (2 Lancs) beat Kgn Burney (2 Lancs) 17-12 on countback score.

Lightweight: Spr Sanjay Marhajan (26 Eng Regt) beat Pte Chiverton (1 PWRR) 12-7 on points.

Light welterweight: Pte Frame (1 Scots) beat Kgn Richardson (2 Lancs) 20-11 on points.

Welterweight: Pte Berry (2 Yorks) beat Pte Kelly (27 Regt RLC), fight stopped in first round.

Light middleweight: Fus Chiltern (1 RRF) beat Spr Brassfield (22 Eng Regt) on judges' decision.

Middleweight: Spr Tikoisanai (39 Eng Regt) beat Spr Roberts (39 Eng Regt) 8-3 on points.

Light heavyweight: Pte Marable-Collins beat Cfn Krstic (9 Regt RLC) 5-4 on points.

Heavyweight: Cpl Main (RACTR) beat Sig Oguaju (11 Sig Regt) 6-2 on points score.

Novice Class B welterweight: Pte Thompson (1 PWRR) beat Pte Owen (2 R Welsh) on judges' decision.

Ruthless Reds rout rivals

THE Army women plundered more than 100 points against their Forces rivals to emphatically seal another Inter-Services Rugby Union title.

England international LCpl Jane Leonard (RE) was among the scorers in a convincing 42-10 victory against the Royal Air Force at Aldershot as their campaign started in fine style.

The Reds continued their blistering form when they locked horns with the Royal Navy at Kneller Hall on the eve of the men's showdown at the world-famous Twickenham stadium.

Skipper Cpl Sarah Mitchelson (RLC) crossed twice as the Army ran in ten tries to complete a 66-0 thrashing.

The Navy offered gallant resistance on the day but their opponents were too strong for the Senior Service.

Cpl Danielle Phan (Int Corps) celebrated a superb hat-trick while lock Cpl Rosie Haigh (REME) and the superb Maj Kat Woods (QARANC) both caught the eye with sublime performances in the pack.



Final fight: LCpl Steve Turner (R Signals, in red) has called time on an impressive Army boxing career

Turner bids farewell

Report: Richard Long

Picture: Graeme Main

ARMY stalwart LCpl Steve Turner (R Signals) missed out on a dream ending to his career in the ring by suffering an agonising defeat in the Amateur Boxing Association finals.

The England international was on the wrong end of 31-13 points decision in his 67kg clash with West Leeds fighter Damon Jones as the Service star returned empty-handed from the prestigious event in Colchester.

Turner told *SoldierSport* the contest was his final fight in Army colours and his attention will now turn to furthering his Service career.

"It was my last bout and I wanted to go out with a bang as national champion, but it wasn't to be," he said.

"He was a good lad and is a junior international for England. He is in his second year as a senior and was keen, hungry and determined.

"When you face someone with that little bit of class they make extra time for themselves and that can put you off. He was the better boxer and deserved to win. But to be in the top two in the country is no small achievement."

Turner joined the Army team in 2004 and has enjoyed a fine run in the sport.

He claimed five Combined Services titles, fought in three ABA finals and represented England twice, winning on both occasions.

"I wanted to push for some of the bigger international events, such as the Tammer Tournament or the Commonwealth Games, but the chance never came around," the fighter said.

"Sometimes you do not get the opportunities. I feel we are somewhat neglected by the England set-up. The Army has got some great guys who have never let their country down but they do not get the recognition they deserve.

"When the call does come it is usually at the last minute and is because of injuries elsewhere. It is very disappointing for us."

Turner's focus is now aimed at passing the Royal Army Physical Training Corps selection course, but he has not ruled out a return to the Service's state-of-the-art gym at Aldershot's Combat Sports Centre.

"I'm really looking forward to it," he said. "Hopefully that can push me on to the position of Army coach within the next three years."

"I've got my coaching badges and it is a job I would love to take on."

Turner leaves the ring with a record of 86 bouts, 65 wins and 21 losses. ■



Infantry fire winning shots

Report: Richard Long
Picture: Graeme Main

ARAPID fire half-century from LCpl Andy Hornbuckle steered the Infantry to a commanding 43-run victory in the Inter-Corps Twenty20 cricket final.

The opening batsman smashed seven fours and two sixes in a fluent innings of 59 from just 37 deliveries as his side posted a healthy total of 162-3 against the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers at Aldershot.

After losing the toss and being asked to bat, the Infantry took full advantage of ideal conditions at the Army Cricket Ground before the REME crumbled to a below-par 119-8 in reply.

Hornbuckle and Sgt Jay Baldwin laid the foundations for an imposing score courtesy of a 74-run opening partnership.

Baldwin perished at the hands of the impressive Cfn Clive Kyangungu in the ninth over but his departure brought skipper Sgt

Adrian Van Niekerk to the crease as the runs continued to flow.

Hornbuckle (pictured) was trapped leg before wicket by Kyangungu after cracking his second booming six but Van Niekerk and Pte Greg Barton steered the

Infantry towards a competitive score.

The REME response suffered an early setback when Army ace WO2 Steve Hole was bowled in the second over.

A 41-run stand between WO1 Clive Bate and Cfn Stu Togarelli steadied the ship but any hopes of victory disappeared as the innings collapsed from 51-2 to 96-6 in the space of six overs.

Rfn Michael Lewis was the chief tormenter with a spell of 3-27 while Fus Gedeon Charles (2-26) and LCpl Kester Baptiste (2-14) played a superb supporting role.

Speaking at the end of the three-day tournament, Van Niekerk told *SoldierSport*: "I'm ecstatic with the

result. This is the fourth year we have made it to the final and we have lost the three previous times.

"The lads have all played together before and this is a quality young team. The majority also play for the Army Under-25 side so we

all know each other well.

"The team spirit is really high and that carried us through

through. We have a strong batting line-up and six or seven good bowling options.

"If I'm honest, I would have liked more than 162 runs. I thought that 180 would have been a good total as the REME are a decent batting outfit so we did well to restrict them to 119-8.

"Andy Hornbuckle batted superbly and Michael Lewis produced a fine spell. But I don't want to take anything away from the team, they have been fantastic throughout and have produced when it matters." ■



Hallowed turf: The Army will be hoping for a strong showing with bat and ball when they lock horns with their Forces rivals at the home of cricket on June 28

Lord's looms large for Service stars

Report: Richard Long
Picture: Steve Dock

ARMY cricketers return to Lord's this month vowing to avenge their narrow defeat in last year's Inter-Services Twenty20 competition.

A lack of runs contributed to a disappointing showing at the world famous venue in 2010, with the Royal Navy celebrating victory following last-gasp wins over their Forces opponents.

Preparations for the June 28 showdown are now in full swing and Army skipper Maj Alex Senneck (R Signals) told *SoldierSport* his team will make every effort to reclaim the much-coveted trophy.

"We are gunning to get our title back," he added. "We are now putting together a determined squad that is focused on getting its hands on that Twenty20 crown.

"We have lost a few players due to operational commitments but the team is looking good.

"A lack of runs was a problem last year so we will examine the way we approach the game and the make up of our side.

"We are strong in all departments this year and we have to make sure we get the combinations right and perform on the day.

"It is always a privilege to play at Lord's and hopefully we can repay a

good crowd with a win."

The Army stars have a busy fixture list ahead of the tournament, with Twenty20 matches against the British Police, Glamorgan and a Gloucester XI all on the schedule.

The action continues in July when the team faces second XI sides from County Championship outfits Kent, Derbyshire and Hampshire.

Tickets for the Inter-Services competition are now on sale and are available by calling 0207 4321000 or logging on to www.ist20.com

The Royal Air Force take on the Royal Navy in the competition's opening match at 1000, with the Army playing their first game at 1315. ■

SPORT SHORTS



CYCLISTS from Oxbridge are to embark on a varsity triple crown challenge to raise vital money for wounded Servicemen and women.

The ten-day event starts on September 12 and will see two teams from the universities' Officer Training Corps pedalling from London to Edinburgh and back again, via Cardiff.

They will be raising money for ABF The Soldiers' Charity and Combat Stress.

To support the students in the race visit www.varsitytriplecrownchallenge.com

A TEAM of super-fit soldiers have raised more than £7,000 for the Forces Children's Trust by completing a triple marathon challenge along Dorset's Jurassic Coast.

Sgt Carl Lewin (QRL), Cpl Jack Browne (RDG), Cpl Philip Gidley (QRL) and Capt Jay Ferman (2 RTR), along with physical training instructor Jonathon Williams, completed the 78.6-mile route within a 24-hour time limit.

THE Royal Artillery will go head-to-head with their Service rivals when they host the prestigious Polo on The Island tournament on June 5.

Teams from the Adjutant General's Corps, Honourable Artillery Company, Royal Logistic Corps and the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst will also compete in the event, which is being held at Thorney Island in Hampshire.

The competition also sees the Army taking on the Royal Navy.



SOLDIER Cpl Mark Ward (Mercian) had the honour of presenting the FA Cup to winners Manchester City after last month's final at Wembley Stadium.

The Serviceman was a special guest at football's showpiece fixture and had the opportunity to meet the teams ahead of kick-off before awarding the medals and trophy at full-time.

"The atmosphere was electric," the Military Cross winner said. "There were 88,000 fans in the ground and when they all cheered it was fantastic."

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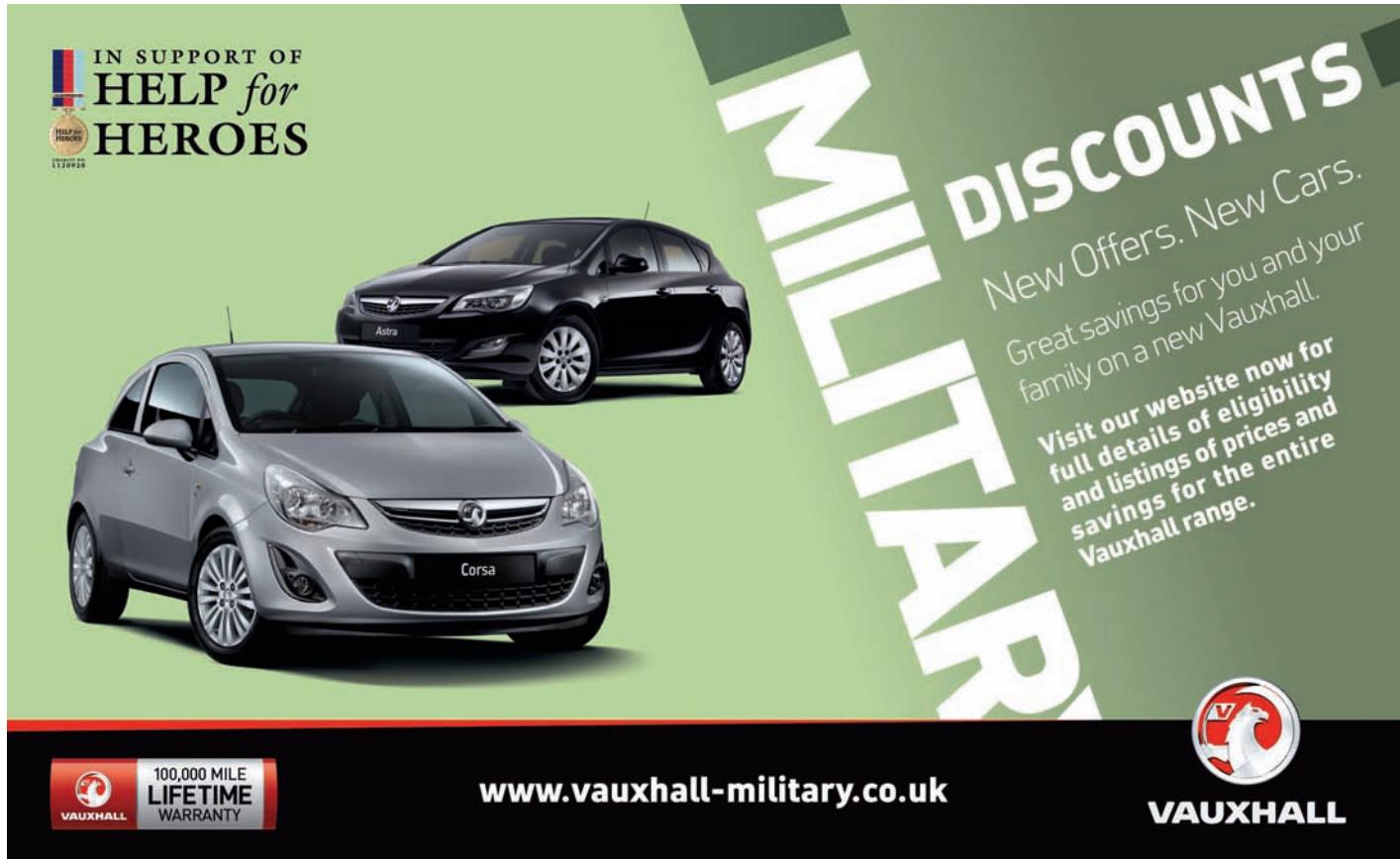
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Rearguard action: 3 Yorks skipper Cpl Adam Collington (red and black) marshalls the defence during a hard-fought Army Challenge Cup final in Aldershot

Yorks win spot-kick thriller

Report: Richard Long

Pictures: Graeme Main

GOALKEEPER Pte Paul Jones was the hero in a dramatic penalty shoot-out that saw 3rd Battalion, The Yorkshire Regiment triumph in the 111th Army Challenge Cup final.

The stopper saved a twice-taken spot kick from 9 Regiment, Army Air Corps skipper Cpl Barry O'Neill to set the platform for a famous win at the revamped Aldershot Military Stadium.

Teammates Cfn Dany Read, LCpl Kevin Shinn, Pte Louie Woodward and LCpl Dwayne Willie showed ruthless efficiency in dispatching their attempts and when ATpr Barry Pryce blazed over, the trophy was secure.

After an encouraging opening spell, in which Reid and O'Neill exchanged headed goals, the match ended in a disappointing 1-1 draw.

Scoring opportunities were at a premium throughout and the contest seemed destined for penalties as the sides cancelled each other out.

But 9 Regt AAC took the ascendancy in extra time and man-of-the-match Jones had to be at his best to thwart an O'Neill strike in the dying minutes.

The save ensured the game would be decided from the spot, where 3 Yorks gained revenge for their final defeat three years ago.

Speaking after an energy-sapping victory, skipper Cpl Adam Collington told *SoldierSport*: "Our performance

today says everything about our team.

"We are known as the Crazy Gang but we're also about determination and hard work. In the last 15 minutes they



battered us and we are lucky we have a great goalkeeper.

"As soon as the match went to penalties I knew we would win, he was always going to save one and we backed each other all the way.

"They beat us in the 2008 final and the desire within our team was unbelievable. At the start of the season our aim was to go as far as possible in the Infantry Cup.

"We won that and when we got to the quarter finals of this competition we really wanted to go for it. To win it is a huge bonus."

Goals from Sig Damien Burrell (pictured left) and captain Cpl Robert Simpson guided 4 Mechanised Brigade Headquarters and Signal Squadron to a hard-fought win in the Minor Units Cup final.

The Catterick-based soldiers held on for a 2-1 triumph over their rivals from 104 Force Support Battalion, Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers in another close contest.

Burrell opened the scoring just before the half-hour mark when he sprinted clear of the defence to fire home. Simpson doubled the advantage with a well-directed header after the REME back line failed to clear a long clearance down field.

Skipper LCpl James Riches reduced the arrears with a simple back post tap-in but their opponents managed to hold out for the win. ■



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Recovery rink: Wounded soldiers will be taking to the ice as part of the Battle Back Bisons sledge hockey team that is joining the national league this summer

Bisons braced for battle

Report: Richard Long
Pictures: Graeme Main

INJURED personnel will be taking centre stage in the new National Ice Sledge League as part of the latest initiative from Battle Back.

The four-team tournament launches this summer and the Battle Back Bisons will travel to Cardiff, Hull and Peterborough for matches in the high-adrenalin sport, which is seen as a key tool in the rehabilitation process.

Sledge hockey is a variant of ice hockey and sees players sitting in sledges while propelling themselves with adapted sticks.

The sport has already generated vast interest within the Armed Forces and Service personnel formed a key part of the Great Britain squad that finished eighth in the recent European Championships in Sweden.

Team manager Capt Red Geddes (RLC) is hoping to add more players to the ranks ahead of the new season and the officer was able to cast his eye over the emerging talent during some welcome time on the ice at Basingstoke.

"We have got three or four guys who have played with the Great Britain squad," he told *SoldierSport*. "There are a few others who have tried it before but the vast majority have come along for the first time at this taster session.

"The Battle Back Bisons was set up to get people into sport again. It is an excellent rehabilitation option for them as it is a fast and aggressive game.

"Sledge hockey was dying a death in the UK but is now in a position to launch a four-team league that will hopefully increase to ten."

"Battle Back will have a team in that competition this summer. We've had some training sessions and we have spread the word and now we have officially launched we can start recruiting. We are looking for 20 to 30 players to form the squad."

"The joy of sledge hockey is that it is all inclusive, it offers a level playing field and cuts out the disability. It is a sport the guys can really get stuck into."

LCpl Martyn Compton (HCR), who was injured on operations in Helmand province in 2006, was part of the Army contingent that travelled to Sweden and gave a glowing endorsement of the sport's positive impact.

"It is a way of letting out your aggression," he explained. "It is something completely different and I really enjoy playing."

"At Headley Court we are told about the different sports that are used to keep people motivated. I had never heard of sledge hockey but thought I would give it a try."

"I got involved with the Great Britain team and went over to Sweden. We did really well in the competition, which was quite surprising as eight members

had never really played before."

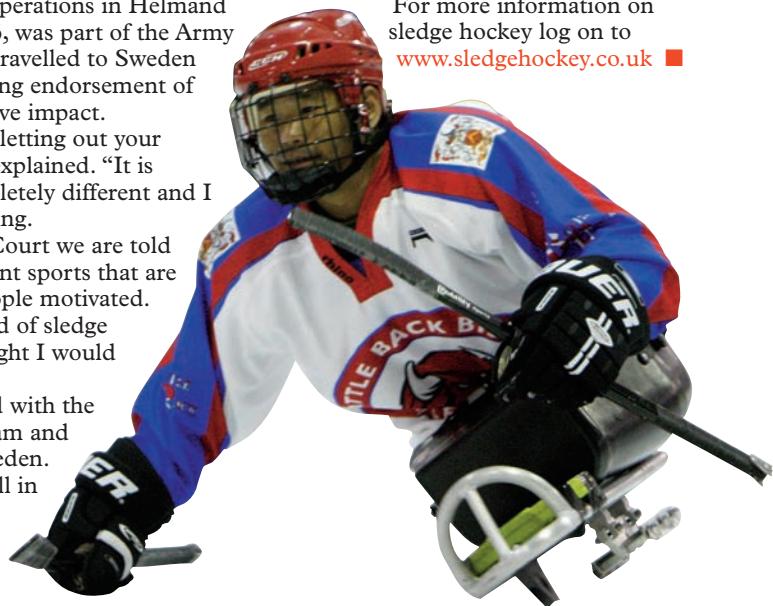
Geddes believes that as the Battle Back team develops there will be further international opportunities for Service personnel.

He added: "The main focus is to get the team established."

"We already have guys in the British set-up through sheer attitude alone. They managed to hold their own and have picked it up very quickly."

"With the mental strength that most soldiers have I can see more guys getting selected and our aim is to get them on the team for the Winter Paralympics in 2014."

For more information on sledge hockey log on to www.sledgehockey.co.uk



SPORT SHORTS

A TEAM of six soldiers from 3rd Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland have completed a gruelling 1,750-mile cycle ride from Italy to their home in the UK.

The personnel tackled some of Europe's toughest terrain as their route took them from Monte Cassino to their headquarters in Edinburgh, via Switzerland and France.

The cyclists covered 125 miles per day and raised around £25,000 for Service charities Help for Heroes, Erskine House, The Royal Regiment of Scotland Association and The Black Watch Association.

ARMY athletes strengthened their grip on the Inter-Services duathlon crown with a dominant performance against their Forces rivals on the airfield at Hullavington.

Capt Rich Hunt (3 Rifles) was the overall winner for the seventh time thanks to an impressive time of 54min 4sec that saw him finish almost two minutes ahead of his nearest Royal Air Force opponent.

The event was held at Buckley Barracks and featured a 5km run and 25km cycle.

ENDURANCE athletes have been set the challenge of running a 24-hour relay race from London to Cardiff to support the work of Cancer Research UK.

The 160-mile route will include a lap of the pitch at England's Twickenham Rugby Union arena before finishing at the Millennium Stadium in Wales.

The race will be held on June 17 and is open to teams of 12 and six.

For more information on the event visit www.relay-uk.com

RUGBY League players from 1st Battalion, The Yorkshire Regiment recorded a 66-28 win over the German national team in a challenge match at Altendorf.

The hosts used the game as a practise session ahead of the new season while the British Army players took to the pitch during a break from a busy round of training for their next operational deployment.

Half back 2nd Lt James Crowther said: "I thought we would receive a physical bashing from the German side. They had some big fellas and were very fit so we all thought they would provide stiffer opposition."

"But we had some flamboyant players and in the end we tore them apart."

FOOTBALLERS from veterans' charity Erskine have locked horns with a legends team from Scottish Premier League outfit Heart of Midlothian.

The former professionals enjoyed a comfortable 12-4 win against a squad featuring 13 Army personnel and three ex-Servicemen.

The match was played at Edinburgh's Tynecastle Stadium to raise money for Erskine and the Heart of Midlothian Education and Community Trust.



Picture: Graeme Main

ARMY volleyball players have continued to make strong progress on the court despite returning from the Inter-Services championships in Aldershot empty-handed. Operational commitments took their toll on the squads ahead of the show-down but the performances against their Forces rivals points to a bright future for the sport. The Royal Air Force continued their recent dominance of the competition with victory in the men's and women's tournaments, while the Royal Navy won the mixed event. The Army were in action at the Crown Services Tournament in Aberdeen as this issue went to press.

From coast to cadet

NETBALL star Jo Binns has swapped action on the court for a 19-day expedition along one of Africa's most rugged and challenging coastlines.

The former England ace is part of a 12-strong team tackling the 400km trek along Namibia's Skeleton Coast and is raising money for military charity Combat Stress.

Participants have to carry everything they need for the mission and will walk for eight hours in temperatures as high as 35 degrees. They will also spend five hours each evening pumping salt water from the sea to drink.

Binns has played in all four of Team Bath's Netball Superleague title-winning teams and has competed regularly this season up to the home game against Northern Thunder in March.

She will join the Army as an officer cadet at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst on completion of her African adventure.

"I'm somewhere

between nervous and excited," she explained. "When you go to something like a world championships you feel comfortable and well prepared because you've been playing netball for years. You know what to expect."

"This is a complete unknown, which is a bit terrifying."

"I wanted to do this expedition because it is a unique opportunity to go to one of the most remote places in the world."

"There's no real chance of seeing anyone outside the team once we're walking and that will be a strange experience for us."

Binns served as a second lieutenant with 9 Supply Regiment, Royal Logistic Corps while studying for her degree and has also been a detachment commander with the Wiltshire Army Cadet Force in Colerne.

The trek started as this issue went to press and donations can be made online at www.justgiving.com/jo-binns ■



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final word



We asked personnel from 27 Regiment, Royal Logistic Corps in Aldershot for their thoughts on CGS's Briefing Team and offering feedback to the top

INTERVIEWS: RICHARD LONG
PICTURES: MIKE WESTON

Cpl Heather McArthur

The briefing was very good but I thought it was a little too in-depth for the regiment; some of the privates would not have a clue about certain aspects. In the current climate sessions like this are most valuable. It is a good link to the top. There are a few issues I want to raise regarding accommodation and qualifications and this is a good way to be heard.

Cpl Joe Gutkowski

I think it is good things like this are being organised as it lets people know what is happening. I've heard about some of the subjects but this briefing talked a lot more about them. I am going to ask if the bonus for Afghanistan is staying and what is being done to ensure Service couples are being kept together. I would like to think my voice is being heard.



Capt Sandra Hodgson

Soldiers might not feel as if they are being heard, but with this someone at a higher level is listening to them. It also keeps us up to date on current issues. You can read about things in *Soldier* and on Armynet but some of the information we received had only been announced the day before. I've been involved in visits previously and the issues are included in the annual report, which is good.



Sgt Russ Cooper (AGC)

It is useful but a lot of the things the team has talked about are accessible via Armynet and other outlets. The feedback is the most important part as it gives you chance to get things off your chest. It is the usual favourites – pensions and allowances. I've had these briefings two or three times over the past seven years and on the whole I think they are very good.

Sgt Lee Jenkins

It is a good idea for them to come round and brief us but I think a few of the subjects were not fully answered and that generated more questions. Pensions are the main concern for a lot of people at the moment and we need to know more about what is happening regarding redundancies. I received briefings prior to the visit but it is good they have come here to do this.



LCpl Lynsie Boon

I thought it was interesting to hear what is happening within the Infantry and of the new kit that is going out on the ground in Afghanistan. I was also happy to learn about the updated accommodation. I am going to be asking for the latest on redundancy and I know a lot of people on this camp want to know the situation regarding Pay As You Dine.



2nd Lt Kieran Foley

It is great to have this team down and hear what the views are at the top. Likewise, it is good for CGS's Briefing Team to hear what the guys think and to canvas opinion. Most of the detail in the brief is stuff we as officers have already heard but a lot of the younger soldiers may not. The feedback session is most important and they can hear directly what issues we have.

Sgt Carl Jones

For them to come and see us is of massive value as it lets us know more about current affairs within the Army. The biggest worry for the senior NCOs is pensions as we have guys close to termination. A private two years in to the job may not be interested in the political side of things so this briefing is useful for them. The chief of staff will definitely chase issues and that is good to know.



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