

MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH ARMY

# SOLDIER

AUGUST 2008 £2.50

## HELP FROM HEROES

Line-out legend returns  
for front-line Forces

## MEDAL WINNERS

Troops decorated  
for daring deeds

## ROAD TO SALVATION

Bosnians reflect  
on British tenure



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# SOLDIER

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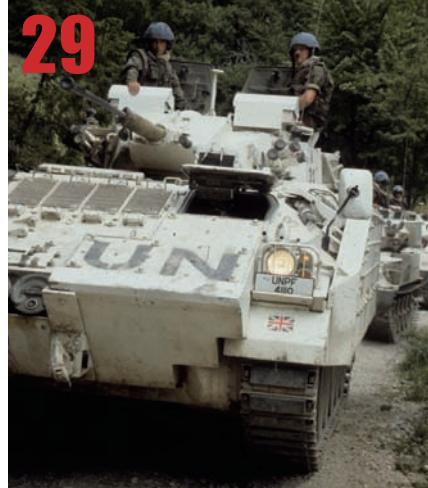
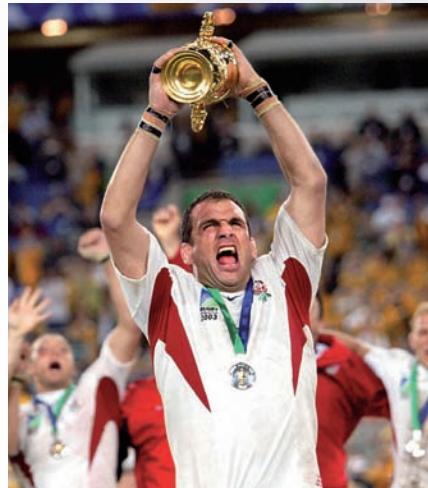
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Cover picture (left): Sporting hero Martin Johnson throws his considerable weight behind rugby fixture in a bid to raise £1 million for Service charity.

See Pages 49-55 Picture: David Davies/PA Photos

Background image: Close contact – Colour sergeants see the ugly side of officer cadets. See Pages 37-39

Picture: Graeme Main

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FREE STUFF . . . get your hands on the "real story" of the British Army in Afghanistan – James Fergusson's *A Million Bullets*, bank yourself £100 (Page 67) and win a copy of Brig Ben Barry's seminal account of a Warrior battalion on ops in the Balkans, *A Cold War* (Page 87).

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**ALL ENQUIRIES: TEL 01252 347353**  
(Ald Mil 94222 2353)  
Fax: 01252 347358 (2358)  
Email: mail@soldiermagazine.co.uk  
Website: www.soldiermagazine.co.uk

**Managing Editor:** John Elliott

**EDITORIAL**

**Editor:**  
Andy Simms 01252 347355 (2355)  
asimms@soldiermagazine.co.uk

**News Editor:**  
Cliff Caswell 01252 340753 (5753)  
ccaswell@soldiermagazine.co.uk

**Sports Editor:**  
Stephen Tyler 01252 347362 (2362)  
styler@soldiermagazine.co.uk

**Assistant Editors:**  
Karen Thomas 01252 347154 (2154)  
kthomas@soldiermagazine.co.uk  
Heidi Mines 01252 340462 (5462)  
hmines@soldiermagazine.co.uk

**Editorial Assistant:**  
Doreen Cadwallader 01252 347360 (2360)  
dcadwallader@soldiermagazine.co.uk

**DESIGN**

**Art Editor:**  
Tudor Morgan 01252 347169 (2169)  
tmorgan@soldiermagazine.co.uk

**Graphic Designers:**  
Chris Sell 01252 355080 (8080)  
csell@soldiermagazine.co.uk  
Kath Lee 01252 347361 (2361)  
klee@soldiermagazine.co.uk

**PHOTOGRAPHY**

**Chief Photographer:**  
Mike Weston 01252 347357 (2357)  
mweston@soldiermagazine.co.uk

**Photographers:**  
Graeme Main 01252 347357 (2357)  
gmain@soldiermagazine.co.uk  
Steve Dock 01252 347357 (2357)  
sdock@soldiermagazine.co.uk

**MARKETING and ADVERTISING**

**Business Manager:**  
Andy Clarkson 01252 347351 (2351)  
aclarkson@soldiermagazine.co.uk

**Advertising:**  
Heather Shekyls 01252 347352 (2352)  
hshekyls@soldiermagazine.co.uk

**Subscriptions:**  
Stephen King 01252 347353 (2353)  
sking@soldiermagazine.co.uk

**Distribution:**  
Patricia Lamport 01252 347354 (2354)  
plamport@soldiermagazine.co.uk

**ARCHIVE**

**Archivist/Information Manager:**  
Ruth Kusionowicz 01252 355056 (8056)  
rkusionowicz@soldiermagazine.co.uk



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"Dammit Sir, this is the 20th chilli casualty this week – it's making inroads into our availability for public duties."

● Who ate all the pies? – Pages 43-45

# Prop idols, but not real heroes

THE British public have long suffered at the hands of sporting idols who promise so much but ultimately deliver so little.

Errant spot kicks from messrs Waddle, Pearce, Batty, Southgate and Beckham put paid to hopes of glory in football's recent World and European Cups, while Tim Henman made a career of so-near-yet-so-far forays into the final rounds of Wimbledon.

So rare is it to see a home-grown sportsman lifting a major trophy that when it does happen, those involved are immediately labelled as heroes.

Take our cover star Martin Johnson. Already a much-medalled player for Leicester Tigers, at Six Nations level for England and with the British Lions, the 6ft 7in man mountain reached new heights when he captained his country to World Cup triumph in 2003.

Perhaps understandably for a country that had not tasted a major team success since the 1966 football World Cup, England collectively fell at the feet of its all-conquering rugby stars, lining the streets of London and dishing out MBEs like they were going out of fashion.

But ask Johnno about the backs-to-the-wall achievement Down Under and he is quick to dismiss talk of heroism. That, he says, should be reserved for the men and women serving their country in boots of a different kind in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Proof that his staunch belief in the value of the Forces' work is not just a cliché can

## FIRST SIGHT

be found in the eight pages detailing the actions that have earned several gallant soldiers recognition in the latest operational awards (Pages 19-27). As undeniably sweet as beating Australia in their own back yard was, the tales of heroic actions under the toughest of conditions show that the big man's modesty is not ill-founded.

The national side's new head coach is not alone. Fellow World Cup winner Lawrence Dallaglio joined his former captain in agreeing to come out of retirement for September's Help for Heroes challenge match at Twickenham ([www.helpforheroes.org](http://www.helpforheroes.org)), insisting

that helping injured Servicemen is the only cause that could have convinced him to do so.

Our exclusive interviews with two of rugby's greatest talents (Pages 49-55) reflect a growing appreciation and admiration at all levels of society for the work being carried out by troops on front-line operations and for the bravery and determination of those who battle back from life-changing injuries.

Veterans of the 15-year campaign in Bosnia showed a different kind of heroism. Rather than supporting each other through intense contacts, they put themselves between warring ethnic groups to bring peace to the volatile region (Pages 29-33). ■



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Key paper points: Greatly improved compensation for the seriously wounded and better access to medical care and university education are proposed

# Better way ahead

## Command paper proposals will address 'disadvantaged' Services

ARMED Forces lobby groups will be given more influence under far-reaching initiatives set out in the new Service Personnel Command Paper.

Under one of the most significant blueprints for the military community in two decades, representatives from the Army Families Federation (AFF) and other pressure groups will have the ear of the Prime Minister on key issues.

Brig Ian Dale, the senior military member in the team behind the command paper, told *Soldier* that the wider military family stood to benefit greatly from improvements to areas such as healthcare, compensation and education.

"At its core, this paper, *The Nation's Commitment: Cross-Government Support to our Armed Forces, their Families and Veterans*, reflects the essential starting point that nobody in the Forces should be disadvantaged," he said. "But at the same time, it shows that we should give our Service people special treatment where it is right to do so, and recognises the uniqueness of serving your country."

"The document sets a principle for every government department to follow and the devolved administrations in

Scotland and Wales are also supporting these measures. We have an agreement to establish an Armed Forces advocate in each department and his or her job will be to make sure all involved parties keep in close touch with the MoD."

Brig Dale added that a reference group, which would include a representative of the AFF, would be set up in the Cabinet Office. It would meet at least every six months and report to the Prime Minister annually. Its report would be published.

Brig Dale, late REME, believed that the Armed Forces could look forward to a higher public profile as a consequence.

"The AFF has a role to generate discussion and needs to gain evidence on any issue to put to the relevant government department.

"In that sense the Federation has a key, almost pivotal, role to play and they are the people who are going to work within the new framework being created. They will nurture these new relationships and shape them."

While the reference group represents a far-reaching change in itself, the command paper suggests a range of groundbreaking proposals with potential to

change the lives of troops during their military careers and when they return to civvy street.

They include entitlement to funding for further or higher education, building on the current Learning Credits initiative, after six years of service.

The much criticised Armed Forces Compensation Scheme will also be beefed up, with lump sum payouts to the most seriously injured soldiers doubled from £285,000. They will continue to receive the tax-free income for life.

Amended legislation will be put before Parliament after a consultation period.

The paper sets out a path to improving access to NHS dental services to military personnel, including the use of facilities on military bases and mobile clinics. Trials will begin in England soon.

Brig Dale said: "We have spoken to people from all three Services, in the UK and Germany and with chief executive officers in councils, and the public. In addition, we visited other government departments, asking them to help with solutions. In all, there are around 40 important commitments in this paper."

● **Home Truths – Page 65**

# UNDER Big Ben

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

## Reserves report set for release this year

THE Strategic Review of Reserve Forces will enter a new stage next month, Armed Forces Minister Bob Ainsworth has confirmed.

Speaking during a debate in the House of Commons, Mr Ainsworth said a second round of consultation workshops would be run in September and the report would be delivered later in 2008.

He added: "The strategic review is now moving from research to analysis, returning to those consulted where necessary to test assumptions and clarify detail.

"We should never underestimate the contribution that is being made by our Reserve Forces to our current operations, as has been made through 100 years of the TA.

"The review is to make sure they remain as relevant to the Armed Forces over the next 100 years."

**Snatched away:** Snatch Land Rovers are being used less with the introduction of new armoured vehicles on ops, Mr Ainsworth has said. The Armed Forces Minister told MPs that new additions to the fleet such as Mastiff were replacing older stablemates on some tasks but stressed that there would continue to be a role for smaller vehicles including the Snatch. He said: "Any alternative would inevitably have similar capability in terms of mobility and protection."

**Allergy action:** The Army would be "highly irresponsible" to enlist soldiers with a nut or other food allergy, Mr Ainsworth said. In response to a question from Gary Streeter MP, he said it was impossible to guarantee that the military catering system, particularly in remote operational areas, was nut free.

**Badge of honour:** More than 2,000 veterans badges are being issued to ex-Servicemen and women every week, according to Veterans' Minister Derek Twigg. He believed that 602,000 former personnel were now wearing the lapel badge.

# Turnaround

## Top US officer hails Army's efforts in Basra city

A SENIOR American officer has praised British soldiers for their work in southern Iraq, claiming that their "decisive" efforts had helped smash rogue militias.

Gen Jack Keane, who serves on the US Policy Review Board, told reporters there had been a "stunning turnaround" in fortunes and said the troops deserved recognition. He had earlier been quoted in the media as saying there was a "general disengagement" by British forces in the region and that security on the ground was gradually deteriorating.

But speaking in Basra, he pointed out that British support for the Iraqi-led Operation Charge of the Knights had played a pivotal role in defeating the insurgents who had been in control in some areas of the city.

"It has been a stunning victory in such a short period of time," he said. "I was here in the third week of March of this year and the militia were pretty much in control of the city. Now the Iraqi security forces are in control. You can go any place in Basra, have complete freedom of movement and can do it safely."

Gen Keane praised soldiers of 7th Armoured Brigade – the Desert Rats – for their work with the Iraqis in Military Transition Teams. They had passed on invaluable knowledge and experience to the Iraqi soldiers they were mentoring, who were becoming a credible force in their own right.

"Working with the Iraqis side-by-side, providing advice and counsel and helping educate them about techniques and procedures we know work is a proven combination," he said.

"The British participation is not only helpful, it is decisive."

Gen Keane said he believed that the Iraqis had a strong senior commander in Gen Aziz, who was committed to ensuring enemy forces had no place to hide. His crackdown had hit the insurgents hard.

"The British military, the Iraqi forces and some of the US forces that are also participating in the operation deserve a tremendous amount of credit," Gen Keane concluded.

● **LORD** Justice Gage has been appointed to sit on the public inquiry probing the death of Baha Mousa, an Iraqi civilian who died in the custody of British soldiers in 2003.

The experienced judge has decided to oversee the case alone, but has the power to appoint assessors who can assist with expert knowledge and advice.

Mr Mousa died from asphyxiation and had 93 injuries on his body. Seven soldiers were charged in connection with his death but only one, Cpl Donald Payne, of the 1st Battalion, The Queen's Lancashire Regiment, was convicted. He admitted that he inhumanely treated a prisoner at a court martial.

# Premier's praise

TROOPS on Op Telic gave an enthusiastic welcome to Prime Minister Gordon Brown when he made a flying visit to Iraq.

He arrived in Basra on a C-130 Hercules and watched soldiers in the Military Transition Teams instructing their Iraqi counterparts and thanked them for their courage and dedication.

He also met the Commander of the Iraqi Army 14th Division, Gen Aziz, and the Basra operations commander, Gen Mohammed.

The PM said he had been impressed with the pace of progress in Basra since the Iraqi Army had taken control of the province from rogue militias. He said British troops had played a key role in the transformation, particularly in providing training.

Mr Brown told the soldiers: "We are now working with the Iraqi forces to train them up so they can take over their responsibilities and we can complete our work here."

"Your work is going to make a huge difference in the long term. We want to see local elections here. I want you to know that you have the support of all the British people. What we ask of you is to show great courage in some extremely difficult circumstances. You are the most professional army in the world and I know the Iraqis here are very happy with the joint arrangements that are working very well."

Mr Brown visited Baghdad during his whistle-stop tour, meeting Iraqi counterpart Nouri al-Maliki and President Jalal Talibani.

A British military spokesman said Mr Brown had been well received. "The Prime Minister met a number of personnel involved in training the Iraqi Army and said a few words. They respected the fact that the most senior UK politician had come to visit, especially in 50C of summer heat."



Picture: Cpl Rob Knill RLC

**In memoriam:** Soldiers from 7th Armoured Brigade took time out of their Iraq tour to remember a comrade killed in a road accident in March, shortly before he was due to deploy with them. Around 120 members of the Brigade HQ and

Signal Squadron gathered to light candles for Sig Scott Barsby in a service at the Contingency Operating Base in Basra. It was an emotional occasion for the soldiers after they received gift parcels organised by Scott's parents, Angela and

Frank, who were keen to mark their son's birthday with the comrades he would have served with. Squadron OC Maj Richard Carter said: "We think about Scott every day and we're always thinking of his family and friends in Derby."

# Mentors upgraded

**Engineers move in as Brits consolidate their position among Iraqi troops**

**S**APPERS have consolidated gains made in Basra by building new accommodation for British military mentors living with Iraqi troops.

Soldiers from 32 Armoured Engineer Regiment worked around the clock to provide better conditions for 7th Armoured Brigade troops working with the Iraqi 14th Infantry Division.

The sappers assembled new forward operating bases and refurbished the crumbling quarters in which the Military Transition Teams (MiTTs) had been living. At Camp Stables in Basra the engineers transformed a rubbish-strewn farm into a tented accommodation block complete with basic gym.

They also built sangars, fenced off the compound and introduced ballistic protection for the troops of 2nd Battalion, The Royal Anglian Regiment.

MiTTs from the 4th Battalion,

The Royal Regiment of Scotland, are working in both Basra and Baghdad, and soldiers from The Royal Scots Dragoon Guards have been mentoring in Basra

while the Strike Battle-group based on the 1st Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, is at high readiness to assist with operations.

## Food for thought on ops

A MILITARY catering chief has called on officers and NCOs to ensure soldiers on operations feed themselves properly.

Capt Paul Cunningham RN, project leader at Defence Food Services, was worried that some troops in Iraq and Afghanistan were not consuming their full rations and that their effectiveness could suffer as a result.

He was speaking after announcing trials of a new Multi-Climate Ration Pack at the Defence Vehicle Dynamics Exhibition.

While stressing that under-eating was not a major problem, he called for commanders

to make sure their troops knew that food was "fuel for operations" and that they ate enough to keep them healthy in the field.

Capt Cunningham said: "We are aware of some soldiers who don't have breakfast and others who won't touch the puddings.

"There is a case for sergeants, corporals and officers to give subordinates more education about healthy eating on ops. They need to explain the importance of the ration box to their young men and women and make them aware that food is fuel."

● Bon appétit – Page 47

# Paras' black month

## Experienced NCO and officer hopeful killed as Helmand ops continue

**S**OLDIERS serving in Afghanistan have been remembering a respected senior NCO and dedicated junior soldier who were killed within 24 hours of each other.

WO2 Michael Williams, a company sergeant major with two decades of Army experience, and young reservist Pte Joe Whittaker, died in separate incidents on June 24. Both had been serving with the 2nd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment.

The senior NCO had been on an operation in the Upper Sangin Valley, Helmand province, when he was fatally wounded in a fire fight with the Taliban.

Pte Whittaker – a Territorial Army volunteer and member of 4 Para who was on attachment in Afghanistan – died when a suspected improvised explosive device detonated.

The deaths of the two men followed the recent loss of five other paras. But senior officers pledged that there would be no let-up in the battle against the Taliban.

"Sgt Maj Williams died commanding C (Bruneval) Company's fire support team in contact in the Upper Sangin Valley," said 2 Para CO Lt Col Joe O'Sullivan. "Pte Whittaker was part of a mine detection team and was killed helping



● WO2 Williams



● Pte Joe Whittaker

to ensure re-supply convoys could reach forward operating bases.

"They were ready for the risks they calmly accepted on the day they died, and their courage and commitment will spur us on to give our best to improve the situation here, no matter how difficult or dangerous other people may tell us that will be," he said.

WO2 Williams, who was 40 and from Cardiff, joined the Army in 1986 and was a career 2 Para soldier. He had already completed a previous tour in Afghanistan and served in Northern Ireland, Macedonia and Iraq.

Known to friends as Mark, he was respected for his experience and was well liked by those under his command for his

compassion and encouragement. He had been based at Forward Operating Base Gibraltar when he died.

Pte Whittaker had signed up with the TA in Stratford-Upon-Avon in Warwickshire three years ago, transferring to 4 Para in October 2007 after initially serving with the Royal Signals.

He completed the Combat Infantryman Course and P Company before volunteering to serve in Afghanistan and mobilising with 16 Air Assault Brigade in May this year.

Respected for his intelligence and high levels of fitness, the 20-year-old had already passed the Army Officer Selection Board and was soon to begin his training. He wanted to become an Apache pilot.

Defence Secretary Des Browne said he was deeply saddened to hear of the deaths of the two men, adding that his thoughts were with their family and friends.

Mr Browne said: "They both died in the most heroic of circumstances.

"CSM Williams had been taking part in a deliberate operation to drive Taliban fighters from the Upper Sangin Valley and Pte Whittaker was checking the road for mines to ensure the safety of his comrades."

## Two dead in day of anguish

AS the men of The Parachute Regiment continued their fight against the Taliban in the Upper Sangin Valley, operations elsewhere in Helmand province claimed two more lives.

WO2 Dan Shirley, serving with 13 Air Assault Support Regiment RLC, was killed when his patrol vehicle was involved in an accident on June 27. LCpl Jimmy Johnson of the 5th Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland, died a day later after falling victim to an anti-personnel mine.

Soldiers and commanders have paid warm tributes to both men. They were described as highly capable and professional NCOs who would be sorely missed.

WO2 Shirley, who was 32 and from Leicester, originally joined the 2nd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment, in 1992 before transferring to the Army Physical Training Corps. He arrived at 13 Air Assault Regiment around two years ago.

The father-of-two had been running the Regimental Training Wing in southern Afghanistan. He had been on a logistic patrol from Sangin to the main base at Camp Bastion when the WMIK Land Rover he was



● WO2 Dan Shirley



● LCpl Jimmy Johnson

travelling in rolled over. His CO, Lt Col R J McNeil, said: "The loss of WO2 Dan Shirley has come as a shock to every member of the regiment. He was known to all and universally respected.

"WO2 Shirley's memorial will be the skills he imparted – they have saved lives and will save more. This is an extraordinary tribute to an extraordinary soldier."

LCpl Johnson, who grew up near Strathclyde, joined The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders in 1997 and had served in Northern Ireland and Bosnia.

The 31-year-old qualified sniper, who was engaged to be married, was remem-

bered as a highly capable infantryman whose skills were "second to none". He had been on a vehicle checkpoint patrol near Lashkar Gar when he was killed.

Lt Col David Richmond, CO of 5 Scots, said: "LCpl Johnson made the ultimate sacrifice. He died among men who held him in the highest regard. He will be remembered for his humanity, the time he had for people no matter what the pressures on himself, his humour and his professionalism."

● A soldier from the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers was killed in Afghanistan as this issue went to press.

The Ministry of Defence confirmed that Cpl Jason Barnes, who was attached to 2 Para, died when a routine patrol in the Kajaki area of Helmand province came under fire on July 22.

According to reports, an ambulance that Cpl Barnes was driving was caught in an explosion caused by an improvised explosive device following the contact.

Two other soldiers were injured and evacuated to Camp Bastion. Their injuries are not life-threatening.



Picture: SSgt Mike Harvey RLC

Death from above: Apache helicopters dealt an insurgent commander a lethal blow after British Forces embarked on a new strategy in southern Afghanistan

# Taliban decapitated

**Enemy leaders eliminated as Brits carry out pinpoint surgical strikes**

BATTLE-hardened British troops sent the Taliban high command into disarray after mounting surgical strikes to wipe out senior insurgent leaders in Afghanistan.

In three pinpoint operations, soldiers moved against the terror leaders, engaging them from the sky and ground.

British commanders had a stark message for the Taliban – anyone found undermining the Afghan government could expect the same medicine.

In the first attack, Apache gunships

from 664 Squadron, 9 Regiment AAC opened fire on a vehicle carrying an infamous leader known as Sadiquallah, suspected of being the mastermind behind bomb and suicide strikes against Nato troops.

Later Bishmullah, a key logistician and commander in northern Helmand, was shot dead in a fire-fight with British soldiers near Now Zad and Abdul Rasaq, also known as Mulla Sheikh, was killed near Musa Qala.

British commanders said the three ops

had been a great success. They had put the Taliban on the back foot, and left its leadership in tatters.

Army spokesman Lt Col Robin Matthews said soldiers remained committed to improving conditions for ordinary Afghans. He added: "The Taliban's senior leadership structure has suffered a shattering blow. They remain a dangerous enemy but they increasingly lack strategic direction and their proposition to the Afghan people is proving self-defeating."

## Commandos Herrick bound

SOLDIERS serving with 3 Commando Brigade Royal Marines are standing by for action after it was announced that they will be heading to Afghanistan in October.

The troops, who have been going through their ramp-up training, will continue the battle to oust the Taliban and promote reconstruction in the south of the country.

They will replace personnel from 16 Air Assault Brigade, who are currently midway through their Herrick tour and have continued to make strong progress towards stabilisation in Helmand province.

The latest force package built around 3 Commando Brigade will be reinforced by an extra 230 personnel to beef-up the mis-

sion, announced by Defence Secretary Des Browne in June.

The Territorial Army will continue to play a key role in the deployment and call-out notices are being issued to members of the Reserve Forces to fill 560 posts.

Explaining the reasons for expanding the Herrick mission, Mr Browne said security in Afghanistan was improving but momentum had to be kept up.

Mr Browne added: "These additional forces will ensure we can maintain the growing reach of the Afghan Government in Helmand, increase the military contribution to development and accelerate the pace of Afghanisation."

### 3 COMMANDO BRIGADE

#### LAST IN AFGHANISTAN: 2006/07

3 Commando Brigade HQ

1st The Queen's Dragoon Guards

29 Commando Regiment Royal Artillery

24 Commando Engineer Regiment

2nd Battalion, The Royal Gurkha Rifles

1st Battalion, The Rifles

Commando Logistic Regiment

3 Close Support Battalion REME

114th Provost Company, RMP

42 Commando Royal Marines

45 Commando Royal Marines

UK Landing Force Command and Sup Gp

## IN BRIEF

● TEN soldiers are to attempt a 450-mile trek across Greenland's ice cap this month to mark the 100th anniversary of the Territorial Army.

The route, pioneered by Norwegian polar explorer Fridtjof Nansen 120 years ago, is so treacherous that fewer people have attempted it than have climbed Everest. The Scotland-based soldiers, led by Maj James Woodhouse, 7 Scots, plan to complete the expedition from east to west coasts in under 35 days, ten fewer than Nansen. TA team members include a construction project manager, a forestry student, sports and leisure lecturer and a doctor.

● TERRITORIAL Army soldiers are set to wear their uniforms to work on one day every year after the success of an initiative to mark the organisation's centenary. Troops swapped their civvies for Combat 95s last month to raise awareness of the Reservists' vital role on modern operations.

TA 100 spokesman Col Alistair Bruce said: "What truly matters is that the public are aware that eight per cent of the people in Afghanistan are Territorials. We are doing this for them."

The centenary commemorations were also marked with a pageant at Horse Guards Parade in London, attended by 6,000 spectators including The Prince of Wales, the Duchess of Cornwall and the Earl of Wessex.

● HOMECOMING troops have been greeted with brand new accommodation on their return from operations in southern Afghanistan.

More than 200 soldiers from 27 Transport Regiment RLC, came back to single-living, en-suite flats at Aldershot Garrison.

The new rooms, which were opened by Under Secretary of State for Defence Derek Twigg, are part of an £8 billion Private Finance Initiative (PFI) to transform garrisons across Salisbury Plain and Aldershot.

Project Allenby/Connaught is thought to be the largest estates PFI project the MoD has ever undertaken and to date almost 2,300 soldiers have now moved into their new lodgings across the country.

The project is being delivered and maintained by Aspire Defence.

● SOLDIERS from 75 Engineer Regiment (Volunteers) have become the first TA recipients of the Army Benevolent Fund's Carrington Drum, awarded annually to the unit raising the most money for the ABF. The TA sappers took part in fundraising events, including a 127-mile march and truck pull, and banked more than £22,000.

# Troops must set standards

## Conflict 'a battle for hearts and minds', says CGS

**S**OLDIERS must always take the moral high ground if they are to be successful in current and future operations, the Chief of the General Staff has stressed.

Gen Sir Richard Dannatt described modern military actions as "a global battle for hearts and minds", adding that failure to adopt the right values would play into the hands of the enemy.

In a keynote speech to pressure group Progress, the head of the Army said that exemplary leadership was now more important than ever.

He added: "I would submit that today's conflict is a contest of ideas and values. It is a battle for hearts and minds on a global scale – not just among the people of Iraq and Afghanistan, but also among people of London, Washington and elsewhere.

"In conflict and war, our soldiers must uphold the highest values and standards – failure to do so would not only in itself be wrong, but would also play into the hands of our enemies, for some of whom compromise is not an option."

Gen Dannatt described the moral high ground as "vital ground", and said

troops needed to be more flexible – as well as robust – when out in the field. He believed it was now more difficult to label the different operations in which the Army was involved and that soldiers often had to call on many different skills in one theatre.

Gen Dannatt said: "What has changed is the distinction between different types of warfare. We can no longer be prescriptive about taking part in either major combat or stabilisation operations as the boundary between the two has increasingly become blurred.

"I cannot envisage a conflict where there will be no role for stabilisation operations but, equally, stabilisation is also highly likely to involve combat as it does today."

CGS said that the concept of winning or losing did not apply to many modern operations, and measuring where a conflict ended and peace began was more complex.

"Success in contemporary operations is very much a moving target and replaces the binary notions of victory or defeat, both of which assume a line in the sand," he concluded.

## Soldier CO stands down

MORE than two decades after taking the helm of the British Army's in-house magazine, *Soldier* Managing Editor John Elliott has decided to fall out.

The much-respected journalist, who joined the magazine as Editor in 1986, is retiring after taking the publication to new heights, scooping a clutch of awards and seeing the British Army evolve from Belfast to the compounds of Afghanistan.

"I have greatly enjoyed helping to tell the story of the British Army for more than 20 years," said Elliott. "From exercises on the north German plains with the old British Army of the Rhine to life in divided Berlin and the dangerous streets of Northern Ireland, I have never failed to be impressed by soldiers doing their job. During that period it has been a privilege for the magazine to report on operations in the Balkans, Iraq and now Afghanistan with short-lived but testing

missions in Sierra Leone, East Timor and Rwanda, among others, along the way."

Elliott took up his post at *Soldier* after spending 11 years at the magazine's sister publication *Navy News*. Turning his hand to every part of the editorial process, he improved standards by introducing modern production techniques and employing experienced journalists. His efforts turned a stale publication, with a print run of just 20,000, into a vibrant magazine that rivals many of its contemporaries on the news stand. With a readership conservatively estimated at around 250,000, it has won more than 40 awards.

Having assumed the role of Managing Editor in 2006, Elliott guided *Soldier* to a second successive "best British internal news magazine" title last year and was also named Experienced Editor of the Year by the British Association of Communicators in Business.



● John Elliott



Global reach: A new C-17 Globemaster, pictured above, has joined the Forces' fleet, while the Airbus A400M will enter RAF service early in the next decade

# Final approach

## Boost to long-haul capability as new troop carriers prepare to touch down

**B**RITISH soldiers will be able to take the battle to the enemy more rapidly following an announcement that they will soon have a new fleet of air transporters at their disposal.

The Airbus A400M, the future transport aircraft for the Royal Air Force, was revealed to the media and MoD officials in Spain last month.

The workhorse will be able to carry a 32-tonne payload over 2,000 miles when it replaces part of the ageing C-130 Hercules fleet early in the next decade.

But soldiers have also been given an immediate boost in lift capability, with the arrival of a sixth C-17 transport aircraft at RAF Brize Norton in Oxfordshire.

Collected from the Boeing factory in California, the new Globemaster was immediately pressed into action, flying soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, The Rifles to Kosovo.

Air force crews and senior officers have welcomed moves to beef-up the fleet, claiming the new additions would allow soldiers and kit to be moved swiftly in and out of operational areas.

Speaking at the unveiling of the A400M, Air Marshal Sir Barry Thornton said the arrival of 25 of the new aircraft – which can carry nearly 120 passengers in addition to kit – would make a “significant difference” to capability.

“The A400M will support the deployment of all three Services in peace,

crisis and wartime roles. It will be highly reliable and capable,” he said.

Pilots and crews at Brize Norton welcomed the arrival of the sixth C-17.

A spokesman for 99 Squadron, which operates the aircraft, said: “It will bring immediate benefit to ground troops all over the world.”

## Rifles extract from Kosovo

SENIOR officers have spoken of their satisfaction after the first battalion to deploy overseas from Northern Ireland returned to the province.

Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, The Rifles, arrived back in Ballykinler last month after completing a four-week peacekeeping tour as part of the Nato force in Kosovo.

Commanders are now looking ahead to the first brigade-level deployment from Northern Ireland – scheduled to be a tour of Afghanistan next year.

Lt Col Rob Thomson, CO of 2 Rifles, was pleased with the professionalism shown by

his troops. He said: “We were working to a French HQ in the north of Kosovo with our main tasks being to deter anyone from taking the law into their own hands and reassuring local people of support.

“It has been a historic deployment from Ballykinler as this has been the first time the British Army at battalion strength has gone on operations overseas.

“We have shown you can detach units from Northern Ireland to go on operations and that is what will happen next year when 19 Light Brigade goes to Afghanistan.”

● Peacemaker – Pages 34-35

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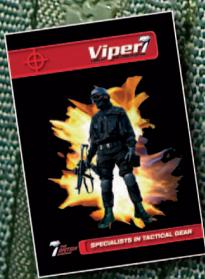
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Artist's impression: Birmingham's impressive new hospital is poised to be an international centre of excellence for both military and civilian medical care

# Out on operations

## Civvy medics brave the front line as new military ward is announced

**S**ENIOR Army medical officers have saluted the bravery of civilian counterparts for donning body armour and heading for the front line.

National Health Service doctors and nurses, who have been treating wounded soldiers at Birmingham's Selly Oak Hospital, came in for high-praise after being given a first-hand look at daily life on the ground in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Brig Chris Parker, Commandant of the Royal Centre for Defence Medicine, said the staff had conducted themselves with bravery and professionalism.

He was speaking to *Soldier* after seeing the progress made on a new military ward being built at the Birmingham University Hospital in Edgbaston.

The new trauma and orthopaedics centre will provide a further boost to the care given to military personnel, with both single rooms and four-bed rooms, a spacious communal area and quiet room for relatives, when it opens in around two years.

Up to 30 patients will be looked after in the new facility, but in common with the old military hospitals, civilians will be permitted on the ward if space allows.

It is intended that there will be more nursing staff than on a normal NHS

ward to reflect the often complex injuries of military personnel and that they are likely to face a longer stay in hospital.

Brig Parker accepted that the help available to injured personnel and their families had not always been up to an acceptable standard. But he emphasised that there had been a number of improvements to resolve the problems over the last two years.

The number of Services nurses on the current military-managed ward at Selly Oak Hospital had been significantly boosted, from a dozen to around 40, the commandant confirmed.

In addition, there were now two specialist psychiatric nurses and two military liaison officers to help the loved

ones of wounded troops. There had also been a number of improvements to the medical evacuation chain.

Brig Parker said that the latest investment would complement the already strong relationship between military medical teams and their civilian counterparts. "We now have a truly joined up and combined operation between medical staff of all three Armed Services and the NHS.

"Our new military ward will have a military manager, and injured personnel will feel very much at home. There will even be Service décor and memorabilia," he revealed.

● **Health check – Page 98**

## Techno-savvy tailoring

PERSONNEL will soon be able to get their kit online thanks to a new system being piloted by the MoD. New Clothing Solution (NCS) will enable Servicemen and women to order their uniforms on the internet and request delivery to the address of their choice. Although the system will

not be available to troops on operations, all others can expect to receive their kit within four days of ordering.

An MoD spokesman confirmed a pilot trial will run until the end of November and it is anticipated the system will be rolled out soon after.

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Picture: Steve Dolk

Flying south: A 747 bound for the Falkland Islands is refuelled at Ascension. Veterans who fought in the war can now apply for cheap flights to return there.

# Atlantic concession

## Families of soldiers killed in 1982 call for rights to indulgence flights

**B**EREAVED relatives who lost loved ones in the Falklands War have urged the Government to consider expanding a scheme that gives veterans cut-price travel to the islands.

They believe the entitlement to indulgence flights should be offered to family members of Servicemen killed in action, claiming widows and other relations are being disadvantaged.

Moves to open up the subsidised MoD travel scheme to South Atlantic Medal holders have been widely applauded by former soldiers.

Veterans can apply for a return trip to the islands for £150, significantly less than the full ticket price of £1,300.

But the scheme, which is managed by the South Atlantic Medal Association and is being introduced next month,

is open only to veterans of the war. Speaking to *Soldier* during the annual Welsh Guards reunion in Wrexham, Ceri Jones, whose brother Gareth Hughes was among those killed in the attack on the RFA *Sir Galahad*, said she could not afford to pay the full cost of a flight.

The remains of those who lost their lives on the ship, which was bombed by Argentine aircraft on June 8, 1982, could not be repatriated because the vessel was sunk as a war grave.

Ceri added: "My view is that the indulgence flights should be opened up to families. Gareth's death left a hole in my life, and broke my father's heart. He died two years later."

Former Welsh Guardsman John Jones, who visited the Falklands on a pilgrimage as part of the 25th anniversary commemorations last year, agreed that close family members should be helped with travel costs.

"I am not knocking the concession that has been given to us – Derek Twigg, the Veterans' Minister, has done a good job in opening up indulgence flights. But I think they should be available to partners of ex-Servicemen and bereaved family members," he said.

# Tribute paid to RGJ fallen

FORMER members of The Royal Green Jackets turned out in force for the unveiling of a new memorial to the regiment's fallen.

Around 2,000 ex-soldiers, along with families and friends, were involved in a parade at the National Memorial Arboretum in Alrewas, Staffordshire, where the new monument was dedicated.

The service included prayers and hymns, before the official unveiling of the memorial by Field Marshal Lord Bramall, a former commanding officer of the 2nd Battalion, The Royal Green Jackets and later a Chief of the Defence Staff.

In his address, the peer paid tribute to

those who had served with the regiment in times past as well as those involved in challenging current operations with The Rifles battalions.

Lord Bramall told the veterans: "As you march past on this very special parade, you can do so with immense pride in the past, which can never be extinguished or taken away from you."

"At the same time you can have every confidence in those to whom you have passed the torch and in the competence displayed by the superb way that the two battalions of The Rifles are taking our legacy forward," he said.



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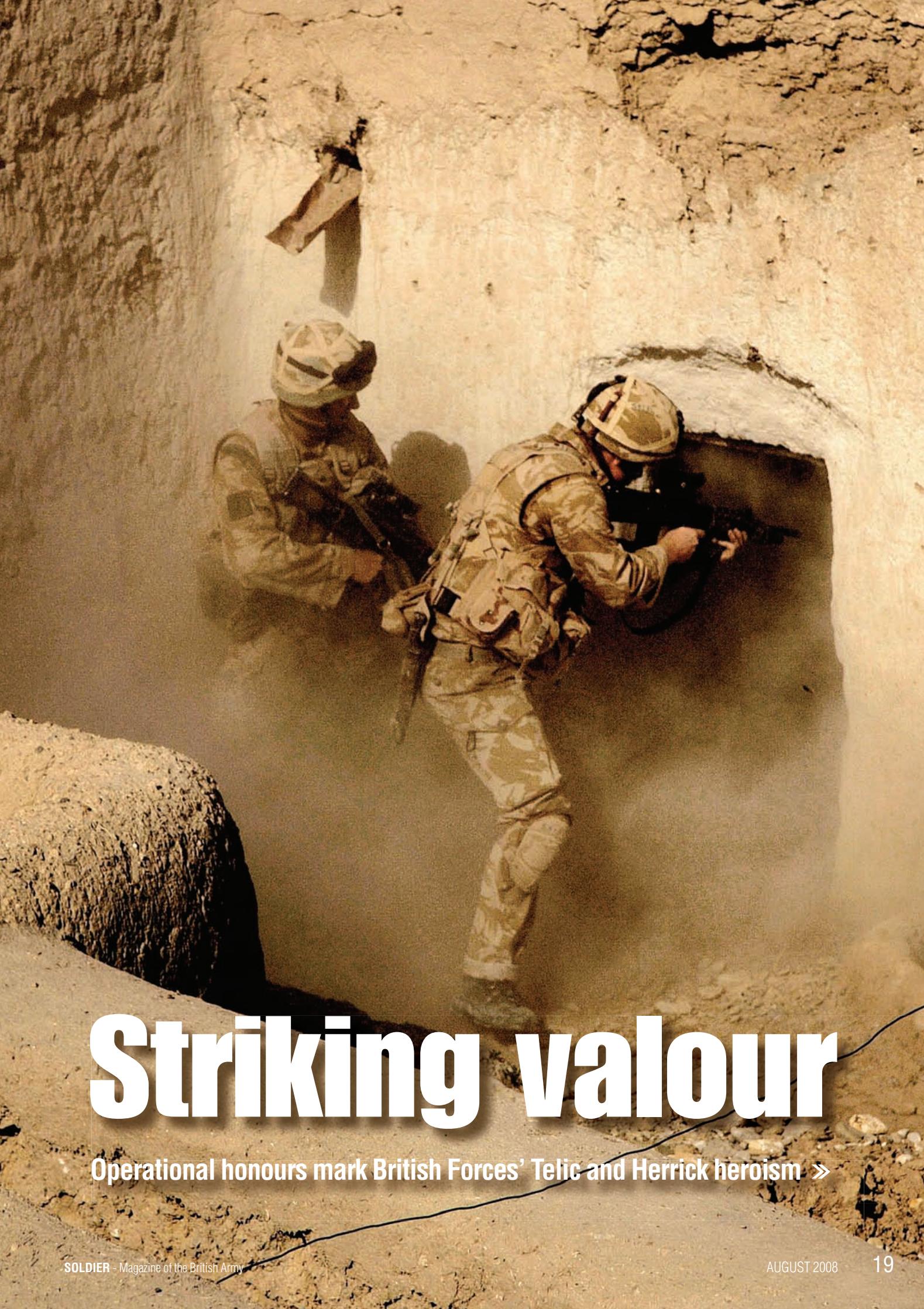
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# Striking valour

Operational honours mark British Forces' Telic and Herrick heroism »

# Cross of courage

The citations of the Army's latest Military Cross winners reveal how the chill of last year's Afghan winter was warmed by the heat of battle . . .

**T**HE inspirational leadership of an officer faced with commanding a "chaotic" mix of International Security Assistance Force troops has been praised following a hectic Herrick tour.

Maj Jason Little, 2 Yorks, was tasked with training the 2nd Afghan National Army (ANA) Kandak in his role as officer commanding Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team (OMLT) Two on Op Herrick 7.

In November last year, the Taliban invaded Golestan and Maj Little was tasked with pushing the ANA through the final stages of their training ahead of deploying to the area, recapturing the town and protecting the vital hub of Delaram.

On arrival in Delaram, Maj Little was faced with a scene of confusion as a mixture of troops from the ANA, Afghan National Police, US National Guard and Italian Army operated with little or no

● WHEN a company-level recce patrol came under intense fire near Musa Qala, the heroic actions of A/Sgt John Cockburn, 2 Yorks, ensured that the enemy failed to take the initiative.

Sgt Cockburn's Brigade Reconnaissance Force (BRF) patrol was pushing forward from the west bank of Musa Qala Wadi into its basin when the British troops came under fire from two heavy machine gun positions on November 27 last year.

Further incoming rounds from enemy fighters using RPGs, small arms and mortars followed and Sgt Cockburn and his men were left pinned down in an exposed position. Despite facing heavily-armed and well-dug-in adversaries, Sgt Cockburn

● HEROICALLY battling through the pain of a shrapnel wound to direct fire onto enemy fighters during an intense contact earned Capt Paul Britton a Military Cross.

The Royal Artillery Fire Support Team (FST) commander was called into action when a patrol to the north-east of a Forward Operating Base (FOB) in Helmand's Green Zone, was ambushed by combatants wielding RPGs and small arms on November 9 last year.

The officer set about the complex task of coordinating artillery fire, mortars and aircraft against the enemy forces, whose attack left three members of the British



● Sgt Lee Johnson



● Maj Jason Little

command. The British officer quickly and skilfully imposed order on the town and galvanised the soldiers ahead of an assault on Golestan 35km away.

A previous attempt on Golestan had resulted in the capture and execution of 18 ANA troops, but Maj Little's careful planning allowed his team of around 20 mentors and two ANA companies to bypass

kept cool under pressure to identify an opportunity to move his six-man patrol forward and outflank the combatants' main position, a trench 250m away.

As Sgt Cockburn pushed ahead, the weight of enemy fire was directed onto his patrol and the team had to take cover 30m away from their objective after being engaged from a previously unseen position.

Realising how close he was to his



● Sgt John Cockburn

patrol with serious injuries.

Twenty-five minutes into the contact, an airburst RPG slammed into the walls of Britton's compound, leaving him and a colleague with shrapnel wounds. Despite suffering considerable pain from the injury to his left shoulder, the FST commander continued to take the fight to the enemy and refused



● Capt Paul Britton

the enemy and secure the town.

Two weeks later, 2nd Kandak regrouped to participate in Op Mar Karardad, the recapture of Musa Qala.

Charged with delivering a feint to the south of the town, Maj Little steadied his troops during a savage fire-fight and forced the enemy to flee.

Tragically, a hugely popular senior NCO – Sgt Lee Johnson, of the 2nd Battalion, The Yorkshire Regiment – was killed in an explosion shortly afterwards and Maj Little again showed inspirational leadership to refocus those under his command ahead of the assault on Musa Qala the following day.

His Military Cross citation reads: "Personal courage, huge strength of character and an absolute determination to achieve the mission in conditions of complexity and great adversity has set him apart."

target, Cockburn ordered three of his men to suppress the new position while he dashed towards the trench, eventually reaching it and capturing an enemy fighter on the way.

His selfless courage allowed other sections of the patrol to surround the remaining positions and swung the advantage away from the enemy.

His Military Cross citation paid tribute to his "fearless pursuit of an objective", adding: "He could see that action was needed, he was only too aware of the dangers, yet it made no impact on his mindset. Cockburn's actions saved the lives of his fellow soldiers, but in so doing he took a remarkable risk with his own."

morphine in order to remain focused.

Thanks to his bravery, a support helicopter was able to land and fly the wounded back to Camp Bastion. In a further display of selflessness, Britton stayed at the FOB until the rest of the patrol returned and was only extracted for medical treatment the following morning.

The inspirational officer showed further dedication by resuming command of the FOB's FST two weeks later.

Capt Britton's Military Cross citation paid tribute to an "outstanding display of professionalism, inspirational leadership and selflessness".



● THE "supreme and selfless courage" shown by Rfn Bhimbahadur Gurung during a frenetic contact in Sangin was enough to earn him a Military Cross.

Rfn Gurung, of The Royal Gurkha Rifles, sprinted 75m across open ground while under direct fire to prevent a group of Taliban fighters from outflanking his section and then dashed back to carry to safety a machine-gunner who had been shot in the shoulder.

The contact happened on December 10 last year as part of a counter-attack against a group of 60 Taliban who had launched a coordinated assault on Sangin. Rfn Gurung's company conducted a 3.5km night infiltration to a cluster of villages known to be a Taliban stronghold in an attempt to regain the initiative and were preparing for a dawn attack when they came under fire from heavy machine guns and RPGs.

With a group of between six and eight enemy fighters moving towards a compound 100m away, Rfn Gurung rushed forward and seized the building.

The rifleman then spotted a second group of Taliban attempting to outflank his position and decided to run across the open ground to a low wall to lay down covering fire.

His actions inspired two machine-gunners to follow and the three men halted the enemy's advance. Moments later, one of the gunners was shot in the shoulder and Rfn Gurung carried him across the open ground to the relative safety of the compound.

Rfn Gurung's citation reads: "His willingness to expose himself to intense enemy fire as he crossed open ground took great courage. To choose to do so again, burdened by a wounded comrade on his shoulder and with no cover available until he reached the compound, can only be described as gallantry of the highest order."



● Rfn Gurung

● THE dramatic recapture of Musa Qala threw up scores of tales of battlefield bravery, but none of them might have happened had it not been for the foresight of Maj Paul Pitchfork.

The officer commanding A Company, 1st Battalion, The Royal Gurkha Rifles led from the front as his men defended Sangin district centre, the loss of which would have seriously dented the coalition operation in Musa Qala.

After fighting off as many as 60 Taliban fighters during a contact on the fringes of Sangin bazaar on December 9, Maj Pitchfork realised that his troops would have to take preventative action to kill off any potential counter-attacks.

Moving his company down Sangin's principal riverbed early the following morning, Pitchfork was able to re-engage the enemy at first light.

In a fire-fight that lasted more than ten hours, the inspirational officer was under direct fire as he commanded his

● RESCUING a mortally wounded soldier and defending the evacuation against a tenacious enemy has earned LCpl Agnish Thapa the Military Cross.

The junior Royal Gurkha Rifles NCO displayed conspicuous gallantry during a fierce battle to destroy a Taliban stronghold in the Uruzgan province of southern Afghanistan.

Isaf troops engaged the enemy in a surprise attack but the Taliban retaliated and ferocious fighting ensued.

During the close quarter combat that followed, LCpl Thapa charged across open ground to go to the aid of a severely injured Isaf comrade.

Under constant, intense enemy fire, he dragged the soldier 100 metres to the nearest sparse cover and continued to administer first aid until relieved by the medical officer.

The enemy was not giving up ground and doggedly pushed forward an attack as the coalition troops tried to airlift the casualty.

LCpl Thapa ordered his section into a firing position. They returned fire so effectively that the Taliban assault faltered

troops against a determined enemy.

In the absence of a Joint Tactical Air Controller (JTAC), Maj Pitchfork also assumed responsibility for controlling support from Apache helicopters at considerable personal risk.

Despite taking two casualties, he manoeuvred his men through waist-deep water along the river in an attempt to engage the enemy's flank, coming under contact three more times before the Taliban withdrew at last light.

His Military Cross citation reads: "Pitchfork demonstrated the very highest standards of leadership, courage and initiative under fire and in the face of a most determined enemy threat."



● Maj Pitchfork

and Isaf soldiers caught in the killing zone were able to withdraw.

These actions turned the battle in the coalition troops' favour and immediately boosted morale.

LCpl Thapa's citation said he richly deserved the Military Cross for showing a complete disregard for his own safety and acting above and beyond his rank and experience.

The citation added: "His bravery was inspirational and had an immediate positive impact on all involved in the battle, lifting morale and driving men to continue their fight, despite the infliction of casualties by the enemy.

"His effective leadership proved pivotal in swinging the initiative in favour of coalition forces, enabling casualty evacuation to be completed despite grave tactical circumstances."



● LCpl Thapa

**T**HE constant willingness of regimental medical officer Maj Douglas Reid to put himself in harm's way to save the lives of his men is deserving of "the very highest official recognition".

Maj Reid, RAMC, consistently put his safety in jeopardy to treat wounded soldiers on Op Herrick 7, earning a Military Cross for his actions.

Taking part in Op Palk Wahel in the Upper Gereshk Valley in September last year, Maj Reid volunteered to attach himself to the company with the highest risk of casualties and soon found himself in an intense fire-fight deep in enemy territory. Reid advanced under direct fire to treat two casualties and organise their extraction. He also proved to be an

inspirational leader for some of the younger soldiers who were experiencing their first taste of close combat.

Following the operation in Helmand, Maj Reid was taking part in a road move to Kandahar when his vehicle was struck by an improvised explosive device (IED).

The company commander was killed instantly and the gunner and driver were thrown clear in the blast, but despite the physical and mental trauma, Maj Reid



● Maj Douglas Reid

forced his way out of the destroyed vehicle and began to treat the two casualties on open ground and in full view of enemy firing points.

Maj Reid's unrelenting dedication to his job continued during Op Spin Ghar in the Baluchi Valley later that year.

In a close-quarter battle against multiple enemy positions, Maj Reid ran to open ground to attend to a mortally wounded Isaf soldier and pulled him clear from the killing zone. His citation reads: "During the tour, he saved the lives of many local Afghans, their security forces, coalition and British troops. His gallantry was inspirational and contributed to the overall enduring fighting spirit of the battle-group."

● A JUNIOR NCO who showed exceptional courage aiding the crew of a stricken Mastiff armoured vehicle under repeated enemy attacks has been awarded the Military Cross.

Cpl Richard Street, REME, was commanding a lightly armoured Foden recovery vehicle in support of The King's Royal Hussars when they were ambushed on the road from Gereshk to Musa Qala.

He braved Taliban RPGs and small-arms fire to dismount and hook the Foden to the KRH squadron leader's Mastiff, which had been immobilised during the attack.

Cpl Street's citation praised his leadership of the Foden crew and personal courage in recovering the vehicle under

sustained fire.

The patrol fought through the ambush but came up against a bridge that would not take the weight of the 23-tonne Mastiffs. With no alternative but to backtrack into the danger zone, the patrol returned to the ambush site. The Taliban were waiting and launched two more attacks.

Small-arms fire destroyed the front left wheel of the Foden but Cpl Street pushed forward and fired his pistol from



● Cpl Richard Street

the window while driving one-handed and encouraging his crew. Cpl Street's citation said: "His decision to continue to drive a partially disabled vehicle with no serious ballistic or mine blast protection through two enemy ambushes kept the route free for the squadron, maintained tempo at a critical time and undoubtedly prevented significant casualties from being taken.

"He was an example to all around him, particularly given the paucity of protection he enjoyed and the vicious nature of a contact that saw an armoured squadron post more than 20 grenades and left more than 20 enemy dead. He was a credit to his squadron and corps and his was a conspicuous display of gallantry."

● UNHESITATING bravery and steadfastness in command under heavy enemy fire has earned LCpl Mohansingh Tangnami, RGR, the Military Cross.

The junior NCO took the initiative and lead by example throughout his tour, which was punctuated by specific acts of bravery.

On patrol in the Helmand River Valley, LCpl Tangnami's platoon was ambushed and pinned down by Taliban machine guns. His section was caught in full view of the enemy but he remained with a rifleman in the killing zone as his men made for cover, returning fire with his grenade launcher. When his comrade was wounded, the

junior commander extracted him to safety. He then braved enemy fire again by returning for the rifleman's machine gun to prevent it falling into Taliban hands.

Later during his tour, LCpl Tangnami's company was engaged in a ten-hour fire-fight near Sangin. He repeatedly took charge of firing on enemy positions and extracting



● LCpl Tangnami

casualties to safety before returning to the battle. These actions repeatedly exposed him to acute danger as he moved about under accurate and withering machine-gun and sniper fire.

His citation said: "Whenever his platoon has been in contact with the enemy, Mohansingh's unhesitating bravery and steadfastness in command in the face of intense enemy fire has been a source of inspiration to those around him. His presence alone has become sufficient to imbue a sense of confidence in the platoon at large. These actions epitomise Mohansingh's conduct as a junior commander."

● AN INEXPERIENCED improvised explosive device disposal operator's bravery in disabling two bombs allowed his Royal Marine colleagues to make quick progress into enemy-held territory.

Maj Ian Scattergood, RLC, was asked to accompany troops from C Company, 40 Commando RM to clear a set of old defensive positions on a ridge 2km from Forward Operating Base Zeebrugge. As the patrol approached the base of the ridge, Maj Scattergood uncovered and made safe an IED connected to a main charge of 9kg of high explosive and five litres of petrol, enough to kill anyone standing within a 20m radius.

With one threat out of the way, the newly-trained loggie climbed the ridge and immediately came under fire from enemy forces as he searched the defensive positions. Despite the terrain limiting the amount of suppressing fire the Marines could deliver, the officer crawled forward to clear two more trenches.

The patrol required further positions to press

home its tactical advantage and Maj Scattergood duly obliged, again crawling forward while under direct fire and stopping only when he uncovered a second IED attached to the warhead of a 107mm rocket.

He quickly disabled the device, allowing the rest of the patrol to move forward.

His citation reads:

"Scattergood, a senior officer but a relatively inexperienced IEDD operator, consciously made the decision to clear two anti-personnel IEDs by hand at considerable risk and, whilst under fire, search several defensive positions believed to be protected by IEDs and mines."



# Front-line dispatches

They may have missed out on the headlines but citations from Op Telic reveal British soldiers were far from being out of the action in Iraq . . .

**A** SENIOR officer at one of Basra's most dangerous locations has been rewarded for his exemplary operational leadership under relentless insurgent attacks.

Lt Col Patrick Sanders, commanding officer of the 4th Battalion, The Rifles battle-group, was based at Basra Palace, the most mortared coalition base in Iraq during the first three months of Op Telic 10.

In the face of the daily onslaught of devastating indirect fire, he led his troops from the front.

He rallied his riflemen on hazardous and complex missions on the streets of Basra, taking the fight to the insurgents. The

battle-group was attacked by countless roadside bombs, RPGs and small-arms fire during these strike operations.

The citation for the Distinguished Service Order awarded to Lt Col Sanders praised his decisive leadership, tactical vision and compassion during the physically and morally testing battles.

After handing Basra Palace back to Iraqi Security Forces, the CO was engaged in operations on the Iranian border for the latter part of the tour. His initiative and drive inspired his own soldiers and his Iraqi counterparts in the fight to stop the smuggling of lethal explosive material across the frontier.

Lt Col Sanders's battle-group suffered 11 killed in action and 62 wounded in action during the six-month tour. His citation said: "In the closing weeks of his time in Basra Palace he planned an exceptionally intricate and politically sensitive withdrawal. Against the risk of strategic failure, Lt Col Sanders masterminded and executed this demanding operation; its success has proved to be a decisive point in the campaign. Despite the loss of life and numerous casualties, he kept his battle-group going in the face of adversity. His conduct and gallantry have been of the highest order and he merits the highest public recognition."

● A CAVALRY officer demonstrated "exceptional" skill after braving raging enemy fire in an unfamiliar vehicle to drive infantrymen into battle.

Maj Christopher MacGregor, commanding D Squadron of The King's Royal Hussars, had swapped his usual Challenger 2 for the Warrior troop carrier before he headed to southern Iraq.

Thrown into the thick of the fight with 2 Lancs, the officer and his soldiers squared up to the demands asked of them.

Leading 60 vehicles, Maj MacGregor

faced 14 lethal roadside bombs and a volley of small-arms fire and rocket-propelled grenades on their first battle-group strike op. Working meticulously through the booby-trapped route, the officer and his soldiers fought a two-hour battle to travel a distance of just 1.5km.

It was an action that set the tone for a tough and testing tour in Basra, and Maj MacGregor's courage, leadership, skill and tenacity earned him a Mention in Dispatches.

The officer's notable successes included

leading 50 vehicles on an epic three-day supply mission to the Maysan Battle-group, during which he was repeatedly attacked.

Maj MacGregor was later under contact for around six hours as he took the brigade commander through insurgent-infested streets for a meeting in the heart of Basra.

"Over four exceptionally demanding months, he repeatedly led his squadron in their unfamiliar vehicles through countless enemy actions," his citation said. "He played a pivotal role and his men became the best at fighting in their Warriors."



● A PROFESSIONAL and effective rifleman saved the lives of British troops as violence escalated in Basra.

Rfn Joseph Irving, attached to B Company of 4th Battalion, The Rifles, won the respect of commanders and colleagues for his courage on operations, and was recognised with a Mention in Dispatches.

Based at Basra Palace, the 23-year-old experienced some of the most heaviest and most costly fighting seen during the Op Telic campaign.

"Rfn Irving's contribution has been decisive," his citation said. "He has consistently demonstrated selfless commitment, bravery, initiative and outstanding professionalism and he has been an inspiration to those around him.

"Cool-headed, decisive and self-assured in exceptional circumstances – though one would not know it to speak to him. He is quiet, modest and unassuming."

The soldier was involved in several contacts during his Iraq tour.

In one gun battle at the Provincial Joint Coordination Centre in Basra he was under heavy fire in his sangar, but despite the incoming rounds, his decisive fire forced the enemy to break off their attack.

Later, Rfn Irving helped stopped a terror team from laying a roadside bomb during a British night strike op. During the action, British soldiers manning a cordon had come under fire from enemy snipers and rocket-propelled grenades.

His citation said: "In a night of intense fighting his actions made an enormous contribution to the successful protection of the strike group and the battle-group extraction at the end of the operation."

● AN NCO continued to motivate and inspire those under his command despite the deaths and serious injuries of colleagues on operations.

Known for being "tough and fiercely loyal", Sjt Kevin Gahgan, 4 Rifles, led from the front in the face of often blistering enemy fire during contacts with militias on Op Telic 10.

On one occasion he rallied his men during two ambushes, keeping up morale despite suffering four casualties and taking the fight back to the enemy. He was awarded a Mention in Dispatches after commanders recognised his bravery, courage and inspiring leadership were "in the highest traditions of the British Army".

Sjt Gahgan's citation said: "Time and time again he led the company on convoys, a dangerous and stressful job. Despite twice being blown up he continued to volunteer. Later, Sjt Gahgan's initiative led to the apprehension of an important insurgent commander, who had fled his house and was hidden on an adjacent rooftop."

● A JUNIOR officer who smashed the enemy on Basra's dangerous city streets made an "extraordinary contribution" to his tour, commanders have said.

Lt Simon Bedford-Smith, a platoon commander with The Royal Welsh, personally took the battle to the militias in a series of engagements during his time in Iraq with the 4 Rifles Battle-group.

His platoon frequently braved rifle fire, mortar bombs and rockets but he always led his men to respond in kind, sending a clear message to would-be attackers.

His extraordinary contribution, leadership and willingness to take the battle to the enemy on his first operational tour has been rewarded with a Mention in Dispatches.

His citation revealed how he had led his platoon in conducting a "fundamental review of security" at the city's Joint Provincial Co-ordination Centre, a vulnerable coalition outpost, and was involved in more than half-a-dozen withering fire-fights.

During one contact, when more than 15 insurgents had opened fire, the officer launched a Javelin missile into the enemy stronghold, crushing the assault.

● AN OFFICER who showed "courageous leadership" at the height of hostilities in southern Iraq has been saluted by superiors for saving soldiers' lives

Maj Mark Williams, of The Royal Welsh, proved his mettle by commanding A Company in the vanguard of the manoeuvre battle-group. His consistent, strong leadership, intelligent planning and calm execution under fire was recognised with a Mention in Dispatches.

Maj Williams's citation recalled how the officer had spearheaded an operation into the dangerous Al Jumhuriya area of Basra, coming under attack and losing one of his Warrior drivers to a roadside bomb.

He pressed on to the objective and co-ordinated a complex strike to detain insurgent suspects before pulling out. He suffered the loss of a further soldier to hostile fire when the British armoured vehicles were ambushed in the Hay Hatin district, but he did not falter.

Maj Williams was also involved in the clearance of vital convoy routes to Basra Palace, braving hits from roadside bombs during actions lasting up to six hours.

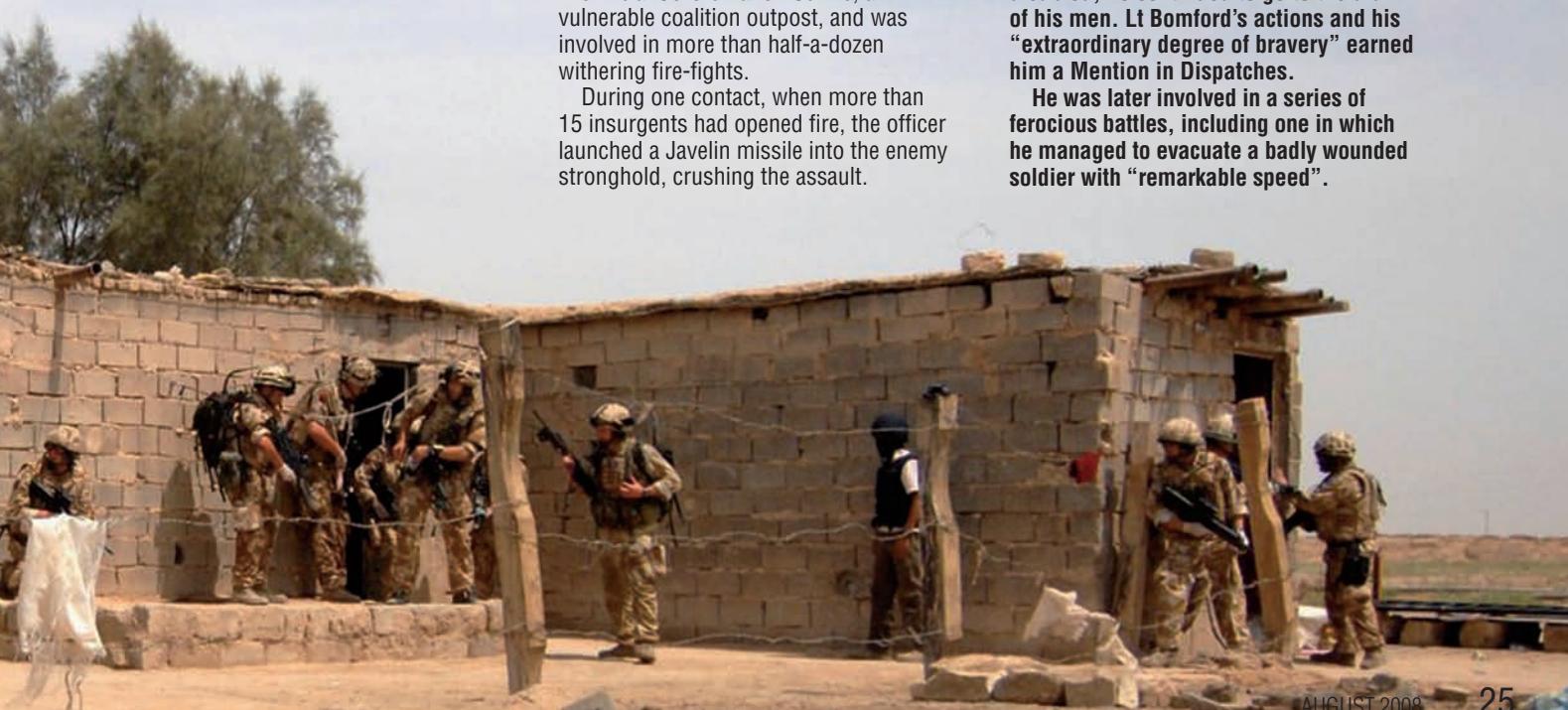
He lead the extraction of troops from the Joint Provincial Co-ordination Centre, rallying his troops to deliver a faultless op.

● A "HIGHLY effective" platoon commander embarked on a dangerous mission to protect a disabled vehicle while still reeling from the death of one of his NCOs earlier that day.

Lt Henry Bomford, 4 Rifles, took a Bulldog troop carrier to help his trapped comrades and quickly became embroiled in a three-hour fire-fight. But despite more than 25 incoming rocket-propelled grenades and a volley of accurate rifle fire, the junior officer remained exposed so he could hit back at the enemy.

Even when an improvised explosive device blew him from his turret, left his driver seriously injured and the Bulldog disabled, he continued to go to the aid of his men. Lt Bomford's actions and his "extraordinary degree of bravery" earned him a Mention in Dispatches.

He was later involved in a series of ferocious battles, including one in which he managed to evacuate a badly wounded soldier with "remarkable speed".



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## OPERATIONAL HONOURS

### AFGHANISTAN

**CBE:** Brig A D Mackay, late KOSB; Col S R Skeates, late RA.

**OBE:** Maj C J Bell, SG; Lt Col A J P Bourne, RGR; Lt Col S J Downey, Yorks.

**MBE:** Maj M C Gidlow-Jackson, Rifles.

**MC:** Capt P N B Britton, RA; A/Sgt J M Cockburn, Yorks; Rfn B Gurung, RGR; Maj J A Little, Yorks; Maj P R G Pitchfork, RGR; Maj D F Reid, RAMC; Maj I D Scattergood, RLC; Cpl R S Street, REME; LCpl M Tangnami, RGR; LCpl A Thapa, RGR.

**Mid:** A/Maj M B Adams, Lancs; Rfn O Ale, RGR; Sgt C E Bartlett, Yorks; Sgt D W Baxter, RA; A/Capt J L Cadbury, KRH; LCpl O B Caglar, Yorks; WO2 J M Fraser, RA; Sgt N J Hunt, RE; Lt J A E E Jeffcoat, RGR; Sgt L Johnson (killed in action), Yorks; A/Cpl D S Lawrence (killed in action), Yorks; Sgt J C Lynas, Yorks; Capt J R Manchip, RA; Maj M E Milford, Rifles; Maj A B Phillips, RA; Pte M Ravouyou, Yorks; Col E A Smyth-Osbourne, late LG; LCpl T G Sunwar, REME; Cfn S M Tomkins, REME; Pte A T Troup, Yorks; Tpr J A Warburton, RTR.

**QCB:** LCpl S P Cooper, RE; Cpl A R Griffin, RMP; Cpl D J Murphy, RE.

**QCVS:** Maj G Bartle-Jones, WG; Lt Col G Cole, RA; Capt J A C Dee, Int Corps; Lt A L Dray, RLC; Maj J P Eyre, HCR; Capt D Gurung, QGE; Maj S H Henderson-Lea, Int Corps; Maj P D Holder, RLC; Lt Col N B Lewis, RLC; Maj G M Strickland, RGR; LCpl J D Trigg, R Signals; Lt Col R Wardlaw, RE.

### IRAQ

**CBE:** Brig J I Bashall, late Para.

**OBE:** Lt Col A J P Barr, RE; Lt Col M P Kenyon, Lancs; Lt Col J F P Swift, R Welsh.

**MBE:** Capt R S Downs, RA; WO2 R J Farnell, RMP; Maj J A E Palmer, IG; Maj Z R Stenning, Yorks.

**RRC:** Maj J M Pilgrim, QARANC.

**ARRC:** Sgt G A King, QARANC.

**DSO:** Col P N Y M Sanders, late Rifles.

**MC:** CSgt B P Greensmith, Para; Sgt M McDougall, RE.

**Mid:** Lt S J Bedford-Smith, R Welsh; Lt H G Bomford, Rifles; Sjt K S A Gahgan, Rifles; Pte J J Illidge, R Welsh; Rfn J A Irving, Rifles; Maj C S MacGregor, KRH; Pte M J A New, Mercian; LSgt G P O'Neill, IG; Maj M Williams, R Welsh.

**QCB:** Gdsm P J McGee, SG; Gdsm R I Vulaidausiga, SG.

**QCVS:** Pte M F Azman, R Welsh (V); Maj T R Copinger-Symes, Rifles; Maj T E Grey, AGC; Rev D F Hernandez, RACD; Maj A T Lamb, R Signals (V); Maj J W McCleery, RA; WO1 M J Peters, RLC.

● **A COOL-headed top cover sentry** managed to avoid a civilian catastrophe with his meticulous planning and courage during a terrorist ambush in Baghdad.

Pte Michael New, of The Mercian Regiment, was awarded a Mention in Dispatches for warding off his attackers after his platoon was ordered on an escort patrol in the volatile capital city.

With the lead wagon brought to a standstill in a crowded market, a gunman appeared on the street. But New, who was in the second vehicle, made the courageous decision not to return fire because of the risk of civilian casualties.

Exposed and vulnerable, Pte New spotted a second terrorist on a nearby rooftop, calmly reporting the situation and keeping tabs on the initial threat until the first militia man withdrew.

Under attack, the soldier then opened

● **A YOUNG Warrior driver stripped down to his underpants in a bid to remain conscious as temperatures soared towards boiling point during a gun battle in Basra.**

Commanders were astonished to hear how Pte Joseph Illidge had remained at his seat, even after his vehicle was hit by four RPG rounds and with the fierce heat of the Iraqi summer sending temperatures in the cabin shooting towards 70C.

Having been tasked to clear a convoy route, the member of 2nd Battalion, The Royal Welsh and his colleagues were ambushed by the enemy after the re-supply wagons were delayed. In the ensuing wait, the Warriors in the 20-year-old's company were transformed into ovens, with soldiers collapsing in the intense heat.

Realising there were no more drivers to take his place, Pte Illidge stripped off until

● **A SENIOR NCO who broke cover in sight of an enemy heavy machine gun to deliver a knockout blow to an ambush has been praised for "courage and initiative of the highest order".**

LSgt Gavin O'Neill, 1 IG, had been providing route security for a convoy when his platoon came under attack from insurgents during the night op in Hayy Al Muhandisin. As he and his men moved forward to assist, another group of insurgents blasted his section with a wagon-mounted heavy machine gun. The NCO broke cover to scupper their efforts with his underslung grenade launcher.

LSgt O'Neill's decisive actions were recognised with a Mention in Dispatches. "These actions, conducted selflessly in full view of insurgents, and in the

fire on the other gunman, quickly neutralising the threat and buying the patrol time to escape from the ambush.

Pte New's citation praised him for his "exemplary conduct" in a tough situation, adding: "His coolness under fire and sound judgement prevented the loss of innocent life.

"Exposed to enemy fire and with no apparent thought for his safety he gave rapid, accurate information that ensured younger men in his patrol did not open fire in a busy market. His restraint undoubtedly reassured the more inexperienced soldiers who were providing top cover in the lead vehicle to avoid firing upon the gunman who was at street level. It was his cool-headed decision to hold his fire that was the most remarkable feature of his performance and the one that saved the lives of many innocent civilians."

he was near-naked and doused himself in water to remain conscious.

His heroism, rewarded with a Mention in Dispatches, was confirmed a week later when he was wounded by mortar fire at Basra Palace while preparing to head out on a convoy towards the city's Provincial Joint Coordination Centre.

He ran to get help for two other injured soldiers before joining his comrades, driving the Warrior despite the searing pain of the shrapnel wounds to his legs. Patched up by medics, it was only after he arrived back at the Palace five hours later that he sought proper treatment, when he was evacuated back to the Contingency Operating Base.

Pte Illidge's citation paid tribute to his courage. "These two examples are typical of a soldier who has consistently been courageous, dedicated and resilient."

knowledge that his platoon were in grave danger, were an example to those around him," said his citation.

The NCO was also commended for an earlier act of bravery, when troops investigating a suspected roadside bomb in the Hayy Ash Shuhada District came under attack. Understanding that a key convoy route to Basra Palace needed to be cleared, LSgt O'Neill braved rifle and RPG fire to counter-attack "with speed and aggression".



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**Devastation:** A British soldier witnesses first-hand that no Bosnian – Croat, Serb or Muslim – was safe from the fighting  
Picture: Mike Weston



# War and peace

**Between 1992 and 2007 more than 100,000 British troops served in Bosnia-Herzegovina. During those 15 years more than 50 gave their lives. One year after our Forces finally left, Bosnian survivors and British soldiers and officers tell their stories about a conflict that displaced almost two million people from their homes and left 200,000 dead »**



**Zoran  
Arsenijevic,  
former  
interpreter with  
British Forces**

A FRIEND told me the UN was in town recruiting interpreters. I took my bike and rode through the shelling into Bugojno and ended up working with the new batch of Duke of Wellington soldiers. I had a good time with the British and I've kept my uniform and blue helmet – in civvies I would have been shot. At first I thought Unprofor was a blessing from heaven as I was stupid enough to believe they would stop the war in a week. I quickly realised men armed with golf clubs could have achieved more.

The bad pictures broadcast by the media caused the low opinion that some of the British initially had of us. They thought we were stupid and uneducated because we were fighting a war. We saw slaughtered children and a woman cut into pieces and you have to live with it. When a British soldier sees that and tells people back in the UK, that is what they will think of Bosnians. But this opinion changed. It will take generations to see progress here and progress is not just that somebody won't kill you – you need jobs.





## The Bosnian viewpoint

### 1945

MARSHAL Tito's iron grip on the Balkan states of Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH), Slovenia, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia and Macedonia after the Second World War failed to permanently bridge gaping ethnic divides.

### 1989

THE West rejoiced in tearing down the Berlin Wall in 1989 and ending the Cold War but a cascade of brutal conflicts in the former communist state of Yugoslavia rapidly filled the void.

### 1991

AFTER brief border battles in 1991, Slovenia and Croatia swiftly gained their independence. But BiH was roughly split between Bosniaks (Muslims), Serbs and Croats, and was ripe for a bloody civil war when it broke away from Yugoslavia the following year.

### 1992

BRITISH troops arrived in BiH as part of the UN Protection Force (Unprofor) in 1992. Later deployed as the Implementation Force (Ifor) of the 1995 Dayton Peace Agreement, they finally came home last year.

### 2001

THREE savage years of fighting, massacres and ethnic cleansing set families and neighbours against each other. War criminals from all three sides were indicted at The Hague and Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic was arrested for trial in 2001.

**Main picture, 1994:** Pte Richard Divine, DWR, right, stands guard as his comrades patrol Gornji Vakuf's no man's land – a road that separated the Muslims from the Croats

**Inset, 2008 and life goes on:** The rebuilt town of Gornji Vakuf

**Nirvana Kliko, former interpreter with British and Dutch Forces**

I WAS 12 when the Serbs came to Jajce. There was a sniper on the mountain and I saw my neighbours shot in the street but I couldn't go out and help them. If you wanted to survive you had to leave and thousands queued to get on any transport without knowing where they were going. My grandmother was a Serb so she couldn't stay with us. She had to let her daughter – my mother – go with me and my brother in one truck while she went in another. She survived but I didn't see her again until after the war.

I thought the British soldiers I worked with were professional and very well trained. I felt much safer in the British Army vehicles because the Dutch took too much time deciding if they could shoot back. The British had a bad reputation in some areas of Bosnia because they kicked down doors and behaved as fighting soldiers but that was needed when there was a war going on. They got more results in the end and I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for them.



**Mato Zeko, former Croatian Army liaison officer**

WHEN the UN troops arrived in 1992 I hoped they would stop the war. But the mandate for Unprofor was totally wrong and it was really frustrating for professional soldiers to go to the villages and speak with militias who thought they had the upper hand. That completely changed with Ifor, which could fight back.

I would like to meet the British captain who helped me find out what happened to my mother. I explained that I'd not heard from her for two months and he took a few armoured vehicles to my village. He found my mother alive but under guard and he was not allowed to evacuate her. But this captain went to the Bosniak army commander and said that if anything happened to the 20 Croats remaining in my mother's village, he would "see" to the commander personally.

The war stopped thanks to the internationals but unfortunately we haven't taken any steps forward. I don't feel 100 per cent safe going back to the place where I was born because it's majority Muslim now.



**Tomislav Rajic, former Croatian Army liaison officer**

I WAS in the Travnik area when the real war between the Bosniaks and Croats started in 1993.

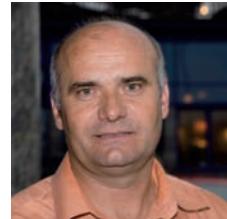
CNN's reporter Christiane Amanpour showed up in my village of Guca Gora and two days later the Bosniak Army came and cleansed it because they had seen the footage of us on the television. All Croat property, including my house, was burned.

Guca Gora was attacked on the morning of June 8 but half the village managed to escape.

I was one of 12 soldiers and more than 100 civilians who got left behind completely unprotected. In the afternoon some Warriors with British soldiers rolled up.

We collected all the civilians together in the St Francis monastery where we stayed the night. The next day the Warriors took us through the front line to Nova Bila.

Fifteen people were squashed into one Warrior but if you stayed in the village you were certain to be killed. It was The Prince of Wales's Own Regiment of Yorkshire who saved us.



# The British connection

## First response

THE 1st Battalion, The Cheshire Regiment was one of the first units deployed as Unprofor on Op Grapple 1. It was mandated to deliver humanitarian aid, including food and medicines, to civilians caught in the crossfire in their homes.

## Supply lines

THE UN convoys drove from Split in Croatia to the volatile central BiH. Route Triangle was little more than a loggers' track across the mountains until 11 Squadron, 38 Engineer Regiment, rebuilt the lifeline during a harsh winter. The road is still used today.

## IFOR forcing peace

NATO deployed Ifor on Op Resolute in January 1996 with a mandate to bring the peace agreed at Dayton. The 1st Battalion, The Queen's Lancashire Regiment was based in Gornji Vakuf and Vitez, as British HQ moved to Banja Luka in Serb-controlled Republica Srpska.

## Troubled waters

SERBIA ordered the ethnic cleansing of Kosovar Albanians in Kosovo in spring 1999. Nato bombed Belgrade, Kosovo Serbs were driven from their homes in retaliatory attacks and The Queen's Royal Lancers were tasked with quelling an uprising in Republica Srpska.

## Final curtain

IN 2004 the British commanded the North-West Multi-National Task Force as part of the EU-led Eufor. The Welsh Guards were the last British troops to deploy to Op Althea in 2007. Banja Luka Metal Factory closed its gates on August 31, ending the 15-year campaign in BiH.

### Maj Gen (Retd) Alastair Duncan deployed as a lieutenant colonel commanding The Prince of Wales's Own Regiment of Yorkshire in 1993

OUR Unprofor mandate was quite clear – get food and aid through to people who required it from the border with Croatia all the way to Tuzla. It was a huge task for one battalion but we got all the aid through, thousands and thousands of tonnes of it. In terms of keeping people alive during a war, we were hugely successful.

Guca Gora village had something like 180 Croat people in its monastery surrounded by the Muslims. I had a UN representative with me and we had a long discussion with the people as to whether they wanted to be evacuated. You couldn't just take people out; you had to have their permission. The evacuation was quite difficult. We had to get the entire battalion of armoured vehicles out because we were under fire all the way.

Now in Vitez there are a lot of smart shops but the town was completely flattened in my time. So we have allowed people to start up their businesses, which is good news.

The fact that they're still having trouble with each other I think will go on for a long time because it's built into their society. It's quite clear that although we were there for 15 years and have only just come out, we have enabled Bosnia to move forward in a big way in comparison to what it was like before.



Main picture, Back to school: The Cheshires turn classrooms into ops rooms as they base their HQ on the outskirts of Vitez in 1992

Inset, Back to a school: The classrooms in Nova Bila return to educating the future of Bosnia



### Brig Patrick Marriott, deployed as a lieutenant colonel commanding The Queen's Royal Lancers in 1998-99

WE had a classic safe-and-secure mission around Mrkonic Grad with a lot of patrolling to reassure the population, as there were still frictions and the occasional incident. There was a very active mine threat.

At one point when Kosovo ops began, I commanded eight companies across the Republica Srpska. We were pretty fortunate because the Serbs quite liked the Brits. We understood where they were coming from but it got quite difficult when they got angry over the conflict in Kosovo. There were two brigades



of Serbs in Banja Luka and we parked a tank outside their barracks with orders to stop them leaving. But tens of thousands of civilian Serbs came out protesting on the streets and burnt the UK and US consulates. It put our local interpreters in an awkward position and we lost a few but others were very brave and kept coming to work.

Even when it was quite tense I collected and pressed wild flowers, presenting them in a leather-bound book to my wife. Driving around the country kept morale up and my soldiers enjoyed the eccentricity. We drove out of the valleys along narrow mountain roads and would suddenly come across devastated houses with these beautiful flowers growing in the ruins.



### Ian Deacon, former lance corporal who deployed with the Royal Signals in 1995

TITO'S fist kept people in order but there were always deep ethnic divisions. The break-up along these divides was inevitable once Yugoslavia lost its federal power.

I was first deployed to Tomislav Grad and then to Sarajevo via Mostar. We were painting the white Warriors back to camouflage and straightaway we had a more aggressive presence on the ground. The warring factions were more inclined to stop fighting and keep the peace.

There was a bombed-out nightclub on the main road into Gornji Vakuf. It looked so surreal because there was this disco with the front blown out but the glitter ball was still dangling from the ceiling. That memory has stayed with me because it was the starker reminder that there was a thriving social scene as part of normal life before the war.

It's a shame the Bosnians don't see a bright future for themselves but ultimately it's better than the wholesale killing that went on. These things don't heal overnight and one problem that prevents them from getting back on their feet is the corruption. It doesn't heal the divides and the ordinary people are the ones who suffer. But BiH needs to get its house in order if it wants to be a member of the EU.



### Maj Gary Garner, AGC (SPS), deployed 1995 and 2003

I HAD no time for the UN. The Croats built a free-standing wall around the UN barracks in Zagreb and each brick had the name of a Croat who was killed or posted missing on its watch.

When hostilities ended in 1996, Croats had occupied the Serb town of Sipovo.

Gradually, the local Serbs would return and try to rebuild their houses but they were afraid to stay.

Life slowly returned but the hatred was there for all to see. We would go jogging and see the shells of burnt-out houses.

This started to have a marked effect on

one of my senior guys who became severely depressed by the destruction.

I returned to Mrkonic Grad, near Sipovo, in 2003. The change was phenomenal because the town was almost rebuilt.

But there were no jobs and there were bad feelings between the factions that would probably never change. Those displaced from their original homes were resigned to the fact that they would never return.

The British soldiers didn't take sides and tried to help everyone, irrespective of their ethnic background.

Their professionalism in extreme weather conditions made one proud to be a part of such a team.

# Peacemaker

## Trailblazer reflects on Afghan campaign in light of lessons learnt from Bosnia

Interview: Cliff Caswell

Pictures: Mike Weston

**W**HEN one of the most brutal civil wars of recent times exploded on the doorstep of Europe, Gen Sir Michael Rose was one of the trailblazers in the battle for peace.

Faced with a conflict in Bosnia that threatened to spread out of control through neighbouring states, and during which the term "ethnic cleansing" reared its ugly head, his troops' crucial achievement was helping to seal a peace deal that ended the fighting.

Yet despite the brokering of the Dayton Peace Accord in 1995, the former commander of the United Nations Protection Force believes world leaders have misunderstood the lessons of Bosnia and have become involved in two costly wars as a result.

But following a recent visit to Afghanistan – a country in which both his father and grandfather fought in previous campaigns – the retired senior officer is confident that the correct approach to securing peace is now being taken.

"I understand Bosnia is stable today but it is going to take generations before people see themselves as Bosnians rather than Muslims, Croats and Serbs," Gen Rose told *Soldier* during an exclusive interview in Whitehall.

"The old wounds have not healed, but we helped to create the right conditions for that to happen."

That process took a big step forward when Radovan Karadzic, the former Bosnian Serb political leader, was arrested as this issue went to press, after being indicted for genocide by the UN.

"Unfortunately, however, the legacy of Bosnia in the wider world is that politicians learned wrong lessons and became involved in wars from which we are still recovering," he said.

Gen Rose, who joined the Coldstream Guards in 1964 and served in theatres from Aden to Northern Ireland during his 33-year career, said the Balkans flashpoint had created a mindset that complex problems could be solved by military action alone.

He believes that the Kosovo and Iraq conflicts – which began with intense aerial bombardments – had come about as a direct result of this misconception and that both campaigns were still a long way from being resolved and were sapping valuable resources.

"You can follow a straight audit trail from Bosnia to what has happened in the last few years," Gen Rose said. "We fought a war that was not successful in either humanitarian, political or military terms in Kosovo but because it was deemed to be successful, it led us into the Iraq campaign."

"Yet the use of military force alone had little to do with the Dayton Peace

Accord – it did not come about from bombing. What delivered the treaty was the presence of the UN and the creation of an alliance between Croats and Muslims."

Gen Rose said that the misconceptions of Bosnia had compounded problems in Iraq by creating a belief that democracy could "be delivered by force of arms" while the US-led coalition had failed to meet expectations on reconstruction.

"With Kosovo, on the other hand, we have become victims of our own propaganda – its declaration of independence has not been universally recognised," he said.

"The traditional population mix is no longer reflected and the fact the Serbs have been driven out of their historic land will be a running sore for some time."

However Gen Rose, who held posts including Commandant of the Staff College in Camberley and Adjutant General before retiring in 1997, said that correct lessons had been learned in Afghanistan, where Nato was winning the peace.

And after spending time with British troops during a ten-day visit to theatre, with stops in Kabul and Helmand province, he was confident progress was being made and that the multinational effort would be successful.

Gen Rose added: "The objectives in Afghanistan are well defined as well as being morally justified and achievable. We have a coherent campaign plan in place. I have to say that I was really heartened by what I saw on the ground.

"The coordination between the Provincial Reconstruction Teams and military operations is now as close as it could be and the strategy is working effectively."

Gen Rose went on to praise the professionalism of British troops, who, he said, were performing bravely and punching above their weight in Helmand province.

"The quality of the young soldier of today is



# General Sir Michael Rose – MY ARMY

far removed from those that I did my counter-insurgency work with in Aden back in 1964 and 65," he recalled.

"Leadership has improved, tactics are better and equipment is outstanding.

"Commanders have told me that they have drawn their own lessons from Bosnia, and what we have learned in Northern Ireland has also been important."

Gen Rose said that the spirit of the Afghan people, as well as the professionalism of their emerging military forces, were also making a difference in ensuring that the Taliban were suppressed and reconstruction could take place.

"I was born in Quetta in India, not far from the Afghan border, and when I told the deputy governor of Helmand province about my father and grandfather being in Afghanistan, he replied that that fiercest of foes can make the best of friends.

"It was an interesting meeting – we are going to be in Afghanistan for a while.

"Insurgencies traditionally take a long time, because they are to do with attitudes of people.

"To control the security situation requires a lot of people on the ground," Gen Rose concluded.

"But military force alone cannot deliver solutions to problems, and that is recognised in Afghanistan.

"The progress since 2006, when we first started to re-focus our efforts in Afghanistan, has already been dramatic." ■

## ● A savage war – Page 86

Below, left, Winning the peace:  
UN peacekeeping forces on  
patrol in the Balkans





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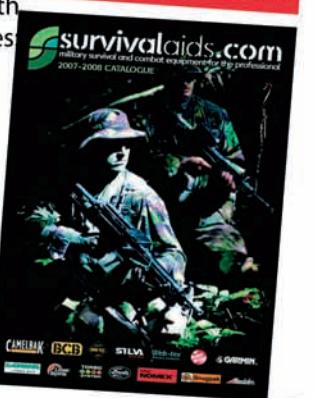


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# Teacher training

**Sergeants push for promotion on  
rejuvenated Sandhurst cadre »**



**Report: Stephen Tyler**  
**Pictures: Graeme Main**

**T**HERE is a school of thought that suggests signing up to train as a colour sergeant at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, is a one-way ticket to a four-week boasting.

Numbers on the cadre at the world-famous institution have been dwindling in recent years due to a belief that the price of gaining the opportunity to instruct officer cadets was hours spent on the drill square under constant pressure.

The decline in popularity did not go unnoticed by RMAS's Dettingen Company, which is responsible for organising short courses at the academy, and those at the top set about redesigning the programme from the ground up.

With a mission plan to make the

cadre relevant, interesting and, above all, transparent, Dettingen Company officer commanding Maj Jason Gunning, R Signals, has pumped fresh enthusiasm into the unique training regime, which is once more being recognised as the course of choice for senior NCOs.

"The idea was to completely wipe the slate clean from the old system and start from scratch," explained Maj Gunning. "Realistically promotion is the main attraction of this course, but it also gives a unique insight into the way that officers are trained. The British Army is the only one in the world that uses senior NCOs to train its officers so this is a unique opportunity

for the right candidates," he said.

Suggesting that drill does not rear its head during the cadre would be wide of the mark, but the course's renovated schedule offers much more than frequent familiarisation with a pace stick. Key sessions in chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear threats and weapons training form the bulk of the prospective colour sergeants' time in the classroom, but much more of the cadre is

devoted to the outdoors and the nitty gritty of green soldiering.

Candidates are required to put their own soldiering skills to the test by competing against teams of officer cadets in Exercise Long Reach, a physically and mentally demanding slog through the Brecon Beacons complete with a series of command tasks.

Speaking halfway through the training, Sgt Mark Lockhart, RRF, found the cadre had disproved his preconceptions.

"A lot of people might be put off by stories of it being four weeks of getting smashed, but it's not like that," he said. "My perception was that we would spend all day on the parade square, but that's a very small percentage of it. You get treated like a senior NCO and the course is totally transparent so you can judge how well you are doing throughout. It's a natural career progression and a good

**‘People might be put off by stories of it being four weeks of getting smashed, but it’s not like that’**





opportunity for promotion."

With the cadre providing such a challenge of a potential instructor's leadership and soldiering skills and because more than 40 candidates apply for around 30 positions, there are inevitably those who leave RMAS disappointed. Historically, anyone falling short of the required standard did not find out until the end of the four weeks, by which time it was too late to address any shortcomings. Under the new set-up, however, sergeants receive advice throughout the cadre on how they are progressing and where they need to improve.

"Some of the people on the old course felt that it wasn't being made clear how they were doing during selection," said Maj Gunning. "Now we provide weekly feedback to make sure that nothing stays behind closed doors."



Those that miss out on selection need not despair as they are permitted to reapply as many times as they want in the future. Armed with the reasons why they have not been picked, candidates can go back to their regiments and address specific action points to give them a better chance of succeeding next time around.

"This is the only course in the British Army where there's such competition to gain promotion," explained Sgt Carl Taylor, 1 WG, who was striving for selection after an unsuccessful attempt last year. He made it this time.

"Under the new structure there is more of an emphasis on finding the right type of person to instruct commanders who will leave and be put in charge of a platoon. It's important that the people teaching them have the right personality and are able to come across in a mature way."

Just one year into the new regime and the cadre's transparency is already proving popular with senior NCOs keen to get the chance to guide officer cadets through exciting commissioning course exercises such as the frenetic public order training at Longmoor Camp.

Further fringe benefits, including Sandhurst's prime location and the opportunity for colour sergeants to book leave up to one year in advance, have further strengthened the job's reputation.

Making it onto the cadre is an achievement in itself and because the standard is so high, talk of failure for those who don't make the cut has been banned. "Just because someone

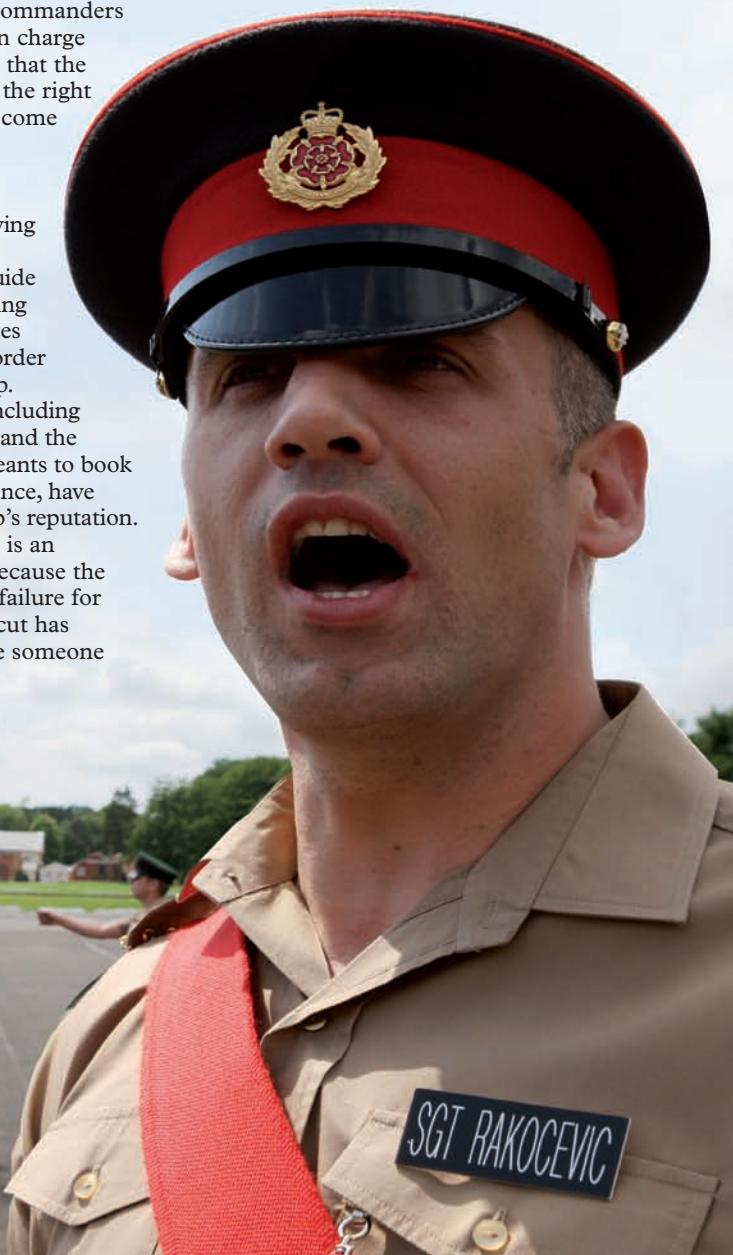
isn't selected does not mean they are a failure," concluded Maj Gunning. "To get here they have to be selected as the best from their cap badge and that's a massive compliment." ■

● For more information call:  
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**Clockwise from main picture, I predict a riot:**  
Colour sergeants keep a close eye on potato-throwing officer cadets during a public order exercise at Longmoor Camp

**Student teacher:** Sgt Mark Rakocevic, 1 Lancs, puts his teacher training into practice

**Green streak:** Cadre contenders test their soldiering skills in the Brecon Beacons



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# Poised to pounce

**Nimble and deadly, Panther delivers potent firepower and extra protection**



Report: Cliff Caswell  
Picture: Mike Weston

**B**RITISH troops will soon be prowling the battlefield with greater agility and power thanks to a new breed of command and liaison wagon.

Built by Newcastle-based BAE Systems, Panther is the latest upgrade to the Army's armoured fleet and will replace some ageing Land Rovers, Saxons and tracked reconnaissance vehicles.

And like its big cat namesake, it is a nimble and deadly beast, at ease on and off the beaten track and capable of inflicting a lethal bite.

A dozen variants of the seven-tonne wheeled feline, which is based on an Iveco chassis, are currently en route to soldiers on operations. All are fitted with the Bowman communications suite and boast the latest standards of protection and crew comfort.

A third of the 400 Panthers being delivered are also armed with Enforcer, a hi-tech station which allows crews to fire roof-mounted weapons remotely while under armour. The proven system has

already seen active service in theatre with Warrior and Bulldog.

Roy Lea, engineering manager for Panther, said the new vehicle had been undergoing rigorous tests in Oman with the Army's Armoured Trials and Development Unit. He believed that it would be well received by troops in the field, adding that deliveries were already well under way and were expected to be completed by spring next year.

"The Panther is a four-wheel drive vehicle that offers good levels of protection against general and anti-tank mines as well as small-arms fire," he said. "A number of the vehicles have also been shipped out to the British Army Training Unit Suffield (Batus) in Canada and the soldiers who have tried it have been impressed. It has proved to be very capable as an off-road vehicle."

Visitors to the Defence Vehicle Dynamics exhibition at the Millbrook Proving Ground, Bedfordshire, were able to see the Panther for the first time in June, when it was put through its paces on

the site's demanding cross-country circuit.

The vehicle, which is fitted with a 190bhp three-litre diesel engine mated to a six-speed automatic gearbox, tackled the course at the former Lotus testing facility with aplomb.

Lea said: "Panther performs well in its class. Depending on the role it is being used for it can carry a crew of three or four and is more than capable of looking after itself."

As well as being responsible for manufacturing the vehicle, BAE Systems has also been awarded a support contract for the new command and liaison fleet. Col John Ogden, Light Armoured Systems team leader at Defence Equipment and Support, said that the deal would benefit everyone concerned.

"This achievement is a tribute to both the quality of the vehicle and the effectiveness of the working relationship between the MoD and BAE Systems," he added. "We are confident that soldiers on the ground will like this new capability and appreciate the benefits of its support arrangement." ■

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Who ate  
all the  
pies?



**Guards' tastebuds tantalised on food-tasting panel »**

**Report: Cliff Caswell**  
**Pictures: Steve Dock**

**W**EARILY dipping his spoon into another portion of chilli sauce, Gdsm Callum Jones is fast beginning to realise his taste buds have been shot to pieces.

After nearly five helpings of different spicy offerings, he has been complaining that his mouth has gone numb. By the look in his eyes, he would be happy if he never experienced another jalapeño pepper pick-me-up in his life.

"I pretty much lost the taste for anything after the first one of these," the young member of the 1st Battalion, Welsh Guards, laughs as he spoons in another mouthful. "But it's interesting to try them out. It's like being in the kebab shop."

Gdsm Jones returns to the serious element of the job – filling in a questionnaire on what he thinks of the different brands of chilli sauce he's just eaten, data which will be used to determine whether his favourite will appear on cookhouse core menus.

He's asked to comment on the flavour, consistency and appearance on a scale ranging from very good to unappealing. His answers will be analysed by the nutritionists and budget managers who determine the Forces' menu, which encompasses 1,500 products and is worth £140 million a year.

The Welsh Guards involved in this food selection panel at London's Wellington Barracks have been warned that this is a marathon rather than a sprint, and this advice has proved sound. For the past 90 minutes, a relentless conveyor belt of pies, burgers, ham and chocolate cakes has crossed their table. The food invasion has been taking its toll, eroding their appetites bite by bite.

Yet the opportunity to play a front-line role in determining future menus at home and on ops is appreciated. Men and women of all ranks, age groups and dietary requirements from all three Services give their input at these panels, which are held ten times a year.

The food is tasted blind, with the product currently on the military menu put up against its leading competitors. Once the soldiers' opinions are registered, the views are balanced against other factors such as cost, nutritional value and shelf life.

"We really don't want to force-feed anyone – the aim is to give soldiers a nutritional range of tasty meals," says Sqn Ldr David Tanner, RAF, a veteran of the hospitality trade who now works in the MoD's food and catering services.

"Obviously we must have items that offer the right intake of calories and

nutrition. But the products also have to be properly evaluated to take account of shelf life, value for money and whether the packaging is robust enough to be shipped around the world.

"We also try to cater for as many different ethnic groups and religions as we possibly can," Sqn Ldr Tanner adds. "There are already a range of options available and we are developing them more and more."

Getting scoff to soldiers on major ops is certainly a test, so shelf life is a serious issue. It can take up to nine

weeks for products to arrive in Iraq, while in Afghanistan supply convoys can face a five-day trek from Kabul to British bases in the south. For the soldiers at the sharp end, however, the in-theatre catering is generally given the thumbs-up.

"The food that we had when we were out in Bosnia was absolutely beautiful," says Gdsm Jones as he draws breath and tucks into a slab of steak and kidney pie. "We even had Indian and Mexican theme nights and I think soldiers are happy if they get variety rather than having the same stuff all the time."

Gdsm Karl Evans agrees, but the veteran of Op Telic 1 is less enthused when it comes to fast food such as burgers.

"I don't

mind having them once in a while," he says. "Variety is definitely the thing for soldiers, especially when you've been out on exercise and spent 32 days eating out of ration packs."

Variety might be the spice of life for soldiers, but on this occasion an overdose of chilli sauce has put paid to lunchtime appetites. It is 1230 and the chefs are rolling out a fine curry. After a morning of food heaven, the portions are noticeably smaller and there is less enthusiasm as the troops dig in with naan bread and poppadoms.

Nonetheless, the Welsh Guards seem pleased to have had the food-tasting opportunity, and the chance to determine a menu created for soldiers by soldiers. Their palates need to be satisfied. With troops digging in for the long haul in Afghanistan, Napoleon Bonaparte's analogy of an army marching on its stomach has never been more apt. ■







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# Bon appétit

## New multi-climate ration pack a morale booster for ravenous troops

Report: Cliff Caswell

**F**OOD is something you look forward to on the frenetic front lines of Iraq and southern Afghanistan.

Operating away from creature comforts, in tough conditions and often under contact with the enemy, a meal is as much of a boost to morale as it is a provider of fighting fuel.

But when ravenous troops dive into their ration packs to find a monotonous menu, unappealing biscuits and chocolate bars melting in the 50C heat, it can leave a bad taste in the mouth.

At these temperatures an appetising Yorkie quickly turns to liquid – the chocolate evaporating as fast as the morale it was supposed to bolster.

"It is very hot in Iraq and Afghanistan, and some of the products in the 24-hour ration packs were just not suitable for these areas," admitted Capt Paul Cunningham RN, project leader with Defence Food Services.

"Added to this, people have been living on ration packs for longer than before, and fatigue has been starting to set in. Even if you eat your favourite food for several months, you are soon going to get bored of it."

This mix of food fatigue and melting chocolate bars has been the catalyst for

a drastic rethink of field cuisine.

In recent months a hot climate supplement has been introduced, which gives soldiers in the field an extra injection of mineral-rich snacks in a bid to avoid heat stress.

But front-line recipes are about to get some new ingredients with the trial of a multi-climate ration box, which will introduce 20 new menus – including six alternative vegetarian, Halal, Sikh and Hindu options.

Out go items such as chocolate bars and unappealing biscuits brown and in come flapjacks, pasta pouches and energy drinks to provide the edge on hot operations.

"The new multi-climate ration will double the amount of available menus and remove the need for supplements," said Capt Cunningham.

"We have lots of new items in the rations and I am convinced these will be very popular. However, the creation of the new packs has been a process of evolution rather than revolution.

"A third of the products are new, a third are from the existing packs and the remainder are from the supplements we have been providing."

Food tasting panels for the new rations were conducted with personnel from

all three Services in May, with the new menus scheduled to be sent to Iraq and Afghanistan next summer. The trials will form the basis for future field catering.

Soldiers who helped choose the products for the new range were pleased that changes to rations were being made, adding that more choice would, without doubt, raise spirits.

"These new packs will definitely be a lot better – they are not too bad at all," said Tpr Danny Skipper of the Household Calvary Regiment. "With 20 menus rather than ten, there should be plenty of variety on operations.

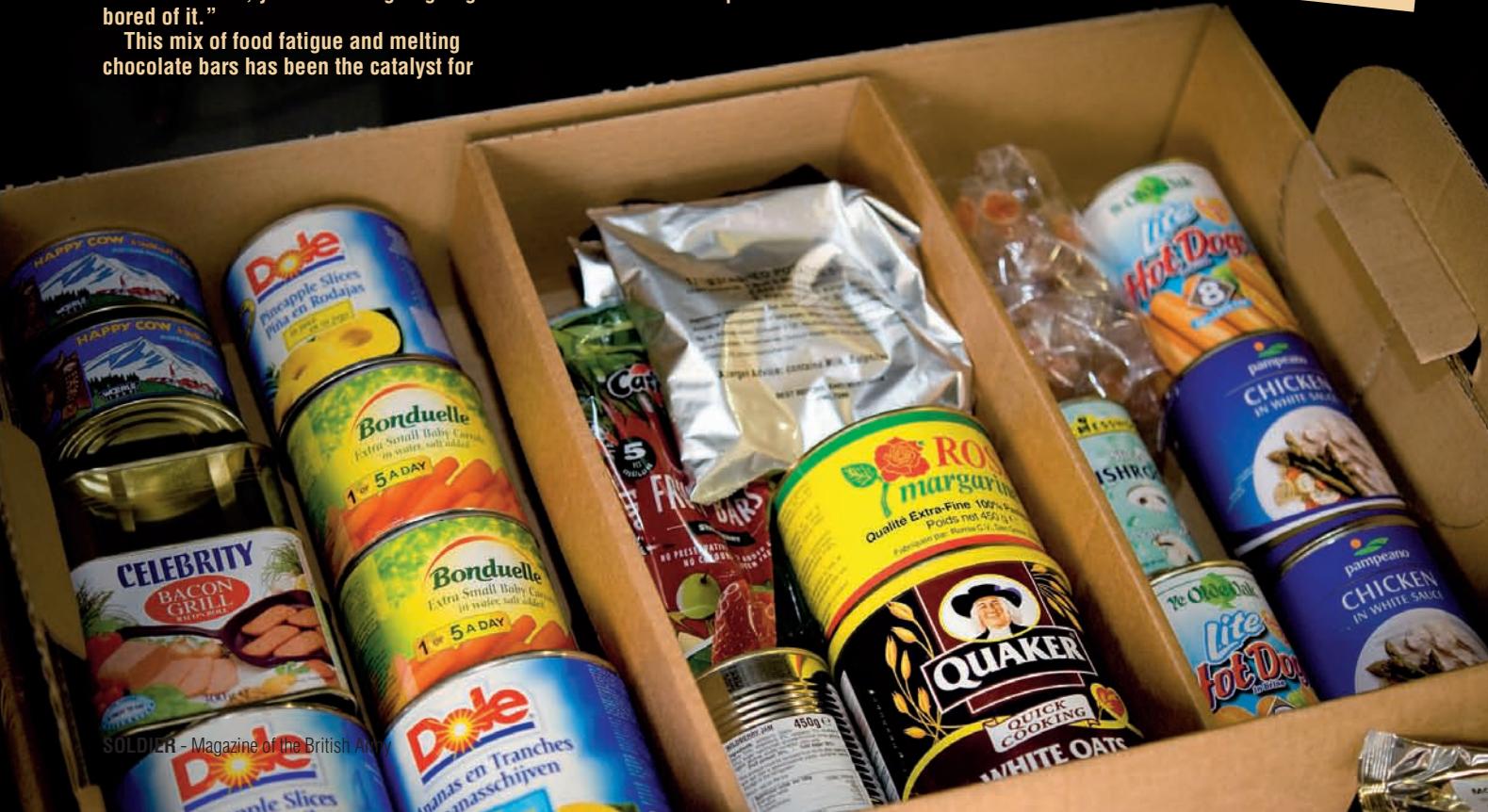
Tpr Kenny Elmsley, HCR, added: "I was on one of the food tasting panels and it will be good to have more choice. The time is right for a change. When you are out on ops and living on rations, every day is Groundhog Day. You get up and eat the same stuff. Variety is a very good thing." ■

### WHAT'S HOT

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Energy drinks  
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### WHAT'S NOT

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and paté





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# Help from heroes

Rugby legends bolster Service charity's pack »

# As the first Englishman to lift a major World Cup in modern times, Martin Johnson is rightly revered as one of the country's favourite sporting sons. Here the former Leicester Tiger explains why supporting the British military is the only cause great enough to coax him out of retirement for one final match . . .

Interview: Stephen Tyler

**A**NYONE with doubts about whether September's Help for Heroes rugby match could achieve its goal of selling out all 82,000 seats inside Twickenham could not have banked on the strength of British sports stars' support for the Services.

The eagerly-anticipated event's ultimate aim of raising £1 million for Help for Heroes was enough to convince the likes of Lawrence Dallaglio and Scott Gibbs to agree to come out of retirement for 80 minutes. And if those two names had rugby fans reaching for their wallets, the news that World Cup-winning former England captain Martin Johnson will be entering the fray should send the ticket hotline into overdrive.

Johnson, who took over as coach of the national team earlier this year, told *Soldier* that he had no hesitation in lending his support to the cause.

"I received a call from Lawrence to play in the Help for Heroes challenge match," said the former Leicester Tiger. "How could I say no? I'm looking forward to it. The cause is a superb one and anything the players and fans can do to raise money for care and the facilities to support our wounded Service personnel at Selly Oak Hospital and Headley Court has to be worthwhile."

Johnson will line up alongside Lawrence Dallaglio in a Help for Heroes XV managed by another man to have worn the white shirt, Phil de Glanville, and the national coach's playing experience will provide a stern challenge for his International XV opponents.

After bursting onto the England scene in a 16-15 win over France in 1993,

Johnson's never-say-die attitude and outstanding leadership abilities made him as good as irreplaceable. His first taste of international captaincy came in 1997 when Ian McGeechan unexpectedly put him in charge of the British Lions squad ahead of its tour to South Africa.

The move proved to be an inspired one as Johnson led from the front to help the unfancied tourists to a stunning 2-1 series victory over the Springboks. Club captaincy at Leicester Tigers followed the same year and Johnson was finally awarded the skipper's armband for England two years later.

His performances at the 2003 World Cup were hailed as some of the best ever seen from a lock forward and the showpiece

tournament proved to be a successful swansong as the Leicester man announced his retirement from international rugby after lifting the Webb Ellis trophy.

He played his final game for the Tigers in 2005, but despite not having carried a ball in anger since then, Johnson is determined to show what he hopes will be a sell-out Twickenham

crowd that he still has the fitness and physical drive to influence a game.

"Yes, I will be treating the game as a competitive fixture. We all will," confirmed Johnson.

"I've kept myself fit and I will need to be. Although I've played some one-off charity rugby and football matches, this will be the first and I'm sure last time that I will play in a competitive match against some world-class players.

"I don't know who I'll be playing against yet, but whoever they are they will be tough opponents."

Lawrence Dallaglio's assertion that supporting the Services is the only cause

that could have convinced him to play a final competitive match is shared by Johnson, who is delighted to be able to do his bit for the Armed Forces.

Although he has no direct military experience himself, Johnson's older brother Andrew is in the Territorial Army and the England coach intends to continue showing his support long after the final whistle blows on September 20.

"I do feel strongly about the game and the reasons why we are playing it," he added. "I haven't been to Headley Court or Selly Oak yet, but I do plan to. I admire the job all our Service personnel do and they do it in very difficult circumstances."

In a career that yielded five Premiership titles, two Heineken Cups, five Six Nations trophies and, of course, a World Cup win, Johnson is rightly regarded as one of Britain's all-time sporting greats.

But although he has every right to hold himself and his achievements in exceptionally high regard, the forward is at pains to point out the difference between his career and those of soldiers serving in the field on current operational deployments.

"Sports people are seen to be heroes, but the real ones are the men and women in Iraq and Afghanistan and I hope the match raises awareness of the good job they do," he concluded. "Our target is to reach a sell out at Twickenham and to raise £1 million for Help for Heroes so I urge everyone to do their bit, buy a ticket and enjoy a good day out for an excellent cause."



● Tickets for the Help for Heroes challenge match, which takes place at Twickenham on Saturday, September 20, cost from £20 for adults and £10 for juniors. Family tickets for two adults and two children cost £50. To purchase tickets, visit [www.ticketmaster.co.uk](http://www.ticketmaster.co.uk) or call 0844 8472492.



# In a professional career spanning 18 years, Lawrence Dallaglio conquered Rugby Union's top teams to get his hands on the sport's major trophies at club and international level. But in this exclusive interview, the World Cup-winning number eight explains why he sees the inspirational achievements of today's troops as much greater than his own . . .

Interview: Stephen Tyler  
Picture: Graeme Main

**N**OT many players can lay claim to having tamed the Leicester Tigers, but London Wasps legend Lawrence Dallaglio had a habit of taking the sting out of one of Rugby Union's most prominent club sides.

Where other opponents fell prey to the Tigers' brand of ferocious forward play, Dallaglio stood tall to leave the enemy looking toothless on a number of occasions, most notably in the 2007 Heineken Cup final.

It seemed like fate when, after announcing his plans to retire from professional rugby at the end of the 2007/08 season, Dallaglio's last match turned out to be a rematch against the Tigers in the Guinness Premiership final at Twickenham last May.

The London team raced into the lead and as they closed in on another title, Dallaglio was substituted to a standing ovation from even the most partisan of the record 82,000 fans inside the stadium.

Fittingly the highly-decorated World Cup winner, as inextricably linked to Wasps as the club's black and gold shirts, called time on a glittering playing career at one of the game's great grounds as a champion.

But while it appeared that the imposing number eight had graced the turf at the home of English rugby for the final time, Dallaglio has agreed to take to the field once more as captain of a Help for Heroes XV in a fundraising match next month (September 20).

Such is the rugby legend's admiration for the work of today's troops, he insists that supporting the Services is the only cause that could have convinced him to dust off his boots for one final time.

"The only reason I got involved was because the charity is so worthwhile and the cause is one that myself and the whole of rugby is very passionate about," Dallaglio told *Soldier* in an exclusive interview. "I finished my career in the best way I could have hoped for and I didn't intend on playing another game. This is certainly the first and last post-career competitive game I will be involved in."

"Throughout my career I and my colleagues have always had a very close relationship through letters and emails from people on the front line who were supporting the England rugby team, be it in the Six Nations or the World Cup.

"You get an understanding of what it means to people to be able to sit down in the desert in Iraq or wherever they may be and watch a game of rugby. That makes me very proud and I think we have carried that responsibility on our shoulders.

"Sportsmen and women are put up there as heroes, but when you understand what some of the people serving in places like Afghanistan and Iraq are going through, those guys are the real heroes."

Dallaglio was originally drafted into the Help for Heroes XV as a non-playing captain, but he was quick to accept a more active role when opposing captain and former British Lions teammate Scott Gibbs announced he would be taking to the pitch.

The two heavyweights were involved in some titanic clashes between old enemies England and Wales and Dallaglio has no intention of treating September's charity match as a friendly fixture.

"I can guarantee that this will not be an exhibition," he continued. "It will be a competitive fixture and you would expect nothing less from something that's representing the Forces.

"It's going to be a fun day for a good cause, but it has to be a competitive match and we will be putting together two teams of players still capable of playing at the highest level to make sure it is."

"I hope that having myself and Scott playing against each other will get the English and Welsh factions within the Forces going and we intend to announce some more very high-profile players before the game."

Organisers of the match are still finalising the two squads for the showdown but both starting 15s will contain a mix of established internationals, up-and-coming

professional stars and some of the best players from the three Services.

The resulting line-ups are sure to provide 80 minutes of blood-and-thunder rugby in front of what is hoped to be a sell-out crowd in excess of 80,000 people in West London.

The use of Twickenham stadium has been donated for free and Dallaglio hopes that his involvement will help draw in the fans and push the match past its target of raising £1million for Headley Court.

"I would encourage everybody to come along because if we can get 50,000 people there to watch the Army play the Royal Navy then I really believe we can fill it for this match," he said.

"The reality of war means that a lot of people return having had their lives completely changed either physically or mentally and I think that places like Headley Court are wonderful for giving them the opportunity to put their lives back together.

"It can not be done without funds and this is a chance for us to get involved and do it in a specific and worthwhile way."

Despite overcoming several battles in his professional and personal life, including

being stripped of the England captaincy following a sensationalist tabloid story, Dallaglio is at pains to state that his trials and tribulations are nothing compared to those of today's Servicemen and women.

The 6ft 3in man mountain grew up listening to his mother's stories about living in London during the Second World War and wants the sense of empathy that civilians felt with troops during that conflict to be rekindled in the present day.

"I think when the reality of war is closer to home we understand the implications a lot more," he said.

"My mother used to wake up in the middle of the night to go to an underground shelter and when she went back up, the house on either side would be gone. »

"When conflict is further away, perhaps it's a case of out of sight, out of mind so this is an opportunity for us to really emphasise a growing feeling in this country that our Servicemen and women perhaps don't get the respect or as good a deal as they deserve."

"There has always been a link between rugby and the Forces that goes back a long way."

"We are all tremendously proud of the incredible work that these men and women put in around the world and this match gives us an opportunity to help that grow."

Dallaglio got a prime example of the dedication and drive typical of those in the Forces when Wasps teammate Josh Lewsey combined his professional rugby career with officer training at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst.

The full back was given special dispensation to leave the academy to attend matches and training sessions, on one occasion playing at Twickenham in the afternoon and returning to Sandhurst straight after the final whistle.

He has gone on to become a key member of the Wasps and England set-ups and Dallaglio is full of praise for his efforts.

"I take my hat off to Josh and to the club because he managed to do the training and hold down his playing career. There was a lot of give and take on both sides and I hope that everyone got out of it what they needed," he said.

"Josh is a good soldier and a good rugby player and there are not many people who could have done what he has, physically let alone mentally."

"It has been a pleasure to captain him because he's a professional, hard-

working, bright lad who knows what he wants," he added.

Winning the 2007-08 Guinness Premiership title added a final gloss to a playing career almost unrivalled throughout world rugby.

As an England player, Dallaglio was a key factor in the country beating Australia to the World Cup in their own back yard in 2003.

His contribution in the famous white shirt also produced four Six Nations championship titles and the proud Englishman put aside his rivalry with his Irish, Scottish and Welsh counterparts to take part in British Lions tours to South Africa, Australia and New Zealand.

Even northern hemisphere club rugby's biggest prize, the Heineken Cup, has ended up in Dallaglio's hands after he steered Wasps to victories over Toulouse in 2004 and Leicester Tigers in 2007.

The immense success that Wasps have achieved during rugby's professional era has been built on a bedrock of players such as Dallaglio, Simon Shaw and Joe

Worsley who have stuck with the club from its amateur days.

Dallaglio admits to missing some of the off-the-field excesses that have been lost to professional rugby, but thinks the stability that has developed as a result has put the club in a strong position.

"A lot of people tell me I'm a tremendously loyal person for staying [with Wasps] for 18 years and I suppose on reflection you could say that," explained Dallaglio. "But my loyalty and my decision to stay has always been because it has given me the chance to be competitive and play for England."

"If I felt that it didn't then I would have been happy to move on because you have to be ruthless in that respect. I've been lucky enough to play for a club that's close to me and in all my time here I have had four coaches and played with two fly halves."

"That tells you all you need to know about success being developed over a long period."

"I have been a small part of that and I hope that with the likes of Danny Cipriani, Tom Rees and James Haskell, it will continue long into the future."

Although his playing career with Wasps has ended, Dallaglio has no intention of letting his links with the side fade and is currently working to develop the club's brand.

He also intends to carry on gaining coaching qualifications and admits he would "love" to work with the squad if the opportunity arose.

Whatever the future holds for the Londoner, the men and women of the Forces can be assured that one of England's sporting greats will always be ready to fight for their cause.

"There are a lot of similarities between rugby and the Forces – the pursuit of excellence, making big decisions, the spirit, the training, being able to cope in a high-pressure environment."

"I have been very fortunate to have played with and against some amazing players and in some amazing teams."

"You can't write your own script, but my career finished better than I could ever have asked for."

"While that is true, it's important to remember that when you're a sportsman you put your reputation on the line every week. When you're a Serviceman you put your life on the line."

"That's a big difference and that is why we are so grateful for what these men and women do." ■

## ● SoldierSport – Page 97

**Main picture, Victory salute:** England talisman Lawrence Dallaglio celebrates last year's Jonny Wilkinson-inspired 14-9 victory over World Cup hosts France. Defying the critics and their own pre-tournament form, the semi-final win took England to a second successive final  
Picture: AP Photo/Mark Baker

**Left, Sandhurst scrum:** Wasps star and England World Cup winner Josh Lewsey (pictured second from right), who combined soldiering with first-class rugby during his time at the Royal Military Academy, was praised by Dallaglio for his physical and mental strength  
Picture: Graeme Main







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# TALKBACK

## Time for Army postcode

MANY tri-Service communities serving overseas are suffering problems with the British Forces Post Office (BFPO) postcodes. Being based abroad means troops often have to use the internet to buy goods from UK retailers.

More and more companies are using automated websites which will not recognise a BFPO postcode, declaring it invalid and prompting the user to enter a UK postcode.

Clearly we cannot use the normal postcode for RAF Northolt (where BFPO now resides) as this would mix up their mail with that going overseas.

### PRIZE LETTER

But how hard would it be for BFPO to ask the Royal Mail to create a dedicated postcode which overseas troops could use to direct mail to the BFPO mail centre?

Our addresses might then be something like:  
12345678 Pte A N Other,  
62 Materiel Squadron,  
6 Supply Regiment RLC,  
BFPO 47, Middlesex  
HA4 \*\*\*  
United Kingdom.

I emailed Royal Mail to ask about this and was told that in principle it would not be a problem. After all, new streets are constructed all the time and

new postcodes can be generated easily enough for them.

I have tried to chase this through the chain of command and have even written to BFPO myself without reply. Perhaps they didn't get my letter. – **Sgt P Tyler, 6 Supply Regiment RLC.**

#### **Maj Steve Roberts, D Def PCS, responds:**

*BFPO are engaged with Royal Mail to identify a solution to this problem. I will speak to Sgt Tyler to explain in depth the complexities involved in what, on the surface, seems a simple solution.*

**What do you think? You can voice your own opinion on this topic on ArmyNet**

PS....

I HAVE just read the "No-bonus tour" letter (June) from the wife of someone doing a six-month tour in the Falkland Islands and felt obliged to comment on it.

Having served on six-month tours in both the Falklands and Afghanistan in the past couple of years, I cannot believe the naivety. Most personnel in the Falklands work a normal day and have a lot of down-time, when the local bars and Service messes do a brisk trade.

It would be ludicrous for them to receive the same bonuses as Service personnel on operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. – Name and address supplied.

## Thanks for decompressing us

IWOULD like to thank the team that organised our post-Op Telic 11 decompression training in Cyprus for running such an excellent package.

The Army should be given a pat on the back for this effort. Some may have been sceptical beforehand, but everyone left feeling that it was a very worthwhile experience. The Army gave us the opportunity to let off steam and provided some excellent facilities to do this.

The stand-up comedians were very funny, though they did take the mick out of me for a wearing a shirt. – **Capt T J Cowdry, 1st Battalion, Scots Guards.**

## JPA 'circle of death' squared away

IN Soldier (March) you highlighted the SPVA complaints procedure and who to contact if iSupports were not resolved after ten working days.

As a regimental admin officer I was aware of this through the JPA Op Bulletins, although I did not hold out much hope. But after reading Soldier I have now used this procedure on four occasions and found the service to be

excellent. Capt Haydn Pritchard and his team have resolved long-term issues within a fortnight and the "circle of death" of iSupports has ceased.

For most it has not been an easy transition to JPA, but this is a positive step that hopefully puts an end to the drawn-out process of iSupports and the frustration encountered. – **Capt Sarah Freeman, 3 Para, BFPO 772.**

## Brief is best

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

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

**Read lots more of your letters at [www.soldiermagazine.co.uk](http://www.soldiermagazine.co.uk)**

# Two quarters are better than one

HAVING just read the letter in the May issue regarding the rules on cohabiting in Service accommodation I can fully understand the frustration of the soldier who can't live with his partner and so will be separated from his child.

But we all know the Army is not going to change the rules that govern allocation of married quarters.

May I suggest an option that Brig

Gordon did not mention in his reply? Once your partner has given birth to your child, and as long as you are both serving soldiers, you take full sole parental responsibility for the child, leaving your partner with full sole responsibility of the child she has from her previous relationship.

This will not solve the problem of you not being able to live together but will

force the Army into providing you with separate married quarters as you both have full-time parental responsibility.

You can then each spend 28 days out of every 61 at the other's house, giving you 56 out of 61 together. And as you are both single parents it is unlikely you will be sent on a six-month tour. – **WO1 (ASM) G E Haworth, SA ES Org and Trg, HQ 4 Divison ES.**

# Thwarted by policy

I WAS given an out-patients appointment at Selly Oak Hospital, Birmingham but the date was not suitable so I followed the instructions to change the appointment.

The military operator taking my call told me that I would have to go through my medical centre to change an appointment. I asked why, as a warrant officer, I was not allowed to alter my own appointment and was told it was "policy". I asked for his line manager's number, which he was not able to locate, so gave him mine and asked to be contacted at their convenience.

A major in the military patients' wing called to tell me I could not change my

appointment, regardless of rank, and that I should follow the policy and do so through my medical centre.

But my med centre does not know my availability so any new appointment made without my knowledge may again be unsuitable.

The officer told me his department deals with about 400 requests a week to change appointments. I reckon most of these are being changed many times over as medical centres make "blind" appointments.

Any civilian can contact a hospital to alter an appointment, so why can't we? – **WO2 (QMSI) A Blatch, 72 Engineer Regiment (V).**

## Defence Medical Services Department (DMSD) responds:

*DMSD cannot intervene in individual cases regarding administration, treatment or patient grievances.*

*If WO2 (QMSI) Blatch wants to complain about procedures regarding his administration at Selly Oak Hospital, he has the right to do so using the NHS complaints procedure.*

*He must go to the hospital or trust concerned and ask for a copy of the complaints procedure.*

*The following websites will give further information on the complaints procedure. Go to [www.library.nhs.uk/healthmanagement](http://www.library.nhs.uk/healthmanagement) and follow the appropriate links.*

# No refund of our fees 50 years ago

I WAS interested in the letter "Army should pay these fees" (March). I served in the Royal Engineers from 1942 to 1966, initially with the Engineer Works Services as a surveyor's clerk and later, after obtaining my Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) as a chartered quantity surveyor.

I had to obtain that qualification at my own expense as there were no long quantity surveying courses leading to the RICS

qualification, which it was essential to hold before one could gain a commission.

I remember the efforts made by our small band of officers to obtain a refund on our subscriptions. Equally unsuccessful were our efforts to persuade HM Inspector of Taxes to allow our subscriptions to count as a deductible expense. It seems that, 50 years later, there is not much change. – **Maj (Retd) John A Lilley QSRE, Colchester.**

# My room needs price check

AT my last unit I was lucky enough to be accommodated in modernised sergeants' mess single living accommodation.

It was classed as level 2, which I was very happy to pay. But I have been posted to a new unit and my room is just the opposite. It is barely big enough to swing a cat in and has a small sink. I have to share a single toilet and shower with five other people.

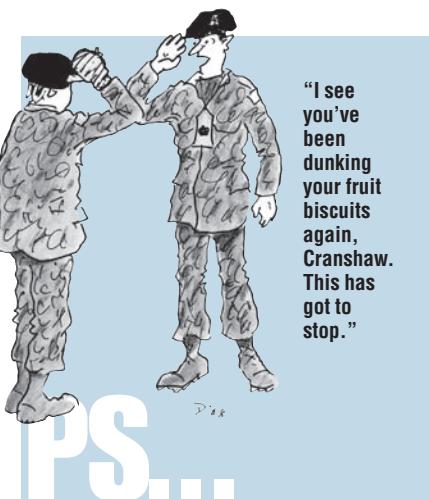
That would not be a problem but for the fact that I am paying the same rate as I did in my previous room. How can such opposites be on the same scale?

I was in a similar room to this one at a previous unit and was told it was

of such a poor standard that all I had to pay for was amenities. – **Name and address supplied.**

**Brig Jamie Gordon, DPS(A), replies:** Something appears to be wrong. Each type of accommodation is divided into four grades for charge depending on its condition, conformity to scale and so on. You should not be paying the same for the single living accommodation you describe as you did for new SLAM accommodation.

Contact your admin office to confirm the Grade for Charge you are paying, and then speak to your quartermaster who can ask for a board of officers to convene to re-grade your accommodation.



LIKE many other soldiers I bought myself a 350ml thermal mug. After making a coffee on a recent exercise, I tried to dunk a biscuit fruit from my ration pack and was shocked to find it did not fit into my mug. I snapped the biscuit in two and dunked it sideways. Because it did not have as much length, I could only dunk a little before scolding my fingers. If biscuits were made 6mm smaller, they would fit, which would increase morale. – LCpl, 1 (UK) ADSR, name, address supplied.

# Suez gong was for 30 days

I WOULD like to clarify a comment in the PS column of Talkback (June).

Your correspondent made a comment about the eligibility criteria for the Suez Canal Zone only being one day. This is not entirely correct.

The eligibility criteria for the GSM 1962 with clasp "Canal Zone" was 30 continuous days' service in the Canal Zone area during the period October 16, 1951 to October 19, 1954.

The medal to which he may have been referring is the GSM 1962 with clasp "Near East", which does only require a single day to qualify for the medal for service in Egypt between October 31 and December 22, 1956. – Lt Col (Retd) Peter Lockyer, MoD Medal Office.

## What about a wound medal?

IT was great to see a decision made to honour the war dead with a medal that can be cherished by families. But I am disappointed that those injured in action will receive nothing.

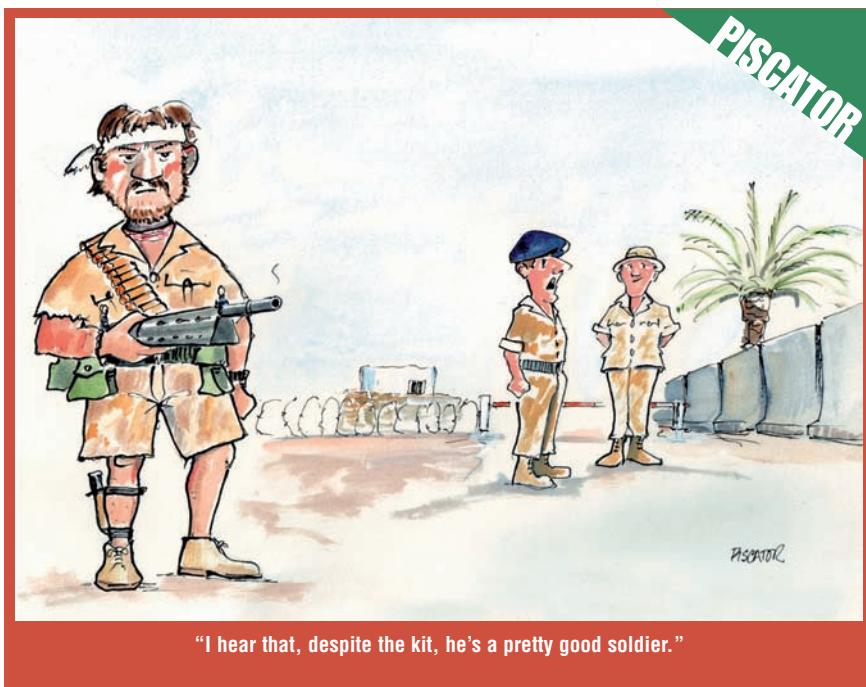
I was wounded in Afghanistan last year, as were many others, and it seems we will be forgotten. I believe recognition is due, with something that we could wear with pride.

If medals were issued, the public would see the scale of the sacrifice made by this nation's finest. – Sgt C Hill, 19 Regiment RA.

## Cyprus slight

THANKS to David Williams, ex-Somerset LI (June), for highlighting the disgraceful fact that many Servicemen did not get a GSM for service against Eoka. I have been fighting for years to get justice for veterans who were there.

In 1958, the 16th Parachute Brigade and attached units were in Cyprus when the Jordan crisis arose and they were rushed there. Some, including me, returned to Cyprus. We spent five to six months on continual active service in two countries but got no recognition in the form of a GSM. Suez veterans got a medal and now it's our turn – if there is any justice left. – George Harris, ex-RE, Haverfordwest.



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Call 0845 241 4820 or visit [www.armybenfund.org](http://www.armybenfund.org)

# Higher car rate is cheaper than train

WORK in MoD Main Building in London, live in a married quarter in Kingston and often have to travel regularly to Copenacre.

I am the only military person in my unit. My civilian counterparts get 40p a mile for travel in their own cars while I, a serving soldier, can only claim about 26p. This seems unreasonable.

JSP 541 states that the Official Duty Rate (ODR) can only be paid in exceptional circumstances and when there is no hire or Service transport available, which would never be the case in Main Building. JSP 541 makes no mention of cost in regard to ODR.

With increases in fuel the Private Car Rate (PCR) does not cover my costs per mile so I stopped using my own vehicle and started to use either hire cars or rail transport. Both cost considerably more

than ODR. Rail and taxi to Copenacre is about £150; hire car about £100; ODR about £66.

This is a waste of money. Could the rules not be amended to authorise the cheapest practicable method of travel, and leave it to the chain of command? – Name and address supplied.

**Brig Jamie Gordon, DPS(A), replies:** You may have seen earlier correspondence on why it is that PCR/ODR rates do not totally reflect the rapid increase in fuel price. Hire cars may be more expensive but the price differential is not as great as you suggest, and one can get reduced rail tickets.

Your suggestion to amend the JSP may sound sensible, but I refer to para 04.606. You effectively lose control of your car and are constrained to using it only for future business travel.

# Why can't AAC attract degree in flying?

I READ on the Defence website that the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force have teamed up with universities to combine military training with academic skills so they can offer their personnel a degree level qualification.

The Fleet Air Arm has combined military flying training and education into a Military Aviation Studies Foundation degree, which recognises the unique skills needed for service in combat aircraft. The Army Air Corps also has winged aircraft in service



**"Do you reckon my 'unique flying skills' will count towards my postal political and social service degree?"**

and it takes almost two years to qualify as an Army aviator.

So why has the AAC not teamed up with educational bodies to recognise and accredit the training its aviators receive? – **Concerned soldier.**

**Brig Jamie Gordon, DPS(A), replies:** In line with the Army and Defence

Accreditation policies, the Army Air Corps has recently implemented apprenticeship schemes for all phase two groundcrew and communications trainees at the School of Army Aviation. Work is going on to map

aircrew training to civilian qualifications. Although AAC flying training is similar to that delivered for the RN and RAF, it is not identical and so needs a separate and distinct accreditation process.

It is also worth noting that even the RN Military Aviation Studies Foundation degree is not accredited for all flying training: it is only for specific roles.

To date, Open University degree credit points are available on completion of the Army Elementary Flying Training Course (30 points at Level 1) and various options are being pursued to accredit the rest of the training received by AAC pilots to bring it in line with the other Services.

Point of contact for AAC accreditation is the Accreditation Co-ordinator at HQ AAC, Middle Wallop.

# Using a dodgy DII password isn't on

I AM a great fan of JPA but the problem lies in finding a DII (Defence Internet Infrastructure) terminal to access it.

I requested a DII account to access JPA to process expenses incurred in moving to my new unit but was told no more DII(C) accounts were being created and I would have to wait for DII(F) in another two months at the earliest. By then my claims would be three months old and could be invalid.

Beg, steal or borrow a DII user name and password seemed to be the default answer in the unit, including among my

AGC (SPS) staff. I was told they were too busy to help process my claims.

Using someone else's account is a breach of security and given the proliferation of sensitive data security breaches this is unacceptable. An audit of those using JPA without holding a valid account would be revealing. – **Name and address supplied.**

**Maj Graham Ingram, Infra Coherence, HQ Land Forces, responds:** The mitigation team delivered six additional DII(C) machines to the correspondent's barracks to meet their stated needs for JPA Interim Operating Capability (IOC). In a subsequent review to assess the need for approach-and-use kiosks, the unit stated that no further terminals were required.

This was the right decision at the time as DII(F) delivery was anticipated in time for JPA infrastructure reasons. If the length of slippage had been better understood further mitigation could have been provided.

Limitations on the growth of legacy accounts and the lack of JPA clamped kiosks at the site have caused local "work-arounds" which may have infringed security rules.

The problem has gone away with the final arrival of DII(F) on site. The chain of command has been collecting examples where DII(F) slippages and JPA mitigation plans are out of step. These have been few but the correspondent is thanked for raising this unsatisfactory situation. It has been noted at the highest levels.

I AM the Force cashier on Op Telic 11 responsible for the funding of all theatre troops and the payment of all contractors. The imprest account I control is the biggest in the military.

I work in a tri-Service environment and have come to realise that a chief petty officer writer in the Royal Navy is on the higher range of pay whereas the likes of me and other WOs and SNCOs controlling millions of pounds are stuck on the lower band.

When is the AGC (SPS) going to get a fair crack at the whip? – **Name and address supplied.**

**Brig Jamie Gordon, DPS(A), replies:** The Joint Service Job Evaluation Team (JSJET) reviews all cap badges in a six-year cycle; AGC (SPS) military administrators are being evaluated now.

JSJET assigns each trade a whole trade score based on the following factors: knowledge, skills and experience; complexity and mental challenge; judgement and decision-making; use of resources and level of supervision; communication and working conditions.

JSJET studies will examine a range of personnel at each rank and trade, not just the one or two who happen to be doing a relatively busy job at the time.

When your naval colleagues were last evaluated they scored higher marks, principally because of their additional duties over a range of posts. I await the results of the JSJET military administrator evaluation with interest.

## PS...

ON the subject of the monkey puppet (April), I have been in Afghanistan several times and often stayed overnight in small villages.

I learnt that the Afghan people have a strong sense of humour. They like jokes and funny things. I think the monkey is perfect to start a conversation. Soldiers should be disciplined but if a bit of humour helps to get the mission completed, I think it is appropriate.

Do not forget that during the times of the Taliban having fun was forbidden. – **Carl Schulze, Defence journalist, Germany.**

# Where's the X-factor for varsity cadets?

I NOTE with interest the withdrawal of X-factor from university units.

It is unclear from the MoD report what body of personnel this refers to: is it officer cadets only, cadetship officers, TA group A staff serving with the University Officers' Training Corps (UOTC) or permanent instructors?

The only other reference to "University Units" within the report is with respect to the officer cadet bounties, so presumably it applies only to officer cadets? If this is the case, on what basis have UOTC cadets ever been paid X-factor given that they have not been mobilised as a body since the First World War?

Considering the level of eminence on the Armed Forces Pay Review



Board (AFPRB), should we not expect a little more clarity? – **Maj Martin Shakespeare, SO2 Business**

# Plain old exercise delayed my move

I HAVE been trying to transfer to REME since October 2007, but my initial interview proforma was ignored for six weeks and it was not until I terminated my service last December that I finally got interviewed.

Nothing happened until, after much ringing around and having to organise my own selection test and medical records, I was given a transfer date of June 2. I made arrangements for married quarters and schools and my wife gave notice on her job.

I also informed my chain of command, only for my RCMO to ring Glasgow and have the date put back by four weeks to June 30 so I could go on a battalion exercise on Salisbury Plain.

Am I right in saying that a transfer shouldn't be delayed except for

operational reasons? My family and I have been shafted for the sake of one exercise. – **LCpl Edge, 1st Battalion, The Yorkshire Regiment.**

**Maj Tristan Halse, Army Manning, responds:**

*Current transfer policy states that the receiving cap badge, in this case REME, should make a fair offer based on your experience, training and suitability. It also states that once a soldier has been accepted and an offer agreed to, the soldier should be posted to a unit of his new cap badge as soon as possible (paras 4d (1)-(4) of Army Transfer Policy (D/DM(A)/311) dated March 15, 2006). The delay so you can go on exercise is unacceptable and DM(A) has contacted APC and MS Soldiers Infantry to ensure that they expedite your transfer request in line with current policy.*

# 'Forgotten' Palestine veterans back in the picture

ON behalf of all Palestine Veterans Association (PVA) members, I commend you on Cliff Caswell's article on the 60th anniversary of the withdrawal of British military forces from Palestine (June).

Our members have long felt that the role they played in a thankless mission has been conveniently forgotten, should mention of it cause upset on political or religious grounds among our allies.

Although the PVA only formed in 2000, we have 1,193 members, all of them determined that the 784 men and

women of the British Armed Forces who lost their lives in Palestine are commemorated. Members will gather at the Eden Camp Modern History Theme Museum for their annual reunion on October 18. Membership is open to all who served in Palestine between 1923 and 1948 and details can be obtained from me.

Thanks again for your tribute to the 90,000 Service personnel who served in the country which our members will always know as Palestine. – **Nick Hill, PVA Administrator, Eden Camp**

**Continuity, HQ Land Forces.**

**Brig Jamie Gordon, DPS(A), replies:** The withdrawal of X-factor highlighted in your letter does refer to university officer cadets. X-factor not only relates to mobilisation as you point out, but to a balance of 18 factors (see Pages 40-42 of the report).

Your last point in relation to clarity is unfair. The 2008 Armed Forces Pay Review Body report covers a wide range of complex multi-faceted topics and is necessarily high-level and tri-Service.

Army Briefing Notes (ABN) are designed to accompany and clarify issues and I refer you to ABN 04/08 in this instance, which also signposts where you can go for future information on this issue.

# I had to beg for my leave

I AM returning from a non-operational overseas posting and have been away from my family for three months. Yet I am struggling to get permission to take relocation leave as neither my losing nor gaining unit can afford to lose me for the ten days to which I am entitled.

Why do we have to beg for leave and why it is not factored into assignment order movements? I should not have to upset my new bosses by requesting an absence they have not planned for. – **Name and address supplied.**

**Brig Jamie Gordon, DPS(A), replies:** Problems with taking leave have been highlighted in Talkback with my responses and reference to the X-factor. I am sorry to hear of your difficulties in taking your ten days of relocation leave. It is fact that the needs of the Army come first, but I am disappointed that you can't be spared for ten days – no doubt you fill a key appointment, but no one is irreplaceable.

**Museum, Malton, North Yorks YO17 6RT (admin@edencamp.co.uk).**

"END of Days" (June) was well written and *Soldier* has again given its readers high standards which others can only envy. Well done Cliff Caswell and Steve Dock. It was amazing they did not insult anyone, were politically correct, yet told the story fairly and illustrated the suffering of those who served. – **Maj (Supt) Bob Mountwitten, "Yasham" Anti-Terrorist Unit (Volunteers), Israel Police, Jerusalem.**

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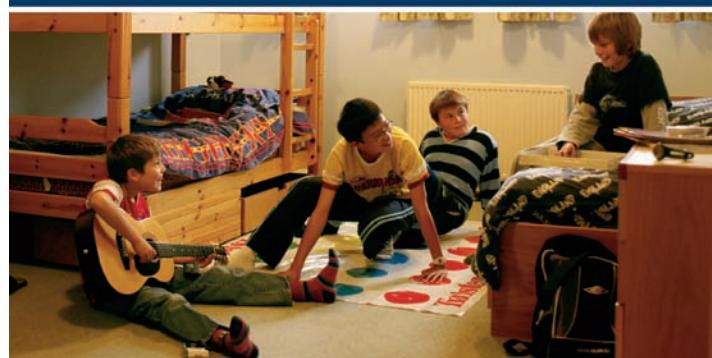
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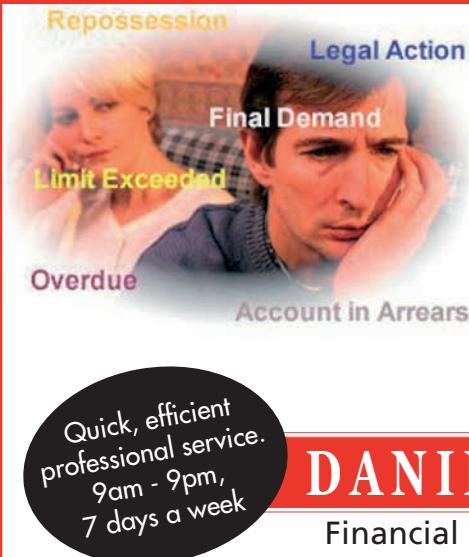


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# Advantage point

## But I'll be holding my breath for just a short while longer on some issues

I REPORTED last month that Gordon Brown had said the Government would do everything to improve conditions for the Armed Forces, but that I wouldn't be holding my breath.

Well, after the publication of the Service Personnel Command Paper I can hold it for a short while at least.

The bottom line was "no disadvantage" for Service personnel and families, and on the face of it goes a long way to achieving that goal.

The media picked up on the doubling of the compensation payments for the most seriously injured. It is a huge increase and it has to be applauded, especially when we read that the mother of LBdr Parkinson said it would give peace of mind and security for the soldier and his family.

Who better to endorse the increase than a family experiencing the effects of war at first hand?

As a delegate at the AFF Conference in June, I awaited this publication with baited breath. The stock answer to questions at the conference was: "The Service Personnel and Command Paper will address that issue."

So, I thought, will it be a panacea to all ills? To some issues raised at conference, I hope that it might be.

Since 2004 families of Foreign and Commonwealth soldiers have been asking why they are so disadvantaged in terms of visas, benefits and education



A personal view from  
Mel Pullan, Director  
of Communications  
of the Army Families  
Federation

when their spouses are fighting on behalf of the nation. A brave lady asked the question again in June: "Why do I have to wait two years more than my spouse for naturalisation?" This has been addressed by the paper, but with the proviso "where practicable".

So what changes will families actually experience?

Another regular complaint is that of Service families' access to National Health Service dentists. While finding an NHS dentist is difficult for everyone, it is more difficult for Service families because of their constant moving around.

Well, the paper says that it will help families with dentistry by making use of facilities on military bases. Does this mean that our families can now visit a military dentist?

And what about school place allocation? The paper says that the Department of Children, Schools and Families is seeking Service families' views on improving admissions.

This is all very well, but the issue cannot be viewed in isolation; our ability to access a school place for our children is dependent on the timely receipt of a posting order and the allocation of a suitable quarter – and neither of these factors are likely to be in time for the key entry dates for schools. Applications are required as

### 'The paper does not address overstretch, accommodation or Gurkha rights'

much as 11 months in advance.

I really hope the paper does much to address the reported low morale among Service personnel because undoubtedly, behind a soldier with low morale will be a family with low morale.

Soldiers claimed that they do not feel valued, nor supported, nor feel that their pay and housing reflect the job they are doing.

And the number of operational tours and persistent overstretch means that many families are experiencing excessive separation.

But the paper does not address overstretch. Nor does it address the upgrade of Single Living and Service Families Accommodation.

Nor does it address the rights of Gurkhas, an issue again highlighted in the press last month with a headline that read: "Gurkha dies from residency stress".

While I welcome this cross-Government initiative to secure a better deal for the Armed Forces, I wonder how some of the initiatives will work on the ground.

While I remain positive that measures are in place to ensure the initiatives are delivered, I am glad the Chief Executive of AFF is a member of the external reference group and so ideally placed to put pressure on the Government to deliver what it has promised.

I will hold my breath for a short while longer, but if I start going blue in the face please give me a prod. ■

Want to know more about the Army Families Federation? Log on to [www.aff.org.uk](http://www.aff.org.uk)

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- Are you owed a rebate because your home is in the wrong council tax band?
- Are you failing to claim child and other credits to which you are entitled?
- Check your gas and electricity tariffs.
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- Visit [www.uswitch.com](http://www.uswitch.com) for the cheapest energy deal.
- Credit Action has many saving tips on its website at [www.creditaction.org.uk](http://www.creditaction.org.uk)
- Cook. Ready-made meals are pricy.
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on newspaper (or the BBC) websites.

- The Army has a range of Credit Action material to help you budget. Or download it from [www.creditaction.org.uk](http://www.creditaction.org.uk)

- Money trouble? Contact the Consumer Credit Counselling Service for free advice on 0800 1381111 or visit [www.cccs.co.uk](http://www.cccs.co.uk)
- Get cheaper credit. Visit [www.moneybasics.co.uk](http://www.moneybasics.co.uk) for advice.

- Talk to the chain of command. Bottling it up will only make it harder to resolve.

I am grateful to [www.timesonline.co.uk](http://www.timesonline.co.uk), where much of this material is available.

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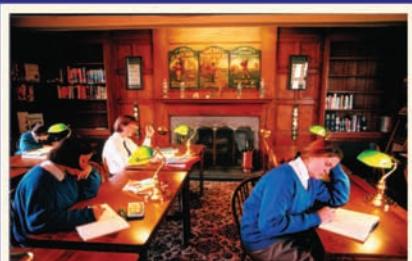
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NO. 801

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THE details have been changed in the latest in the series of drawings by our cartoonist, Chip. Circle the differences in the left-hand image and send the whole panel to **HOAY 801, Soldier, Ordnance Road, Aldershot, Hampshire GU11 2DU** by August 29.

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

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**June competition (No 799):** First correct entry drawn at random and winner of the £100 prize was **LCpl L Marshall, 98 PC Squadron, BFPO 47**. Runners-up **Sgt S P Wakelin, Darlington** and **D Hodgson, SUV IPT Abbey Wood** each win a £25 gift voucher.

The ten differences were: Sam Browne belt; headlamp; drops of paint; gun barrel muzzle; tool on gun; medal ribbons; number on bumper; badge on arm; button on back pocket; pick on side of vehicle.



## Winner of our June competition (inset)

Ian Goodwin-Reeves, admin officer of 150 Recovery Company REME at Redhill, Surrey, wins the two collections of wartime cartoons for his suggestion: "Mr Cowell Snr believes he may have a great idea for a TV show".

WO2 G E McLorie, Medical Branch, HQ London District, who was our May winner, nearly completed a double with his topical take on the photo: "The soldiers felt that the unit hadn't exactly splashed out on the entertainment for the TA 100 celebrations".

Simon Harrison of Luddershall came up with "New operational task for Army announced: Produce winning entry for Eurovision competition" and S Shephard, Facilities Management Office, BFPO 40, sent in: "Elton John had nothing on Spud's rendition of Crocodile Rock".

There was another Territorial Army-inspired effort from Bill Smart of Shrewsbury,



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**WIN A BOOK:** Write your own caption for the photo, above, from our January 1955 issue and send it to us by August 29. The best, in our opinion, will win a copy of James Fergusson's *A Million Bullets*, billed as the "real story" of the British Army in Afghanistan (Bantam Press, £16.99).

who suggested "So you say if I join, this is what I'll do every TA drill night?"

D Hodgson, from the SUV IPT at Abbey Wood, sent in "Sid could balance the ash on his cigarette even when he was leading

the Aldershot Sergeants' Mess Male Voice Choir through its repertoire at the annual reunion" and N R Townsend of Reading saw it as "The new padre's ideas have certainly made choir practice very popular".

# Web watch

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### [www.recoverypnp.niceboard.com](http://www.recoverypnp.niceboard.com)

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### [www.baff.org.uk](http://www.baff.org.uk)

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

### [www.baor-locations.com](http://www.baor-locations.com)

Website of the British Army of the Rhine and its locations.

### [www.forcesresources.co.uk](http://www.forcesresources.co.uk)

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

### [www.sftf.mod.uk](http://www.sftf.mod.uk)

The Service Families Task Force website contains useful tri-Service information.

## SERVICES

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Support our Troops event at Basingstoke, Aug 16-17.

### [www.armywivesunited.co.uk](http://www.armywivesunited.co.uk)

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## MOD LINKS

### [www.army.mod.uk](http://www.army.mod.uk)

Official website of the British Army.

### [www.armyaviation.co.uk](http://www.armyaviation.co.uk)

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

### [www.armysafety.mod.uk](http://www.armysafety.mod.uk)

Website of HQ Land Command's chief environment and safety officer.

### [www.armyrugbyunion.mod.uk](http://www.armyrugbyunion.mod.uk)

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### [www.rememuseum.org.uk](http://www.rememuseum.org.uk)

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### [www.armymuseums.org.uk](http://www.armymuseums.org.uk)

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

### [www.kingsownmuseum.plus.com](http://www.kingsownmuseum.plus.com)

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# Bulletin board

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## Defence directory

**Armed Forces Christian Union:** 01252 311221; [www.afcu.org.uk](http://www.afcu.org.uk)

**Army Benevolent Fund:** 0845 241 4820

**Army Welfare Information Service:** 01722 436569; [www.army.mod.uk/soldierwelfare/supportagencies/aws](http://www.army.mod.uk/soldierwelfare/supportagencies/aws)

**Army Families Federation:** 01980 615525

**British Limbless Ex-Service Men's Association:** 020 8590 1124. [www.blesma.org](http://www.blesma.org)

**Career Transition Partnership:** 0207 766 8020

**Children's Education Advisory Service:** 01980 618244; [enquiries.ceas@gtnet.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries.ceas@gtnet.gov.uk)

**Confidential support lines:** UK 0800 731 4880; Germany 0800 1827 395; Cyprus 080 91065; Falklands #6111; from operational theatres Paradigm Services \*201; from anywhere in the world (CSL operator will call back) +44 1980 630854. Lines open 1030-2230 (UK) every day.

**Ex-Services Mental Welfare Society:** 01372 841600; [www.combatstress.com](http://www.combatstress.com)

**Family Escort Service:** 020 74639249

**Forces Pension Society:** 020 78209988

**Joint Service Housing Advice Office:** 01722 436575

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

**Mutual Support (Forces Multiple Sclerosis support group):** 07962 023654, 01803 311527, [www.mutualsupport.org.uk](http://www.mutualsupport.org.uk) email [welfaresupport@mutualsupport.org.uk](mailto:welfaresupport@mutualsupport.org.uk)

**National Gulf Veterans' and Families' Association Office:** (0900-1700); 24-hour helpline 0845 257 4853; [www.ngvfa.org.uk](http://www.ngvfa.org.uk); fax 01482 808731

**Regular Forces' Employment Association:** 0121 2360058; [www.rfea.org.uk](http://www.rfea.org.uk)

**Royal British Legion:** 0845 7725 725

**RBL Industries Vocational Assessment Centre:** 01622 795900; [www.rbli.co.uk](http://www.rbli.co.uk)

**St Dunstan's charity for blind ex-Servicemen and women:** 0207 7235021; [www.st-dunstans.org.uk](http://www.st-dunstans.org.uk)

**SAMA 82 (South Atlantic Medal Association)**

Falklands conflict veterans: 01495 227577

**Services Cotswold Centre:** 01225 810358

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

**Service Personnel and Veterans Agency (SPVA):** 0800 169 2277 (from UK); 0044 1253 866043 (from overseas) Medical Assessment Programme: 0800 169 5401

**Victim Support:** Germany 02161 472 2272; UK 0845 3030900, [www.victimsupport.org](http://www.victimsupport.org)

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

## Reunions

**The Queen's Own Buffs:** Remembrance service, parade, reunion, Aug 10. Leros Barracks, Sturry Road, Canterbury. Ring H Delo on 01843 842357 or email [henry.lyn@idelo.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:henry.lyn@idelo.freeserve.co.uk)

**Staffordshire Regimental Association:** Reunion and dinner, Aug 30, at Swynnerton Camp, nr Stone, Staffs. Contact Helen Rayson, RHQ Mercian, Whittington Barracks, Lichfield, Staffs WS14 9PY or phone 01543 434390.

**King's School CCF:** Centenary past-and-present dinner on Sept 6 to celebrate formation of the Officer Training Corps in 1908. King's School, Wrexham Road, Chester. Ring Capt A Joseph on 07711 335894 or email [aj@kingschester.co.uk](mailto:aj@kingschester.co.uk)

**57 (Bhurtpore) Bty RA:** All ranks reunion at Salisbury Rugby Club on Sept 6. Contact Sgt Edwards, 57 Bty, 32 Regt, Robert Barracks, Larkhill SP4 8QU, ring 01980 845052 or email [eddi\\_jmj@hotmail.com](mailto:eddi_jmj@hotmail.com)

**RADC:** Reunion weekend at Evelyn Wood Road, Sept 20, and service in Garrison Church, Sept 21. All who have served with the RADC are invited. Contact Maj (Retd) J Sharp on 01276 412753 or email [rhq\\_radc@hotmail.com](mailto:rhq_radc@hotmail.com)

**Royal Hampshire Regiment:** Reunion luncheon for TA battalions, Sept 27 at 1200, Southampton University OTC, 32 Carlton Place, Southampton. Contact Maj I Taylor, 4 Cedar Wood Close, Fair Oak, Eastleigh, Hants SO50 7LN, phone 02380 694771 or email [ian.p.b.taylor@btinternet.com](mailto:ian.p.b.taylor@btinternet.com)

**152 (Ulster) Ambulance/Transport Regt RLC(V):** Reunion at Palace Barracks, Holywood, Co Down, N Ireland on Oct 11. Ring Paul Cowan on 07841 376997 or email [cawamp2@hotmail.com](mailto:cawamp2@hotmail.com)

**Royal Army Dental Corps:** Reunion weekend in Wigan, Oct 11 for former ADC, RADC, QARANC dental, Regulars, Territorials or National Service. Ring Brian Sims on 01332 515653 or email [34@simbs.plus.com](mailto:34@simbs.plus.com)

**1 GS Regiment RLC:** Reunion for 43 and 2 Sqns or anyone from 1995-2000 on Oct 11. Email Sgt B J Wright at [beejwright@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:beejwright@hotmail.co.uk)

**1 Troop, 23 Fd Sqn RE:** 50th reunion, Oct 18, at Chiseldon, Wilts for all who served in Cyprus and Jordan in 1958. Ring Taff Harris on 01437 768668.

**RMAS Edinburgh Coy WSC 921:** Reunion on Oct 18 at HQ RLC Officers' Mess, Deepcut. Email Maj Lucy Giles or Amanda Hassell on [lucy\\_nick@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:lucy_nick@yahoo.co.uk) or [990hasse@armymail.mod.uk](mailto:990hasse@armymail.mod.uk)

**56th Midlands Festival of Remembrance:** In the Town Hall, Birmingham on Nov 2 to mark 100 years of TA. Contact F Manning, 22 Lambeth Road, Birmingham B44 9NS.

**Devon Festival of Remembrance:** Exeter University, Nov 6. £6 RBL members, £8 non-members. Call RBL Devon on 01392 272211.

**South Notts Hussars Association.** Dinner on Nov 8 at TA Centre, Bulwell, Nottingham. Past

and present members with wives and partners. Ring Miss D Pover on 0115 927 2251 for tickets. Remembrance Service in St Mary's Church, Nov 9 at 1055. All ex-members of HM Forces welcome.

**5th Royal Inniskilling Dragoon Guards:** Southern area annual weekend at Falklands House UOTC, Oxford. Nov 14 – regimental curry evening. Nov 15 – local military visits followed by gathering in Oxford. Ring Steven Hunt on 07823 331033 or email [jwalker77@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:jwalker77@hotmail.co.uk)

## Searchline

Former **RAC Junior Leaders**, Bovington, interested in a reunion or forming an association are asked to contact John Fisher, ex-3 RTR, 50 Beverley Gardens, Ashburton, Newton Abbot TQ13 7BN or email [john@inspire2win.co.uk](mailto:john@inspire2win.co.uk)

**Babtie Squadron RAMC 1978:** Dave Copp seeks former members of the squad who did their basic training at Keogh Barracks. He is interested to know where mates ended up with a view to possible reunion. Call 0191 258 2477 or email [dcopp@fsmail.net](mailto:dcopp@fsmail.net)

Vanessa Buckner is trying to trace details of her natural father, **Peter Stradling**, who was born in 1910 and in 1946 held the rank of captain in the British Army. Call 01908 234066 or email [nessie0907@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:nessie0907@hotmail.co.uk)

Reginald Preston is trying to trace 1432749 **Charles George Williams** or his relatives. He joined 271 AA Battery in Aug 1939, transferred to either 303 or 313 Battery and formed part of the BEF in France in late 1939. In 1940 Charles Williams was a POW for five years. Discharged Nov 27, 1945. Contact Mr R Preston, 151 Fangrove Park, Lyne Lane, Surrey KT16 0BT.

The **Royal Signals Association** branch in South Wales invites all serving and ex-signallers living or working in the area to join the branch, which meets at the Royal Navy Club in Llanelli in addition to social events. Any ex-Armed Forces personnel who do not have a local branch of their regiment or corps within easy reach are welcome to join as associate members. Contact Gerry Dean on 01792 891855 or Bert Colderick on 01792 232687.

## Roadshow dates

THE Army Presentation Team wants to hear from members of the public who would like a personal invitation to attend its dynamic roadshow, which begins with a reception, is followed by a presentation and questions-and-answers session and finishes with a finger buffet. Military personnel will answer all your questions about the British Army. Call 01276 417000 or email your name and address to [apt.mod@btinternet.com](mailto:apt.mod@btinternet.com) with the event you are interested in attending.

**Sept:** 23, Telford; 24, Worcester; 25, Kidderminster. **Oct:** 1, Worthing; 14, Tonbridge; 15, Camberley; 28, Liverpool; 29, Blackpool; 30, Rochdale.



Royal reception: Soldiers from the 1st Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery welcome the Queen to Larkhill

# Sovereign's seal

THE Royal Artillery received a fitting start to the latest chapter in its illustrious history when its new headquarters were formally opened by the Queen.

A guard of honour formed by soldiers of the 1st Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery and a royal salute from The Kings Troops, Royal Horse Artillery, welcomed the Monarch as she unveiled a commemorative stone at the entrance to the Royal Artillery Barracks in Larkhill.

The Sovereign met LBdr Ben Parkinson, who was seriously injured while serving in Afghanistan with 7 Para RHA and was presented with an engraved silver vase by LBdr Anthony Makin.

LBdr Makin, 29 Cdo Regt RA, lost a leg in a roadside bomb blast during an Op Herrick tour in 2006 but has been given permission to return to Afghanistan on active duty later this year.

Col Ian Tinsley, chief of staff at Headquarters Director Royal Artillery,

said: "It was an excellent day and a great honour for us to have Her Majesty here as she had not visited us for some time.

"We have had correspondence back since the visit telling us the Queen was thankful for the opportunity to see all aspects of the regiment."

In addition to touring stands of equipment used by the gunners in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Queen, who is the Royal Artillery's Captain-General, also saw kit used on deployments to Norway and the Falkland Islands. The visit was wrapped up with a private meeting with the families of gunners killed since 2000 and a garden party attended by more than 1,000 past and present members of the Royal Artillery.

The Royal Regiment of Artillery's headquarters began its move to Larkhill as far back as 1994, with the majority of the regiment's antique ordnance, monuments, paintings and silver collection following from May 2007.

## Defence diary

**Until further notice: Helmand: The Soldiers' Story** – A free exhibition built, written and contributed to by soldiers of 16 Air Assault Brigade to tell the story of their experiences fighting in Afghanistan. National Army Museum, London. Tel: 0207 7300717.

**September 10:** A commemorative service to mark the end of operations in Northern Ireland will take place at St Paul's Cathedral, London. The service will pay tribute to the 763 personnel killed in Northern Ireland, and the 300,000 who have served in the province since 1969.

**September 12: Rhythm Force, Kneller Hall, Twickenham** – This year's Corps of Army Music open air concert is hoping to raise more than £100,000 for the Army Benevolent Fund. Visit [www.army.mod.uk/music/rhythm\\_ii.htm](http://www.army.mod.uk/music/rhythm_ii.htm) for more information and ticketing details.

**September 13:** TA 100 Act of Remembrance, Armed Forces Memorial, Lichfield.

■ Email [diary@soldiermagazine.co.uk](mailto:diary@soldiermagazine.co.uk)

## Appointments

**Maj Gen:** N H Rollo, late RE, to be Iraq Study Team Leader, in Jan 09; A J Bradshaw, late KRH, to be GOC 1st (UK) Armoured Division, in Feb 09; R J M Porter, late RWF, to be Director Force Strategic Engagements Cell, Multi National Force, Iraq, in Oct; N P Carter, late RGJ, to be GOC 6th (UK) Division, in Jan 09.

## Competitions

**Territorials: A Century of Service:** A Tebbitt, MoD Abbey Wood. **Answer:** 1908.

**Excellence in Action:** G Greenshields, Ontario, Canada. **Answer:** Seven regiments.

**Sony Blu-ray player/Rambo:** Cpl K Pun, 36 Engr Regt. **Runners up:** M O'Shea, Wembley, Middx; S Smith, Info Systems and Svcs, Corsham; P Munday, Shape, BFPO 26; SSgt Woolfitt, Trg Analyst, Chicksands; Maj M Quince, Shape, BFPO 26. **Answer:** First Blood

# British Army Badges

By Lt Col (Retd) Robin Hodges

## Cap badge

THE Army has about four generals, 11 lieutenant generals and 44 major generals. As officers of the Staff they are subject to Staff dress regulations but many continue to wear some regimental distinctions, particularly berets, in working dress, and, in a few instances, in Service dress. However, all wear the generals' bullion cap badge, which is produced in two sizes, one for the beret and a larger one for the forage cap.



## Formation sign

THE Infantry reorganisation of 1936 formed sections and platoons but failed to train and equip it for mechanised warfare. A Director of Infantry was appointed after Dunkirk with staff in each operational theatre to study the Infantry's requirements and ensure it had the necessary weapons and battle training to restore a truly offensive capability. The bayonet was chosen as the Infantry emblem and in 2008 Tolley Badges produced an arm badge for HQ Infantry.



## Specialist badge

THE crossed flags badge was introduced in 1881 as a prize badge for Telegraphists Royal Engineers. The all-arms badge is now worn by qualified signallers on the left forearm and by instructors on the right sleeve above their chevrons or below the warrant officer's crown. Instructors who have gained a distinction on the course wear a small star above the badge.



## Tactical recognition flash

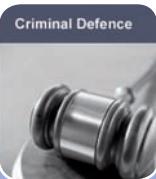
THE three Army Air Corps regiments assigned to 16 Air Assault Brigade wear landing zone flashes. It was not until 2006 that a TRF was adopted by the AAC.



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



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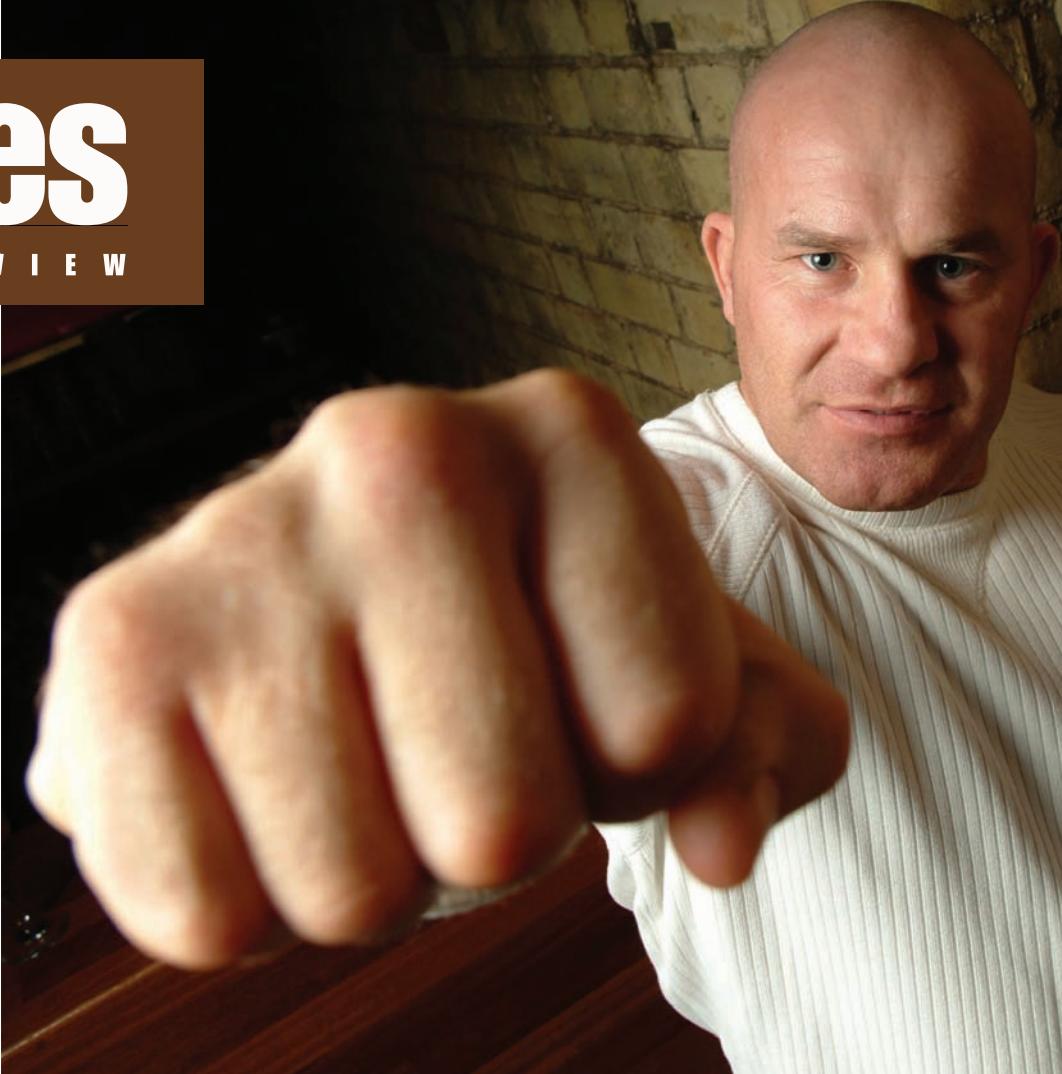
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# Movies

AUGUST REVIEW



**Strong cast:** Cage fighter Ian "The Machine" Freeman, right, muscles into the movie business alongside Danny John-Jules (*Red Dwarf*) and Gordon Alexander, above, in *Sucker Punch*



# Funny bone blow

**British-made crime comedy turns the table on mixed martial arts bad boy**

**Interview: Karen Thomas**

**S**UCKER Punch wraps the good guy, gangster, girl and lovable rogue up in a plot of gags and fights that will make all but the most hardened wince.

Street fighter Charles Buchinsky (Gordon Alexander) drifts into town Clint "man with no name" Eastwood-style with his fists for hire. Hustler Harley, played by Danny John-Jules, aka Cat from *Red Dwarf*, sees his ticket to making some big bucks and woos Buchinsky into an unlikely partnership.

The duo set up a sting to take down illegal fight promoter, porn baron (that's where the girl comes in) and generally nasty knuckleman Victor Maitland. Ian "The Machine" Freeman had the fighting credentials, TV screen presence and strongman stature to carry off his first acting role as the gangland Mr Big with ease.

Better known for flooring opponents in Cage Rage tournaments, the British

mixed martial arts light heavyweight champion faces Alexander's character in the film's climactic fight scene.

Neither Freeman nor Alexander, who has choreographed fights for Hollywood A-lister Jackie Chan, came away unscathed.

"There's a part where Gordon goes down on the floor and I kick him in the ribs. As I was kicking him he said 'get in a bit harder, Ian', so I kicked him and I broke two of his ribs," Freeman revealed to *Soldier*. "When you see him wince and grab his thigh it's because he really is hurt. There's another part where Gordon's sitting up against a concrete wall and I run in with my knee towards the post. He moves out the way and I hit the post. After five or six takes I said to Malcolm Martin [the director] that my knee was starting to hurt a bit and he said, 'we can pad your knee underneath your pants if you want to,' and I said, 'what? After six takes you tell me that now?'"

Joining Freeman and Alexander from

the fighting world is Kara Scott, former professional Thai boxer. Scott takes the role of Mandy, the high maintenance pregnant girlfriend of Harley who rolls with the slick one-liners and knockout punches between the *Red Dwarf* funny man and Alexander. Writer-director Malcolm Martin gathered a cast that carries the plot along an entertaining path, which contrasts humour with past violent, unsettled scores. Antonio Fargas – Huggy Bear from the hit 70s TV series *Starsky and Hutch* – lends an amusing cameo to the crime comedy.

While Freeman was happy to grapple for gags on screen, he insisted that organisations such as the police and Army should take his day job seriously.

The 41-year-old, who claimed to be "a big softie, especially when it comes to animals", said: "I watch programmes on TV like *Road Wars* and see policemen struggle to get hold of a convict. The way they grab them it's no wonder the bad guys escape. Mixed martial arts is the way forward for everyone."



But despite being comfortable performing his trademark "ground and pound" against opponents, he admitted he had to learn a few new tricks about staging a fight for film and that it was Alexander who lent his experience to the authentic blows and kicks of *Sucker Punch*.

"When Gordon said I needed to throw a punch from this angle or that angle, it was weird because you wouldn't in real life. But when you watch it back on camera it doesn't look like you've thrown a punch from that angle, it looks real."

The film allowed Freeman to live by his watchword, authenticity, but he wants to push the acting envelope on his developing career. The Sunderland-born tough man has set a goal of spreading his wings to take on roles that don't require the blood, guts, muscle and posturing of Victor Maitland.

"I do a comedy routine that's quite blue and people say I'm a little bit like Roy Chubby Brown. But I don't tell jokes, I tell funny stories. So whenever there's a camera in front of my face or a microphone in my hand I'm happy."

So forget about *Snatch* and *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels* and take a look at this tale (out now on DVD) of how good can win over bad with a little tweaking of the Queensberry rules. ■



### The Dark Knight, in cinemas now

UP-ARMoured, meaner and moodier, **Christian Bale's** caped crusader effortlessly overshadows this summer's blockbuster offerings. **Heath Ledger's** superbly maniacal Joker is the perfect foil to the troubled Dark Knight but the trump acting card goes to **Aaron Eckhart's** good-District-Attorney-gone-bad Harvey Dent. The classy cast builds the drama up to the rollercoaster action and knife-edge duels brilliantly but don't expect a Hollywood ending for everyone. Just get queueing for the IMAX performances and let eight storeys of Batman do the rest.



### Man on Wire, in cinemas August 1

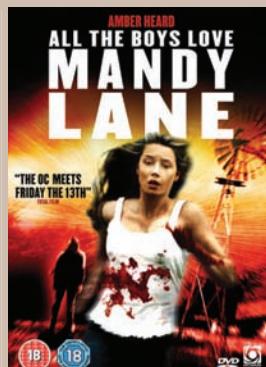
INEXPICABLY entertaining, this retelling of a Frenchman's madcap (and illegal) dream to walk a high-wire between New York's twin towers is as gripping and dramatic as any of this summer's big-money, special effects-laden movies. While the sheer insanity of **Philippe Petit's** gravity- and death-defying plan to step out on to a wire 1,350ft above Manhattan is compelling, it is the personality of the film's protagonist that captivates. Petit's infectious passion to commit "the artistic crime of the century" will hook audiences in the same way it did his co-conspirators.



### Son of Rambow, out to own on DVD August 11

DIRECTOR **Garth Jennings** (*Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*) draws heavily on his own childhood experiences of growing up in 1980s Britain in this must-watch film, which explores the impact of films on children. The bond formed by the two lead characters, engaging in the production of their own *Rambo* movie during a long summer, is stirring and imaginative. *Son of Rambow* does lose its focus midway but this doesn't spoil the overall enjoyment of nosing at someone else's childhood recollections.

**LCpl Chris MacCallum, 242 MI Section, Int Corps**



### All the boys love Mandy Lane, out on DVD now

MANDY Lane is the most perfect girl in high school: all the girls want to be just like her and all the boys... well they want considerably more than that. But when her friends start disappearing it seems someone has taken their obsession a little too far. For the most part this is a standard teen slasher movie with the requisite beautiful cast and gory action. That said, it also boasts stylish photography, a cool soundtrack and a climax which wrong-foots you just when you think you've figured it all out.

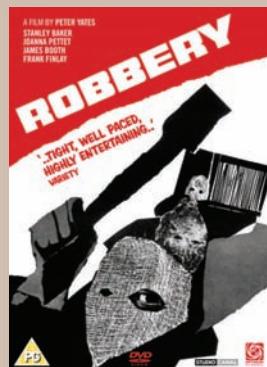
**Daniel King, MoD**



### Run for the Sun, out to own on DVD now

RECENTLY debuting on DVD, this third remake of **Richard Connell's** novel *The Most Dangerous Game* comes up short. Two star-crossed writers – one a reporter (**Jane Greer**) the other an author (**Richard Widmark**) – survive a plane crash in the Mexican jungle only to find themselves in the company of three Nazi war criminals. The film follows their bid for freedom but the race to reach the sun (Mexico City) lacks the drama and gritty content of the original novel. Save your cash. One for fans of the **Boulting brothers** (directors **Roy and John**) only.

**WO2 Andy Draper, AGC**



### Robbery, out on DVD now

BEFORE all the trendy London gangster movies, there was *Robbery* – the original and true story of the Great Train Robbery, which became widely regarded as the "crime of the century". Don't expect *The Italian Job*, however, as this is more drama than action, with not a gun in sight. Filmed in the 1970s, *Robbery* is a nostalgic look at the swinging 1960s' London crime scene, which focuses on the meticulous planning, rehearsing, and tension of the theft. This sheds some light on just how this daring crime was committed, and the mentality of those involved.

**LCpl Paul Thomas, Int Corps**



**Birds of prey:** With 50 fast jets involved, *Hawx* assures players of some frantic dogfight action



# Attack formation

**Soldier** locks on for an exclusive preview of Clancy airborne combat sim

**Preview: Cliff Caswell**

**G**AME studios have always had a nasty habit of crashing and burning when it comes to producing console flight simulators.

While the controls to take a warplane into battle can be adequately replicated on a PC, they have never transferred well onto the thumbsticks of the Xbox and PlayStation. As a result of the controllers' limited scope, many valiant efforts have fallen less than spectacularly out of the sky.

Despite these shortcomings, the *Ace Combat* series has managed to keep a number of would-be pilots engaged while the early Xbox 360 title *Over G Fighters* pushed the envelope still further. But now it seems Ubisoft's forthcoming *Hawx* may achieve the perfect blend of action and realistic flight dynamics to keep console aviators on the edge of their ejector seats.

With satellite imagery of real locations and a control system that

makes use of multiple perspectives of the battle, players are placed in the middle of intense dogfights in full-on cinematic *Top Gun* style.

Add in 50 iconic jets to fly into the fray and the ability for armchair pilots to direct their wingmen by speaking into a microphone and you have an impressive mix of high-speed action, flight simulation and strategy.

The latest instalment in the successful *Tom Clancy* branded series, *Hawx* is set four years into the future against the backdrop of dodgy private security companies willing to do dirty work for any governments that cough up enough cash.

Players assume the role of a former air force pilot-turned-mercenary who finds his expertise in demand by one such firm. The objective is to line your pockets by zapping any opposition your client sees fit to eliminate.

The theatre of operations spans the world, with air combat taking place above familiar cities such as Rio de

Janeiro, while a wealth of air-to-air, air-to-ground and sea strike missions test your piloting skills to the limit.

"We've been working on *Hawx* for the last three years and we wanted players to be able to fight in battles all over the world," pointed out Andrei Costin, the product manager. "The locations are all based on high-quality satellite imagery, so they have a very realistic look."

"The player takes on the role of a former United States aviator who has joined one of the emerging private military companies."

"As well as doing the flying, you also have a voice control system to enable you to talk to your squadron mates."

"This is cool because it means you have to do two things at once – staying alive and giving orders at the same time," Costin added.

While the voice control wasn't a feature of the demo version of *Hawx* we sampled, the graphics were among the best *Soldier* has seen in a flight sim



and the air battles look as if they have been drawn directly from an action movie such as *Iron Eagle*.

The dogfights proved to be exhilarating, with air targets aplenty while enemy ships and landing craft offloading an endless supply of tanks and other armoured vehicles provided an abundance of air-to-ground fodder.

The system of controls, which allows players to jump between first- and third-person perspectives, also worked well.

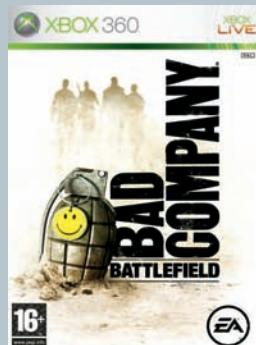
Players can remain ensconced in the cockpit or make use of intelligently devised exterior perspectives of the battle.

The concept of *Hawx* is similar to the underrated early '90s PC game *Strike Commander*, in which players fought as a mercenary F-16 pilot and were rewarded with cash on completion of successful missions.

But the latest game, which is due to be launched on Xbox 360 and PS3 in the autumn, looks as if it has plenty to offer in its own right.

"We did look hard at what has already been done," admitted Costin. "Our aim has been to provide a different interpretation of an epic air battle."

Certainly the game looks the part. We will stay firmly on the tail of *Hawx* and keep you updated in the coming months. ■



### Battlefield: Bad Company, Xbox 360

THE hugely popular *Battlefield* series takes a different route for this latest title, which puts players in a squad of convicts tasked with dealing with the grubbier missions. It is highly entertaining stuff, providing a landscape that can be blown to bits at will, frantic first-person action and some suitably black humour. The game lacks the originality of *Battlefield 2*, when you were given command of a vast army of soldiers (in *Bad Company* you are part of a foursome on surgical strikes). The game is fun nonetheless.



### Call of Duty: World at War, All formats

AFTER a superb excursion into the world of current ops, the enduring franchise is back for another dose of late 1940s action. *World at War* uses the same engine that made *Modern Warfare* such a success but this time players have the chance to play the role of the US Marines and Russian soldiers fighting in locations from the Pacific islands to the heart of Berlin. A wealth of high-intensity battles are promised, with weapons including a flame-thrower added to the armoury. A co-op team mode is also on offer. *Call of Duty* is launched later this year.



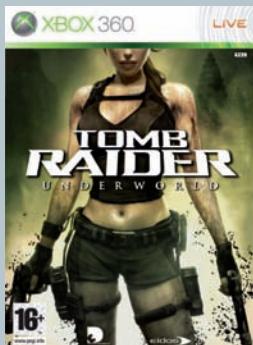
### Metal Gear Solid, PS3

YOU'RE immediately blown away by the quality of the graphics in the first few moments of the new *Metal Gear* instalment – and they set the tone for what is another winner from Konami. The stealther plays well and draws you into the story even if you have no experience of the previous games in the long-running series. The quality of the character interactions is superb, although the camera view can have a tendency to leave you disorientated at times – a feature that is common with many games in the genre. But all in all, this is a quality offering and is well worth a look.



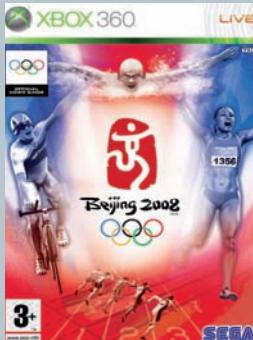
### Fifa Manager 09, PC

AS Euro 2008 fades into the memory – and with the emphasis now on the World Cup campaign – armchair football managers can play out their own strategies with EA Sports' latest venture into the beautiful game. Would-be soccer strategists have full control over their clubs, from signing up new blood to extending their stadium. The game features specially licensed club and player data from more than 30 countries while moments of high joy and misery can be relived via a three-dimensional view of matches. *Fifa Manager 09* takes to the field this autumn.



### Tomb Raider Underworld, Xbox 360 & PS3

SEXY sprite Lara Croft returns for an all-new adventure at the end of the year. And from the latest previews we've seen, the game looks as if it will be a definite winner. Only a few sketchy details have been released about the plot, but early indications suggest Lara will be involved in a dangerous quest spanning caverns in South America, Antarctica and far beneath the oceans. Graphics on the preview are faultless while the gameplay has been enhanced to give players more freedom to interact with the environment.



### Beijing 2008, Xbox 360

BROKEN joypads and sore arms are the order of the day in the button-mashing game of this summer's Olympics. A raft of events – from track and field through to judo, table tennis, gymnastics and cycling – are on offer and require players to master controls ranging from hitting buttons as fast as possible through to delicately rotating the joystick to match an onscreen prompt. Graphics are suitably slick and online play is good fun but the difficulty levels on *Beijing 2008* are frustratingly inconsistent between events.



**Flamboyant fivesome:** The classically trained musicians and singers turn their talent to topping the indie rock charts



# Key of pop major

**Alternative indie rock band Elliott Minor nods respect to operational troops**

**Interview: Cliff Caswell**

**G**IFTED songwriter Ed Minton is the first to admit the past few years have been a rollercoaster ride – his music has taken him on a journey all over the world.

From humble beginnings recording songs in a home-made studio in an attic flat while still at school in York, his indie rock band Elliott Minor has blazed into the public eye and his music has even managed airtime in the Army's operational theatres.

"I have so much respect for the men and women serving their country, and it is amazing to hear that some of them have been listening to our music," 21-year-old Minton told *Soldier*. "It means a lot that they enjoy what we do and that makes me happy."

"We've been very fortunate to have had so much support – *Kerrang* TV and Radio 1 have come on board and are playing our stuff. The band has been having a ball."

By any standards, Elliott Minor have come a long way in a short time. It is just a few years since the original singer-songwriter duo of Minton and long-time friend Alex Davies were joined by drummer Dan Hetherton. They initially gigged together as The Academy after finishing their A Levels.

Having taken a gap year after school to develop the band and write new material, the bass guitarist's brother, Teddy Hetherton, and keyboard guru Ali Paul joined the trio for live performances, completing the line-up of the re-named Elliott Minor.

Having made their mark performing, the quintet secured a record deal and released the single *Parallel Worlds*, which rocketed to number one in the UK indie chart in 2007. Their self-titled debut album, launched in April, broke into the top ten of the national chart and claimed the number six slot.

The band have worked closely with top US producer Jim Wirt in Los Angeles and have received a wealth

of critical acclaim for their clutch of distinctive recordings.

Despite being a rock-driven act, however, the five classically-trained musicians have forged their unique sound by mixing an array of traditional instruments, including cello, violin and piano, into their music. The mix gives an edge to the album's 11 tracks.

The group cite influences as far reaching as Brit Award winners Muse and classic bands Queen and the Beach Boys, to the movie scores of American composers such as James Horner, as the inspiration for their musical repertoire.

"To be honest, we all have our different styles. I grew up with American punk pop and Teddy is into heavy music while Alex actually likes film soundtracks," said Minton. "Ali is into dance stuff although obviously we all listen to a number of different styles in addition to the music that we prefer."

"The classical edge to the music really comes in the harmonies although forming the band has been a long



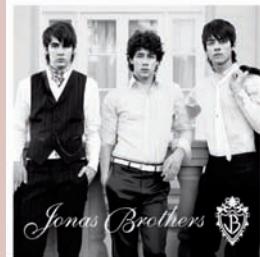
process and we don't want to be pigeon-holed into one style. It gets annoying when you are defined by what people call your music."

The diversity, however, seems to have played to the advantage of Elliot Minor. This slightly more leftfield outfit quickly gained a loyal fan base from their album and have been attracting scores of converts after a series of live gigs all over the country. They are also well-backed on the internet through their own MySpace page.

"We've had great fun hitting the venues in the UK. We're continuing our time on the road in October and November and our long-term plans are to tour Europe towards the end of this year," said Minton. "The travelling is absolutely great and we're enjoying going to all these new places. We're also looking forward to our second album."

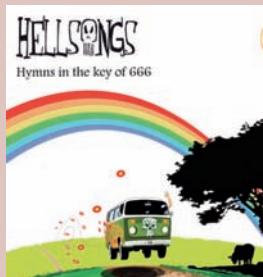
As for the future, Minton said he would not rule out donning helmet and body armour and putting the band forward to entertain soldiers in Iraq or Afghanistan.

"We've come a long way already and the ride has been great fun so far," he added. "As for performing out on operations – why not? It is something that appeals and I am very honoured to hear that British soldiers are listening to our music out there." ■



### Jonas Brothers (Jonas Brothers)

THESE three brothers from New Jersey are fast becoming the band of the moment. They sound like the love child of *High School Musical* and *Disney Club* and have been labelled as a punk-pop band. The trio has produced a host of easy listening songs delivered by some above average vocals. Unfortunately I find this style of music annoying and pretentious. There are far too many groups adopting the cheesy **McFly** sound these days and far too many people thinking it's cool. The only good thing about this album was that it had me reaching for a bit of **Rage Against The Machine**. **Cpl Ray Kalaker, RETDU (B)**



### Hymns in the Key of 666 (Hellsongs)

THE self-confessed metal aficionados have stepped out of their comfort zone with this album. I approached it with preconceived ideas of genre, production and song writing but I couldn't have been more wrong. Rather than thrash metal guitar and monotone angry shouting, each track from the Swedish trio is underpinned by gentle acoustic guitar backed up with some delicate keyboard arrangements. Lyrically, this is a brooding metal album but the female lead vocal offers well-balanced light relief. That said, all ten tracks are pretty samey and listening borders on monotonous.

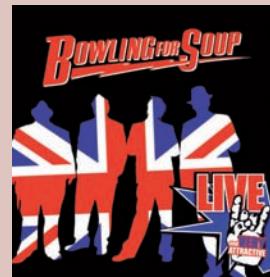
**Cpl Tom Robinson,  
151 Tpt Regt, RLC**



### On The Brink (The Thirst)

HAVING produced a very strong debut album, **The Thirst**'s sound is best described as a blend of punk and reggae – up tempo and edgy with lyrics to match. Discovered by **Rolling Stones**' guitarist **Ronnie Wood**, they got a record deal and an exclusive support slot with the Stones, which saw them play in front of a crowd of 40,000 in Croatia. Seen at Glastonbury and Isle of Wight festivals, the foursome's well-crafted collection of tracks deserves to be a success. If **The Thirst** continue to showcase this form, the combo from Brixton should soon find itself at the forefront of British pop-rock.

**Patrick Jordan, ex-RAMC**



### Live and Very Attractive DVD (Bowling For Soup)

ONE look at this American punk-pop group and you know what you're going to get – the 20-stone guitarist, boastful talk of how much they drank backstage and loud, grungy songs on how "the beauty queen rejected me at the prom, where are you now, I'm really famous, don't you regret it". But regardless of the fact that the four lads from Wichita Falls are now in their thirties and still bleating on about high school rejection, you can't help but like them. Millions sold worldwide must say something and this DVD of the concert in Manchester's Apollo says they've still got it where it counts.

**W01 David Greaves, REME**



### Fortress Round My Heart (Ida Maria)

LAST month the Norwegian punk-pop musician announced her entrance on the UK music scene with the single *I Like You So Much Better When You're Naked*. Her style on her debut album is very similar and will appeal to fans of bands such as **Green Day**. But Ida is definitely not your typical girl-with-a-guitar artist. In an interview she said: "I wanted to make ten short, sharp, perfect tracks no more than three minutes long. I wanted to make pop music that hits you hard – music you can dance to, drink to, go crazy to." I think she has made a damn good go at making this pay off. *Fortress Round My Heart* was not to my usual taste but I enjoyed it.

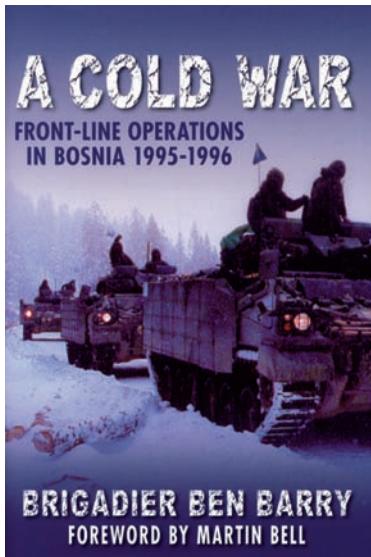
**Lt Jim Berry, 1 R Irish**



### Silver Spoons and Broken Bones (Stone Gods)

NOVELTY rock act **The Darkness** was high in the music popularity ratings when lead singer **Justin Hawkins** left in 2006. A new band formed from the ashes – **Stone Gods** – and guitarist **Richie Edwards** moved centre stage to assume the lead vocalist role. The UK foursome ditched the karaoke-friendly tunes in favour of a much darker style. Tracks from their debut album such as *Burn the Witch* and *Defend or Die* crank up the noise and take the listener on a nostalgic trip round 1980s heavy metal. The EP reached number two in the Radio 1 rock charts but whether it's an improvement is a matter of opinion. This album could be a one-way ticket to obscurity.

**Cpl Charlie Lloyd, RLC**



Darker days: Many of the images in Brig Barry's book were taken by *Soldier* photographers. The main picture is of a Light Infantry battle-group mission in March 1996



# A savage war

## Infantry commander's account defines British soldier of the Nineties

**A Cold War: Front-Line Operations in Bosnia 1995-1996** by Brigadier Ben Barry (Spellmount, 320pp hardback, £20).

**Review: Maj Mike Peters AAC**

THE current war fighting operations in Iraq and Afghanistan naturally dominate our thoughts today. It is therefore very easy to forget the role played by the British Army in the Balkans during the 1990s.

But just over a decade ago, there was only one theatre of operations on the mind of the British Army – Bosnia.

At its peak the civil war had the potential to draw the whole of Europe into a bloody and far-reaching conflict

that could have ignited the region and beyond. British troops deployed in Bosnia and Croatia played a critical role in initially containing the conflict and ultimately in the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement, which finally ended the ethnic cleansing and savage fighting that had characterised the war in Bosnia.

The book focuses on the operations conducted by the 2nd Battalion, The Light Infantry during what was the most dangerous phase of the war. At the time the author was commanding officer of the battalion, which was deployed from Paderborn to Bosnia from November 1995 to May 1996.

His frank and detailed account encapsulates every phase of the operation, as seen through the eyes of the CO. A clear and engaging narrative gives the reader a real insight into the workings of a mechanised infantry battalion on

operations, from receipt of the initial warning order through to its eventual return to Germany.

Amid the politics and intrigue that characterised operations in the Balkans, the author never loses sight of the daily dangers and challenges faced by the soldiers of his 2 LI battle-group. A wealth of first-hand accounts help explain the ever-changing situation on the ground and the physical demands of operating an armoured battle-group over some of the most unforgiving and hostile terrain in Europe.

The text is supported by excellent colour photographs, many courtesy of *Soldier* staff who shared the hardships.

Brig Barry captures the excitement of 2 LI's tour and there are many examples of life-and-death decisions faced by officers and troops alike.

Particularly interesting are the moral dilemmas presented by the horrific realities of a civil war fought between warlords with, at best, medieval values. What leaps off the pages is the almost

### Soldier ordering service

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



unique ability of the British soldier to adapt quickly to a new situation and complete whatever task he or she has been set.

The author's writing style is eloquent, candid and engaging, making a subject that has the potential to be a turgid and confusing read a genuine pleasure.

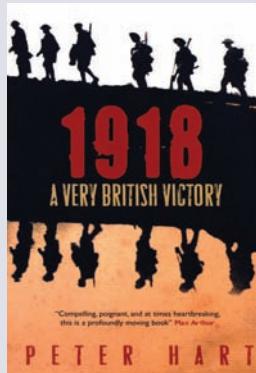
He has succeeded in blending the many facets of a complex and confused war into an authoritative narrative. Brig Barry has written not only the seminal account of a Warrior battalion on operations in the Balkans, but a book that defines the British soldier of the 90s.

I recommend it to those who, like me, may have wondered what was really going on around us in Bosnia. You may gain a better understanding of what it was about.

Under new MoD rules, soldier-authors may not profit from books relating to their military experiences while serving, so the writer's profit from sales will be shared by the Army Benevolent Fund and Help for Heroes. Money well spent. ■

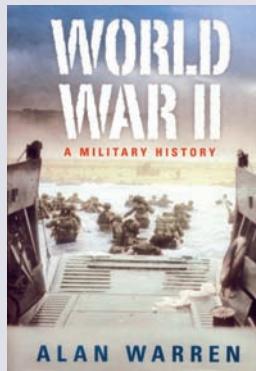
● To have a chance of winning a copy of *A Cold War*, tell us on a postcard or email ([comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk](mailto:comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk)) the name of the capital of Bosnia. Closing date is August 29. Usual rules apply.

For more reviews, go to  
[www.soldiermagazine.co.uk](http://www.soldiermagazine.co.uk)



**1918: A Very British Victory** by Peter Hart  
THE British Expeditionary Force of 1914 was described by a German general as "a perfect thing apart", writes Mike Peters. The British armies that faced the Germans in 1918 were huge in comparison but should be equally praised. Hart illustrates just how formidable they were. By 1918 no other army in the world could match the force that Britain and her empire had developed. This is an excellent book packed with lessons for the modern soldier.

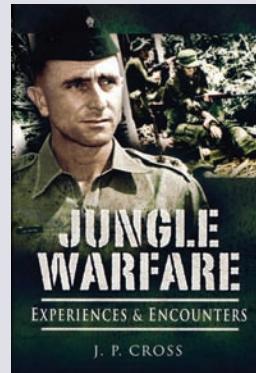
Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 552pp, £20



**World War II** by Alan Warren

THIS ambitious project encapsulates the military history of the conflict in 16 chapters, from the invasion of Poland to final victory. To achieve this in a single book the author concentrates on the milestones – the fall of France, the Atlantic war, the Battle of Britain, Barbarossa, Midway, El Alamein, Stalingrad, Kursk, Normandy and so on. For students who wish to dig deeper there is a lengthy and detailed list of his sources.

Tempus, 394pp, £25

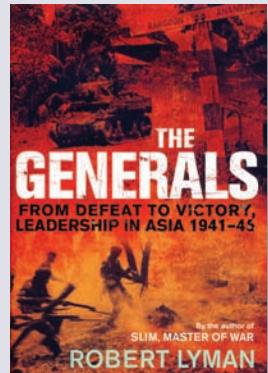


**Jungle Warfare**

by J P Cross

JOHN Cross writes from deep experience. He served at the tail end of the war in Burma, fought the Viet Minh in French Indo-China, spent a year on the North-West Frontier and served throughout the Malayan Emergency. He also led the Border Scouts in Borneo during the Confrontation and commanded the Army's Jungle Warfare School. His impressive CV in the field was rounded off by a tour as the last British Defence Attaché in Laos and visits to Vietnam.

Pen & Sword, 265pp, £19.99

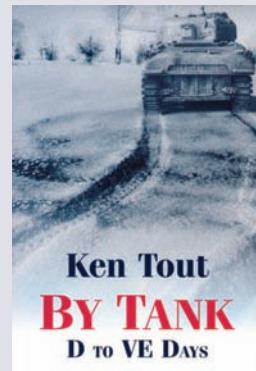


**The Generals**

by Robert Lyman

THE campaigns in Asia and the Far East were the most protracted of the Second World War, writes Mike Peters. Soldiers endured extreme hardships over unforgiving terrain. A general must possess exceptional qualities to lead an army to victory in this environment. This thought-provoking book explores those qualities and the performance of US, Australian, British, Chinese and Japanese generals. The pressures of high command during The Forgotten War were extraordinary.

Constable, 383pp, £25

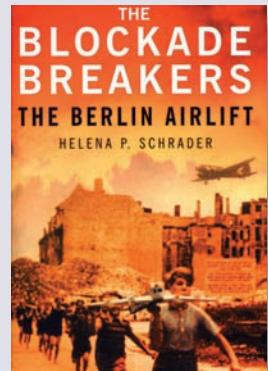


**Ken Tout**  
**BY TANK**  
**D to VE Days**

**By Tank: D to VE Days** by Ken Tout

KEN Tout knows what it was like to fight in a tank: he did so from Normandy to the end of the war. His intense observations on the experiences of the Northamptonshire Yeomanry in this new narrative are condensed from three previous memoirs – *Tank, Tanks Advance* and *To Hell With Tanks*. He and his conscript colleagues matched their outgunned Shermans against the heavier Tiger and Panther tanks of the Germans.

Robert Hale, 240pp, £15.99



**The Blockade Breakers** by Helena P Schrader

BARELY three years after the Second World War Europe faced a new crisis when Soviet troops closed all access to Berlin's Western Sectors. This book marks the 60th anniversary of the year-long, round-the-clock airlift that prevented Berliners from starving or running out of fuel. As British and US forces held their nerve in a stand-off to thwart the Soviet Union's aggressive attempts to expand into Europe, it became the greatest operation of its kind ever attempted.

The History Press, 304pp, £19.99

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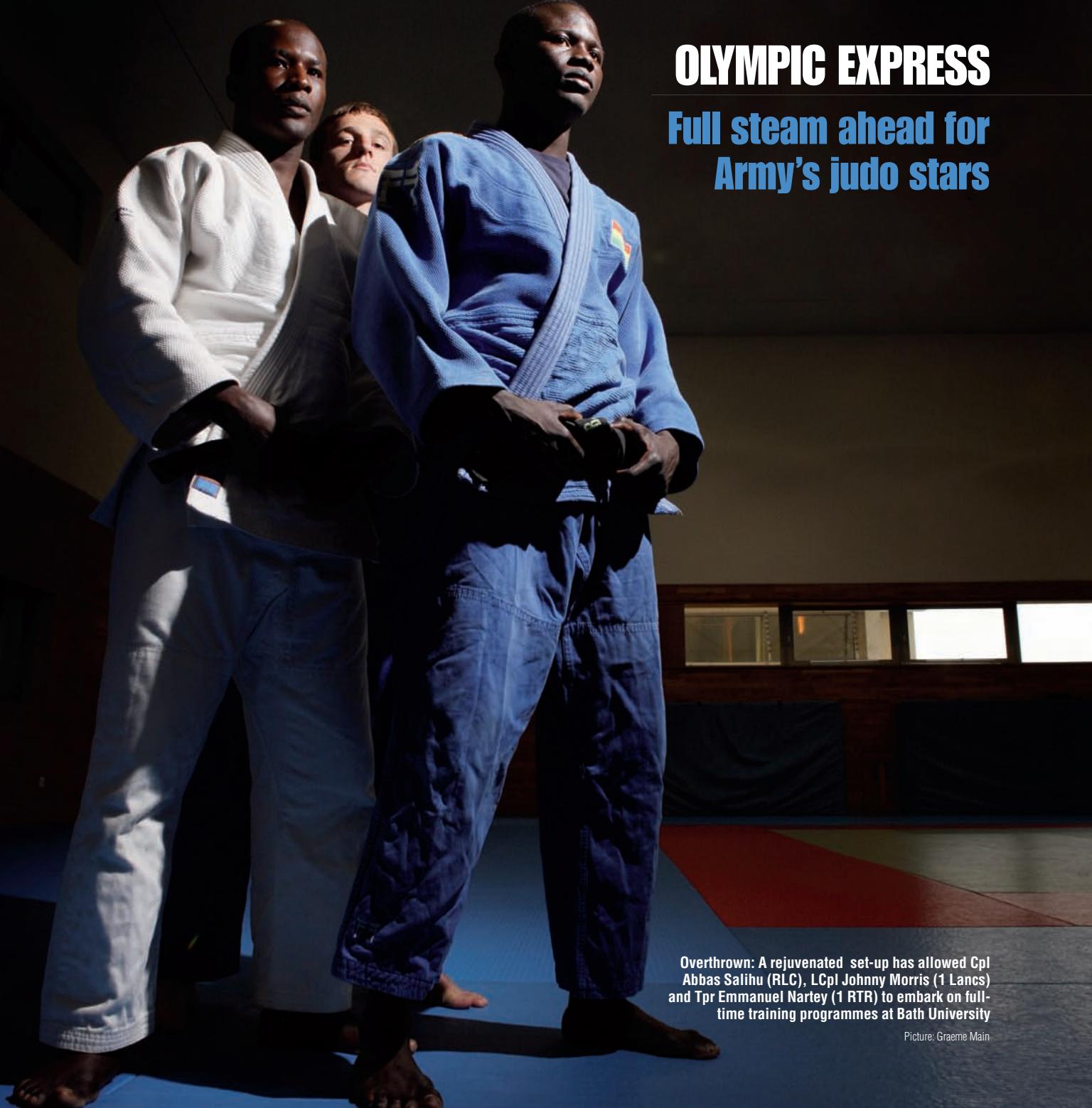


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# SOLDIERSPORT

**OLYMPIC EXPRESS**

**Full steam ahead for  
Army's judo stars**



**Overthrown:** A rejuvenated set-up has allowed Cpl Abbas Salihu (RLC), LCpl Johnny Morris (1 Lancs) and Tpr Emmanuel Nartey (1 RTR) to embark on full-time training programmes at Bath University

Picture: Graeme Main

# China Blue

## Rower plans to blow opponents out of the water in pursuit of Olympic gold

Interview: Cliff Caswell  
Picture: Steve Dock

**A**RMY rowing ace Capt Al Heathcote is predicting that Olympic gold is "not out of the question" as he enters the final stages of preparation for the Beijing Games.

The Blues and Royals officer, who has managed to balance a demanding training regime alongside his military career, told *SoldierSport* that he was relishing the opportunity to compete in China after securing his place in Team GB's eight-man boat.

And with his place at the world's greatest sporting event assured, he is committed to the final stages of training.

"I'm about to go to an altitude training camp in Austria and will spend three weeks there. The team is really going to be putting in the miles there and I know that it is going to be very hard work," said Heathcote, who has only just recovered from a stress fracture to his ribs.

"Then we're back in the UK for a

**'Everyone will be trying to peak at the right time and on the right day'**

ten-day camp at the Redgrave-Pinsent Rowing Lake in Caversham before we fly out to Beijing. I think we have a good chance of getting a medal, and a gold is not out of the question."

Competing at the Olympics is the pinnacle of sporting achievement for Heathcote, who has been one of two Army officers fighting for a berth with Team GB.

His friend and colleague, Lt Robin Bourne-Taylor (LG), has been selected to row in the pairs event with Tom Solesbury (see below).

The two men met when Heathcote was posted as a gunnery instructor at Lulworth, Dorset, where Bourne-Taylor was undergoing officer training. Both decided to try for the Olympic team.

Heathcote said: "My regiment has always been really good to me with the rowing – they have seen it as a good recruiting opportunity. Although after a few months the Army released me and I have been in training on a full-time basis with Team GB.

"I don't know anybody that could

train at this level and work at the same time," he added.

"We are in the boats seven days a week with no holiday."

The tough regime is essential for Beijing, where the British squad will find themselves up against the world's best, including a Chinese Olympic rowing squad for the first time.

"They are an interesting opposition team and I'm keen to see what they come up with," Heathcote admitted. "As a team they have had a good start, winning a few gold medals, but their form did drop off a little bit at the World Championships."

Ironically Heathcote, who first took up oars while studying at Eton College and later Newcastle and Oxford Brooks Universities, started his Army rowing career on Op Telic 5 when he was based in a volatile Basra city.

With his helmet and body armour close by, the officer trained on a rowing machine, often pushing himself to the limit in the early hours of the morning to avoid the searing heat of the day.

"I was at the Old State Building with the 1st Battalion, Welsh Guards, and rowing was the most sensible option to stay fit – being in such an enclosed space you could not go out for a run."

But Heathcote, who has also completed a tour of duty in Bosnia, added that he had decided to call time on his Army career, and would take his life in a new direction after Beijing.

"I feel now that I have done everything the Army has to offer, from exercises to operations and sport, and I'm ready to go off and try something new," he continued.

"It has been a really good seven years for me, and I don't have any regrets."

Carrying the dreams of a nation will mark his departure from the military in style. But with hopes high for a medal from the eight, the pressure is on Heathcote and his teammates.

David Tanner, Team GB's rowing team leader, summed up the élite squad's feelings.

"Everyone will be trying to peak at the right time and on the right day, including our Chinese hosts who have emerged over the last four years to be a formidable force in our sport," he said. "We go to Beijing confident, but we are aware of the task ahead." ■

## Pair-shaped

A LAST-MINUTE shuffling of Britain's Olympic pack left Lt Robin Bourne-Taylor heading to Beijing in the unfamiliar pairs boat.

The Household Cavalry officer was in contention for the eight alongside Heathcote, but has been moved to the two-man event alongside Tom Solesbury.

Despite the unexpected announcement leaving him with just three weeks to get up to speed in the smaller boat, Bourne-Taylor was defiant and determined in his desire to put on a good show in China this month.

"We have had to put this boat together at the very last minute, so instead of a four-year preparation we are trying to do it in three weeks," he told *SoldierSport* from

the British squad's Austrian training camp. "Nonetheless we are both trying our best to make the most of it."

The British duo will have to overcome some strong crews to achieve success in Beijing, including the defending back-to-back world champions from Australia.

The military athlete is under no illusion as to the size of the challenge he faces and has set himself and Solesbury a target of securing a top-six finish by qualifying for the A final.

"The pairs is a strong event and it's hard to tell at this stage who will be the best," he added. "This is the hand we have been dealt and I would be really pleased to make an A final." ■



● Capt Bourne-Taylor



Call me Al: Capt Al Heathcote hopes that months of hard graft will lead Great Britain's eight-man boat to the ultimate glory at this month's Beijing Olympics

# Aerial assault

**A**DRENALINE junkies from the Army's canopy piloting team swooped to success with a string of medal-winning performances at the sport's national championships.

Led by Maj Alastair Macartney (RLC), the six-man military squad outjumped some full-time competitors at the Joint Services Parachute Centre at Bad Lippspringe in Germany.

Despite facing turbulent conditions throughout the three-day tournament, the Army pilots scooped four individual medals, including an overall second-place award for Macartney.

"We are all very pleased with how well we performed," said the officer. "I was happy with winning the silver medal because the guy who won it does this full-time."

"Having said that, I had a couple

of bad rounds and I definitely should have taken more scores from the speed and zone accuracy events. I didn't get beaten by much and I think if I had competed to my normal level throughout then I could have won."

The Army's success in Germany earned all six pilots a call-up to the British squad for this year's world championships, which will be held in South Africa in November, and the 2009 World Cup.

Canopy piloting is a relatively new form of skydiving that involves flying high-performance canopies horizontally across the ground at speeds of up to 70mph and for distances of 300ft.

Pilots have to pass through a series of gates just 10m wide and 1.5m high to score points in speed, distance and zone accuracy events. ■

## FIXTURES

### CRICKET

4 – Royal Navy v Army (Vine Lane); 5 – Royal Air Force v Army (Vine Lane).

### GOLF

4 – Army v Whittington Heath (Whittington Heath); 5–6 – Army open stableford championships (Whittington Heath); 7 – Army v Little Aston (Little Aston); 13 – Army v Tidworth (Tidworth); 16–17 – Women's coaching weekend (Woodhall Spa); 20 – Combined Services v R&A (St Andrews); 26–27 – Army v NAPGC (Sherwood Forest); 28 – Army v Civil Service (Sherwood Forest).

### RUGBY LEAGUE

27 – International nines competition (Headingley).

### RUGBY UNION

16 – Middlesex sevens (Twickenham).

### SHOOTING

2–3 – British clay target grand prix (Beverley); 9–16 – Small bore British Championships (Bisley); 13 – Clay target Inter-Services match (Orton).

■ Got a date for the diary? Email details to [fixtures@soldiermagazine.co.uk](mailto:fixtures@soldiermagazine.co.uk)

# Board walk

## Army duo make light work of triple triumph at Services' diving contests



Report: Stephen Tyler  
Picture: Steve Dock

**S**UPER sapper Sam Jeffries-Allen and SSgt Amanda Prentice (RLC) sent their Services rivals' hopes plummeting with a clean sweep of three diving competitions.

The gulf in class between the Army's top two and the opposition was all too apparent as the daring duo glided to wins in the Inter-Services, Army and triangular tournaments at Aldershot Garrison Sports Centre.

Despite going into each competition as clear favourites, Prentice (left) told *SoldierSport* that neither she nor Jeffries-Allen took victory for granted.

"I think everyone expected us to win going into the tournament and we were pleased to have achieved that," she said.

"Sam and I compete a lot in civilian competitions and also do a lot of training, so in that respect it was probably right to say we were the favourites, but we try to never be too complacent about it.

"We don't always know who the other Services are going to put out against us so we are always a little wary."

The Army pair's superiority was evident early on in the Inter-Services tournament as both secured comprehensive wins in the springboard competition with complex dives.

Jeffries-Allen's finishing score of 287.05 was nearly 90 points better than his nearest rival, while Prentice's range of dives left her almost 47 points clear at the top.

The highboard competition proved a sterner test for the duo, but both favourites held their nerve to complete a memorable double and help the Army win the men's and women's trophies.

Prentice and Jeffries-Allen won their events in the triangular tournament to help the Combined Services teams to double first place finishes, while the pair completed the treble in the élite springboard and highboard disciplines at the Army finals.

Prentice also claimed three silvers at the British Summer Masters. ■

## Making waves

PREDICTABLY changeable English weather failed to take the wind out of *British Soldier*'s sails as the Army's new racing yacht chalked up a respectable mid-fleet finish in the prestigious Rolex Commodores' Cup.

Sailing against 45 other yachts in conditions ranging from flat seas to howling gales, the Archambault boat and her military crew battled against the elements to claim a finishing berth in the middle of the pack.

*British Soldier*'s crew did well to avoid the broken masts, bent booms and shredded sails that plagued other, more experienced boats.

The Rolex Commodores' Cup is sailed in the difficult tides around Cowes. ■





Clean bowled: Sig David Wade (R Signals) takes one of his three wickets during a devastating over in the Army's decisive victory against the Royal Navy

Picture: Graeme Main

# Hole-hearted

## All-rounder inspires Reds to comfortable defence of Inter-Services trophy

**A**N inspirational man-of-the-tournament performance from SSgt Steve Hole (DLO Andover) drove the Army's Twenty20 cricketers to a second successive Inter-Services title at Portsmouth.

The Reds made light work of the Royal Air Force on a blisteringly hot day on the south coast, economically bowling the airmen out for 105 before eclipsing the target in just 13 overs.

Hole's unbeaten 64 set the Army up for 168 runs from their 20 overs in the deciding game against the Royal Navy and the hosts were unable to match the reigning champions, eventually falling comfortably short with an innings of 140.

Head coach Dave Gelling was happy with his side's levels of concentration and the "professional" manner of the two victories.

"We were reasonably confident going into the tournament despite the usual concerns over availability and the unpredictability of the shortened game,

where anything can happen," he said.

"The first game [against the RAF] was an easy ride, but that had a lot to do with our approach and I was pleased that we finished it off quickly.

"We were slightly disappointed not to have scored more against the Navy, but we defended the total well."

All-rounder Hole set his stall out early on against the RAF, claiming two wickets for just eight runs from his four overs. Cpl Ian Redfern (RE) weighed in with a further four wickets as the Army got their title defence off to the best possible start.

Chasing the airmen's modest total, Gnr Muzza Heyns (RA) led the way with an inspired knock of 47 and the RAF took just four wickets before the Reds reached their target.

After watching the Royal Navy canter to a 26-run victory against the beleaguered RAF, the Army went into the final match against the hosts knowing that a win would allow them to keep hold of the title for another year.

After losing the toss and being put in to bat, the Reds made a slow start and things did not look good when Heyns was bowled for just four runs.

Cpl Dan Webb (212 MI Sect) notched up a quick-fire 24 and the Army's innings finally took off when Hole came to the crease and smashed his way to an unbeaten 64 as his team closed off the 20 innings with 168 runs.

The Navy's response was tentative and some outstanding bowling, including a spell of three wickets in one over from Sig David Wade (R Signals), prevented the home team from finding any kind of rhythm.

With the scoreboard showing just 138 runs when the eighth wicket fell, the Army smelt victory and a final two-wicket salvo from Hole wrapped up a deserved win and the championship.

"Even though the score might make it appear it was close, we were in control and the Navy never looked like they would reach our total," added Gelling.

● The Army were due to take on the Navy at Lord's as this issue went to press. See next month's *SoldierSport* for a full report. ■

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Going for gold (from left): LCpl Johnny Morris (1 Lancs), Cpl Abbas Salihu (RLC), Tpr Emmanuel Nartey (1 RTR) and Cpl Stephanie Alexander-Hart (RLC)

# London calling

## Move to full-time training stokes rising judo stars' 2012 Olympic dreams

**E**XPECTATIONS were blown out of the water last month when the Combined Services' top judo players secured podium finishes at the national team championships.

Both the men's and women's squads took bronze medals from the competition in Kendall after two week's hard graft with world-class coaches at the University of Bath.

The success may have come as a surprise to some, but for team coach Capt Phil McGregor (APTC) it served as the perfect vindication for his grand plan to reinvigorate Services judo.

"My goal is to bring as many people as possible into the sport and ensure that we develop élite players to where they should be. That is, competing at Great Britain and Commonwealth level," he said.

"Training is critical to success and we usually race around for a couple of days before competing. I was convinced that getting the right training in place was the first thing to do and Team Bath were instrumental in helping us."

The development of the Combined Services team has been fast-tracked thanks to a number of key players entering full-time training programmes.

Ghanaian international Tpr Emmanuel Nartey (1 RTR) is already based at Team Bath and only missed out on a spot at this year's Beijing Olympics due to an administrative error.

He is due to be joined in the West Country next month by four colleagues,

including Nigerian number one and former African under 81kg champion Cpl Abbas Salihu (RLC).

The loggie, who won the African Championships in 2000 and 2001, competed in the 2002 Commonwealth Games and is his regiment's current sportsman of the year, hopes that a more demanding coaching programme will push him to reach his full potential.

"At the moment I'm number one in my weight, but I wasn't in with a chance of making the Olympics because I missed some qualifying matches," he told *SoldierSport*. "With full-time training I think 2012 is a possibility.

"Capt McGregor has made a massive difference. Just to have someone who is willing to go to the regiments and explain how important it is for us to get to train with world-class coaches is important.

"Sometimes it is not how you train but who you train with and we have benefited from learning from coaches who have good records as players."

Another Army man with his eyes on a berth in the London Games is former Great Britain youth international LCpl Johnny Morris (1 Lancs).

The junior NCO took a break from judo to concentrate on promotion after signing up for the Army, but since returning to the mat the Dartford man has picked up where he left off with a string of impressive performances at under 81kg level.

"I won seven or eight national medals and I was due to go to the Europeans

before I joined the Army," he said. "I think I've improved because of my military training. I have that inner steel to dig deep when others might think they have nothing left."

"Four years is a long time, but as long as I keep building I don't see why I can't make the London Olympics."

Morris's transition into full-time training will be eased with the help of experienced campaigner Nartey.

The trooper admits he is "depressed" about missing this year's Olympics, but his loss could be Britain's gain as Nartey is hoping to switch nationalities.

And with a growing military contingent joining him at Bath, he refuses to write off the chance that he could be representing his new nation on home soil in four years.

"London is a possibility as long as I am still getting support and backing," he said. "I have the determination to achieve it so it could happen."

While Salihu, Nartey and Morris lead the charge for international recognition, the rest of the Combined Services line-up provides strength in depth.

The mix of experience and raw talent is apparent in the women's squad, which features skipper Cpl Stephanie Alexander-Hart (RLC) competing alongside Pte Francesca Siefloff, a 17-year-old junior soldier from Army Foundation College Harrogate.

"Everyone is training to win," said Alexander-Hart, who along with Fus Victor Ahaviour (1 RHF) completes the Army's presence at Bath. "There's always someone pushing you for your place and that is a healthy thing." ■

## SPORTS SHORTS

**FORMULA** One superstar Mark Webber joined more than 400 riders to take on the Army Cycling Union's (ACU) *Are You Tough Enough?* enduro challenge.

The Australian raced to 18th place in the four-hour event around a specially-constructed eight-mile track at Porridgepot Hill, near Deepcut.

A mixture of Service and civilian cyclists got on their bikes to tackle further two-hour and fun races, which were organised by ACU member CSgt Si Panter (R Anglian).

"It was amazing to see so many people turn up," said Panter. "A lot of blood, sweat and tears went into making sure the course was exciting and challenging enough."

The Porridgepot Hill circuit was redesigned for the event to provide riders with a challenging surface including long climbs over mud, soft soil and pebbles.

The solo four-hour men's race was won by Simon Ernest, of AW Cycles, who completed seven laps of the track in the allotted time.

Capt Adam Morris was the Army's highest finisher in the Combined Services four-hour race, which was won convincingly by the Royal Navy's Andy Plewes.

● See next month's *SoldierSport* to find out how Mark Webber came to swap horsepower for pedal power.

THREE Twickenham residents raised £960 for the Army Benevolent Fund and The Sailors' Society with a collection outside this year's Army v Royal Navy Rugby Union showdown.

Pam and Laurence Jones and Winnie Wright collected the cash outside Twickenham train station ahead of the Army's record-breaking seventh successive win in May and will split the money equally between the charities.

**SIX** Hohne-based REME runners braved a herd of stampeding bulls to raise more than £2,800 for Help for Heroes.

Capt Nigel Booker, Cpl Richie Howells, LCpl Chris Beetson, LCpl Jim Nagle, Cfn Ross Meats and Cfn David Graham were among the thousands of people taking part in this year's Pamplona Bull Run in Spain.

Each of the military men had to negotiate an 825m run through Pamplona's narrow streets while avoiding falling competitors and the six fighting bulls rampaging behind them.

"Once the run was over and all the bulls were in the bull ring, we reflected on what we had done," said Booker. "We couldn't believe that we had actually done it."

To make a donation, visit their website at [www.justgiving.com/pamplonabullrun](http://www.justgiving.com/pamplonabullrun) until September 7.



London calling: Maj Peter Underhill (1 Rifles) hopes for a strong Army presence at the 2012 Olympics

# Sporting chance

## Second-to-none Essex centre open for business

**S**OLDIERS serving in Colchester will have no excuse not to keep in top shape after the unveiling of a state-of-the-art sports centre.

The facility, which was officially opened by the town's mayor, Peter Crowe, provides troops and their families with a full-sized sports hall which can be split into two areas each the size of a five-a-side football pitch.

A fitness suite, 25-metre swimming pool complete with 3m high board, six squash courts and 12 outdoor tennis courts are also available at the Berechurch Road centre.

Col Tony Phillips, deputy garrison commander, said: "We expect a lot of our troops in the modern world and it is only right that we provide them with the most up-to-date facilities, not only

working or living conditions but also leisure and fitness facilities."

The amount of outdoor sports areas has been bolstered with 15 new pitches to add to the existing athletics track and hockey and cricket pitches on Abbey Field and Napier Road.

As well as being free to serving military personnel and their dependants, all of the facilities except the fitness suite are available to civilian groups, including Colchester United Football Club.

The completion of the sports centre is the second and final phase of work on Colchester's impressive new £560m Merville Barracks.

Construction of the first 78 of the barracks's 134 buildings was finished last September. ■

# Aiming high

## Olympic recognition for shooting star Underhill

THE Olympic shooting event at the 2012 London Games will be run with military precision following the appointment of former Great Britain international Maj Peter Underhill as competition manager.

Maj Underhill (1 Rifles) will take charge of the planning, organisation and management of both the Olympic and Paralympic shooting events, which will be staged at the Royal Artillery Barracks in Woolwich.

The 50-year-old, who started shooting at the age of 13 and has gone on to represent the Army, England and Great Britain, said he was delighted to have been picked for the role by the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games.

"I'm extremely happy to be doing this," he told *SoldierSport*. "It's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to take charge of the competition at an Olympic Games on home soil.

"My job will be to manage the competition and put in place the infrastructure for the four ranges."

Army development and selection officer Underhill is currently on a fact-finding mission in Beijing to see what can be learnt from this year's Games.

As well as being in charge of logistics,

**'The standard at the moment is reasonable, but we are not complacent'**

Underhill will be responsible for a range of support services.

He takes up the competition manager post full-time in 2010 and hopes to be the first of many military personnel involved in the shooting competition by the start of the Games.

"They have chosen central venues throughout the city and Woolwich is a prime example of that.

"As we get closer to the Games I think there will be a call for people from within the military to assist as officials and as volunteers."

In addition to serving as support staff for the shooting competition, Underhill believes that Army marksmen could be in the running for medals by the time the London Games come around.

"There is a long time to go, but there is every chance we might develop the odd pistol shooter between now and then," he said. "The standard at the moment is reasonable, but we are not complacent and recognise that there is always room for improvement.

"Our competition shooting should reflect our operational shooting and we are learning some very hard but valuable lessons in Iraq and Afghanistan which are working to make sure we do not forget." ■

## SPORTS SHORTS

LEGENDARY All Black Jonah Lomu is the latest player to throw his hat into the ring for next month's Help for Heroes charity Rugby Union match.

Kiwi Lomu has agreed to play for an International XV managed by Ieuan Evans and captained by Scott Gibbs for the Twickenham game, which takes place on Saturday, September 20.

The opposition – a Help for Heroes XV skippered by Lawrence Dallaglio and managed by Phil de Glanville – will feature 2003 World Cup winners Will Greenwood and Mark Regan as well as flying winger Dan Luger, who scored 24 tries in just 38 England matches.

"It's going to be fantastic. Look at the guys that have already agreed to play," said Luger. "Help for Heroes is a great cause to be part of."

Tickets cost from £20 for adults, £10 for juniors and £50 for families and are available online from [www.ticketmaster.co.uk](http://www.ticketmaster.co.uk) or by telephone on 0844 8472492.



THE Combined Services tug-of-war team narrowly missed out on a clean sweep after scooping all but one of the titles at a triangular tournament.

The military pullers' A team was too strong for opponents from the British Police and Civil Service in the 600kg, 640kg and 680kg events.

Only a strong performance from the policemen in the catch weight category prevented the Combined Services from claiming a fourth victory.

# Ace service from soldiers

## Army stewards hold court at All-England Club's grand slam tournament

AS Rafael Nadal edged out Roger Federer in last month's Wimbledon final, Army aces were playing their part in making sure English tennis's grand slam event went without a hitch.

Following a tradition that began in 1946, military men and women served as stewards around the All England Club, including during the tournament's big matches on number one and centre courts.

The Army's involvement at Wimbledon was masterminded by Lt Col Mick Cotton and Maj Bruce Cox (both AGC), who run their game-plan from an ops room in the bowels of centre court.

"We are pretty experienced in addressing the Wimbledon situation," said Cox, adding that the Royal Navy,

Royal Air Force and London Fire Brigade helped man the desks.

"We plan ahead, get into position very early and have the talent available to handle most hot situations. If a situation were to arise it would be unusual for a Serviceman to take a pace backwards.

"It certainly helps us in the meet-and-greet role to know that the guests are here for the tennis and Wimbledon ambience and are so very willing to follow the stewards' advice."

Enjoying her first taste of the Wimbledon atmosphere this year was 19-year-old radar technician LCpl Jess Byrne (REME).

Byrne manned gate 22 throughout the tournament fortnight and was also treated to a courtside view of the men's final, which is sure to go down as one of

the most exciting matches ever played.

"I am determined to take every opportunity the Army has to offer," she told *SoldierSport*. "It was epic and I will be back for definite, but first there's an overseas tour on the horizon."

Cpl "Zoe" Ball (AAC) had arguably the most glamorous posting as he took up a role as a Royal Box steward.

The Middle Wallop-based instructor said: "I really enjoy the camaraderie between the different regiments and Services and feel privileged to be with the Royal Box crew."

Wimbledon chief executive Ian Richie added: "We are a unique event and the Services stewards with their appearance and bearing play a special part in making these Championships what they are today." ■

# Health check

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

## With a new military ward under construction in Birmingham, we asked soldiers whether they had confidence in their system of health care

### Cpl Sam Wilkinson, R Signals

I think it is important that you keep wounded soldiers together, so a military ward is a great idea. While I have never used the health care system I have seen the medical facilities in Iraq. The field hospital there is spot on. I've absolute confidence in the medical system. You only have to look at Headley Court to see that the rehabilitation offered is impressive.



### Maj Rob Holland, RA

I've been in the Army for 35 years and we had military hospitals all over the place when I joined. I think soldiers being treated in Birmingham do need to be together while they are recovering – I don't think they should be mixed with civilians. A military ward is a good idea and unfortunately we need it with the types of injuries that soldiers are currently receiving on tour in Afghanistan.



### Cpl Matt McGlown, R Signals

I've not really had any experience of the medical chain, but I've been out to Afghanistan and helped to build the field hospital at Camp Bastion. From what I saw while I was out there you would be well looked after if you were wounded. It will be a step forward to have a new military ward in Birmingham. I think soldiers need something like that and it's a very good idea.



### Sgt Scott McKenzie, RA

I have to say that I am wary of the NHS and think the medical system we have in place needs reviewing. Standards are better than they were prior to the fighting in Afghanistan but there is always room for improvement. The system of care that we have in theatre is fine. Headley Court is also very good at what it does for soldiers who are undergoing rehabilitation.



### Capt Jock Reid, R Signals

I live in Herford and troops based there are treated in German hospitals if they are ill or injured. I shattered my wrist while I was snowboarding and the standards of treatment were extremely high. The military ward in Birmingham will be a good thing. Guys on ops must have 100 per cent confidence that they will be looked after if something goes wrong. It has taken the civilian systems a little time to adapt.



### Capt Ken Smith, R Signals

You have to go with what you are given and have confidence in the system. In the case of Selly Oak, the doctors and nurses are gaining more experience with injured soldiers, but a new military ward can only improve things. I've been in the Army for 22 years and was last in Iraq in 2005 and think the standard of care in theatre is probably a lot better than some places in the UK and Germany.



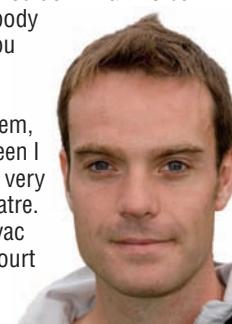
### LBdr Ross Glen, RA

I had a dental appointment when I was in Iraq on Op Telic 9 and although it took place in a tent, the care was just the same as you would expect in the UK. The place looked like a normal dental surgery. There are specialists in theatre if anything happens to you. In the UK a military ward in Birmingham would be a good thing. It is much better to be alongside other soldiers if you have been injured.



### Cpl Cam Pitcairn, R Signals

The new military ward is a very good idea. If you have been wounded you should be put together with others who have the same experiences as you. You don't want to be on a ward where nobody understands what you have been through. I've not had cause to use the medical system, but from what I've seen I think you are treated very professionally in theatre. Looking at the medivac chain and Headley Court I'm happy with what we have.



### WO2 Tim Tatler, RLC

The opening of a new military ward is welcome news. I'm of the view that soldiers should be treated alongside other soldiers, as they can all relate to each other. I've been through Headley Court three times myself after suffering a repetitive injury through playing rugby and football. It made a huge difference and I'm still in the Army because of the standard of care I received.



Interviews: Cliff Caswell Pictures: Steve Dock

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Olive Green P252VO £29.99

Coyote P252CT £29.99

### KA-BAR

#### KA-BAR M.U.L.E.

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Olive Green SB452VO £42.90

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