

SOLDIER

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Parachute Regiment pulls out of the pits for new Grand Prix season

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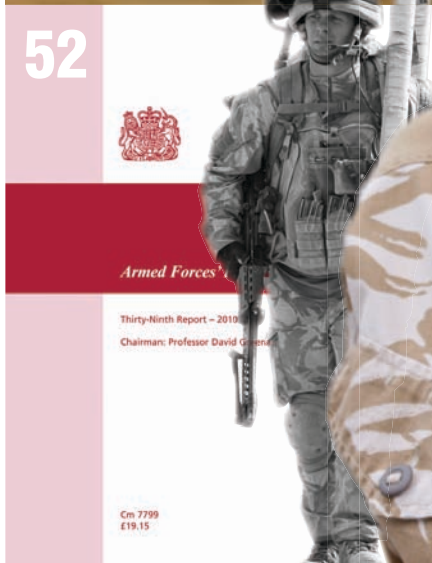
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Cover picture (left): Soldiers from 3rd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment training in Kenya

Picture: Steve Dock

Background image: Moments before a contact from the enemy, a column of Viking armoured vehicles led by a Ridgback rolls up to a checkpoint on the Shamalan Canal in Helmand Province, southern Afghanistan

Picture: Cpl Dan Bardsley, RLC





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Est 1945 – incorporating the
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Parsons House, Ordnance Road,
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All enquiries: Tel 01252 347353
(Ald Mil 94222 2353)

Fax: 01252 347358 (2358)

Email: mail@soldiermagazine.co.uk

www.soldiermagazine.co.uk



Managing Editor: Andrew Simms

EDITORIAL

Editor:

Stephen Tyler 01252 347356 (2356)

styler@soldiermagazine.co.uk

Assistant Editor:

Joe Clapson 01252 347154 (2154)

jclapson@soldiermagazine.co.uk

Sports Editor:

Richard Long 01252 347362 (2362)

rlong@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

ARCHIVE

Archivist/Information Manager:

Ruth Kusionowicz 01252 355056 (8056)

rkusionowicz@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 Lampert 01252 347354 (2354)

plampert@soldiermagazine.co.uk



ARMY



WINNER

SOLDIER is published by the Ministry of Defence
and printed by St. Ives Roche Limited. Print
contract managed by CDS.

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Views expressed in this magazine are not necessarily
those of the British Army or the Ministry of Defence.



"Fat lot of use your 'rhino whispering' has been!"

● Running hot – Pages 33-35

Attention grabbers

AS any one of my old school reports will testify, I have not always been the best at ignoring distractions.

Back in my time as a student, the lure of a kickabout with friends or the promise of something good on TV was guaranteed to lead me off the straight and narrow and away from revision or homework without much of a fight.

Fast forward to today and my will power is under daily assault from a glut of time-wasting activities. I know that I need to do my ironing, but a documentary about Britain's fattest people is surely just too good to miss.

Likewise, going shopping might be important, but then so is spending hours staring inanely at the mundane updates of people I barely know on Facebook.

All of this means that when something does hold my attention it must be special. And one evening late last month, that something arrived in my inbox in the form of a document detailing the latest operational honours and awards.

The email contained citation after citation – covering 146 Service personnel in total – detailing some unbelievably heroic acts in the face of more danger than most people will ever encounter in their entire lives.

Suddenly the lure of watching Champions League football evaporated in favour of reading about George Cross-winning IED disposal experts risking – and in one instance giving – their lives to save their comrades.

Equally the triviality of throwing virtual sheep at friends via the internet was exposed by the scores of other amazing deeds performed by award-winning soldiers, whether it is running into the

line of fire to rescue stricken civilians or staying calm in the wake of a devastating IED blast.

These incredible front-line dispatches are almost unbelievable and make for gripping reading. We feature a selection of them on Pages 25-31 and, needless to say, I think they will hold your attention.

The skills and drills soldiers need to serve so effectively on Op Herrick are being taught to increasing numbers of troops on the revamped Exercise Grand Prix.

Kenya now hosts 10,000 British personnel for tough pre-deployment training and we joined 3rd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment on the ground in East Africa to explore the impact made by the changes (Pages 33-41).

April sees the introduction of the latest Armed Forces Pay Award and you can get a full rundown on what difference the two per cent salary increase and additional operational benefits will have on your pay packet on Pages 52-57.

Speaking of the Paras, we also caught up with Cpl Tom Neathway who lost three limbs in an explosion in Helmand province.

His personal courage was well chronicled by the BBC's *Wounded* documentary last year, but the NCO has been keen to direct some of the attention onto the Army's Casualty Visiting Officer scheme which tasks a fellow soldier to liaise with the family of someone wounded in action.

In the wake of his own life-threatening injuries, Cpl Neathway was comforted by the support provided to him and his family by fellow-Para Sgt Paul Biddiss.

Whatever your powers of concentration, I'm sure you will find the story hard to put down. ■

‘These incredible tales of front-line bravery are almost unbelievable and make for truly gripping reading’



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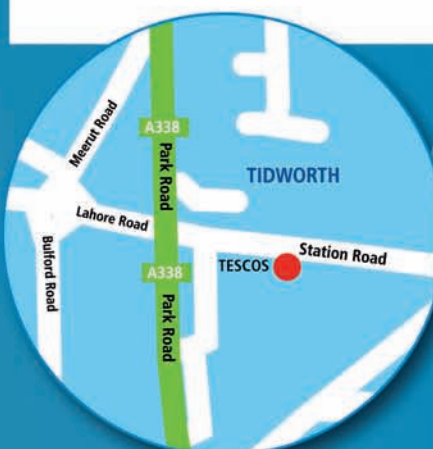
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Picture: SSgt Will Craig, RLC

Bearing fruit: The increasing trade taking place in the centre of Musa Qaleh is a sign of the improved security created with British help

Musa Qaleh handover announced

B RITISH Forces will be passing security responsibility for the Musa Qaleh district to their US colleagues in a move to rebalance troop numbers in central Helmand.

The decision will see 550 UK Servicemen and women transferred to one of the most heavily populated areas in the province, where they will help increase the capacity to partner and train the burgeoning Afghan National Security Forces.

British soldiers first deployed to Musa Qaleh in the summer of 2006 and 23 personnel have lost their lives while providing security in the district.

But their professionalism and courage, along with that of their colleagues, has helped to contain

insurgent activity and develop public services and governance, a role that will now be continued by American troops.

Speaking to *Soldier* from theatre, Lt Col Harry Fullerton, commanding officer of The Household Cavalry Regiment Battlegroup in Musa Qaleh, said: "Over the past six months security has improved a great deal.

"We have managed to expand the area of government control and have handed back a better lifestyle to the people of Musa Qaleh.

"There has been fighting on the perimeter. We have pushed the Taliban back and have ensured the police have responsibility for the town centre itself."

Over the past 12 months the number of International Security Assistance

Force troops serving in Helmand province has risen from around 7,700 to more than 20,000.

This significant increase has allowed commanders to rebalance forces in the region to ensure personnel are located where they can be most effective.

Five UK battlegroups have been involved in providing security for Musa Qaleh and Lt Col Fullerton believes the Americans will be able to build on the good work achieved in recent years.

"We feel we can give them a very good handover and they will be able to continue the progress that has been made," he said.

"This is a rebalancing of British Forces in line with the multinational effort. It is not a withdrawal.

"We have removed the Taliban and their influence. The economy is right back on track and there is a strong feeling of security that was not here two years ago. We made a promise that the future could only get better and we have delivered on that."

1,200

**THE NUMBER OF SHOPS TRADING
IN MUSA QALEH THANKS TO THE
SECURITY BUILT UP BY BRITISH
AND COALITION SOLDIERS**

NEWS IN BRIEF

INFANTRY soldiers in the final stages of their Herrick tour proved their versatility by launching a road convoy to deliver battle-winning kit to front-line colleagues.

Personnel from 3 Rifles took on the job usually carried out by specialist logisticians to transport equipment from Camp Bastion to Sangin.

The 20-vehicle patrol, which included Jackals, Mastiffs and Ridgbacks, travelled the 110km route under the watchful eye of two Lynx helicopters.

And despite one Mastiff being damaged by an IED strike, the Rifles reached their destination 14 hours after setting off without firing a single shot.

Maj Mark Melhorn, who led the operation, said: "As a battlegroup we drove our own vehicles, manned the guns and navigated our way through difficult terrain to ensure we delivered these vehicles to the front line."

THE grandson of wartime Prime Minister Winston Churchill has died.

Winston Spencer Churchill, a former journalist and politician who most recently served as president of the United Kingdom National Defence Association (UKNDA), passed away on March 2 after a battle with cancer.

UKNDA chief executive Cdr John Muxworthy said: "As president, [Churchill] was an inspirational leader."

STARS from across the world will converge on London to mark the 65th anniversary of Victory in Europe Day.

The Alexandrov Red Army Choir and Russian crooner Iosif Kobzon will be joined by a host of other international artists for a special concert, which takes place from 1930 on Monday, May 10 at the Royal Albert Hall.

THE type of stamp required by Foreign and Commonwealth soldiers in their passports to prove their exemption from immigration control has changed.

To enhance security, UK Border Agency officials have replaced the old-style ink mark with a sticker containing a photograph of the passport holder.

The change applies to all new applications, although existing visa holders do not need to do anything until they renew or replace their passport.

Control stamps will continue to be issued for free and personnel who spend money buying passport photos for visas can claim the cash back.

THE home of the Second World War's top codebreakers has announced a fun-filled line-up of events for 2010.

Bletchley Park will host exhibitions celebrating everything from vintage computers to the Enigma machine.

For more information about the planned events, visit www.bletchleypark.org.uk or call 01908 640404.

Manpower measures to return

THE reintroduction of measures used to control the Army's manpower is necessary to retain operational effectiveness, according to a senior officer.

Small numbers of personnel with between 12 and 15 years' experience could be discharged following the return of Manning Control Points (MCPs), which have been suspended since 2002.

Gen Sir Peter Wall, Commander-in-Chief Land Forces, said that using MCPs was necessary to ensure the Army maintains the right balance of soldiers in different arms, ranks and trades to remain operationally effective.

"The fact is that the Army has grown unevenly and we now need to make some adjustments," he added.

"Part of this is about giving some of our people the opportunity to retrain with the Service so they can make their contributions in areas

where our need is greater.

"But a relatively small number of soldiers will also be required to leave the Army under the Manning Control Points mechanism."

Those affected will qualify for the usual resettlement grant of around £10,000 and any pension accrued.

Soldiers selected to leave the Service under MCPs will be identified by a board at the Army Personnel Centre and will have the opportunity to apply to transfer to a different trade.

A 12-month notice period will be given to troops chosen to return to civvy street.

Originally introduced with National Service, MCPs are part of soldiers' terms and conditions of service. More than 3,000 personnel were dismissed from the Army using the mechanism between 1986 and 2002 before it was suspended due to a period of under-manning.

6,500 THE NUMBER OF WIND-UP RADIOS DISTRIBUTED TO RESIDENTS ACROSS HELMAND PROVINCE IN SUPPORT OF OP MOSHTARAK

Vehicle boost announced

FRONT-LINE soldiers will receive a fleet of new vehicles in equipment deals announced by the MoD.

Officials have signed a contract for the demonstration phase of new medium-weight armoured fighting vehicles which should see 600 assets enter service under the Specialist Vehicle (SV) programme.

The department has also committed to purchase 200 light protected patrol vehicles (LPPVs) as an Urgent Operational Requirement to replace the Snatch Land Rover.

Secretary of State for Defence Bob Ainsworth said: "We are determined to provide the Armed Forces with the capabilities they require."

General Dynamics UK has been

selected as the preferred bidder for the SV programme, which includes the development of the Scout principal reconnaissance platform that will replace the Scimitar in Afghanistan.

Scout will offer soldiers greater firepower and longer-range sensors and sighting systems as well as increased reliability.

In addition to the SV fleet, the MoD is evaluating two bespoke LPPV models which will be deployed to Afghanistan "as soon as practicable".

Offering a balance between protection, weight and manoeuvrability, the ministry is retaining the option to increase its commitment for the technologically-advanced vehicles from 200 to 400.

NEWS IN BRIEF

ARMY Cadets celebrating the organisation's 150th anniversary received the royal seal of approval during a visit to Buckingham Palace.

Twenty six youngsters, including representatives from the Sea Cadets, Air Training Corps and Combined Cadet Force as well as the Army Cadet Force, were greeted by the Queen and Duke Of Edinburgh during a special reception.

The group were then treated to lunch at the Ministry of Defence before getting a behind-the-scenes tour of 10 Downing Street.

For more information about Cadet150 celebrations, visit www.cadet150.org

Brits welcome Down Under gunners

A TEAM of Australian gunners joined their UK counterparts to prepare for a joint deployment to Afghanistan.

The 15 personnel from 1st Field Regiment, Royal Australian Artillery will work alongside soldiers from 7th Parachute Regiment Royal Horse Artillery for 15 months.

Soldier visited the troops while their 105mm light guns fired 36-pound shells at a range of 8.5 kilometres on the training area at Larkhill Barracks.

Lt Col Gary Wilkinson, CO of 7 Para RHA, said: "We are giving instruction

to the Australians on the ammunition system and the navigation system – we have GPS whereas the Australians use dial sights.

"They've come from the Brisbane sunshine to the wet and cold but they're getting on really well and are really motivated to be here.

"The priority is protecting not killing people, so everyone must make checks before firing. We have to secure the population with no collateral damage."

The gunners are set to deploy on Op Herrick 13 in September, with one

gun detachment going with F (Sphinx) Parachute Battery RHA and the other with G (Mercer's Troop) Parachute Battery RHA.

Praising the co-operation between the two countries' soldiers, 2nd Lt Aiden Philpott (7 Para RHA) said: "This is the first time that I have trained with the Australians and they are all very willing to learn.

"The commands for the guns are slightly different, but there haven't been any problems at all. It's great to have them with us."



Picture: Graeme Main

Passport to fitness

A NEW rehabilitation initiative that aims to speed up soldiers' recovery from injury has been launched in British Forces Germany.

The Rehabilitation Passport scheme sees recuperating personnel issued with a wallet-sized card which is filled in with important information including appointments, points of contact, future goals and a training record.

Everyone involved in the recovery process is then able to follow the soldier's progress.

Maj Richard Firth (RAMC), who came up with the idea, said: "The aim is to support both the soldier and the unit by giving clear direction on what is possible and safe for individuals to do.

"The passport also acts as a reminder for soldiers, allowing them to monitor their own progress and work towards set goals."

Although they are very detailed, the passports do not contain any confidential information about the

individual soldier's condition.

WO2 Tony Gaul (APTC), who has used the scheme since it was first trialled last summer, said it was a significant step forward in enhancing the rehabilitation of wounded troops.

He added: "Before we used generic programmes for injured soldiers, but with the passport the physical training instructor can see clearly what the soldier can or can't do and the specific goals set by the physio and exercise rehabilitation instructor. It has everything on a small document."

Andy Atkinson, senior physiotherapist at the Wegberg primary care facility, said the passport system had created a more positive environment for recovery.

He explained: "The light duty chit is all about what patients should be excused for, but the Rehabilitation Passport focuses on what patients can achieve. It keeps them proactive and motivated to get fit."

NEWS IN BRIEF

PUPILS at a Helmand school received a huge amount of new equipment thanks to soldiers from 1 Scots.

British troops were stopped in Wishtan by teacher Hafiz Hekmatullah who told them that his madrassa was in desperate need of stationery.

The soldiers, from B Company, took his plea seriously and returned alongside Afghan National Army (ANA) personnel with 100 exercise books, pens and pencils, rulers, erasers and school bags.

Sgt Paul Naismith, B Company commander, said: "I was overjoyed to see the ANA interacting with the locals like this. It will serve to further the cause of the ANA in Wishtan and give these kids a better education."

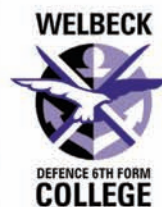
Sgt Sangee, of the ANA's Warriors of Heavy Weapons Company, 2/3/205 Kandak, added: "I hope they will learn everyday with these things."

As well as providing the equipment, the patrol also left the school with packs of cartoons highlighting the dangers of touching unidentified objects.

They were included after a brother and sister were killed in January after setting off an IED planted near the madrassa.

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Kit procurement defended

THE MoD has backed its record on delivering new equipment after a report accused the department of wasting hundreds of millions of pounds on unproductive activities.

The cross-party Defence Select Committee's Defence Equipment 2010 document argued that the Ministry had commissioned more work than it could afford throughout its current ten-year equipment programme.

It also labelled the department's policy of delaying projects to reduce costs in the short term as a contributing factor to an increased financial shortfall.

But Minister for Defence Equipment and Support Quentin Davies said the MoD had delivered 90 per cent of all projects to cost over the past two years, with 80 per cent completed on time.

He added: "We recognise that further improvements must be made – that is why we commissioned the Bernard Gray Review into Defence Acquisition, accepted the majority of the review's recommendations and published the Strategy for Acquisition Reform."

The report called into question the MoD's failure to substantiate its

claim that it had reduced the overall equipment funding gap from £21 billion in 2008 to £6 billion in 2009.

Chairman James Arbuthnot said: "The Defence Committee cannot fulfil its scrutiny role for Parliament if the MoD refuses to provide such information about its activities."

Criticism of the management and length of the now-scrapped Future Rapid Effect System programme, which aimed to produce a new family of armoured vehicles, featured prominently in the report.

Mr Davies agreed with the "justified criticism" of the scheme, but pointed out that it has since been replaced by a series of individual acquisition programmes designed to produce quicker results.

He also highlighted that the kit and equipment currently given to front-line soldiers was not called into question by the report and pledged to maintain sufficient funding to allow Britain to continue to develop new assets.

He added: "Our forces in Afghanistan will continue to receive the equipment they need, when they need it."



Princely vision

PRINCE William showed his support for visually impaired ex-Service personnel during a visit to a charity facility in Wales.

The Royal Air Force pilot was joined by other dignitaries including former Chief of the General Staff Gen Sir Richard Dannatt as he toured St Dunstan's training and rehabilitation centre in Llandudno.

The centre has been designed to provide state-of-the-art care, respite and training for soldiers with sight problems and is undergoing renovations which are expected to be completed by the end of 2011.

Gen Dannatt, who is St Dunstan's vice patron, said: "Young men and women from our Armed Forces whose sight has been damaged, as well as St Dunstaners who have served and lost their sight in later life, will benefit hugely from this new centre."

As well as meeting some of the people who will use the facility, Prince William tried his hand at blind archery and sampled some of the equipment and services that will be on offer.

The specially-adapted surroundings will allow St Dunstan's staff to provide the visually impaired with training in independent living skills such as getting around safely, navigating a kitchen and using a computer.

Sporting and social activities are also planned to increase community spirit and rehabilitation.

St Dunstaner Simon Brown, who was blinded by sniper fire in Iraq, said: "The new centre will mean St Dunstan's will be able to reach out to more blind veterans so they can look forward to an independent future."

St Dunstan's currently operates two similar centres in Sheffield and Brighton and extends its support to all soldiers and their families for life.

● www.st-dunstans.org.uk

100 THE NUMBER OF SCHOOL UNIFORMS AND PAIRS OF SHOES DISTRIBUTED TO CHILDREN IN KHAIN NEHSIN, AFGHANISTAN. A US AID CONTRACT FOR GYM KIT IS BEING FINALISED

Leader of the pack

A BRITISH soldier has earned the nickname "sniffer dog" after demonstrating an uncanny ability to track down IEDs in Afghanistan.

Kgn Christopher Stagg (2 Lancers) has uncovered 12 of the deadly devices during his Herrick tour in his role as lead scout – the man responsible for locating and marking explosive threats.

The modest soldier, who deployed to Helmand after serving in the Theatre Reserve Battalion in Cyprus, said: "I am just doing my job and hope to find more before I leave."

"It's been a challenging time out here and I am looking forward to the end of the tour when I can see my mum and dad and my three sisters."

Labelled as a "legend" by



comrades in Arnhem Company, Kgn Stagg spent most of his tour in Nad-e-Ali district, one of the key areas targeted by Op Moshtarak

which has seen thousands of coalition troops clearing the largest remaining Taliban strongholds in southern Afghanistan.

His section commander Cpl Vanden said that the 21-year-old's impeccable talent had "undoubtedly" saved lives.

He added: "It is like he can see the IEDs in the ground."

Commanding officer Lt Col Robbie Boyd was full of praise for Kgn Stagg. He said: "I am proud of all my Lions, but 'sniffer dog' is the bravest of the brave [and] has saved countless lives."



A SEARCH dog who saved lives by sniffing out explosives in Afghanistan has been awarded the animal version of the Victoria Cross. Treo, an eight-year-old black Labrador, received the People's Dispensary for Sick Animals' (PDSA) Dickin Medal during a ceremony at London's Imperial War Museum. The dog, who was joined at the presentation by handler Sgt Dave Heyhoe from 104 Military Working Dog Support Unit, found two potentially-lethal IEDs in Helmand province in 2008. He becomes the 63rd recipient of the highest animal military accolade, joining an elite group that includes 26 other dogs, 32 messenger pigeons, three horses and one cat. Sgt Heyhoe said: "Treo is a very special dog. There's a reason why I call him 'my boy' – it's because I feel safe when he is by my side and I know he has saved my life many times over. During the six months we spent in Helmand province the challenge was unrelenting but Treo did not waver from his duties for a second. He's a true soldier friend." Treo, who is now a family pet, was in the lead position in a patrol in southern Afghanistan in August 2008 when he located a daisy-chained IED that had been booby-trapped to detonate as soldiers passed. His next heroic act came just weeks later when the dog again sniffed out an explosive device.

NEWS IN BRIEF

THE Commander in Chief of Land Forces has set out his vision for the department for the next year.

The Land Forces Plan 2010-11, which makes up part of the wider Army Plan, details CinC's orders to Land Forces and how he intends to direct and resource the activities of the headquarters.

A copy of the document can be found on the Defence Intranet at <http://defenceintranet.diiweb.r.mil.uk/DefenceIntranet/Military/Army/CinCLF/HeadquartersLandForces.htm>

FARMERS in the south of Helmand's Green Zone will grow lower-lying crops this summer to reduce the cover provided to insurgents.

Following a shura with International Security Assistance Force (Isaf) personnel at Patrol Base Waterloo, land owners near Sangin agreed to limit the height of their agricultural yield to provide greater security for patrolling troops – despite the fact that the change is likely to decrease their potential income.

The shorter crops will be provided by Isaf and distributed by the Afghan National Army.

Nation honours military heroes

B RITAIN'S Servicemen and women past and present will be honoured at the second Armed Forces Day on Saturday, June 26.

Welsh capital Cardiff will host the celebration's national event, with more than 100 individual community-led festivities taking place in towns and cities across the UK.

A repeat of last year's "Fly the Flag" initiative, which saw Army units,

councils and individuals hoisting commemorative flags in the lead up to the main event, is planned, while Reservists will be asked to wear their uniforms to work on Friday, June 25.

Ex-Service personnel can also get involved by wearing their Armed Forces Veterans' Badges on the Friday before Armed Forces Day.

For more information about the event, visit www.armedforcesday.org.uk

Additional support for Forces families

SERVICE families with disabled relatives are being invited to attend a support seminar in London.

The Forces Additional Needs Disability Forum will meet at MoD Main Building on May 12 to enable families and service providers to discuss how they can work together to benefit adults and children within the wider military community.

Armed Forces Minister Bill Rammell and Services welfare expert Lt Col Andrew Purdy will be among the speakers during the day, which will also

feature three workshops.

Families attending the seminar may be eligible for free accommodation at the Union Jack Club. Delegates must pre-book and are expected to pay their own travel costs.

To reserve a place at the event, contact Marlette Bennett on 0207 463 9250 or email marlette.b@ssafa.org.uk

For further information about additional needs support available within the Armed Forces, contact Jane Barnes on 020 7463 9234 or email jane.b@ssafa.org.uk

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IN MEMORIAM



LT DOUGLAS DALZELL (27)
1ST BATTALION,
COLDSTREAM GUARDS
KIA FEBRUARY 18 – AFGHANISTAN

BRITISH troops in Afghanistan have been mourning the loss of a young officer “undoubtedly destined for great things”.

Lt Douglas “Dougie” Dalzell, of the 1st Battalion, Coldstream Guards, died on his 27th birthday in an explosion in the Babaji area of Nahr-e-Saraj in central Helmand.

The Berkshire soldier joined his battalion in April 2008 after passing the platoon commanders’ battle course and quickly established himself as a capable leader.

Remembered for his commendably positive attitude, Lt Dalzell deployed on Op Herrick 11 with 2 Platoon and soon built up a rapport and trust with his men.

Lt Col Toby Gray, 1 Coldm Gds’ commanding

officer, said: “Had I been a platoon commander at the same time as Lt Dalzell, I would have wished to be like him: assured, confident, utterly professional and hugely popular with his men.

“He was the ultimate role model and example for any young officer.”

Maj Toby Till, 1 Company commander, said: “I am immensely proud to have commanded one of the finest platoon commanders that I have known during 17 years of service.

“Dougie had displayed outstanding moral and physical courage and will always remain an example to all of us.”

Gdsm Andrew Legge, of 2 Platoon, added: “He was the kindest, most polite gentleman I have ever met.”



LSGT DAVID WALKER (36)
1ST BATTALION, SCOTS GUARDS
KIA FEBRUARY 18 – AFGHANISTAN

COMMANDERS and soldiers have been remembering a much-respected comrade whose bravery helped ensure early success during a critical mission in Afghanistan.

LSgt David “Davey” Walker, who was serving with the 1st Battalion, Scots Guards, was killed by enemy fire during Op Moshtarak in central Helmand on February 18.

A section commander, the veteran soldier had been leading a four-man fire team as part of Combined Force Nad-e-Ali (North).

LSgt Walker, who was from Glasgow, joined the Army in 1993 and soon embarked on tours of Northern Ireland as well as Iraq during Op Telic 5 in 2004.

The married father had also served as

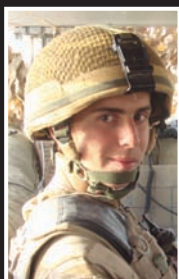
an instructor at the Infantry Training Centre Catterick, where he had passed his wealth of experience to a new generation.

Lt Col Lincoln Jopp, commanding officer of 1 SG, said his thoughts were with LSgt Walker’s widow Teresa, his family and friends.

The CO added: “He was so much part of the regimental family it is difficult to remember a time when he wasn’t around.

“He was older than the average lance sergeant having been out of the Army for a time, but prided himself on always keeping several steps ahead of the younger guardsmen.”

LCpl Michael Little said: “He was the best soldier I have ever seen. If you ever needed a role model it was Davey.”



RFN MARTIN KINGGETT (19)
4TH BATTALION,
THE RIFLES
KIA FEBRUARY 25 – AFGHANISTAN

A PROMISING young soldier whose strength of character inspired those around him was killed “after finding his calling” in Afghanistan.

Rfn Martin Kinggett, who was serving with 4th Battalion, The Rifles, died after he was shot on a routine foot patrol in Sangin, Helmand. The 19-year-old had been providing covering fire during the evacuation of a wounded colleague.

Originally from Dagenham in Essex, the soldier first joined the Army in 2007, but took a break before re-enlisting last year.

Rfn Kinggett deployed to Afghanistan as part of the 3 Rifles Battlegroup soon after passing out of the Infantry Training Centre in Catterick. His superiors said he had been excelling during his first operational tour.

Lt Col Rupert Jones, commanding officer of 4 Rifles, said: “Rfn Kinggett was a young man that his mates could rely on – he had a good heart and was deeply loyal.

“In Afghanistan he really found his calling – he was fearless as the lead man in his section, clearing the ground for those that followed.

“His family who he loved so openly and talked of so frequently will be devastated by his loss, but will take great pride that he fell as he lived. His legacy will be the enduring progress being made in Helmand and the changes to the lives of the Afghan population – something of which he would be proud.”

In a statement, Rfn Kinggett’s family said the soldier would “always be a hero”.



SGT PAUL FOX (34)
28 ENGINEER REGIMENT
KIA FEBRUARY 26 – AFGHANISTAN

AN exceptional sapper who was killed in southern Afghanistan had been determined to return to the front line having previously been injured in action.

Sgt Paul Fox, of 28 Engineer Regiment, had been attached to the 11 Light Brigade Reconnaissance Force (BRF), when he was mortally wounded in an explosion in Nad-e-Ali.

Originally trained as a combat engineer and welder, the 34-year-old married father was deeply respected for his professionalism having steadily progressed through the ranks. He was selected for duty with the BRF after coming top of his rece selection cadre shortly before deploying on Op Herrick 11 last year.

Lt Col Matt Bazeley, CO of 28 Engr Regt, said

his thoughts were with the family and friends of Sgt Fox. He added: “He was above all else a quite outstanding man – a tremendous soldier, an impressive leader and good friend.

“His quick wit, committed sense of purpose, dedication and capacity was beyond doubt. His loss is a quite shocking sadness and we have lost a great Royal Engineer.”

Friends and colleagues of Sgt Fox shared the sentiments. Sgt Den Keene, of 28 Engr Regt Reconnaissance Troop, said: “His smile and determination kept us all going.

“I met him first as a young sapper out in Northern Ireland, where his cheeky Mancunian wit lit up the troop – he was constantly joking around in true Manchester style.”

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IN MEMORIAM



RFN CARLO APOLIS (28)
4TH BATTALION,
THE RIFLES
KIA MARCH 1 – AFGHANISTAN

COMMANDERS and friends have been reflecting on the life of a South African soldier and “fine ambassador for his nation” following his death in Afghanistan.

Rfn Carlo Apolis, of 4th Battalion, The Rifles, was shot as he took part in a foot patrol during an operation to expand security around Sangin.

The 28-year-old, who joined the Army in 2007, was on his first operational tour as part of 11 Light Brigade and had been attached to the 3 Rifles Battlegroup.

Nicknamed Apollo by friends, Rfn Apolis came to the UK in 2004, working at a hotel in Exeter before enlisting. He was remembered as being a brother figure to younger colleagues.

Lt Col Rupert Jones, commanding officer of 4

Rifles, described Rfn Apolis as being “generous to the core”.

The CO added: “He had travelled a long way to be a rifleman but remained fiercely loyal and proud of his native South Africa – he was a fine ambassador for his nation.

“His family are in our thoughts and prayers. They should take great pride that he fell with his friends at his side and helping to improve the lives of ordinary Afghans.”

Rfn Apolis’s girlfriend Rebecca Williams described the soldier as “my best friend”.

She added: “Most people will have known Carlo as fun loving and highly entertaining – someone who could make you smile when you were feeling down.”



CPL RICHARD GREEN (23)
3RD BATTALION,
THE RIFLES
KIA MARCH 2 – AFGHANISTAN

A CAPABLE NCO and “larger-than-life character” had made a significant contribution to improving the stability of Helmand province, commanders have said.

Cpl Richard Green, of 3rd Battalion, The Rifles, was shot and killed in Sangin. The 23-year-old, who joined the military aged 16, had been mentoring members of the Afghan National Army.

Originally from Reading, the gifted soldier passed out of the Infantry Training Centre, Catterick in 2004 and achieved promotion within a year of joining his battalion.

Since deploying to Afghanistan in September last year, Cpl Green proved himself to be a huge asset in developing the country’s security forces.

The NCO’s family said in a statement: “On his recent R&R, he said: ‘If anything happens to me, know I’ve lived life to the full, have no regrets and love my job’.

“We miss him more than words can say but take comfort from the thought that, if there is a heaven, he is now having a laugh with his friends whose lives have been taken like his over the past year.”

Lt Col Nick Kitson, commanding officer of the 3 Rifles Battlegroup, said Cpl Green was “a man at the top of his game”.

He recalled: “Having breezed through courses that test even the best young riflemen, he showed himself to be up to any challenge the Army could throw at him.”



RFN JONATHON ALLOTT (19)
3RD BATTALION,
THE RIFLES
KIA MARCH 5 – AFGHANISTAN

A “HERO” soldier died while serving as the front man responsible for clearing the ground of IEDs in a patrol in Sangin.

Rfn Jonathon Allott (19) was taking part in an operation to insert a new patrol base in Helmand province when he was caught in an explosion.

The Bournemouth resident enlisted in the Army in November 2008, attending the Infantry Training Centre in Catterick until May 2009 when he joined B Company, 3rd Battalion, The Rifles for pre-deployment training.

Describing him as an “inspirational young man”, commanding officer Lt Col Nick Kitson said: “He had already made a name for himself as someone for whom nothing was too much trouble, whether it was taking time to talk to a

fellow rifleman or clearing the ground of deadly IEDs for his platoon to pass safely.”

Rfn Allott leaves behind his parents, two sisters and a brother. In a statement, the family said: “Jonny died a hero doing the job he loved – he will be sorely missed.”

Comrade Rfn Joshua Martin remembered Rfn Allott’s strong sense of humour and charm.

He added: “He would always go that extra mile for his mates. His courage, his professionalism, but most importantly his friendship, will be sorely missed.”

Platoon commander Lt Dan Brown said: “The sound of his laughter will surely be missed, as will his beaming smile that lit up our little corner of Afghanistan.”



RFN LIAM MAUGHAN (18)
3RD BATTALION,
THE RIFLES
KIA MARCH 6 – AFGHANISTAN

SMALL arms fire claimed the life of a “keen, dedicated and promising” rifleman serving in southern Afghanistan.

Rfn Liam Maughan was shot and killed while providing overwatch protection to his platoon in central Sangin.

The 18-year-old had deployed to Helmand province with 3rd Battalion, The Rifles less than six months after passing out of the Infantry Training Centre in Catterick in March 2009.

Born in Doncaster, Rfn Maughan was described by his family as a “tall, handsome six-footer with looks to melt the heart of any girl and make men envious”.

They added: “This cruel and premature departure from us leaves dreams unfulfilled,

potential unrealised and a massive irreparable hole in the lives of everyone who knew him.”

Commanding officer Lt Col Nick Kitson praised the “capable, enthusiastic, courageous and loyal” soldier. He said: “He has been an absolute credit to his family and our nation.”

Rfn Maughan had made his mark on Op Herrick as his platoon’s sharpshooter and his skills were recognised by his colleagues.

LCpl Jonathon Robson said: “Rfn Maughan was without a doubt one of the best soldiers I have worked with.

“When he passed his sharpshooter’s course he was over the moon. I would like to say I am grateful to have had the opportunity to work with and command such a soldier.”

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IN MEMORIAM



LCPL TOM KEOGH (24)
4TH BATTALION,
THE RIFLES
KIA MARCH 7 – AFGHANISTAN

A PROMISING soldier who won the coveted top student award on a junior non-commissioned officer cadre died in a firefight in Afghanistan.

LCpl Tom Keogh, of 4th Battalion, The Rifles, was serving with the 3 Rifles Battlegroup when he was fatally wounded during the incident at Patrol Base Bariolai in Sangin.

The veteran of Op Telic 10 had rejoined the Army in 2009 after taking a one-year break and was immediately posted to 4 Rifles' reconnaissance platoon.

The 24-year-old from Paddington, London, leaves behind his parents and two brothers. In a statement, his family said: "He loved the Army life and lived his life to the full. He brought laughter and happiness to all who knew him."

The NCO's commanding officer, Lt Col Rupert Jones, described him as "one of the very best soldiers in the battalion".

He added: "The younger lads were drawn to him by his example and kindness. He was a genuine role model to them and they aspired to his standards."

WO1 Lee Roberts, 4 Rifles' RSM, said: "LCpl Keogh was the typical recce soldier in every aspect – fit, professional, loyal and trustworthy."

"He would crack on and get the job done to the best of his ability."

Cpl Daniel Ord, who served with LCpl Keogh in Iraq, added: "Tom was a natural recce soldier and brother."

"He will be sorely missed."



CPL STEPHEN THOMPSON (31)
1ST BATTALION,
THE RIFLES
KIA MARCH 7 – AFGHANISTAN

SOLDIERS serving on Op Herrick have been remembering the invaluable contributions of a talented NCO killed in an explosion in Sangin.

Cpl Stephen Thompson, from Bovey Tracey in Devon, died in a blast three kilometres south of the district's centre.

Since joining the Army in 1997 and passing out of the Army Training Regiment in Lichfield, Cpl Thompson had gained two promotions and been posted to train recruits in Catterick.

He had volunteered to deploy to Afghanistan as a battle casualty replacement, joining A Company, 3rd Battalion, The Rifles in February this year.

His family, including parents Carol and Peter, brother Philip, sisters Claire and Helen and

son Ewan, said in a statement: "We are so very proud of Stephen and all that he achieved. He died doing the job he loved."

Lt Col Nick Kitson, CO of 3 Rifles Battlegroup, said: "Go-getting and committed, he embraced the challenge of operating in one of the most demanding environments within this most demanding of operational theatres."

Remembered as a "grade A" instructor for recruits at Catterick, Cpl Thompson has also been praised for his sense of humour.

Cpl Ben Hall said: "I got on with him like a house on fire. He was always coming out with one-liners that had us in clip laughing."

"He was a great bloke and fitted right in with our platoon."



CAPT MARTIN DRIVER (31)
1ST BATTALION,
THE ROYAL ANGLIAN REGIMENT
MARCH 15 – SELLY OAK

A POPULAR and "utterly decent" officer died in Birmingham's Selly Oak Hospital from wounds sustained in an IED blast during a patrol in southern Afghanistan.

Capt Martin Driver was flown back to Britain after being critically wounded in Musa Qaleh but succumbed to his injuries three weeks later.

Having originally served as a Territorial Army soldier with 4th Battalion, The Parachute Regiment, during which time he deployed to Northern Ireland and Iraq, Capt Driver commissioned into 1st Battalion, The Royal Anglian Regiment in 2006.

The officer deployed on Op Herrick 6 in 2007 before being posted to study Arabic at the Defence School of Languages in Beaconsfield

and earning his promotion to captain.

The Barnsley-born Serviceman leaves behind fiancée Johanna, his parents and a twin brother, who said in a statement: "His legacy shall never be forgotten. He has touched so many with his love and compassion."

Remembered by colleagues as quiet and unassuming but immensely talented, Capt Driver was second-in-command of the Viking's A (Norfolk) Company.

Capt Will Meddings said: "Once you got to know him you could not help but be impressed by his capacity for work, his ability to get to the heart of any problem and the extent to which he cared about those under his command."

"He is irreplaceable in every respect."



SJT STEVEN CAMPBELL (30)
3RD BATTALION,
THE RIFLES
KIA MARCH 22 – AFGHANISTAN

A TALENTED NCO has been remembered as "one of the Army's rarest treasures" following his death in Afghanistan.

Sjt Steven Campbell, of 3rd Battalion, The Rifles, was killed when an IED detonated during a patrol three kilometres south of Sangin district centre in Helmand province.

The 30-year-old, who was born in Durham, joined the Army in April 1998, rising through the ranks to corporal by 2003 when he was posted to the Army Foundation College in Harrogate as an instructor.

His next promotion came in 2006 when he became a platoon sergeant. He leaves behind his parents, wife Lisa and son Brandon.

In a statement, his family said: "He was a

loving husband to Lisa and a loving father to Brandon and will be missed by all."

Lt Col Nick Kitson, CO of 3 Rifles Battlegroup, said: "Sjt Campbell was one of the Army's rarest treasures. So positive and energetic, it was truly an honour and a pleasure to know him."

Capt Alex Kelly recalled Sjt Campbell's "legendary" status with his comrades as well as his perpetual good mood.

He added: "One could not help being dragged along in this torrent of positivity, uplifted by his mere presence. I will treasure many memories of this great man."

CSjt Gavin Paton said: "Steve broke the mould with everything that a rifleman should be."

IN MEMORIAM



PTE JAMES GRIGG (21)
1ST BATTALION,
THE ROYAL ANGLIAN REGIMENT
KIA MARCH 16 – AFGHANISTAN



LCPL SCOTT HARDY (26)
1ST BATTALION,
THE ROYAL ANGLIAN REGIMENT
KIA MARCH 16 – AFGHANISTAN

VIKINGS from The Royal Anglian Regiment have been remembering the lives of two comrades killed in Helmand province.

LCpl Scott Hardy and Pte James Grigg, both of 1st Battalion, R Anglian, died in an explosion 20km north of Musa Qaleh.

The pair had been serving with the Household Cavalry Regiment Battlegroup and were on a daring operation deep behind enemy lines at the time of the blast.

Chelmsford-born LCpl Scott Hardy had worked as a bricklayer before joining the Army and excelling at the Infantry Training Centre.

He passed out of Catterick in May 2007 and deployed on Op Herrick 6 just three weeks later.

Remembered as a soldier of great maturity and potential for leadership, the 26-year-old was employed in Afghanistan as second-in-command of 3 Platoon's A (Norfolk) Company.

In a statement, his family said: "Possessing great inner strength and a powerful personality, Scott could be relied upon even in the worst of situations to lift his men's morale.

"To lose Scott is to lose a huge part of life itself. But he will always be with us, making us smile, giving us pride and gratitude."

Lt Col James Woodham, commanding officer of 1 R Anglian, said that LCpl Hardy was always willing to see the bright side of life and took the challenges of operations in his stride.

He added: "His performance leading men in the most demanding of circumstances in Afghanistan was notable – he was steadfast under fire and hugely brave.

"Blessed by a robust sense of humour, Scott

was the first to laugh at life's challenges and keep soldiering on."

Officer commanding 3 Platoon, Lt Simon Broomfield, said he had no doubts that LCpl Hardy would have gone on to pass the section commanders' battle course.

Pte Grigg, who hailed from Hartismere in Suffolk, had been with 1 R Anglian for just over a year when he deployed to Afghanistan.

Lt Col Woodham recalled the 21-year-old as a "quiet man" who came into his own when talking about cricket.

The CO said: "He was simply fanatical about the game and a great all-round player.

"When he stepped up to bowl you just knew he would start taking wickets.

"Friendly, polite and enormously helpful, he was a real team player that you would want to have on your side."

Lt Broomfield echoed his CO's memories of Pte Grigg as an excellent cricketer and an all-round sportsman.

He said: "An intelligent and thinking soldier, he was quiet but well-liked by his teammates.

"He had a razor-sharp wit. He and I followed the test matches religiously on BFBS and he could be found thumbing his way through my *Wisden* cricket magazine whenever I was not reading it myself."

Maj Stuart Smith, officer commanding A (Norfolk) Company, added: "Always smiling and never complaining, James will be sorely missed by all those who knew him.

"Our thoughts at this difficult time are with his friends and family."

Iraq memorial unveiled

A COMMEMORATIVE wall to those who died on Operation Telic has been unveiled at the National Memorial Arboretum.

Almost 500 family members of the 178 British Service personnel and one MoD civilian who lost their lives in Iraq were present at a poignant service at the Staffordshire facility.

They were joined by the Duke of Gloucester, Prime Minister Gordon Brown, senior Government officials and relatives of personnel from Denmark, Italy, Romania and the Netherlands who are remembered on the wall.

Defence Secretary Bob Ainsworth said: "Today we paid tribute to those who gave their lives in Iraq on behalf of the nation and in order to provide Iraqis with a better life."

The Basra Memorial Wall

was originally built outside the headquarters of Multi-National Division (South East) in 2006 by members of 37 Armoured Engineer Squadron.

Containing plaques bearing the names of the fallen, the wall was brought back to the UK in 2009 and subsequently rebuilt.

The unveiling ceremony featured a flypast of Tornado GR4s, the lighting of an Op Telic memorial candle and the reading of a poem – *Where Your Ashes Kiss The Earth* – written by Lt Col Jonathan Brown while he was serving in Iraq.

Brian Tanswell, whose son Tom was killed in Iraq in 2006, laid a wreath on behalf of all of the victims' families.

He said: "This memorial is an everlasting tribute to our loved ones where families, friends and comrades can come and remember them."



Chief of the Defence Staff ACM Sir Jock Stirrup salutes the Basra Memorial Wall

Picture: Sgt Su McGinlay, RAF

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THE BIGGER PICTURE

A SOLDIER from 2 Company, 1st Battalion, Welsh Guards scrambles for cover while under a co-ordinated attack on a compound situated near Checkpoint Yellow Seven, close to Helmand's Shamalan Canal

Picture: Cpl Dan Bardsley, RLC

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Legend: SSgt Olaf Schmid (RLC) received a posthumous George Cross for his work in disabling scores of improvised explosive devices in southern Afghanistan
Picture: Steve Dock

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HELMAND'S FRONT LINES**

Report: Joe Clapson

GEORGE Cross medals have been awarded to two “awe-inspiring” bomb disposal experts for their selfless acts of bravery under unprecedented pressure in Afghanistan.

SSgt Kim Hughes and the late SSgt Olaf Schmid, both of The Royal Logistics Corps, were described as “the bravest of the brave” by Air Chief Marshall Sir Jock Stirrup, Chief of the Defence Staff.

In the citation for his award, SSgt Hughes’ actions were praised for being “the single most outstanding act of explosive ordnance disposal ever recorded in Afghanistan”.

SSgt Schmid was personally responsible for dealing with 70 IEDs and gave his life in the line of duty.

Personal congratulations were given to SSgt Hughes and SSgt Schmid’s widow, Christina, at the Honourable Artillery Company by ACM Stirrup and Secretary of State for Defence, Bob Ainsworth.

ACM Stirrup said: “The George Cross is awarded only rarely; its recipients must have displayed the very highest levels of gallantry.

“The actions of SSgt Hughes and the late SSgt Schmid meet this demanding test in the full measure.

“Their selfless commitment, unswerving devotion to duty and unsurpassed courage are both awe-inspiring and humbling.”

The George Cross is the highest award for “acts of the greatest heroism or of the most conspicuous courage in circumstances of extreme danger”.

SSgt Hughes was recognised after clearing a safe path for his Service colleagues through an area littered with IEDs in 2008.

On August 18 of that year, and with an urgent need to recover casualties and bodies of fallen comrades, SSgt Hughes, a High Threat IED Disposal (IEDD) Operator, disarmed seven lethal bombs, three by hand, without wearing protective clothing while under fire.

SSgt Schmid was also a High Threat IEDD operator working in Helmand from June 2009 until his death on October 31, 2009. He deployed at the height of Operation Panther’s Claw and spent

long periods in close proximity to Victim Operated IEDs (VOIEDs), putting himself in extreme danger.

On the day he died, he was trapped in an alleyway penned in by IEDs. SSgt Schmid worked to make a device safe and was killed in the process of saving the lives of his men.

Before handing the framed citations to SSgt Hughes and Mrs Schmid, ACM Stirrup added: “The words ‘the bravest of the brave’ mean exactly that. Through their actions they saved countless military and civilian lives.

“They are true heroes and I salute them both.”

Speaking after receiving the citation on behalf of her husband, Mrs Schmid said: “I am as proud of my husband as he was

magnificent. He could not be here to learn this awesome news, and it is awesome, but I have the next best thing in Kim.

“It’s right that high threat operators are appreciated at the highest level when they go above and beyond their call of duty.

“This is a legendary award for my legendary husband.”

SSgt Hughes, who started his 12-year Army career as a driver, was also pleased that such a prestigious honour had been bestowed to his trade.

“To have two ammunition technicians get the same award for the same operation is good for the profession,” he said.

“It’s outstanding to have come from a driver when I started out to be picking up the George Cross.

“It’s absolutely gleaming and I never would have thought it would happen.”

He added: “Not many people get this, so I’m over the moon. It would’ve been better for Oz to be here, but knowing him and having Christina here is outstanding.” ■

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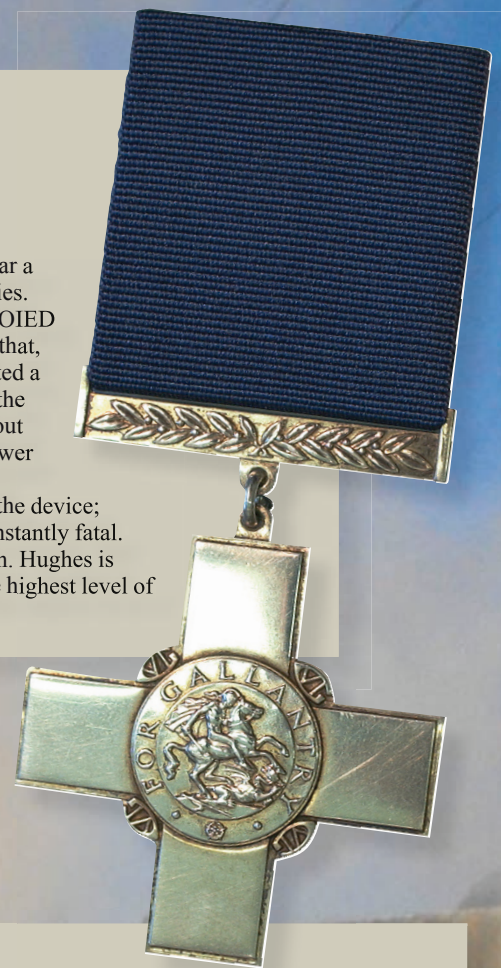


Bravery rewarded: SSgt Kim Hughes (RLC) and Christina Schmid, widow of SSgt Olaf Schmid, collect George Cross citations at this year’s Operational Honours ceremony in London. The awards will be presented at Buckingham Palace.

Staff Sergeant Kim Spencer Hughes
The Royal Logistic Corps
High Threat IEDD Operator,
Helmand province, Afghanistan Apr – Oct 09

DURING his tour in Afghanistan, Hughes disposed of more than 80 VOIEDs. To deal with seven of the deadly devices linked in a single circuit, in a mass casualty scenario and using manual neutralisation techniques once, never mind three times, is the single most outstanding act of explosive ordnance disposal ever recorded in Afghanistan. That he did it without the security of specialist protective clothing or powerful explosive ordnance disposal electronic counter measures equipment serves even more to demonstrate his outstanding gallantry. During a VOIED attack, which had resulted in injured and fallen soldiers, Hughes

and his team were called to clear a path and to recover the casualties. Hughes discovered a further VOIED within one metre of a casualty that, given their proximity, constituted a grave and immediate threat to the lives of all the wounded. Without knowing the location of the power source, Hughes calmly carried out a manual neutralisation of the device; any error would have proved instantly fatal. This was a “Category A” action. Hughes is unequivocally deserving of the highest level of public recognition.



Staff Sergeant
Olaf Sean George Schmid
The Royal Logistic Corps
High Threat IEDD Operator,
Sangin, Helmand province,
Afghanistan Jun – Oct 09

STAFF Sergeant Schmid carried out several acts of great heroism by which he saved the lives of his comrades and of Afghan civilians. On each occasion at the gravest personal risk to himself, he demonstrated courage and selfless commitment of the highest order and his valour is worthy of the highest recognition. While a gun-battle raged about him, Schmid set about successfully neutralising two IEDs. During a further period of 36 hours spent clearing IEDs from a convoy's route, he rendered safe ten VOIEDs, all without the aid of a remote control robot, making it necessary to deal with each device by means of manual and semi-remote actions. This series of disposal actions involved Schmid working in extreme close proximity to improvised victim operated switches that could function at the slightest slip of the hand. His selfless gallantry, his devotion to duty and his indefatigable courage, displayed time and time again, saved countless military and civilian lives and is worthy of the highest recognition. It was while once again demonstrating these same qualities that Schmid was to make the ultimate sacrifice: saving the lives of others.



● THE “selfless and courageous” actions of a senior NCO during a hectic firefight have been rewarded with a Conspicuous Gallantry Cross.

Sgt Marc Giles (Mercian) leapt into action when a joint patrol with the Afghan National Army (ANA) was ambushed in June 2009.

With the OMLT commander trapped in the killing zone with a wounded ANA soldier, Sgt Giles took charge and dashed forward to rescue the injured warrior, carrying him to safety over his shoulders.

As the fight intensified, Sgt Giles went to rendezvous with a quick reaction force (QRF) who were approaching the scene when he was thrown against a compound wall by an IED blast.

Remaining amazingly composed and aware of the danger the entire patrol faced while recovering from the explosion, Sgt Giles ordered the QRF to halt and personally coordinated the patrol’s defence.

Sgt Giles’ citation said: “He displayed bravery and initiative. His actions saved the patrol from defeat and are worthy of formal recognition.”

● THE inspirational leadership shown by a senior NCO in the wake of an IED blast has been recognised with a Conspicuous Gallantry Cross.

Sjt Jaime Moncho (Rifles) was in the rear section of his platoon’s patrol in Wishtan last July when he heard an ear-shattering blast followed by heavy small arms fire.

Dashing to the site of the explosion, he found that the lead section had been ripped apart. Showing immense calmness under pressure, Sjt Moncho immediately gripped the situation and barked short, sharp orders at his team to return the shocked riflemen to their senses.

He then turned his attention to helping the casualties, personally leading the triage and delegating additional treatment to his troops.

As an evacuation got under way, Sjt Moncho established a fire base to protect those extracting from the area and he was the final member of his platoon to return to safety.

His citation said: “[Sjt Moncho’s] supreme courage in the face of the most testing of circumstances was exemplary and his personal actions steadied all those around him.”



● Sgt Marc Giles

● A YOUNG NCO demonstrated the utmost calm and bravery in the face of a vicious assault to put an end to the potentially-lethal contact.

LCpl Kyle Smith (Mercian) was part of a platoon that was struck by an RPG and pinned down by accurate small arms fire in July 2009.

With several soldiers injured in the initial blast, he brazenly moved 100m across open ground to provide emergency first aid and move a casualty to cover.

LCpl Smith then repeated the unbelievably-brave act to save a second person, pausing only to return fire at insurgent fighters.

The quick-thinking Serviceman then took the lead in tackling the insurgents’ well-sited firing points, using his honed situational awareness skills to firmly and effectively direct his soldiers’ fire onto the enemy positions.

His Conspicuous Gallantry Cross citation read: “Without the selfless, brave and timely actions of this young NCO, two of the casualties from the initial engagement would have remained exposed to the enemy and undoubtedly suffered further injury.

“That he recovered one casualty from grave danger is remarkable; that he returned for a second time, knowing full well the risk, is remarkable.”

● A SOLDIER’S actions in rescuing a wounded comrade from an enemy ambush were so brave that it was a “miracle” he was not killed.

LBdr Gary Prout (RA) was with a patrol in the notoriously dangerous settlement of Yatimchay in March 2009 when a colleague was engulfed in an explosion in open ground and attracted small arms fire.

LBdr Prout leapt from the roof he was occupying and ran 75m in full view of the enemy to pull his colleague out of the increasingly-dangerous firing zone.

With incoming rounds from positions no more than 100m away landing around him, LBdr Prout again risked his life by returning to the roof to coordinate artillery fire.

The two-hour contact following the initial explosion was the most brutal his company experienced during the tour and LBdr Prout’s Conspicuous Gallantry Cross citation paid tribute to his “most incredible courage... which goes beyond that normally expected of an NCO in the face of the enemy”.



● LBdr Gary Prout

● A SOLDIER who twice braved heavy insurgent fire to dash across open ground and carry injured comrades to safety has been rewarded with a Conspicuous Gallantry Cross.

Gnr Steven Gadsby (RA), a fire support team signaller serving in Nad-e-Ali District, was on a routine foot patrol that was contacted by enemy fighters in May last year.

With the platoon commander wounded, the decision was made to return to base and Gnr Gadsby carried his injured comrade on a stretcher back to within 100m of the team’s checkpoint.

With the commander in urgent need of medical attention, Gnr Gadsby dismissed the time-consuming option of progressing under cover along a canal.

Instead, he lifted the wounded man over his shoulder, crossing an infantry foot bridge before dashing across open ground in full view of the enemy to reach the base’s front gates.

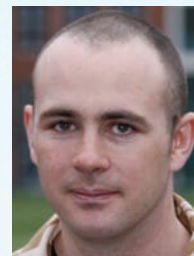
Once inside, Gnr Gadsby collapsed with exhaustion before an ANA soldier approached him to say that a second Serviceman had been shot.

Ignoring his fatigue, the heroic soldier left the safety of the base and twice more ran the gauntlet of enemy fire to rescue his stricken colleague.

His citation read: “Gadsby’s actions displayed a complete disregard for his safety on two occasions to try to save the lives of others.”

● A DEDICATED nursing officer was recognised as the “key clinical success factor” for emergency platelet and blood donation during her time serving with 202 Field Hospital and the Danish Hospital Squadron at Camp Bastion.

From April to October last year, Capt Gail Whittle’s (QARANC) life-saving work ensured that blood products were available for wounded Isaf and ANA soldiers and she also spent time outside of her duties visiting patients. Her Associate of the Royal Red Cross Award citation reads: “Whittle’s only consideration has been for sick or injured patients. She has displayed consummate professionalism in pursuit of that goal.”



● Gnr Steven Gadsby



● Capt Gail Whittle

● **AN officer whose troops discovered 63 IEDs between April and October 2009 – including 31 in one day – has received a Military Cross.**

Maj Jo Butterfill (RRF) led from the front as his operations uncovered scores of deadly devices around his patrol base in Nolay, situated in the south of Helmand's Green Zone.

The commander's leadership kept his soldiers' spirits high despite 12 IED strikes causing a number of casualties.

Maj Butterfill was at the "point of the spear" as his company headed out on patrol, often in searing temperatures exceeding 55 degrees Celsius.

He was in the direct line of IED fire throughout the 24-hour period in which his troops unearthed 31 devices and was also a key player in establishing a second patrol base for the Afghan National Army.

Praising him and his company for their levels of energy, Maj Butterfill's citation said: "His courageous actions, reflecting his position as an inspirational leader of men, stand out."



● Maj Jo Butterfill

● **COURAGEOUS medic Cpl Craig Adkin (Mercian) ran across 100m of open ground to provide emergency care to four victims of an RPG strike during last year's Op Panchai Palang.**

Realising that the casualties were pinned down in the enemy's killing zone, the NCO showed no hesitation in braving heavy fire to administer first aid.

After treating the first wounded soldier, Cpl Adkin dragged him across further open ground to avoid exposing the rest of his platoon to the enemy.

He then returned into the line of fire to treat the other casualties and helped to safely extract them to a helicopter landing site before troops managed to destroy the insurgents' firing position.

Describing him as a man who "refuses to loiter in the rear, [instead] pushing forward to the front where his skills are most likely to be needed", Cpl Adkin's citation for a Military Cross added: "He undoubtedly saved lives during the tour. His selfless and courageous actions are in the best traditions of his trade."



● Cpl Craig Adkin

● **A SECTION commander took on the full force of an enemy assault to neutralise a machine gun nest threatening his men. Cpl Richard Clark (Scots), part of an aviation assault company, deployed on ops in the insurgent heartland of Zhari last July and spent a day repelling a series of attacks in searing heat.**

As dusk fell, his platoon was engaged by a machine gun nest hidden in a hut 120m away. With the target obscured from the team's snipers, Cpl Clark fired two 66mm rockets at the position.

Sporadic firing continued from the building so, recognising the need for quick and decisive action, Cpl Clark left the relative safety of his compound to lead his section towards the enemy.

Despite bullets fizzing into the ground around him and his men, the NCO's calculated and courageous act was responsible for silencing the machine gun. His Military Cross citation read: "His initiative [and] speed of thought in the face of the enemy has been extraordinary."



● Cpl Richard Clark

● **A COMPANY forward air controller who was badly injured when his patrol was ambushed refused to relinquish his radio until he had called in air support.**

Cpl Paul Mather (AAC) was on a joint mission south of Sangin when insurgents attacked, launching grenades at British and Afghan troops.

The NCO suffered fragmentation wounds, but despite bleeding heavily and being in considerable pain, he crawled into cover and immediately began to request assistance from aerial assets.

Showing complete disregard for his own safety and well-being, Cpl Mather stayed on the radio to coordinate the incoming jets and helicopters, even refusing morphine in case it clouded his judgement.

The Military Cross winner's actions were described as showing the "utmost professionalism and selflessness".

The citation added: "He focused solely on delivering the accurate fire support needed to extract his comrades from danger."



● Cpl Paul Mather

● **A CORPORAL who found himself acting as sergeant and commander when injuries struck senior colleagues has received a Military Cross.**

Cpl Steven Childs (Rifles) stepped up to the role of platoon sergeant after an explosion blew out the eardrums of the senior NCO in the post.

After performing that role with merit, he was again called on to take on a more senior position when his platoon commander was badly injured by an IED buried in a compound roof.

Left in charge of the wounded officer and a shocked platoon, he coordinated an attack on an enemy position, called in mortar fire and personally led the soldiers back to the security of their nearby forward operating base.

Plunged into a traumatic scenario and faced with ongoing contacts with insurgent fighters, Cpl Childs displayed "raw courage" throughout.

His citation added: "For a seasoned platoon sergeant these actions would have been extraordinary. For a corporal they were exemplary."

On the ground: Soldiers from 3 Scots during an operation in the Upper Sangin Valley

Picture: Cpl Rupert Frere, RLC

● **A JUNIOR officer showcased his phenomenal command skills by successfully taking charge of a mixed vehicle and dismounted soldier troop during Op Panchai Palang.**

Lt Tresham Gregg (LD) led from the front as his reconnaissance vehicles cleared routes through important areas, often having to use choke points to progress. Insurgents attacked his troops on several occasions, but the officer did not hesitate to move his vehicles into the line of fire to protect his men.

Although the group suffered a number of casualties during the offensive, Lt Gregg demonstrated compassion and maturity beyond his years to maintain a high level of morale that proved inspirational to the rest of the battlegroup.

His Military Cross citation read: "His courage, forthright leadership and determination to complete the mission in the face of heavy casualties were pivotal to the success of the operation."



● Lt Tresham Gregg



● A HIGH-THREAT IED disposal operator disabled scores of deadly devices before being killed in an explosion.

Capt Daniel Shepherd's (RLC) life-saving skills were most evident during a spell spent providing close support to 3 Scots during an aviation assault held as part of Op Panchai Palang in Helmand province.

The officer was tasked with clearing a known drugs bazaar in central Helmand of the many IEDs insurgents were believed to have laid in the area.

During an intense 36-hour period, and working without the benefit of a remote-

controlled vehicle or protective explosive ordnance disposal suit, Capt Shepherd led his team as they rendered 13 IEDs safe, including nine in just 200m on the only approach road to the area.

All of this happened while under sporadic small arms fire and his glowing citation for a George Medal praised his "technical expertise, nerves of steel and well of personal courage".

Capt Shepherd dealt with a total of 57 explosive devices before he was killed in action during an operation in Nad-e-Ali on July 20 last year.

● A RIFLEMAN who suffered serious injuries after willingly heading into an IED-laden area to recover a fallen comrade has received a George Medal.

The heroic actions of Rfn Paul Jacobs (Rifles) happened in August 2009 when the soldier was leading a patrol on Pharmacy Road in Wishtan – widely recognised as one of the most heavily-mined stretches in the whole of Afghanistan.

A member of his company was clearing an alleyway to prevent insurgents attacking using command wires when he was caught in an enormous explosion which left him with fatal injuries.

His body lay on the ground next to a second IED exposed by the first blast, but Rfn Jacobs did not hesitate to volunteer to clear up to the site to recover the body of his colleague by dragging it clear using a quad bike.

After confirming the body was not touching the second device, Jacobs began to move back up the alleyway when a second IED detonated, killing his cover man and leaving him seriously wounded and with major fragmentation damage to his eyes.

Despite the severity of his injuries, Rfn Jacobs had the presence of mind to drag himself into the safe route he had just cleared to make his extraction less dangerous for others.

His citation read: "His sheer personal courage and startling determination that morning almost defy belief."

Hero honoured: Rfn Paul Jacobs (Rifles) receives his George Medal citation from Commander in Chief Land Forces Gen Sir Peter Wall. Picture: Steve Dock

● EXPERIENCED soldier WO2 Peter Burney (Rifles) has been awarded the Queen's Gallantry Medal for his inspirational leadership during a traumatic patrol in the Green Zone south of Sangin.



● WO2 Peter Burney

Moving with the lead section into an area known to have been laid as a minefield, WO2 Burney was blown off his feet by an explosion which ripped through the patrol's middle and seriously injured the section commander.

Immediately taking control, he called in a medic, issued orders and organised protection as well as accurately reporting events over the radio to get a helicopter evacuation team called in.

As the team set off towards the planned landing site a second device detonated, badly injuring the stretcher bearers and again blowing WO2 Burney off his feet.

He called on his experience to motivate the younger members of the patrol, ensuring no-one moved until a Royal Engineer search team had cleared a route to his position.

Recognising that this was just one of "numerous extraordinarily dangerous incidents" he faced on Sangin's front lines, his citation read: "His steadiness and steely determination in the face of the most horrific attack was inspiring and his personal courage was exemplary."

● AN IED disposal operator who dealt with 93 devices – the greatest quantity in a single operational tour by a British soldier – has had his actions recognised with the Queen's Gallantry Medal.

Capt Wayne Owers' (RLC) remarkable efforts occurred during an intense deployment to Helmand province between March and August 2009.

Routinely operating at higher risk levels than other troops, the officer was praised for relying on his wits, personal courage and lightweight equipment to tackle the full range of the insurgents' arsenal.

On one occasion, he lay down on top of an IED inside a crater caused by a previous explosion to disarm the device while under heavy small arms fire.

His citation said: "Such courage and determination to complete tasks irrespective of the risk to his own life has been Capt Owers' hallmark."



“His inspirational actions have served to instil real confidence in commanders and subordinates alike, have enabled countless missions to succeed and directly saved innumerable lives.”

● THE calmness under pressure of a company medic called on to deal with scores of incidents during his Op Herrick tour have been rewarded with a Queen's Gallantry Medal.

Cpl Peter Thomas' (Rifles) company suffered ten killed in action and 30 wounded in Helmand last year, but those figures would have been “considerably higher” were it not for his actions.

During one patrol, he came to the aid of his seriously-injured platoon commander, frequently stopping while under enemy fire to administer vital care.

The NCO was then called on to provide emergency treatment to several casualties of a second massive blast less than one month later.

On top of incidents out on the ground, the highly-skilled medic also used his vast talents to offer assistance to nine victims of an RPG attack on a forward operating base.

His citation read: “Cpl Thomas' extraordinary and repeated actions while under small arms fire are in keeping with the highest standards of the British Army.”

● THE unflinching bravery of a soldier who came to the rescue of a stricken comrade following an IED strike were in the “very finest traditions” of the Armed Forces.

LCpl Paul Timmins (RLC) was on an IED clearance patrol along the notorious Pharmacy Road in Wishtan when a member of a Royal Engineers search team detonated an improvised explosive device.

Knowing that further IEDs might be buried around the casualty, the junior NCO cleared a path forward, marked a wide safe area and provided treatment.

Working quickly and effectively, the quality of his first aid was such that the medical director at the field hospital later said the casualty would not have survived without it.

His citation for the Queen's Gallantry Medal said: “His incredible commitment has been pivotal to the sustainment of the enduring fighting spirit of the Joint Force Explosive Ordnance Disposal Group.”



● LCpl Paul Timmins

OPERATIONAL HONOURS AND AWARDS

Afghanistan

George Cross (GC): SSgt Kim Spencer HUGHES, RLC; SSgt Olaf Sean George SCHMID, RLC (killed in action)

Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE): Col Greville Kenneth BIBBY MBE, late Coldm Gds

Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE): Lt Col Simon James BANTON, Mercian; Lt Col Charles Simon CALDER, R Anglian; Lt Col Michael Robin James CAMPBELL, RLC; Lt Col Stephen John CARTWRIGHT, Scots; A/Col Douglas McKenzie CHALMERS MBE, PWRR

Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE): SSgt Thomas Edward John BRENNAN, RAMC; Maj Oliver Jerome KINGSBURY, Para; Maj Eldon Nicholas Somerville MILLAR, RE; Maj Samuel Joseph PLANT, LD

Bar to Distinguished Service Order (DSO): Lt Col Angus George Costeker FAIR DSO, LD

Distinguished Service Order (DSO): Maj Giles Richard HARRIS MBE, WG; Brig Timothy Buchan RADFORD OBE, late LI; A/Col Robert John THOMSON MBE, Rifles

Associate Royal Red Cross Medal (ARRC): Capt Gail Lesley WHITTLE, QARANC

Conspicuous Gallantry Cross (CGC): Sgt Alan Gordon DENNIS, Mercian; Gnr Steven William GADSBY, RA; Sgt Marc Kevin GILES, Mercian; Sjt Jaime MONCHO, Rifles; LBdr Gary PROUT, RA; LCpl Kyle Patrick SMITH, Mercian

Military Cross (MC): Cpl Craig ADKIN, Mercian; Capt Edward Robert BROWN, Mercian; Maj Jo BUTTERFILL, RRF; Cpl Steven Graham CHILDS, Rifles; Cpl Richard CLARK, Scots; Maj Neil Darren GRANT, Mercian; Lt Tresham Dame Rowley GREGG, LD; Maj Karl Christian HICKMAN, Rifles; Lt William James Archie HIGNETT, Rifles; Pte Alexander Robert KENNEDY, Mercian; Cpl Paul Edward MATHER, AAC; Lt Alexander John PHILLIPS, Scots; Cpl Christopher Sean REYNOLDS, Scots; Cpl Craig Richard SHARP, Scots; LCpl Alexander James SMITH, Para; WO2 Simon Nicholas THOMPSON, Rifles; LSgt Matthew Philip TURRALL, IG

George Medal (GM): Rfn Paul Raymond JACOBS, Rifles; Capt Daniel Marc SHEPHERD, RLC (killed in action)

Queen's Gallantry Medal (QGM): WO2 Peter John BURNEY, Rifles; Capt Wayne Edward James OWERS, RLC; Cpl Carl Peter THOMAS, Rifles; LCpl David James TIMMINS, RLC



Mention in Despatches (MiD): A/Cpl Sean Conor BINNIE, Scots (killed in action); Cpl Samisoni Naisabo BOILA, Scots; Lt Robert Alexander Macpherson BUCHANAN, Rifles; Capt Owen Alastair Ralph CANDY, Scots; WO2 Paul David COLVILLE, Scots; Rfn Gary CRANE, Rifles; Lt Mark Alexander CRIPPS, Rifles; Sgt Grant Leslie CUTHBERTSON, LD; WO2 Mark Andrew

DOBBS, LD; Lt Christopher Stuart Nicholas FENTON, WG; LCpl Buddhahadur GURUNG, RGR; Lt Duncan Simon Whittick HADLAND, Mercian; Lt Andrew John HALLIDAY, Scots; Sgt Darren Justin HANRAHAN, Scots; Rfn Kevin HOLT, Rifles; Capt Howard Robert HOOPER, RE; Cpl Paul INNES, Scots; LCpl Christopher Paul JAKEMAN, Rifles; Sgt Jamie Stuart LAWSON, LD; LCpl Rhodri Wyn LODWICK, WG; Sgt Terence Albert LOWE, Scots; Spr James Ewan MCINTOSH, RE; Sgt Andrew Peter MCNULTY, Mercian; LCpl Nigel David MOFFETT, LD (killed in action); Pte Edwin Goitseone MOTETE, RLC; WO2 Paul Simon MUCKLE, Mercian; Capt Matthew Bromley O'HARE, RRF; LSgt Michael Ellis PARRY, WG; Rfn Prakash PUN, RGR; LCpl Tilakkumar RAI, RGR; Sgt Gary Richard REYNOLDS, RE; Pte Lauren Louise RICHARDS, RAMC; Cpl Anthony RICHARDSON, LD; Cpl David Joseph ROY, Scots; Gdmn Lee SKATES, WG; Maj Alasdair Fortune Lyon STEELE, Scots; LCpl Matthew Paul TURNER, Para; LCpl Matthew David VITEL, Rifles; Maj Richard David WALLWORK, RA; Rfn Daniel Christopher WILD, Rifles (killed in action)

Queen's Commendation for Bravery (QCB): Rfn Edward Kenneth William BENTON, Rifles; Cpl Leslie John BINNS, LD; LCpl Sally Patricia CLARKE, RAMC; Rfn Ricky Dean EDGAR, Rifles; Rfn Robert Craig FLANAGAN, Rifles; Lt Charles James Richard FRASER-SAMPSON, WG; Capt Judith Lorna GALLAGHER, RLC; Rfn Liam John HARGREAVES, Rifles; Fus Rory HUGHES, RRF; Cpl Timothy Kenneth JONES, RE; Cpl Ian Paul PASCALL, RRF; Cpl Henry Edward SANDAY, Rifles; Spr Matthew Robert WESTON, RE

Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service (QCVS): A/Capt Michael James BRIGHAM, Mercian; Pte Charlotte Angharad BUTLER, RAMC; Lt Aloysius Coleman CONNOLLY, RGR; Capt James Alexander CORBET BURCHER, WG; Capt Mark Robert CRANLEY, RAMC; WO2 Andrew DAVIDSON, AGC (RMP); Maj Darren John DENNING, Rifles; Maj Robert Woodd GALLIMORE, WG; Capt Mark James HALE, Rifles (killed in action); Maj Ion Cameron Walter HILL, Rifles; Col Peter Francis MAHONEY OBE, late RAMC; A/Cpl Nathan Derek Leon MURRIN, RLC; Maj John Edward Keith OLDROYD, RA; Cpl Jonathon Simon PRECIOUS, Para; Maj Jeremy Andrew ROSTRON, Para; WO2 Declan Brian SIBLEY, Rifles; Maj Guy Charles Gideon Rees STONE, WG; WO1 Richard Charles TAYLOR, RE; Rfn Thomas John THOPPIL KEZAKETHIL, Rifles; Lt Col Rupert Stuart Michael THORNELOE MBE, WG (killed in action); Maj Stuart Peter WILES, LD

Iraq

Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE): Brig Thomas Anthony BECKETT, late Para

Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE): Col Andrew DENNIS, late Lancs; Maj Simon Peter HAMILTON, REME

Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE): Capt Keith TATE, Int Corps

Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service (QCVS): Maj Christopher James BELL OBE, SG; Capt Nicholas David Guise COWLEY, QRH; Lt Col Ludwig Karl FORD MBE, RA; Col Ian Alexander RIGDEN OBE, late RGR; Lt Col Gavin James THOMPSON, RTR; Capt Timothy WALVIN, RLC

National Operations

Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George (CMG): Col Nigel Malcolm Tree STAFFORD, late 9/12 L

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RUNNING HOT

Kenya-based Exercise Grand Prix picks up the pace to meet the Army's increasing demand for Herrick training

**Report: Richard Long
Pictures: Steve Dock**

THE arid African continent has traditionally formed one of the most challenging environments for Service personnel looking to perfect their all-important skills and drills.

With the Kenya-based Exercise Grand Prix offering an arduous training package in a climate that pushes soldiers to the very limit, it is easy to see why the country is emerging as a premier proving ground.

In 2008 around 3,500 troops were put through their paces in the challenging programme delivered by British Army Training Unit Kenya (Batuk).

Last year saw a dramatic surge in activity as the number of visiting personnel nearly trebled and that trend looks set to be repeated in 2010.

With that in mind *Soldier* completed a lap of Exercise Grand Prix at the Lolldaiga Training Area, near Nanyuki, to discover the latest improvements to this key Army asset. >>



"It is very busy and we are running hot," explained Batuk commander Col Neil Hutton (late Parachute Regiment).

"I've not got all the people I need in terms of numbers but it is coming together. Like everyone, we could do with more resources.

"The great thing about Kenya is that it delivers good value for money. We can do things much more cheaply than elsewhere.

"The training climate is so much more demanding on both the men and machines, so it tests all elements of the battlegroup. You cannot get that in the UK."

Batuk is now engaged in a year-long training cycle that includes seven Exercise Grand Prix as well as important engineering and medical packages.

Each battlegroup spends around 45 days in the country, 30 of them in training.

The work is divided between Archers Post, where soldiers are drilled in live firing, and Lolldaiga, the setting for a six-day field exercise that includes a number of challenging and varying serials.

Col Hutton said: "This is training for the contemporary world. The wars we are seeing in Iraq and Afghanistan are what we can expect to find in the short to medium term.

"But Afghanistan is going in its own direction

and we are not following that here.

"A lot of what we do is similar but when the soldiers go back to the UK they get mission-specific training and equipment and they focus on the skills and drills for Afghanistan."

He added: "The training here is in a challenging climate, it is very arduous.

"The guys develop physically and mentally in hot, dry, dusty conditions that are like those found in Afghanistan.

"If you are a young soldier coming out of London, Glasgow or wherever this is a fantastic experience and it really develops their confidence."

The commander is also keen to highlight what he considers to be a key aspect of the Batuk experience – the use of a

populated battlespace.

"We have locals being themselves; we bring in village chiefs to be village chiefs," he said.

"Wherever we [the Army] go there will be indigenous people we have to interact with.

"Here we have Kenyan villagers creating a very realistic battlespace. It adds a truly authentic flavour.

"If one of the guys has a bike repair shop he will bring it to the training area.

"Others might bring some bottles of Coke and set up a soda stall. It all adds to the mix."

With the Batuk demand higher than ever, plans are now in place to create a new base fit for the 21st century rather than having assets scattered across sites in

Nanyuki and Nairobi.

"The Nanyuki Showground (NSG) was an ideal set-up 30 years ago,"

Col Hutton explained.

"It was a training camp for two or three exercises a year with the main base being in Nairobi.

"We want to go out of the NSG and reduce the footprint from Nairobi to a single purpose-built site.

"The design team is out here with us now to put the plans together for a four-to-five-year programme.

"We will have one site split in two halves. The battlegroup will be in one half in tented accommodation and the other side will be the Batuk site.

"This will incorporate accommodation, workshops, admin offices and other facilities, allowing me to get the vast majority of people up here.

"For example, the main engine change for a Bedford truck has to be done in Nairobi. This will eliminate the need for that 200km drive."

And with the wind of change blowing in from the horizon the officer believes Batuk has an important role to play in the Army's future.

"We have been training here for 40 years and I would like to think we can be here for at least another 40," he said.

"Kenya is an important partner. The relationship we have with their military is getting bigger and they are now an important part of Grand Prix." ■

“The great thing about Kenya is that it delivers good value for money”

BICYCLE REPAIR



Front foot: Troops from 3 Para take the fight to insurgents in the settlement of Beeda



Force for good: Soldiers offer vital medical assistance to injured villagers in Anio



Emergency extraction: British Army personnel load a wounded civilian onto a stretcher

Report: Richard Long
Pictures: Steve Dock

AS the demand for training in Kenya continues to spiral it is fair to say there is an equal amount of pressure on those behind the scenes.

With around 10,000 troops due to visit the country this year, it is vital that a challenging and relevant package is delivered in one of the most arduous environments personnel can expect to encounter.

Soldier deployed to Africa with 3rd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment on the latest Exercise Grand Prix and found that Servicemen and women were quick to praise the wealth of facilities offered courtesy of

British Army Training Unit Kenya (Batuk).

"I'm really pleased with the way the training has gone," said 3 Para commanding officer Lt Col Huw Williams.

"This is not a natural environment and it is something a young soldier has to adapt to, but they have done that very well."

He added: "The weather is unpredictable and the wildlife factor adds a different element as well."

"It has also been very demanding. The exercise's battlegroup attack was in 45-degree heat and ran from midnight to 2300 – it was very challenging."

While focusing on the core kinetic training that is crucial for all soldiers, the Kenyan experience also allowed 3 Para to test the other skills that are becoming equally important for a 21st century army.

With villages and settlements scattered across the Lolldaiga Training Area, the soldiers were tasked with engaging with the local population to allay their fears and address their needs.

Thanks to the use of locally employed civilians, the troops learned valuable lessons in how to successfully interact with an indigenous population.

"We are trying to get soldiers to draw information out of the people they deal with," Lt Col Williams explained.

"It is about going into the village and pulling the information out so we can put the intelligence together."

"In Afghanistan we are living and working among the people and trying our best to

Walk on the wild side

Battle-ready Paras test their mettle in the unforgiving Kenyan climate



understand what they want.

"It is very easy for soldiers to do a left flank attack, but going into an area to understand people's needs and learn how they respond is also very important."

Soldier witnessed this crucial element of training as elements of C Company provided security assistance in a serial based at a mock United Nations camp.

The troops had to identify and communicate with tribal leaders in a bid to gain trust while simultaneously adopting a soft approach to avoid any confrontation and hostility.

Lt James Higginson, 9 Platoon commander, said: "This is my first time away with the platoon so it has been excellent training for me.

"We did a lot of live firing in the first two weeks, it was more kinetic so we did not do much counter-insurgency work.

"But at the UN camp we had a 24-hour presence rather than going out on patrol for a few hours and coming back a week later.

"This gave us complete control and the villagers loved us being in there.

It has been good for the new lads. It has given them the basics from which they can build

"On the whole it has been a valuable and worthwhile experience."

Sgt James Shimmins, of 7 Platoon, C Company, was also very impressed with the package and said there was a clear balance between conventional serials and the hearts and minds work that is now required of soldiers.

He added: "Most of the training we have been doing has been very fast paced.

"It has been good for the new lads. It has given them the basics from which they can build. I think they have been performing very well."

Soldier also saw 3 Para in action as they offered immediate assistance to locals following a massacre serial at the village of Anio.

The training then moved to the settlements of Beeda and Gotti, where the troops were engaged in a hard-fought contact with aggressive insurgent forces.

While testing the skills and drills of soldiers in the searing African heat, Kenya also ticks the boxes of a key Army retention tool – adventurous training.

During their time in the country 3 Para were given the opportunity to take part in a vast array of activities including kayaking, mountain biking and treks up Mount Kenya.

"We do far too many exercises where we work hard and the blokes do not get any fun," Lt Col Williams explained.

"But they can come here and have a good time. People pay thousands of pounds to come to Kenya as tourists.

"The Army invests a lot of money in adventurous training, we set the lads up with things to do and they have a brilliant choice.

"It is something for them to look forward to. If you are a young 18-year-old from a city centre estate you do not get this opportunity.

"We have had a busy year, we've been to Oman, France, Holland and Belize so we've had a really good run." ■



Report: Richard Long
Pictures: Steve Dock

TRAINING African military personnel and civilians to deal with the varying problems that grip their continent is a challenging task at best.

With countries including Somalia and Sudan bearing the brunt of considerable difficulties across the eastern region, the international community has been quick to offer its assistance.

But in this part of the world there is a strong ethos of providing African solutions to African problems.

This honourable thinking is at the forefront of the work being carried out by personnel in the British Peace Support Team (Eastern Africa) [BPST(EA)].

Working at the Humanitarian Peace Support School (HPSS) in Kenya, British soldiers are helping to develop a unique centre that will provide African military, police and civilian officers with the skills they need to tackle the range of problems on their doorstep.

Visitors from across the eastern region travel to Kenya to tap into this vast resource and *Soldier* took a closer look at the facility to learn more

about the work being carried out there by international troops.

"It is based on pre-deployment training depending on what the individuals will be doing and where they are going," explained Maj Mike Liddicoat (RA), a member of the BPST's planning team.

"We do have an aspiration to move to delivering collective training.

"In the same way that British Army Training Unit Kenya (Batuk) trains a battlegroup going on operations, I see us doing the training for the Eastern African Standby Force."

He added: "This was all paid for by the Crown. Our task is to develop the capacity so it is self sustained.

"The objective is to see it run by regional police and military personnel or civilians. That target is 2015."

Maj Liddicoat insisted that after an initial investment in facilities, the amount of money the UK now contributes is relatively small.

He was also keen to stress how training at the HPSS is an international operation with personnel from

across the globe involved in the process.

Classrooms and lecture theatres supply a fitting backdrop for the theory side of the courses but it is the Peace Support Operations village that is the stand-out feature.

Maj Liddicoat said: "The idea of the village is to put people in a realistic scenario within a safe environment.

"It gives them the chance to train and learn how to operate and react in different situations they might face.

"It is a phenomenal training facility. There is currently nothing else like this anywhere on the continent, but it is only part-built."

Canada has already pledged financial support to the village and further investment is being sought to ensure the project is able to continue.

When complete the facility will boast a market square, a church, military observation posts, a mosque, an IDP camp, a school and a number of other amenities.

This will give tremendous scope in terms of training serials and will allow students to gain experience of the vast array of scenarios they are likely to face when deployed on the ground.

Soldier's visit to the HPSS coincided with a host of African



policemen being put through their paces in a hostage serial.

Personnel from Ghana, Tanzania, Kenya and Sudan were all involved in the exercise with Dutch and American officials on hand to observe proceedings and give feedback on their performance.

Other true-to-life training packages included police investigating a human trafficking ring and even the simple task of recovering a bogged truck.

"From a training point of view the chances of them having had experience of this kind in the past is zero," Maj Liddicoat explained.

"They have never done anything like this in their lives. It is an unbelievable opportunity for them.

"We [the BPST] oversee the concept, design and construction of the facility. We look at the detailed requirements and are involved in briefing the architects.

"We have also helped with the development of the scenarios and we organise for role-players to be brought in."

As with the training delivered by Batuk, locally employed civilians play a key role at the HPSS.

Around 50 unemployed people are tasked with helping out in different scenarios, a job that pays \$10 per day.

While the early signs indicate a promising future for the HPSS, it still has a long way to go if it is to emulate the success achieved by its predecessor.

Up until April 2009 the site was home to the International Mine Action Training Centre, but due to the fantastic work it carried out its role became almost redundant over time.

The most notable example of its success can be found in Rwanda.

In late 2009 the country was officially declared landmine-free and it was Rwandan soldiers trained at the centre who took responsibility for clearing the devices.

If the HPSS follows suit, the lofty target of a fully trained East African Standby Force, capable of delivering African solutions to African problems, may just become a reality. ■

Helping hand: WO2 Rob Allen (RE) helps debrief African policemen taking part in a hostage-taking training scenario in Kenya

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A region united



Soldiers push for peace in East Africa

Report: Richard Long
Picture: Steve Dock

WITH operations in Afghanistan rightly taking centre stage in the Army's thinking, the efforts of personnel elsewhere across the globe can be overlooked.

East Africa has had no shortage of problems in recent times and it is in this volatile region that a handful of military and civilian staff are striving to ensure a peaceful future is enjoyed by all.

With just 17 personnel on its books, the British Peace Support Team (BPST) certainly has its work cut out. But it is playing an integral role in developing an Eastern Africa Standby Force (EASF) that is being trained to tackle varying crises as and when they evolve.

It is hoped the force will be fully operational by 2015 and BPST commander Col James Cunliffe (late Rifles) believes it will have a tremendous impact on the region.

"We are here to help Africans find solutions to African problems," he told *Soldier* at the team's base in Kenya.

"That is somewhat of a cliché but it is a very important aspect of international policy.

"It goes back a long time, before the Tony Blair Commission for Africa and the work of Bob Geldof.

"It should not be the international community that deals with civil wars in Africa. The African people want to take control of their own destiny."

To achieve this aim the BPST (Eastern Africa) offers advice and support to help develop the military capability of the region, which includes Sudan, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya, Uganda,

Rwanda, Burundi, the Seychelles and Comoros.

But its work is not just aimed at military personnel. Senior civilians and police officers are also among those who benefit.

In Karen, on the outskirts of Nairobi, British money has helped create the Peace and Conflict Study School (PCSS), a facility aimed at training and educating key decision-makers.

The campus is one of two sites that form the International Peace Support Training Centre.

"To get EASF trained, organised and ready the UK has built two schools in Nairobi," Col Cunliffe explained.

"The PCSS is strategic. We are talking heads of mission, senior UN officials and standby commanders who come for classroom training.

"The other school is more tactical – it is where individuals receive training for the standby force. We are not a British Military Advisory Training Team, we are about regional capacity building.

"We are increasingly becoming involved in helping countries go on UN tours.

"But this is not just Britain on its own, it is about sharing the burden with our international partners."

Visitors to the PCSS are offered a varied programme of courses that includes studies in conflict analysis, rights issues, peace operations and preventative diplomacy.

The site has a university feel and includes an accommodation block and classrooms as well as a dining hall.

But it is not just British money that has been

directed at developing the facility.

German funding helped build a lecture theatre, syndicate rooms and a library and partner countries such as Japan, Canada and the USA have also offered investment and support.

With British cash playing an integral part in establishing the school, it is now open to countries from across the region.

The international community has been quick to support the EASF and the courses on offer have a truly global feel.

"Instructors can come from anywhere, depending on the course," explained BPST chief of staff Maj Jules Fuller (9/12 L).

"If the United Nations is running a course they bring their own people with them.

"We may provide one or two instructors or some guys from England as contractors.

"Initially we were focused on providing facilities and training, now it is about offering the facilities."

The international theme continues within the BPST itself.

Lt Col Nick Theaux, of the French Army, is working with the British as part of an exchange programme between the two countries and serves as the team's S01 for plans.

"Working with the British has been very easy," he told *Soldier*. "We are thinking in the same way and for me there is not much difference.

"It has been a great operational experience. I am part of a small team and I do not have the pressure of the French structure.

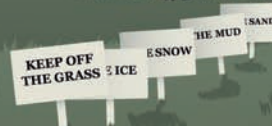
"This is a great project to be part of." ■

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HOG ROAST

Wild pigs save recce patrol troops' bacon

Report: Richard Long
Picture: Steve Dock

OPERATING at the limits of Kenya's vast training area, members of The Parachute Regiment's reconnaissance platoons have been exposed to a potentially deadly set of challenges.

Putting the scorching temperatures, lack of cover and hostile wildlife to one side, the troops also had to contend with a distinct lack of scoff.

Too far forward for a field kitchen and without the space for stacks of ration packs, the soldiers had to rely on their hunter/gatherer skills to keep their food intake at an optimum level.

Luckily for the Paras, they were not alone. For the first time in Exercise Grand Prix's history, British personnel deploying on long-length missions are doing so alongside wild boars.

With faces only a mother could love, the plucky pigs – warthogs to be more precise – have been added to the Army's ranks in Africa because of their unrivalled ability to sniff out food.

Armed with a similar digestive system to humans, warthogs are susceptible to exactly the same kinds of poisons as their two-legged comrades and can give the trotters up or down on a potential source of scoff without the need for soldiers to risk eating it.

The idea to utilise the animals came about after 3 Para NCO Cpl Peter Hammond saw a warthog being used as a guard animal on a wildlife safari during a previous deployment to Kenya and suggested employing them in a military role to his chain of command.

He told *Soldier*: "I was surprised that they could be trained to guard humans, but apparently it is not really that difficult.

"If you're on a long patrol you want to keep your load down as much as possible and food makes up a lot of the bulk. There are lots of berries growing here which is a good source of nutrition, but some of them are poisonous.

"I asked one of the locals about warthogs and he told me they use them to tell whether wild food is safe or not and I thought it made sense to use them in patrols out here."

James Florence, operations manager for the Worldwide Veterinary Service (www.wvs.org.uk), which supplies provisions for animal care in Afghanistan, confirmed that warthogs are indeed the perfect partner for a lengthy trip into the wild.

"It uses its two sets of tusks to dig burrows, but also to search for the grubs and berries which form its main diet," he explained. "They are a hardy

animal that can be easily trained and are completely unfazed by humans.

"Warthogs have an excellent sense of smell, which they use to determine if a food type is edible and, if threatened, are able to run at speeds up to 30mph.

"These animals make an excellent addition to a military unit."

The deployment of warthogs in a Service role may be new, but animals have a proud history of proving themselves on several wars' front lines.

From the carrier pigeons of the Second World War to modern Army sniffer dogs on Op Herrick, the animal kingdom has been a key ally in numerous conflicts.

The People's Dispensary for Sick Animals (PDSA) Dickin Medal – the highest military accolade for creatures of all sizes – has been awarded to 63 animals including a cat, three horses, 32 messenger pigeons and 27 dogs, among them search dog Treo for his work in Helmand province in 2008.

PDSA spokesman Isobel George said: "The use of animals in battle is absolutely invaluable.

"Since man first waged war, creatures great and small have contributed to the saving of lives in conflict, many times through their skill and always through their devotion to duty." ■

‘They make an excellent addition to a military unit’



Parental guidance

Service support system raises wounded soldier's family's fortunes

Report: Joe Clapson
Main pictures: Mike Weston

IS TOM going to survive? That was the simple question posed to Casualty Visiting Officer (CVO) Sgt Paul Biddiss (3 Para) by the parents of fellow-Para Cpl Tom Neathway when they learnt he had been caught in an IED blast in Afghanistan.

For Sgt Biddiss, providing an answer was a tall challenge for a man conducting his first visit as a CVO.

Senior officers introduced the powerfully-built sergeant to Amanda and Alan Neathway, but from that moment the stark situation was left solely in his hands.

"I just told them Tom was on a flight on his way back, which meant he was fit to travel and that he had a fighting chance," he said.

"There was no sugar-coating things, it's always best to tell the truth."

The sequence of events that led Sgt Biddiss to meet the Neathways started on July 22, 2008 when Cpl Neathway (2 Para) was providing sniper cover for a patrol on the ground in Helmand province.

One innocent move changed his life forever. "I went into a camp which had just been cleared twice," explained Cpl Neathway. "There was a sandbag which had been given the all-clear and when I moved it, it detonated."

As a result, the red-haired soldier lost both of his legs above the knee and his left arm. He is one of just seven Servicemen to have lost three limbs while serving in Afghanistan.

But even at the instant of the horrific explosion on Op Herrick 8, Cpl Neathway, a

car lover, only focused on "important things".

"I just thought about not being able to drive my Subaru," said the soldier, who was also blown up twice during a hectic tour before being injured.

While the NCO, then aged 24, was being casevaced back to the UK, Sgt Biddiss was asked to consider taking up the role of CVO – the demanding-but-crucial liaison point between the casualty and his family.

"I was asked if I would volunteer to help to be the bearer of bad news to Cpl Neathway's family," said Sgt Biddiss.

"One of the reasons I think I was chosen was for my experience with my own son, Chandler. On the day he was due to be born he contracted meningitis and suffered severe brain damage.

"He will never walk, talk, or see, so I have had that experience of facing and handling difficult circumstances."

The family, traumatised by what had happened to Cpl Neathway, was thankful for Sgt Biddiss' no-nonsense attitude and appreciated his "Para ways".

Usually parents of a war casualty would see their son or daughter privately, but Mr and Mrs Neathway requested the presence of Sgt Biddiss during their visits.

"We didn't know how Tom was going to be and I was very apprehensive about seeing him," said Mrs Neathway.

"When you are in the state that we were in you just can't take things in, but Paul was there to listen and confirm things the doctors had said to us.

"We trusted him and he deserves a medal for what he did for us." >>



Support in service:
Sgt Paul Biddiss (3 Para)
and Cpl Tom Neathway (2
Para) both benefited from
the Army's Casualty Visiting
Officer system



STRONG BOND



Sgt Paul Biddiss' son Chandler meets Cpl Tom Neathway during his stay in hospital
© Sgt Paul Biddiss

WALKING TALL



The plucky Para met his personal challenge of walking at his regiment's medal parade
© Press Association

ROYAL RECOGNITION



Prince Charles spent time talking to Cpl Neathway during the ceremony
© MoD/Cpl Rupert Frere

FAST TIMES



The car-lover admits that this thoughts turned to motoring when he was injured
Mike Weston

Sticking to what he knew best, the CVO saw humour and cheerfulness as the best way to lighten the sombre mood.

"His parents were really tense when they saw Tom for the first time so straight away I just said 'Oh no... he's ginger'.

"They laughed and immediately it broke the awful atmosphere."

While Cpl Neathway's life was in the balance Sgt Biddiss ensured there was nothing extra for the soldier's parents to worry about.

After three torturous weeks of uncertainty Cpl Neathway regained consciousness and was introduced to Sgt Biddiss for the first time.

As soon as he woke up from his coma and having stared down at the space where his legs used to be, he made a pledge to himself and to his comrades.

"I checked out all of my injuries, realised what I had left and pretty much straight away I said 'I'm walking at that medals parade'," Cpl Neathway told *Soldier*.

Weeks later he was stood proudly on prosthetic legs at the post-tour event.

"I like to set myself goals, but that wasn't just for me," said the soldier from Worcester. "It was for everyone to see that you can crack on."

Tom's next target is to travel to America to continue working on his rehabilitation.

"I need to get a set of legs to use full time," he said. "Headley Court has been amazing and got me to where I am, but America has had so much experience with my kind of injuries since the Vietnam War."

To outsiders, Sgt Biddiss' manner towards Cpl Neathway might seem harsh. But Cpl Neathway would not have it any other way.

"The banter goes both ways and I don't need someone watching their words, I'm a normal bloke," said the veteran of Northern Ireland, Iraq and Afghanistan.

Cpl Neathway, with Sgt Biddiss in full support, revels in astonishing doctors and breaking boundaries for amputees.

"I attended a medical board in February and the guys on the panel couldn't believe my progress – I will keep doing the same in the future," said the proud soldier, who died three times on the operating table.

"I will just go away, smash it out and see what happens in the future."

In addition to Cpl Neathway's determination to act as a "pathfinder" for the MoD by challenging the possibilities for amputees, the unrelenting competition he has with other wounded soldiers is astounding.

"There's a bit of rivalry between amputees – and obviously I'm top of the pile," he said.

"When I arrived at Headley Court it was full of Marines, so I just debriefed them on how they were all useless.

"I think that's why we get on so well, because we're all on the same wavelength."

Deadpan Sgt Biddiss chipped in: "To be honest Tom is the worst amputee because not only has he got his injuries but he's also got ginger hair."

Unbelievable as it might seem, not once since the life-changing IED blast has Cpl Neathway dwelled on the negative side of life.

"Sometimes I find stuff hard but I don't have bad days," he said. "I can't feel sorry for myself – there are guys who are worse off than me."

Cpl Neathway now works as a liaison point between senior officers and recruits and administers the parachute jump database at 1 Parachute Training School based at RAF Brize Norton in Oxfordshire.

On top of his Army duties, Cpl Neathway also works tirelessly to share his knowledge with other injured Servicemen and women.

"I go up to Selly Oak and Headley Court to see guys who have suffered injuries and just put things to them straight," he said. "I explain what they can expect and how I have dealt with my circumstances."

He added: "There are a few that don't want to hear what I say but I just tell the truth. The best way to get on with life is to accept the reality."

In terms of his personal development, Cpl

Neathway has refused to rule anything out and has several targets in addition to learning to walk on his new legs. One is to carry out a military jump – a feat never performed before by a triple amputee. Another is to

re-deploy to Afghanistan as a sniper.

"There was a rumour that I wouldn't technically be classed as a para if I couldn't do solo jumps," Cpl Neathway told *Soldier*.

"So I just thought, right I am going to be able to do solo jumps.

"I just want to prove to myself and to others that it can be done."

Since the accident, the thrill-seeker has already carried out five tandem parachute jumps, skied and been scuba diving. Now he is focused on the lone descent from 1,000 feet.

"I will either be on my stubbies and jump from the C130 ramp or there will be two lads lobbing me out," said the nonchalant corporal.

When considering returning to the war zone which changed his life forever, Cpl Neathway was similarly unperturbed.

"I just want to show the Army what I can do. I want to get back to Afghanistan – that's my ambition," he said.

In response a senior Army spokesman said: "Tom will be one of the first soldiers to work with the Army Recovery Capability. His Individual Recovery Plan will ensure his ambition to set the standard for what multiple amputees can achieve is fully supported."

For Mrs Neathway, listening to Tom coming up with his "impossible" dreams has become a regular occurrence and the proud mother does her best to keep calm.

"Regardless of what I say, if Tom wants to do something, he'll do it," she said.

"I was horrified when I when I saw him on TV skiing – I think as well as his legs and arm, he must have lost his marbles."

Cpl Neathway may have lost three limbs, but for his fortitude to conquer his challenges, he has gained endless respect and has grown into a living inspiration. ■



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Interview: Ciff Caswell
Picture: Steve Dock

HAVING taken on the mantle of Adjutant General leading the British Army's new Personnel and Support Command, experienced officer Lt Gen Mark Mans is the first to admit that times are changing.

With the Service embroiled in a fast-moving and high-intensity campaign in Afghanistan, budgets being squeezed and a Defence Review looming on the horizon, Lt Gen Mans (pictured) is well aware that the organisation he commands faces a more intense struggle than anything it has seen in recent years.

But despite these testing times presenting him with a stern trial, the senior

officer is relishing the challenge.

"It is an area in which I feel I am able to add value," Lt Gen Mans explained in an interview with *Soldier* at HQ Land Forces in Wilton.

"Obviously there is a Defence Review just around the corner and we need to be prepared for what could come from that. It is important that, come what may, we are ready to react.

"While soldiers join to go on operations, it is also important for me as AG to ensure they and their families are being looked after and that we are in tune with their needs."

Lt Gen Mans is well placed to see the Army through the ups and downs of the coming years. A sapper by trade, he has served in a

variety of senior posts around the world, among them Deputy Commanding General Multi-National Corps in Iraq, Military Secretary and Commander Regional Forces.

It was after his appointment to the latter post that a top-level review placed him at the helm of the Army's new Personnel and Support Command, which combined his existing job with that of the AG.

The move also saw the creation of the Force Development and Training Command, headed up by Lt Gen Bill Rollo. These two new organisations are now focused on supporting the Field Army and the Joint Helicopter Command.

"Having taken on the remit of AG, I have responsibility

for the whole people and infrastructure dimension in the Army and there are just about enough hours in the day to do the job," Lt Gen Mans said with a smile.

"But on a serious note, I am already seeing significant opportunities in bringing these two important roles together as one.

"I'm determined to support as best we can all ranks within these demanding times.

"Making sure we give these people the best is important. Within weeks of joining their units our soldiers are now going out

on operations – extremely difficult operations – and we are asking normal people to do extraordinary things."

Away from the cut and thrust of deployments and training, Lt Gen Mans is keen that troops continue to enjoy sport

and adventurous activities. As deputy president of Army Rugby and president of Army Volleyball, he firmly believes the sports arena remains an important part of military life.

"There is no doubt that sport fosters team spirit and brings a sense of achievement," he added. "I am very pleased to see that so much sport is still being played despite the commitments that we have."

Whatever the future shape of the Armed Forces determined by the Defence Review may be, the latest reorganisation at the Army's highest levels will ensure that the Service is more than capable of meeting the demands of tomorrow.

Lt Gen Mans may be the figurehead for that demanding task, but he is determined that his new command will meet the challenges and ensure the Army's needs are met – and that soldiers and their families have the support they deserve. ■

"I'm determined to support as best we can all ranks within these demanding times"

People person

Adjutant General puts soldiers and families first

Report: Marte Boye Haakonsen
Pictures: Norwegian Army

IN the deep woods of the eastern parts of Norway, the trees are loaded with snow. Freezing fog drifts lazily past powerful mountains providing a perfect backdrop. This idyllic setting was the temporary home to British soldiers Sgt Barry Welch, Cpl Dexter Fox and Cpl Lewis Dublin (all 1 Rifles).

They were among 39 international personnel who travelled to Scandinavia to learn the secrets of winter warfare from the masters.

"The course is challenging, mainly because of the weather conditions," explained Sgt Welch. "We're not used to -30C temperature and heavy snowfall."

"It was a bit of a shock to come here, but now we have learnt the basics we handle the cold better," Cpl Dublin added.

The Norwegian School of Winter Warfare (NSWW) is an international proficiency centre specialising in cold weather operations. The facility's main task is to educate Norwegian and international troops of all branches in how to operate and survive in sub-zero conditions.

As well as the British trio, the latest NSWW course hosted participants from Belgium,

Canada, the Netherlands, Spain, the Czech Republic, Germany and the United States.

"We teach them how to take advantage of the winter, for example by hiding tracks and making traps," explained course officer and Norwegian Army captain Stig Berge.

"The survival part is also very important. They learn to make snow caves and how to behave if they break through the ice or get caught by an avalanche."

For cold weather training, settings do not come much better than the Norwegian wilderness. Picture postcard forests cover the snow-laden landscape, allowing beams of brilliant sunshine to bounce through their

Winter warriors

British soldiers brave the cold to undertake six-week course in the snowy setting of Scandinavia



branches onto the white floor.

Unnoticed, camouflaged warriors enter the scene. All of a sudden the silence is broken by the roaring of a snowmobile.

The three British soldiers follow behind on skis and look every bit as comfortable on them as their international colleagues, but that is far from the truth.

"I had never skied before in my life but now I'm almost a professional," Cpl Dublin said.

While Sgt Welch skied once ten years ago, Cpl Fox didn't have any experience. But the soldiers were quickly brought up to speed.

"In the beginning of the course we did a ski march that lasted for three days so we had to

learn it pretty quickly," Cpl Fox explained.

As well as skiing, the three students took part in a variety of other exercises, including the feared "ice-breaking drill". Lining up on the ice in the dead of night, each person on the course had to plunge themselves into the freezing water below and stay submerged for 30 seconds before climbing out.

A survival exercise gave the students 40 minutes to build a snow cave in which they had to stay for 12 hours.

"Basically we learnt to look after ourselves in these conditions, and we have also done many tactical exercises," Cpl Fox continued.

In their final lesson the Brits were taught

how to rescue someone from an avalanche.

"We were shown different methods of digging, and this is among the new skills I can take home and teach my soldiers," Sgt Welch added.

As well as learning important skills and drills, the troops had time to visit a ski resort in the mountains near the camp and sample Norwegian delicacies like grouse and elk.

Afghanistan may be best known for its blazing-hot summers, but the winter months bring more than their fair share of snow.

Having personnel trained to deal with sub-zero conditions is an invaluable asset to have among the ranks.

"It's been a great atmosphere," concluded Capt Berge at the end of the course. "They have all succeeded really well." ■

"I had never skied before in my life but now I'm almost a professional"



Report: Stephen Tyler

SOLDIERS will receive a two per cent salary increase and more money for being away from home after the announcement of the latest pay awards.

The Armed Forces Pay Review Body's (AFPRB) recommendation for an increase in wages for ranks up to brigadier was accepted fully by the Government.

Changes to the Longer Separation Allowance (LSA) system, including allowing troops living under field conditions to claim from the first day, have also been made in the rates, which came into effect on April 1.

Chief of the General Staff Gen Sir David

Richards said that the extra money was a deserved bonus that recognised the "enduring commitment" personnel continue to show while serving on operations in Afghanistan and elsewhere.

He added: "In addition to the core award of two per cent, the substantial improvements made in the payment of LSA will go some way to mitigating the reality of nights out of bed in pre-deployment and other training."

The increase in salary will see other ranks' pay increase by between £268 and £917 per year. Officers will notice between £305 and £1,980 extra in their pay packets.

New entrants to the Army will now receive £13,645 per year – up from £13,377 in 2009 – while top-level private soldiers could take home as much as £26,405.

As well as earning soldiers entry to the prestigious mess, promotion to sergeant will now guarantee a salary of at least £32,756 – £642 more than last year's rate.

In addition to a higher basic amount, the AFPRB's recommendations include a host of financial incentives which recognise the hard work of personnel preparing for and deploying on operations.

One of the key changes made is to the Unpleasant Living Allowance (ULA), which will now be extended to cover Servicemen and women working from designated forward operating bases (FOBs) and patrol bases (PBs)

throughout Afghanistan.

Permanent Joint Headquarters is maintaining a list of locations where living conditions fall below a certain standard and troops based in them will earn a daily rate of £3.34.

Gen Richards added: "The payment of ULA to those in qualifying FOBs and PBs in Afghanistan recognises the often Spartan conditions we ask our soldiers to endure.

"I believe this year's award will contribute to sustaining the campaign."

The latest cash boost for members of the Armed Forces also includes a series of financial retention incentives for personnel serving in key operational roles.

The invaluable work of the Army's high-threat improvised explosive device disposal operators has been recognised with the offer of a payment of £50,000 for a four-year return of service.

Senior non-commissioned officer Apache helicopter pilots will earn £50,000 for three

Hike for heroes

Increased basic salary and more operational bonuses served up in Armed Forces pay awards

years of service, while class one avionic technicians from the REME will be handed a payment of £12,500 for committing to a three-year period.

While salaries have increased, there have also been rises in the cost of some aspects of Service life.

Charges for Service Families Accommodation (SFA) and Single Living Accommodation will grow by a maximum of 1.2 per cent for Grade One properties, although rates for those in Grade Four houses will remain the same as they have done for the past ten years.

The cost of hiring furniture for SFA is up 1.2 per cent, representing a total rise of between £3 and £12 each year. The garage charge rate is also up by the same amount, meaning an additional cost of £3.72.

A six pence increase in the Daily Food Charge means that scoff will now cost £4.13 a day – up 1.5 per cent from 2009. ■

Money matters: Chief of the General Staff Gen Sir David Richards has welcomed the two per cent pay rise awarded to soldiers. Troops serving on operations will now benefit from an improved allowances package.

Picture: Cpl Barry Lloyd, RLC
Background picture: PO (Phot) David Husbands, RN

Financial Retention Incentives

The vital work undertaken by British troops in certain trades has been recognised with a series of retention offers, including:

- £50,000 for high-threat explosive device disposal operators agreeing to a four-year return of service, 12 months of which must be on operations
- £50,000 for senior NCO Apache pilots and instructors for a three-year return of service
- £12,500 for REME Class One avionic technicians having completed between seven and nine years for a three-year return of service

Rates of pay for Other Ranks

| Higher band | | | | Lower band | | | |
|-------------------------|---------|---------|---------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|------|
| | | | | Annual Rate 2009 | Annual Rate 2010 | Annual Increase | |
| WO1 | Level 7 | £45,836 | £46,753 | £917 | £43,255 | £44,120 | £865 |
| | Level 6 | £45,146 | £46,049 | £903 | £42,066 | £42,908 | £842 |
| | Level 5 | £44,355 | £45,242 | £887 | £40,918 | £41,737 | £819 |
| | Level 4 | £43,576 | £44,448 | £872 | £40,135 | £40,938 | £803 |
| | Level 3 | £42,789 | £43,645 | £856 | £39,356 | £40,144 | £788 |
| | Level 2 | £42,066 | £42,908 | £842 | £38,578 | £39,349 | £771 |
| | Level 1 | £41,255 | £42,081 | £826 | £37,843 | £38,600 | £757 |
| WO2-SSgt | Level 9 | £42,404 | £43,252 | £848 | £38,851 | £39,628 | £777 |
| | Level 8 | £41,806 | £42,642 | £836 | £37,991 | £38,751 | £760 |
| | Level 7 | £41,219 | £42,044 | £825 | £37,506 | £38,256 | £750 |
| | Level 6 | £40,633 | £41,446 | £813 | £36,940 | £37,678 | £738 |
| | Level 5 | £39,754 | £40,549 | £795 | £35,342 | £36,049 | £707 |
| | Level 4 | £38,871 | £39,648 | £777 | £34,868 | £35,565 | £697 |
| | Level 3 | £37,991 | £38,751 | £760 | £34,069 | £34,750 | £681 |
| Sgt | Level 2 | £37,104 | £37,846 | £742 | £32,997 | £33,657 | £660 |
| | Level 1 | £36,229 | £36,954 | £725 | £32,572 | £33,223 | £651 |
| Cpl | Level 7 | £36,205 | £36,929 | £724 | £33,443 | £34,112 | £669 |
| | Level 6 | £35,538 | £36,249 | £711 | £33,190 | £33,854 | £664 |
| | Level 5 | £34,872 | £35,570 | £698 | £32,082 | £32,724 | £642 |
| | Level 4 | £34,206 | £34,890 | £684 | £31,267 | £31,892 | £625 |
| | Level 3 | £33,780 | £34,456 | £676 | £30,954 | £31,573 | £619 |
| | Level 2 | £32,945 | £33,604 | £659 | £30,195 | £30,799 | £604 |
| | Level 1 | £32,114 | £32,756 | £642 | £29,424 | £30,013 | £589 |
| LCpl-Pte | Level 7 | £32,532 | £33,182 | £650 | £29,255 | £29,840 | £585 |
| | Level 6 | £31,837 | £32,474 | £637 | £29,043 | £29,624 | £581 |
| | Level 5 | £31,191 | £31,814 | £623 | £28,814 | £29,390 | £576 |
| | Level 4 | £30,456 | £31,065 | £609 | £28,589 | £29,161 | £572 |
| | Level 3 | £29,761 | £30,357 | £596 | £28,372 | £28,939 | £567 |
| | Level 2 | £28,372 | £28,939 | £567 | £27,051 | £27,592 | £541 |
| | Level 1 | £27,051 | £27,592 | £541 | £25,887 | £26,405 | £518 |
| LCpl-Pte | Level 9 | £28,372 | £28,939 | £567 | £23,755 | £24,230 | £475 |
| | Level 8 | £27,051 | £27,592 | £541 | £22,924 | £23,383 | £459 |
| | Level 7 | £25,887 | £26,405 | £518 | £21,920 | £22,359 | £439 |
| | Level 6 | £24,751 | £25,246 | £495 | £21,021 | £21,442 | £421 |
| | Level 5 | £23,603 | £24,075 | £472 | £20,178 | £20,582 | £404 |
| | Level 4 | £21,346 | £21,773 | £427 | £19,146 | £19,529 | £383 |
| | Level 3 | £19,853 | £20,250 | £397 | £17,605 | £17,957 | £352 |
| Pte | Level 2 | £17,982 | £18,342 | £360 | £17,143 | £17,486 | £343 |
| | Level 1 | £16,681 | £17,015 | £334 | £16,681 | £17,015 | £334 |
| New entrant rate of pay | | | | £13,377 | £13,645 | £268 | |
| | | | | £13,377 | £13,645 | £268 | |

Rates of Pay for Commissioned and Short-service (Late Entry) officers – Pages 54-55

Compensatory Allowances and Specialist Pay – Pages 56-57



Unpleasant Living Allowance

Soldiers serving in the often-Spartan conditions found in Afghanistan's front-line bases will now receive the Unpleasant Living Allowance (Operational)

Locations deemed to fall below minimum living standards will attract the payment, which stands at £3.34 per day

The allowance ceases once soldiers have been away from the base for more than 72 hours unless they are on patrols

Rates of pay for Commissioned and Short-service (Late Entry) officers

Spartan hike: Troops living in tough conditions in Helmand's forward operating bases will be rewarded with a new allowance

Picture: Steve Dock

Commissioned officers

| | | Annual Rate 09 | Annual Rate 10 | Annual Increase |
|---------------|-----------------|----------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Brig | Level 5 | £98,984 | £100,964 | £1,980 |
| | Level 4 | £98,013 | £99,973 | £1,960 |
| | Level 3 | £97,054 | £98,995 | £1,941 |
| | Level 2 | £96,091 | £98,013 | £1,922 |
| | Level 1 | £95,128 | £97,030 | £1,902 |
| Col | Level 9 | £87,655 | £89,408 | £1,753 |
| | Level 8 | £86,660 | £88,394 | £1,734 |
| | Level 7 | £85,666 | £87,379 | £1,713 |
| | Level 6 | £84,675 | £86,368 | £1,693 |
| | Level 5 | £83,684 | £85,357 | £1,673 |
| | Level 4 | £82,693 | £84,347 | £1,654 |
| | Level 3 | £81,702 | £83,336 | £1,634 |
| | Level 2 | £80,707 | £82,321 | £1,614 |
| | Level 1 | £79,716 | £81,310 | £1,594 |
| Lt Col | Level 9 | £76,095 | £77,617 | £1,522 |
| | Level 8 | £75,111 | £76,613 | £1,502 |
| | Level 7 | £74,126 | £75,609 | £1,483 |
| | Level 6 | £73,151 | £74,614 | £1,463 |
| | Level 5 | £69,178 | £70,562 | £1,384 |
| | Level 4 | £68,315 | £69,681 | £1,366 |
| | Level 3 | £67,452 | £68,801 | £1,349 |
| | Level 2 | £66,589 | £67,920 | £1,331 |
| | Level 1 | £65,717 | £67,032 | £1,315 |
| Maj | Level 9 | £56,078 | £57,200 | £1,122 |
| | Level 8 | £54,918 | £56,016 | £1,098 |
| | Level 7 | £53,765 | £54,841 | £1,076 |
| | Level 6 | £52,609 | £53,661 | £1,052 |
| | Level 5 | £51,445 | £52,474 | £1,029 |
| | Level 4 | £50,293 | £51,298 | £1,005 |
| | Level 3 | £49,128 | £50,111 | £983 |
| | Level 2 | £47,980 | £48,940 | £960 |
| | Level 1 | £46,824 | £47,760 | £936 |
| Capt | Level 9 | £44,206 | £45,090 | £884 |
| | Level 8 | £43,704 | £44,579 | £875 |
| | Level 7 | £43,195 | £44,058 | £863 |
| | Level 6 | £42,195 | £43,039 | £844 |
| | Level 5 | £41,187 | £42,011 | £824 |
| | Level 4 | £40,188 | £40,991 | £803 |
| | Level 3 | £39,176 | £39,959 | £783 |
| | Level 2 | £38,168 | £38,932 | £764 |
| | Level 1 | £37,172 | £37,916 | £744 |
| Lt | Level 10 | £32,062 | £32,703 | £641 |
| | Level 9 | £31,295 | £31,921 | £626 |
| | Level 8 | £30,536 | £31,147 | £611 |
| | Level 7 | £29,773 | £30,369 | £596 |
| | Level 6 | £29,006 | £29,587 | £581 |
| 2nd Lt | Level 5 | £24,133 | £24,615 | £482 |
| | Level 4 | Not applicable to the Army | | |
| SSLC | Level 3 | £18,207 | £18,571 | £364 |
| | Level 2 | £16,685 | £17,019 | £334 |
| OCdt | Level 1 | £15,268 | £15,573 | £305 |
| | | | | |
| UCdt | Level 4 | £17,548 | £17,899 | £351 |
| | Level 3 | £16,075 | £16,397 | £322 |
| | Level 2 | £14,317 | £14,603 | £286 |
| | Level 1 | £12,470 | £12,719 | £249 |

Short-service (LE) officers

| | Annual Rate 09 | Annual Rate 10 | Annual Increase |
|----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Level 15 | £49,686 | £50,680 | £994 |
| Level 14 | £49,361 | £50,349 | £988 |
| Level 13 | £49,020 | £50,000 | £980 |
| Level 12 | £48,358 | £49,325 | £967 |
| Level 11 | £47,699 | £48,653 | £954 |
| Level 10 | £47,033 | £47,973 | £940 |
| Level 9 | £46,370 | £47,298 | £928 |
| Level 8 | £45,708 | £46,622 | £914 |
| Level 7^a | £44,881 | £45,778 | £897 |
| Level 6 | £44,371 | £45,258 | £887 |
| Level 5 | £43,853 | £44,730 | £877 |
| Level 4 ^b | £42,829 | £43,686 | £857 |
| Level 3 | £42,319 | £43,166 | £847 |
| Level 2 | £41,797 | £42,633 | £836 |
| Level 1^c | £40,778 | £41,593 | £815 |

a: Minimum entry point for LE officers with more than 15 years' service

b: Minimum entry point for LE officers with between 12 and 15 years' service

c: Minimum entry point for LE officers with less than 12 years' service



Compensatory Allowances

Longer Separation Allowance

| | Daily Rate |
|-----------------------------|------------|
| Level 1 (up to 340 days) | 6.69 |
| Level 2 (341-580 days) | 10.46 |
| Level 3 (581-820 days) | 14.24 |
| Level 4 (821-1,060 days) | 15.63 |
| Level 5 (1,061-1,300 days) | 16.83 |
| Level 6 (1,301-1,540 days) | 18.03 |
| Level 7 (1,541-1,780 days) | 19.22 |
| Level 8 (1,781-2,020 days) | 21.03 |
| Level 9 (2,021-2,260 days) | 22.24 |
| Level 10 (2,261-2,500 days) | 23.45 |
| Level 11 (2,501-2,740 days) | 24.64 |
| Level 12 (2,741-2,980 days) | 25.85 |
| Level 13 (2,981-3,220 days) | 27.04 |
| Level 14 (3,221+) | 28.24 |

Unpleasant Work Allowance

| | |
|---------|-------|
| Level 1 | 2.50 |
| Level 2 | 6.15 |
| Level 3 | 18.16 |

Unpleasant Living Allowance

| | |
|--|------|
| | 3.34 |
|--|------|

Northern Ireland Resident's Supplement

| | |
|--|------|
| | 6.41 |
|--|------|

London Recruitment and Retention Allowance

| | |
|--|------|
| | 3.84 |
|--|------|

Experimental Test Allowance (per test)

| | |
|--|------|
| | 2.69 |
|--|------|

Experimental Diving Allowance (Lump sum per dive)

| | |
|---------|--------|
| Grade 5 | 300.10 |
| Grade 4 | 150.06 |
| Grade 3 | 112.55 |
| Grade 2 | 75.01 |
| Grade 1 | 15.00 |

Additional hourly rates

| | |
|---------|-------|
| Grade 5 | 60.02 |
| Grade 4 | 15.00 |
| Grade 3 | 11.24 |
| Grade 2 | 7.50 |
| Grade 1 | 0.00 |

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

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

c: After four years on the preceding rate

d: Payable only to pilots in the ranks of major and below who have received the top rate of Flying Pay for four years

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

f: After four years on the preceding rate

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

h: Army pilots not qualified as aircraft commanders

i: After nine years' total service, subject to a minimum of three years' aircrew service

j: After 18 years' reckonable service

k: Also incorporates those previously covered by SP(Air Despatch) and SP (JHSU Helicopter Crew)

l: Rate applies to members of the Pathfinder Platoon

n: Payable on a non-continuous basis (NCB) to RLC officer and SNCO EOD operators filling an EOD appointment and qualified to low and high-threat environment level. RE TA officers and SNCOs will receive SP for each day they are in receipt of basic pay.

o: Payable on a NCB to qualified officers and SNCOs when filling an advanced manual techniques annotated appointment

p: Generalist nurses on achievement of Defence Nursing Operational Competency Framework (DNOCF) level 2 and working in a DNOCF level 2 post

q: Specialist nurses who acquire the specific academic qualification of specialist practice (Defence Nursing Operational Competency Framework (DNOCF) Level 3)

Specialist Pay

| | Daily Rate | Reserve Band Rate | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------|--------------|--------------|
| | | 75% | 50% | 25% |
| SP(Flying)^a | | | | |
| Initial rate | 13.93 | 10.45 | 6.97 | 3.48 |
| Middle rate^c | 23.63 | 17.72 | 11.82 | 5.91 |
| Top rate ^c | 37.58 | 28.19 | 18.79 | 9.40 |
| Enhanced rate^d | 44.24 | 33.18 | 22.12 | 11.06 |
| Enhanced rate ^e | 41.82 | 31.37 | 20.91 | 10.46 |
| Lieutenant Colonel^b | | | | |
| On appointment | 38.80 | 29.10 | 19.40 | 9.70 |
| After 6 years | 36.36 | 27.27 | 18.18 | 9.09 |
| After 8 years | 33.94 | 25.46 | 16.97 | 8.49 |
| Colonel^b | | | | |
| On appointment | 29.70 | 22.28 | 14.85 | 7.43 |
| After 2 years | 27.87 | 20.90 | 13.94 | 6.97 |
| After 4 years | 26.05 | 19.54 | 13.03 | 6.51 |
| After 6 years | 23.02 | 17.27 | 11.51 | 5.76 |
| After 8 years | 19.98 | 14.99 | 9.99 | 5.00 |
| Brigadier^b | 12.12 | 9.09 | 6.06 | 3.03 |

Non-Commissioned aircrew (trained) Qualified as aircraft commanders

| | | | | |
|----------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Initial rate | 13.93 | 10.45 | 6.97 | 3.48 |
| Middle rate ^f | 23.63 | 17.72 | 11.82 | 5.91 |
| Top rate ^f | 37.58 | 28.19 | 18.79 | 9.40 |
| Enhanced rate ^g | 44.24 | 33.18 | 22.12 | 11.06 |

Army pilots^b

| | | | | |
|--------------------------|-------|-------|------|------|
| Initial rate | 7.28 | 5.46 | 3.64 | 1.82 |
| Middle rate ⁱ | 15.75 | 11.81 | 7.88 | 3.94 |
| Top rate ^j | 18.78 | 14.09 | 9.39 | 4.70 |

Army aircrew

| | | | | |
|--------------------------|-------|-------|------|------|
| Initial rate | 7.28 | 5.46 | 3.64 | 1.82 |
| Middle rate ⁱ | 15.16 | 11.37 | 7.58 | 3.79 |
| Top rate ^j | 19.98 | 14.99 | 9.99 | 5.00 |

Flying crew pay^k

| | | | | |
|--------------------------|------|--|------|--|
| Lower rate | 4.85 | | 2.43 | |
| Higher rate ^f | 7.87 | | 3.94 | |

Diving Pay

| | | | | |
|---|--------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| Army comp air diver | 8.50 | 6.38 | 4.25 | 2.13 |
| Army diver class 1 | 11.52 | 8.64 | 5.76 | 2.88 |
| Army diving supvr and instructor | 19.98 | 14.99 | 9.99 | 5.00 |

Supplement for EOD Operators. In receipt of SP (Diving) level 3 and 4 and completed EOD Course 0804

| | | | | |
|--|------|------|------|------|
| | 3.36 | 2.52 | 1.68 | 0.84 |
|--|------|------|------|------|

SP (Mountain leader)

| | | | | |
|--|-------|------|------|------|
| | 10.31 | 7.73 | 5.16 | 2.58 |
|--|-------|------|------|------|

SP (Para Jump Instructor)

| | | | | |
|-----------------------|-------|------|------|------|
| < 8 years' experience | 7.87 | 5.90 | 3.94 | 1.97 |
| > 8 years' experience | 11.52 | 8.64 | 5.76 | 2.88 |

SP (Para)

| | | | | |
|--|------|------|------|------|
| | 5.46 | 4.10 | 2.73 | 1.37 |
|--|------|------|------|------|

SP (High Alt Para)^j

| | | | | |
|--|-------|--|------|--|
| | 10.31 | | 5.16 | |
|--|-------|--|------|--|

SP (EOD Operators)ⁿ

| | | | | |
|----------------|--------------|--|-------------|--|
| Level 1 | 7.28 | | 3.64 | |
| Level 2 | 15.16 | | 7.58 | |
| Level 3 | 19.98 | | 9.99 | |

SP (Nursing)

| | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|------|-------------|------|
| Generalist nurse^o | 4.85 | | 2.43 | |
| Specialist nurse ^p | 10.31 | 7.73 | 5.16 | 2.58 |

Longer Separation Allowance (LSA)

The Armed Forces Pay Review Body has tweaked the Longer Separation Allowance to compensate personnel who are away from home for a period over and above that covered by the X-Factor element of their basic pay

Key changes include:

- Service personnel operating under field conditions will be eligible for LSA from the first day;
- The minimum threshold for LSA has been reduced from ten to seven days for those not working under field conditions;
- Daily rates of LSA have been increased by two per cent in line with the basic pay award

Families first: A new Longer Separation Allowance package will benefit soldiers forced to be away from their loved ones during training and deployments

Picture: Maj Paul Smyth

Compensatory Allowances and Specialist Pay

Separate pay tables are available for the groups listed below and are published in the AFPRB report and on the MoD and ArmyNet websites and MoD Intranet: ● Pilot Employment Stream (Army) ● Medical and dental officers ● Veterinary officers ● Chaplains

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TALKBACK

YOUR letters provide an insight into the issues at the top of soldiers' agendas... but please be brief. Emails (mail@soldiermagazine.co.uk) must include your name and location (although we won't publish them if you ask us not to). We reserve 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.

PS...

THE anonymous "disappointed officer" writing about haircuts in March's issue needs to grow up. Queen's Regulations are clear enough and if he does not like them there are plenty of other jobs where "individuality" scores highly. I might add though that a decent haircut does not deny an individual the ability to have a personality.

If this officer knows of WOs or SNCOs being over-zealous in the interpretation of the rules then he may wish to take such people to task. I believe we call it leadership.

On the wider issue of dress and haircuts, perhaps this officer has yet to visit other armies which do not have similar standards and see how little respect is shown to them by their civilian populations. There is much mileage in the phrase "looking the part is half the battle". How would he have us all appear? With earrings and hairnets? I remind him we are supposed to mirror our society, not be a cheap photocopy of it.

Finally, and most irritatingly, his throwaway comment "while traditional in Phase One training, treating soldiers thereafter as children (or sheep)" is highly provocative.

As 2iC of a training regiment I can assure him his ignorance of how we treat our Soldiers Under Training is breathtaking in the extreme. Those that behave like children are of course pulled up but I assure him they quickly join the remainder who are expected to behave and are treated like adults at all times. — Maj N Presscott (RLC), 2iC 2 ATR.

● Keeping up appearances – Page 61



● MINDFUL that one good turn

deserves another, *Soldier* are pleased to offer SSgt Paul Tyler (1 AAC) a prize break for a family of four, courtesy of our pals at Pontin's. As the author of this month's prize letter (see Page 63), he can revel in the karma of sharing his money-saving tip with others during a three- or four-night break in Pontin's Self-Catering Classic accommodation at a choice of four coastal Holiday Parks: Brean Sands in Somerset; Camber Sands in East Sussex; Prestatyn Sands in North Wales and Southport in the North West.

Terms and Conditions. 1. All places are subject to availability at time of booking. 2. Prize is for a one bedroom Classic apartment, for up to 4 persons (adult or child) to be taken by October 30, 2010, excluding dates between 31/07/10 and 28/08/10, Bank Holidays and special events. 3. Open to UK residents aged 18 or over, except employees of the Ocean Parcs Ltd and their families.



Irregular tours: Soldiers and civil servants supporting the British garrison in Brunei – home to the Army's jungle warfare school – deploy under different terms and conditions of service Picture: Graeme Main

Green over Brunei imbalance

I AM based in Brunei and am about to use the military system to move the contents of my family home out here.

However, I have found out that there is quite a significant difference in entitlement compared to a move in the UK or Europe and I am only being given an allowance of 8.5m³ for possessions.

The remainder of my belongings will have to go into storage, leaving my family with no option but to purchase duplicate items in country which will in turn have to be left when we return to the UK.

In the current financial climate I know every penny counts and that operations are quite rightly the priority, but it is worth remembering that the Brunei bill is picked up by the host government.

The MoD civil servant who sits opposite me doing exactly the same job gets an allowance of 20m³ and extra entitlement for his family.

In addition he doesn't pay for his quarter and utilities, and nor will he for up to five years while in post.

On top of all of this he receives some very generous extra allowances, including not having to pay CILOCT [contribution in lieu of council tax].

This is also true for those unaccompanied civil servants, whose packages put those of the serving soldier to shame.

This inequality of terms and conditions for those who wear uniform and those who do not leaves a sour taste in the mouth.

Why the difference? Why are soldiers on a reduced scale of entitlement?

I don't want to hear an excuse about different Terms and Conditions of Service [TACOS]. We all are employed by the MoD

and funded by the Bruneian Government. — WO2 G R Buckley, Ck Wks (E), Brunei.

Brig Mike Griffiths, DPS(A), responds: The simple fact is that you are on different TACOS from MoD civil servants. You are also in receipt of allowances that your Civil Service colleagues do not receive but would like to, and vice versa. The current discrepancies you are encountering will be balanced out by the allowances you receive over your Service career.

The movement allowance ranges from 8.2 to 11m³ and there is an additional provision to cater for the number of accompanying children and the level of furnishings provided.

These are the standard entitlements for Service personnel assigned overseas (excluding north west Europe, where full household effects can be moved economically by road haulage).

When combined with the Service-provided fixtures, furnishings and fittings in the new accommodation these entitlements are deemed sufficient to meet the needs of personnel embarking on standard two- or three-year tours.

Civil servants receive different allowances in part to recognise their different overseas tour lengths, which are normally of a longer duration.

Finally, it is a common misconception that the Government of Brunei funds all costs associated with the British Garrison stationed there. They do not. In this case the MoD pays for the movement of the personal effects to the port of entry and the Brunei Government meets the cost of the movement of these effects in country.

| | | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|--|---|
|  JOINT HELICOPTER FORCE (AFGHANISTAN) OP HERRICK 11 2009/2010 |  AVN SUP GP Where's My Durka-Durka State? OP HERRICK |  1 REGT AAC WKSP REWE OP HERRICK 11 AFGHANISTAN SEPTEMBER 09 - FEBRUARY 10 |  OP HERRICK 10 Mar-Oct 09 FOB DELHI RAP BG (S) |  INTENSIVE CARE UNIT OP HERRICK 10B CAMP BASTION 2009 |  IEDD 5 REST 5 OP HERRICK 10 THE FAMOUS 5 EOD UNDER CONTACT |
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|  9 BUCKFAST Tp ATR WINCHESTER 29 Mar -28 Aug 09 | | | | |  HERRICK 10 NAD-E-ALI FOB SHAWQAT |
|  CAMP BASTION BG (UK) Demand-Distance-Duration-Destruction OP HERRICK 10 MAR-OCT 09 |  21 SIGNAL REGIMENT AIR SUPPORT 220 SIGNAL SQUADRON OP TELIC 13 |  FORCE PROTECTION AFGHANISTAN AUG-DEC 09 |  EGYPT FTR SECT 24TR VIKING GP BORN SURVIVORS OP HERRICK 10/11 |  FP & TPT COY ISAF XI(8) KABUL AUG'08 - FEB'09 |  PANTHERS CLAW PANCHAI PALANG THE BLACK WATCH LAD |

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PS...

I WRITE in response to the recent letters from Mr Rowland-Jones and Maj Thompson, "Officers need a dressing down", regarding personnel not wearing any headgear.

I fail to see how not wearing a beret detracts from the public's high opinion of those in the Army. The absence of headgear does not render the rest of the uniform "scruffy chic", unless of course it is dirty or incorrectly worn.

I find it odd that Mr Rowland-Jones considers an officer "eating something half-covered by a brown paper bag" as an affront to the British Army. Are soldiers not to be seen eating in public lest their enemies discover that they actually require food?

I find it equally sad that Maj Thompson is appalled that guardsmen walk about town without headress. I believe most people would find the term "appalled" overkill.

A "Colonel Blimp" attitude towards always wearing berets has no place in a modern army. It is the training, aggression in battle and weapon expertise that make our Army the finest in the world. — Adam Pamment, ex-RE.



A QUICK observation on the letter "Dress debate wearing thin" (February). The author has clearly made the same mistake as 98 per cent of the rest of the Armed Forces and civilian population and not realised that all the soldiers in the photograph are in fact wearing jackets, not shirts.

Consequently I'd like to pass on a valuable piece of sapper advice: "If all else fails, read the label." — Lt Col Rhyl Jones (RE), HQ London District.



● HAVING been bombarded with letters regarding the haircuts and appearance of Army personnel, *Soldier* has enlisted a top salon to give its opinion on the Queen's Regulations. In next month's magazine, world famous hairdresser Nicky Clarke will give his take on the Service directives on hairstyles and will advise on how to look good within the rules. *Soldier*'s Joe Clapson will also go under the scissors at Clarke's Mayfair salon in a bid to discover a haircut that should be acceptable to both style-conscious soldiers and their sergeant majors.

Picture: Graeme Main

Importance of keeping up appearances

I T was with amusement at first and then increasing alarm that I read the letter "Dress debate wearing thin" in February's issue of *Soldier*.

The correspondent, commenting on a photo of soldiers wearing their uniforms untucked, said that he could "only imagine the reaction of some regimental sergeant majors" to the picture which accompanied a story relating to the British Army's new camouflage clothing.

Deployed on Herrick 11, the author went on to say how officers everywhere would be shaking their heads, outraged at the sight of these scruffy individuals.

Commending the kit being worn as it was designed to be, the soldier commented that in some locations in theatre troops were required to tuck their shirts in.

While it is also my understanding that

the Combat 95 shirt was designed to be worn out, it has become common practice across the British Army to wear this item tucked into trousers when in barracks and as normal working dress. It is undeniably smarter and more appropriate.

It is correct that we need to concentrate on winning the war in Afghanistan.

However, in order to do that we need to maintain a high standard of military professionalism. Whether this individual likes it or not, shaving, the way we wear our uniform and discipline are all part of that.

There will be times when "shirts out" or T-shirts are the appropriate order of dress while on exercise or operations; it is a case of dressing appropriately for the job at hand. Even so, when back in locations that allow, we would do well to remember that we are professionals and that discipline

and appearance do matter. Other nations and the public at large do notice how we present ourselves and we should not forget this.

I may be currently sitting behind a desk but like many others I have completed a number of operational tours and expect more to come. I therefore speak with a degree of objective experience.

I am proud of what we, as professional soldiers, are accomplishing on operations, particularly in Afghanistan.

In the interests of ensuring that the younger, more impressionable soldier is not led astray, a degree less flippancy when debating the imperatives of maintaining professional standards and self-discipline would probably not be a bad thing. — Maj James Halford-MacLeod, Scots DG, SO2 (B) Reserves (Army), HQLF.

Been given anything **NICE** lately?



Do you know what you
are giving your loved one?

The symptoms of HIV can be hidden for years.

Ask your Medical Centre or GU Clinic for a simple test.

HANDS ON SURVIVAL

USE A CONDOM



PS...

I'D like to share a money-saving tip I discovered after a long-running battle with UK retailers over Value Added Tax (VAT) refunds.

Soldiers stationed overseas who have British Forces Post Office addresses are entitled to buy certain goods without payment of VAT. However the regulations for doing so were updated in December 2009.

Retailers are now required to obtain and keep a certificate from the person requesting a VAT refund. This certificate is an official letter (on headed paper) from your unit or sub-unit confirming that you are entitled to purchase goods from UK retailers without paying VAT.

Signed by a commissioned officer, the document must identify the individual [name, rank and number], specify the item(s) purchased [a signed copy of the receipt will suffice] and refer to the relevant European Economic Community directive.

You will have to supply the certificate every time you make a refund request but several receipts from the same company can be included in one request. For more information visit <http://customs.hmrc.gov.uk>

Better in your pocket than in theirs! – SSgt Paul Tyler, 1 AAC.

IN response to last month's feature on the Army's updated arsenal, "Top guns", why not bring back the 7.62mm Bren light machine gun? Robust, accurate and boasting a 32-round magazine, it is a superb section weapon and there are probably still boxes of them sitting in military armouries. – David Pritchard, ex-RM.

Dialect downloads, please

IN this age of the iPod when a great many 18 to 35-year-olds have an MP3 player, has anyone considered putting together an operations-orientated podcast which would allow soldiers to hone their language skills ahead of deployment?

If not, can someone please recommend which dialects are most appropriate to specific areas of Afghanistan and Iraq. – Cpl C M Darbyshire, 160 Pro Coy, RMP.

Col Hugh Russell, AD Ops, HQ DETS(A), responds: Cpl Darbyshire will be pleased to hear that as a 51-year-old colonel I too have an iPod.

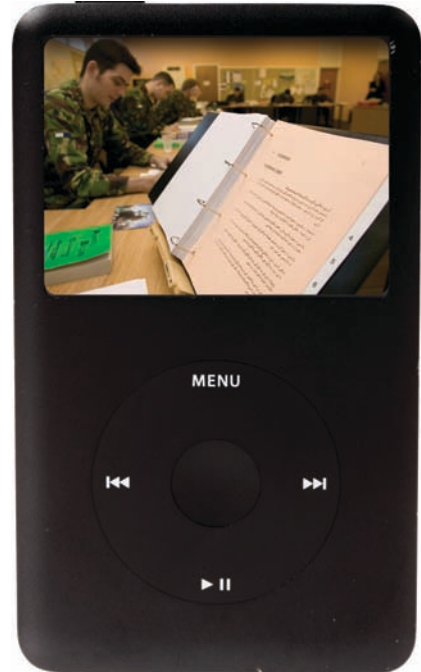
He will be even more pleased to hear that the operational language cards are presently in MP3 format on ArmyNet and that there is currently a trial under way within the MoD to evaluate the use of Apple iPod devices to host language and cultural training in support of current overseas deployments.

Please continue to watch the pages of *Soldier* to see how the trial unfolds.

On the subject of dialect – it depends who you are talking to and where.

The most problematic is Pashto which is spoken in a large crescent shaped area to the west, south and east of Afghanistan and across the border into Pakistan and has very marked dialect variations.

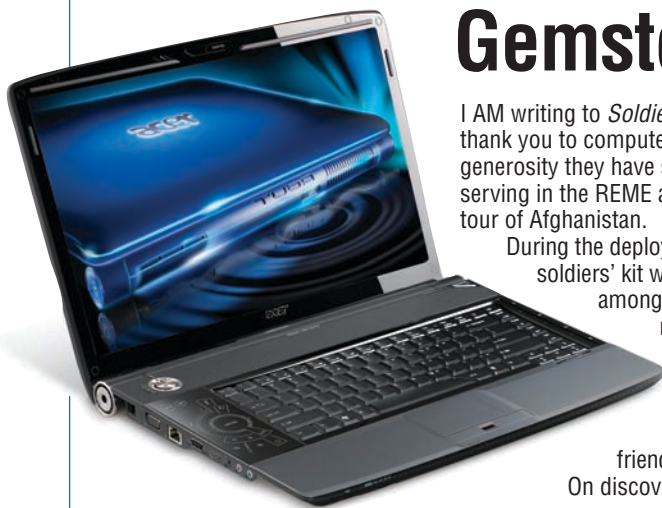
Much of the commercially-available Pashto teaching tools focus on the Pakistani dialect.



Dari, the language of government, is less complex and more standardised.

Iraqi Arabic also has local dialect variations. A complete answer would be too complex for this reply.

It is best to seek specialist guidance from the Defence Operational Language Support Unit or through your local Army Education Centre.



Gemstones of the silicone set

I AM writing to *Soldier* to offer a public thank you to computer company Acer for the generosity they have shown to my son, who is serving in the REME and has just completed a tour of Afghanistan.

During the deployment a vehicle carrying soldiers' kit was hit by an IED and among the damaged items was my son's laptop, which he had only bought six months previously and used as a means of keeping in contact with friends and family at home.

On discovering that the computer

was not covered by insurance I contacted various laptop manufacturers to explain what had happened and to enquire whether they could do anything to assist.

Many of those I wrote to did not respond or emailed a reply stating they could not help, but a member of staff from Acer rang me and promised to provide a free replacement if my son's computer was beyond repair.

A top-of-the-range Acer Aspire Gemstone arrived at my home soon after.

I would like to say a big thank you to Acer for exceeding expectations and helping when they were not obliged to do so. – David Horridge, Chorley, Lancashire.

READING your article on weapons and wildlife existing side-by-side in East Anglia, "Green Army" (February), led me to ponder the level of Army cutbacks.

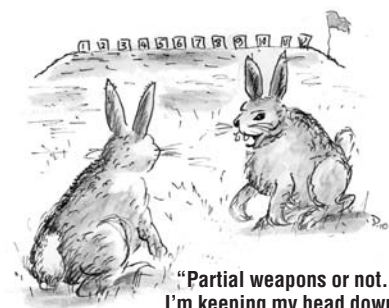
In my time on the ranges, my colleagues and I conducted annual personal weapons tests rather than the "partial weapons test" referred to in the story.

Is this change a result of a money-saving exercise or do soldiers use "partial" weapons so as not to disturb the wildlife?

To take this very green concept further, perhaps the Army could introduce partial vehicles; which would see soldiers training with just a steering wheel or wing mirror.

Such a move would make for considerable savings, both in terms of cost and damage to the environment.

This new partial world could rival the virtual one many seem to be spending a large amount of their time in. – D Evans, Haverfordwest, Wales.



"Partial weapons or not... I'm keeping my head down."

IN his response to the matter of Council Tax for an unoccupied property (*Talkback*, February), Brig Mike Griffiths pointed CSgt Towe to the Department for Communities and Local Government leaflet *Council Tax: A guide to your bill*.

Section ten on page seven of this document states: "If you have a second home because of the nature of your job, for example because you are a tenant publican or a member of the clergy and are provided with accommodation as part of your work, then the council must give you a 50 per cent discount on your second home."

As CSgt Towe is a Serviceman who lives in Service-provided accommodation as part of his job, the council is required to give him a 50 per cent discount. The guide can be found at the link previously given by Brig Griffiths, <http://www.local.odpm.gov.uk/finance/ctax/ctaxbillguide.pdf> – Lt Col Andrew Purdy, SO1 Families and Non-Operational Welfare.

HEAR, hear on the letter by WO2 (QMSI) Blower in the February issue of *Soldier* with regard to dissatisfaction over the warrant issued to warrant officers across the Services.

I recently had the privilege of receiving an MBE in the New Year Honours list and in the first week of February I received my Order of the British Empire warrant from Buckingham Palace. In sharp contrast to my warrant for promotion to warrant officer, the document arrived within four weeks, is embossed and signed in ink (not facsimile) by both the Queen and Prince Philip.

It is interesting to note that all those on the New Year Honours list (a total of 842 recipients) will receive a similar warrant. If the Queen can find time to personally sign these warrants, then surely the Secretary of State for Defence could do the same for warrant officers. – WO2 P Shipley, JFHQ.

JOANNA Robson, who wrote regarding the Army's refusal to allow her and her husband-to-be to move into their Service accommodation prior to two weeks before their wedding (*Talkback*, March), should be grateful she is being allocated a quarter.

I served for six years (WRAC) and have now been married to a soldier for 25 years.

Like many other Army wives, there have been times when I have not been allocated a quarter until seven weeks after my husband has been posted.

I've had to pack up one quarter and move to another without support and all while keeping children in check and the daily routine going amidst the boxes and chaos.

If Miss Robson is going to fit into the amazing roller coaster of a ride that is Service life, then she should embrace the opportunities with less negativity and do what we Army and ex-Army wives do best... get on with it! – Denise Boomer, ex-WRAC.

Have I got news for you

ON a recent visit to Afghanistan I noticed that the practice of supplying significantly out-of-date daily newspapers as part of the welfare package is still happening.

At most of the locations I visited there were huge piles of newspapers, the majority of which were at least ten days old and unread. Those which had been picked up had been leafed through and discarded. This is a waste of time, money and effort, and rather than improving welfare it serves to remind our troops that they are a long way from home at the end of a strained air bridge.

Surely a better solution would be to provide weekly journals and newspapers. *The Guardian*, *Telegraph* and *Independent* all publish weekly international editions.

At the other end of the spectrum, weekly magazines such as *Nuts* and *Zoo* provide entertainment and sports coverage.

By supplying weekly publications the welfare package could deliver a product which is timely, relevant and something people will actually read. It would also reduce the volume of unwanted paper being flown into theatre.

The only thing yesterday's newspapers are good for is wrapping up fish and chips. – Maj R Noott, SO2 Joint Manoeuvre 5, MoD.

Maj Alex West, PJHQ, replies: The tri-Service Welfare Policy (JSP 770) states that personnel in receipt of the Deployed Welfare Package (Overseas) (DWP(O)) are eligible for a selection of newspapers on a ratio of one newspaper per ten personnel per day and a selection of magazines on a ratio of one magazine per five personnel per month.

Newspapers are delivered to RAF Brize Norton the day they are printed and are usually flown to Afghanistan the same day. Delays, however, often occur in theatre as newspapers are a low priority for freight and they generally arrive in forward



"Even our local chippy at home uses more up-to-date papers than these."

operating bases significantly out of date.

Following an agreement with the provider, some weekly newspapers are sent but they are not an entitlement.

Units on Herrick 10 reported that weekly newspapers were not wanted. If the feeling in theatre has changed and that weekly, rather than daily, newspapers are required, PJHQ J1 will engage with MoD and look at changing the entitlement.

Each unit in theatre should submit a DWP(O) return every month outlining which newspapers, journals or magazines they would like for the following month. If a unit wants all of their magazines in a particular month to be *Nuts* and submits the DWP(O) return to Joint Force Support, we will provide that.

It is worth remembering that yesterday's newspapers still help deployed personnel keep in touch with events at home.

Unfortunately it is unrealistic to expect to receive today's British newspaper while serving on operations in Afghanistan. PJHQ J1 did investigate the possibility of building a printing press in Camp Bastion to speed up the provision but it was considered prohibitively expensive.

'Quit whingeing, you 'orrible lot'

I HAVE always enjoyed reading the *Talkback* pages of *Soldier* but am appalled by the whingeing that has been published recently. How the respondents keep managing to answer without being cynical is beyond me.

I would like to offer the following replies to a number of reader's letters: To LCpl McKinney who asks whether the current rate of Long Service Advance of Pay is high enough, do like the rest of us have done – save up for a deposit and do not rely on handouts from the Army.

To the author of "Bootneck blues" [who voiced his annoyance at being posted away from Plymouth], transfer to the Royal Marines or buy a house in the area.

To Joanna Robson [who was critical of

the Army system for not allowing her and her husband-to-be to move into a married quarter more than two weeks before their wedding date], if you think getting married and planning a move is stressful, how are you going to cope when your partner is on operations and you have to move with young children in tow?

I could go on and on. Come on people, stop the whingeing and whining. The Army is not a charity with bottomless pockets. If you think life in civvy street is any different, go and try it. – A grumpy LE officer.

The editor, with only a trace of cynicism, types: Thanks for sharing your whinge about whingers with us.



Revolutionary rifle: An Urgent Operational Requirement, the semi-automatic, gas-operated L129 A1 Sharpshooter is the first new rifle to be introduced to the British Army for 20 years. WO2 Ian Smith, who was involved in the weapon's trial and procurement, insists it is more accurate, robust and reliable than the SLR. Picture: Steve Dock

Sharpshooter slays Service stalwart

AS the technical officer responsible for, among other weapon systems, the new L129 A1 Sharpshooter, I thought it prevalent to comment on some of the comments made by Erik Blakeley in last month's issue (*Talkback*, March).

The rifle is indeed similar to the AR10 in outward appearance as it is based on the Stoner design of weapons, which originated in the 1950s and was the concept behind the 5.56mm version of the AR15 Assault Rifle. This weapon did eventually morph into the M16.

There are several takes on this design by other manufactures, with the most up-to-date being the L129 A1 from LMT [Lewis Machine & Tool Company], which the MoD has procured through open competition against alternative systems, including other AR10 variants.

The Sharpshooter has a stainless steel, match grade, cut rifled barrel that is at the core of its accuracy and performance and is currently not found on any other weapon of this type.

It has a one-piece upper receiver which means that the upper picatinny rail is full length and unbroken, and the weapon can be stripped and reassembled without having

to remove the sights and breaking zero.

I do not see that it is odd that we buy a modern version of a rifle that is very reliable, accurate and robust.

To date, there is no other rifle in existence that incorporates the Stoner design which has achieved the level of accuracy and adaptability as this one.

How is reverting back 30 years to a rifle that will have to be modified to be something it was not designed to be (accursed M14s) a good idea?

We have brought in a modern rifle that was designed to fully fill a capability gap that has arisen due to the operational theatres that we work in.

Even if sufficient stocks of the L1A1 (the SLR for those who either don't know or remember) existed, the weapon is nowhere near as accurate, robust or reliable as the new rifle. And yes, I have fired them back-to-back on the same range on the same day.

In my view, rose-tinted spectacles have no place in modern warfare and readers should remember that just because they used the weapon 20-30 years ago and thought it was great, capabilities have moved on.

The L1A1 has had its day, it has no place

on the modern battlefield modified or not, so please let it rest in peace along with the fond memories of those that used it! – WO2 Ian Smith, LWPB, Abbey Wood.

PS...

I'd like to add my three pence worth to the recent letters on calls for a left-handed rifle.

As a left-handed ex-soldier who served in the Royal Corps of Signals (1970-76) I used the left-handed version of the venerable SLR.

Today's assault rifles are the primary offensive weapons of modern fighting soldiers. To enter a conflict with a weapon that puts left-handed soldiers at a disadvantage is a cause for concern.

Between 13 and 15 per cent of the population of the United Kingdom is left-handed. Along with this comes ocular dominance – left hand/left eye. No amount of training is going to change that.

Surely in the 21st century we should be able to equip our soldiers with a weapon that can be fired left-handed. The Germans, Spanish, French and Austrians seem able to do this, why not us? – Les Johnson, Tyne and Wear.

Give British veterans a slice of American pie

DURING my career I have enjoyed several deployments and personal holidays to the USA and have been impressed with the facilities – be it hotels, gyms or welfare offices – afforded to serving American personnel, their veterans and overseas soldiers such as myself.

Although I understand we cannot emulate the same level of social infrastructure as America, I feel we should be striving to match the commitment to welfare and recreational services for our own deserving veterans. Has there been any consideration given to allowing ex-Service personnel an

ID card of some sort?

Such a document could then allow access to military facilities post service.

I understand that there may well be security issues with such arrangements but I am sure some sensible controls could be implemented. I would love to be able to buy cheap tickets to Disney when I am 80! – WO2 J Lane, AAC.

Cdr Graham Jardine (RN), Pensions, Compensation and Veterans, responds: The subject of veteran's identity cards has been raised previously and considerable

work has been undertaken to identify the best option to satisfy the many requirements that the introduction of such a scheme, underwritten by the MoD, would raise.

Following careful consideration the MoD is investigating issuing a veterans' variant of the national ID card. This position is strongly supported by the various ex-Service organisations. As far as recreational facilities are concerned, there are no plans to change current MoD policy in order to allow veterans routine access to Service establishments.



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PS...

I WRITE in response to the soldier who said he felt cheated at not being awarded the Golden Jubilee Medal (*Talkback*, February). How does he think civil servants, who are also crown servants, feel?

This was not a medal issued for a campaign, but was a decoration to acknowledge individuals' allegiance to the Queen. Unlike the writer, who did not have the qualifying five years of service to the crown in 2002, I had 23 years to my name and to miss out felt like a slap in the face.

Something, be it a medal or badge, to acknowledge our commitment and hard work behind the scenes in supporting the Armed Forces would have been appreciated. – *Name and address supplied.*

TO those who have commented that Princes William and Harry should hand back their Golden Jubilee Medals, I would like to point out that the decoration was a gift from the Queen.

Her Majesty elected to award the medal to those in the Armed Forces and emergency services and it was the organisations who set the five-year qualifying rule.



The medal was also awarded to all members of the royal household – including all footmen, butlers, chefs and the lord lieutenants of counties – and it was for this reason that the princes received the decoration.

Members of the royal family, irrespective of what they do, have always been issued with coronation/jubilee medals. As an example, Prince Charles and Princess Anne both received the Coronation Medal in 1953, despite only being aged five and two-and-a-half at the time. – Gerry F Smith, Ardersier, Inverness.

THERE was much criticism when the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal was awarded to only those military personnel who were in uniform and had a minimum of five years service on the anniversary date.

This criteria continues to cause great resentment among veterans. There were many who had served far longer than five years who did not get awarded the medal because they left the military just before its issue.

Clearly, the same anger will surface once again should a similar criteria be used for the Diamond Jubilee Medal.

To be fair, avoid more criticism and, more importantly, show appreciation to all those who serve, I would ask that serious consideration be given to awarding the Diamond Jubilee Medal to all those who have served during the Queen's reign. – *Maj (Retd) Sean Pollock, Toronto, Canada.*

Time to honour wounded

AN article in my regimental magazine, submitted from the regimental HQ of the Queen's Own Rifles of Canada, detailed the creation and approval of a Sacrifice Medal.

The story stated: "The medal will be awarded to military personnel, members of allied forces or Canadian civilians working under the authority of the Canadian Forces, who have suffered wounds or death caused by hostile action, on or after October 7, 2001."

Qualification for the medal falls into the two distinct categories of "wounding" and "death". Suffice to say that the criteria for these are straightforward to understand and are not ambiguous in any way.

If Her Majesty can grant the soldiers and civilians of Canada with such a medal, then why not for members of the British Armed Forces? I put it to readers of *Soldier* – be they serving or civilian, private or general – that our beloved and much-respected Queen has never been approached with such a request.

I would also suggest that if she was made aware by members of the Services of the desire for such a medal that she would not hesitate to authorise one.

Some reading this will argue that the recently struck Elizabeth Cross [issued to



the families of those killed on operations] is the British equivalent of such an award.

Not so. This decoration [pictured below] is not awarded to Service personnel, but to the next of kin in recognition of their loss.

Let's be perfectly frank in the glorious medium that is *Soldier* and with the wide and diverse audience that regularly reads it – there are a vast number of Service personnel who have been injured on current operations by hostile forces or action.

Calls for a decoration similar to the Sacrifice Medal are not about glorification. Nor are they about adding another medal to those who no doubt already have a chest full. Part of the Army's ethos is "doing the thing right, because it's the right thing to do". A Sacrifice Medal is the right thing and is certainly the right thing to do.

These fine men and women deserve a medal to show at appropriate times that they have been injured by the "enemy" in the course of their given duty, while protecting the interests of their people, the policies of their Government and the good name that they do it under, Queen Elizabeth.

If it's ok for Canada, it's ok for Great Britain. Get a grip and make it happen! – *WO2 M Istead, 2 PWRR.*



PM's patrol: Gordon Brown



Tory tour: David Cameron



Lib Dem deployment: Nick Clegg

'Shame on petition-pooping naysayers'

I RECENTLY received an electronic petition calling on 10 Downing Street to put a stop to MPs receiving a medal for visiting Afghanistan. I declined to sign as I found it an extraordinarily pompous and small-minded cause.

By 2004, 211 of the 435 US congressmen had visited American troops in Iraq to show their support. After four years in Helmand province, Parliament can offer only an embarrassing proportion of visitors.

However, those that come to theatre do so beyond the call of duty. They do so at often greater risk than many Service personnel deployed at Kandahar Airfield and I found them to be genuinely

interested and concerned for what they could do to help, some offering significant influence and funding.

There is no purely military solution to Afghanistan and every effort by MPs to further enfranchise the institution of Parliament in this bloody endeavour should be recognised; by a medal if that's what it takes.

Well done those MPs who have been bothered to visit any troops anywhere and shame on the petition-pooping naysayers. None of whom, I suggest, have written to their MPs asking them to show support to the deployed UK civil/military effort through a Parliamentary visit. – *Maj I Ballantyne, R Signals.*

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Time for self-help: Having provided the necessary security and stability for nations such as Iraq (above) and Afghanistan to return to democracy, AFF chief executive Julie McCarthy is urging British Service personnel and their families not to ignore the ballot box on home soil come election day. Picture: Cpl Will Craig, RLC

Elect to have your voice heard

ALITTLE under a year ago I wrote about the difficulties British Service personnel and their families face when it comes to voting.

Unfortunately, with the country now on the eve of a General Election, very little has changed since then.

However, this has not been for the want of trying. A working group has been looking at the issues for the last couple of months and while there are some big ideas there is simply not enough time to implement them. After the election, we will start work again.

So what can we as a Service population do to ensure that we have and use our vote? Registering for the right to do so is a key first step.

This may sound obvious but I was amazed by the number of people who responded to an Army Families Federation (AFF) survey on voting with comments such as "I can't be bothered" and "what is the point?". Over 56 per cent of those who answered were not registered to vote.

So how do you register? The easiest way is by visiting www.aboutmyvote.co.uk and clicking the Armed Forces link at the bottom of the page.

Word to the wise, if you're overseas don't put your BFPO number in the "your local area" box – the website won't like it!

You need to enter the postcode of the area in which you want to vote.

This could be the location of your last posting, your home town or even the area in

which you eventually want to settle.

If you're going to be on operations in Afghanistan when the election is held and want a postal vote then there is a special registration form available.

Your unit should be able to provide you with the relevant documentation. However, if you do have any problems obtaining a copy then contact either the AFF or Electoral Registration Officer in your area.

Personnel currently deployed in Afghanistan should already be in possession of the paperwork but regimental administrative officers will be able to provide forms to those who are not.

These registration forms will identify those ballot papers that need to be collected centrally and distributed quickly.

When registering you will be offered a plethora of choices – ordinary voter, Service voter, postal vote or proxy.

If you're in the UK then you can register as an everyday voter.

Why choose to be a Service voter? If you're living overseas then this is the option for you. Equally, if you do not wish to vote locally and are keen to have your say at the polls in your home town or that of your family then you will need to register as a Service voter in that constituency and elect to vote by post or proxy if you won't be there on election day.

Spouses, civil partners and dependants can also register as Service voters.

To post or to proxy? Both methods have their pros and cons. Do you have somebody you can trust, who you believe would vote the way you ask them to?

If so proxy may be the most sensible method to ensure that your vote is exercised, especially if you are voting from overseas or on operations.

I used a proxy for my years in Germany but remain unconvinced that my dad voted the way I asked him to.

Postal votes are a way of putting your own X in the box but you need to return your ballot papers straight away to give them a fighting chance of getting back in time for election day.

A recent trial by the AFF's Germany branch showed that dummy ballot papers took between ten and 14 days to get to and from the target addresses.

As the election window is only 11 days you can see the conundrum.

Although it all sounds a bit gloomy if you're overseas, that doesn't mean you shouldn't make every effort.

We live in a democratic country and there are others around the world (many of whom our Forces spend time helping) who aren't so fortunate. Having assisted others, you now owe it to yourself to at least try to vote on your nation's future. ■

‘You now owe it to yourself to vote on your nation's future’



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TEN details have been changed on this photograph of a display at the Imperial War Museum, London. Circle the differences in the left-hand image and send the panel to **HOAY 821, Soldier**, Ordnance Road, Aldershot, Hampshire GU11 2DU by April 30.

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

Name: (Give initials and rank or title)

Address:

February competition: First correct entry drawn at random and winner of the £100 was **Mrs S Page**, Pontefract, West Yorkshire. Runners-up **SSgt M Cavnor**, 655 Sqn AAC(V), Army Aviation Centre, Middle Wallop and **LCpl K Evans**, RHQ Irish Guards, Wellington Barracks, each win a £25 gift voucher.

The ten differences were: disabled sign; tunic button; brass clip; battle honour; cap badge; Iraq medal; cuff button; collar badge; person on balcony; II on cypher.



QUITE how some of our satirists got from Lord Paul "the dragster" Drayson showcasing the cutting-edge properties of intelligent material d30 (picture below right) to discussing doughnuts is lost on the team at *Soldier* HQ. But get there many did.

Among those shunning the scientific wonder of the synthetic goo [a soft and flexible material made from intelligent molecules that lock together on shock to absorb and spread force] in favour of deep-fried delights, was Sandra Shephard (BFPO 40) who penned "**Lord Paul demonstrates how the hole is made in doughnuts**".

Also "dunkin" into the world of doughnuts was Lt Col Joe Adkins (QRL), who wins a copy of Byron Farwell's *The Great Boer War* for his jam-filled offering of "**The MoD's new doughnut producing machine attracted much media interest**".

Other entries worthy of mention – and without a trace of nuts – were "**Paul felt**



Kenya's big game hunters are said to be considering laying down their rifles after safari-goers in the north of the country reported sightings of a stampede of 'shamrocked' predators

WIN A BOOK: Write your own caption for the photo above of troops from 1st Battalion, Irish Guards celebrating St Patrick's Day while on Exercise Grand Prix last month and send it to us by April 18.

The best, in our opinion, will win a copy of *Alamein*, Iain Gale's powerful novel of men at war.

that the dressing for his paper cut was a trifle over the top" (Ian Goodwin-Reeves, 150 Recovery Company, REME) and Simon Harrison's "**Typical politician, always poking his finger into things that don't concern him**".



Picture: Cpl Steve Wood, RLC

Picture: Cpl Steve Blake, RLC

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Armed Forces Humanist Association: www.armedforceshumanists.org.uk

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Army Welfare Service: 01722 436569; www.army.mod.uk/soldierwelfare/supportagencies/aws

Army Families Federation: 01980 615525

British Limbless Ex-Service Men's Association: 0208 590 1124; www.blesma.org

Career Transition Partnership: 0207 766 8020

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

Confidential support lines: UK 0800 731 4880; Germany 0800 1827 395; Cyprus 080 91065; Falklands #6111; from operational theatres Paradigm Services *201; from anywhere in the world (CSL operator will call back) 0044 1980 630854. Lines open 1030-2230 (UK) every day.

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

Family Escort Service: 0207 463 9249

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Joint Service Housing Advice Office: 01722 436575

Medal Office: 94561 3600 or 0141 224 3600

Mutual Support (Multiple Sclerosis group): 07962 023654; www.mutualsupport.org.uk

National Gulf Veterans' and Families' Association Office: (0900-1700); 24-hour helpline 0845 257 4853; www.ngvfa.org.uk

Regular Forces' Employment Association: 0121 236 0058; www.rfea.org.uk

Royal British Legion: 0845 7725 725

RBL Industries Vocational Assessment Centre: 01622 795900; www.rbli.co.uk

St Dunstan's charity for blind and visually impaired ex-Servicemen and women: 0207 723 5021; www.st-dunstons.org.uk

South Atlantic Medal Association: 01495 227577

Services Cotswold Centre: 01225 810358

SSAFA Forces Help: 0207 403 8783; Western Europe 02161 472 3392

Service Personnel and Veterans Agency: 0800 169 2277 (from UK); 0044 1253 866043 (from overseas); Medical Assessment: 0800 169 5401

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

WRVS: 02920 232668

DEFENCE DIARY

Until January 2011: The Ministry of Food Exhibition. The story of food from farms and gardens, to shops and canteens. Imperial War Museum, London. Tel: 0207 416 5000.

April 25: Band Concert. The Army Medical Services Band (V) will be performing at a concert in the Anvil Theatre, Basingstoke, with proceeds going to ABF The Soldiers' Charity. Visit www.army.mod.uk/amstaband

April 29: Friends of Millbank visit to Defence Medical Service Training Centre. Lecture on field hygiene – a comparison between the Crimea and today's combat arena. Contact Col F Davies by email frantheadavis@02.co.uk

May 12-16: Windsor Castle Royal Tattoo. For tickets and information call 0844 871 1517 or visit www.ticketsbreaks.telegraph.co.uk

June 9 & 10: Beating Retreat. Floodlit music spectacular on Horse Guards, Whitehall, London. Starts at 2100. Massed bands of the Household Division. Tickets available from www.ticketmaster.co.uk or 0844 847 2435.

June 12: Trooping the Colour. Queen's Birthday Parade. Horse Guards, London.

Until June 13: War photographs exhibition by Don McCullin. Imperial War Museum North, Manchester. www.iwm.org.uk

June 16, 23 & 30: Royal Military School of Music Concerts in the Park. Three or more bands at every concert. Bring your own blankets, chairs, picnics and wine. Refreshments available on site. Gates open at 1800, concert starts at 1950. Adult tickets £10, concessions (under 16s, OAPs, students, MoD 90 holders and TW2 residents) £8. Season, group and family tickets available. Payment in advance by credit or debit card or on the gate. Cheques payable to the Accounting Officer MoD, Concert Secretary, Royal Military School of Music, Kneller Hall, Twickenham, Middlesex. Tel: 0208 744 8633.

July 7, 14, 21 & 28: Royal Military School of Music Concerts in the Park. Details as above.

July 17 & 18: Cholmondeley Pageant of Power. Grounds of Cholmondeley Castle, Cheshire. Event for all the family, including a military tattoo. Supporting Help for Heroes. Contact 0845 0941 007 for tickets.

SEARCHLINE

Lt Col Rhyl Jones is trying to locate all who attended the **29 Clerk of Works (E) course at Chatham (Nov 81-Jun 83)** for a reunion in November 2010. Further details from Lt Col Jones on 0207 414 2004 or 07785 787311 or email at rhyl@aol.com or gary.jones415@mod.uk

Ian Tilson is trying to locate all ex **Arborfield Apprentices from intakes in 1962** for the 50th anniversary in 2012. Also looking for the family of **Capt Chris Mears REME**. Ian has photographs for him or his family. For more information call 07876 360691 or email iantilson@yahoo.co.uk or ja.swarbrick@btinternet.com

POV Production Company have been asked by The History Channel to make a documentary, ***Soldiers' Stories: Gulf War 1***, to coincide with the conflict's 20th anniversary. They are looking for anyone who was involved in Gulf War 1 and who would be happy to share their memories and recollections of the conflict and be part of the documentary. They are especially interested to find out if anyone has photographs, slides,

moving images or any other material to illustrate their time in the Gulf. To get involved, contact Emma Ford by email at emma@povprod.co.uk or phone 01752 568602.

The Friends of Gibraltar Society are interested in recruiting ex-military personnel who have served in or had connections with Gibraltar. Regular meetings are held in London throughout the year and other events include a residential conference in Winchester and a trip to Gibraltar. Interested personnel should contact the membership secretary, Friends of Gibraltar House, 150 Strand, London WC2R 1JA or email Tim Lawson-Crutenden at tim@harassment.co.uk

Sigrid Frobose (nee Donalh) wishes to locate former soldier **Gerald (Joe) Gurney**. Joe was stationed in Sessen in 1945-1946 when he was 19 years old. He was a bugler in the Oxon/Bucks Regiment. Contact Sigrid by post at Schutzenalle 15, D-38723 Seesen, Germany.

Where are you **Charles Young**? He served in the RMP and was a Sgt in 1988. Sgt David (Scouse) Dowling is trying to locate you. You both served in NI 1981-1983, then posted to Germany. Contact Linda Dowling by email at vodkaoke80@hotmail.com

Pat Andrew is researching the Banham family history and would like to contact her cousin **Joseph Edward Banham**, son of the late Maj Donald and Mrs Jean Banham, of Englefield Green, Windsor. Contact Pat by email at georgepatandrew@googlemail.com

I am ex-Women's Royal Army Corps and am trying to trace a platoon photograph. Does anyone who served in **7 Platoon, 2 Company, intake 419 at Guildford in September 1979** have a copy that they could send me? All costs for reproduction will be paid. Contact C Mackenzie by email at mackenzie.24015@yahoo.co.uk

REUNIONS

Army Medical Services WOs' & Sgts' Mess: Past and present dinner club will take place on May 8 at Fort Blockhouse. Contact W01 (Corps RSM) L Hall on 01276 412759 or Mrs R Thomas on 01276 412789 or email AMS-RHQ-EventsandFunctions@mod.uk

11 Hussars PAO: Regimental reunion at the Park Inn in Telford, Shropshire on May 14-16. For further details, contact chairman Lawson Kent on 07854 973602 or send an email to lawsontheferryman@hotmail.co.uk

144 Para Med Sqn/144 Field Amb & 23 Para Fd Amb (PFA): Annual past and present dinner to be held at the TA Centre, 2 Priory Road, Hornsey N8 7QT on June 5. Contact W02 Bill Hounsborne on 0208 341 3664 or 07762 490583, email bill_hounsborne@hotmail.com

Worcestershire & Sherwood Foresters: Reunion will be held at Worcester Rugby Club on June 5. Drumhead service and march-past. Past, present members and families of the regiment welcome. Contact Lt Col K Seddon, Asst Regimental Secretary, RHQ Mercian, Foresters House, Chetwynd Bks, Chilwell, Beeston, Nottingham NG9 5HA or phone 0115 946 5415.

Bristol UOTC: Centenary Day will encompass a cathedral service and a reception at the Artillery Grounds on June 5. All former members of staff and officer cadets are invited to attend. For information email amy.thomas654@mod.uk or call 01179 733533.

RAMC Open Day: To be held at Keogh Barracks, Ash Vale, Aldershot, Hants GU12 5RQ on June 19. All enquiries to RAMC RHQ on 01276 412789 or

email RHQ_AMS@hotmail.com or AMS-RHQ-EventsandFunctions@mod.uk

7 (Sphinx) Commando Battery RA: Celebrating Sphinx Day on June 19. Family day at RM Condor and an evening function at the Arbroath Royal British Legion. All past, present members and families are welcome. Details from Stephen Templeton or Mrs M Jack on 01241 822156 or 93387 2156.

747 Squadron (1960) RM: Sixth reunion and 50th anniversary of joining the Royal Marines takes place at Exmouth and Lympstone, Devon on July 9 and 10. Further details from Harry Briggs by email at hbriggs747_rm@hotmail.com

Airborne Logistic Offrs Club (TALOC): Annual dinner will be held on July 23. Open to all Para-trained serving and ex-serving officers, Regular and TA, of the RLC, RAOC, RCT, RASC, ACC and The Royal Pioneers. The following day is the 16 Air Assault Bde Open Day in Colchester which will add to the occasion. If you wish to receive an invite contact Maj Ash Loudon, 63 CS Sqn, 13 Air Asslt Sp Regt RLC, Merville Bks, Colchester CO2 7SW or Capt Will Ross, AO 63 CS Sqn, 13 Air Asslt Sp Regt RLC or email ashloudon@gmail.com or william.ross824@mod.uk

Light Infantry Golf Day: Reunion to be held at Breadsall Priory Golf Club on July 30, arrive for 1000. Further details from CSjt Ron Owen on 94451 2172 or 0115 957 2173.

53 (Louisburg) Bty Royal Artillery: Reunion to be held at 5 Regt RA, Marne Bks, Catterick, DL10 7NP on July 30-31. Contact SSgt Bennett on 01748 875746 or email 5ra-53bty-atism@mod.uk or Sgt Burtenshaw on 01748 875855 or email 5ra-rhq-rcmoasst@mod.uk

COMPETITIONS

Spine Lines winner: Sig M Prockter, 1 Sig Sqn (RBY) Troop.

Revision Eyewear winners: WO2 B Law, HQ 12 (Air Sp) Engineer Group; WO2 A Samuel, AFCCO Cardiff; Capt R Basset, SO2 O&D RMAS.

Go Fast on DVD winners: P Metson, Harrogate; SSgt D Muff, 72 Engineer Regt; Mrs L Yates, Academy HQ, RMAS; Ms S Jackson, 201 Tpt Sqn RLC, Bedford; M Woods, Frimley, Surrey.

Mesrine Parts 1 and 2 winners: WO2 P Yates, CSM Inf, Gibraltar Bks, Blackwater; Capt H Healing, 25 Ff AAC, BFPO 12; Sgt K Chapman, GSUOTC, Glasgow; Ms J Simpson, Croydon; Maj M Hayward, SO2 Jt User, MoD Ensleigh.

Ong Bak DVD winners: L Newport, Oxford; R Rendall, Sp Sqn, 39 Signal Regt; Maj A Fisher, HQ BFB, BFPO 11; Sgt J Dunwoody, 2 Signal Regt; WO2 G Baxter, Medical Centre, BFPO 40.

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 question-and-answer session and finishes with a finger buffet.

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April: 22, Portsmouth; 28, Andover; 29, Bicester. **May:** 12, Hastings; 13, Margate; 18, Leatherhead; 26, Swindon; 27 Torquay. **June:** 23, Bournemouth; Liverpool, Preston, Manchester, Inverness, Dumbarton, Kilmarnock tbc.

APPOINTMENTS

Maj Gen: R L Barrons, late RA, to be Assistant Chief of the General Staff in July; M D Conway, late AGC (ALS), to be Director General Army Legal Services in October; J H Gordon, late RGJ, to be Senior British Loan Service Officer Oman in January 2011; N P Carter, late RGJ, to be Director General Land Warfare in February 2011.

Brig: S F Deakin, late PWRR, Brigadier Equipment Strategy (A), an extension of tenure of six months until February 11; S P Wolsey, late RA, to be Commander 2 (SE) Brigade in June; C W Tadier, late RA, to be Commander Joint Air Land Organisation in March; W J F Kingdon, late RA, to be Deputy Commander, British Forces Cyprus in August; J D Bevan, late RLC, DCOS, CSS, HQ ARRC, extension in tenure of four months until April 12; S Simpson, late REME, to be Head of Land Equipment Operation Herrick Vehicles Eqpt Sp and Regeneration Tiger Team in February; J W R Thorn, late RE, Executive Coordinator International Mil Staff, HQ Nato, extension in tenure of six months until Aug 2012; J D Wootton, late RE, Chief Trg Education and Doctrine Advisory Div, Nato, Baghdad, extension in tenure of three months until September; M N Pountain, late RA, to be Chief Training Education and Doctrine Advisory Div, Nato, Baghdad in September; G P R Norton, late Gren Gds, to be Deputy Commander, Combined Joint Task Force 7, Kandahar in May.

Col: R E Parkinson, late RLC, to be Secretary, Chiefs of Staff Committee in Mar; S J B Warner, late REME, to be Asst Director Combat Equipment, HQLF in Apr; A D Hutchison, late Gren Gds, COS Hyperion, HQLF, extension in tenure of 14 months until Apr 11; R H Lloyd-Jones, late R Welsh, to be Deputy Head of Public Relations, Directorate Media & Comms, London in Sept; A V Carwardine, late RA, to be Asst Hd of Strategy Management, DGS, in Sept; E D Brown, late RGBW, Commandant Land Warfare School in Apr; J N N Orr, late KRH, to be Head of Media Operations, PJHQ in Aug; G R Pearce, late RLC, to be COS HQ 5 Div in Apr; S P B Kilpatrick, late PWRR, to be Vice President, Army Officer Selection Board in May; R A Charrington, late 9/12 L, to be Asst Head Joint Evaluation Judge (A), Personal Services 10/12 (A) in Nov; J P Thornton, late RTR, to be COS, Joint Services Command and Staff College in Sept; D J C Russell-Parsons, late Gren Gds, to be Deputy Commander, 38 (Irish) Bde in May; I G Standen, late R Signals, to be Commander, Joint Service Signals Organisation in Aug; K I Chafer, late AAC, Hd JIEDAC, extension in tenure of 12 months until Jun 11; G F S Wright, late REME, to be COS Implementation Team, Defence Technical College in Apr; S I J Eggleton, late Int Corps, to be Deputy Asst COS J2, PJHQ in

Jul; N J Hubberstey, late Int Corps, Comd 1 MI Bde, extension in tenure of five months until Dec; N A Baker, late Int Corps, to be Comd 1 MI Bde in Dec; D B Warne, late R Signals, to be Asst Head, Command Control & Information Infrastructure Capability Enabling Networks in Jul; M A Grainger late AGC(RMP), to be Deputy Prov Marshal (Investigations) in Feb; I E Prosser, late AGC(RMP), to be Deputy Prov Marshal (Custodial & Guarding) in Feb; D C N Giles, late AGC(RMP), to be Deputy Prov Marshal (Ops) in Feb; R G A Castell, late RLC, to be Commander, LSI, HQ 4 Div in Mar; S P Wheelton, late RLC, to be COS, DRLC in Mar; P M L Napier, late R Welsh, to be COS, HQ Director Infantry in Jul; R A Leaky, late AAC, to be Commander Aldergrove Station (JHCFS) in Sep; G McGarr late RLC, to be Bereavement Support Study in Jan; C M D W Roskelly, late RDG, to be Team Leader, UOTC Study in Feb; R J Jordan, late WRF, Senior BLO, US Army Europe, 24 Liaison HQ, extension in tenure of 14 months until Nov 11; M G Redmond, late RA, to be MA to UK Military Mission, UN (New York) in Oct; G P Falconer late AAC, to be EO, Office of the Deputy Commander, JFC Brunssum in Mar; J F H Fitzgerald, late RE, SO Intelligence Policy, International Military Staff, HQ Nato, extension in tenure of eight months until May 11; R D Thurlow, late RE to be Sec Hd (JISRCDS/G) HQ SACT (Virginia) in Apr; H H Backman, late Scots DG, Commander IMATT, Sierra Leone, extension in tenure of four months until Dec; R J Steed, late R Signals, DA Nairobi, extension in service of ten months until Dec 11; J M R Hopkinson, late Scots to be Chief Ops, HQ ISAF, Kabul in Nov; A T Jackson, late Yorks, to be Commander PRT, Task Force Helmand in Dec; N T Jefferson, late RA, to be Director CJ5, CSTC, Kabul in Sep; C R Prince, late RLC, to be Deputy Comd JFS, HQ JF Sp, Helmand in Jun, M P Carter, late RE, to be Joint Forces Engineer, HQ Joint Force Support, Helmand in May; M G Scott, late PWRR, to be COS, Force Headquarters, UN Mission in Sudan in May; G H J Deacon, late QDG, to be MLO, UN Mission, Congo from Dec 09; A N Morphet, late R Signals, to be MA Athens in Jul; A L Crew, late RA, to be Deputy Head of Networks Team, Information Systems and Services, Defence Equipment Support in Feb; N A Wilson, late RA, to be Asst Director Lessons Exploitation Centre, Land Warfare Centre, in Feb; P S Rafferty, late Lincs, to be Defence Combat Equipment, Personal Equipment and Common Operational Clothing Team Leader, in Feb; G P Collect, late RLC, to be Asst Director Joint Explosive Ordnance Disposal, HQLF, in Jan; R T Goodman, late AGC(OPS), to be Asst Direct JPAO, DSPS(A) in Mar; S H Cowen, late RHG/D, to be Chief Strategic Communications, Task Force Helmand in Feb; A P Guthrie, late PWRR(V), to be Col TA, HQ Infantry in Jan; A A W Cran, late REME(V), to be Col TA, HQ DEME(A) in Apr.

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www.armywivesunited.co.uk

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www.sftf.mod.uk

The Service Families Task Force website contains useful tri-Service information.

www.aff.org.uk

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www.youtube.com/britisharmy

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www.forcesequine.co.uk

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www.nfassociation.org

The "Not Forgotten" Association for disabled ex-Service personnel aims to provide entertainment and recreation for war-wounded personnel to alleviate the tedium of their lives and give them something they can look forward to.

www2.armynet.mod.uk/armysafety

This Chief Environment and Safety Officer (Army) website provides up-to-date advice on safety and environmental issues affecting the Army.

www.facebook.com/britisharmy

The Army's official Facebook fan page

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www.squaddiewives.co.uk

Squaddie wives, British Army wives and girlfriends site for women only.

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www.doing-alright.army.mod.uk

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www.hive-bfg.co.uk

HIVE Information centres for the Tri-service communities.

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.

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www.starandgarter

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www.erskine.org.uk

Erskine, caring for ex-Servicemen and women. The charity is currently caring for more than 1,000 veterans, young and old, throughout Scotland.

www.oswaldstoll.org.uk

Sir Oswald Stoll Foundation provides appropriate housing with support to vulnerable and disabled ex-service personnel, including those who have been homeless.

www.blesma.org

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

www.army.mod.uk/welfare-support/family/default.aspx

The Army Welfare Service provides confidential, comprehensive and professional support to Service personnel and their families

www.veterans-aid.net

Tel: 020 7828 2468, info@veterans-aid.net

www.nivets.org.uk

The Northern Ireland Veterans' Association, providing advice, support and assistance to veterans and families of those affected by the Troubles.

MUSEUMS

www.remuseum.org.uk

REME Museum of Technology.

www.armymuseums.org.uk

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

www.kingsownmuseum.plus.com

King's Own Royal Regiment Museum, Lancaster.

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Tooled up: Electronic Arts' *Battlefield: Bad Company 2* features a staggering array of 46 weapons

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Mind control: A Hollywood A-list takes to the screen in *The Men Who Stare at Goats*, released on Blu-Ray and DVD on April 19

Story got my goat

Ambiguity over fact and fiction disarms George Clooney's 'covert operations' caper

Review: Joe Clapson

THE all-star ensemble cast of *The Men Who Stare at Goats* is enough to provoke interest, but other than raising a few smiles it serves only to raise unanswered questions.

Based on the non-fiction best-seller by the journalist and broadcaster Jon Ronson, the comedy feature depicts an investment in psychic warfare by the US military.

The film follows daily newspaper reporter Bob Wilton (Ewan McGregor) who – having seen his wife run off with his editor – flies to Kuwait to cover the Iraq War in an effort to prove his credibility as a newshound.

But rather than bombs and bullets, Wilton stumbles upon mustachioed Special Forces operator Lyn Cassady (George Clooney), who reveals he has psychic abilities and has been tasked with developing a range of para-psychological skills including invisibility.

Cassady explains to an excited Wilton that he was trained under "Project Jedi", a covert programme created to counter a similar Soviet scheme and produce "super soldiers".

A product of the New Age Army, founded by the amusingly left-field Bill Django (Jeff Bridges) following a vision he had after being shot in the Vietnam War, Cassady's mind-control credentials provide the centrepiece of the film.

Excited by the prospect of a juicy exclusive, Wilton enters a world of obscure psychological and psychic experiments in which prisoners of war are forced to repeatedly listen to the theme song of *Barney & Friends*.

Cue laughter.

With talk of stopping a goat's heart by staring at it and a demonstration in the "sparkly eyes technique", first-time director Grant Heslov expects his audience to laugh – and it will.

The material is original, the content is funny and Clooney with his standard comedy hat on delivers in the same dry smiley way he does in all of his light-hearted roles.

But the big problem with *The Men Who Stare at Goats* is the fact that we do not know what is true and what is fiction.

We are told at the start of the movie that "more of this is true than you will ever believe", but that just stimulates the annoyance at not knowing the extent to which such black operations were used in the wilds of Iraq.

Ronson's book has been transformed into an overblown fiction feature, which makes a mockery of any truth behind the subject.

Kevin Spacey gives a well-executed performance as Larry Hooper, the bitter rival to Cassady – a more talented psy-ops agent – but that is not enough to save the film.

Hooper is the bad guy of the piece and heads up a private camp engaged in mind-altering techniques in Iraq. Once again, goats are the focus of brain assaults, as are some captured and unsuspecting locals.

Following in the shadows of Cassady and the now-alcoholic Django, Wilton hunts for information on the unexposed side of warfare.

Clooney is easy on the eye with his laid-back charming funniness; Bridges is a class act as a flower-power soldier; Spacey's uptight, resentful militiaman adds another humorous edge; and McGregor – the straight man – is inoffensive.

But without the lure that the film's story is based on fact, its appeal is undermined.

With a fascinating plot and big names to fill lead roles, *The Men Who Stare at Goats* has masses of potential but ultimately it just numbs the mind.

Were these Jedi warriors real or not? ■

From a blood-thirsty Butler to brawling Brummies, *Soldier* goes six rounds with the latest DVD releases...

Law Abiding Citizen out on DVD April 12

WHEN the wife and daughter of a Philadelphia man (**Gerard Butler**) are needlessly murdered during a brutal home invasion, the DA (**Jamie Foxx**) cuts one felon a deal to convict the other. Butler's mild-mannered character becomes a traumatised vigilante and violently seeks revenge on the killers and the legal team that failed him. While the opening scenes of this movie are brutal and the ending disappointing, the meaty mid-section delivers a tense cat-and-mouse thriller. Fast paced, full of action and with some bloody torture scenes, this revenge film is well worth watching. Enjoy!



WO2 Ritchie Downing, 3 AAC

Win... a bit of Butler on DVD

BILLED as one of the biggest action films of the year, *Law Abiding Citizen* features **Gerard Butler** (*The Bounty Hunter*, *Gamer*) as a grieving husband and father hell-bent on revenge and **Jamie Foxx** (*The Soloist*, *The Kingdom*) tearing up the screen and the American justice system. Momentum Pictures has provided *Soldier* with five copies of the film on DVD to give away. To have a chance of winning answer this question: Which Scottish-born actor co-stars with Jamie Foxx in *Law Abiding Citizen*? Answers on a postcard to the usual address or by email to comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk



Closing date April 30

American Son out on DVD now

A YOUNG US Marine spends a Thanksgiving weekend in his hometown before shipping out to Iraq. Using this simple premise, the film explores a number of complex issues relating to the personal side of current operations. While it ultimately raises more questions than it can answer, it is a brave offering which dares to ask, among other things, what is the domestic cost – for both the individual and society – of US commitments overseas. The young soldier must say goodbye to his friends, family, and love interest. An official selection of the 2008 Sundance Film Festival, this authentic and convincing film deserves wider attention.



Daniel King, MoD



Eyes on: George Clooney uses secret mind-control techniques in *The Men Who Stare At Goats*, which is released on Blu-Ray and DVD on April 19

Salvage out on DVD now

FILMED on an old *Brookside* set, *Salvage* is a low budget blend of horror and thriller. Starting out as a Christmas Eve domestic between a mother (**Neve McIntosh**) and her estranged daughter, it violently morphs into military meltdown as assaulting troops move towards the sleepy neighbourhood and a series of supernatural events unfold. Director **Laurence Gough** gradually builds the tension with some nail-biting claustrophobic camerawork and a nice balance of shocks. Apart from a sub-par storyline and long periods of inactivity, it remains a refreshing change from the bog standard Hollywood horror.



Cpl Tom Robinson, RLC

Shinjuku Incident out on DVD now

AFTER illegally entering the Land of the Rising Sun in search of his lost fiancée, silver screen veteran **Jackie Chan** takes on the yakuza – Japan's answer to the mafia – in a film that only serves to remind cinema-goers that he should have stopped acting years ago. At least in the *Rush Hour* series Chan had some comedy value, albeit based on his co-stars mocking his accent and manner. In this movie he is positively wooden. His gait and demeanour reminded me of **Dustin Hoffman's** *Rain Man*. Fans will be disappointed and newcomers will be bemused as to how he became a household name in the first place.



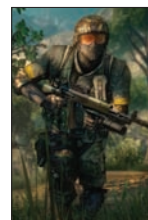
Capt Jim Berry, R Irish

Win... 1 Day on DVD

BASED on the gang culture in Birmingham, *1 Day* delivers a raw and hard-hitting reflection of what life is like on the streets, where sex, drugs and violence are part of daily routine. If you're a fan of British urban dramas *Adulthood*, *Kidulthood* and *Shifty*, then Britain's first hip-hop film – which is out on April 12 – is definitely one for your collection. *Soldier* has teamed up with Momentum Pictures to offer five readers the chance to win a copy of the film on DVD. To enter, tell us which city the film is set in. Answers on a postcard to the usual address or by email to comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk



Closing date April 30



Heavy hitters: Soldiers in EA's *Battlefield: Bad Company 2* can equip themselves with as many as 46 deadly weapons

Battlefield brilliance

Call of Duty's dominance challenged by close-knit company's latest outing

Review: Richard Long

WITH Infinity Ward achieving phenomenal success with the release of *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 2* it would be safe to assume the developers had successfully cornered the market in military-based first-person shooters.

But the release of *Battlefield: Bad Company 2* has provided a significant threat to this crown and, for some, this all-formats game could even overtake the leader of the pack.

The action focuses on a close-knit squad of soldiers as they attempt to thwart an evil Russian in his attempt to acquire a missing secret weapon that was developed by the Japanese at the end of the Second World War.

To achieve this aim players are provided with a wide variety of land, sea and air vehicles and there is the added thrill of being able to select from 46 technologically-advanced weapons that can be customised into 200 different, high-powered firearms.

"The amount of weapons, choice of vehicles and scale of destruction in the *Battlefield: Bad Company 2* sandbox environment generates

countless unscripted and unforgettable moments," said Karl Magnus Troedsson, executive producer of the *Battlefield* franchise.

"We are confident it will deliver the best online multiplayer experience ever."

To help achieve such lofty ambitions, developer DICE has included expansive single-player and web-based campaigns that offer many hours of kinetic action.

The sequel to *Battlefield: Bad Company* features a new micro-destruction mechanism that allows gamers to be more strategic in their gameplay by chipping cover away bit by bit or by taking down an entire building and watching it collapse with enemies inside.

As well as offering a seemingly-endless supply of weapons, there are also more than 15,000 kit variations available, giving each squad member the opportunity to select the upgrades and enhancements that will best suit their style of play.

Another new addition is the inclusion of the UH-60 transport helicopter that can ship an entire four-player squad directly into battle, while allowing two additional members to wreak havoc with the mounted rail guns on board.

After a slow opening – players are transported back to 1940s Japan to get an insight into the

mysterious-but-deadly weapon's origin – the pace soon picks up in the freezing Russian outback.

The adventure continues with missions in Bolivia, Chile and Colombia as the game adopts a truly international feel.

In some quarters the single-player campaign has been criticised for being too short – the 13 missions can be successfully completed in around ten hours – but the multi-player format has earned greater praise.

With four different modes available there is far greater scope for entertainment, which certainly adds to the value.

The controls are easy to master and anyone who is familiar with the feel of *Modern Warfare 2* or similar titles will soon get to grips with what is on offer here.

As seems to be the norm these days the graphics and production are both sharp and slick while the sound quality is particularly noticeable.

On the whole *Battlefield: Bad Company 2* offers a welcome addition to this increasingly-competitive genre.

If the collective brains behind the seemingly-impenetrable *Modern Warfare* series thought they had things all their own way in the first-person shooter stakes, they better think again. ■

From motorbike madness to demonic hordes, *Soldier* loads up the latest glut of video game releases...

Prison Break for Xbox 360

ON the face of it, the game of the hit US TV show should have plenty going for it. Set against the backdrop of the programme's first – and best – series, players take on the role of an undercover agent sent to the Fox River jail to uncover Michael Scofield's secret plans. But this release is a menace to society that should be sentenced to life without parole. The gameplay revolves around fighting other prisoners using a clunky control system or sneaking around off-limits sections of the facility to complete arbitrary missions. It is such a waste of time that I would rather go to prison than play this again.



Out now

Moto GP 09/10 for Xbox 360

THE high-octane world of *Moto GP* makes its well-anticipated return to the Xbox 360, but fans of the series are going to be disappointed with the outcome. The presentation is spot-on as the teams, riders and circuits are all lovingly recreated and the menus are intuitive. But the fun soon comes to an end on the track as the bikes handle appallingly and you'll probably spend most of the time skidding helplessly along the tarmac with your bike rolling off into the distance. While implementing an arcade-style control system might have dumbed the product down, at least it would have been playable. One to steer clear of.



Out now

Tiberian Twilight for Xbox 360

COMMAND and Conquer Four's latest spin-off is the final instalment in the *Tiberium* series and represents a step away from the in-game mechanics familiar to fans. Rather than following the resource-collection and base-building path that has served so well in the past, EA has opted for a system more akin to a role-playing game in which characters gain skills and equipment depending on how many enemies they defeat. Despite the changes, this is still a credible challenge for strategically-minded gamers. Beware before purchasing – you have to be connected to the internet at all times just to play the game.



Out now



Art of destruction: *Battlefield: Bad Company 2* gives players unprecedented scope to blow holes in buildings to add another dimension to the action

Dragon Age Origins Awakening

SET in the mythical world of Amaranthine, this Xbox 360 release is an expansion pack for its predecessor, *Dragon Age Origins*, which was named role-playing game of the year for 2009. Appointed as the spiffily-titled Commander of the Grey Wardens, players have to once again launch into battle with the darkspawn which plagued the original title. The atmospheric surroundings make up for a lightweight plot, with lush environments providing plenty of eye candy for the impressive battle sequences. For fans of the genre, this is very highly recommended – casual gamers might want to look elsewhere.

Out now



King's Bounty: Armoured Princess

AN inexplicably scantily-clad heroine – her armour is made slightly redundant by the amount of naked flesh on show – tries to save the kingdom of Darion from hordes of demons in this *World of Warcraft*-esque title from Focus Multimedia. The titular Armoured Princess Amelie has to fight her way through scores of the devilish creatures to reach the world of Teana, recruit legendary knight Sir Gilbert and return order. I wasn't entirely sure what was going on for large sections of the game, but the graphics are spot on and the mix of action and turn-based play provides a good pace to proceedings in this unlikely PC success story.

Out now



Win... Battlefield gaming pack

BATTLEFIELD: Bad Company 2's incredible array of 46 weapons and destructible environments make the title an adrenalin-packed romp and *Soldier* has teamed up with Electronic Arts and Fat Boy to give you the chance to play it in style.

We have one prize of an Xbox 360, *Battlefield: Bad Company 2* and a Fat Boy bean bag to sit on for one winner and copies of the game for two runners-up. For your chance to win, tell us how many weapons feature in *Battlefield: Bad Company 2*. Answers on a postcard to the usual address or by email (comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk). Usual competition rules apply.

Closing date: April 30





Guitar hero: Guns N' Roses legend Slash takes centre stage with the release of his debut album, out on Roadrunner Records in May

Resurrection man

Iconic guitarist calls in rock's heavyweights for a helping hand on solo album

Review: Richard Long

WHEN one of the greatest rock guitarists of all time sets about recording a solo album it is hard to imagine he will struggle to find guest collaborators for the project.

For Guns N' Roses legend Slash there were no such difficulties and when his self-titled debut is released next month, fans will find an all-star roster of friends and contemporaries who were only too happy to help the iconic musician.

The list includes rock heavyweights Ozzy Osbourne, Iggy Pop, Dave Grohl and Lemmy Kilmister with Fergie, Kid Rock and Chris Cornell also in the mix.

"The idea was really simple in the beginning," Slash explained.

"These are all artists I wanted to work with – that I thought would be amazing to do something creative and collaborative with.

"And I was so impressed with what everyone brought to the table. They were all so committed to doing a good job and we had a lot of fun making these songs."

To get the project under way Slash enlisted

the services of producing partner Eric Valentine (Queens of the Stone Age, The All-American Rejects) and compiled a rhythm section of bassist Chris Chaney (Jane's Addiction) and drummer Josh Freese (Nine Inch Nails).

With the foundations in place the guitarist took on the responsibility of songwriting duties and arrangements himself and hand-picked the artists he wanted for each track.

But the idea of working alongside such luminaries is nothing new for Slash.

After achieving phenomenal success with Guns N' Roses – where he helped create signature sounds like the guitar riff of *Sweet Child o' Mine* and *Welcome to the Jungle* – he became a man in demand and has had the honour of performing with the likes of Michael Jackson, Stevie Wonder and Ray Charles.

He has also received critical acclaim for his personal project Slash's Snakepit as well as global success with supergroup Velvet Revolver, which he formed after splitting from Guns N' Roses.

But the time has come for the 44-year-old to take centre stage and his solo album will not disappoint those yearning for that inevitable heavy hard rock edge.

On the whole the thoughtfully-created

collaborations work well, the most surprising of which sees Fergie taking the lead vocals on *Beautiful Dangerous*.

The decision to include the Black Eyed Peas star in the project may provoke a few raised eyebrows but the transition from mainstream pop to the more sinister rock sound creates impressive and enjoyable results.

Dave Grohl and former Guns N' Roses bassist Duff McKagan join Slash on the guitar-driven *Watch This* while Ozzy Osbourne lends his distinctive vocals to the aptly-titled anthem *Crucify The Dead*.

With a famed musician of such ilk being the driving force behind an album like this, one could expect to find a succession of tracks that are riddled with elaborate guitar solos to highlight such considerable talent.

But that is not the case here. The production is perfectly balanced and provides the listener with a fine smearing of those distinctive riffs without ever over-indulging.

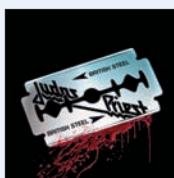
While *Slash* (the album) could never be described as ground-breaking it certainly ticks all the boxes in terms of good old-fashioned rock and roll and is a welcome addition to an already impressive back catalogue. ■

From a slice of metal nostalgia to the latest pretender to pop's crown, we check out the new releases...

British Steel by Judas Priest

IT has been 30 years since this seminal album was released. Long considered one of metal's all-time classics, it was the record with which **Judas Priest** truly broke through to the masses. The CD has been re-mastered and to celebrate there is a live track-by-track DVD containing bonus content including a making-of feature and a 30-minute documentary. Classics like *Breaking the Law* and *Living after Midnight* can be heard again. Likewise we are reminded how good the live anthems *Grinder* and *Metal Gods* are. This is good old-fashioned metal in all its glory. Along with the likes of **Saxon** and **Iron Maiden**, they blazed a trail that is still burning. A must-have collection for all rock fans.

Steve King, MoD



Tear the Signs Down by The Automatic

RETURNING with their third album, **The Automatic** show little sign of slowing down, continuing with their jaunty, rocky sound. The singles *Interstate* and *Run and Hide* are typical stomp-along tunes that will have you harking back five years to the enduring smash hit *Monster* and its memorable chorus. Hailing from the small Welsh village of Cowbridge, the band has come a long way in a relatively short period. All-in-all an enjoyable album, but only time will tell if *Tear The Signs Down* will solicit as much success as the first offering, *Not Accepted Anywhere*. That said, this is still a competent release and a must for any fans of the band.

W02 Mo Morris, RLC

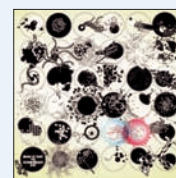


The Logic of Chance

THIS follow-up to **Dan Le Sac Vs Scroobius Pip's** underrated debut album *Angles* sees the Essex duo returning with their distinctive brand of poetry and electronic beats.

The Logic of Chance has a social conscience and focuses on the issues that characterise life in Britain today, such as knife crime and a disaffected youth. While there are serious issues to be discussed there are lighter elements to enjoy, including a reworking of *Rehab* by **Amy Winehouse**. It is hard to pigeonhole Dan Le Sac vs Scroobius Pip to a single musical genre but that does not mean they cannot be accommodated. This is a must-have for anyone wanting something a little out of the ordinary.

Richard Long, Soldier





Rock royalty: Famed musician Slash has collaborated with an all-star roster of talent to produce a self-titled debut packed full of trademark riffs

Under Great White Northern Lights

THIS live recording captures Detroit rockers **The White Stripes** in action on their 2007 Canadian tour and includes the hit singles *Icky Thump*, *Seven Nation Army* and *Fell in Love With a Girl* among the 16 tracks. Fans of fast-paced screeching guitars and pounding drumbeats will not be disappointed but the dynamic can easily become tiresome for those who are not hardened supporters of the band. The accompanying DVD is of far greater interest and follows the duo on their mission to hit every province and territory in Canada, an intriguing quest that sees them playing in a host of bizarre venues including bowling alleys, pool halls and tiny town squares.



Stephen Tyler, Soldier

Mirrorkicks by Mirrorkicks

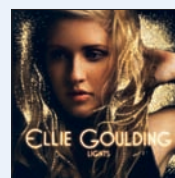
INDIE rockers **Mirrorkicks** have been making quite a name for themselves in recent times thanks to some vibrant live performances across the UK. Building on this gathering momentum, the south London-based four-piece has produced a debut offering that is packed full of electrifying anthems, whip-cracking guitar riffs and euphoric choruses and shows a great deal of promise. Latest single *Anything* has been playlisted on XFM while their first release *Turning Up* has surprised many by raising a few eyebrows across the pond, where it has been very well received by an enthusiastic American audience. This is a solid debut album that hints at promising things to come.



Joe Clapson, Soldier

Lights by Ellie Goulding

AFTER bagging the Critics' Choice Award at this year's Brits, there is a certain weight of expectation surrounding **Ellie Goulding**, the latest pretender to pop music's crown. But with all this potential in mind, there is unfortunately nothing earth shattering about her debut album *Lights*. The 23-year-old avoids wandering off the well-beaten track of her contemporaries, instead playing with a straight bat to firmly embrace the folk-pop genre. Singles *Under the Sheets* and *Starry Eyed* are decent enough, but the soppy ballads *I'll Hold My Breath* and *The Writer* struggle to capture the imagination. Only time will tell if her talent matches the hype.



Richard Long, Soldier



Picture perfect: *Shaped by War* is published by Jonathan Cape (£25). The exhibition – of the same name – runs until June 13.

Life through a lens

Chronicles of a career photographing international conflict focus on realities of war

Interview: Cliff Caswell

DON McCullin never looked for conflict – it found him at every stage of his life. From the fighting in Suez and a divided Berlin to Afghanistan under Soviet occupation, the veteran photographer has seen first-hand the most brutal side of human nature.

“War came to me very early on in life,” the 74-year-old told *Soldier*. “I was only five years of age when I experienced the Germans bombing London every night.”

Growing up against the backdrop of the Second World War certainly set the tone for McCullin’s life behind the lens. As a young man he carried out his National Service in the Royal Air Force, where he saw action in the Suez Crisis of 1956, before picking up his camera to forge a civilian career.

His long association with the photographic trade is reflected in an exhibition of pictures and memorabilia at Manchester’s Imperial War Museum North and an accompanying book, *Shaped by War*.

The account is a fascinating insight into a life lived on the edge and is illustrated with images that

lay bare the realities of war; the death, injury and suffering caused to combatants and civilians alike.

McCullin’s career as a photographer began in 1961 when he arrived in Germany, armed with his cameras, as the early frost of the Cold War was beginning to descend.

“I was in Berlin when the Russians were building the wall and even back then there was a huge sense that this was the most important event of the day,” he recalled. “There were American and Soviet troops everywhere, all wearing the same type of uniforms – it felt like an extension of the Second World War.”

With his pictures from Germany attracting international acclaim, McCullin was offered work with the *Observer* newspaper and was duly sent to Cyprus to capture the unfolding hostilities between the island’s Greek and Turkish communities. Covering most of the principal post-1945 conflicts – and cheating death on more than one occasion – his later journeys took him to Vietnam, Cambodia and Afghanistan.

“When you go away to places like these, you have to go without reservation and without thinking that you have any immunity from what is going on,” said the former *Sunday Times* photojournalist, who has a son serving with the

Royal Marines. “Hundreds of correspondents lost their lives covering the Vietnam War and a number of journalists were killed in the first week of the fighting in Cambodia.

“Afghanistan was another dangerous place – I spent ten miserable days in Kandahar with the Mujahadeen. They proved to be despicable people and I’d quickly had enough of them after finding out that they were stealing our equipment.

“At one point we were forced to hide under trees while Russian MiG jets were flying in the area – they knew we were there and kept coming to strafe us.”

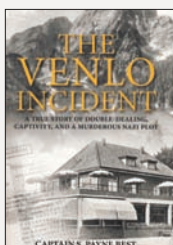
McCullin said it was “spooky” to see British soldiers now fighting insurgents in the same region. But having long hung up his combat boots in favour of focusing his lens on the landscapes at the end of his Somerset garden, he admitted he did not miss his old life.

“I don’t have any enthusiasm now – war is a waste of life and resources and, apart from the occasional heroic deed by soldiers and civilians, it’s all totally negative. That said, I have nothing but admiration for the people that come back from Afghanistan. I’ve been there and know what the land is like. It is the most physically trying place in which to fight – it’s completely ball-breaking.” ■

From British blushes to Wessex warriors, a flick through this month’s literary releases...

The Venlo Incident by Capt S Payne Best

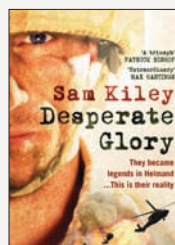
A FASCINATING story that would make for a fantastic film if it wasn’t such a calamitous British disaster. *The Venlo Incident* tells of how two British intelligence officers – one carrying a list of all active agents in Germany – were captured by the enemy during the Second World War. An autobiographical account, the book recounts in intricate detail the agents’ capture, interrogation and internment in the Sachsenhausen concentration camp. The pair’s fate has been linked directly to the invasion and occupation of Holland and their story is told with humility and utter frankness. A gripping, if not at times surreal, read.



Capt Shaun Fardy, AGC

Desperate Glory by Sam Kiley

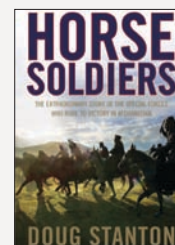
AWARD-winning *Times* journalist and documentary maker **Sam Kiley** provides a detailed insight of Op Herrick 8, 16 Brigade’s 2008 deployment to Helmand. The reporter delivers fascinating accounts of the six-month tour from across the spectrum of ranks involved in the fighting. Having followed closely on the heels of the soldiers, the author presents a comprehensive record of the lifespan of several operations from conception to execution and highlights the “humanity” of a brigade in theatre. Available in paperback next month, *Desperate Glory* is a gripping account of war in the modern day.



Maj Matt Hayward, Scots DG

Horse Soldiers by Doug Stanton

THE aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attacks saw a stampede of US Special Forces into the hinterland of Afghanistan. This is a dramatic account of one particular unit which, using an unlikely combination of horses, mules and air strikes, tore across the Afghan terrain inflicting heavy casualties on the Taliban. After a spectacular victory and the capture of the town of Mazar-i-Sharif, the tables were turned on the Americans. Caught off-guard and heavily outnumbered the “horse soldiers” were forced to fight for their lives in the ancient fortress of Qala-I Janghi. Recommended reading for any Special Forces buff.



Maj Mike Peters, AAC



Pictures: Richard Ash

Over exposed: Having covered every major conflict in his adult lifetime until the Falklands War, Don McCullin has no desire to return to the battlefield

Helmand Mission by Richard Doherty

IN this passionate account of the actions of The Royal Irish Battlegroup during their 2008 tour of Helmand, **Doherty** writes in remarkable detail of the heroism and initiative of the Irish soldier. While the missions described are gripping, the telling is often for the men in the book. Rightly so, but this means that much of it reads like a citation or appraisal report – heavy going. Nevertheless, the accounts of pre-deployment preparations and insights into counter-insurgency ops and the mentoring of Afghan soldiers will be of interest to anyone Herrick-bound. If you're in it, you'll love it. If you're not, it might take a while to read.

Capt Dan Knowles, 35 Eng Regt



Britain's Gurkhas by Christopher Bullock

AN official history of the Brigade of Gurkhas; this coffee table offering explains why men from Nepal fight so bravely for Britain. **Christopher Bullock** has written a captivating text that is supported by lavish illustrations, fascinating maps and rare images so as to follow the brigade's story from 1814 through to Helmand in 2009. *Britain's Gurkhas* will undoubtedly become the core text for anyone who wants to know more about those men who have steadfastly fought for this country, from the far-off battles of the Indian Raj through the two world wars and into an uncertain future.

Maj Eddie Elms, AGC



1 Wessex by Martin Lee-Browne

THIS wistful though often wordy book – available from www.1wessex.co.uk – chronicles the 28 years of 1st Battalion, The Wessex Regiment. Copious unit diaries allow **Lee-Browne** to describe in detail annual camps, drill nights, fun, friendships and the juggling of civilian jobs and TA commitments. The coverage of Cold War TA readiness is informative but the description of internal politics is often convoluted. A narrative rather than analysis, it misses the opportunity to provide pointers for future volunteer contributions to Defence. Certainly recommended for those serving across the old Wessex footprint.

Lt Col Andy Gladen, RE



Korma Blimney

April's fiery fundraiser from
ABF The Soldiers' Charity



**COOK UP A CURRY
AND RAISE MONEY
FOR OUR SOLDIERS
IN NEED**



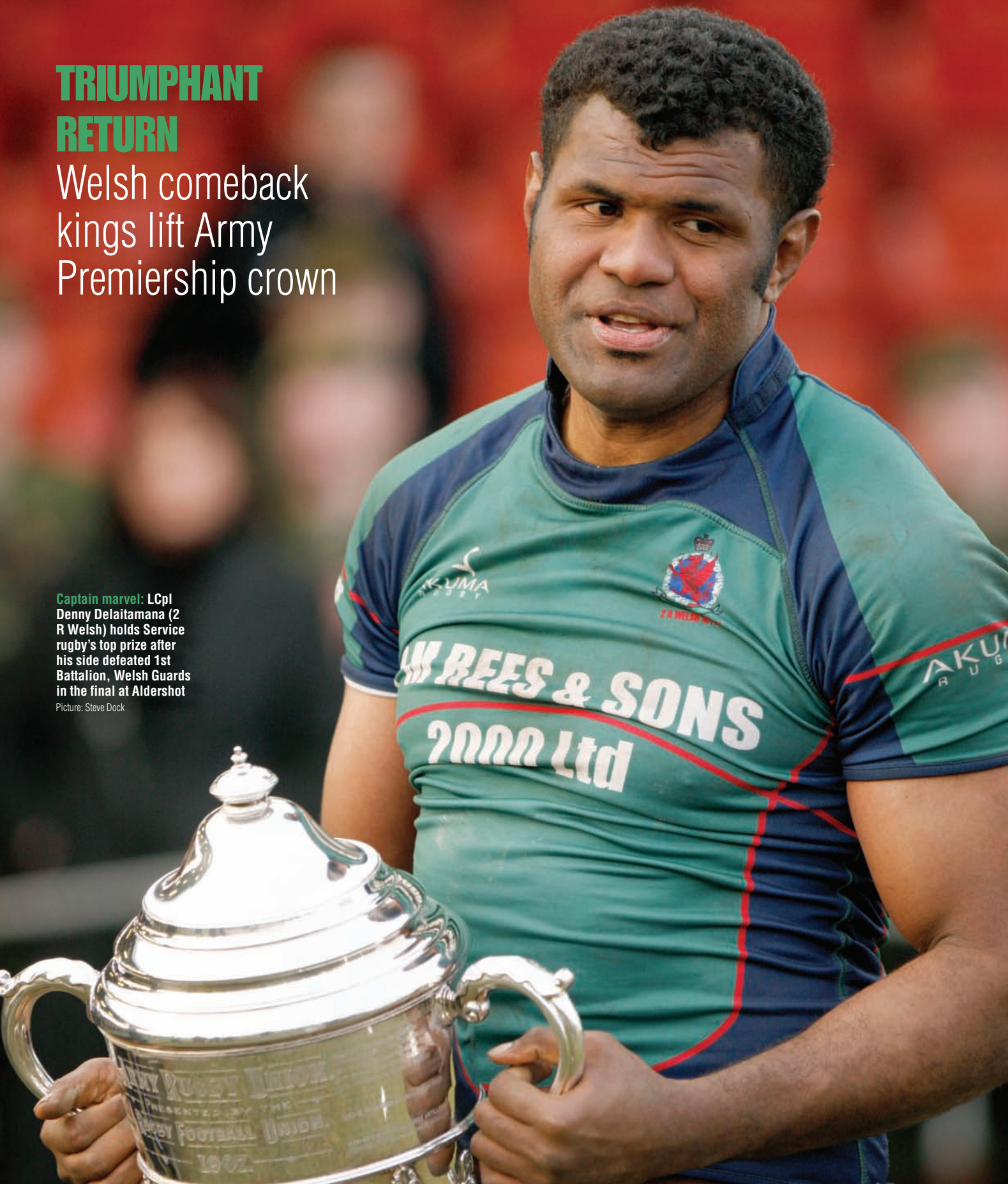
SOLDIERSPORT

TRIUMPHANT RETURN

Welsh comeback
kings lift Army
Premiership crown

Captain marvel: LCpl
Denny Delaitamana (2
R Welsh) holds Service
rugby's top prize after
his side defeated 1st
Battalion, Welsh Guards
in the final at Aldershot

Picture: Steve Dock





Crest of a wave: Nautical ace Lt Emma Clarke (RAMC, front) hopes to sail into medal contention when the Olympic Games come to Great Britain in two years

Clarke harbours 2012 dream

Interview: Richard Long
Picture: Steve Dock

WITH the London Olympics promising to be the greatest sporting spectacle this country has ever seen, a place in Team GB is one of the hottest tickets in town.

Sailing ace Lt Emma Clarke (RAMC) is one of the privileged few that have a realistic chance of securing one of those much-coveted spots thanks to her fantastic form on the water.

After a success-laden 2009 the 23-year-old was invited for trials with the Olympic development squad with the ultimate goal of becoming part of

the women's match-racing team.

"I was basically put at the front of the boat and told to get on with it," the officer told *SoldierSport*.

"We did a series of up-wind and down-wind manoeuvres as well as match-specific training, which was new to me.

"It was two days of full-on training, putting me in difficult situations to see if I could handle it."

Her efforts certainly impressed fellow Olympic hopeful Mary Rook, who immediately invited Clarke to join her team as bow girl and help challenge for

a place at the 2012 Games.

The two-day trial in Weymouth came on the back of some terrific

performances last year in which the Service star tasted success at the RS200 and RS400 Nationals.

She was also a winner at Cowes Week in the SB3 class and was

victorious in the Endeavour Trophy champion of champions' series.

"I really did not expect to make the trials," Clarke explained.

"I knew I'd had a good season but I have limited match-racing experience.

'This is going to be a long challenge with lots of hard work'



That was my biggest concern but my basic skills got me through.

"The trial was basically a weekend with Mary and she decided I was the one she wanted. We clicked quite well on the boat and it is looking good."

With full-time training now under way Clarke is familiarising herself with the Elliot Six Metre craft, which has been selected as the women's match racing class for the Olympics.

She said: "It is a steep learning curve, it is hard work and really different to what I am used to.

"My role is about communication, watching what is happening with other boats, looking at where we are and how long we have left."

The key position also sees her taking responsibility for the jib and spinnaker, a job that demands she is physically fit.

"The whole front of the boat is my responsibility and there are intensive bursts of work," Clarke explained.

"Match racing skills and

communication are different to those in fleet racing. The focus is on time and distance to the start line and what the other boats are doing.

"In fleet racing you make judgement calls based on the whole fleet rather than the one boat you have to take out."

Rook will be holding similar trials to fill the final position in her team and the trio will go head-to-head with three other crews for the one match-racing place available.

All four boats will be looking to impress during a series of regattas this year in what promises to be a lengthy selection process.

"It can be really late when they make the announcement, it may not be until 2012," Clarke said.

"Sailing is one of the sports Britain expects to do well in so, unless they have a world champion, they leave selection until the last minute so they have the best chance of winning medals.

"At the moment we are looking at

training seven days a week, with the odd five-day week, as well as doing physical exercise every day.

"This is going to be a long challenge with lots of hard work but hopefully it will be worth it."

The Olympic contender has demonstrated her commitment to the cause by postponing her entry to Sandhurst until September and Clarke was quick to praise the backing she has received from within the Service.

"The Army Sailing Association (ASA) and Army Medical Directorate have been absolutely amazing, they have given me fantastic support," she added.

She also has a simple message for fellow personnel thinking of sampling the sporting opportunities available with the ASA.

Clarke concluded: "It is absolutely amazing, the variety of events you can get involved in is unbelievable.

"It is a wide-ranging sport, anyone can take part. It is brilliant fun." ■



Prop star's Services support

Interview: Richard Long
Picture: Georgina Coupe

WITH this year's Guinness Premiership edging towards a nail-biting climax you would expect London Wasps to be entirely preoccupied with matters on the pitch.

But as well as plotting their path to glory the Rugby Union giants are putting the finishing touches to a grandstand St George's Day celebration that could see a potential six-figure sum pouring into the coffers of Services charity Help for Heroes.

The 2007 Heineken Cup champions will relocate to the world famous Twickenham Stadium on April 24, when they face a showdown with league rivals Bath as they continue to push for a place in the end of season play-offs.

Having set an ambitious target of filling the 82,000 capacity arena, the club hopes to serve up a feast of entertaining rugby while backing a terrific cause.

"St George's Day is a fantastic opportunity for us to celebrate something," said powerhouse prop Phil Vickery in an exclusive interview with *SoldierSport* at Wasps' training ground.

"Why not celebrate and help the men and women who give the ultimate sacrifice to protect us.

"I am very proud to be associated with this. It is a great opportunity for the club to show what it can do. Hopefully we can sell-out Twickenham, celebrate a great day and raise money and awareness for Help for Heroes.

"But as we do so we should not forget about the people [Service personnel] who are away, they are never out of our minds and it is important we keep that sentiment going."

For every ticket sold a minimum of £1 will be donated to Help for Heroes and as this issue went to press 35,000 seats had already been booked.

Wasps have extended their Services

support via the Treat a Troop initiative, a scheme that will see free tickets offered to personnel for the Bath clash.

Supporters can take part by purchasing an extra seat in the stands when they book their own tickets, with the additional allocation going to Servicemen and women.

Vickery has met and stayed in touch with a number of military personnel over the years and he is more than happy to show his support for the Services whenever he can.

"I take great pride in the fact our Armed Forces are the best in the world," the World Cup winner said.

"They are out there doing their best and that makes me proud to be British, the least we can do is give our support and help and it is important they know we are thinking about them.

"I think there is a great crossover between rugby and the military.

"For us it is all about team spirit and from my experience of what goes on in the Forces you have to be a team.

"You have to have desire and passion while being mentally and physically tough, it is the same in rugby."

The game itself promises to be an explosive offering with a rejuvenated Bath side looking to build on their recent good form and move up the league table.

Vickery said: "Bath are on a good run at the moment. They were struggling coming into the season but they have really found their feet.

"This is the business end of the season and it does not matter what has happened in the past. Every game is a cup final now and we want to be in the top four and make the play-offs.

"Playing a club game at Twickenham is a great honour. If we can fill that place the atmosphere will be amazing.

It could just be the deciding game for those play-off places."

The former Gloucester man has been sidelined with a neck injury this season but is now well on the road to recovery and hopes to be fit in time to take to the field for the Bath showdown.

With a return to playing imminent, the 34-year-old is hoping to hit top form and force his way back into an England side that came under fierce scrutiny during this year's disappointing Six Nations campaign.

"There has been huge amounts of criticism surrounding the team

and I think the performances have not been what the players and coaches had hoped for," the 73-cap veteran said.

"There have been some positives but the results do not lie.

"It is like anything, if you do not perform people start to ask questions and the results have not gone their way.

"I would like to play for England again but that will only come when I get back on the field and warrant selection.

"Dan Cole has come in and done a great job in the front row, he has been fantastic for the team.

"If I am wanted or needed hopefully I will get the call, if not it will not take away my ambition to play the game."

SoldierSport has a pair of tickets for the St George's Day clash at Twickenham to give away.

To be in with a chance of winning, simply answer this question: How many England caps has Phil Vickery won?

Answers on a postcard to the usual address or by email to comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk by April 16.

● To book tickets and take part in Treat A Troop call 0844 225 2990 or visit www.stgeorgesdaygame.co.uk ■

"I take great pride in the fact our Armed Forces are the best in the world"

RECORD BREAKER

DISTANCE runner Capt Barry Stoddart (APTC) fought through the pain barrier to set a new world record at this year's Fleet Half Marathon.

The officer decided to tackle the gruelling course while carrying a 40lb Bergen and completed his challenge in a time of 1hr 44min 53sec.

Stoddart was running in memory of his friend Sgt Jonno Johnson (2 Yorks), who was killed in Afghanistan in December 2007, and his effort raised more than £4,000 for ABF The Soldiers' Charity.

APTC colleagues WO2 Jimmy McCallion and Sgt Simon Gowing offered their support by running alongside the record-breaker, a gesture that was greatly appreciated.

"If it had not been for Jimmy and Simon pushing me on at the ten-mile point I don't think I would have made it," Stoddart said.

"It was really emotional at the end and it was a fantastic event."

The super-fit officer added that he chose to raise money for ABF The Soldiers' Charity because of the support Sgt Johnson's family received at the time of his death.

Lt Col Danny Bryan, who is co-ordinating the APTC's 150th anniversary celebrations this year, said he was immensely proud of Stoddart's achievements.

He explained: "This is a landmark year for the APTC and what better way to kick things off than one of our guys setting a world record?"

● Donations can still be made at www.justgiving.be/Fastesthalfmarathoncarrying40lb



Picture: Graeme Main



Under wraps: The Royal Navy's defence kept persistent Army goal threat LCpl Kim Holden (RLC) quiet

Reds lack killer instinct

**Report: Richard Long
Picture: Steve Dock**

THE Army's women footballers were left to reflect on what might have been following a disappointing Inter-Services campaign.

A series of spurned opportunities saw them draw 2-2 with the Royal Navy in their opening match before a missed penalty contributed to a 1-0 reverse against the Royal Air Force.

Coach Capt Sandra Hodgson (RLC) told *SoldierSport* her side lacked a killer instinct in front of goal this season, a weakness that cost the Reds in the games that mattered most.

"We have got a great team with some great players but we were just not quite up to the mark," she said.

"The RAF deserved their victory but we missed a penalty and that did not help. The Navy had two chances and scored them both.

"Footballing-wise we have progressed and played some good stuff but we have got to turn that into results, we are just not finishing the chances we create."

The lack of a ruthless edge was obvious in the Army's clash with the Navy at a windswept Aldershot Military Stadium. A comprehensive victory looked on the cards as the home side

dominated possession and created chance after chance.

But visiting goalkeeper LLogs Lou Lee (HMS *Daring*) was in stunning form and produced a string of fine saves to thwart the Army attack and help her side secure an unlikely point.

Strikes from Sgt Helen Lee (AGC (SPS)) and substitute Cfn Jess Moran (REME) gave the Reds a deserved 2-1 lead but Lpt Nat Bavister (BRNC Dartmouth) grabbed a late goal as the match finished all square.

With Hodgson determined to play an attacking game against the RAF the Army fell short once more as they failed to capitalise on their opportunities.

Despite suffering disappointing results the coach believes there are positives to be taken, with newcomers Pte Holly Pointon (RAMC) and Pte Rachel Rigby (RLC) catching the eye.

Hodgson added: "I picked a young squad this year. We let a few of the older members go and we knew it would be difficult for us.

"But I am confident that we can regain the Inter-Services trophy. As these young players get more experience under their belts they will be able to step up to the mark.

"If they do what I say and play more civvy football between now and next year we will have a massive chance." ■

'We are just not finishing the chances we create'

Lap round Lakes up for grabs

SERVICE personnel are being encouraged to test their powers of endurance by competing in this year's Montane Lakeland 50 and Lakeland 100 ultra trail races.

The Lake District-based events are set over 50- and 100-mile courses, with competitors ascending to accumulated heights of up to 6,300m.

Regarded as one of the UK's toughest ultra races, the Lakeland 100 follows a circular route over rocky terrain and rugged

trails and paths and athletes have a 40-hour time limit for completion.

The event is ideal for Servicemen and women as entrants are required to have extensive navigation skills as well as experience of navigating at night.

Competitors can also attempt the Lakeland 50, an event that climbs to 3,200m with a 24-hour time limit.

The ultra races, sponsored by outdoor clothing company Montane, will be held between July 23 and 25.

SoldierSport has three entries into the Lakeland 50 up for grabs, along with a further three places in the Lakeland 100.

Each winner will also receive £100 of outdoor clothing courtesy of Montane.

To stand a chance of winning just answer this question: **Where are the races held?**

Answers on a postcard to the usual address or by email (comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk) by April 30.

Entries can be made online at www.lakeland100.com

To view Montane's clothing range visit www.montane.co.uk ■



Picture: Graeme Main

Future's bright for Army football

A LAST gasp goal from Pte Sam Lake (Para) gave the Army men a deserved draw with the Royal Navy in the final fixture of this year's Inter-Services football championship.

The powerful defender headed home from a Cpl Keith Emmerson (AGC (RMP)) free kick to tie the score at 2-2, a result that saw the Reds crowned Southern Counties Cup champions at the end of an encouraging season.

Despite the Royal Air Force taking the Inter-Services title, Army coach Capt Lee Dyson (APTC) was happy the campaign showed real signs of progress.

"The RAF was the best team in this year's competition," he told *SoldierSport*. "They had a lot of experience with guys who have played in four or five Inter-Services.

"Being positive we have only lost one game all season and we have won the Southern Counties Cup, which is our first silverware in three years.

"We have some terrific young players coming through and that certainly bodes well for the future.

"There were some guys who were unavailable due to injury and ops and they will make us stronger next season.

"While we didn't win the Inter-Services I am over the moon with what we have achieved."

The RAF effectively ended the Army's challenge with a 2-0 victory on a frozen evening at Elgin.

When the Reds took to the field against the Navy they were playing for the runners-up spot after their Service rivals drew 1-1 a week earlier.

The impressive Sig Sam Agar (R Signals, pictured) set them on their way, but the Navy replied on the stroke of half time and added another before Lake's moment of magic late on. ■



On the charge: Fly half Pte Amori Nailago (2 R Welsh) takes on the 1 WG defence during his side's 31-26 win in the Army Premiership Cup final at Aldershot

Royals win Welsh showdown

Report: Richard Long
Picture: Steve Dock

A RUGBY masterclass from tight head prop LCpl Chris Budgen guided 2nd Battalion, The Royal Welsh to glory in a pulsating Army Premiership Cup final at Aldershot.

The experienced forward was in sublime form against his compatriots from 1st Battalion, Welsh Guards as he combined power in the scrum with attacking flair to cross for two tries in a dramatic 31-26 win.

After withdrawing from last year's competition the victory marked a triumphant return to action for 2 R Welsh and coach CSgt Boff Williams was thrilled with the outcome.

"I am delighted. After taking a year out, coming back to win is amazing," he told *SoldierSport*.

"A lot of the boys have just come back from Afghanistan and they have had to sacrifice leave to play.

"They have shown a massive commitment to the team.

"We knew we had an overall team from one to 15 whereas the strength of the Welsh Guards was in the pack.

"We had to match them there but I knew that our three-quarters were a yard quicker and that played to our advantage.

"We tend to lose our way a bit and I think everyone got a bit nervous towards the end but it was great to finish the job."

The Guards stamped their early authority on the match with Army stars LCpl Melvyn Lewis, LCpl Matt Dwyer and LSgt Chris Scarf constantly firing the pack forward.

Hooker Dwyer kicked three booming penalties in the opening period but wing Cpl Graham Mansfield kept 2 R Welsh in touch, running clear to score in the corner, before Budgen powered

home following a great forward drive on the stroke of half time.

The prop crossed under the posts for his second try shortly after the interval and scrum half Pte Morgan Evans was on hand to extend the lead after a loose

ball was retrieved just short of the line.

But the Welsh Guards showed ferocious commitment to the cause and rampaging lock LSgt Steve George smashed his way through would-be

tacklers to reduce the arrears.

The Guards crossed again just minutes later but Mansfield was on hand to stem the flow, rounding off some stunning cross-field passing to score under the posts.

George had one last moment of influence, charging home for his second try of the afternoon, but 2 R Welsh managed to cling on to their slender advantage and seal a thrilling victory. ■

'After taking a year out, coming back to win is amazing'

Reds near top gear

Report: Richard Long

THE Army's Rugby Union stars continued to build momentum ahead of next month's

Twickenham showdown as they battled their way to a 15-15 draw with Worcester Warriors A (pictured).

With impressive wins over Cambridge and Oxford Universities already in the bag and a spirited showing in their defeat against Northampton Saints A, the Reds look well set for further Inter-Services glory this year.

Coach WO2 Andy Price (WG) has been keen to challenge his players with tough-looking fixtures against Guinness Premiership A sides and Worcester provided a stern test of their credentials at Aldershot's Army Rugby Stadium.

The home side made an electrifying start, applying constant pressure on the Warriors defence. Their dominance was rewarded when fullback Pte Charl Coetzer (AGC) crossed for a try within the opening five minutes.

After repelling the Army's early barrage the visitors grew stronger as the half progressed and flanker James Freeman and centre Greg King both scored well worked tries to establish a 12-7 interval lead.

A penalty five minutes into the second period extended the

visitors' advantage but the Army came roaring back with rampant flanker Pte Apo Satala (1 Scots) at the heart of their best moves.

The powerful Fijian broke through would-be Worcester tacklers to create a try for centre Spr Perceli Nacavamuto (RE) and then forced a penalty in front of the posts that was easily converted by Cpl Ceri Cummings (REME).

With the Army charging for victory Cummings spurned a gilt-edged opportunity to finish Worcester off in the closing minutes, missing a penalty that fell well within range as the match finished all square.

The Reds were in action against Saracens A as this issue went to press and are due to travel to South Africa for a two-week training camp before locking horns with the Royal Air Force at Newbury on April 21 (kick-off 1915).

Attention then turns to Twickenham on May 1 (kick-off 1500), as the Royal Navy look to avenge the demoralising 50-7 defeat suffered at the hands of the Army in last year's showpiece fixture.

● Visit www.arutickets.com to purchase tickets for the big match. ■



Picture: Gaerne Main

SPORT SHORTS

ENDURANCE ace Capt Ben Harrop (3 Para) has set his sights on a new Guinness world record when he takes part in this month's London Marathon.

The 30-year-old will be running the gruelling 26.2-mile route in Army trousers and boots while carrying a 60lb pack and is hoping to beat the current record for such a feat, which stands at 6hr 28min 23sec.

He will also use the event to raise money for Armed Forces charity The Royal Star and Garter Homes for disabled ex-Servicemen and women.

To sponsor Harrop visit www.justgiving.com/BenjaminHarrop

LCPL Mark Hellier (R Signals) is running this year's London Marathon to raise money for the disabled children's charity KIDS.

To make a donation visit www.justgiving.com/markhellier

FORMER soldier Howard Johnson will be raising money for ABF The Soldiers' Charity and The Gurkha Welfare Trust when he runs his twelfth London Marathon this year.

The 69-year-old from Cardiff, who served from 1956 to 1961, is appealing for sponsors and donations can be made at www.justgiving.com/Howard-Johnson1940

WITH the Winter Olympics firmly put to bed attention now turns to the 2014 Games in Russia and Army ace Capt Simon Nicholson (REME) is going all out to join the party.

After excelling in Army, Inter-Services and Combined Services competitions, the officer was named in this season's GB Snowboard Cross Team and had the privilege of competing against Europe's best riders.

The adrenalin-fuelled sport is a fast and aggressive downhill race that sees riders going head-to-head on specially-designed courses that include an array of obstacles and challenges.

"In previous years all three Services have provided personnel who have attempted to reach World Cup level, but the Army looks like it will be the first to succeed," said Great Britain coach Simon Whyte.

"The Army Championships and Inter-Services competitions are excellent breeding grounds for new talent.





"Team GB is always on the lookout for riders with the right potential."

Nicholson added: "This unique opportunity could not have been done without the fantastic support of my unit, ATR Bassingbourn, and the Army Snowboard Association.

"Together with my sponsors, SNO!zone MK and Fox Racing, all have enabled me to represent my country in this sport."

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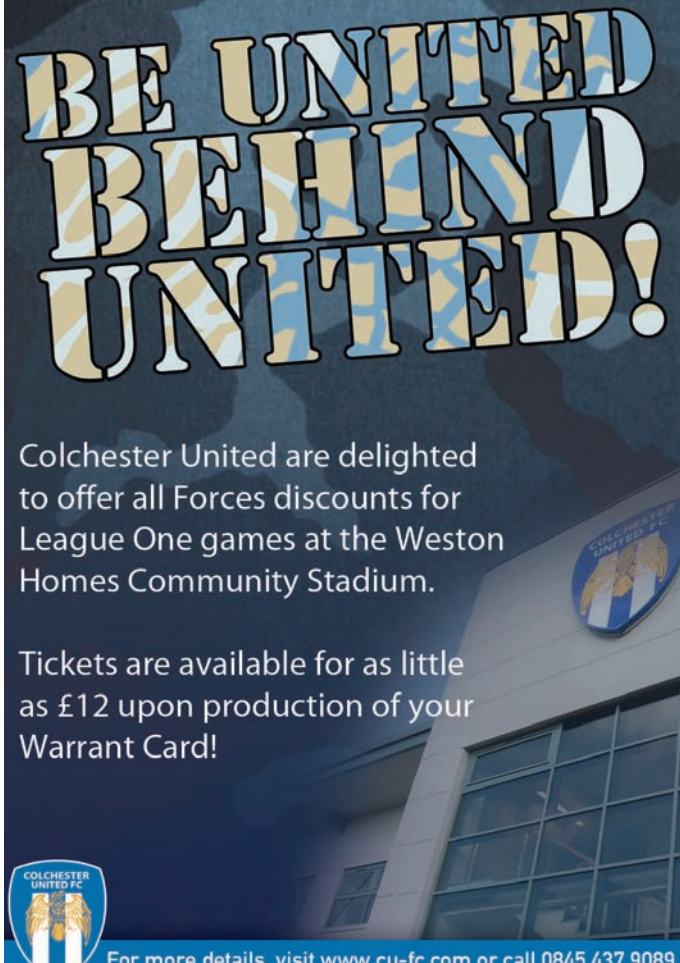


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Boxers floor Service rivals

Report: Richard Long
Picture: Graeme Main

A DEVASTATING first round knock out from Rfn Emmanuel Izonritei (Rifles) was the highlight of an emphatic win for the Army at this year's Inter-Services Boxing Championships.

The brutal heavyweight (pictured) floored Royal Air Force challenger SAC Richie Lewis with a booming right hook to help the Reds record a comprehensive victory and secure their 27th consecutive title at Aldershot's Maida Gymnasium.

Izonritei was in total command of the short-lived contest, easily manoeuvring his opponent around the ring before delivering the thumping blow that left him face down on the canvas.

With the exception of the lone RAF fighter the Royal Navy matched the Army in all but two bouts, with Cpl Kibria Subhan (REME) and Spr Adam Whitfield (RE) awarded early walkover wins.

Cpl James Allen (REME) was the first fighter to face action in the ring and he was in complete control against Gareth Smith (BRNC).

After a cagey opening the bantamweight stamped his class on the contest and recorded solid scores in both the second and third rounds to triumph 10-3.

Spr Aaron Downes (RE) made an explosive start to his featherweight clash with Jake Beer (HMS *Sultan*) by landing some well-directed punches in the opening round.

The early assault set the pattern for the remainder of the fight as Downes

completed a comfortable 14-7 win.

Great Britain international LCpl Martin Stead (RLC) showcased his considerable talents and made easy work of his lightweight contest with Ashley Smith (HMS *St Albans*), knocking out his opponent in the opening round.

But LCpl Steve Turner (3 UKSR) was made to work hard for his slender 3-2 win over determined Navy opponent Ricky Rose (45 Cdo RM).

After a tentative first round both fighters found it difficult to connect with any meaningful punches, but Turner did just enough in the eyes the judges.

Welterweight LCpl Gav McGee (Rifles) suffered the Army's first defeat of the evening in what appeared to be an evenly-fought bout with AB Mark Flowers (HMS *Ark Royal*).

The boxers struggled to find any fluidity as the referee intervened at regular intervals and the unfortunate McGee was left mystified by a standing eight count in the second round, which ultimately contributed to his downfall.

Spr Shane Sadler (RE) gave an all-action performance in his light-middleweight clash, recording a fine 13-8 victory in a highly entertaining fight, but England international Sig Nikki Gittus (R Signals) struggled to hit top form in his bout with Andy Neylon (HMS *Campbelltown*) and had to rely on a 14-12 countback to secure his narrow win after the scores were tied at 6-6.

Tpr Lawrence Cumberbatch (RTR) was involved in a bruising light-heavyweight encounter with Mne Greg Welling (CTCRM) and was unlucky to fall victim to a bizarre 14-4 scoreline.

Cruiserweight Cpl Gareth Jones (1 R Welsh) tasted defeat against Paul Ormston (HMS *Collingwood*) while Cpl Shane Duggan (R Signals) lost on a countback after his super-heavyweight clash ended tied at 6-6.

Speaking after a night of superb boxing, coach Sgt Tony Davis (APTC) said he was thrilled to retain the Inter-Services title in what is his first year in charge.

"With the preparations

we made we were quite confident but you never know what will happen on the night," the former Amateur Boxing Association champion told *SoldierSport*.

"Overall I thought it was a great performance. This was my first big test and the focus was on retaining our title.

"This is the first time in recent years that the Army has won on bouts, in the past we have done it on walkovers after being beaten on the night, so that was really pleasing.

"I was a little apprehensive but the hard work and preparation paid off.

"The scoring was disappointing at times, especially with Steve Turner and Gav McGee, who was desperate to win his first Combined Services title.

"But on the whole I am delighted and this should hold us in good stead for the upcoming ABAs." ■

'This was my first big test and the focus was on retaining our title'





Pedal power: Army mountain bike ace Cpl Tim Upston (Rifles) tests his downhill skills at the Stile Cop run in Staffordshire ahead of another busy season

Downhill riders get into gear

Interview: Richard Long
Picture: Graeme Main

CYCLING is a sport very much on the up thanks to the phenomenal success of Britain's golden generation at the 2008 Olympics.

With its popularity soaring a fresh impetus has washed over the Army Cycling Union (ACU) as an increasing number of Service personnel take to the saddle to test their pedal power.

Last year more than 40 riders tackled everything from challenging mountain bike courses to gruelling road races at the ACU championships and further progress is expected this year.

One sport hoping to emerge from the shadows of the more instantly recognisable disciplines is downhill mountain biking.

The high-octane event pushes cyclists to the very limit and the Army is now looking for new faces to join its development team.

"Downhill mountain biking is less established compared to some of the other disciplines and a lot of people do not realise what it is," rider Cpl Tim Upston (Rifles) told *SoldierSport*.

"In the past I think the focus has been on road racing and cross country mountain biking but this is the extreme

side of the sport.

"The adrenalin rush is unbelievable, we have jumps and drops and we hit the corners at high speeds. It is a great spectator sport as well.

"I would say that civvy-wise it is one of the biggest cycling sports around at the moment."

Downhill mountain biking is a time trial event that sees riders pedalling against the clock on courses that can take between two and five minutes to complete.

Races are staged on steep, downhill terrain that includes a range of challenging jumps and obstacles. Riders also rely on gravity as there are no climbing sections involved in the runs.

The development team competes in regional events across the country and the long-term goal is to progress to races at national level.

With civilian competitions forming the backdrop for Army riders the cost of taking part – once the relevant equipment has been purchased – is relatively low.

New recruits pay £45 for a three-year membership, which includes a race top, and they can take part in a number of events on a hectic race calendar.

The team also meets regularly at the Stile Cop run in Cannock Chase, Staffordshire, to perfect their skills and prepare for upcoming competitions.

"Every month they hold timed practise sessions so we use this as a training area," Upston explained.

"It is in a central location and does not cost us anything. It is a great facility.

"A lot of young kids are getting involved in downhill mountain biking now and I think the sport is a great incentive for people to join the Army."

To establish its own identity the team is finalising plans for an upgraded Army championships this year.

"We are hoping to move down to the UK Bike Park just outside Blandford," Upston said.

"They are onside for letting us use the facilities. We are trying to get away from the confusion with cross country racing and this will give us the chance to show the Army what we are about."

● For more information on downhill mountain biking and getting involved in the sport visit www.armycyclingunion.co.uk or follow the links to the ACU page on ArmyNet. ■

'The sport is a great incentive for people to join the Army'

Army trio in Olympic bow

BOBBSLEIGH ace Cpl Paula Walker (R Signals) finished an agonising 0.05 seconds away from a top ten finish on her Winter Olympics debut in Vancouver.

The GB2 driver and her brakewoman Kelly Thomas were ranked 11th in the competition after a scrappy final run left them just short of their target.

Speaking to *SoldierSport* on her return to the UK, Walker said: "Finishing 11th was great but I really wanted to be in the top ten."

"It was brilliant to be involved in the Olympics. It was a bit overwhelming at first but it was an unbelievable experience."

"A top ten finish would have been a fantastic leap as I was ranked 15th going into the competition."

"I now have to look ahead to 2014. If I can get the funding and the time off it is my intention to be there."

Fellow Service star Capt Henry Nwume (RAMC) was part of the

GB team that finished 17th in the four-man bobsleigh competition.

A second run crash ruled the crew out of contention but they improved on 21st place at the halfway stage to move up the rankings.

LCpl Lee-Steve Jackson (2 Yorks) completed his Winter Olympic campaign by finishing 66th in the 20km individual biathlon event.

The Stockton-on-Tees soldier missed four shots out of 20, but ended on a high note by hitting five from five.

Jackson said: "It was tough, but my ski speed was good again. It was painful but fun. I really enjoyed the week and I can walk away happy."

The 20km race was the 29-year-old's third event at Vancouver 2010 and he clocked a time of 55min 37.5sec over the course.

He finished 55th in the 10km sprint and 56th in the 12.5km pursuit in the Games' earlier biathlon events. ■

SPORT SHORTS

ARMY volleyball players will be taking to the court in a hectic schedule of matches over the coming months.

The Tidworth Garrison Super Gym will host the inter-unit finals on April 21 before male and female players head to Colchester Garrison for training sessions from May 10 to 14.

Army squads will be perfecting their skills ahead of the Crown Services tournament and new players are welcome to take part.

The Inter-Services championships will then follow, with RAF Cranwell hosting the event on June 17 and 18.

Any players – Regular and TA – interested in joining the squads should contact Chris Teoh on 01235 543764 or email christeh77@yahoo.co.uk

THE 2010 Inter-Services Table Tennis Championships yielded mixed results for the Army as the Royal Air Force continued its dominance of the sport.

With the airmen boasting considerable strength in depth they were able to play their way to yet another team title when they clashed with their Forces rivals in Aldershot.

But the Army's top two players showcased their talent in the individual competition, with Pte Eric Amoah (RLC) narrowly beating teammate WO2 Wallace Mahaffy (1 R Irish) in the tournament's semi finals.

The Ghanaian ace powered to victory in the final, defeating the RAF top seed to be crowned men's open champion.

Amoah and Mahaffy then teamed up to secure a comfortable win in the men's doubles competition.

Team spokesman WO2 John McFaul (AGC (RMP)) said: "This has been another successful and encouraging championship for the Army team who must continue to build on the individual achievements of Amoah and Mahaffy if they are to take the highly sought-after Inter-Services men's team title from the RAF in the future."

A FORMER Royal Engineer has started preparations for a gruelling motorcycle desert challenge to raise money for Help for Heroes.

Neil McGichen will take part in the 2011 Heroes Legend Rally (the old Paris to Dakar route), an event that will see him travel more than 6,500 kilometres on some of the hardest terrain on Earth.

With no previous off-road experience to his name the ex-Serviceman is planning a busy year of training before the rally starts.

He is also keen to gain as many sponsors as possible to boost his fund-raising total.

For more information about the challenge and to donate to the cause visit www.justgiving.com/heroeslegend

Picture: Sgt Anthony Boocock, RLC



Loggies light up slopes

WINTER sports stars from 1 Logistic Support Regiment capped another terrific season by being crowned Army Alpine and Nordic ski champions.

The skiers dominated proceedings at Exercise Lions Challenge, winning all the team races during a terrific week of action in Serre Chevalier, France.

Fine performances from Sgt Dougie MacPherson, LCpl Chris McCourt and LCpl Chalkie White (pictured) helped secure the Alpine title but former skipper Capt Matt Shepherd (RLC) broke the regiment's stranglehold by winning the individual races.

LCpl Jonathan Marsden gave an

inspired showing in the Super G competition, finishing fourth in only his second year of skiing.

The Royal Logistic Corps retained its corps team title and the ladies squad also dominated, winning all of their races for the first time.

In the Nordic competition 1 LSR were crowned male champions for the fourth successive year while the RLC ladies retained their crown.

The fine form of 1 LSR received further recognition with the presentation of the Princess Marina Cup.

The prestigious accolade goes to the best skiing unit in the Army. ■

final word



We asked soldiers for their thoughts on the training exercises on offer in Kenya and the opportunities the country provides for adventurous training

INTERVIEWS: RICHARD LONG
PICTURES: STEVE DOCK



Bdr Stephen Ward (RA)

It has been very good training. The serials have been fast, hard and very realistic. This was my first time in the joint planning fire cell and coming here has shown me how the whole post works and has given me a greater understanding of the job. I also had the chance to go white water rafting, which was awesome. It was great to get away and do some adventurous training.



Pte Herbie Hyde (3 Para)

Coming away to train has been very good and Kenya has given us the chance to try something new. I have been in the mortar detachment and the work has been quite intensive. I have been to Afghanistan so I knew what the climate would be like coming here. For my adventurous training I climbed Mount Kenya, it was something different to try and was a great challenge.



Pte Chris Pocock (RAMC)

This is my first time here and I have loved it. The training in Kenya has given me more of a chance to do my job. I've been giving lessons and have been treating real-time casualties as well as those simulated in the exercise. I've been dealing with a lot of climatic injuries, such as tropical bites and stings, which will be good experience for when I go to Afghanistan.



LCpl Mathew Jones (3 Para)

This is my second time here. On my previous visit I was simulating the enemy forces. I have not been involved directly as I'm offering protection for the CO. When the serials are running we are normally on the high ground watching how the situations evolve. When you are up there it can be hard to breathe due to the altitude and the heat can slow you down. It is hard graft but enjoyable.



Capt Nick French (3 Para)

I have not been to Kenya before and it has been a huge challenge. The climate is difficult but that is a good thing as it simulates Afghanistan quite closely so we know what to expect when we deploy. I think Kenya is a stunning country and this is a great opportunity to learn how to live and operate in a testing environment with challenging conditions. I think we have coped well.



Capt Jonathan Quayle (RAMC)

At Archers Post the temperature was touching 40C, which is Afghanistan-like heat. From that point of view there is value in the training and the soldiers are learning how to look after themselves. It tends to be the younger lads who suffer as they are less experienced but hopefully they now see the value of taking on fluids and scoff.



Pte David Ashton (3 Para)

I have had the chance to do a lot of live firing with the mortars. I'm number one in the mortar detachment so that brings a lot of responsibility. Archers Post is a great training area and is very similar to what it will be like on operations. I also had the chance to do some white water rafting, rock climbing and kayaking, which was a great way to break up our time.



Pte James Allan (3 Para)

This is my first time in Kenya and I have found this to be good, hard training. We have been providing the overwatch for a lot of the serials, being the first in and last out. The climate and terrain makes the training very challenging but it is good preparation for when we go to Afghanistan. Since I've been here I've had the chance to do some rafting and climbing.



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