

MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH ARMY

SOLDIER

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find solace in
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FREE STUFF . . . win a copy of Mark Bryant's *World War 1 in Cartoons* and *World War II in Cartoons* (Page 67) and take home Sylvester Stallone's explosive return to duty, *Rambo*, on Blu-ray – and a Sony Blu-ray player to watch it on (Page 81).



Cover picture (left): Cpl Will Rigby, 4 Rifles, at the funeral of his twin brother John, who was killed by a roadside bomb in Iraq a year ago this month. See Pages 17-21 Picture: Gareth Fuller/PA Wire

Background image: Cpl Ali Bowler, RMP, targets drivers speeding around the COB. See Page 41 Picture: Graeme Main





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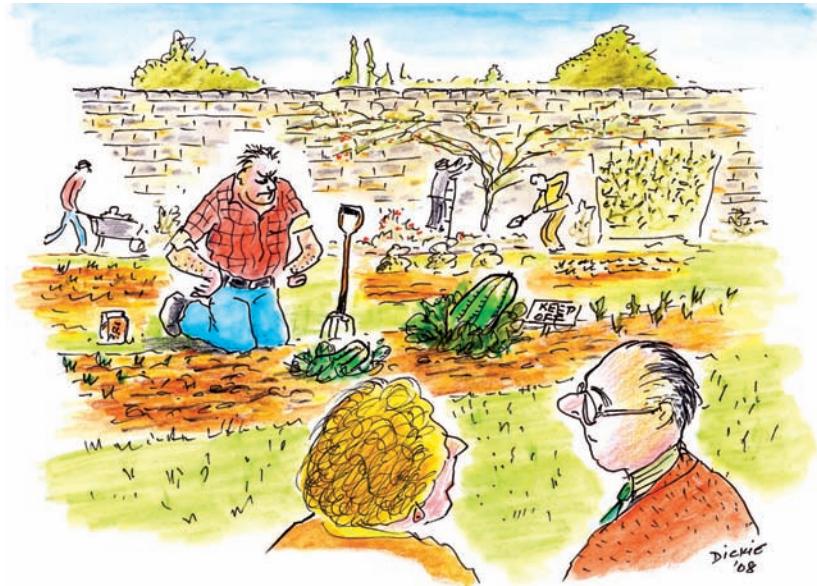
ARMY

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SOLDIER - Magazine of the British Army



"It's not working, Doctor . . . his marrow is so much smaller than Cpl Jones's, he's getting even more depressed."

● Green-fingered remedy – Pages 31-33

Common sense and sensibility

FIRST SIGHT

HAVING been accused of single-handedly spearheading a "downturn in wholesomeness" of the British Army by splashing Katherine Jenkins on the cover and "naively scaring off" the parents of potential recruits with our April Fools tale of genetically modified soldiers, it is not beyond the realms of possibility that this issue of *Soldier* will attract criticism from some quarters.

By carrying interviews with Cpl Will Rigby and his father Doug (Pages 17-21) – a year after the death of Will's twin brother in Iraq – and a feature on post-traumatic stress disorder (Pages 31-33), we touch on two of the most uncomfortable truths about Service life.

The military campaigns of the last six years have highlighted the risks faced by our Servicemen and women. Amid some of the most ferocious fighting British troops have seen for years, the image of the guard of honour carrying a coffin from an aircraft at RAF Brize Norton has come to define the sacrifices made by those in the line of fire.

This stark reality is again laid bare in this issue, with the death of Tpr Ratu Sakeasi Babakobau of the Household Cavalry Regiment and another unnamed soldier following separate explosions in southern Afghanistan (Page 10).

Less visible, however, are those who must live with the loss of their loved ones and the troops who return from tours and continue

to fight the war in their everyday lives.

Will and Doug agreed to speak to *Soldier* because they wanted to provide a supportive shoulder to others who experience the death of a close family member on operations. They also wanted people to know how supportive the Army family and the compassionate

system had been as they came to terms with their shock and grief.

As sensitive as this topic may be, we felt it would be an insult to those serving in Iraq (Pages 35-43) and Afghanistan to gloss over the reality of casualties and the impact on families. We felt it would also be unfair to ignore initiatives such as decompression (Pages 23-25 and 98), which have been set up to alleviate the mental impact on returning troops.

But ultimately we are not spelling out anything that is not already well understood.

As ex-soldier Andy McNab (Pages 46-47) points out, the realities of modern combat are fully appreciated by those who enlist. "People forget that these lads do know what they're getting into."

"They are volunteers and more worldly aware than soldiers have ever been and it is not as if this war is being kept from them because they can watch it live on Sky."

We couldn't agree more. ■

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No need to hide: Gen Sir Richard Dannatt, right, endorsed the need for transparency into events surrounding the death of Baha Mousa in British custody

Great expectations

Inquiry welcomed by Army which demands 'the very highest standards'

BRITAIN'S most senior officer has pledged to "get under the skin" of the events surrounding the death of an Iraqi man in Army custody and make sure lessons are learned.

Describing what had happened to Baha Mousa as "a disgraceful incident", Gen Sir Richard Dannatt, the Chief of the General Staff, said the military would cooperate fully with a forthcoming public inquiry to establish what had happened.

Mr Mousa was found to have died from asphyxiation and had 93 injuries on his body following his detention by British troops five years ago.

Gen Dannatt said: "We have an absolute responsibility to understand all the details of what happened. We need to be both transparent and open. I want the people of Basra, and Iraq and Afghanistan, to have confidence and trust in the Army. I don't want anyone to think that we go around beating people up in detention and then sweep it under the carpet. We need to get further under the skin of these events and there is nothing to hide as far as the Army is concerned. I am content we do this in public."

The inquiry was announced by Armed

Forces Minister Bob Ainsworth in May, a year after the court martial of seven soldiers and officers in connection with Mr Mousa's death.

Five men from the 1st Battalion, The Queen's Lancashire Regiment, now part of The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment, faced allegations relating to the Iraqi's killing. They included the then commanding officer, Col Jorge Mendonca.

An officer and senior NCO with the Intelligence Corps were also alleged to have played a part in the death of Mr Mousa on September 15, 2003.

All were acquitted with the exception of Cpl Donald Payne, 1 QLR, who was jailed for 12 months and dismissed from the Army after admitting he inhumanely treated a prisoner.

Following the trial, Gen Dannatt had told reporters that the case raised "uncomfortable facts", adding that Baha Mousa and other prisoners had been "subjected to a conditioning process that was not lawful".

A report by Brig Robert Aitken, the Army's Director of Personnel Strategy, published in January this year found some procedures for handling prisoners

of war were outdated when troops entered Iraq in 2003. Brig Aitken's report pointed out that the doctrine had subsequently been changed, but stressed there was no evidence of widespread mistreatment of detainees.

Speaking to reporters after last month's announcement of a public hearing, Gen Dannatt said the Army had been due to hold its own board of inquiry into Mr Mousa's death but endorsed the need for transparency.

He confirmed that further action could be taken against soldiers if it was identified that their conduct had fallen short of what should have been expected.

Praising the civilian community for their backing of Service personnel, Gen Dannatt concluded: "I am extremely grateful for the appreciation they have shown. But I think the public would also understand that, on the face of it, a wrong has been done in this case. The Army expects only the very highest standards from its officers and soldiers and any failure to achieve those standards, however rare, is unacceptable to us."

● Values and standards – Page 8

IN BRIEF

● COMMANDERS and soldiers have a responsibility to live by the Army's values and standards throughout their career in uniform, the Chief of the General Staff has stressed.

In his introduction to a new booklet setting out the conduct required of soldiers and officers of all ranks, Gen Sir Richard Dannatt made it clear that operational effectiveness depended on exemplary behaviour.

The publication, *Values and Standards of the British Army*, spells out the expectations required of troops in all areas of Service life and is being sent to all personnel.

Gen Dannatt added: "The Army has a worldwide reputation for excellence, a strong reflection on its officers and soldiers. This reputation derives from, and depends upon, unequivocal commitment, self-sacrifice and mutual trust. Our values and standards are vital to operational effectiveness – they are the lifeblood that sustains the Army. We must believe in them and live by them.

"Commanders create their command ethos and must ensure that values and standards are at the centre of it, through personal example and educating and training their subordinates."

● BRITISH troops are being urged to go green and play their part in reducing carbon emissions as part of World Environment Day on June 5.

Army environment expert Jeffrey Rooke said the global event complemented the military's efforts to drive down emissions and fight global warming and asked soldiers to save energy by making sure they turn off TVs, lights and computers and by ditching their cars for the journey to work.

He added: "We have produced a number of posters and have been raising awareness of World Environment Day on the radio. We urge everyone to give their support."

● COMBINED Cadet Forces' initiatives should be expanded in mainstream schools as part of a move to make the public more aware of their Armed Services. A report by MP Quentin Davies suggests that helping youngsters connect with the military could help them develop a greater appreciation of the work carried out by personnel.

The idea is proposed by Mr Davies in the Armed Forces Recognition Study, which also includes allowing troops to wear uniforms in public and encouraging more homecoming parades for soldiers returning from ops.

Armed Forces Minister Bob Ainsworth said the MoD would liaise with other Government departments to decide how best to take forward the proposals.

● Full report next month

Rats return

Crucial role as 7 Brigade heads back to Basra

A STRONG force of around 4,000 military personnel will remain in Iraq for Op Telic 12 amid ongoing operations in Basra, Defence Secretary Des Browne has confirmed.

Announcing that the 7th Armoured Brigade – the Desert Rats – would be returning to theatre to relieve 4 Mechanized Brigade this month, Mr Browne said the situation was "continuing to evolve rapidly" and planned troop cuts had been put on ice.

The Defence Secretary told the Commons in a statement that the Iraqi-led Operation Charge of the Knights, a clampdown against criminal elements in Basra, had been continuing and the action had been backed by coalition soldiers. But he said caution was needed while the uncertain situation prevailed in the region and pointed out that the Desert Rats would be given crucial responsibilities.

Mr Browne added: "It remains our clear direction of travel to reduce our force levels, as and when conditions allow, from the number of around 4,000 for the next roulement. But while military commanders continue to assess the changing environment in Basra, it remains prudent that we take time to fully consider further reductions."

Mr Browne said troops were currently focused on training and mentoring the

DESERT RATS – DEPLOYING UNITS

LAST IN IRAQ: 2006/07 (OP TELIC 7)

7th Armoured Brigade HQ and Signal Squadron

3rd Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery

The Royal Scots Dragoon Guards

9th/12th Royal Lancers

32 Engineer Regiment

1st Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers

2nd Battalion, The Royal Anglian Regiment

4th Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland

2 Logistic Support Regiment, RLC

3 Close Support Medical Regiment

2 Close Support Battalion, REME

111 Provost Company, 1st Regiment RMP

14th Division of the Iraqi Army, which was "months away" from being fully operational. He added: "Already we have enhanced our advisory and operational support by embedding UK personnel with headquarters and operational planning staff in Basra. Improvements in security will also provide a basis for further economic development and political progress, including through provincial elections, scheduled in the autumn."

Coalition on the charge

BRITISH-backed Iraqi troops are engaged in a series of operations against rogue militias after shifting their focus to the north of Basra.

As this issue went to press, soldiers were striking at targets in the Al Qurnah and Medina areas in two actions to restore peace in the region.

British and American mentoring teams supported them as they moved into the areas close to the convergence of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers.

Commanders were satisfied by the success of the Charge of the Knights actions, which had resulted in a significant decline in the number of mortar and rocket attacks against coalition bases.

However, a 15-strong barrage of rockets launched against the Contingency Operating Base (COB) in Basra on May 8 claimed the lives of two Iraqi contractors and wounded an undisclosed number of coalition soldiers.

British Army spokesman Maj Tom Hol-

loway said there was no room for complacency despite the decline in attacks and stressed the clampdown against terrorists and rogue militias was continuing apace.

He added: "The situation in the city is much improved, but we are conscious that it is fragile. There are checkpoints at major junctions to stem the flow of ordnance. But there is the general feeling of a new era among the people of Basra."

"The shops, in particular, have opened and have been doing a roaring trade so we are cautiously optimistic."

Maj Holloway reiterated that British troops had not been confined to their base. He said: "Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland, have been working in Military Transition Teams with the Iraqis."

"They have been living in austere conditions and doing a very good job. The Scots Guards also provided a company for the ops in Al Qurnah. Guys have been risking life and limb doing very positive things."



Desert display: Insurgents operating in southern Iraq have been dealt a major blow after British troops destroyed six tonnes of illegal weapons in spectacular fashion.

Lethal ordnance, including Iranian-produced rockets, mines and mortar bombs, were seized during the latest Charge of the Knights operations around Basra. But all were removed permanently from terrorist hands after being blown up

in a series of controlled explosions at a remote desert location.

According to reports, "sizeable" caches of weapons have been found during street searches and some have been handed over by Basra residents. Lt Jason White, Royal Navy, OC of the Joint UK Explosive Ordnance Disposal Group, said the destruction of the weapons was an important step in creating a safer and more secure environment.

The ordnance had been held at the Shatt al Arab hotel, a former British-held outpost that is now a vital Iraqi Army HQ and the Basra Operations Centre.

Lt White said destroying the weapons had made life safer for personnel at the base. "We have reduced the scale of the problem, making it easier for the Iraqi Army to deal with what remains," he added.

Uprising crushed

But future of Basra remains uncertain, according to outgoing commander

ACTION needs to be taken to consolidate the gains made during Operation Charge of the Knights, according to the outgoing British commander in Basra.

Brig Julian Free, commanding the 4th Mechanized Brigade, said troops had "had to move quickly" to support Iraqis fighting to bring the insurgents to heel.

But he confirmed that Prime Minister Nouri Maliki's decision to intervene during the violence in Basra had achieved its main goal of quelling the uprising and that 4 Brigade troops welcomed the chance to lend a hand.

Speaking as he prepared to hand over to the 7th Armoured Brigade as this issue went to press, Brig Free told *Soldier*: "We had to move quickly to support the

Iraqi preparations to tackle the militias in the city. In doing so, we regained the initiative in Basra and, with outstanding and very welcome support from our US colleagues, enabled the Iraqi Army's decisive and successful engagements with the militia."

Violence erupted three months after coalition forces handed back control of Basra province to Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) at the end of last year.

During the actions, British troops have continued to train their counterparts as well as fighting alongside them in the Military Transition Teams (MiTTs).

Brig Free confirmed that coalition troops had also provided specialist support for gaps in Iraqi capacity, such as placing a Joint Tactical Air Coordinator

in each MiTT for strikes against militia rocket teams.

He said that the MiTTs had returned the British Army to its roots and historical strength of working alongside local forces. But the commander warned that the future of Basra still remained in the balance. Brig Free added: "There is still much to do to secure the gains that have been made but there is now an opportunity to drive forward the redevelopment of Basra. The brigade has acquitted itself well and every soldier has delivered on my personal plea to them to work harder and run faster to turn the mission round against significant odds. I am immensely proud."

● *Telic tales – Pages 35-43*

IN BRIEF

● SERVICE personnel are being encouraged to visit a new website to help them avoid falling foul of television licensing laws.

Soldiers living on MoD bases are not exempt from the licence fee and TV Licensing has launched a special section on its website, www.tvlicensing.co.uk/armyforces, to explain the rules.

Content includes jargon-free clarification of the law, with sections on shared accommodation, temporary residences and watching TV on laptops. Visitors can also find out how and where to buy a licence.

● SOLDIERS injured in Afghanistan have received some high-tech relief from their Colchester-based colleagues.

More than £3,200 worth of laptop computers have been donated to the Royal Centre for Defence Medicine at Selly Oak Hospital in Birmingham by Colchester Garrison, the home of 16 Air Assault Brigade, which replaced units from 52 Infantry Brigade in Helmand province in April.

● BENEVOLENT bikers earned a date with singer Hayley Westenra after raising £10,000 for the Poppy Appeal.

Fifty members of the Royal British Legion Riders Branch rode their motorbikes along London's famous Pall Mall to present the cash to the New Zealand soprano at the charity's headquarters.

Westenra is a keen supporter of the Legion, having previously sung at the Festival of Remembrance and at a concert at Fairfield Hall.

Riders Branch chairman Paul Pollard explained that the money was collected from a series of events held throughout 2007, adding: "Knowing the funds we have raised for the Poppy Appeal will help those currently serving and the ex-Service community means a lot to us."

● SENIOR NCOs serving with Bulford-based HQ 12 Mechanized Brigade are dealing a helping hand to less fortunate comrades by holding a special poker event. Organiser WO2 Matt Lambeth, RRF, is hoping that soldiers will have an ace up their sleeves for Help For Heroes at the event, to be held on June 25 and 26.

The avid card player, who follows poker on TV, is charging fellow NCOs £10 a head to join in, with players competing for prizes instead of cash.

WO2 Lambeth told *Soldier*: "We're looking at having 100 or so people on the first night, with the winners coming through to the final table on the second evening. I've been seeking sponsorship and I'm hoping to email a couple of online casinos, asking whether they will be able to provide dealers and chips."

Trooper killed by mine strike

Colleagues mourn death of one of Fiji's finest

A PROMISING Fijian soldier who was held in the "highest regard" by his comrades died doing a job he loved, his superior officers have said.

Commanders recalled that Tpr Ratu Sakeasi Babakobau of the Household Cavalry Regiment had quickly earned the respect of those around him on his first overseas tour in southern Afghanistan.

His death, after his vehicle hit a mine in Helmand province during a routine patrol on May 2, had been "an enormous tragedy" for his friends and colleagues.

Three other soldiers and an Afghan civilian were hurt in the blast in the Nowzad area. The casualties were evacuated to the main base at Camp Bastion.

Known as Baba, Tpr Babakobau joined the Army in 2004 and deployed to Afghanistan in April under the command of the 5th Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland. The 29-year-old married father-of-two had quickly established himself in theatre, where he was recognised by superiors for his ability and strong potential.



● Tpr Babakobau

Lt Col Harry Fullerton, commanding the HCR, said: "He was an outstanding soldier who was destined for great things. He was already a leader of men and words cannot express our grief at this time. Our thoughts lie with his wife, children and family back in Fiji."

Lt Col David Richmond, CO of 5 Scots, said Tpr Babakobau had been highly respected in the battalion and his loss had been sorely felt. He added: "He died in action doing a job that he loved and excelled in, surrounded by men who held him in the highest regard. He possessed all the best qualities of a British soldier – selfless commitment, utter professionalism and the absolute will to win. He was loved and respected by all, and our thoughts are with his loved ones at this tragic time."

● AN explosion has claimed the life of a British soldier in Afghanistan. The soldier, who has not been named at the request of his family, was carrying out a foot patrol in the Musa Qaleh area when he was caught in the blast on May 19.

Brits aid Afghan Army ops

CONFIDENT troops from the Afghan National Army (ANA) put their expert British training into play when they smashed a huge arms cache in Helmand province.

Following up an intelligence lead, the soldiers swooped on a house close to a compound in Gereshk where they unearthed RPGs, rockets and more than 100,000 rounds of ammunition. Several Afghan Police uniforms were also discovered, which, it is believed, insurgents have worn to infiltrate secure areas.

British Forces spokesman Lt Col Robin Matthews was delighted with the outcome of the raid, which, he said, showed the British training was working.

Mentoring teams from the Royal Horse Artillery and 23 Engineer Regiment were on standby to help the Afghan troops if needed during the search op. Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland, also played their part in assisting in the clearance and storage of the ammo.

Lt Col Matthews said: "Our mentoring teams are working with the Afghan Police and Army and operations such as these demonstrate the progress they are making. They have seized a significant amount of ammunition, which will have dented the insurgents' capability," he added.

● A RELIEVED junior officer has spoken of the horrifying moment a rocket-propelled grenade bounced off his body armour during a patrol in Musa Qaleh.

Lt David Robertson of the 4th Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland, recalled how his company's Warrior armoured vehicles had been supporting ANA troops advancing on a Taliban position when the round was fired. It clipped him and exploded nearby. The 30-year-old vehicle commander, who suffered injuries to his arm and was later extracted from the area by a medical response team, admitted: "I have been thinking how lucky we were."



Centenary deployment: Soldiers from Imjin Company, 2 R Irish will spend half of the TA's 100th anniversary year providing force protection at Camp Bastion

TA mark their territory

Royal Irish take on force protection duties at British Army's Herrick home

TERRITORIAL Army troops from Northern Ireland have taken over the key role of ensuring the security of Camp Bastion in southern Afghanistan's Helmand province.

One hundred and forty soldiers from Imjin Company, 2nd Battalion, The Royal Irish Regiment, will be working in and around the large base for the next six months as part of Bastion's force protection company.

As well as patrolling the camp and its immediate surroundings, the reservists will also provide protection for Helmand's combat air ambulance and contribute to a reserve force capable of deploying to incidents on the ground at short notice.

LCpl Steve Limmer, who works as a software tester in civvy street, said: "I was amazed how the team just gelled really well right from the off. My work colleagues just think I am out here sunbathing in the sand."

On their patrols outside Camp Bastion, the soldiers regularly interact with the Afghan population, whether it is kicking a football around or providing medical treatment. Team medic LCpl Chris Hagan explained: "We were out with our vehicles when the patrol was approached by a family. Their young daughter had a large, deep burn to her arm so I cleaned the wound as it was quite dirty, dressed

it and gave her some mild pain relief. It doesn't sound like much, but her family was over the moon and I was just pleased that I could help."

Company commander Maj Mark Hudson said he was proud to be leading

the Territorial contingent through the tour, adding: "Imjin Company are great Territorial soldiers who are as capable and able as their Regular counterparts."

● TA 100: City's show of thanks – Page 13

Relative peace for Paras

BRITISH soldiers in Afghanistan's Helmand province are taking advantage of the final days of the poppy season to press on with their mission to win the hearts and minds of the local population.

The close of the harvesting period usually heralds an increase in Taliban activity, but Capt Nick Rutsch, adjutant of the 2nd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment, told *Soldier* that his men had not encountered a rise in enemy contacts and were using the lull to cement their good relationship with the Afghan people. "We've seen fewer people working in the fields as the poppy season finishes and now more males of fighting age are more obvious in groups," he said. "But to date we have not seen a rise in activity."

"Our main effort is reconstruction and development – everything that we do is with that in mind. Our focus is on reassuring the locals of security so that reconstruction can take place."

Despite enjoying a relatively quiet period, Capt Rutsch insisted that the Helmand-based paratroopers remain prepared for any resumption in hostilities. "Obviously we expect activity as a by-product of our patrols as there are people out there who do not want us to succeed in the rebuilding of the area. We are prepared for that as this is what we trained to do for the best part of a year," he added.

For the first time in recent history, all four Parachute Regiment battalions are serving on operations together as part of 16 Air Assault Brigade.

TA soldiers from the 4th Battalion, The Parachute Regiment, are working alongside their 2 Para counterparts and Capt Rutsch praised their professionalism. "Everyone is considered to be a para," he concluded. "Some have been working with us for over a year now and you can't tell the difference."

IN BRIEF

● STAFFORDSHIRE-based soldiers who have gone the extra mile could have their heroics honoured at a regional newspaper's annual awards ceremony.

The Sentinel, in Stoke-on-Trent, is inviting nominations for its Our Heroes campaign, which includes the Beyond the Call of Duty award for the Armed Forces and emergency services.

Any serving soldier from the north Staffordshire and south Cheshire area who has done something amazing over the past year is eligible to be nominated, and shortlisted finalists will be invited to a presentation evening and dinner in September. The Army has a proud Our Heroes record after Lt Col Tim Sandiford, CO of the 3rd Battalion, The Mercian Regiment, won last year's Editor's award and Pte Andrew Dale received a runners-up prize in his category.

To make a nomination, write a short summary of what the person has done to deserve the award and send it to Aimi Moores, *The Sentinel*, Sentinel House, Forge Lane, Etruria, Stoke-on-Trent ST1 5SS. Nominations close on August 1.

● A NEW commander has been appointed at the Suffolk home of the Army's Apache attack helicopter. Col David Turner succeeds Col Neil Hutton at the helm of Wattisham Airfield, where 3rd and 4th Regiments Army Air Corps and 7 Air Assault Battalion REME, are based.

The former officer commanding 654 Squadron said his role would allow the regiments based at Wattisham to focus on their core job of supporting operations. "With attack helicopters now considered to be an essential part of the Army's order of battle, every effort is required to ensure that the capability can be sustained," he added. "The demands on our people are not insignificant and it is my responsibility to find the right balance of effort."

● CHILDREN of Gurkha soldiers will save £7,000 on a university education after a Welsh college slashed its tuition fees.

The University of Wales Institute, Cardiff (UWIC) now views the sons and daughters of Royal Gurkha Rifles personnel as home students rather than international students, resulting in the cost of a course falling from £10,000 to £3,000. Although the university is the first in the UK to make the change, it is pushing for the policy to be implemented nationwide and has received the backing of Universities UK.

John Phillips, UWIC's dean of international students, said: "We are proud of our military connections and believe it is so important to acknowledge the debt that the UK has to Gurkha soldiers for their commitment and loyal service over the years."

Rifles answer Kosovo's call

Battalion to provide back up to new Balkan state

BRITISH infantrymen have been preparing for peacekeeping duties in the Balkans after Nato requested military support in Kosovo.

The soldiers, from the 2nd Battalion, The Rifles, were due to fly to the volatile former Serbian province as this issue went to press. They will be deployed to provide extra back-up should ethnic trouble flare.

They have been training hard for potential problems, including public order situations, which they could be called on to deal with in theatre.

Based in Ballykinler, Northern Ireland, the 2 Rifles soldiers are part of the Nato and European Union pan-Balkans Operational Reserve Force (ORF) and will reinforce the long-running multinational Kfor operation. Kosovo declared independence from Serbia in February – a move that heralded clashes between Serbs and ethnic Albanians in the northern town of Mitrovica – although the situation has since calmed down.

Announcing the deployment, Defence Secretary Des Browne said British troops were currently responsible for providing

the highest readiness Balkans battalion, a commitment the UK rotates with Italy and Germany.

Mr Browne told the House of Commons: "We are therefore well prepared to meet Nato's request and I have agreed to deploy our ORF battalion until June 30. I would like to stress that the deployment confirms yet again the professionalism of our Forces and their ability to provide essential military support at short notice."

Kfor spokesman Col Jean-Luc Cotard told *Soldier* that he was confident British troops would be welcomed by the people of Kosovo, adding that the situation in the country remained calm. He added: "Every year Kfor asks its Operational Readiness Battalions to come out to Kosovo as they have to respond quickly if there is trouble. It is better for them to come out once a year and see how we are organised logically and get a feel for the situation out on the ground."

"I think the British soldiers will be welcomed here, but obviously they will remain ready to react should there be any problems," Col Cotard concluded.

Troops blast gym fees

DISGRUNTLED soldiers have given a resounding thumbs down to the suggestion that they should pay to use a gym when posted away from a mainstream garrison.

The results of a survey on the secure ArmyNet website found that nearly all the 5,100 troops who responded felt it would be unreasonable to expect them to put their hands in their pockets. Just two per cent said they would cough up.

The ArmyNet poll followed a prize letter in *Soldier* from a warrant officer who was asked to pay to use the gym at Abbey Wood in Bristol. As his new base was a civilian site, he had been told he would be expected to pay membership fees despite being in the middle of a rehab programme.

The senior NCO was also mystified as to why soldiers had to pay while Royal Air Force and Royal Navy personnel did not.

In his response, Lt Col Ian Davidson, of

Land Forces Training, said access to a gym was not a requirement for personal training, and that soldiers were subsidised to use the Abbey Wood fitness facility. Membership cost just £40 per year. He stated that being involved in a rehab programme could place "a different perspective" on the need for gym access.



ArmyNet is canvassing views on issues raised in *Soldier* on a newly refreshed site. The secure internet portal, which is available to troops and their families, boasts a raft of innovative features, including instant messaging, a versatile SMS text messaging service and free-to-download Podcasts.

Maj Ash Loudon, RLC, who has been on the team heading up the project, said further updates of the site were on the cards, including a possible social networking feature similar to Facebook.



Picture: Steve Duck

Protected species

Piranha primed to bare its teeth with British troops on future deployments

AN impressive column of next-generation armoured vehicles is poised for Army roll-out under the Future Rapid Effects System (Fres) programme.

Senior officers are confident that the Piranha 5 troop carrier will give military personnel the flexibility and protection that they need in global theatres.

The platform, built by United States defence giant General Dynamics, has provisionally been selected as the preferred design Fres utility vehicle, which will be used to form the backbone of future military operations.

The company saw off competition from the Boxer, produced by the Dutch-German Artec Consortium, and the VCBI design, built by Nexter, to become the preferred option after rigorous scrutiny by MoD experts.

The selection of Piranha is the first stage in the Fres process, which will ultimately replace parts of the Army's Saxon, FV430 and CVR(T) fleet.

Specialist Reconnaissance, Medium Armour, Manoeuvre Support and Basic Capability Utility platforms will follow in the far-reaching programme. Ultimately up to 3,000 vehicles will fulfil 16 different roles.

Gen Sir Richard Dannatt, the Chief of the General Staff, was satisfied that the selection of Piranha 5 heralded "the start of a new era" for the Army.

Gen Dannatt emphasised: "It maintains the progress of the Fres pro-

gramme, which is my highest priority after support to operations. This will form the backbone of the Army's future armoured vehicle requirements.

"While our protected personnel vehicles such as Mastiff are a very successful addition to meet specific operational requirements in both Iraq and Afghanistan, the Fres medium-weight capability will allow the Army to conduct a wider range of operations in

an uncertain and changing world."

As previously reported in *Soldier*, the Fres initiative marks a departure from the traditional procurement process, with a new emphasis on speed of delivery. Companies involved in the programme have also been told to relax their intellectual property rights, paving the way for the MoD to beef up the platforms with the latest kit without first having to seek permission from the manufacturer.

City's show of thanks

MODERN-DAY reservists marked the 100th anniversary of the Territorial Army, Reserve Forces and cadets association at a service of thanksgiving in St Paul's Cathedral attended by nearly 2,000 people.

Serving soldiers, including Military Cross winner Pte Luke Cole and others recently returned from Iraq and Afghanistan, were joined by scores of veterans for the ceremony in London last month.

Also in attendance were several VIP guests and Army dignitaries, including Gen Sir Richard Dannatt, the Chief of the General Staff.

He said: "I would like to express my sincere gratitude on behalf of the Army to all Territorials for the time, dedication, skills and courage that they continue to give.

"In every operational theatre I visit,

commanding officers tell me how vital their Territorials have been to the delivery of each mission."

He added: "Finding the time to make the commitment needed to achieve the highest professional expectations of military life, at home and on operations, requires huge dedication."

Following the service, more than 900 current and former TA troops marched through the streets of London to the Guildhall for a formal City of London reception. The parade was led by Shenkin, the regimental goat mascot of the 3rd Battalion, The Royal Welsh, and featured music from the Territorial Army bands of the Corps of Drums, 3 R Welsh, the Regimental Band of The Royal Welsh and the Corps of Drums of The Honourable Artillery Company.

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Picture: Graeme Main

Super subs: A trial rule change will allow TA cricketers to compete for the Army alongside their Regular colleagues in all but Inter-Services competitions

Level playing field

Exclusion from representative sport is just not cricket, claims TA officer

TERRITORIAL Army personnel will be able to compete on the same pitches as their Regular counterparts for the first time under a new trial scheme.

Under current rules, introduced in the 1930s, TA soldiers are not allowed to represent their regiment in a sport at corps level or above unless they are mobilised, on a Full-Time Reserve Service commitment or part of a Regular unit's peacetime establishment.

But with reservists facing greater demands to serve alongside Regulars on operations, the Army Sport Control Board (ASCB) has agreed to level the sporting playing field by trialling TA participation until next May.

The scheme is the brainchild of reservist Capt Cliff Dare, who deployed as a battle-group engineer on Op Telic in 2003 and played corps sport on his return, but was prevented from competing once his mobilisation period ended.

"When I first returned from operations I played corps cricket for the Royal Engineers and for the Army," Capt Dare told *Soldier*. "As the rules stood, however, I was left in no doubt that as soon as the mobilisation period ended I was un-

able to continue. I found it galling that I was on a 20-day notice to move – less than a lot of Regular units – but I was not allowed to take part in sport.

"It's widely accepted that the TA has a substantial part to play on operations and there are plenty of reservist men and women who would relish the chance to play alongside the Regular Army."

With the help of ASCB secretary Lt Col (Retd) Chris Harris, Capt Dare wrote a report recommending that TA soldiers should be able to compete alongside Regular troops in accordance with the One Army concept.

The former Royal Marine, who won several Combined Services cricket caps, allayed fears that an influx of volunteers would prevent Regular soldiers from taking part in sport by placing a limitation on the number of Territorials allowed in any squad.

Only two reservists are permitted in sports with teams made up of between two and six players, three in teams of seven to 11 players and a maximum of four in squads of 12 and above, such as Rugby Union and League.

To qualify to play for their corps, TA

soldiers must also have qualified for their previous year's bounty.

"It has taken a long time to get this pushed through and the ASCB have been unbelievably helpful in that process," continued Capt Dare. "There have been concerns about an influx of TA gladiators, but that isn't going to happen. I hope that this is the thin end of the wedge and, in time, the One Army concept will extend fully from work to play. There can't be any justification for continuing this segregation because if someone is good enough to die for their country then they should be allowed to play football as well."

Lt Col Harris said that the only limitation on Territorials would be Inter-Services fixtures because of the greater numbers of reservists in the Army compared with the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force.

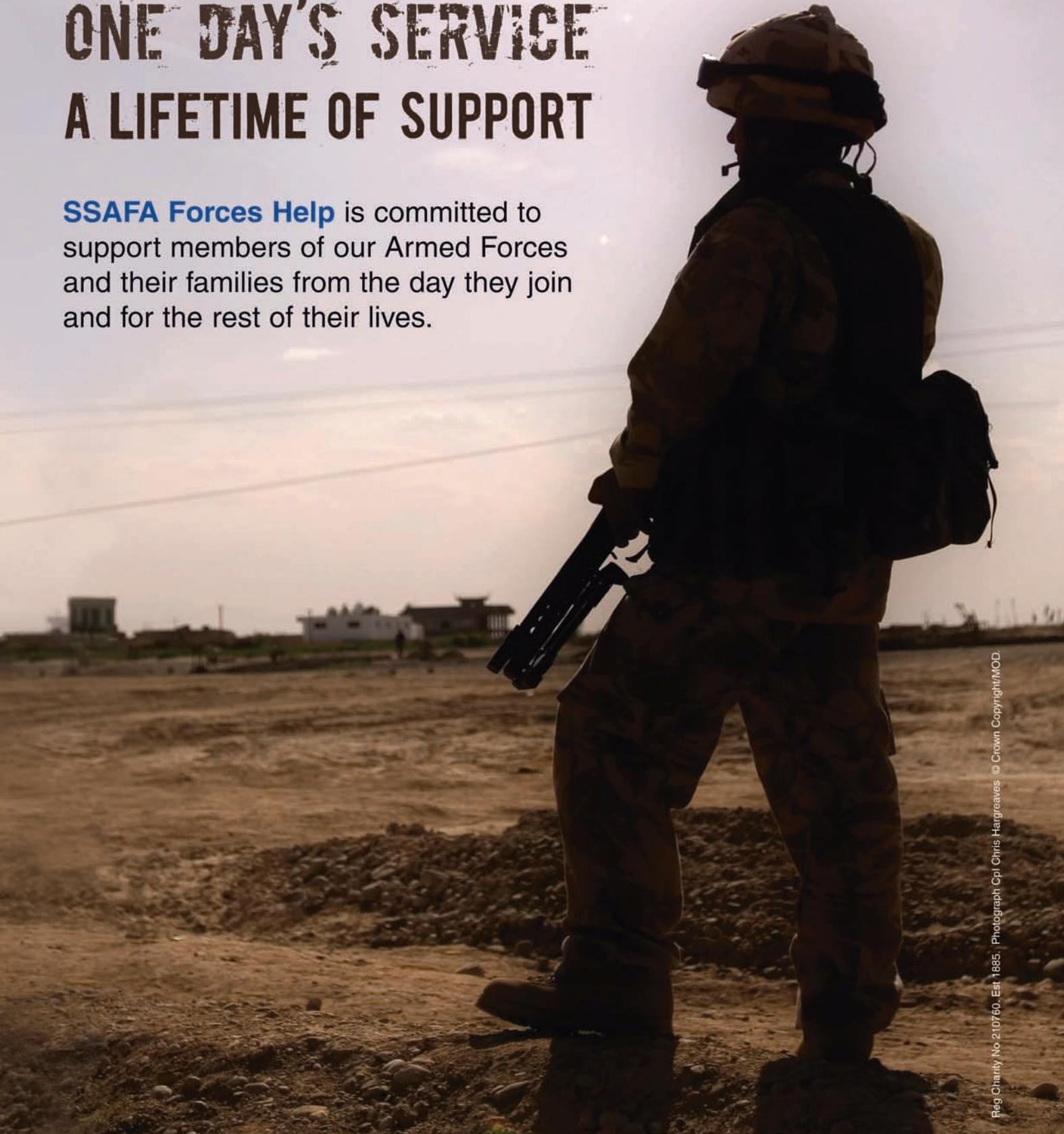
"Territorials are regularly deployed on operations so a degree of equality in sport is only right," he added.

"We will be interested to see what the take-up is like."

● **SoldierSport – Pages 89-97**

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Enduring embrace

Father and son find solace in the support of Service family following their deep loss »



Interviews: Karen Thomas
Portraits: Steve Dock

CPL John Rigby of the 4th Battalion, The Rifles was fatally injured in a roadside bomb attack in southern Iraq during Op Telic 10.

His twin brother, Cpl Will Rigby, also 4 Rifles, was based at Basra Palace at the time. Supported by his battalion, Will was rushed to the bedside of his critically ill sibling at the field hospital.

John died on the twins' 24th birthday – June 22, 2007.

These are the stories of Will and his father, Doug, who have dedicated their words to all Servicemen and women and families who have suffered, and will suffer, the loss of a loved one.

MY platoon commander woke me up at about seven o'clock in the morning. He'd been out on the operation in which John was injured and he came straight away to tell me my brother had been seriously wounded.

I immediately went to CO Lt Col Patrick Sanders's office. That was when it became a reality. I could see in his face it had hit him just as bad as it had hit anybody else. Then the padre, Father Danny Hernandez, came in.

These were approachable people, especially in the close-knit area of operations. You could have a cup of tea with the colonel, the RSM and the padre, so I felt comforted when they were all in the room.

There was a hive of activity going on outside the office and I think they were trying to get a chopper to take me from Basra Palace to the field hospital on the contingency operating base. You're risking the pilots' lives to come in broad daylight because you fly over some dodgy parts of Basra but the helicopter came in 15 minutes.

We all stood up and I was given a day sack with some kit. My platoon sergeant shoved about \$100 in my hand and then they gave me two passports – one was mine and one was my brother's.

I don't think they were expecting to see me back and were already planning for me to leave theatre for some time if things got serious.

The compassionate side of things had kicked in and I'm obviously grateful to the Lynx pilots who risked their lives to come and get me.

As I was running towards the helicopter, Father Danny grabbed me and repeated, 'you're not alone'. A couple of guys shook my hand and gave me a big hug. It had affected everybody I saw in a massive way. It must be hard for them because you can't get any closer than having a twin.

Dealing with a fatality and the brother straight away must have been very testing and new for them. But they dealt with it fantastically. Everyone was so supportive and really great.

After getting off the chopper I was

met by another padre – I was always within arm's reach of a chaplain. The medical officers sat me down and explained John's condition.

Within five minutes I was by his bedside and one of our best friends, LCpl "Stratty" Stratford, came in.

After John passed away I was left with Stratty so I always had somebody to turn to. He was a massive support and we just did a lot of talking and reflecting on what had happened. A lot of people came to talk to me but some did not know what to say. But what do you say?

About 20 guys flew in from the palace for the repatriation and I think that was a big help for them, even though they were back out on an operation that night.

Most of these guys are like second family to me because you know them for so long, you experience so much with each other and it's such a deep-rooted friendship. I knew they were still hurting but my place was to go home and be with my parents.

I felt very strongly about taking John home. We went out to Iraq together and I wanted to bring him back. It was important for me to carry his coffin with our friends, just as it was important that I said something at the funeral. In my mind that's what John would do for me.

Going back to Basra was important because I wanted to finish what I'd started and be with my friends. But there was no pressure. All that was said was 'go home, be with your family, don't worry about anything, we'll be in touch,' and that was a huge comfort to me. They almost wrapped me in cotton wool and I didn't have to worry about anything. Then, there I was with Mum and Dad and I'm massively grateful to all the people who were part of getting us home.

Later on, I heard Father Danny had worked really hard and did memorial services for John's company. His death really rocked those left at Basra Palace because John was so popular. A lot of the riflemen and other NCOs looked up to him and it really shook them up. Father Danny was the person they all turned to.

The hardest thing for the guys is that once a friend is gone someone else steps up and they still have to go out on patrol. They don't have time to grieve. It's only when

they come home that they can reflect on everything and I think a lot of them found that difficult.

But I think that's quite common because the operation has to continue – it's the reality of what we're doing. All our fatalities were early on in the tour and to wait until you get home in November is a long time to keep going, keep plugging away and keep putting yourself in that firing line.

When we came back and it was all over there was a period of about four weeks when we stayed in desert uniform.

I think that was the right decision because people hadn't moved on from the tour and wearing our Iraq gear was a reflection that people hadn't forgotten what was going on. And the support was definitely still there for everybody. After Christmas the emphasis was on remembering our fallen but moving on and I think that was a very important message.

The padres, commanding officer and RSM were all great.

When things like that happen rank is of the least importance. You are like a big family. It's a very strong sensation of being brothers-in-arms and you're all in it together. ,

Soldiering on: Cpl Will Rigby, 4 Rifles, pictured left, returned to fight alongside his battalion in southern Iraq following the death of his twin brother, Cpl John Rigby, pictured below, in a roadside bomb attack last summer



THAT morning we heard on the news that a soldier had been seriously injured in Iraq but the next-of-kin hadn't yet been informed – well, that was us.

I had just come home from an early meeting and was making a cup of coffee when a car with three uniformed personnel pulled up. You just know why they've turned up – why else would they be there?

I think the nearest Army camp is allocated this appalling task of sending someone to break the bad news. I made them tea, we had a chat and it was all very surreal and matter of fact. I didn't get upset – that came later because I instinctively wanted to keep everything together. There were other people to tell, not least my wife Liz who was teaching 15 miles away.

Liz was here when Will started ringing from Iraq with updates. He was very calm and I was very calm, which he said he found helpful although I don't know why I was calm. I just did what was right at the time. Eventually we got another call to say John had gone. I could hear that Will was very upset, as were we. By that time one of our daughters had also arrived so the three of us were here together.

I think the Army personnel were here for about two hours but once they knew the casualty visiting officer (CVO) was coming, they were happy to leave. I haven't seen them since, which is a shame because I've got a lot I'd like to

say to them but I could tell it was really tough for them.

The CVO, Capt Stu Allen, AGC (ETS), was fantastic from the first moment we met him. He's become a friend and still pops in for a cup of tea. He couldn't have done more for us. Over that first week he was just amazing. Not a stone left unturned, his organisational skills were phenomenal and he was genuinely compassionate. That's been our feeling throughout – I don't think anyone's been less than entirely genuine but he's been really good.

Then the rawness of it all sets in – several sleepless nights, waking early in the morning and it's the first thing you think about. So, that's when we had all the tears, rawness and disbelief.

Why us? Why him?

For several days following we had the most enormous postbag that you could possibly imagine. It was just huge. Letters from the military, a card from Buckingham Palace, but the cards and letters that really meant a lot to us were from people who didn't know us. They addressed the envelope 'The Rigby Family, Rye, Sussex', and hoped it got to us – so the postal service does work. It was just absolutely staggering. And the place looked like a florist with floral tributes everywhere from the battalion, the Duchess of Cornwall and the general public. Families that had been bereaved were writing to us saying things like 'we know what you're going through so hang in there because it does get better'.

During this time we were just carried along on the tide of what was going to happen next – the repatriation, the funeral and getting involved with all the arrangements. I personally found that enormously helpful because it gave me something to do. I would say to anyone in the same situation to keep busy. Don't be on your own too much because that's when the blackness comes over you. It does get better and what starts as a raw, open wound begins to heal over.

We liked having the military about. I don't know whether we were just very lucky with the people we were dealing with, especially as the Rifles are a strong family unit. I know other people that I've read

about have issues with the way they'd been treated but personally that's not been our experience at all. We could not have been better treated. It's been absolutely incredible.

Then Will came home with John. He landed with the coffin and the RAF was able to arrange for us to have half an hour with him [Will] privately before the repatriation ceremony took place, which was great.

Then Will came home with us still in his desert combat and still with the sweat on him from the conflict. He sat down and told us everything.

Eventually we all broke down but it was very necessary for him and us to go through that process.

Over time, we had conversations about what he wanted to do although there was no rush or pressure to make a decision. But there was never any doubt in our minds that he would go back to Iraq. I think the Army were quite sympathetic to how we might feel and I'm sure if Liz and I hadn't wanted him to go back then we could have made a compelling case. But he was 24 years old and it wasn't for us to dictate what he should be doing. And I think he had to go back. That was all part of the grieving process.

He said he felt closer to John when he was back there with their mates and the buzz of work than he did here, even though John had been flown home.

Joining the Army was the only thing Will ever wanted to do right from when he was a little lad. If he chose to, he could go all the way. A lot of people might find this surprising but we're glad that he's staying in.

When I have told the press how supportive the Army has been to us it is mostly edited out. People saying 'thank you' is not a very sexy story, is it? But the Army couldn't have been more helpful. And they do continue the support. Just recently Patrick Sanders [CO 4 Rifles] phoned. He's a busy chap and he doesn't have to do that. We're going to erect a small plaque in St Mary's Church in Dover Castle, where John's funeral was.

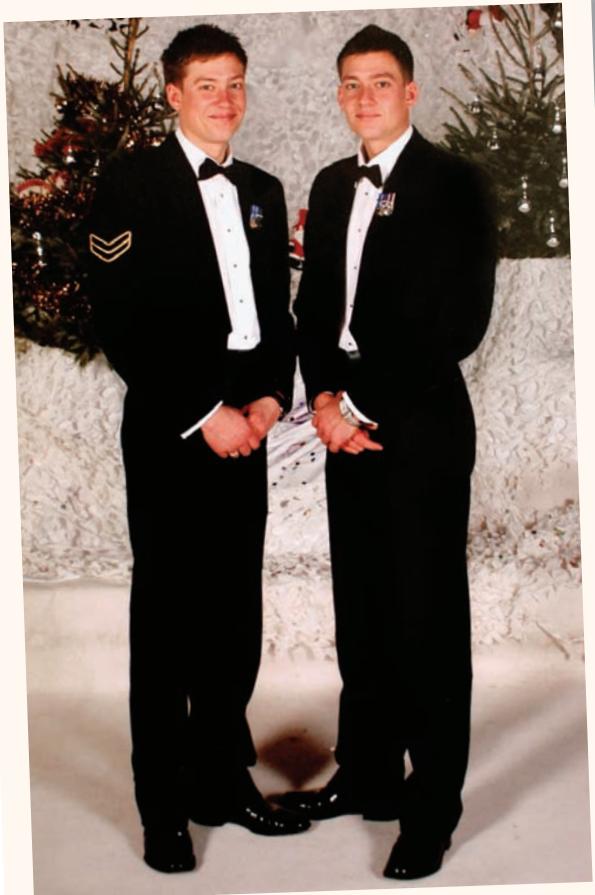
This was offered to us as a permanent memorial to him. Patrick Sanders wants to come and I wouldn't be at all surprised if Father Danny doesn't turn up as well because they couldn't be at the funeral.

Now what we're left with is just sadness but there's no anger. There never really has been any anger.

It's quite tough now because it's about a year ago since John went to Iraq in early May. So that's raised his death as an issue. But we're OK and we have no issues with John.

He was a thoroughly good chap and we knew how much he loved his job. He was very unlucky.

It does get better and what starts as a raw, open wound begins to heal over





Parental praise: Doug Rigby, main picture, the father of Will and John, pictured left, expressed gratitude for the support and compassion shown to his family by the British Army

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Report: Karen Thomas

ALL roads might lead to Rome but the emotionally torturous journey from Iraq to the Holy City took different turns of terror, sadness and joy for a closely-bonded team of front-line padres.

Accompanying 19 Light Brigade on Op Telic 9, ten chaplains endured the same rocket bombardments, separation from loved ones, physical deprivation and mental stress as their battle-hardened flock. After comforting and advising their charges throughout the tough tour, they eased the weary soldiers through a period of "decompression" in Cyprus designed to help the troops move on from the brutality of war before they returned to their waiting families and friends.

Decompression is a vital pause between units flying out of the intensity of a combat zone and landing back in normality. Soldiers are encouraged to wind down and chill out on the Mediterranean island with its golden beaches and azure seas. The two days, during which any lingering conflict issues can be addressed, are seen as key to reducing the incidence of post-traumatic stress disorder.

But although non-combatant men of faith from the Royal Army Chaplains'

Department willingly risk the enemy's fire to work alongside soldiers in theatre, they also need to unload their own operational burdens. For them, the serenity of the Holy City in the heart of Rome was the light at the end of seven draining months in Iraq.

The padres were more than ready to retreat to the timeless cloisters of the Vatican after the rollercoaster ride of months in theatre.

Rev Antony Feltham-White's journey to the Eternal City began with 19 Combat Service Support Battalion at Shaibah Logistics Base. The first half of his first tour was "relatively quiet" and, despite the regular rocket attacks and near misses, everyone soon knew where to find a cup of tea and his friendly ear.

But his routine was more frequently disrupted by insurgents when the battalion relocated to Basra's Contingency Operating Base.

"Our camp suffered a direct hit in one attack and the building next to me was destroyed. I was blown over and the building I was in was wrecked. That was a very tough experience because we suffered injured

soldiers and after that incident whenever the mortar alarms would go off my hands would shake," Padre Feltham-White told *Soldier*. His baptism of fire had come, however, when he spent a fortnight with the 2nd Battalion, The Rifles at Basra Palace covering for a teammate.

"I had to give the last rites to a dying soldier and then do his repatriation from Basra Palace, which was extremely hard.

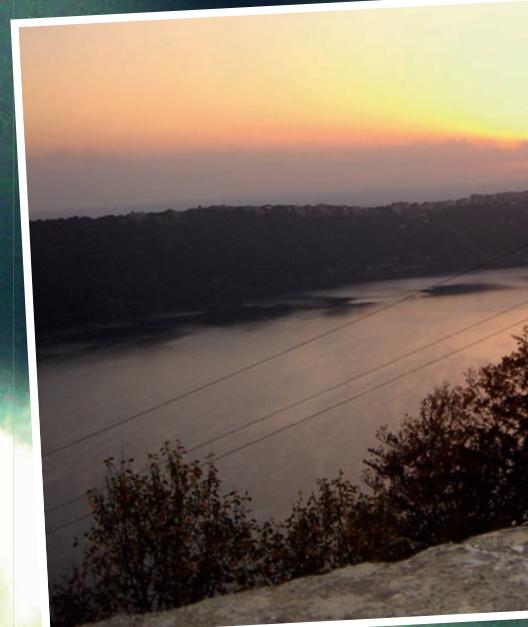
"Dealing with the trauma of the guys coming in off the streets after losing a second friend in two or three weeks and watching the strength of their NCOs, who I'm sure were extraordinarily cut up, pulling their guys together, was very humbling.

"But being with the people and watching them rise to the occasion was very impressive and a real joy. I baptised people, brought them to faith and shared something about who I am, what I do and why I do it. That was great because while you're surrounded by images of death and dying you are finding life and living, which is all very positive."

The intense highs and lows, experienced during even just one day, take their mental toll. As a veteran of Telics 1 and 4, Rev Andrew

Martlew appreciated that he and his fellow chaplains had no more or less of a burden to carry than a troop sergeant or company commander. Yet he recognised the heightened demands of Telic 9 increased the value of being able to offload troubling thoughts and feelings to someone who has shared the same experiences.

"There were horrid things that happened on all the tours but they became so familiar that you stopped



noticing them. On Telic 9 it wasn't the nastiness but the frequency of it and you came to accept it as normal," he explained, describing the importance of the post-tour reunion on Lake Albano outside Rome.

"The retreat needed to be somewhere quite separate from work. The separation and the religious depth of the spiritual and physical foundations of the English College, where we were staying, were so important. Getting together and having a good time on the surface was great but in those few days everybody found themselves having a deep conversation with a fellow minister who was in Iraq at the same time."

Decompression has proved as essential for padres as it is for soldiers although Cyprus had not allowed them to say goodbye or draw a line under their own tours. After a recommended three-month pause, Rev Feltham-White embraced the ancient capital as a sanctuary of healing and spiritual refreshment that allowed him to move on from his time in southern Iraq.

"I was holding my breath between Iraq and Rome, and Rome gave me a chance to exhale and breathe in something other than the dusty air of Iraq.

"There were some things I had seen on tour that I was particularly struggling with but I was able to deal with them in Rome and they ceased to affect me in the same way. It was a blessed relief to get there and to unpack those things that I'd brought with me in the few days that we were together.

"We need to make sure everybody has got the gold standard of what we can do to help people to begin to slip back into their life at home. In the long term it's very important because it makes us more able to recover and be ready to go on operations again." ■

● Wind down – Page 98



Pictures, clockwise from above,
Roman holiday: The ministers'
on their spiritual tour of the
Eternal City

Chaplain, heal thyself:
Rev Antony Feltham-White,
RAChD, donned desert combat
to bring comfort and strength to
Telic troops

A room with a view: Lake Albano
from the English College
Main picture: Paolo Tisco – Fotolia.com





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Calm comfort

Civilian touch for welfare of patients, staff and friends in field hospitals

Report: Karen Thomas
Picture: Graeme Main

HERE is a bunch of non-uniformed, true professionals who voluntarily risk the dangers of front-line operations to care for injured and sick Servicemen and women confined to hospital.

Patients can turn to them for a sympathetic ear and practical help knowing that their worries are completely confidential and won't be passed up the chain of command. Trained in counselling skills, these welfare officers bring valued comfort to those traumatised by their injuries and concerned about what happens after they are evacuated.

But Defence Medical Welfare Service (DMWS) care extends beyond the crisp corners of the patient's bed. Its volunteers are also on hand for family and friends, talking through emotional problems and helping with practical arrangements. And they have a broad shoulder for the medics who need to unburden the effects of dealing with war's stark realities.

Grandmother and Army wife Eileen Jones, pictured above, found herself on

Op Telic 11 with 4th Mechanized Brigade after she volunteered to go to theatre.

Based in Osnabrück, she had already acted as a solid crutch for the brigade's personnel admitted to German hospitals. Her experience proved invaluable for her first three-month DMWS tour.

"I think it helps that I have an understanding of what families at home go through. I know what soldiers are talking about and I can sense when they're trying to pull the wool over my eyes," she told *Soldier* in the tranquillity of the Basra field hospital's welfare room, which is open 24/7 to anyone in or out of uniform and of any nationality. But Basra still held a few nasty surprises.

"Within six hours of arriving on the contingency operating base we came under indirect fire. That was a real eye-opener and a shock to the system because no matter how good your training, it does not prepare you for what happens out here."

DMWS roots go back to the First World War but it wasn't formalised until 1943. Now the MoD-funded

organisation works exclusively for Service personnel, their dependants and civil servants. Based in hospitals in the UK, Germany, Cyprus, Iraq and Afghanistan, many of the highly trained welfare officers are ex-military.

'Within six hours of arriving on the contingency base we came under indirect fire'

In Basra, Eileen escorts and prepares people visiting the patients for what they might see, remaining nearby if they are disturbed and need to talk. She works closely with the padres and field community psychiatric nurses, pointing her colleagues in the direction of troubled soldiers and medics who need help but do not want to make it official.

"During the wave of attacks we were extremely busy. It was an emotionally trying time, not only dealing with patients but also talking to the staff and making sure they were OK. But it made you realise how worthwhile you are and how people do rely on you."

"You do get tired and you are restricted out here in terms of movement and lifestyle but if you are with a great team, it makes it all worthwhile." ■

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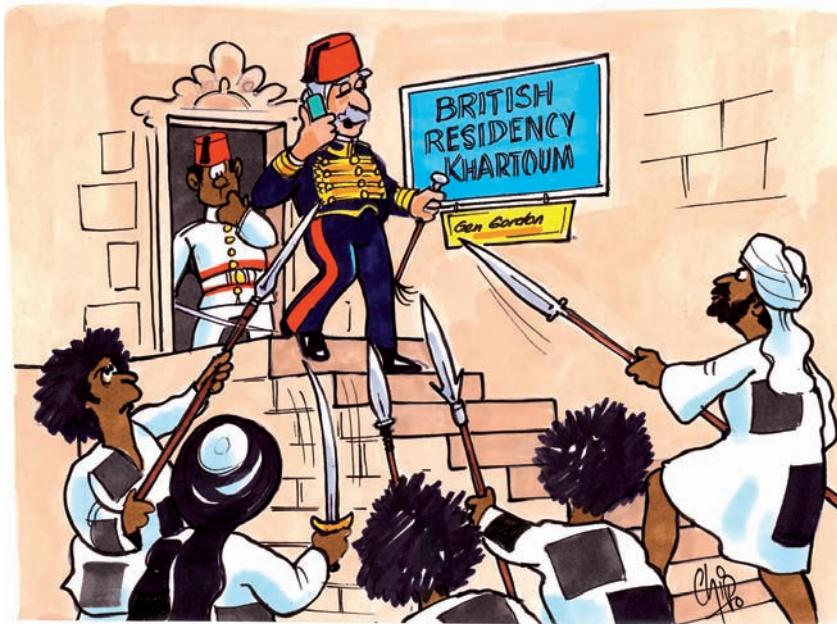
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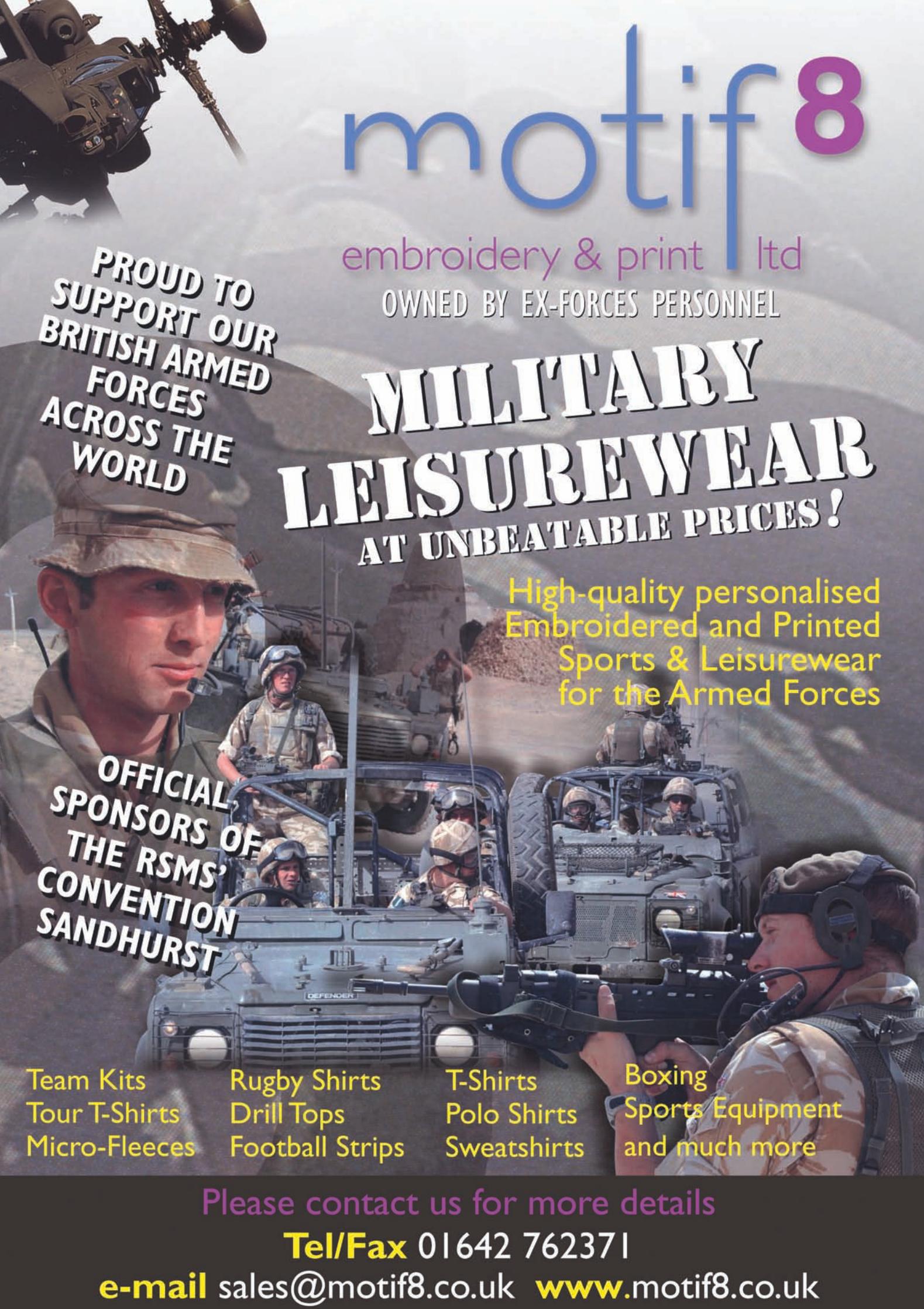
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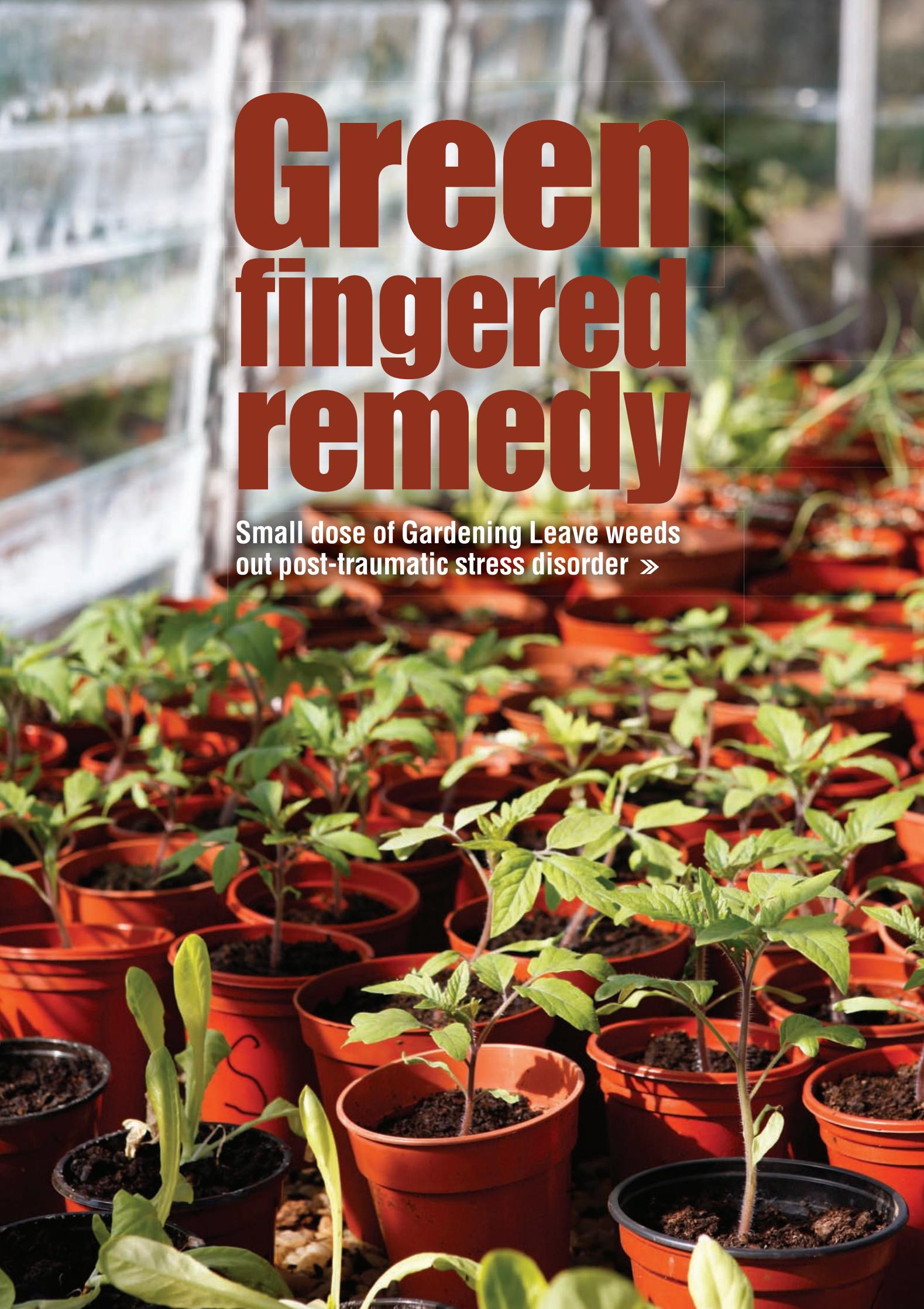
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Green fingered remedy



Small dose of Gardening Leave weeds out post-traumatic stress disorder »

Report: Karen Thomas
Pictures: Steve Dock

AS the popular BBC TV series *Ground Force* transformed neglected wildernesses into majestic landscapes, so gardening is now proving helpful to veterans reclaiming their lives from the wastelands of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Cultivating flowerbeds or growing Sunday's roast potatoes is the great pottering escape for this green-fingered nation. Out in the fresh air disturbed only by scuttling insects, gardening is a tranquil and absorbing pastime. For troubled ex-soldiers, digging into a different sort of trench from those of the front lines allows them the freedom to think around problems weighing heavily on their minds.

Unchecked, that weight can wither the work, relationships and lives of Servicemen and women mentally battered by the harrowing events of war. But tending to a calm oasis can relieve the burden.

First recognised in the USA as alleviating the debilitating symptoms of PTSD among Vietnam War veterans, the seeds of horticultural therapy are now being planted in a quiet corner of Scotland. Gardening Leave, a charity founded by Anna Baker Cresswell, is bearing fruit as a handy tool in the set of treatments used to uproot PTSD. Granted a walled garden at the Scottish Agricultural College at Auchincruive, the businesswoman-turned-horticultural therapist teamed up with Combat Stress, the ex-Services Mental Welfare Society, to start the gardening project.

Veterans from nearby Hollybush House, one of three Combat Stress residential treatment centres, are offered a daily dose of Gardening Leave as required. They don't have to be Alan Titchmarsh to contribute to the 186m-long terraced garden, which gently breaks a self-inflicted isolation from friends and family.

"If the veterans live at home they are invariably on their own and they quickly lose the ability to communicate because they are not engaging

with people. It's easier for veterans to talk here, as there is a common ground – you can always just talk about the garden if you don't want to talk about your problems," Anna told *Soldier*, explaining the importance of the surrounding wall.

"Some veterans can find it very difficult to break the ice and build trust but Gardening Leave can help"

"Walled gardens are very special because if the veterans don't have a clear view of what's around them, they are permanently on their guard and always looking over their shoulder. But here they can see all around them and relax."

Anna supervises novices and experts alike in growing vegetables that will be served up at Hollybush mealtimes and restoring Scotland's only national collection of poppies, appropriately the military's symbol of remembrance. She explained how the perpetual gardening cycle addresses depressing thoughts of a future that holds nothing, which can make the veterans' lives seem pointless.

"PTSD sufferers have a sense of a foreshortened future – they can't see the point of anything. Once you explain to them that the food they're helping to grow goes back to Hollybush House then there's a point to it and that's what



Nurturing life: Jim Mitchell, left, a former guardsman with the 1st Battalion, Scots Guards, works with Steven Gibb, who served in The Royal Highland Fusiliers

makes the difference. Veterans can end up frightened of not finishing something. They get angry and feel unworthy so they don't start it in the first place.

"Gardening can increase their self-esteem by getting them to start and finish something in a morning."

Gardening Leave is just one approach provided at Hollybush House to tackle the damaging effects of PTSD.

Maj Garry Walker, head clinician, agreed that horticultural therapy offered a gentle way to build up confidence and self-esteem in veterans who, on average, endure 14 years before they find their way to Combat Stress.

"Some veterans can find it very difficult to break the ice and build trust but Gardening Leave can help. It is a very important part of therapy," he explained, outlining the other treatments available.

"There are sessions on loss, anger management, hopes and fears and expectations, and Gardening Leave is

another part of the jigsaw. The one-to-one sessions can be especially intense and stressful but Gardening Leave can diffuse those emotions and allow for quiet reflection."

Next on the renovation list at the Auchincruive gardens is the Stovehouse. Weatherproofed and kitted out as a greenhouse, it will be a warm and well-lit haven for veterans depressed by the long dark winter days. But Anna is also casting her horticultural therapist's eye on opportunities to tame more gardening and PTSD jungles.

"The next Gardening Leave project will probably be at the Royal Hospital Chelsea. I'm just waiting for evidence that horticultural therapy is an effective therapy so it is accepted and recognised as a treatment intervention for this PTSD group." ■



Pause for breath: Yoga, offered by Combat Stress to veterans at Hollybush House, reduces stress and promotes a sense of well-being



Let it all out: Robert White, nurse therapist, holds a session on anger management and diffusion techniques to help cope with PTSD

Helpful advice for serving soldiers

Maj Walker said serving soldiers, particularly those with problems arising from operational tours, were contacting Hollybush House. He urged:

- Personnel to seek help quickly if they were still having problems a couple of months after a tour

● Everyone to be honest when filling in the post-tour mental health surveillance questionnaires

● Units to keep in touch with soldiers referred for PTSD counselling

The sooner intervention starts, the sooner soldiers can get back on their fighting feet.

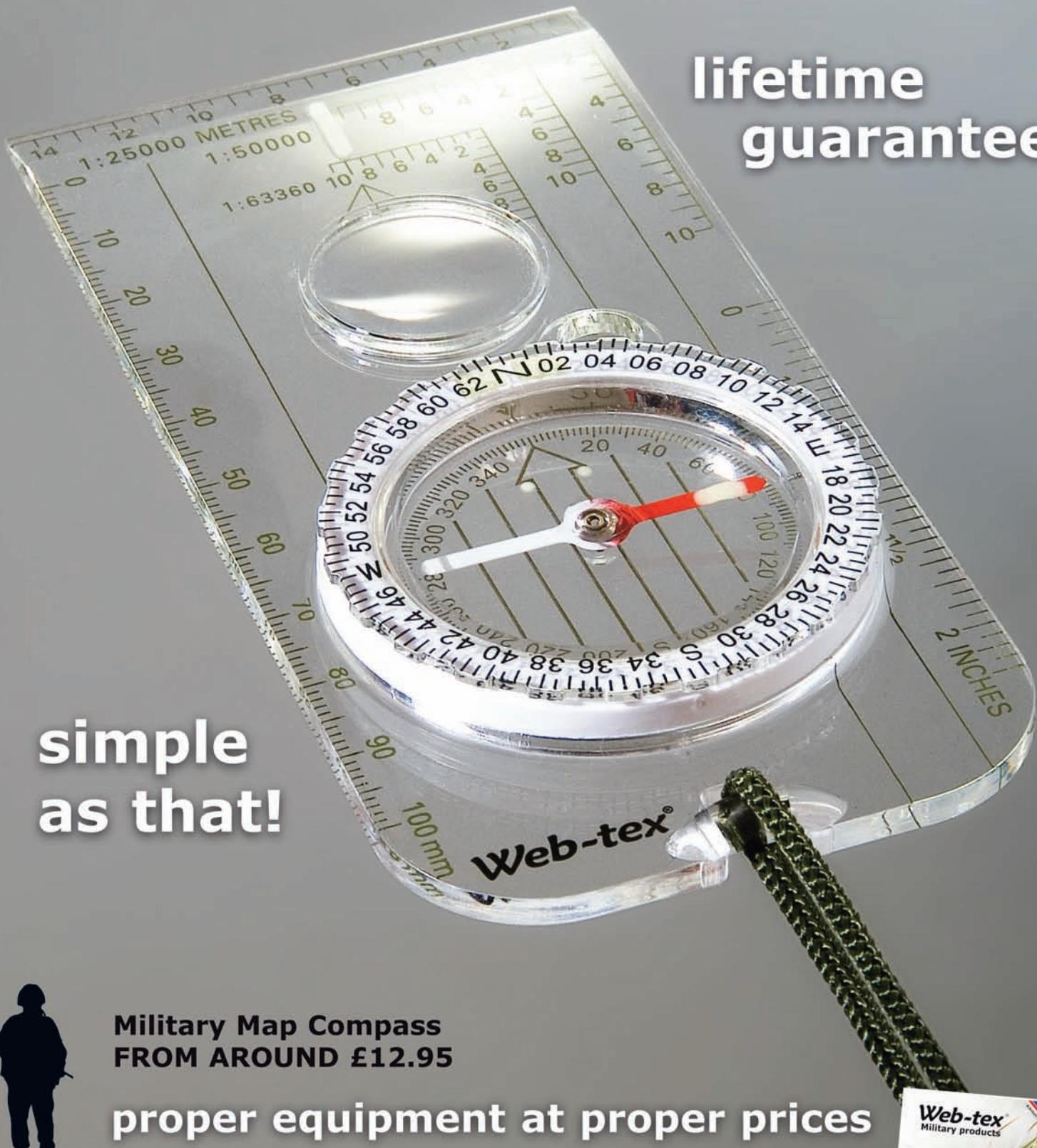


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Mixed signals

British and Iraqi forces in Basra get wired for sound and pictures »



Changing frequencies:
Cpl "Jase" Brown, 204
Signal Squadron, Royal
Signals, patrols outside
the wire with Tigris Troop



Say cheese: WO2 Rick Allen, LCpl Andrew Robson and Sgt Ian Knowles maintain a CCTV camera on the British Army's Contingency Operating Base outside Basra

Report: Karen Thomas
Pictures: Graeme Main

ROYAL Signallers expert in military multi-media communications, found themselves switching rapidly between training, patrolling and being ready to fight on a very unpredictable Op Telic 11 tour.

A brief spell of peace followed the handover of control of Basra province to the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) at the end of last year. But the fragile calm was shattered when rogue militias and insurgents made a violent grab for power in late March.

Operation Charge of the Knights, led by the ISF, called for British support in restoring security and destroying illegal munitions' caches. The signallers started

juggling their trade and soldiering skills as they assisted both their English- and Arabic-speaking comrades. Cpl Andrew

Fazackerley,
Tigris Troop,
204 Signal
Squadron,

tuned up his mentoring skills to get on the Arabic wavelength when assessing and upgrading the communications structure in Iraqi camps.

"On the Military Transition Teams (MiTTs) I was teaching the Iraqis to work new HF and VHF radio systems, and how to do video teleconferencing with US Forces in Tallil and Baghdad," he told *Soldier*. "It's been good working alongside the Iraqis and some of the operators at sergeant level have quite good qualifications. I've also been back into Basra to sort out problems and teach them on the spot."

Sig Kyle Mills, an operator with Tigris Troop, deployed into the city with The Royal Dragoon Guards and Scots Guards to set up their base communications. He rapidly got comfortable with his rifle.

"I went on patrol with them and provided force protection, so it was back to the basic skills and drills. It was the best thing I've done and it was brilliant to be involved in the infantry actions. I've done a good bit of soldiering, as well as my trade, and they were really good lads. As soon as I got there they were introducing themselves and were very welcoming. I did a bit of teaching and gave them an insight into the communications just in case I wasn't around."

As the Scots Guards battle-group moved back into Basra to support the Iraqis, the signallers of Tigris Troop stepped in to bridge the gap with regular patrols, keeping safe the routes, base and Iraqi employees moving in and out of it.

But 204 Sig Sqn was still in demand in the city. As joint operations continued, the ISF requested the communications expertise of the HQ-based signallers. Security at the Provincial Joint Coordination Centre (PJCC), sited in a Basra hot spot, needed fortifying and the connection between the Iraqi leaders there and their COB-based counterparts needed strengthening. Two pieces of communication equipment taken for granted in the UK were installed under high threat in the PJCC.

First to go in was closed-circuit television (CCTV). Brigade foreman of Signals WO2 Rick Allen donned his Osprey body armour and readied his rifle. Protected by Spearhead Platoon, 1st Battalion, The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment, his team lugged 1,000kg of kit into the centre, well within the insurgent's target sites.

"It was a bit hairy when we arrived because about 80 Iraqis tip-toed up to us and were cheering, but they turned out to be friendly and just pleased to see us. It was also dangerous because we stuck out like a sore thumb to snipers from surrounding 'in-your-face' buildings. It was seven hours non-stop activity and I drank seven or eight litres of water but the PJCC comments have been really positive about the CCTV. They can see what is happening around them and are now less exposed and feel a bit safer."

Spearhead was back in action protecting signallers with their hands full of heavy equipment on a second visit. They installed a vital link enabling teleconferencing between the PJCC and COB. Once the link was up and running, the signallers trained the Iraqis in how to use it and checked the CCTV was still working. The visits gave LCpl Andrew Robson a chance to get into Basra.

"This is my first tour and I was pretty apprehensive but I was looking forward to getting out on the ground. It was brilliant to give that equipment to the Iraqis and be part of the team."

"It's good to know the Iraqis are happy to be working with us and to see the results. It's all very new to them and they think the PJCC is the best equipped in the country and they're proud of that."

Having taken everything that Op Telic 11 could throw at them, the troops of 204 Sig Sqn proved themselves capable of adeptly flicking between multiple channels. Switching smoothly between specialist trade and soldiering skills sent a clear signal that the British Army remains highly versatile and ready to respond to fast-changing events. ■



**'We stuck out
like a sore
thumb to
snipers from
surrounding
'in-your-face'
buildings ,'**

Shield of steel

Battle-group's mettle deflects insurgent attacks on Basra strike ops

Interview: Karen Thomas
Pictures: WO2 Alan Murphy 1 SG
and Graeme Main

RAQI-LED operations to quell Basra's recent upsurge in violence and root out the rogue militias had some serious protection from the 1st Battalion, Scots Guards battle-group.

Three companies of Challenger 2 tanks and Warrior armoured vehicles provided massive muscle when escorting British, American and Iraqi troops into the city. The battle-group laid down a defensive armoured barrier on the route taken by the strike teams, sitting tight against small arms fire and mortar attacks so the road could be held until the teams extracted.

Lt James Bentley, 1 SG, armoured infantry

"On one op we moved into a vulnerable area. The guys got out on the ground and spotted something suspicious but just as we called it in, an IED exploded. It injured four men from our team. The most serious got casevac'd and what saved his life was the speed we got him out. It emphasised to us the value of the drills we get taught on the mission rehearsal exercise. The importance of having team medics and evacuating casualties within the 'golden hour' has also been proved on two occasions, including for myself when I had minor shrapnel wounds to my neck."



They stood firm against the greatest threat to their safety – improvised explosive devices (IEDs). Despite numerous attacks, the battle-group's

troops and vehicles held fast and kept the routes open for their comrades' safe passage. Lt Col Willie Swinton, CO of 1 SG, said his family of 18 different cap badges were out in the city

on a daily basis providing the "ultimate insurance policy" for UK, US and Iraqi security forces. He added: "The high levels of protection on Challenger 2 and Warrior are so good and provide a very dependable insurance policy of getting in and out of

Pte John McEwan, 1 Scots, team medic, armoured infantry

"I was one of the four men injured. I was about 15 metres away when the IED exploded but I didn't realise I'd been hit because my adrenaline was so high and my body was numb. I saw our corporal was injured so I ran and dragged him into the back of the Warrior. Pte Christopher Wight, also a team medic, treated him and did everything he could. The others were a bit surprised by my wounded arm and I was in the field hospital for two weeks. Afterwards, I was given light duties to regain my confidence and then I just cracked back on with the job."



really dangerous places.

"We have supplied the armoured shield more than 50 times and our enduring memory of this tour is providing that particular action.

"There has been no hint of boredom and it has been a fulfilling tour, really quite exciting, and we feel we have made significant progress especially with the Iraqi Army."

Reflecting on the tour, members of the battle-group shared some of their own enduring memories with *Soldier*. Among them were Lt James Bentley, 1 SG, and Pte John McEwan, 1 Scots, who were injured during a roadside bomb attack . . .

LCpl Liam Ansty, RDG, Challenger 2 tank operator

"This is my second Telic tour and for the last couple of months we've been doing strike ops into Basra. I have confidence in the tank because I saw what it could take, especially against IEDs. On one op we had two IED blasts, the second exploding five or six seconds after the first. Although we were expecting it because it was a strike op, it was still a shock. But we cracked on, nobody panicked and we stayed focused because it was a big operation. The US Forces we were working with said we did a brilliant job in carrying on after being attacked with IEDs."



Gdsm Eamonn McCulloch, 1 SG

"Our role was to create an outer cordon, which was quite a big and important one to play. It made the troops we were protecting feel a bit safer when they went into Basra and they were really appreciative about what we did. It's my first tour and I've been quite lucky in that we've not had too many incidents. There have been small arms fire and hit-and-run attacks by small mortar teams. It's quite nerve-wracking to begin with but due to the training you're quite confident when you go out there. I expected it to be worse but it's good to be prepared."



Gdsm James Scott, 1 SG

"This is my first tour and so far it has been exciting and a totally different experience. Before, I was just doing the training but it's great to come out here and do this job. The first operation I was involved in, I had more of a sense of anticipation than anything else and the training stood me in good stead. It just automatically kicks in. As the recce platoon, you know you have to go forward and have the responsibility to make sure nothing happens to the guys you are protecting. And you have to make the route back to base safe."



Sgt Chris Richards, RDG, Challenger 2 tank commander



"The day we got hit three times by IEDs was a bit of an experience. We were leading into Basra when the first IED exploded. As we reacted to that, a second one went off. The first reaction is, 'what the Hell was that?' but I

stopped the vehicle and made sure the boys were alright.

The tank was fine so we cracked on. Soon after, we got hit by a third IED, which I believe was the biggest. Obviously I was not going to put my head outside but it all seemed to be working. Back at camp we saw how much damage was done but the tank proved it could take an almighty hit and still go on."



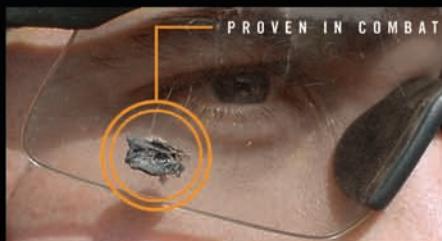
Blast off: Insurgents detonate a roadside bomb as the Scots Guards battle-group take to the streets of Basra

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On the Basra beat

The long arm of 115 Provost Company feels Op Telic 11 collar to keep base on right side of law

Report: Karen Thomas

Pictures: Graeme Main

GAINTING the respect and trust of your fellow soldiers when donning a red cap might seem a daunting task but Op Telic 11 has drawn red and green berets much closer together.

Although 115 Provost Company, RMP had the added advantage of deploying from Germany with the rest of 4th Mechanized Brigade, it quickly capitalised on the strong sense of community established back home. As an integral part of the brigade, it ensures that British law and Army standards are properly maintained abroad.

Maj Andrew Banks, OC 1 RMP, stressed to *Soldier* that they deploy to the battlefield as soldiers first.

"We have been on operations since 1995 and the perception of the 'hated red caps' is gone. Since Op Telic 1 and on Op Herrick we have worked in close proximity with these guys," he said.

"We are enjoying an excellent relationship with the battle-group here through mutual respect."

So was the military policeman's lot in Basra a happy one? ■



Iraqi partners

Working alongside 1 Scots, who mentor in military skills, the RMP delivered training to the Iraqi Tactical Support Unit on arrest and restrain, convoy, first aid and anti-ambush drills for the recent push into Basra city.

Cpl Ali Bowler explained: "We have to work through interpreters, which is time-consuming and some things get lost in translation. But they are disciplined soldiers and policemen and they're very receptive to the training."

Operation SIB

The law requires the usual high investigatory standards on operations but crime scenes outside the COB bring their own set of challenges. SSgt Ben Hood, RMP SIB (CSI), said: "We deploy to locations with injured soldiers and fatalities but have limited space in the Bulldogs and Mastiffs.

"The differences are the constraints of the force protection allowing us access, time and what we can take to the crime scene. And when you have to dart and dash around in Osprey body armour, that's an additional factor."

Driving decompression

Maj Banks told *Soldier*: "The greatest threat to our Forces is on two and four wheels." As 4th Mechanized Brigade heads home to Germany, the carefree summer sun beckons. With the temptation to don the leathers or throw back the soft top for some serious speed, the RMP start to bring home the dangers of driving before similar briefs are given during decompression in Cyprus.



Close up and personal

Sgt Neil Salmon, RMP, is one of the brigade commander's bodyguards.

His team must always be ready to repel an attack or melt discreetly into the background when they deploy on and off the COB with Brig Julian Free.

"It's hard to talk about a routine, as there is no routine and often the commander doesn't go to bed until 0100. If his leave dates change, our leave dates change, so you need to be flexible and be able to fall in line."

Clockwise from top right, You're nicked: Iraqi security forces get trained to arrest and restrain
Stop and search: Cpl Christopher Campbell, RMP, checks credentials of locally employed Iraqi civilians

Speed trap: Cpl Ali Bowler, RMP, targets drivers speeding around the COB

WHEN coalition forces came under heavy enemy attacks in Tallil, Iraq, it was British Army gunners who raced their AS90s to punch back at the insurgents.

Packed off from the gun lines on the Contingency Operating Base (COB) in Basra, a team from D Battery, 3rd Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery, deployed north. Their 155mm self-propelled weapon proved a show-stopper in Tallil, delivering munitions back at the insurgents' door. Capable of firing 96lb Nato HL15 projectiles over a range of 25km, the AS90 also rapidly caught the attention of their coalition comrades.

"We were working with the Australians, Americans and Romanians. They were coming under indirect fire (IDF) and needed counter-fire, and we can deploy there when people need us," Sgt Guy Catterick told *Soldier*, describing the action against the abrupt escalation in fighting that swept across Iraq at the end of March.

"The gun made their life a bit easier and it's good that people see what D Battery can do. We were on our own with the AS90 but the Australians were very friendly and there were a lot of visits to look at the gun. Then the Americans heard about it and we ended up showing quite a few people around. It's a good show of force and had the same effect on lifting their morale, especially the first time we were engaged."

Guaranteeing a round-the-clock defence system, D Battery's gun teams had to step up to a hot plate when the violence erupted in southern Iraq. They were called on to return fire against the sharp increase in IDF attacks onto the COB, as well as firing in support of British Forces assisting the Iraqis pushing into Basra city. The plate got hotter when they deployed to Tallil.

"It was different up there wearing your body armour in the 44C heat," said Gnr Roy White.

"We were working alongside the Australians who were quite friendly and chilled out. There were just slight differences in some of the procedures and it was good to learn what they do. It was good to get off the COB, as it broke up the tour."

On both bases, the gunners loaded up an eight-hours-on and eight-hours-off shift system until further notice. They lived off their guns. Food had to be delivered to the lines where there were no showers or water. Gnr Jonathan Boateng arrived just as the pace of operations intensified. Having just completed his phase two training, he wanted to meet his new comrades and witness the AS90 in action.

"When I arrived we were doing eight

hours on and eight hours off. It was hard for me but after the first three days I got used to it. On your eight hours off you lie down and sleep does come to you because you are knackered – unless there's IDF and then you have to rush to respond to it.

"The first time I saw the gun fire it used one of the strongest charges so it was pretty loud and my whole body shook involuntarily. But it boosts morale. When I arrived we were getting IDF every day and I'd never experienced that. I was a bit stressed until I got used to it and now I run straight to the guns and do the job."

That job has involved D Battery firing hundreds of rounds in six months as counter-IDF and in support of operations. The mission is protecting Multi-National Division (South East) (MND (SE)) personnel in Basra, on operations and on the COB. The guns have also launched illume, which creates daylight out of the night sky, and smoke to provide cover for troops conducting operations.

The Mobile Artillery and Monitoring Battlefield (Mamba) radar is one asset that locates rocket and mortar firing points around Basra. A rapid relay system delivers highly accurate strike area data to D Battery, which then puts its AS90s in action. Bdr Martin Beckett, team commander, praised the gunners' work in defending the COB and taking the fight back to the enemy.

"Being the commander is the best job here because you are the one making it happen. When people hear the guns their morale goes up and you're the one firing the guns," he explained, commending the newer and less-experienced members of the battery.

"We had a few close calls but the lads are all very brave, especially the younger ones. No matter what you're doing when there's IDF you've got to run to the guns while everyone else throws themselves on the ground.

"I'm very proud of the team. The detachment has changed quite a few times but they've all been good, especially the new lads, as it's a different world coming from Pirbright." ■



First-person shooter: The AS90 guns sizzle, turning up the heat on Tallil's insurgent rocket sites
Picture: Cpl Rob Nyffenegger, ADF



Shoot-out

Flames of the RHA guns lick Basra and Tallil insurgents



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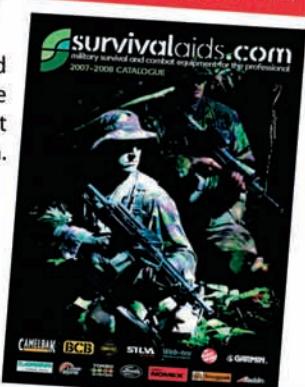
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Space cadet

Ex-Territorial Steve stands by to take a giant leap from the Earth's edge

Report: Cliff Caswell
Picture: Andy Ford

HIGH-flying adventurer Steve Truglia has every reason to feel on top of the world – the ex-military reservist was left exhilarated after freefalling in a space suit in preparation for a world record-breaking skydive attempt.

Steve, who served in the Territorial Army during the 1980s and is now an established film stunt coordinator, has set his sights on jumping at 120,000ft from a special helium balloon.

The jump – from the edge of space – promises to be one of the most risky aerial adventures ever undertaken and has required months of intense preparation.

The current record, which was set by United States Air Force officer Joseph Kittinger, stands at an astonishing 102,800ft and has remained intact for nearly half a century.

Clad in a full Russian MiG pilot suit, Steve has been learning how to freefall in the cumbersome outfit, vital if he is to survive the real jump.

The parachutist, who gave one of his first interviews about the jump to *Soldier* in January, admitted he was pleased with the way his training had been progressing.

He revealed that he is aiming to jump first from 52,000ft in the USA in the next few months and, if successful, to make the world record attempt soon after.

Steve has also been undergoing

intensive training as a balloon pilot to gain the experience he will need to ascend to the edge of the stratosphere.

He added: "The training is going well although I'm currently waiting for the spacesuit that I will be wearing during the world record jump to be delivered.

"In the coming weeks I'm hoping to get into a cold chamber, where I will go through a mission rehearsal in my suit with the temperatures down to -55C.

"In the meantime I have found a guy in the USA who is experienced in high-altitude ballooning and I am close to securing the sponsorship I need. I'm pleased this adventure seems to have fired the imagination." ■



Bravo to heroes

Best-selling Gulf War warrior celebrates 'phenomenal' troops in a new ITV4 series

Interview: Stephen Tyler

TAKING note of the old adage that authors should write about what they know has proven to be a lucrative line for ex-soldier Andy McNab.

The former Royal Green Jacket's experiences behind enemy lines as part of the ill-fated Bravo Two Zero patrol in the Gulf War kick-started a writing career that has propelled McNab to the top of the fiction charts.

But although his own experiences have stoked the imaginations of the British book-buying public, McNab insists that readers wanting modern-day tales of bravery need look no further than the average squaddie.

"The private soldier now doesn't compare to the private soldier at any other time in the Army's history because the standard now is without doubt the best it has ever been," McNab told *Soldier*, adding that his latest book, *Crossfire* (reviewed in *Soldier* in February), is based on his time in Iraq with troops from the 2nd Battalion, The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment.

"You get to these battalions and the standard is phenomenal. I was with 2 Rifles in Basra last year and we went on a strike op in the city. Number one through the door was a 19-year-old rifleman. About ten years ago that would have been a specialist role, but now you have infantry guys who are able to do it. The Army is in a strong position because of the experience and knowledge they are getting on board."

The ever-increasing number of stories of bravery in the face of adversity filtering back from theatre forms the basis of *Andy McNab's Tour of Duty*, a hard-hitting six-part series airing on ITV4 this month.

Using videos, pictures and first-hand

accounts from soldiers on the ground, combat camera teams and intelligence sources, McNab takes an in-depth look at the challenges facing troops and how they are being overcome.

Interviews with everyone from infantrymen to company commanders on their return from theatre explain each story's context and McNab said that talking to the troops convinced him that suggestions young people were being tricked into signing up were extremely wide of the mark.

"The media like to use the Army to attack Government and in doing so they make it seem as if everybody's waiting to hang themselves, that it's all depressing and people want to come home because they didn't know what they were getting into," he said. "They

forget that actually these lads are exactly the same as their next door neighbours.

"The difference is that they have been motivated enough to get off their arse and do something and if they don't like it they can get out.

"People forget that these lads do know what they're getting into. They are volunteers, they are more educated and worldly aware than soldiers have ever been and it's not as if this war is being kept from them because they can watch it live on Sky if they want."

With operational commitments reaching an unprecedented level, McNab is pleased that previous problems with kit and equipment have been ironed out.

Indeed, rather than the horror stories that emanated from the first Gulf War about the SA80 not firing due to the heat, today's front-line troops are almost universally positive about the equipment available to them.

McNab, pictured above, said that



he is aware of foreign armies casting envious glances at British kit and thinks the reliability and effectiveness of the weapons is allowing young soldiers to concentrate on developing their skills.

"This whole thing that some people seem to be hooked up on that the equipment is rubbish is just wrong," he said. "There's some really good gear that's so good that the Americans are going to start buying it."

Although Nick Stone, the character in McNab's books is fictional, the author believes that a lot of his character's missions are now being successfully completed in real life by Regular soldiers. Ally that to the increasingly "Gucci" weaponry available to infantry battalions and it is no surprise to hear that McNab believes the nature of front-line soldiering today is both challenging and rewarding.

"They are getting more kinetic kit and heavy weapons stuff in Afghanistan than I ever saw when I was in the Green Jackets – the lads these days have an amazing array of quality kit and the responsibility that a young NCO or officer has these days is awesome."

McNab's training and unique military manoeuvres around the world have



placed him in hot demand from private companies wanting to learn from his experiences. Hollywood has already come knocking and he has served as a technical adviser on films such as *Heat*, while his own stories are currently being reworked into a film script.

The Distinguished Conduct Medal and Military Medal winner also works closely with the counter-terrorism community and said that Great Britain is well prepared against attacks on home soil. "I think it's a lot better than people think," he said.

"The problem is that it's seen as a massive threat, but actually the system does work.

"The Israelis have a great analogy that what we are doing is running around an apple tree and as those apples drop we are catching them. There will be one apple that will hit the ground and that's a fact because you can't stop everything, but we have huge experience in dealing with it and we are well prepared." ■

Andy McNab's Tour of Duty airs on ITV4 at 2200 for six weeks every Tuesday from June 10. The paperback of *Crossfire* is out now, priced at £6.99.



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Life on the ocean waves:
Pte Derek Derenalei,
of the 2nd Battalion,
The Mercian Regiment,
takes the helm of *British
Soldier*, the Army Sailing
Association's new
£250,000 racing yacht

Report: Stephen Tyler
Pictures: Graeme Main

PROOF that the Army's expensive new top-of-the-range ocean racing yacht was a sound investment did not take long to arrive.

British Soldier, an 11.95m vessel from renowned designer Archambault, was thrust straight into competitive action after the Army Sailing Association (ASA) took delivery of it in April.

And the £250,000 speedster lived up to her price tag by sweeping away the competition at the Spring Series Regatta to qualify for the Great Britain fleet for the Rolex Commodores' Cup, one of sailing's most prestigious events.

It is the first time that a military yacht has earned the right to compete in the Solent-based Commodores' Cup and ASA race manager Maj Mike Lawrence is confident that *British Soldier* and her crew will do themselves justice on the grandest sailing stage.

"Competing in the Commodores' Cup

is a new level for us," said Maj Lawrence after the naming ceremony for the yacht at the Army Offshore Sailing Centre in Gosport. "We have never qualified for it before, but I believe that we have the crew to make a credible attempt at it and to represent the country well."

Given *British Soldier*'s racing pedigree, it is clear that the Army crew are not heading to the competition expecting just to make up the numbers.

The yacht is one of the first of Archambault's thoroughbred A40RC models to be seen on the British racing circuit and her statistics are sure to draw envious glances from rival crews.

Constructed from resin-injected fibreglass, the boat's hull provides a rigid, lightweight frame while its twin wheels provide equally comfortable performance up and down wind.

Just as important as the ability of the yacht itself are the crew who pilot her,

and Maj Lawrence deliberately chose the A40RC as it allows more people to get involved in each race.

"It was a bit of a nightmare finding a new boat," he said. "We were being pushed towards getting something smaller, but we wanted to have the ability to sail with a mixed crew of experienced and novice people.

"Sailing with a smaller boat would have made it too exclusive and that's why we have gone for the larger option.

"Like many other sports, we have struggled with numbers because of the tempo of operations. We are a small part of the Army Sailing Association but we always try to make ourselves as accessible as possible.

"Obviously we can't take complete beginners into the racing crew, but if you have been on a corps team and can demonstrate that you are committed to sailing then you are welcome here."

It may still be in its racing infancy, but *British Soldier* has already made a favourable impression on the Army's offshore sailing squad.

Royal Engineer LCpl Nathan Fulcher is in his first year as a member of the 17-strong team, having previously only sailed at corps and club level.

The junior NCO, who usually acts as the boat's mast man in raising the sails and spinnaker, believes the crew is well-placed to put in a good performance at the Commodores' Cup.

"*British Soldier* has been absolutely brilliant so far," said LCpl Fulcher, who only started sailing competitively at the age of 23. "She is a fantastic boat both up and down wind and that makes sailing a lot of fun.

"There was a lot of behind-the-scenes work to get us ready to compete and it was an awesome result when we managed to qualify.

"I think we were all hoping that we could make it, but it was a challenge because the boat was so new. It was quite gruelling and we worked hard to achieve what we have."



Away from the glamour of race day, the real secret of *British Soldier*'s successful debut lies in the sheer hard work and dedication of her crew.

On top of cleaning and maintenance duties, the squad spends several hours each week practising their racing skills and drills on the water.

The finely-honed routines are underpinned by a strong sense of camaraderie between those on board the boat and LCpl Fulcher believes that strong team spirit could propel *British Soldier* to victory.

"Getting the new boat has come at a good time for us because we have a mix of guys who have sailed a lot before and others who are less experienced," he said. "We are all learning together and that is good for the team.

"We have been training well and hopefully we will do ourselves justice." ■

- **Sail of the century**
– Page 92

Main picture, Yachting all over the world:
The Army Sailing Association's racing team put *British Soldier* through her paces on the Solent off Portsmouth

Inset, Sailing away: Raising the new yacht's distinctive Army-branded sail

Shipshape: *British Soldier* at a glance

Length overall	11.95m
Beam	3.75m
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Genoa	40m ²
Symmetric spinnaker	134m ²





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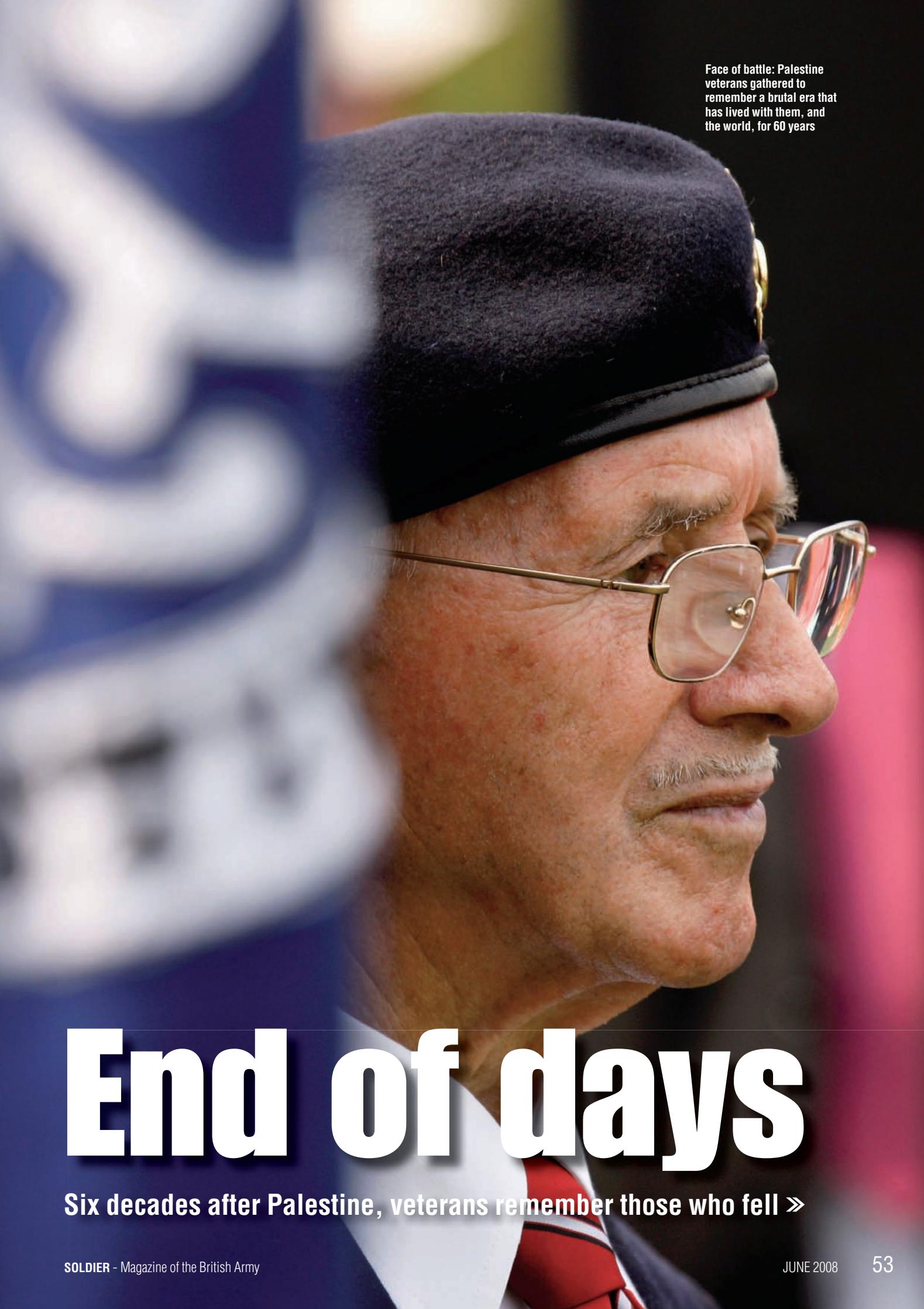
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Face of battle: Palestine veterans gathered to remember a brutal era that has lived with them, and the world, for 60 years

End of days

Six decades after Palestine, veterans remember those who fell »



Report: Cliff Caswell
Pictures: Steve Dock

SITTING at her typewriter in an office of the King David Hotel in Palestine, Hilda Mosley was well aware she had a vastly different life than most office workers her age.

Every morning the 20-year-old corporal would be transported from behind the barbed wire of her camp and escorted by armed troops to work in an armoured vehicle. When the day was over, she would return the same way, ever conscious of the scale of the violence and bloodshed that was going on around her.

“Palestine could be extremely distressing,” the former secretary, who later married and became Hilda Waite, recalled. “As a shorthand typist in the Auxiliary Territorial Service we got to know the atrocities taking place because we were doing the clerical work associated with them. As we were in Jerusalem, we could also hear the explosions and gunfire so we knew what was going on. Some girls lost their lives out there.”

Hilda knew full well the risks of her job. Shortly before she arrived at the King David Hotel, Jewish militants bombed the South Wing, which housed the British Secretariat, killing 91 people and injuring 45.

Such was the daily reality faced by

British personnel in the region.

Palestine might be a little-discussed campaign today, but for those who served there from 1945-48, emotions remain raw. And as veterans met at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire to mark the 60th anniversary of the British withdrawal, there was a feeling among some that little progress to peace had been made in the years since their departure.

Despite the passing of six often bloody decades, Palestine refuses to be consigned to history. There are still ongoing disputes between Jews and Arabs, and the region remains a Middle East flashpoint, the focal point of an unresolved dispute that resonates dangerously into the present day.

At the heart of the troubles facing the British personnel in the mid-1940s was an influx of Jewish refugees, who had faced terrible persecution by the Nazi regime and who were desperate to make a new life in the Holy Land.

The British authorities, which had been in control of the area since 1922 following a mandate from the international community, battled to control the immigrant tide. But the situation had left many Arabs angry.

While it had always been the UK's intention to help create a national home for the Jewish people, enshrined in a declaration made by Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour in 1917, the situation



in Palestine deteriorated as frustrated Jewish insurgents turned to violence to further their cause.

Caught between these terror groups, which included the notorious Stern Gang and the fearsome Irgun Zvai Leumi, and Arab insurgents, British soldiers found themselves under attack from all sides. As the violence escalated, ambushes, bombs and even kidnappings became a daily reality.

“I arrived in theatre in 1946 and left in '48, and in all that time I think I had about a day of leave,” recalled Cyril Watts, a former member of the Royal Artillery, who was based in Hadeira. “My job was a motor-cycle mechanic, but I remember being put on guard duty at one point for 15 days.

“The duty was two-hours-on and four-off. I remember getting very jumpy at one point when I saw tracer bullets come through the roof of my tent – we were only 18 or 19 years old, and hadn't seen anything like this.”

Jack Stephens, who served with the 8th Battalion, The Royal Fusiliers, also remembered the tension. He recalled that the terrorists had resorted to increasingly brutal tactics as their campaign of violence intensified.

“One of the first things you were warned about was the razor wire that the terrorists would put across the road,” he said. “The motor-cycle dispatch riders actually had a blade

Left, Urban ops: An armoured car of the 17/21 Lancers in Jerusalem
Reflections: The names of those who fell in Palestine are recorded at the Memorial Arboretum



mounted on their mudguard to cut through this wire, and the same tactic was used by those of us on the Bren gun carriers."

Jack, who served in Baghdad before heading for Palestine, added that force protection measures were taken increasingly seriously as time marched on. Ambushes, bombings and being abducted were very real threats.

For those who found themselves at close quarters with their enemy, luck was often the only defence. Paul Macmahon, an officer with the Palestine Police, was ambushed as he left a café in Haifa with two colleagues.

"We were armed with revolvers, but I didn't have time to use mine," he recalled. "I knew I'd been shot in the chest and my instinct was to put my hand to my heart to find out if I had been hit there. When I realised the wound was the other side I knew that I had a chance of survival."

The terrorists managed to kill one of Paul's friends while the other escaped injury. The young police officer, who had signed up for service from his native Ireland, was evacuated to the Suez Canal Zone before being sent back to England on a hospital ship.

"At the end of our time in Palestine, the job was to separate the Arabs from the Jews, who were killing each other for this land," he said.

"It was such a shame. It was a Holy Land, but for a time there was absolutely no holiness there."

By the time Paul had been gunned down, the violence had claimed the lives of hundreds of civilians and military personnel. British involvement in Palestine finally culminated on May 6, 1948, when a ceasefire was agreed, and the troop withdrawal began in earnest a week later.

A series of UN proposals suggested the partition of Palestine into Jewish and Arab zones, while Jerusalem

would be placed under an international trusteeship. On May 14, David Ben-Gurion became the first prime minister of Israel, but the troubles continued with the opening shots of the Arab-Israeli War following soon after the British departure.

For the soldiers who attended the memorial service in Stafford, however, it was the memories of comrades and civilians killed and maimed in the violence that were foremost in their minds on the anniversary.

Derek Windmill, a driving force behind the Palestine Veterans' Association and a former soldier with the Royal Artillery, summed up their feelings.

"As a country, Palestine was an absolutely fabulous place but it was spoilt by the situation that prevailed there," he added. "Both sides were right and both sides were wrong. It's a situation that has gone on for 60 years." ■

Right, Palestine past: Hilda Waite remembers old comrades at the commemorations

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TALKBACK

Use JPA to give to charity

AM reaching the end of 22 years in the Army and often read news stories about events that make me want to donate to a military charity, the most recent being Prince Harry's visit to Headley Court in Surrey and the outrageous situation of charities having to fund rehabilitation facilities there.

But sometimes making a donation to a specific charity isn't particularly easy and I feel it would be of real benefit to include some form of donation mechanism via the JPA system.

It need not be complicated, simply a link to a site from where you could select a Service charity and an amount,

PRIZE LETTER

then pay directly from your account.

The tax implications of donating could also be taken into consideration if the system worked correctly.

If the site was in their face every time a Serviceman or woman checked their pay statements or submitted a travel claim I am sure virtually every one of them would use such a system to donate regularly to our Service charities.

– WO2 Sean Heckford RE, 23

Engineer Regiment.

David Crozier, Head of Media and Comms, SPVA, responds: Provided the charity satisfies the normal HMRC rules for

Brief is best

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

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

charity giving, it can be done through the South West Charities route. JPA allows for Service personnel to make a donation to any charity that satisfies the criteria set by HMRC for tax efficient payroll donations.

WO2 Heckford should complete JPA Form E025 (available on the Intranet or from unit human resources staff) and forward it to South West Charity Giving at the address on the form.

The JPA voluntary deductions team will do the rest.

The relevant links are http://www.ipublish.dii.r.mil.uk/nlapps/datal/folders/jpa_docs/PR905012.h

Application form link <http://www.ipublish.dii.r.mil.uk/nlapps/datal/docattachments/JPAE025.doc>

PS...

AFTER reading your Talkback pages (March), I agree with the MPs who want a medal for killed or wounded troops.

I served in Cyprus during the Eoka crisis and was told I did not qualify for the General Service Medal with Cyprus clasp. The qualifying period was 120 days, which the department has admitted was "uniquely longer than most". I understand 30 days is the norm. To obtain the GSM for Suez, personnel had to serve "one day or part of the day thereof" (Command Paper 190).

A Royal Warrant should be sought to let those who served in Cyprus receive an overdue award.

– David Williams, ex-1 Somerset LI.

Racking up the medals

I AM on my second Op Herrick tour. The first was four years ago with the WFR (now 2 Mercian) and I got a medal. But soldiers who have done more than one tour won't receive further recognition (apart from the Isaf medal we can't wear).

I'm sorry for those who have done multiple tours but don't receive the recognition they deserve. Yet reading "Gong for embassy guardians" in *Soldier* (Feb), it seems the RMP will receive the Iraq Reconstruction Service Medal (IRSM), although not the Telic Medal.

– Happy (but a bit miffed) soldier, name and address supplied.

Brig Jamie Gordon, DPS(A), replies: The UK recognises operational service through campaign medals and clasps; one for each campaign, which takes account of the risk

and rigour. Since 1990, nine have been struck, as well as a number of multinational medals, although not all can be worn.

Repeat tours are recognised by the Accumulated Campaign Service Medal; the qualifying period is 1,080 days or 36 months. It is a tough target, but it makes the ACSM valuable and those who earn it really have carried out significant operational duty for their country.

The RMP received the IRSM for their tour of duty when attached to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, but are ineligible for the Iraq Medal for that period. If they were deployed on Telic beforehand, or subsequently return to Iraq with the Army rather than the FCO, they will be eligible for the Iraq Medal. I hope my brief explanation leaves you happy, although probably no less miffed! We do keep the system under review and account is taken of your comments.

Lots more of your letters and emails at www.soldiermagazine.co.uk

Chimp's a champ

I READ with disappointment Annoyed RSM's letter ("What's with the monkey business?", April) regarding the PG Tips chimp in Lt Storm Green's webbing pouch.

Come on! In the middle of a horrendous tour, a small token of humour won't hurt. After incidents in Newry during my time there I occasionally carried a small teddy bear in the ammo pouch of my chest rig.

I used it as an ice-breaker with the youngsters of Newry and was never criticised for it. Indeed, I was often questioned with interest as to Teddy's purpose. Perhaps the chimp has had that same unintentional effect.

I appreciate the need for discipline within HM Forces but feel the RSM needs to re-think his opinions. Well done, guys. Up and at 'em the Guards. – **Name and address supplied.**

ANNOYED RSM wants to lighten up. As a Vietnam veteran, I didn't like his tone regarding the cigarettes and so on we carried in our helmet bands.



What would he know about our war fought 40 years ago? Kit was carried in the helmet bands because it was quick and easy to use.

There's no harm in a soft toy; it's a little ice-breaker for the kids. I feel he was disrespecting the 55,000 Servicemen who lost their lives in Vietnam, which was probably before he was born. – **Ex-Sgt Weinstein, 101st Airborne, White Bean Lake, USA.**

IT is obvious that Annoyed RSM has no idea how effective this can be in helping to interact with Afghan people. It shows that we are normal and not mercenaries.

How exactly is this unprofessional? It is clearly not only good for morale, but causes a relaxed atmosphere that makes you more approachable by the local adults and children you see in the community. – **Cpl B Leeves, RMP.**

GET a grip Annoyed RSM. Either you have never done a front-line tour or you have forgotten what it is like. I think people need to give a bit more credit to the Afghan people and accept that having a PG Tips chimp sticking out of a pouch is not going to make them lose respect for us.

If anything, it adds a touch of humanity to the individual and may be the one thing that tips the viewer's perception of the soldier from that of a Western oppressor to a human being with a sense of humour. – **Name and address supplied.**

I'll pay for this injury

I AM a South African in the Regular Army but I signed off after five years and am due to leave in September. I was injured in my left eye on operations in Afghanistan and need to see a specialist every three to six months for

the rest of my life. I have a high risk of requiring an operation at some point as well as developing glaucoma, and have been in pain after exercise and flying as a result of pressure build-up in the eye.

The Army pays for my treatment now, but when I'm discharged I will have to pay privately because South Africa has no NHS service.

If I remained in Britain the NHS would continue to support and fast-track me as an ex-Serviceman.

Is there any help for Commonwealth soldiers after discharge or do we have to fend for ourselves regarding injuries sustained on operations? – **Spr J Hamman, 28 Engineer Regiment.**

Brig Jamie Gordon, DPS(A), replies: I am sorry to hear of your injuries and I hope you have or are submitting an Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) claim. You will receive a lump sum payment as compensation and, depending on the scale of your injuries, a Guaranteed Income Payment that is index-linked and tax-free for life.

Prior to the introduction of the AFCS in April 2005 you would have had to wait until you were discharged to claim a war pension for your operational injuries.

However, under the war pension scheme those who returned to their country of origin were able to claim payments for the cost of medical treatment associated with their recognised pension injuries.

The relevant article that covered this provision was not carried forward to the AFCS, as it is a compensation scheme that does not cover treatment costs. If you return to South Africa, like any UK expat, I am afraid you would be responsible for your medical costs. All I can suggest is that if you struggle to meet medical costs, you should seek support from your regimental or corps association or from other ex-Service charitable sources.

Alternatively, you could apply to remain in the UK. Under recent changes to immigration rules for soldiers from foreign and Commonwealth countries, providing you meet Home Office criteria, while in the Army you are eligible to apply for UK nationality after five years' service (this includes service abroad), or you can apply for Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR).

Application for ILR can now be submitted ten weeks prior to discharge (formally 28 days). I realise that none of this will be particularly satisfactory for you, but overseas treatment is one of a number of issues that the MoD is considering.

PS...

ON behalf of the Combined Operations Association may I thank all units of the Armed Services for their wonderful support at the recent unveiling of the Combined Operations Memorial at Inveraray.

I would particularly like to thank the public address team of 251 Signal Squadron, 10 Signal Regiment, The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders and 29 Commando Regiment RA, who presented a Combined Ops flag that now flies over the new memorial. Thank you and well done the Army. – James Jepson, General Secretary/Treasurer, COA.

New bonus is insult to our loyal service

I HAVE just read about the increase in commitment bonuses coming into force next year. As a staff sergeant approaching the end of a 23-year career I think the initiative is an insult to all soldiers at the same stage of their career as me and a waste of money that could be better used elsewhere.

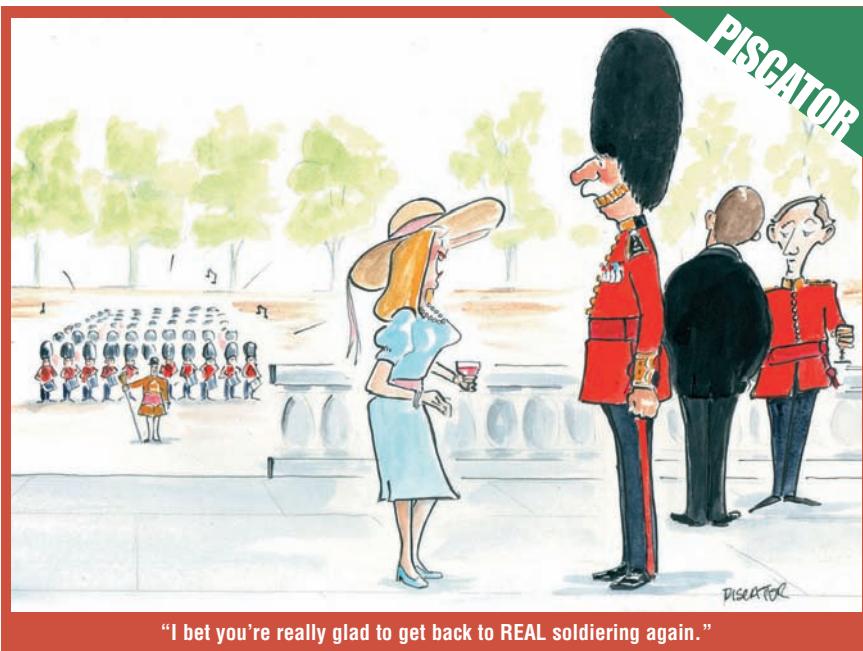
To give £15,000 (taxable, but still a considerable amount) to a soldier who has served just eight years to thank them for their loyalty is a slap in the face for those of us who have shown real loyalty by completing a full career.

I took advantage of what at the time seemed a very good allowance in the Long Service Advance of Pay to gain access to the housing market, albeit at the grand old age of 35. I have paid monthly instalments back to the Army ever since to repay this loan, the balance of which will come out of my gratuity. I am grateful to the Army for this interest-free loan but now believe that younger soldiers are being given nearly double what I was only allowed to borrow – and I had to complete 18 years' service before I could do so.

The commitment bonuses amount to throwing £80 million of public money down the drain every year. A soldier who has done eight years and received his £15,000 only has to serve for another 12 months. How many do they reckon will go on to serve for longer? No more than do now, I would say.

This award has the potential to severely reduce the numbers of those who continue to serve for a full career. They have just been given enough money to set them up in a house, so why would they bother serving for another 14 years?

This has made me very angry. My contribution over the past 23 years seems unvalued and unappreciated. – **SSgt, name and address supplied.**



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SPS slips down list of Army's priorities

WITH reference to the letter "Bounty is invite to sign off" (Talkback, February), I agree with DM(A) that it would be a huge risk for any young soldier to sign off in the hope that they could sign back on and get a rejoining bounty.

As an AGC detachment commander who has experienced under-manning for most of my time in the corps, I was comforted by the fact that while "manning in Infantry to support current operations remains the Army's top priority", the AGC(SPS) were second on the list.

You will understand my disappointment then when I read on the Army homepage on the Defence intranet the Army Briefing Notices 5/08 and 06/08 announcing the introductions of financial retention initiatives for REME lance corporals, vehicle mechanics and soldiers in the Royal Artillery.

This allocation of resources puts the AGC(SPS) in a rather less favourable position than second in the Army's priorities. – **Capt A Osborne-White, AGC(SPS), Household Cavalry Regiment, Windsor.**

Cold War Territorials 'most potent ever'

WHO is responsible for the untruth on the official website of the Territorial Army as it celebrates its centenary? Describing the Cold War years, it states: "Throughout this period of fluctuating fortunes, the TA was never regarded as a particularly useable or effective force, either by the Government of the day or by the Regular Army." Absolute bunkum. The TA of the 1980s was the most potent ever.

It was 70,000-strong, equipped with the latest weaponry and much of it was committed to Nato. The One Army concept, which is claimed as a 21st century invention, was coined during the 1980s. If the TA had been mobilised in the 1980s, it would have gone into action alongside the Regulars and, from what I saw of it during my service from 1976 to 1992, would have acquitted itself well. The notion that the TA "only came of age" in Iraq and Afghanistan is nonsense. Indeed, it may be that short-term demands imposed on today's citizen army will kill it off altogether, and a great national asset will be lost. – **Maj (Retd) Peter Rhodes, R Signals, Kenilworth.**

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Why can't I claim for working in civvies?

I HAVE been working in our welfare office for two years and have worn civvy clothing because I am in constant contact with wives, children and families. You know that old saying: not mean and green but pink and fluffy.

I waited the 12-month qualifying period to claim the civilian clothing allowance, only to be told by my admin office that I wasn't eligible.

Yet all previous other ranks in our

department were given this entitlement.

I have completed the Army welfare officers' course at Bristol University and wear civilian clothes every day as required by my employer so I should be allowed to claim the allowance. – **Name and address supplied.**

Brig Jamie Gordon, DPS(A), replies:

Your interpretation is correct. Annex A to AGAI 81 states that "in cases where a CO

has a policy of unit welfare staff wearing civilian clothes it is recommended that individuals be allowed to claim the civilian clothing allowance".

If you are required to wear civilian clothes, you should be able to claim.

We will clarify JSP 752. Of course, if you are an officer, then you are not eligible as you receive annual tax relief to contribute to the provision and upkeep of civilian clothes (JSP 752 para 08.0306).

No-bonus tour

MY husband is deployed in the Falklands for six months. I understand that he is not putting his life on the line there but feel he is being treated a little unfairly.

Although he is away from his family for six months he will get no operational bonus and I have just learned that he will get only six days of R and R. If he was in Iraq or Afghanistan he would be entitled to two weeks' R and R.

Why are our soldiers treated unfairly just because they are deployed to a relatively safe zone? They still miss their family and friends. – **Mrs L Norman, Chief Clerk, RAF Legal Services.**

Brig Jamie Gordon, DPS(A), replies: The operational allowance (OA) recognises the increased and enduring nature of the danger on operations over and above that calculated in the X-factor. It is currently applied principally in Iraq and Afghanistan, but not, as you say, the Falklands. Your husband does get longer separation allowance (LSA), which recognises the separation. Within the R and R Guiding Principles (JSP 760 Chap),



"I'll be a bit late, Sir, I've been ambushed by some rather vexed ladies."

serving personnel on a six-month tour will get one period of R and R of up to 14 days, inclusive of travelling time. It is not an absolute entitlement; the location and duration of R and R is specified by the appropriate operational commander taking account of local conditions.

Finally, as of February 1, he has been eligible for a Contribution in Lieu of Council Tax (CILOCT) rebate.

This resettlement package leaves me underwhelmed

HAVING enlisted as a boy soldier in 1970, I am now coming towards the end of my military career and my thoughts are turning to planning my resettlement before I retire in 2010 after serving 40 years.

I am entitled to the Individual Resettlement Training (IRT) package, currently £534, as well as 35 days of graduated resettlement time (GRT). While this may appear generous, compare it to someone who has served six years and who will receive the same IRT, or £89 for each year of service,

and 20 working days GRT, or 3.33 days for each year of service.

Using the same breakdown, a soldier at the end of a 22-year career would receive £24.27 IRT and 1.59 days GRT for each of their years of service while I will receive only £13.35 IRT and 0.87 days GRT for each of my 40 years. This is the equivalent of a round of drinks and less than a full day's training for each of my 40 years service. Is this all I am worth? – **Maj Stuart Woodard RLC, Bicester Garrison Support Unit.**

CSA made no allowances

THE Child Support Agency (CSA) told me it would include the food and incidental allowances (FIA) I receive in its calculation for my annual quote of what I pay my ex-wife for the upkeep of our children. I knew this was wrong and confirmed it with my HR staff and the JPAC helpline.

Two hours later the CSA called to tell me FIA would not be taken into account. Had it been, I would have had to pay out in excess of £100 a month more than I am now. I hope others will read this and realise they may be paying more because the CSA is not conversant with MoD allowances. – **Name and address supplied.**

THE Army increased my payments to the CSA after it was told I had not paid in February, even though this has been deducted at source since 1998. The pay office told me that if it is instructed by the CSA to increase maintenance it does so without question. Even though the CSA made the error, the Army is already deducting it from my pay regardless of the agency making a decision on whether or not I should be paying. – **Name and address supplied.**

PS...

MY friends and I were at the Army-Navy rugby game at Twickenham last month and had the privilege of meeting some officer candidates. They made us feel welcome and we were impressed with their maturity and think we are lucky to have them looking out for our Servicemen in the future. Sandhurst should be proud of them. They are a fantastic advert for the Army and we wish them safe and successful careers. – Neil Gardner, Northern Ireland.



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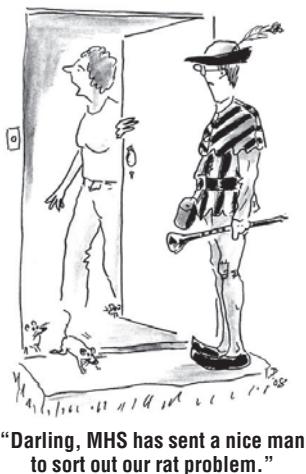
SOLDIER - Magazine of the British Army

My house of rats

HERE are large numbers of rats in my house so I phoned Modern Housing Solutions (MHS) to tackle the problem and was given an afternoon spot when they would attend. I took time off work and waited in, only to find out that someone had called in the morning.

MHS advised me there was nothing they could do but rebook for a later date. I asked if they would come at the agreed time as I would have to take time off work again, but was told they could not guarantee this.

I am still living with rats and no one



at MHS is giving any urgency to addressing the problem. – Name, address supplied.

Valerie Miller, DE Ops Housing Comms Manager, responds:

MHS has investigated this and identified several areas for improvement that will be implemented. But please can we remind occupants living in Service families accommodation in England and Wales that if they have reason to complain about an

outstanding issue, that they should do so to the MHS helpdesk on 0800 707 6000 and select option three.

I WOULD like to congratulate you on the quality of your magazine. I'm in private security in Iraq and see the magazine online. Reading about what our troops do makes me realise how proud I was of serving and how much civilians in the UK should be grateful for their Armed Forces. I'd like to thank all involved and especially 2 Mercian. I hope *Soldier* continues to report the efforts of the British squaddie. – **Mark Sharp, ex-1 WFR, Iraq.**

I JOINED the Canadian Forces in February 2007. I wanted to write to say I love *Soldier*. It's great. I've found two copies so far and they are full of great stories and pictures. I wish the Canadian Army had a magazine of the same calibre. – **Gnr Mike Gibson, C Battery, 1 Royal Canadian Horse Artillery, Shilo.**

*Good to hear from you Mark and Mike. You can access a digital version of *Soldier* at www.soldiermagazine.co.uk* – **Editor.**

Response to housing query is bit damp

MY quarter had a severe damp problem which was rectified late last year. It was agreed that all properties affected would be downgraded and to date I have had a downgrade payment up to August 23.

At the Middle Wallop residents' meeting in November, Vince Avery of Defence Estates (DE) told the group that occupants would be entitled to a refund up to the date of completion of the repairs and that he would do the necessary paperwork for JPA.

The quarter I occupy was not fully repaired until November 1. Mr Avery

has moved on and I have called Peter Langdowne (who is now responsible for Middle Wallop) on many occasions but my calls have never been returned.

I did have a very brief conversation with him at the end of January and he said he would get back to me, but again I have heard nothing. – **Mrs O Vaughan, Middle Wallop, Hants.**

Peter Langdowne, Housing Manager, DE Operations (Housing), responds: After a period of compassionate leave resulting in some absences from my office I am now

able to respond. The four-yearly review of the four-tier grading of Service families accommodation at Middle Wallop convened on August 23, 2007 would have been the reason all temporary downgrading in the area covered by the board terminated on that date.

I have seen a letter from Mr Avery to residents at Middle Wallop confirming that the new grades would take effect three months from the date of the board (Nov 23), again in accordance with regulations. He copied the letter to the Housing Information Centre at Warminster.

Headlight policy change was overdue

IN response to the letter "Headlight regs are a 'farce'" (April), the recent change in BFG policy was not taken lightly and has brought our regulations into line with what should have been applied since headlights with a mechanical device to eliminate the "kick-up" were introduced.

Cpl Buckley's assertion that only BFG vehicles are required to have a kick-up to the right is incorrect as conventional European headlights, which are tested and approved for use in right-hand traffic (on the Continent), all provide a kick-up to the right.

Conventional headlights given an EU-type approval for use in left-hand traffic (UK) provide a kick-up to the left. This is designed to provide extra illumination to the front, the nearside pedestrian pavement and roadside

signage, so increasing road safety.

Few manufacturers provide headlights that are suitable for permanent use for both right-hand and left-hand traffic as there is little demand for it and they are expensive to produce – although interestingly (and sensibly) the new Man SV (Cargo) truck is fitted with such lights.

The flattening of the projected beam is achieved by a mechanical version of placing a shaped sticker on the glass of older conventional headlights. Stickers, or the mechanical masks, are acceptable for BFG (or TUV) light or road worthiness inspection.

These methods are classed as a tourist solution and are temporary measures for holidaymakers or personnel on short business trips.

The acceptance of this within BFG

in the past was wrong and the change in policy now makes our vehicles compliant with EU legislation and German STVZO regulations.

More importantly it provides drivers with a greater chance to see hazards in the dark than does a flattened beam, and therefore more time to react.

The acceptance of a flattened UK headlight beam by a TUV examiner will only occur if the vehicle being examined is not German registered and is used temporarily on the Continent (tourist). BA(G) personnel are not classed as tourists because they are resident and working in Germany.

See a full report on the ES Branch HQ UKSC(G) website at [http://cn5rsts007.dii.r.mil.uk/UKSCG/G4/ES/ - WO1\(ASM\) N Black \(SA GGVS\), ES Branch ESS\(G\).](http://cn5rsts007.dii.r.mil.uk/UKSCG/G4/ES/ - WO1(ASM) N Black (SA GGVS), ES Branch ESS(G).)



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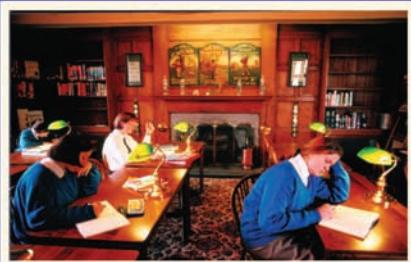
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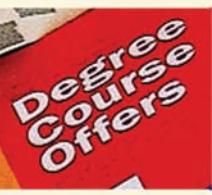


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Home all alone

Impact of low manning ripples out as soldiers spend less time with families

A COUPLE of months ago I wrote about the problem of retention from the families' perspective.

I heard a lovely quote the other day: "If you want to know how long a soldier is going to stay in the Army, ask his wife." But how can you retain a soldier if you haven't even recruited one yet?

Low manning levels have an obvious impact on the soldier because posts are gapped and they end up doing their job and someone else's. But the impact ripples out to the family as the soldier spends more time at work and less at home, leaving one person to run the family.

The MoD appeared to admit in *The Daily Telegraph* last month that the Forces were struggling to meet their designated manning levels. While Shadow Defence Secretary Liam Fox said that the Government must stop asking our Armed Forces to do more without providing them with the manpower and resources needed to get the job done, Defence Secretary Des Browne argued that there had been a 5.4 per cent rise in the number of new recruits, and that this level exceeded the numbers of people leaving the military.

Mr Browne then appeared to contradict himself by saying that the Spring Performance Report found that there had not been much progress made towards achieving manning levels.

He has stated that manning levels

are being addressed through retention incentives and increased recruiting. However, it didn't help when the Chancellor abolished the 10p tax level. Thousands of soldiers earn less than the £19,355 threshold needed to benefit from this drop and most of them are also unmarried with no children and so don't qualify for tax credits.

With the cost of living rising rapidly, this "pay cut" would hardly be an attractive recruitment tool.

Bad news – regardless of how accurate it is – travels fast and far. On May 12 *The Times of India* reported that many British soldiers were living in poverty, and that a briefing team report written for the Chief of the General Staff included an admission that many junior officers were being forced to quit because they simply could not afford to stay on.

The pressure of under-manning has a serious impact on retention; one Regular infantry battalion is currently operating at about 20 per cent under strength, meaning that even more sacrifice is asked of the families as they are left to cope with day-to-day life, even when the unit is not deployed. While welfare provision for families has improved significantly over the last few years, it does not compensate for

time spent together as a family. On a personal note, when I compare my life to that of civilian friends, I find I have more in common with a divorced single parent than I do with a "normal" family unit. Surely that cannot be a good recruitment incentive.

But the Government cannot be held solely to blame for the poor recruitment levels; sections of the public have played a part as well. Manchester University's student union called for a ban on recruitment by the Armed Forces at the university, and the National Union of Teachers tried to prevent Army presentations in our schools.

'I find I have more in common with a divorced single parent than I do with a 'normal' family unit'

They obviously feel the nation doesn't need defence, although I bet they were glad to see the Green Goddesses during the last fire strike – another time when both soldiers and families made sacrifices so that others could exercise their right to protest.

Is it surprising that fewer people want to join an overstretched organisation that gives them little prospect of time with their families?

This would all appear very familiar to Rudyard Kipling: *While it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' Tommy fall be'ind', But it's 'Please to walk in front, sir, when there's trouble in the wind.*

But we should also remember the last line of the poem: *An' Tommy ain't a bloomin' fool – you bet that Tommy sees!* It would appear that Tommy and his family can see even before they join up. ■

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

The column that offers you a confidential way to tackle debt – and it won't cost you a penny

MANAGE YOUR MONEY

Credit Action President Keith Tondeur will be pleased to answer, in confidence, specific questions addressed to the Editor.



Watch the pennies

THE economic climate has turned nasty, the squeeze is on and the rising cost of fuel and food means we can soon overspend. So here are some ways to avoid wasting money

in the shops. Start by planning meals for the next seven days and make a shopping list that includes essential non-food items.

Head for the reduced shelves at the supermarket to see if there are items on your list – and cross off the originals.

Check for offers that could mean you could buy another brand more cheaply than your usual. Cheaper products with the lowest mark-up are usually found on the bottom shelves of supermarkets. The stuff they want you to buy is at eye-level.

Always check the sell-by date. A third of all food bought in the UK is thrown away.

Take advantage of special offers on long-dated items like tinned food to buy in bulk. Sandwiches and ready-prepared meals

cost much more than buying the basic ingredients and making them yourself.

Never go food shopping when you're hungry. Supermarkets spend millions ensuring we buy more than we intended. That's why the fresh-smelling bread is always at the back of the store.

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

Name: (Give initials and rank or title)

Address:

April competition (No 797): First correct entry drawn at random and winner of the £100 prize was **SSgt M McChesney**, 11 Signal Brigade, Donnington. Runners-up **Mrs P Hosking**, Penzance, and **M T Furlong**, AFV D&M School, Wareham, each win a £25 gift voucher.

The ten differences were: (from right) badge on beret of leading instructor; side panel on bergen; airborne "wings" on instructor's T-shirt; number on trainee's helmet; tattoo on forearm; rope missing on log; pocket on No 17's trousers; stone; instructor's beret badge; number panel on helmet of trainee behind the wall.



Winner of our April competition (inset)
OUR prize for April goes to "Right, Pte Atkins, just for the record, run it past me once more. They led you into the Porton Down Ageing Research Laboratory, gave you an injection and then what happened?" sent in by Maj (Retd) C R Miller, AGA(G), Bielefeld.

Other suggestions which made us laugh were "Daddy, can I have my crayons back now, pleeease?" from John Mill in Dundee; and "Right then son, at 0815 you failed to make your bed in the correct manner and were cheeky to the Domestic

iC, also known as your Mum" from SSgt Marie McChesney (winner of the April HOAY prize – see above).



Dai usually tried to play something inspiring for the boys while he and they were in serious training mode for their Combat Fitness Test

WIN A BOOK: Write your own caption for the photo, above, taken from our September 1957 issue and send it to us by close of play on June 30. The best, in our opinion, will win Mark Bryant's *World War 1 in Cartoons* and *World War 2 in Cartoons* (Grub Street, each £15.99).

We also liked the topical "Jenkins couldn't understand the fuss over recruiting in schools" from J Dickinson, 4 Yorks; and "If

you don't write a cheque for £10 I will tell Mum you are wearing her suspenders" from Sgt W G Baker, Grantham.

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www.nivets.org.uk

The Northern Ireland Veterans' Association, providing advice, support and assistance to veterans and families of those affected by the Troubles.

www.blesma.org

National charity for limbless ex-Servicemen and women, their dependants and widows

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.army.mod.uk/soldierwelfare/supportagencies/aws

The Army Welfare Service provides confidential, comprehensive and professional support to Service personnel and their families.

SERVICES

www.recoverypnp.niceboard.com

A site where REME recovery mechanics and friends, serving and retired, meet for chat and banter.

www.baff.org.uk

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

www.baor-locations.com

Website of the British Army of the Rhine and its locations.

www.forcesresources.co.uk

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

www.sftf.mod.uk

The Service Families Task Force website contains useful tri-Service information.

www.army.mod.uk/army_health

The information provided contains practical advice on health-related topics and guidance on how to adopt healthy lifestyles.

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www.supportourtroopsuk.co.uk

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www.armywivesunited.co.uk

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



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Official website of the British Army.

www.armyaviation.co.uk

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

www.armysafety.mod.uk

Website of HQ Land Command's chief environment and safety officer.

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

Army Families Federation: 01980 615525

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

Career Transition Partnership: 0207 766 8020

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

Confidential support lines: UK 0800 731 4880; Germany 0800 1827 395; Cyprus 080 91065; Falklands #6111; from operational theatres Paradigm Services *201; from anywhere in the world (CSL operator will call back) +44 1980 630854. Lines open 1030-2230 (UK) every day.

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

Family Escort Service: 020 74639249

Forces Pension Society: 020 78209988

Joint Service Housing Advice Office: 01722 436575

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

Mutual Support (Forces Multiple Sclerosis support group): 07962 023654, 01803 311527, www.mutualsupport.org.uk email welfaresupport@mutualsupport.org.uk

National Gulf Veterans' and Families' Association Office: (0900-1700); 24-hour helpline 0845 257 4853; www.ngvfa.org.uk; fax 01482 808731

Regular Forces' Employment Association: 0121 2360058; www.rfea.org.uk

Royal British Legion: 0845 7725 725

RBL Industries Vocational Assessment Centre: 01622 795900; www.rbl.co.uk

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

SAMA 82 (South Atlantic Medal Association)

Falklands conflict veterans: 01495 227577

Services Cotswold Centre: 01225 810358

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

Service Personnel and Veterans Agency (SPVA): 0800 169 2277 (from UK); 0044 1253 866043 (from overseas) Medical Assessment Programme: 0800 169 5401

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

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

Reunions

Desert Rats Association: Reunion on June 22 at High Ash memorial site near Mudford on A1065. Service, parade at 1100. Ring Rod Scott on 01359 270490 or email tina.nodshed@talktalk.net

Royal Green Jackets: Reunion on July 12 at St John Moore Barracks, ATR Winchester. Open to all past and present riflemen. Ladies please attend. Details from Maj (Retd) Roy Stanger, WDSU Worthy Down, ring 01962 887916 or email oicspsvcs-wdsu@dcppa-wd.mod.uk

53 (Louisburgh) Battery RA: Reunion on July 25-27 of past/present members of 53 Bty at Marne Barracks, Catterick for the whole family. Details and tickets from 2nd Lt Ffreuer Whitaker on 94731 5746 or 01748 875746.

Baghdad Support Unit: Reunion to be held at the end of July or early August for personnel who have served in the Support Unit from August 03 to the present day. Write to Andrew Bailes, 37 Wessex Road, Yeovil, Somerset BA21 3LP.

12 Regiment RA: Reunion on Aug 30 at Jubilee Barracks, St Helens, starting at 1400. Details on website at www.12regtra.com or phone Maj Dai Ransom on 01744 697830.

Royal West Kent Regt: Reunion at Maidstone, Sept 14. Ring Brian Bartlett on 01322 346053.

Harrogate Apprentices: AGM, reunion on Oct 3-4 at the Army Foundation College, Uniacke Barracks, Harrogate. Open to apprentices who served from 1948-95 and all permanent staff. Email maurice@snook60.freeserve.co.uk

Royal Horse Artillery: AGM and reunion on Oct 4-5 at Victory Services Club and St John Wood Barracks, London. Open to past and present members of any RHA unit. Details from Maj (Retd) R J Whiteway, HQ Dulmen Station, BFPO 44 or email rhaassn@hotmail.co.uk

5th Royal Inniskilling Dragoon Gds: Southern area annual weekend at Falklands House UOTC, Oxford. Nov 14 – regimental curry evening. Nov 15 – local military visits followed by gathering in Oxford. Ring Steven Hunt on 07880 908050 or email jwalker77@hotmail.co.uk

Competitions

Lions for Lambs DVD: Sgt G Baker, New Zealand; WO2 Law, Chatham; Cpl Bighi, BFPO 58; Sgt Barnett, BFPO 40; Spr D Williams, Swansea; Sgt L Parsons, 3 (UK) Div; G Williscroft, 170 Engr Group; LWtr A Lappin, MDHU (Portsmouth); Cpl M Cook, London; M Burgess. **Answer:** Operation Enduring Freedom.

Rescue Dawn DVD: Ms C Sullivan, Bristol; S Smith, DFN IPT; D Woolmer, Whitehaven; Ms S Jackson, 201 Tpt Sqn RLC; J Mill, Dundee; M Lewis, Pontprennau, Cardiff; Miss J Ramsay, Isle of Wight; G Bridges, Burton-on-Trent; G Crandles, Edinburgh; Maj M Quince, BFPO 26. **Answer:** George Clooney.

Searchline

Featherstone, near Pontefract in West Yorkshire, is to unveil a new war memorial on June 15. The organisers would like to hear from any veterans, particularly from the **York and Lancaster Regiment** who recruited in the Sheffield area and trained at Pontefract, who would like to attend. For details, email Brian Clayton at clayton.brian@googlemail.com or ring him on 07903 227367.

Mary Carney is trying to trace her son, **Lee Chapman**, over serious family matters. Last heard from eight years ago when he was serving in the Army and based at Gütersloh. His Army number was 24898632, and he was with 61 Squadron, 6 Supply Regiment RLC and married to Michelle. Please ring Mary on 01305 822421 or 07530 510382 or email mcarney23@yahoo.co.uk

Korean war veteran seeks photos from families of those killed in Korean War. They will be displayed with dignity in a new memorial hall at Busan cemetery, South Korea. Send them to James Grundy, 102 College Croft, Eccles M30 0AN.

Troopship Cameronia torpedoed on Dec 22, 1942. Andre Chissel is researching the torpedoing. If you were on board when she was struck, please email achissel@gmail.com

James (Jimmy) Bazzoni, from Shoreditch and later Greenwich, seeks friend **Richard Greenfield** from Dudley, West Midlands. In 1946 he was serving with 45 General Transport Company RASC in Traviso, Italy. Contact Mrs Janice Hall, 9 Trysull Way, Dudley, DY2 0JG.

Did you serve in **Eckenförde, North Germany in 1945-1948?** If so, could your memories help Herr Rathjen Couscherung to write a history of those times. Write to Herr Couscherung, Johann Hinrich Fehrs Weg 11, 24340 Eckenförde, Germany.

St Omer Apprentices from intakes 95-97 sought for a reunion to be held at the end of the year. Email Phil White at whereschally@hotmail.co.uk

News sought of **LCpl Brian West RMP** by old school friend **Eric Whitehouse**. Brian attended Arnos School in Southgate, North London, before joining the RMP and being posted to Singapore in about 1957. Ring Eric on 01872 510859 or write to him at Trelassick House, near Ladock, Truro, Cornwall TR2 4NR.

WOs' seminar

Joint Services WOs' Course seminar: The Commandant of the Joint Services Command and Staff College will host the inaugural JSWOC Seminar on July 30-31 to update graduates on current and future service issues, followed by a formal mess dinner in the Victory Hall at which the keynote speaker will be Defence Secretary Des Browne. Attendance is open only to graduates of the JSWOC and is limited to 170 on a first-come, first-served basis. Ring JSWOC Admin on 96161 8854 or 01793 788854.



British Army Badges

By Lt Col (Retd) Robin Hodges

Cap badge

WELSHMEN serving with the Black Prince in 1314 were identified by leeks in their hats. The traditional Welsh symbol was chosen for the Welsh Guards when it was raised in 1915, but the regiment was formed so quickly from volunteers already serving that on their first King's Guard it was reported that only the commanding officer had the new badge. Recruits wear an anodised aluminium leek and trained soldiers, polished gilded metal badges.



Formation sign

THE 16 Air Assault Brigade badge, adopted in 1999, combines the Army Air Corps eagle with the quartered colours of Airborne Forces and of the Army Air Corps. It is a copy of the Second World War badge of the Special Training Centre, Lochailort, the original commando training centre from 1940-1942, which had a golden eagle on a black and white shield.



Specialist badge

THE North Irish Horse wears a silver maple leaf on the left sleeve of No 2 dress and an embroidered leaf on combat dress in recognition of actions on May 23, 1944. 'General G C Vokes DSO, Commanding 1st Canadian Infantry Division would be pleased if all ranks 25th Tank Brigade would wear the Maple Leaf emblem in token of the part played by the Brigade assisting 1st Canadian Infantry Division to breach the Adolf Hitler Line.'



Tactical recognition flash

THE Royal Scots Dragoon Guards adopted a TRF before deploying to Iraq in 2004. It is based on the regiment's unique Van Dyke band worn around the forage cap.



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



Rovers return

TROOPS from the 1st Battalion, The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment received a rousing reception when Premiership football side Blackburn Rovers welcomed them home from a tour of Iraq.

Twenty 1 Lancs soldiers paraded on the Ewood Park pitch and were presented with their campaign medals in front of 26,000 spectators at the club's final home game of the season against Derby County.

As well as getting to watch the match for free, the soldiers were also invited into the directors' lounge where they met players including top scorer Roque Santa Cruz.

Capt Andy Lockwood described the

day as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, adding: "It was an amazing experience to stand on the pitch and have more than 20,000 people clapping you.

"We had four guys who were big Blackburn Rovers fans – two of them are season ticket holders.

"They have only sat on one side of the barrier, so for them to walk down the tunnel and onto the pitch was a real dream come true."

The Lancs deployed on Op Telic 11 in November 2007, with Burma Company returning in January and the remainder of the battalion serving until last month. ■

open air concert, featuring bands to cater for every taste, bars, food and fireworks, is hoping to raise more than £100,000 for the Army Benevolent Fund. Visit www.army.mod.uk/music/rhythm_ii.htm for more information and ticketing details.

September 13: TA 100 Act of Remembrance, Armed Forces Memorial, Lichfield.

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

Defence diary

Until further notice: Helmand: The Soldiers' Story – A free exhibition built, written and contributed to by soldiers of 16 Air Assault Brigade to tell the story of their experiences fighting in Afghanistan. National Army Museum, London. Tel: 0207 7300717.

June 7-8: The Chelsea Pageant – This show chronicling the early years of the Royal Hospital Chelsea, from its founding by King Charles II through to the entry of the first pensioners in 1688, is being held to raise funds for the Chelsea Pensioners' Appeal. Tickets can be purchased from Ticketmaster on 0844 847 2309 or online at www.ticketmaster.co.uk

June 21: Territorial Army 100th anniversary National Pageant, Horse Guards, London.

July 16: TA 100 Voluntary Uniform-to-Work day.

September 10: A commemorative service to mark the end of operations in Northern Ireland will take place at St Paul's Cathedral, London. The service will pay tribute to the 763 personnel killed in Northern Ireland, and the 300,000 who have served in the province since 1969. Ticketing details to be confirmed.

September 12: Rhythm Force, Kneller Hall, Twickenham – This year's Corps of Army Music

Roadshow dates

THE Army Presentation Team wants to hear from members of the public who would like a personal invitation to attend its dynamic roadshow, which begins with a reception, is followed by a presentation and questions-and-answers session and finishes with a finger buffet.

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June: 17, Anwick; 18, Hexham; 19, Hartlepool; 30, Tower Hamlets. **July:** 1, Southall; 2, Deptford; 15, Colchester; 16, Cambridge; 17, Loughborough. **August:** No presentations.

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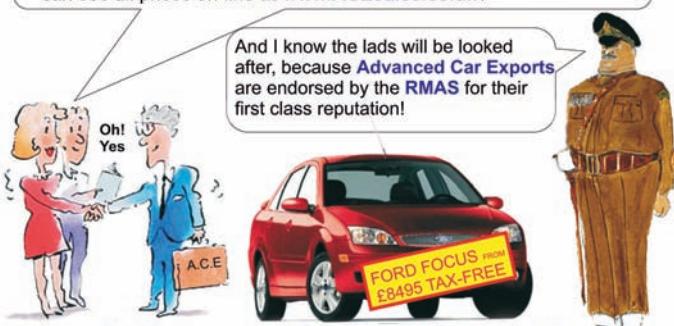
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Tracy, new to Shropshire, self-employed photographer/Apple Mac artworker, would like to use her spare time to write to people serving her country. Enjoys photography, action adventure movies, martial arts, music, motor racing and the countryside. She suffers from fibromyalgia. Does not watch TV or read newspapers, don't expect her to know the footie scores. Seeks pen pals, any age group. P049

Elizabeth (36), long dark blonde hair, feminine, curvier figure and blue eyes. Divorced and a lone parent who enjoys the simple things in life, days out, the cinema and walks. Looking for pen pals, 36-50, who enjoys family life, any location. P050

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Heather (38), petite with long brown hair and blue eyes. Enjoys beachfront restaurants, country pubs, coastal walks, the cinema and the theatre. Would like to correspond with single Serviceman, soldiers or ex-soldiers over 33 years of age. P055

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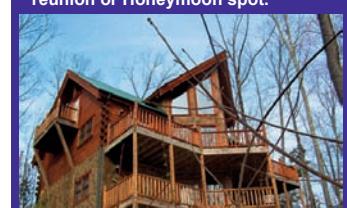
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ALEX Gunn has developed a keen appreciation of war – in his professional life he has become more than familiar with the destruction caused by modern weaponry.

Over 25 years he has put his mastery of pyrotechnics to potent effect, coordinating the use of explosives, supervising the use of flamethrowers and laying waste to buildings.

But Alex has never been a soldier. As a movie special effects supervisor on Hollywood blockbusters – most recently Sylvester Stallone's new *Rambo* picture – his job is to replicate realistically the carnage of conflict.

Tasked with summoning explosions, creating the illusion of bullets striking their targets and setting buildings on fire, he is, in effect, the conductor of a potentially lethal orchestra.

“When you are letting stuff off during

a battle scene you are constantly aware that you only need to have one person in the wrong place for someone to get killed,” Alex admitted.

“You are left with a very tangible sense of how awful being underneath something like an artillery barrage is in real life, and I certainly take my hat off to the British soldiers for what they are doing today. We filmed *Rambo 4* in Thailand and the special effects team were all ex-military men. They were aware of weaponry and the destructive force it has on people.”

Alex's arsenal was certainly felt by the film's cast. This year's revival of Stallone's iconic 1980s action hero boasts an on-screen death toll of 236, a staggering three “kills” per minute.

The movie, released on DVD and Blu-ray this month, pits the 60-year-old Vietnam and Afghanistan veteran against Burma's brutal regime.

The story follows John Rambo's

return to the line of fire as he leads a mercenary team to the rescue of a group of captured aid workers, and takes down scores of bad guys en route.

Getting involved with an intense action film was a dream job for Alex, who became fascinated with special effects by experimenting with his chemistry set while growing up in south London. It was also an opportunity to indulge his hobby of military history, which he often draws upon for movie shoot-outs.

“I find that kind of knowledge really useful, especially when you are working with the stunt coordinators,” he said. “If you can find something that has taken place in the past then you can blend the film's action around it.”

“The battle scenes in *Rambo* are based around the Alamo and Custer's last stand. We wanted the action in the film to be brutally realistic, so we made them as explosive as possible to show



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the scale of what was going on."

As well as making use of his historical knowledge in the film, Alex admitted that having an action hero in the director's chair had helped with his special effects wizardry – particularly as Stallone was keen on delivering no-holds-barred war-fighting.

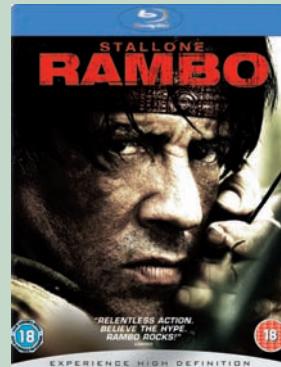
"Sly is pretty full-on and gung-ho when he's on set but away from there he's a real charmer," he added. "He's one of the best directors I have ever had the pleasure of working with because he enabled me to do what I enjoy doing the most.

"He is also very shrewd in the films that he has made, as they show he does have a deep interest in world affairs. It is important to entertain with a film like *Rambo* but at the same time it does put across an important moral message."

For the special effects expert, however, completing the movie and seeing the spectacular end result was among the most satisfying aspects of the job.

"Each time you do a project like this it is like having a new career," Alex concluded. "My personal hero is Lord Nelson because he went out and led from the front.

"I'm the same when we're filming – I like to get out there and get my hands dirty." ■



Rambo, out to own on DVD/Blu-ray from June 23

HE'S back! **Sylvester Stallone** (*Rocky*, *Cliffhanger*) reprises his role as a Vietnam veteran in the explosive fourth instalment of *Rambo*, which is released to buy on DVD, Blu-ray, UMD Video and to rent on DVD from June 23, courtesy of Sony Pictures Home Entertainment. Written and directed by Stallone, *Rambo* features some of the bloodiest battle scenes ever put on screen and includes adrenaline-fuelled action throughout. Packed full of extras, the DVD includes commentaries by Stallone and many featurettes including *It's a Long Road: The Resurrection of an Icon*, *Preparing a Warrior: Finishing Rambo* and *Legacy of Despair: The Real Struggle of Myanmar*. The Blu-ray release also boasts an array of exclusive extras, including picture-in-picture commentary and lots of good stuff on the casting, shooting and visual FX.

● To celebrate John Rambo's latest tour of duty, we've got a copy of *Rambo* on DVD and Blu-ray – and a Sony Blu-ray player (pictured below) to watch it on – to give away. To have a chance of winning tell us the title of the first *Rambo* movie. Five runners-up will receive a copy of *Rambo* on DVD.

Answers by postcard to the address at the front of the magazine or by email (comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk) to reach us by June 30. Winners will be drawn at random from the correct answers received. Usual rules apply.



Cassandra's Dream, in cinemas June 6

THOSE who persevere beyond the shock of hearing **Ewan McGregor** and **Colin Farrell** fail dismally to imitate cockney accents will be rewarded with a film rich in comedy and pathos. A modern-day Greek drama set in London, **Woody Allen's** tale of two brothers striving to better their lives takes a sinister turn when the siblings are asked to silence an estranged business associate of their uncle. The laughs come in the form of some *Snatch*-style bungling criminality but are tempered by the hit men's subsequent spiral into despair.



Intimate Enemies, on DVD from June 9

ACTION-packed from start to finish, this unflinching account of the experiences of a platoon of French soldiers fighting the "fellahs" of Algeria's National Liberation Front in a remote mountainous region during the 1954-62 Algerian War of Independence is well worth a watch. In French with English subtitles and directed by **Florent Emilio Siri** (*Hostage* and *The Nest*), *Intimate Enemies* paints a vivid and brutal picture of the realities of conflict and will hit a note with all those who have taken on the Taliban in southern Afghanistan.

Sgt Peter Comiskey, 3 Scots



In the Valley of Elah, on DVD/Blu-ray from June 2

RUNNING at two hours, this is a touch long for an investigative drama, but the cast excel. **Tommy Lee Jones** is outstanding – and is well supported by **Charlize Theron** – in this tale of a veteran whose son goes missing shortly after returning from Iraq. The ever obstructive military machine, small town cops and other contributing factors – drugs, war and policy – make for an interesting watch. Based on real-life events, the screenplay is terrific and the direction never impedes your desire to watch. Recommended.

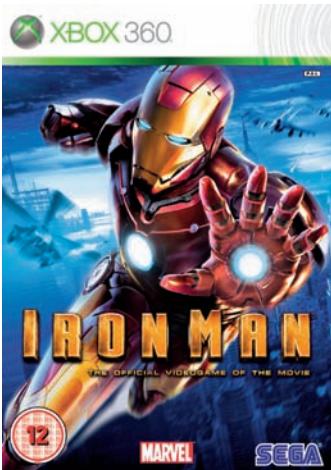
WO2 Andy Draper, AGC



Angels One Five, on DVD from June 2

SET during 1940, *Angels One Five* depicts life in a RAF fighter unit. Focusing on a newly-qualified pilot, it explores the trials faced daily by RAF squadrons during the Battle of Britain. The film, made in 1952, was produced by veterans and this, combined with scenes shot on location and of actual RAF pilots and aircraft, gives it an authentic edge. The acting is first-class and there are some great moments of comedy. If you enjoy classic war movies then this is definitely for you. If not, give this very watchable film a try anyway.

LCpl Chris MacCallum, 242 MI Section, Int Corps



Iron fist: Stan Lee's metal man makes his video game debut with aplomb in the latest Sega film tie-in



Arms and armour

Marvel hero makes theatre debut clad in the ultimate protective flak jacket

Review: Cliff Caswell

HOT on the heels of the first superhero cinema blockbuster of the summer, *Iron Man* has muscled his way into the console world in one of the best movie tie-ins we've seen in recent times.

Faithfully recreating the look of the movie – and the comic strip story which inspired it – and including the voices of lead actors Robert Downey Jr, Terence Howard and Shaun Toub, Sega has produced a credible action title in which players get to don the mother of all body armour.

The video game gurus even had a hand in enhancing the film, bringing their creative thinking to the forefront of movie-making and giving the production team some nifty ideas about how the metal monster might behave in the amazing action sequences.

One of the lesser-known Marvel superheroes, *Iron Man* is the alter ego of Tony Stark, a wealthy

arms dealer who comes to realise the error of his ways when he is captured while on a routine theatre visit to Vietnam in the 1960s.

After escaping from the clutches of the enemy, he decides to turn his back on his past and constructs a series of increasingly complex suits which he uses to further the cause of good rather than return to his old ways of flogging deadly merchandise to the highest bidder.

The movie incarnation of *Iron Man* put the story in a 2008 setting, placing the hero in the thick of the war-torn Middle East, where he is captured during a routine weapons test and his transformation into the hero begins.

"Tony Stark is pretty unique in the sense that he wasn't bitten by a radioactive spider like Peter Parker [Spiderman] – he builds the armour and transforms himself into a superhero," Louise O'Toole, Marvel's worldwide marketing boss, told *Soldier*.

"Stan Lee, who created the

character, said he wanted to make him human and that makes *Iron Man* interesting. Stark was simply doing his job, but he has his perceptions of life changed when he sees how destructive his work is."

While *Soldier* particularly enjoyed the *Iron Man* movie, video game film tie-ins traditionally have a bad habit of turning out to be turkeys. However, Sega's latest is a decent offering that offers an enjoyable enough experience for those with even a passing interest in the Marvel universe, let alone more hardened fans.

The third-person action is well paced, with players starting out from the low base of a relatively unsophisticated suit equipped with a flamethrower before gaining access to more weapons. They can also customise their armour according to the threat level.

In his later attire, Stark can fly and players can carry out some impressive aerial moves, which include latching yourself onto enemy vehicles and



giving them a kicking. You can also take out helicopters by grabbing and snapping them in half, which is particularly satisfying.

All the while the action takes place around some impressive landscapes, ranging from the dusty Middle East to urban settings with high-rise buildings.

"Sega has been a great partner on the game and we have worked very closely together," said O'Toole. "We even had their team out on the set of the film with us, and some of their ideas for the game were even included in the movie.

"It was very much a two-way process – they learned from us just as we learned from them. Everyone involved was very enthusiastic about the project from the outset," she added.

The passion of the team certainly shines through. Fans of the comic books and movie will not be disappointed by the video game version of *Iron Man*, while those who enjoy a straightforward blaster could even find themselves sucked in.

While the action can become repetitive, and the endless flying and shooting takes its toll after a while, Sega's latest offering looks as good as it plays.

Along with a jumbo size pizza and a few beers, *Iron Man* could be just the thing for a decent night in. ■



Grand Theft Auto IV, Xbox 360

PUTTING aside arguments about its controversial content, there is no denying that *Grand Theft Auto IV* is a gaming masterpiece. In the persona of newly-arrived immigrant to America Niko Bellic, players kill, rob and joyride their way up the criminal pecking order. The gritty urban setting of Liberty City – New York in all but name – is smaller than San Andreas, but the map is densely populated with scope to go into as well as around buildings. Stunning graphics bring the city to life and a tweaked driving system gives car chases a new edge.



Dark Sector, PS3

A MUCH-anticipated release, *Dark Sector* is set in a post-apocalyptic Soviet Bloc country, in which you control special agent Hayden Tenno, who quickly finds himself on the wrong side of biological warfare. Graphically, *Dark Sector* is very good – the scenes are detailed and atmospheric and they are complemented by superb sound. However, despite the huge available playing area, this is a disappointingly linear game. Most levels let you take only one particular path and the overall experience of the game leaves the feeling that something critical is missing.



Euro 2008, Xbox 360

ENGLAND's interest in this summer's tournament may have ended in ignominy, but virtual glory is still within the country's grasp thanks to this release. The main tournament, complete with team line-ups, is present and correct, and the game also allows players to alter history by taking charge of a nation and guiding them through a full qualification campaign. The ability to create yourself and work your way up from a B international to international captain adds longevity, and the *FIFA 2008* engine provides a fluid game of football that excels in multiplayer mode.



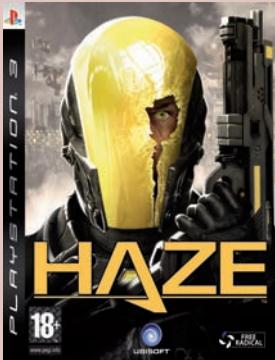
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed, Wii

A MORE civilised age and the chance to finally wield a Jedi Knight's weapon are upon us. Unofficially known as the lightsabre game from LucasArts, players can duel each other in a storyline set between film episodes three and four that has Darth Vader ruthlessly pursuing the Jedi. Players take the role of his secret apprentice and gaming novices will soon be seduced by the power of the Wii-mote to project lightning and throw power surges. Only the Jedi mind trick is missing from the ultimate experience for *Star Wars*' fanatics.



Mario Kart Wii, Wii

IN an age of fancy graphics and over-complicated controls, *Mario Kart Wii* has gone back to basics in bringing the fun back to gaming. Flinging your character around the cleverly-designed corners using the bundled steering wheel may make you look a little odd, but the controller is intuitive and perfectly responsive. The use of weapons also adds a tactical edge to each race. Mario and co can lock horns on either karts or bikes and a brilliant online mode complete with world rankings will keep players coming back for more.



Haze, PS3

UBISOFT was due to release its latest first-person shooter as this issue went to press. *Haze*, which was exclusively previewed by *Soldier* last year, is initially being launched only for the PS3 and, from the demos we have seen, it looks very promising. Produced by UK studio Free Radical, the company behind the acclaimed *Timesplitters* and *Second Sight* titles, *Haze* is set in a nightmare future in which peacekeeping ops have been outsourced to a private contractor. Players step into the boots of a soldier charged with taking the corporate shilling and doing the firm's bidding. One to watch.



Reunited: Three of the Iraq 'n' Roll gang (main picture from left) LCpl Baz Wall, RAVC, Sgt Steve Edgeler, RAVC and WO1 Rich Little, RE



Back on tour

Band of Telic veterans reunites for one-off Help For Heroes gig

Interview: Karen Thomas

BACK by popular Op Telic demand, the Iraq 'n' Roll reprobates are strumming into action one more time in aid of injured soldiers.

Troops who served on Telics 4 and 5 are unlikely to have forgotten the motley crew and their morale-boosting musical extravaganzas. The baying masses at Shaibah Logistics Base, the mighty Danes and even the brigade commander in Basra acquired a taste for the thumping tunes belted out by the impromptu rock group.

Now they're back. Following last year's reunion trendsetters Take That, Spice Girls and Led Zeppelin, Iraq 'n' Roll predict a riot when they perform at Aldershot's Princes Hall on July 5. They hope the fan base they recruited in Iraq will help them raise wad-loads of cash for Help For Heroes.

Ringleader LCpl Baz Wall, RAVC

– drums, guitar, vocals and sometime dog handler – has banged on celebrity doors for support. Robert Llewellyn, servile mechanoid Kryton in the hit BBC TV series *Red Dwarf*, will compere an evening of music, laughter and a raffle of prizes donated by the likes of comedian Al Murray and ex-Army officer-turned-superstar James Blunt.

“We're doing this to support and raise awareness of the guys who have suffered grave injuries. Every penny we raise on that night goes to Help For Heroes because a silent sponsor has offset all the fees,” LCpl Wall told *Soldier*, as he traded insults with fellow RAVC soldier and reluctant lead vocalist Sgt Steve Edgeler, and “all round good egg” and bass player WO1 Rich Little, RE.

The band went through more members than the Sugababes, with 18 people rotating through their tour of duty. Even BFBS technicians were dragooned on board for their musical

talent as well as their ability to fix broken speakers with nail varnish and tape.

“It felt like signing up for the band was part of the arrivals brief at Basra air station because people were turning up and not asking for LCpl Wall of the Dogs Section but for Baz of the Band.

“Once it was established that we weren't just monkeying about, the support was incredible. The brigade commander even stopped me in the Naafi and the next thing we knew we were doing a gig in Basra.”

Despite a deteriorating security situation and having to switch their instruments for rifles when in convoy between bases, stardom beckoned for the lads. On a chilly 2004 New Year's Eve they played to a packed Danish Forces crowd on a stage of cobbled-together flatbed lorries.

“A couple of Danes shouted 'rock it'. We thought 'wow, they're really up for it' but they all disappeared because



there was a *rocket attack*," laughed Wall. Then Little reminded him that their most memorable gig was for a Scottish audience.

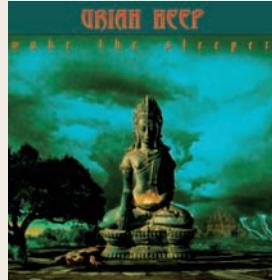
"We played for The Black Watch, 3 Scots, when they got back from Fallujah. They had lost some guys as well as their name, so we played just for them and their support team. It was a very touching and amazing atmosphere," said the bass player.

"We threw in *I'm Gonna Be (500 miles)* by The Proclaimers as our finale but after the 17th encore they had to get the pipes in to stop the lads coming over the stage."

Almost four years later and Iraq 'n' Roll are shaking off the mothballs. *Jailhouse Rock, Is this the way to Amarillo?* and the band's own special mix of Thin Lizzy's and Metallica's versions of *Whiskey in the Jar* will once again resonate for their number one cause, Help For Heroes. ■

Book tickets or contact the band at www.myspace.com/iraqnroll

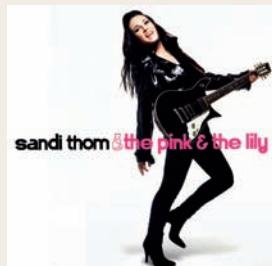
The **Iraq 'n' Roll** line up for July 5 at The Princes Hall, Aldershot is: LCpl Baz Wall RAVC, Sgt Steve Edgeler RAVC, WO1 Rich Little RE, Maj (Retd) Justin Oldridge RE, Cpl Paul Dineley RE, Sgt Pete James RAMC, Damien Watson (BFBS), Jim Hardy (BFBS) and Dave Ramsey (BFBS).



Wake The Sleeper (Uriah Heep)

THE band that became famous as part of the 1970s progressive rock movement are on form with an updated sound, which still manages to connect with their roots. Polished and well-crafted heavy rock songs with quality instrumentation and harmonious lyrics, the tracks vary in tempo and give the album a sense of balance. **Uriah Heep's** first studio album in ten years is one that most fans of mainstream heavy rock can enjoy and the title track is outstanding. An above average offering in the genre, which will grab a new generation of fans.

Pat Jordan, ex-RAMC



The Pink and the Lily (Sandi Thom)

SANDI THOM'S first number one in 2006, *I Wish I Was A Punk Rocker*, is something of a signature tune for the Scottish-born singer-songwriter. Famous (controversially) for the free release of webcast gigs broadcast from her basement in Tooting, south London, Thom has since travelled a long way with her second album. Her coming of age on the UK music scene is announced on this more mature effort, on which she tackles subjects such as global warming and corporate lifestyles in her unique acoustic sound. A good catchy album.

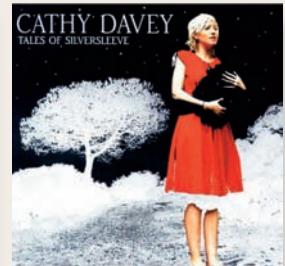
WO1 David Greaves, REME



Between Here and There (Look See Proof)

SINCE forming in 2006, trio **Look See Proof** have impressed Radio 1 DJ and supporter of new bands, **Steve Lamacq**, who offered them a coveted session on his "in new music we trust" slot. Their exuberant tunes have seen them supporting **The Fratellis** and have rightly been hailed by *NME* magazine. Take your pick of any of the 12 tracks and you will soon be tapping your feet in time to the short, sharp, punchy guitar riffs and forceful lyrics. Anyone with a taste for Mod-influenced tunes will doubtless enjoy this album.

SSgt Mo Morris, 3 LSR Regt, RLC



Tales of Silversleeve (Cathy Davey)

BUILDING on her 2004 debut album, *Something Iik*, Irish starlet **Cathy Davey** has surpassed all expectations with this quirky release. Davey's voice is sweet and breathy but can also pack a lot of punch and is prone to shooting up, down and across scales without warning. By definition, *Tales of Silversleeve* is a pop album but for those pop sceptics out there, it is underpinned by elements of folk and jazz, which gives the whole album a wonderful depth of character. To be honest, I didn't expect this to be my cup of tea but I was more than pleasantly surprised.

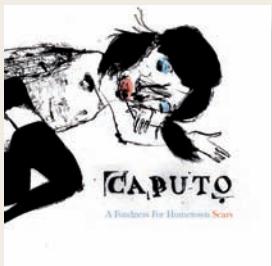
Cpl Tom Robinson, 151 Tpt Regt, RLC



Drive-by Argument (Drive-by Argument)

THIS has got to be one of the best debut albums of the year so far. Five-piece **Drive-by Argument** from Ayr have emerged from the rapidly growing hot bed of new music from Scotland, following in the footsteps of **The Fratellis** and **The View**. Formed as part of a music project for a university course in 2004, the band's style is best described as "indie for disco" and they toy with electro synth in a really infectious way. There is a definite **Bloc Party** influence to their music and my only gripe about this self-titled album is that ten tracks are simply not enough.

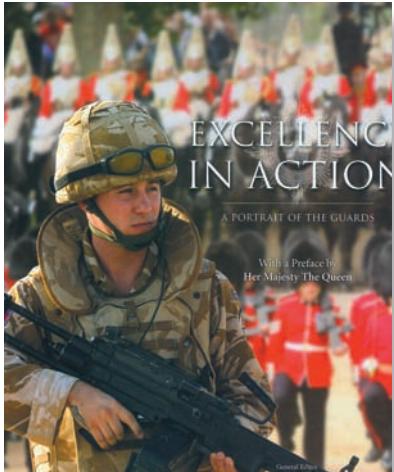
Cpl Ray Kalaker, RETDU (B)



A Fondness for Hometown Scars (Keith Caputo)

NOT an artist I had previously enjoyed, **Keith Caputo** is one I will appreciate from now on. His bittersweet melodies are in a similar vein to some of **Radiohead's** work. Although superb, this album of great songs is definitely not for listening to if you're feeling a bit vulnerable emotionally. Many of the 12 tracks seem to have a personal undertow and one wonders if Caputo has been having a hard time lately. The lyrics from the former lead singer of New York metal band **Life of Agony** – now disbanded – are challenging yet appealing. I enjoyed the fourth solo studio album from the talented American.

Lt Jim Berry, 1 R Irish



Action men: The two regiments of Household Cavalry and five regiments of Foot Guards have a special place in Britain's ceremonial heritage, but as this D Squadron, Household Cavalry Regiment information sign at ANP Hill, Afghanistan suggests, they also play vital roles at the sharpest end of all the British Army's military operations



Action replay

Guards' combatant roles brought sharply into focus in a proud tribute

Excellence in Action: A Portrait of The Guards, with a Preface by Her Majesty the Queen. General editor Rupert Uloth, photographer-in-chief Julian Andrews (Third Millennium Publishing, £45).

Review: Chris Horrocks

TRIVIA question: What have a current pop sensation, a World Cup winning footballer, an FA Cup-winning manager and a former Archbishop of Canterbury in common?

Answer: They all served in the Guards – James Blunt (Life Guards); Jack Charlton (Blues and Royals); Lawrie McMenemy (Coldstream Guards – he won the FA Cup with Southampton in 1976); and the late Robert Runcie (Scots Guards).

Soldier ordering service

BOOKS mentioned on these pages are available from Helion & Company, who can also supply 14,500 in-print military books and operate a free book search; p&p is extra. Major credit/switch cards taken. Allow 28 days for delivery. Helion & Company, 26 Willow Road, Solihull, West Midlands B91 1UE, England (tel 0121 705 3393; fax 0121 711 4075). Email books@helion.co.uk Website www.helion.co.uk

Now we have your attention, as the saying goes, let's move on to more serious matters. It says something significant about the Guards, identified as closely as they are with the tradition, history and pageantry of the nation and synonymous with precision, pride and professionalism, that the publication of this book was postponed for four months. The reason is simply that so much was happening on ops in Iraq and Afghanistan that the content was being constantly updated with first-hand accounts of action under fire.

Our readers do not need reminding – although the wider public may – that the Guards are not just about state ceremonial. The preface by the Queen, Colonel-in-Chief of the seven regiments comprising the Household Division, makes this point, which was also brought sharply into focus by recent media coverage of her

own grandson serving in Afghanistan.

The two regiments of the Household Cavalry and the five of Foot Guards have a fully combatant role as armoured reconnaissance troops and infantry soldiers. In the past year each regiment has been deployed on active service.

The regiments have taken part in all the major campaigns from 1642 – via Waterloo, the Crimea and two world wars, up to and including Iraq and Afghanistan plus Bosnia and Kosovo.

Maj Gen Bill Cubitt, Major General Commanding the Household Division, recalls also that as part of their long and distinguished history, Guards regiments started the SAS, helped pioneer The Parachute Regiment and the Long Range Desert Group, fought in Aden, Borneo and the Falklands, served in Northern Ireland over a period of 38 years, helped bring peace to Bosnia and maintain it in Macedonia, and led the way into Kosovo in 1999.

But this book is no mere recital of historical facts and figures. Particularly



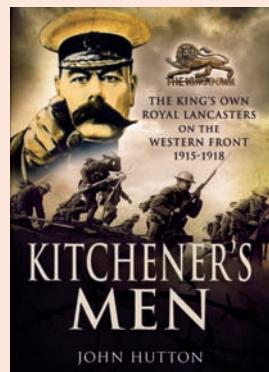
engrossing are the individual tales of selfless heroism and service – of men such as Capt Robert Nairac, who won the only George Cross ever to go to a Grenadier, and Sgt John McAulay, Scots Guards, who won both the VC and DCM in the First World War.

Excellence In Action has been edited, designed and illustrated with all the panache and professionalism of the regiments themselves. It is no surprise that the general editor, Rupert Uloth, was a Life Guard, or that the “photographer in chief”, Julian Andrews, is one of our leading action and sports cameramen.

While the price may put off some, this handsome volume will earn pride of place on the bookshelves of many with an interest in the Army. Among them will be every serving soldier in the Guards, who will receive a copy as a gift from the Household Division.

It is dedicated to those who have died in the service of their country, to those who have been bereaved by such losses, and to those who have been wounded physically or mentally. Poignantly, as this review was being written came news of the death of a Household Cavalry member and injuries to three others in Afghanistan. ■

For more reviews, go to
www.soldiermagazine.co.uk

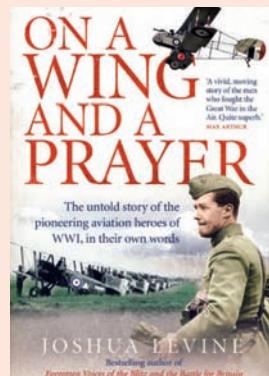


Kitchener's Men

by John Hutton

THERE are many books in circulation recounting the experiences of Kitchener's Army on the Western Front, but I must single this one out for particular praise, writes **Maj Mike Peters AAC**. It tells the story of the New Army battalions raised in and around Furness in the industrial North-West. The text is well written and presented, meticulously researched, and supported by a good mixture of photographs and maps that do the men of The King's Own justice.

Pen & Sword, 246pp, £19.99

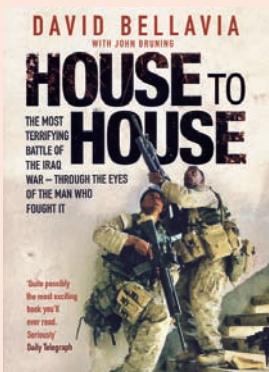


On A Wing and A Prayer

by Joshua Levine

THIS author is already known for his work on the successful *Forgotten Voices* series, writes **Maj Peters**. He has applied the same formula to this absorbing account of the experiences of the men of the Royal Flying Corps during The Great War. The result is a fascinating book that goes a long way toward shattering the satirical image of Lord Flashart and his “Twenty Minuters”. Worth reading, but I would say that wouldn't I?

Collins, 371pp, £18.99

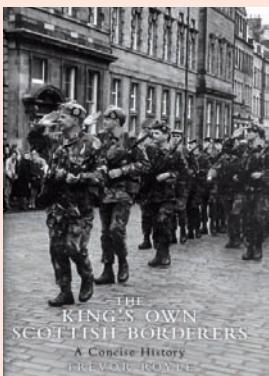


House to House

by David Bellavia

SSGT David Bellavia led a US Army platoon into Fallujah at the start of an assault that involved the Americans in weeks of savage combat. This is a participant's account of the street-by-street fighting to flush out insurgents holed up in bunkers and booby-trapped houses. Questions are still asked today about the necessity for the pitched battle of Fallujah in November 2004, but there is no question about the courage of the soldiers who took it, yard-by-yard.

Pocket Books, 320pp, £7.99

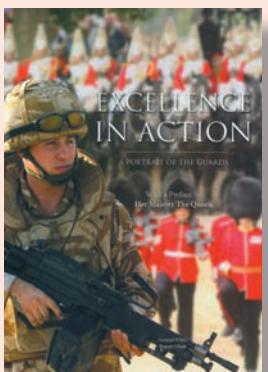


The King's Own Scottish Borderers

by Trevor Royle

ANOTHER – the sixth, in fact – of Trevor Royle's “concise histories” of the Scottish regiments. It does what it says on the tin: delivers the story of the KOSB from formation three centuries ago to defend the city of Edinburgh, through reformation to reincarnation as the 1st Battalion of the new Royal Regiment of Scotland. Packed with facts and a very useful bibliography for those who want to study the Borderers in a little more detail.

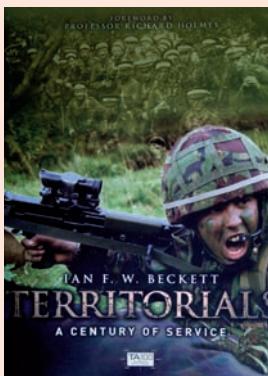
Mainstream, 240pp, £12.99



WIN – Excellence in Action

by Rupert Uloth and Julian Andrews

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WIN – Territorials: A Century of Service

by Ian F W Beckett

REVIEWED last month and published to mark the Territorial Army's 100th anniversary, Ian Beckett's wide-ranging history of the British Army's reserve force is available to *Soldier* readers at the discounted price of £25 from DRA Publishing (01752 671297). Alternatively, if the price still sounds too steep, we have one copy up for grabs. To enter our draw to win, tell us in which year the modern Territorial Army was founded. Answers to the address above.



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SOLDIERSPORT



SEVEN-UP

Twickenham triumph extends record run

Rising above: Royal Engineer Cpl Darrell Ball's sterling work in the lineout played an important part in the Army's 22-11 Babcock Trophy victory over the Royal Navy

Picture: Steve Dock





Red rumble: Sgt Gareth Slade-Jones (APTC) bides his time as the ferocious Army pack drive the Royal Navy backwards during the convincing win at Twickenham

Seventh heaven

Divine display secures Twickenham record for all-conquering rugby team

Report: Stephen Tyler
Picture: Steve Dock

A WELL-ROUNDED attacking display propelled the Army Rugby Union squad to a record-breaking seventh successive Inter-Services win against a spirited Royal Navy side.

A Twickenham crowd of 50,500 – another Inter-Services best – watched the Army grow into the match after a slow start to retain the Babcock Trophy with a deserved 22-11 win.

For all the talk of records, coach WO2 Andy Price (WG) and his side remained focused on winning the match and the Welshman was delighted with the result.

“It went pretty much as we had planned,” he said. “We knew we would face an early onslaught when their adrenaline was flowing, but we defended well and then took control of the game.

“We have got strength all over the field and we were able to out-muscle and overpower them.”

While 2007’s high-scoring victory was achieved through the pace and trickery of an explosive back line, the foundations for win number seven lay in the ferocious power of the Reds’ pack.

Although the Navy contributed to their own downfall with some poor decision-making, the on-song front row of LCpl Chris Budgen (R Welsh), LCpl Jason Kemble (R Welsh) and LCpl Melvyn Lewis (WG) would have been more than a match for most teams.

The Army’s opponents have drawn praise in recent years for reinventing themselves as an attacking outfit and the plaudits looked well deserved early on as the Navy dominated the game’s opening quarter.

Fleet-footed AB Josh Drauniniu was first to test the Reds’ resolve and the Exeter Chief’s chip-and-chase brought him within metres of opening the scoring, but some sturdy defending saw him bundled safely into touch.

As good as their rearguard action was, the reigning champions failed to

assert their authority going forward and the match remained scoreless after the team’s first real chance – a Gdsm Rob Sweeney (WG) penalty – sailed wide of the posts on seven minutes.

An intense spell of Navy pressure was finally relieved when prop Budgen and number eight Pte Joe Kava (RLC) battered their way into the Blue half before a handling error gifted the ball back to their opponents.

Navy debutant fullback AB Wayne Dugan and Drauniniu attempted to make the most of the possession, and their side took the lead with an LAET Dave Pascoe three-pointer after Budgen was penalised for collapsing a scrum.

The score served only to poke the Red nest and the Army finally came to life as Fijians LCpl Maku Koroiyadi (RLC), Pte Malakai Magnus (RLC) and Pte Apolosi Satala (1 Scots) pressurised the Navy line without making the decisive breakthrough.

One of the great strengths of the current Army squad is its abundance of



both pace and power, however, and it was the team's ability to switch tactics at will that finally unlocked the Blues' creaking defence.

From a five-metre scrum, New Zealander Budgen, who was playing his final game for the Reds before leaving the Army, pressed forward to within touching distance of the line. Kava tried and failed to complete the score before Budgen reclaimed the ball and went over for the afternoon's first try.

Not to be outdone by the forwards, the Army's backs put on an attacking show of their own straight from the restart. Scottish sevens cap and Reds' skipper Capt Mark Lee (AGC) lofted the ball wide to Satala and the Leeds Carnegie man glided effortlessly through the Navy defence before offloading to second row Cpl Darrell Ball (RE) who scored his side's second try in as many minutes.

To their credit, the Navy refused to lie down and more good work from Drauniniu and Cpl Greg Barden earned the Blues a penalty which Pascoe converted on the stroke of half time.

With their rivals still within touching distance, the Navy made a bright start to the second period and pinned the Army in their own territory. The Reds showed good patience and a superb

kick from SSgt Mal Roberts (RLC) sent them into the Navy 22 following a transgression from the Blues.

Kemble's lineout was, as ever, accurate, and an unstoppable drive ended with Lewis crashing over for the Army's third try. A Roberts conversion stretched the lead to 17-6.

The Navy prodded and probed at the Red wall standing between them and a seventh successive defeat, but consistently excellent work from Capt Rob Sugden (Coldm Gds) in the lineout forced the Blues to throw long and subsequently give the ball away cheaply.

Ball retention was not an issue for the Army and lively scrum half Sgt Gareth Slade-Jones (APTC) enjoyed a productive afternoon controlling the game's tempo and spreading the ball to the willing runners out wide.

A good period of pressure in the closing minutes again saw the Army's forwards bullock their way to within inches of the line where Budgen tried and narrowly failed to barge through seemingly the entire Navy defence.

Slade-Jones took over handling duties and showed great awareness to spread play to the right where a huge overlap gave Satala time and space to dive over for a deserved try on 77 minutes.

With the game over as a contest, the Navy could have been forgiven for giving up the ghost. Instead, the Blues continued pushing for a last-ditch score.

Cpl Ben Hughes (RE) – celebrating a record 26th cap – put in some big hits, but Pascoe's quick hands set Dugan free on the right for a consolation try with the game's final attack.

Pascoe's missed conversion was the final act as the Army continued to raise the Inter-Services rugby bar.

"I thought Satala was phenomenal," said Price. "Budgen was outstanding as well and Georgie Kemble signed off well after 17 caps."

Price also recorded his pride at the Army women's thumping 75-0 win over the Navy at Kneller Hall.

Going into the match after beating the RAF 56-0, the women dominated from the start and scored their first try within five minutes through LCpl Jo Joubert (RLC).

Four further tries in a completely one-sided first half gave the women a 31-0 lead, but the Reds were in no mood to let up in the final 40 minutes.

Lt Rebecca Homer (RLC) and Capt Charlotte Maxwell (AGC) scored soon after the restart and the Army ran in five more tries, including a further two from Joubert, to complete the rout.

"I am very proud of them," said Price. "It was an inspiration to see them doing so well and hopefully we can emulate the result in the future." ■

Off the fence

Swordsmen issue call to arms for greater participation in their growing sport

Report: Stephen Tyler
Picture: Mike Weston

TEAM GB's Aldershot training camp will not be the only military involvement in the 2012 London Olympics if the Army's élite fencers have their way.

Britain's top athletes will be based at the town's garrison to put the finishing touches to their preparation in the run-up to the Games.

And hoping to be part of the nation's top sporting contingent are several members of the Army Fencing Union who are already setting their sights on gunning for gold in London.

"Qualifying for 2012 is my ultimate goal," explained LBdr Lee Spiers (RA), who has risen from a complete beginner to Britain's 25th best fencer in just two-and-a-half years.

"Since I started fencing I have won two national competitions, been the Army's Master-at-Arms two years in a row and won the Inter-Service Master Swordsman title.

"My current ranking is out of 2,000 fencers in Britain and my immediate aim is to break into the top 20. When I look at where I have got to in my first two years, I'm confident that I can achieve that.

"Beyond that, I want to maintain a good ranking and then be in a position to compete at the Olympics."

Spiers's push for Olympic Games qualification is based around a strict

training and competition regime that reflects the deceptively high demand that fencing places on physical fitness.

The sport requires a subtle blend of explosive speed, agility, aerobic capacity and raw strength and it was telling that an injured Spiers failed to defend his Master-at-Arms title at this year's Army championships, which were held over one week at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst.

Mental toughness is also a key weapon in any fencer's arsenal as competitors have to make split-second tactical decisions to stay one step ahead of their opponent.

"It's a fantastic sport because success depends as much on being in a good mental condition as it does on being physically fit," said Cfn Dennis Kofitia (REME), who took up fencing after watching it on television as a child and hopes to break onto the national circuit in the coming year.

"You do have to be fit, but I think being a good fencer is probably 70 per cent concentration and being able to anticipate what is going to happen."

Lt Naomi Lee (REME), a Northern Ireland international and this year's female Master-at-Arms after completing a clean sweep of the foil, épée and sabre events, agreed that success is achieved as much in the mind as it is on the mat.

"You won't be successful if you're

not able to outwit your opponent and predict what they are going to do," she told *SoldierSport*. "It helps that fencing is a very social sport and everyone is willing to help each other improve."

Despite its reputation as a discipline taken up primarily by officers, this year's Army championships were keenly contested by a broad cross section of ranks and abilities.

Lining up alongside the experienced Spiers and Kofitia were complete newcomers who only picked up a sword for the first time during a preparatory training camp days before the competition.

Army Fencing Union spokesman Capt Jamie Metcalfe (1 Yorks) said that fencing's accessibility and the opportunity to try any of the sport's three disciplines – sabre, épée and foil – keeps people coming back for more.

"Fencing is easy to pick up but difficult to master," he said. "That is why we open these championships to anyone regardless of their experience."

"Anyone can pick up a sword, but learning the subtle nuances is a lot more difficult. Most people learn to fence using the foil, but different styles are more suited to the sabre or épée."

"People are sometimes nervous about giving it a go because it's not something they have ever experienced. It can look a bit daunting, but they soon change their minds once they have tried it." ■

‘Anyone can pick up a sword, but learning the subtle nuances is a lot more difficult’



Sail of the century

THE Army Sailing Association's race crew showed what their new yacht is capable of as they guided *British Soldier* to a third-place finish in its offshore debut.

The boat's crew made the most of moderate winds in the Solent to finish the prestigious Royal Ocean Racing Club's Cervantes Trophy event behind French boat *Pen Azen* and the British team on board *Puma Logic*.

Starting from the Royal Yacht Squadron, the 11 yachts involved in the race tussled for position before turning towards Le Havre.

The military squad, who had previously only sailed *British*

Soldier in inshore events, crossed the finish line shortly after midnight, nearly 15-and-a-half hours after setting off.

Team spokesman Capt Matt "Timmy" Mallett said: "It was a steady and determined performance and we are looking forward to the remaining races in this series."

The RORC events are serving as a warm-up for this month's Rolex Offshore Commodores' Cup, in which the Army will represent Great Britain for the first ever time.

● See *Sea Change* (Pages 49-51) for a report of last month's official launch of *British Soldier*. ■



Live by the sword: Capt Jamie Metcalfe (1 Yorks) clashes with OCdt Stuart Clark during a warm-up session at this year's Army fencing championships

● PROFESSIONAL players from the Guinness Premiership

were no match for stars from the Army at Rosslyn Park's annual floodlit Rugby Union Sevens tournament.

The Reds brushed aside Cambridge University 26-0 and Richmond 39-5 at the pool stage to set up a semi-final against London Irish.

A tense first-half finished 12-12 and although the Exiles scored a converted try early in the second period, the Army battled on to score two tries in the final minute to snatch a 24-19 win.

Harlequins provided the opposition in the final, but the expected close encounter never materialised and the Army romped to a 31-12 win.

Pte Apo Satala (1 Scots) impressed throughout with his direct running.

SPORTS SHORTS

● RUNNERS from 11 Sig Regt (A) won the Army road relay

championships at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst (RMAS).

The four-man team finished nearly one minute ahead of second-placed RMAS (PS), with HQ Land Forces beating SEME (A) to third place by just one second.

The RMAS women's team went one better than their male counterparts by finishing first in their race, with HQ 4 Div claiming the runners-up medals and ATR Pirbright crossing the line in third.

Maj Crossland (HQ Land Forces) was the quickest male runner, while Sgt Morgan (RMAS) finished well clear of Sgt Menzies to win the women's race.

The race was dedicated to Maj Nick Bateson, a long-serving Army athlete who died in Iraq in 2007.

MASSEY TROPHY

MASSEY TROPHY – DIV 1

	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
RE	12	10	0	2	20	30
Infantry	12	8	1	3	13	25
RA	12	6	1	5	2	19
R Sigs	12	6	0	6	10	18
RLC	12	6	0	6	1	18
REME	12	3	2	7	-5	11
APTC	12	0	2	10	-41	2

MASSEY TROPHY – DIV 2

	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
Int Corps	8	6	1	1	9	19
AGC	8	5	2	1	18	17
AAC	6	1	2	3	-4	5
RAC	6	1	1	4	-9	4
AMS	6	0	2	4	-14	2

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Double no trouble

Army trio return from amateur boxing's showpiece event with twin titles

Report: Stephen Tyler
Picture: Graeme Main

ARMY boxers capped a hugely successful season by claiming two senior Amateur Boxing Association (ABA) titles at London's York Hall.

Powerful performances from Pte Martin Stead (RLC) and Spr Adam Whitfield (RE) won them amateur boxing's greatest domestic honour in front of a full house at Bethnal Green. LCpl Steve Turner (R Signals) was unlucky not to add to the Army's

individual haul after a rare dip in form against Rotunda's Liam Smith on a night that coach Sgt Darren Dugan (PWRR) said highlighted the strength of his current crop of boxers.

"I am really impressed not just with these results, but with our performances over the season," he told

SoldierSport, adding that a further six members of his squad had made it to the ABA semi-finals.

"We have completely changed their training and our lads are stronger, fitter and more determined to win when they step in the ring.

"Steve has performed brilliantly throughout the year and it just didn't happen for him on the night. He knows what he has to do to win next time."

Although the Army has had three boxers qualify for the ABA finals in the past, having more than one champion has been a rarity in recent years and hopes were high that a triple triumph would be achieved this time around.

Whitfield was first to take to the ring against Stockbridge's Anthony Smith, and the Army man had every right to feel confident having dispatched England international Ashley Sexton at the semi-final stage.

The flyweight looked in control throughout the opening round and Whitfield's pace around the ring helped him ease into a 3-1 lead.

Smith struggled to cope with the sapper's tactics as Whitfield stretched his lead over the middle rounds, eventually opening up an 11-6 gap to claim his first ABA title.

He said: "I had a couple of bad results before Christmas and I have been working hard since then to put things right. Winning the ABA title means a lot to me."

Our lads are stronger, fitter and more determined to win when they step in the ring

While Whitfield finished comfortably ahead of his opponent, Stead and fellow lightweight finalist Gary Reay were involved in a photo-finish in one of the most enthralling bouts of the evening.

The Army man's familiar long-reaching style limited Reay's attacking opportunities during a tense first-round that the East Durham College fighter edged 2-1.

Things opened up in the second and both boxers landed telling head and body shots to crank up the tempo and increase the scores to 6-5 in favour of Reay.

Both boxers chalked up another two points in a cautious third round and although he trailed 8-7, Stead looked composed and patient going into the final two minutes.

If the junior Olympic champion was to add an ABA title to his collection, it looked like it would be

without the help of the judges as Stead twice failed to gain points for what looked like scoring blows as the clock ticked down.

The soldier was building up a head of steam when the timekeeper inexplicably rang the bell with 55 seconds remaining.

Quick intervention from the referee got the fight started again and Stead used the remaining time to land a flurry of right handers flush into the face of Reay.

A brilliant double strike with just four seconds left on the clock scored the Army man two points in quick succession and he held on to sneak an ultimately deserved 10-9 win.

He said: "When the bell went I knew we hadn't finished the round. I realised it was close, so I went for it in the last minute and it paid off."

Turner's light welterweight bout against Smith proved to be a step too far for the junior NCO, who had distinguished himself in the semi-finals by out-boxing England international Bradley Skeete.

A tight first round ended 2-1 in favour of Smith and the Rotunda boxer moved 6-1 ahead halfway through the bout.

Turner limited his opponent to just two more points in the remaining four minutes, but he eventually lost 8-1 in a disappointing end to his ABA campaign.

Dugan felt that his boxer suffered from some poor scoring decisions and although two-time finalist Turner agreed, he was pragmatic in defeat.

"I'm confident I caught him with some close shots so the score was a bit of a kick in the face for me," he said. "I had beaten better kids than him on the way there, but it was one bad fight and it won't stop me pushing on."



Making a fist of it:
ABA finalists (from left) Spr Adam Whitfield (RE), LCpl Steve Turner (R Signals) and Pte Martin Stead (RLC)

FIXTURES

ANGLING

June 3 – Crown Services championships (Graham); 6-8 – Army championships (Rutland).

ATHLETICS

June 11 – Individual and inter-corps championships (Tidworth); 18-19 – Army semi-finals (Tidworth); 22 – Army standard distance triathlon championships (South Cerney).

BOXING

June 21 – Combined Services ABA women's championships (Aldershot).

CANOEING

June 21-22 – BCU canoe polo tournament (Liverpool).

CRICKET

June 3-5 – Inter-corps Twenty 20 (Aldershot, Deepcut and Sandhurst); 8 – Army women v Dorset (Blandford); 11 – Army U25 v Warminster (Warminster); 12 – Army U25 v Dorset (Blandford); 13 – Army women v Oxford University (Oxford); 19 – Army U25 v Cambridge (Cambridge); 24 – Combined Services Twenty 20 (Portsmouth); 25 – Army U25 v Stragglers of Asia (Aldershot); 26 – Army U25 v LCCA (Aldershot); 28 – Army women v Hampshire (Larkhill).

CYCLING

June 2 – Sotonia CC middlemarkers (South District); 3 – Upavon road race summer series (Upavon Airfield); 7-8 – National 25 mile time trial championships (South east Midlands); 7-15 – Army championships (Arborfield); 21-22 – National 50 mile time trial championships (Yorkshire).

EQUITATION

June 17-19 – Royal Tournament, Inter-Services and inter-corps individual and team show jumping (Melton Mowbray).

FENCING

June 16-19 – Inter-Services championships (RAF Cosford).

GOLF

June 3-4 – Inter-regional championship (Worksop); 14 – Coaching day (Pine Ridge); 16 – Army women's championship (Army Golf Club); 16-17 – Army v British Police (Fairhaven); 18 – Army v AOGS (Army Golf Club); 26 – Army v Australian Defence Force (Army Golf Club); 27 – Combined Services Golf Club v Australian Defence Force (Liphook).

MARTIAL ARTS

June 1 – British Masters Championships (High Wycombe); 7 – WFT Inter-Services (Poole); 15 – National team judo championships (Kendal).

POLO

June 7-8 – Queen's Royal Irish Hussars Cup (Tidworth); 11 – Prince's charity day (Sandhurst).

ROWING

June 1 – Metropolitan regatta (Dorney); 6 – Army championships (Dorney); 11 – Joint Services regatta (Peterborough); 21-22 – Marlow regatta (Dorney).

RUGBY LEAGUE

June 4 – Army v BARLA (Aldershot); Inter-unit nines competition (Aldershot).

SAILING

June 12-15 – IRC championships (Solent).

continued...

After eight

Warriors on the ball for new Inter-Services record

Report: Stephen Tyler

Picture: Steve Dock

AN unforgiving Army side slammed their opponents off the court to win a record eighth consecutive Inter-Services title.

The Warriors put 100 points past a shell-shocked Royal Navy before dispatching the Royal Air Force 84-63 in a one-sided competition at Grantham's Prince William of Gloucester Barracks.

Not to be outdone, the women's and under-23 teams also completed their tournaments with 100 per cent records as the Army further cemented its position as the dominant force in Service's basketball.

Warriors head coach SSgt Carl Black (REME), a former professional with Thames Valley Tigers, praised the attitude of his squad, which included players brought back especially from operations and exercises in Afghanistan and America.

"We never go into these tournaments expecting to win because they are one-off games and anything can happen, but these are fit guys and they did a professional job," he said.

With the opportunity to become the first team to win eight straight titles tantalisingly close, the Warriors flew out of the traps against the Navy and the final score of 100-46 reflected the huge gulf in skill between the two sides.

Black expected a closer encounter

against the RAF, but although the score suggested a more competitive match the Army played some superb basketball and the result was never in doubt.

"The Navy seemed to bowl over quite easily," said Black. "In fairness it was their second game of the day, but we pushed them as hard as we could.

"I thought we were on fire against the RAF. I have never seen us play that well, especially defensively because they were still in single figures at the end of the first quarter.

"Our intensity levels were high throughout and I thought we had more of a will to win."

LCpl Roshane Murray (RE) excelled at the heart of the team in his first tournament as skipper and Black also paid credit to newcomer Spr Steve Towell (RE).

The shooting guard played high school basketball in the United States before moving back to England to join the Army and he was instrumental in securing victory for both the senior team and the under-23 side.

Black's team is now gearing up for an international tournament in Spain ahead of the annual end-of-season SHAPE competition in Belgium.

"The players deserve to be congratulated on what they have achieved," he said. "I put an emphasis on pace during training so that they have to work hard and are always under a degree of pressure. The results have shown on the court." ■

Hockey heroes'

A PERFECT performance in the preliminary round of this year's second tier county championships earned the Army hockey team promotion back to the tournament's top flight.

A near full-strength squad scored 17 goals and won all four group matches at Aldershot to seal a place in the finals and secure a return to Division A after an eight-year absence.

Player-coach and double Olympian Maj Guy Fordham (RAMC) said the return of several key players from operations had galvanised his squad for the ultimately successful promotion push.

"Getting a strong team together has been difficult in recent years because of the Army's commitments around the

world, but we currently have a good blend of experienced and younger players.

"There were some very good individual performances, but it was very much a squad effort. Our achievement is based on every player putting in a performance."

After a patchy start in its opening game against Herefordshire, the Army fell behind to an early goal.

Fordham levelled the scores with a first-half penalty stroke and the home team turned the screw with four unanswered strikes in the second period to get their tournament off to an early start.

Poor concentration in their second match against Somerset again saw the Army go a goal down early on.

The Reds responded with a series of



Jump to it: LCpl Lindy Pine (WG) rises above the opposition during a training match ahead of the Army's successful defence of the Inter-Services trophy

stick up

penalty corners and Lt Andy Watson (RLC) made the most of the pressure by scoring with an excellent drag flick.

Somerset retook the lead soon after, but OCdt Ian Vanderput equalised and the Army added to their tally through Fordham, Maj Craig Pope (RAMC) and a second from Vanderput.

Somerset reassured themselves and pulled two goals back, but the Army held on to triumph 5-4.

A further brace from the irrepressible Vanderput in the first game of day two, against Devon, was complemented by strikes from Capt Chris Lane (RA) and Watson in a comfortable 4-1 victory.

Despite already having wrapped up promotion and progression to the

Division B finals, the Army went into the final match against the Royal Air Force determined to put their traditional rivals to the sword.

The Reds' defence stood firm during the opening exchanges and some smart link-up play between midfield and defence allowed Vanderput and Spr Jez Fort (RE) to get on the scoresheet.

With the temperature rising, both teams seemed content to slow things down in the second half and a goal from tournament top scorer Vanderput and a late consolation from the airmen were the only remaining incidents of note as the game finished 3-1.

"We were disappointed to lose this season's Inter-Services competition and our main priority for next year is to win that," concluded Fordham, whose team were playing in the finals as this issue went to press. "I hope that playing at a higher level will be good for the development of our players as well." ■

FIXTURES

SHOOTING

June 1 – Target rifle pentangular match (Bisley); 7-9 – Target rifle Scottish open championships (Barry Buddon); 13-15 – British international small bore 50m championships (Bisley); 14-15 – Target rifle inter-counties match (Bisley); 21-22 – British Pistol Club championships (Bisley).

SWIMMING

June 11 – Inter-unit team championship finals (Aldershot); 12 – Army individual and single event relay championships (Aldershot); 16 – Inter-Services open water championships (Lake Bala).

TENNIS

June 1 – Army v Hurlingham (Hurlingham).

WATER POLO

June 10 – Army championships (Aldershot); 29 – Andy Morton tournament (Aldershot).

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

Wind down

The regular feature in which we ask soldiers for their views on a hot topic

We asked British troops in Iraq whether they thought their impending decompression in Cyprus would smooth their return from operations

LCpl David Clampitt, 1 Mercian

I don't think decompression is necessary. We go straight home from R and R and we don't have any decompression after that.

But, when we finish the tour we can not go home. It will be good to have a laugh and unwind together but most of us just want to get home. I think decompression should be included in the deployment.



Pte Simon D'Arcy, 4 Mercian

I'm in the TA. Some tours are easier than others and all individuals are different. I feel we have different needs to the

Regulars. We return to regular jobs and are expected to fit back into the real world. I think there should be more support on the medical side. We are given a psychiatric de-brief but I don't feel as supported as we could be.



Lt Rob Hewitt, 73 Armd Eng, RE

I'm looking forward to it. I've been to Tunnel Beach before on a simulated decompression exercise and the facilities

are fantastic. People understand what it will be, but maybe don't understand what will happen. It was a lot more relaxed and informal than you think the British Army can be.



Bdr Jason Thomas, D Battery, RHA

The benefits are being in your civvies, having a drink and not having to lug my rifle and Osprey body armour about.

The downside is not getting back home. If there was no decompression I would still probably do it in the same way and chill out in our camp bar but there is obviously the risk of jumping in the car after drinking.



Sgt Guy Catterick, D Battery, RHA

From what I've heard it's supposed to be quite good. And a little bit of down time beats going straight back to Germany and gives us time to relax.

Personally, I can quite easily do a tour, switch off and go straight home but some people do have issues. For the younger lads it's a good place to go to and another country for them to visit.



WO2 (CSM) Sean Kimber, RMP

I underwent decompression in January but unexpectedly came back out to Basra in March and so I'll do it again. It was well structured and you weren't under scrutiny. If the company can decompress together it's a nice way to draw a line under things, finish the tour and release some of the stress.



LCpl Garry Duffy, SG

I believe we get briefed on getting back into normal life. Decompression is instrumental in reintroducing us to our normal lives. Going from six months here straight to Germany could mean people get into trouble but decompression will catch any problems. I think decompression will definitely help and is the way forward.



LCpl Darren Hunt, RMP

It's at Camp Bloodhound and we'll have briefs on drink-driving. I'm looking forward to it and I want to tick Cyprus off the globe, as I've not been before.

I understand people want to see their family but, for me, I want some time out from being in the operational environment. And it will be nice to stop carrying our body armour, not to hear the sirens and just to be able to relax.



Cpl Wayne McMullan, RDG

I can see why they want us to do it but we've been working on our own decompression. The benefits are that it happens in a locked-down environment, before other agencies get involved.

But I think my family feel they would just like to have me come straight home.



Interviews: Karen Thomas and Heidi Mines Pictures: Graeme Main and Mike Weston

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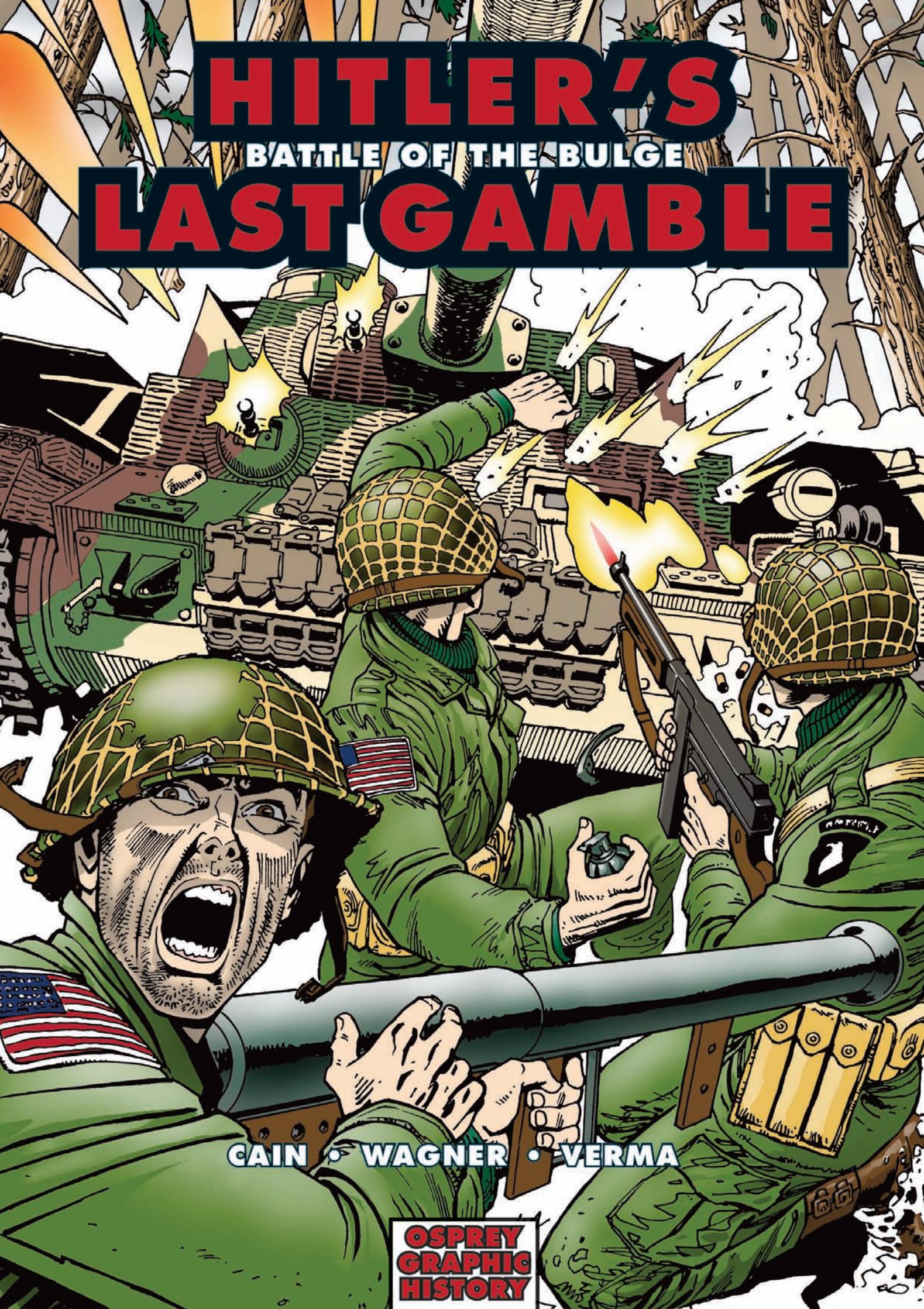
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HITLER'S BATTLE OF THE BULGE LAST GAMBLE

CAIN • WAGNER • VERMA

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ABOUT THE...

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Newcomer BILL CAIN has been interested in comics for many years, and has begun his comic writing career following his retirement from the military. His work includes new titles for Rosen Publishing's *Graphic Non-Fiction* line. This is his first title for Osprey Publishing.

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DHEERAJ VERMA is a comic strip artist with over 10 years' experience and has worked for many publishers, including Marvel Comics, Viper Comics and Rosen Publishing.

HITLER'S BATTLE OF THE BULGE LAST GAMBLE



GAIN • WAGNER • VERMA

OSPREY
GRAPHIC
HISTORY

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WHO'S WHO



Lieutenant General Omar Bradley (1893–1981) was senior U.S. field commander and in charge of the 12th Army Group. He had a good relationship with his superior General Eisenhower and was known for his great management and tactical skills.



SS Oberstgruppenfhrer Josef "Sepp" Dietrich (1892–1966) was commander of the 6th Panzer Army at the Battle of the Bulge. Dietrich was very popular with his men, and nicknamed "Obersepp." He was also one of the closest men to Hitler.



Lieutenant General George S. Patton (1885–1945) was in charge of the Third Army, part of Bradley's 12th Army. Patton was a colourful character, and his intelligence team (G-2) was one of the most vocal in warning the Allies of the German offensive in the Ardennes.



General der Panzetruppen Hasso von Manteuffel (1897–1978) was commander of the 5th Panzer Army at the battle. Unlike Dietrich, he had no political connections and began the war as a commander in Rommel's Army. He was, however, also a personal favorite of Hitler's.

WORLD WAR 2

1939 – 1945

Even after World War I (1914–1919), there were strong hostilities between many nations. The United States worked to build good relations with other countries to avoid fighting another war.

However, other nations were becoming aggressive toward their neighbors. In 1936, Italy invaded Ethiopia. Japan attacked China in 1937. In 1938, Germany took control of Austria and Czechoslovakia.

In 1939, Germany invaded Poland. France and England responded by declaring war on Germany. The United

States had avoided fighting in the growing worldwide conflict, but on December 7, 1941, Japan attacked the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. America was at war.

For the next four years, the United States and its allies fought Germany and the other Axis forces on land, sea, and in the air. One of the most brutal battles was fought at the Battle of the Bulge, between December 1944 and January 1945. Its outcome was so important that many historians call this battle the decisive campaign of the war in North-West Europe. ■

D-DAY AND BEYOND

The Battle of the Bulge (also known as the Battle of the Ardennes) was one of the bloodiest and most important campaigns of the Second World War, a last great effort by the Germans to defeat the western Allies before their armies reached Germany itself. Codenamed Wacht am Rhein ("Watch on the Rhine"), the German offensive was planned in complete secrecy, and when it was launched on December 16, 1944, the Allies were taken completely by surprise. If the Germans had won they might have captured the vital port of Antwerp,



Adolf Hitler (left) dominated all German military planning. It was he who decided on the Ardennes offensive. (NARA)



▲
Josef "Sepp" Dietrich was commander of the 6th Panzer Army, the leading Panzer forces during the Battle of the Bulge. (NARA)

split the Allies in two, and forced them to negotiate a peace treaty. However, the dense forests, hilly ground, and winter weather that hid the German build-up would eventually work in their favor.

When the British, Americans, and Canadians landed on the beaches of Normandy on June 6, 1944, they managed to fight their way ashore and carve out a small beachhead. In the months that followed, the Allies made several attempts to push inland, but the outnumbered Germans fought a skillful defensive campaign, forcing the Allies to pay heavily for every yard of ground. However, in August 1944, the thinly-held German line cracked under the pressure, and the Allies were able to surround and destroy the bulk of the German army in

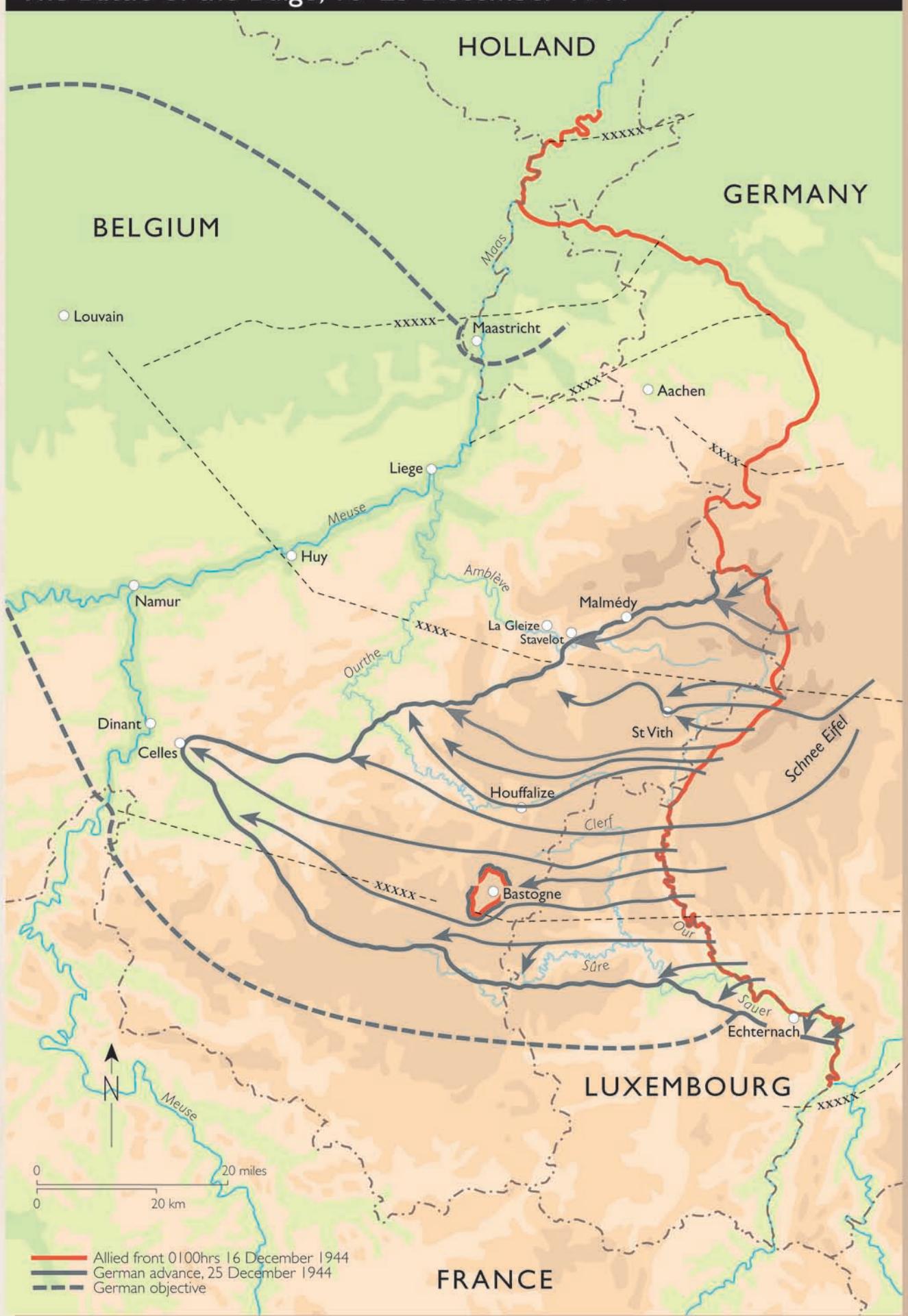
the "Falaise Pocket." This operation was known as the "breakout from Normandy." As the German survivors retreated, the Allies spread out across France, liberating Paris and driving on into Belgium to the north and the French provinces of Alsace and Lorraine in the east.

The biggest problem facing the Allies was getting food, fuel, and ammunition to the troops spearheading the Allied advance. All their supplies had to be transported from Normandy, and soon the Allied advance began to slow down because of a lack of fuel. The capture of the port of Antwerp in Belgium should have eased the problem. However, small German pockets still held out in the area, and it wasn't until the start of December that the first supplies could be landed there. Meanwhile, the Germans had managed to regroup and form a defensive line along the border of Belgium and Holland as well as in Alsace-Lorraine, stretching south from Luxembourg to the border of Switzerland.

▼
Taken by an anonymous German military cameraman, this shows the Germans advancing to form their defensive line. (NARA)



The Battle of the Bulge, 16–25 December 1944



PRELUDE TO THE BULGE

On September 16, British general Bernard Montgomery launched Operation *Market Garden*. This involved dropping parachute divisions along the Allied line of advance, capturing bridges needed for the rest of the army to cross the River Rhine, and pushing into Germany. Unfortunately the Germans were able to overrun the British 1st Airborne Division at Arnhem before the rest of the Allied army could rescue them. The operation succeeded in liberating most of southern Holland, but the disaster at Arnhem meant that the Germans were able to stop the Allies reaching Germany.

As the British became bogged down in Holland, Lieutenant General Patton's U.S. 3rd Army was fighting a grueling campaign in Alsace-Lorraine, an area where the Germans had built their West Wall, a belt of fortifications that slowed the American advance to a crawl. Between Patton and Montgomery lay the Ardennes—an area of dense forest and winding roads that the Allies thought unsuitable for offensive operations. To the north were the city of Aachen and the Hürtgen Forest, where General Hodge's U.S. 1st Army became embroiled in another bloody battle. Hodge used the quiet sector of the Ardennes as a place where his battered American divisions could rest and recover.

No one suspected that a few miles to the east the Germans were secretly building up a

LEFT The Battle of the Bulge took place in Belgium, with the towns of Bastogne and St Vith the centers of most of the action. Surprised by a large German Panzer force, U.S. forces struggled for nine days to fight off the attack.

powerful army group and preparing to launch it through the Ardennes toward the coast. The Allies failed to detect this German build-up, and by mid-December everything was ready. Three German armies would take part in "Wacht am Rhein." To the north the 6th SS Panzer Army would spearhead the drive on Antwerp, supported to the south by the 5th Panzer Army, which would capture the strategic Ardennes town of Bastogne, then drive on to the River Meuse. To the south, the smaller 7th Army would protect the southern flank of the German offensive against Patton's U.S. 3rd Army. In all some thirty German divisions were involved in the attack—a third of a million men.

Success for the Germans depended on three things. First, the attack had to be a complete surprise. Second, they needed bad weather to keep the Allied aircraft on the ground. Third, the Germans were desperately short of fuel, so they needed to capture as much fuel as they could from the Allies as they advanced. It was all a great gamble—Germany's last chance to defeat the Allies and end the war before Germany itself became a battleground.

Many U.S. soldiers huddled in ditches and snow drifts during the battle, trying to survive both the conditions and the enemy. (NARA)



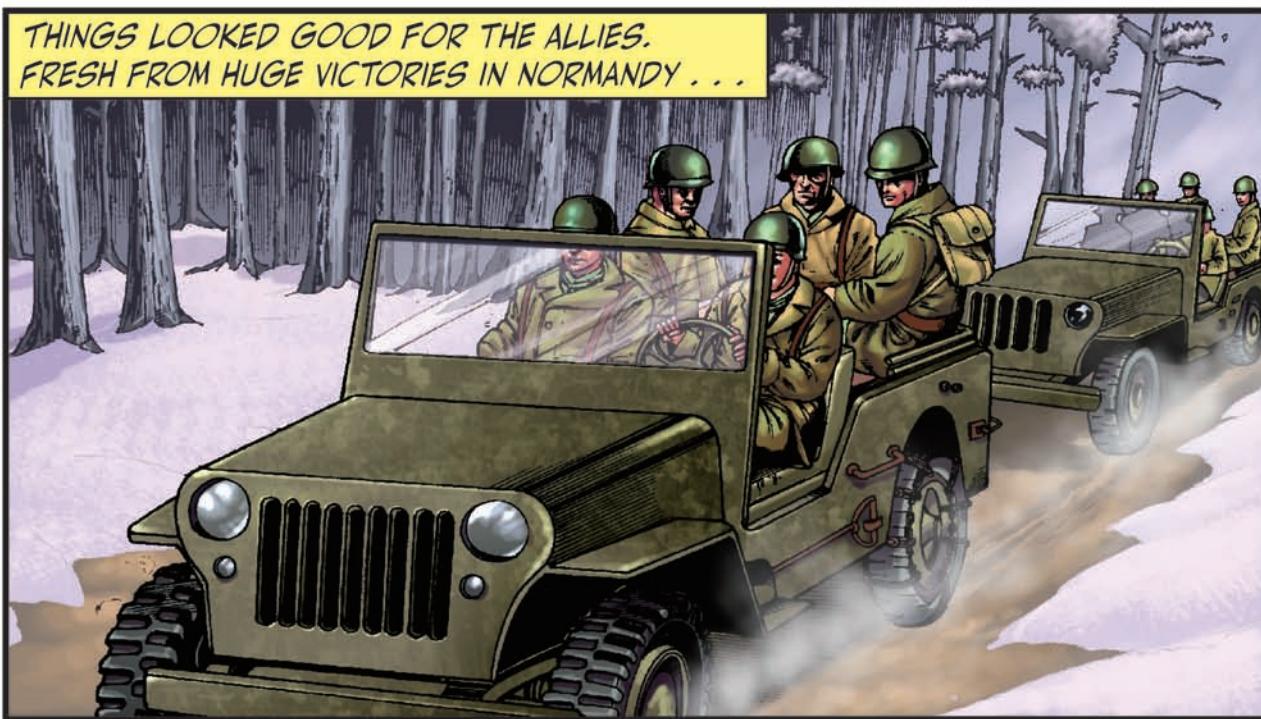
THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE



AFTER THE ALLIES GROUNDED THE GERMAN AIR FORCE, OR LUFTWAFFE, THE GERMANS HAD NO WAY TO GATHER INTELLIGENCE OR STOP THE ALLIED ADVANCE IN THE SOUTH AND WEST.



THINGS LOOKED GOOD FOR THE ALLIES.
FRESH FROM HUGE VICTORIES IN NORMANDY . . .



. . . AND LANDINGS IN SOUTHERN FRANCE, THE ALLIES ADVANCED TOWARD BERLIN, GERMANY, FASTER THAN ANYONE EXPECTED, TO FINISH OFF THE LAST OF THE GERMAN ARMY.



HITLER PLANNED A DARING ATTACK CALLED "WATCH ON THE RHINE" TO SPLIT THE ALLIES AND REGAIN CONTROL OF GERMANY'S WESTERN FRONT.



HITLER PLANNED TO QUICKLY CROSS THE MEUSE RIVER AND TAKE CONTROL OF THE BELGIAN PORT OF ANTWERP. ANTWERP WAS A VITAL SUPPLY ROUTE.



HIS PLAN RELIED ON FOUR ELEMENTS: SPEED, SURPRISE, BAD WEATHER TO KEEP ALLIED PLANES ON THE GROUND, AND CAPTURING ALLIED FUEL.



THE GERMANS PASSED ON PLANS VIA TELEGRAPH AND TELEPHONE, ROBBING THE ALLIES OF THEIR MOST POWERFUL WEAPON: ULTRA INTERCEPTS.*



*THE SYSTEM USED BY BRITISH AND AMERICAN INTELLIGENCE TO DECODE SECRET GERMAN MESSAGES.

JUST LIKE HIS EARLY SUCCESSES IN EUROPE IN 1940, HITLER WAS CONVINCED VICTORY WOULD BE HIS AGAIN.

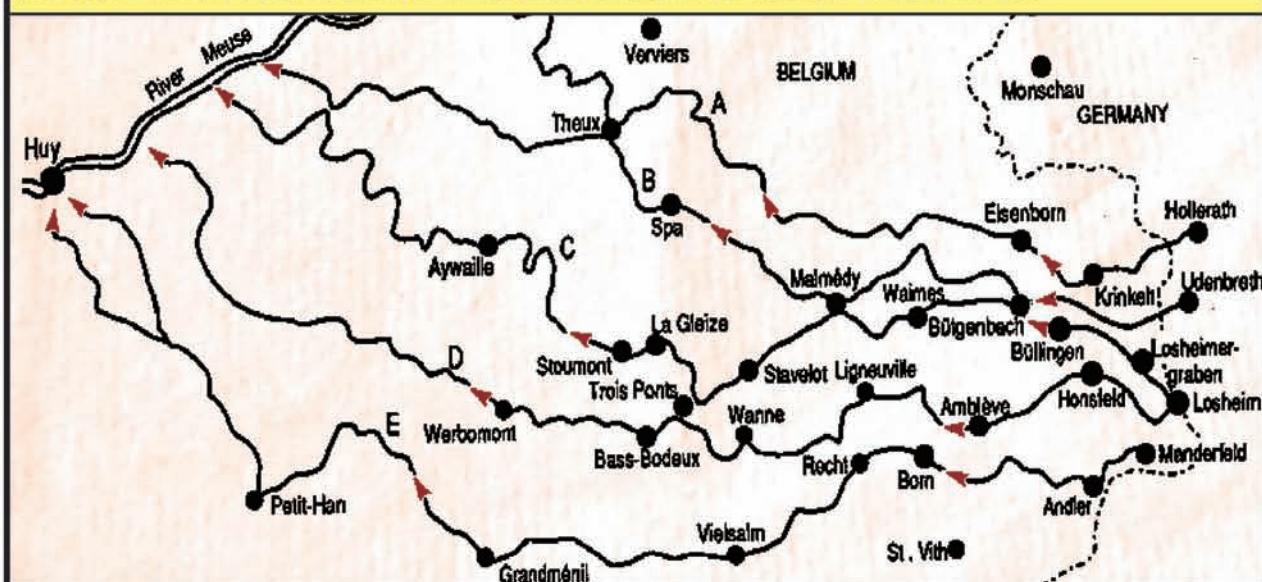


ES BRAUST EIN
RUF WIE DONNERHALL, WIE
SCHWERTGEKLIRR UND
WOGENPRALL.*

"WATCH ON THE RHINE" WOULD BECOME MORE THAN JUST THE NAME OF A PATRIOTIC SONG . . . IT WOULD GIVE NEW LIFE TO THE THIRD REICH!

*TRANSLATION "A CALL ROARS LIKE THUNDERBOLT, LIKE CLASHING SWORDS AND SPLASHING WAVES."

THE GERMANS MOVED 200,000 TROOPS WITH 500 TANKS INTO THE ARDENNES FOREST TO ATTACK ALONG THREE ROUTES INTO ALLIED POSITIONS.



LEADING THE ATTACK WOULD BE LEGENDARY SS GENERAL SEPP DIETRICH. HIS MISSION WOULD BE TO SEIZE THE IMPORTANT PORT OF ANTWERP, BELGIUM.



GENERAL HASSO MANTEUFFEL'S 5TH PANZER ARMY WOULD ATTACK IN THE MIDDLE AND TRY TO CAPTURE THE TOWN OF BRUSSELS.



THE SOUTHERNMOST ATTACK WAS DESIGNED TO KEEP THE ALLIES IN PLACE AND SUPPORT THE TWO ATTACK ROUTES IN THE NORTH.

DECEMBER 16, 1944. THE BATTLE BEGAN JUST BEFORE SUNRISE WITH A HUGE ARTILLERY ATTACK.



SOLDIERS FROM NEWLY ARRIVED UNITS LIKE THE 106TH INFANTRY DIVISION WONDERED WHAT WAS GOING ON IN THE USUALLY QUIET WOODS IN FRONT OF THEM.

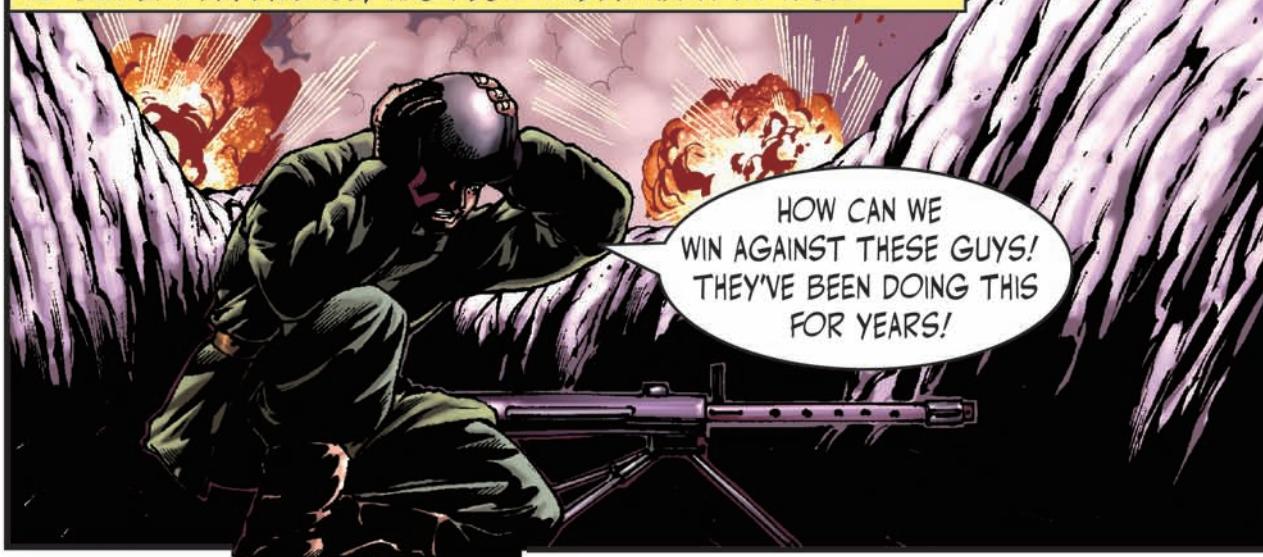


ACROSS THE 50-MILE FRONT, 2,000 GERMAN ARTILLERY HOWITZERS BEGAN SPITTING FIRE AND LAUNCHING A RAIN OF STEEL DEATH ON THE LIGHTLY DEFENDED ALLIED LINE.



OPERATION "WATCH ON THE RHINE" HAD BEGUN.

THE U.S. 99TH INFANTRY DIVISION, A NEWLY ARRIVED UNIT WITH NO COMBAT EXPERIENCE, WAS ALSO UNDER HEAVY ATTACK.



THE INEXPERIENCED "BATTLE BABIES" FOUND THEMSELVES ALONE WHILE THE WEHRMACHT'S BEST TROOPS ATTACKED THEIR THINLY HELD LINE.



THE 99TH COMMANDER, MAJOR GENERAL LAUER, ORDERED HIS SOLDIERS TO HOLD THE LINE.



THE ORDERS, PASSED TO EACH GERMAN UNIT, WERE VERY CLEAR . . .



SOLDIERS OF THE WEST FRONT: YOUR GREAT HOUR HAS STRUCK. EVERYTHING IS AT STAKE. YOU BEAR A HOLY DUTY TO ACHIEVE THE SUPERHUMAN FOR OUR FUEHRER!

LATE DECEMBER 16, 1944. IN THE ALPS OF BAVARIA, HITLER RETREATED TO TEEHAUS, HIS MOUNTAIN RETREAT CALLED "THE EAGLE'S NEST."

BAVARIA WAS IN EASTERN EUROPE, TO THE RIGHT OF GERMANY AND BELGIUM, WHERE THE FIGHTING WAS TAKING PLACE.



THE INITIAL REPORT OF THE MORNING WAS A GOOD ONE FOR THE GERMAN DICTATOR.



BOTH PANZER ARMIES HAVE ADVANCED THIRTY MILES SINCE YESTERDAY, MEIN FUHRER. THE AMERICANS HAVE BEEN TAKEN COMPLETELY BY SURPRISE!

ONLY THIRTY MILES? I EXPECTED MORE!

STILL, IT WILL BE TWO OR THREE DAYS BEFORE THE ALLIES UNDERSTAND OUR ATTACK. BY THEN, IT WILL BE TOO LATE FOR THEM.



FROM HIS HEADQUARTERS IN VERDUN, FRANCE, GENERAL EISENHOWER MET WITH GENERAL OMAR BRADLEY, 12TH ARMY GROUP COMMANDER.

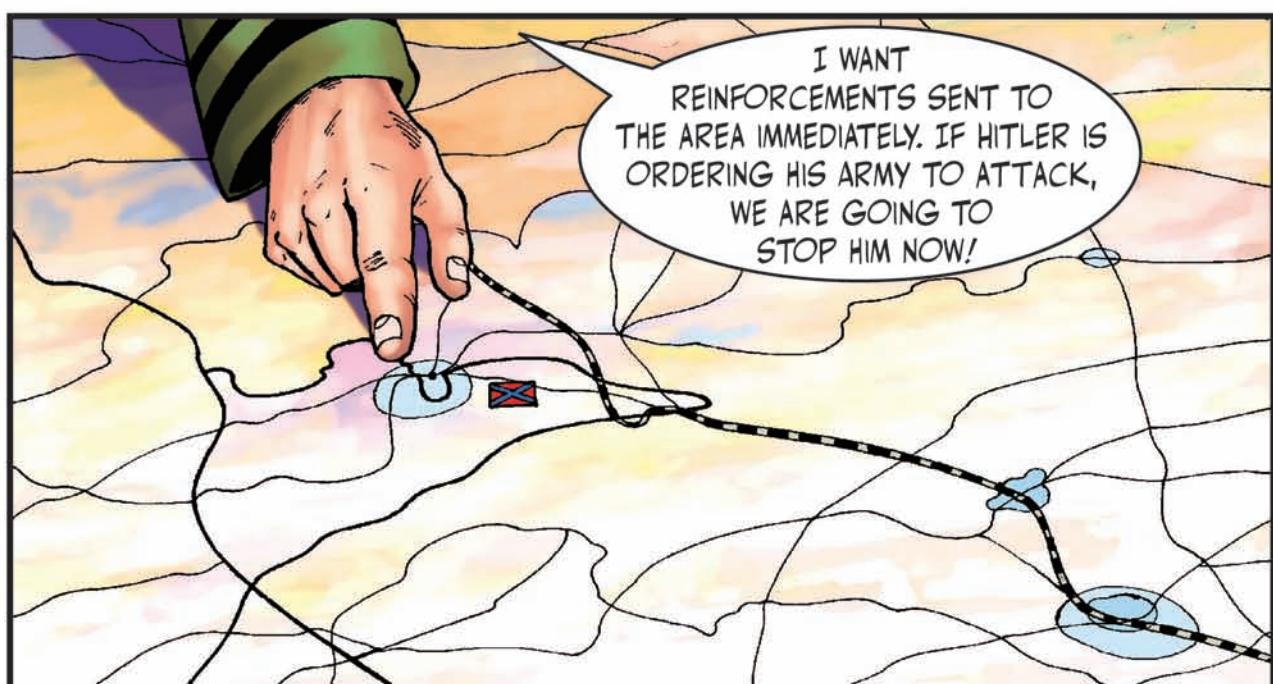
WE ARE GETTING REPORTS OF SMALL ATTACKS ACROSS THE FRONT, BUT THIS IS MOST LIKELY NOTHING IMPORTANT, SIR.



THAT SEEMS TO BE THE CONVENTIONAL WISDOM, BRAD. BUT I THINK HITLER'S TRYING SOMETHING VERY BIG.



I WANT REINFORCEMENTS SENT TO THE AREA IMMEDIATELY. IF HITLER IS ORDERING HIS ARMY TO ATTACK, WE ARE GOING TO STOP HIM NOW!



A MAJOR PART OF "WATCH ON THE RHINE" WAS AN AIRBORNE ATTACK BY 1,300 GERMAN PARATROOPERS TO SEIZE IMPORTANT CROSSROADS IN THE NORTH.



CAPTURING THE NORTHERN AREA OF ANTWERP, BELGIUM, WOULD WEAKEN THE U.S. ARMY'S SUPPLY ROUTES AND PROVIDE THE GERMANS WITH VALUABLE SUPPLIES.



GERMAN COLONEL FRIEDRICH VON DER HYDTE LED THE OPERATION, CODENAMED STOSSEN. HE MADE HIS JUMP WITH HIS BROKEN ARM IN A SLING.



HIGH WINDS AND A BLINDING SNOWSTORM RESULTED IN ONLY 300 PARATROOPERS REACHING THE FINAL CROSSROAD LOCATION.

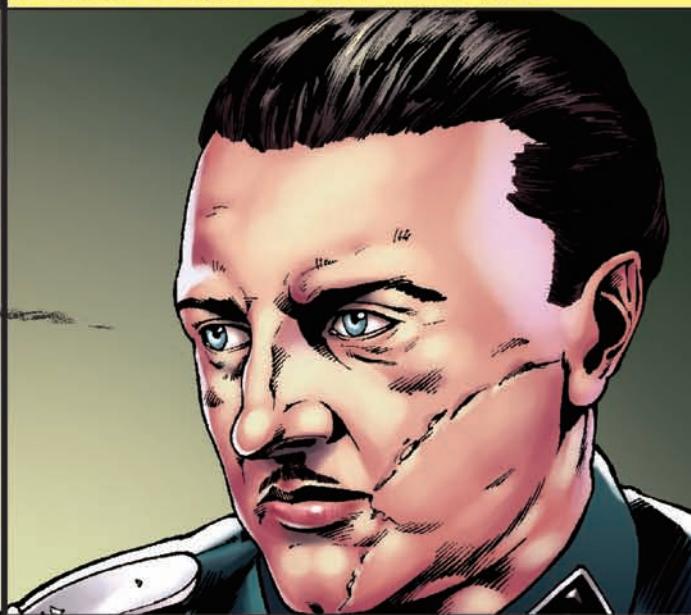


WITH SO FEW MEN, VON DER HYDTE ABANDONED PLANS TO TAKE THE CROSSROADS. INSTEAD, HE ORGANIZED A GROUP OF SOLDIERS TO HARASS ALLIED TROOPS.



DESPITE BEING IN GREAT PAIN, VON DER HEYDTE USED HIS EXPERIENCE AS AN AIRBORNE COMMANDER TO SET UP AMBUSHES ALONG IMPORTANT ROADS AND JUNCTIONS.

DECEMBER 17, 1944. AS THE WORD SPREAD THAT A MAJOR ATTACK WAS HAPPENING, THE GERMANS LAUNCHED A SUPPORTING ATTACK CALLED OPERATION GRIEF.

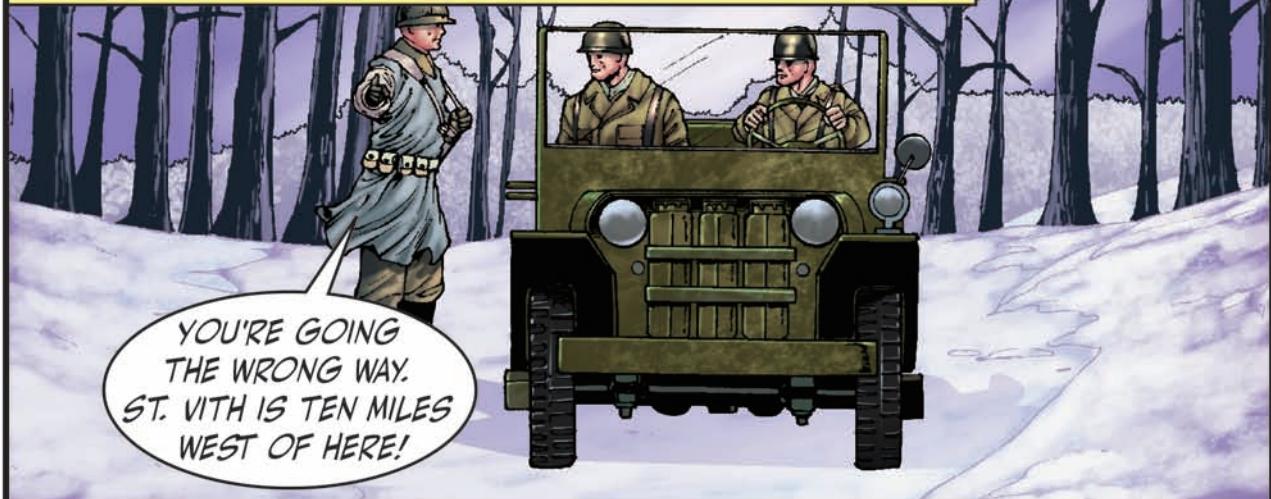


THIS OPERATION WAS LED BY COLONEL OTTO SKORZENY, CALLED BY MANY, BOTH AXIS AND ALLIED, "THE MOST DANGEROUS MAN IN EUROPE."

ABOUT 24 GERMANS WHO SPOKE ENGLISH SNEAKED INTO THE ALLIED AREA, WEARING U.S. UNIFORMS.



THEY SPREAD CONFUSION BY MISDIRECTING U.S. TROOPS AND ATTEMPTING TO HOLD BRIDGES FOR THE GERMANS.



RUMORS QUICKLY SPREAD THROUGHOUT U.S. FORCES IN THE REGION.



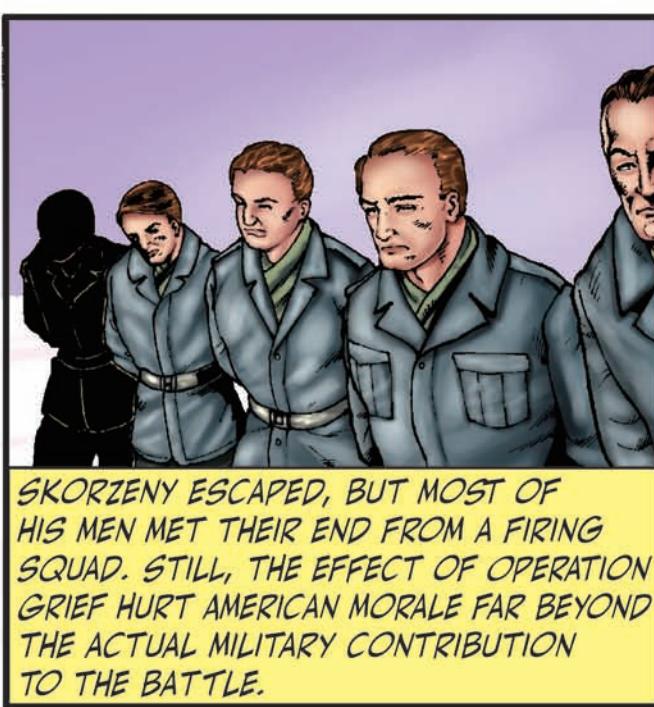
TO IDENTIFY THE DISGUISED GERMAN COMMANDOS, U.S. SOLDIERS ASKED QUESTIONS THAT ONLY AMERICANS COULD ANSWER, LIKE THE NAME OF MICKEY MOUSE'S GIRLFRIEND, THE WORLD SERIES WINNER, OR THE CAPITOL OF ILLINOIS.



THESE QUESTIONS LED TO THE BRIEF DETENTION OF GENERAL OMAR BRADLEY, WHEN A G.I. INSISTED THAT THE CAPITOL OF ILLINOIS WAS CHICAGO.



DESPITE THE EARLY PANIC CREATED BY SKORZENY'S COMMANDOS, THE INCREASED SECURITY LED TO THE CAPTURE OF MOST OF HIS MEN.



SKORZENY ESCAPED, BUT MOST OF HIS MEN MET THEIR END FROM A FIRING SQUAD. STILL, THE EFFECT OF OPERATION GRIEF HURT AMERICAN MORALE FAR BEYOND THE ACTUAL MILITARY CONTRIBUTION TO THE BATTLE.

NEAR THE TOWN OF MALMEDY, BELGIUM, GERMAN SS COLONEL JOCHEN PEIPER CAPTURED ABOUT 120 AMERICAN SOLDIERS GUARDING A FUEL DEPOT.



AS PEIPER MOVED AHEAD, HIS SS OFFICERS ORDERED THE AMERICANS TO MARCH INTO AN OPEN FIELD.

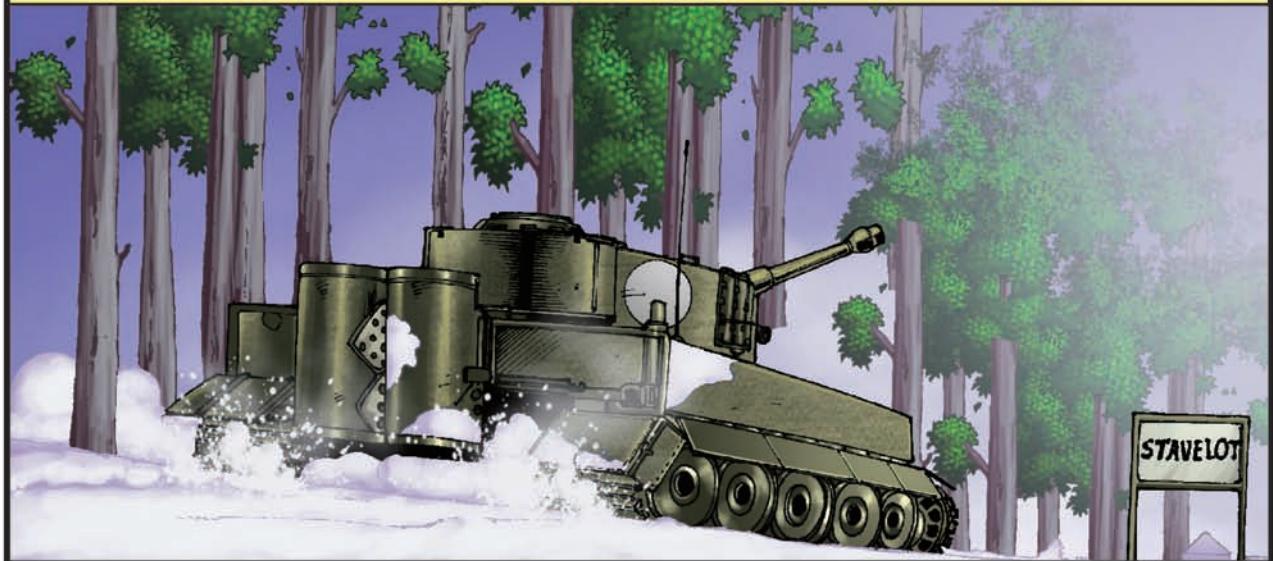


THE AMERICANS TRIED TO ESCAPE INTO THE WOODS, BUT 84 WERE KILLED.

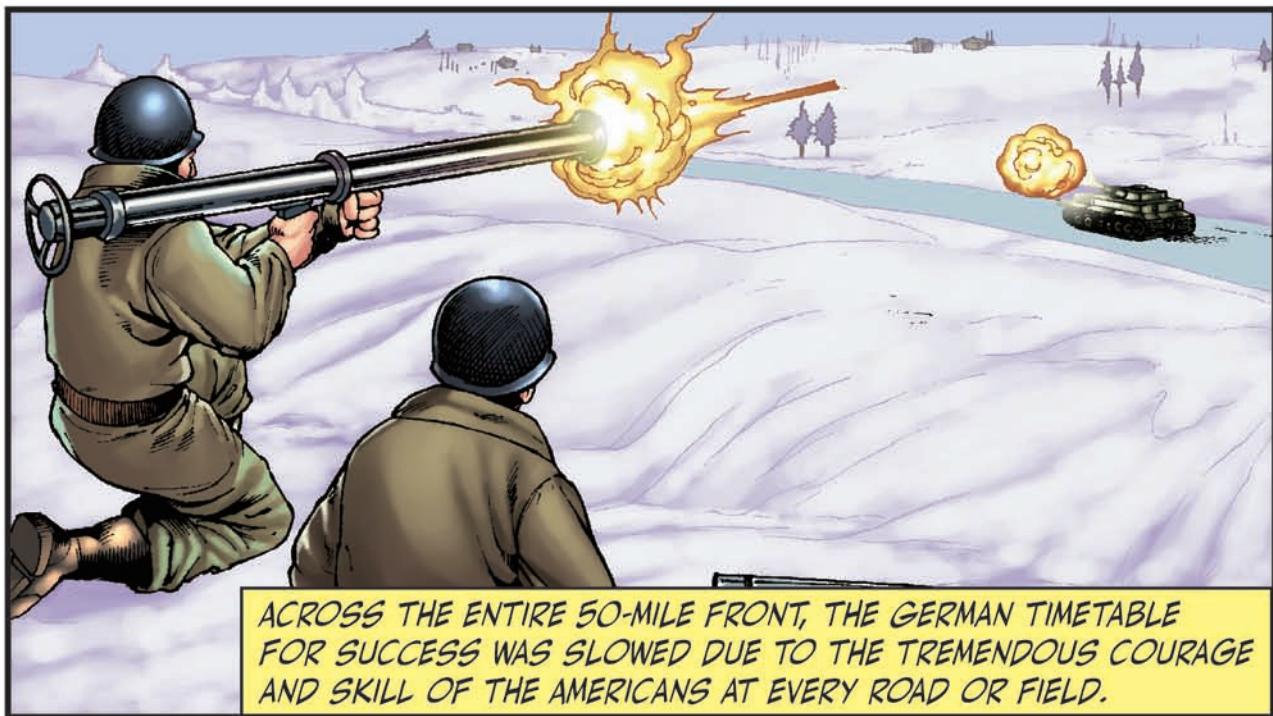


FROM THE AMERICAN POINT OF VIEW, THE MASSACRE AT MALMEDY IS THE MOST INFAMOUS EVENT OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE. ONE AMERICAN SURVIVOR WROTE, "IT TAKES A LONG TIME TO KILL 100 MEN, EVEN WHEN YOU USE MACHINE GUNS."

DECEMBER 18-19, 1944. PUSHING AHEAD TOWARD THE BELGIAN TOWN OF STAVELOT, PEIPER HOPED TO CAPTURE ALLIED FUEL SUPPLIES.



HE ENCOUNTERED STIFF RESISTANCE AND WAS FORCED TO TURN BACK WHEN U.S. ENGINEERS DESTROYED THE ONLY BRIDGE LEADING INTO THE TOWN.



ACROSS THE ENTIRE 50-MILE FRONT, THE GERMAN TIMETABLE FOR SUCCESS WAS SLOWED DUE TO THE TREMENDOUS COURAGE AND SKILL OF THE AMERICANS AT EVERY ROAD OR FIELD.

DECEMBER 16. U.S. PRIVATE FIRST CLASS HARRY ARVANNIS GRABBED A MORTAR WITH A MISSING BASE PLATE AND FIRED 30 ROUNDS AT THE GERMANS BY HAND, HOLDING THE TUBE BETWEEN HIS KNEES.



SEEING THAT ARVANNIS WAS OUT OF MORTAR ROUNDS, THE REMAINING GERMANS PUT BAYONETS ON THEIR RIFLES AND CHARGED HIS POSITION.

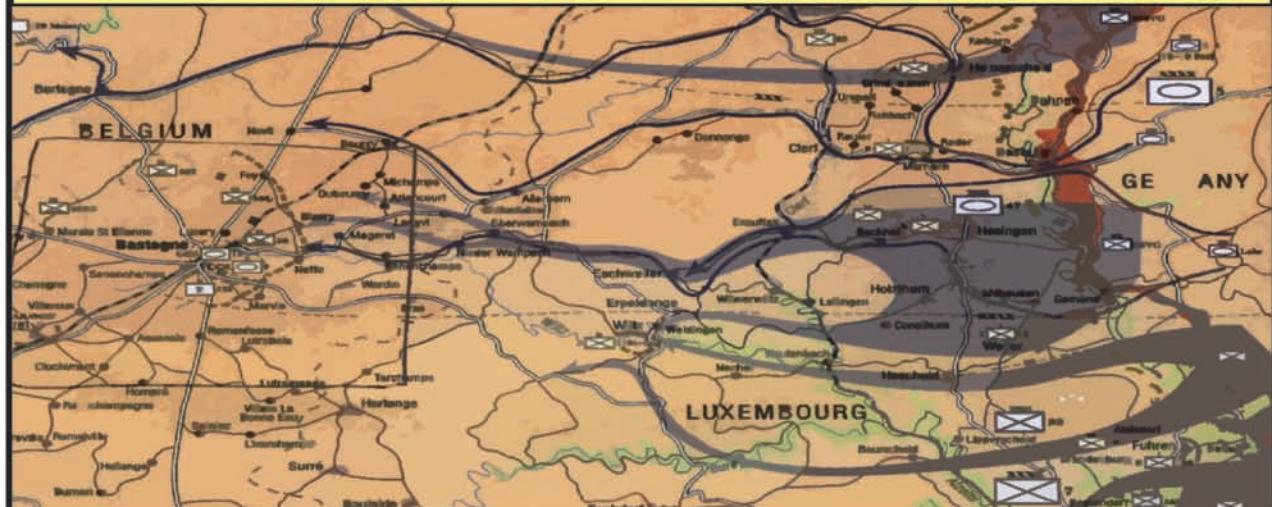


WITH ONLY HIS PISTOL REMAINING, PFC ARVANNIS FIRED UNTIL IT WAS EMPTY. HE KILLED THREE OF THE FOUR ATTACKING GERMANS.

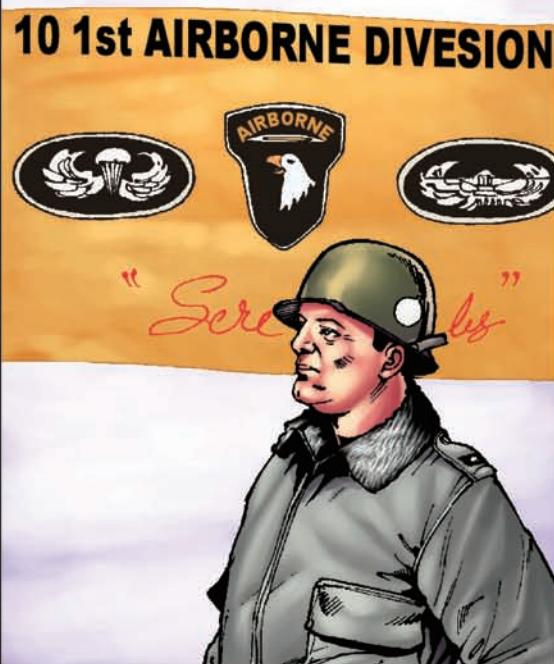


OUT OF BULLETS, ARVANNIS THREW HIS 4-POUND REVOLVER AT THE LAST GERMAN, HITTING HIM ON THE FOREHEAD AND KILLING HIM INSTANTLY.

MORE AND MORE, EISENHOWER SAW THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SMALL BELGIAN TOWN OF BASTOGNE AND ITS CROSSROADS.



EISENHOWER ORDERED GENERAL ANTHONY McAULIFFE AND THE 101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION TO MOVE INTO BASTOGNE IMMEDIATELY.



DECEMBER 18. GENERAL McAULIFFE AND HIS TROOPERS ARRIVED IN BASTOGNE MERE HOURS BEFORE THE GERMANS.



DECEMBER 19. CAPTAIN LEE BERWICK'S UNIT WAS OUT OF AMMUNITION WHEN HE SAW ABOUT 100 GERMANS COMING TOWARD HIM.



BERWICK DECIDED TO FOOL THE GERMANS INTO BELIEVING THEY HAD WALKED INTO A TRAP.



STANDING FACE TO FACE WITH THE ENEMY, BERWICK WARNED THAT A "MASSIVE ATTACK FORCE" WAS WAITING TO KILL THEM IF THEY DID NOT SURRENDER IMMEDIATELY.



THE GERMANS BELIEVED BERWICK. HE CAPTURED 102 SOLDIERS AND TWO OFFICERS, TAKING THEIR WEAPONS TO CONTINUE THE FIGHT!

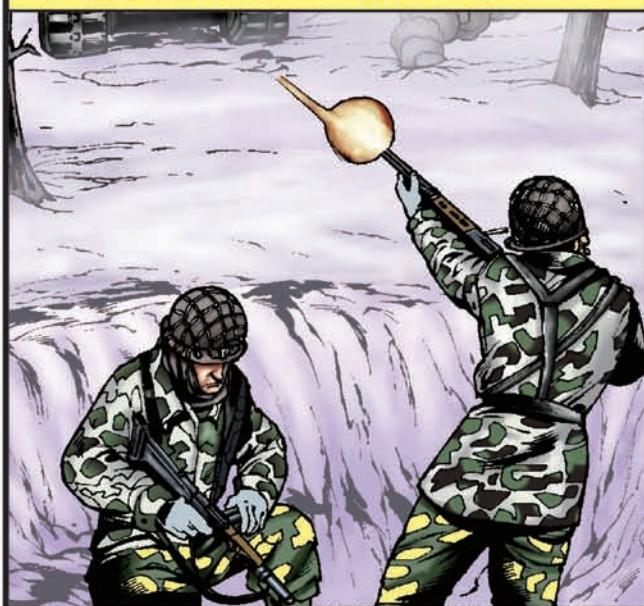


GENERAL EISENHOWER WAS THE ONLY AMERICAN OFFICER WHO SAW SOMETHING POSITIVE ABOUT THE GERMAN OFFENSIVE.

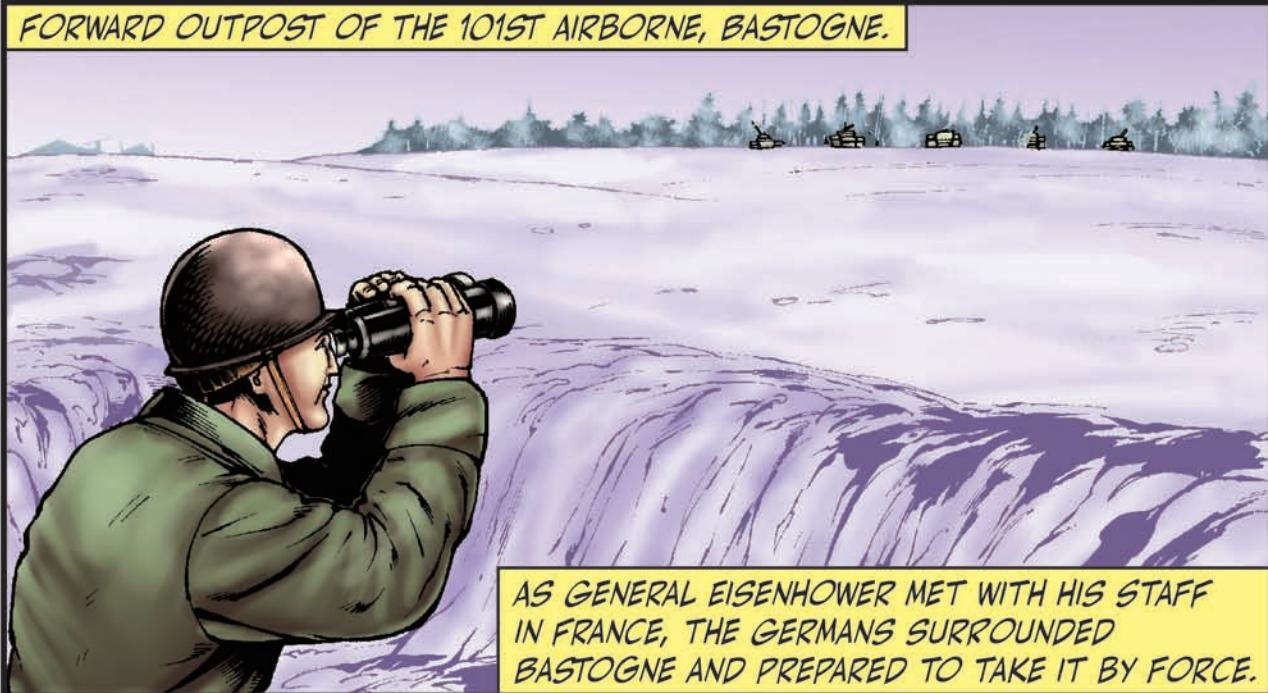
HE KNEW IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO FIGHT THE GERMANS IN THEIR WELL-PREPARED DEFENSIVE POSITIONS.



HE ALSO KNEW THAT BY ATTACKING ALLIED POSITIONS, THE GERMANS WOULD EXPOSE THEMSELVES TO COUNTERATTACK.

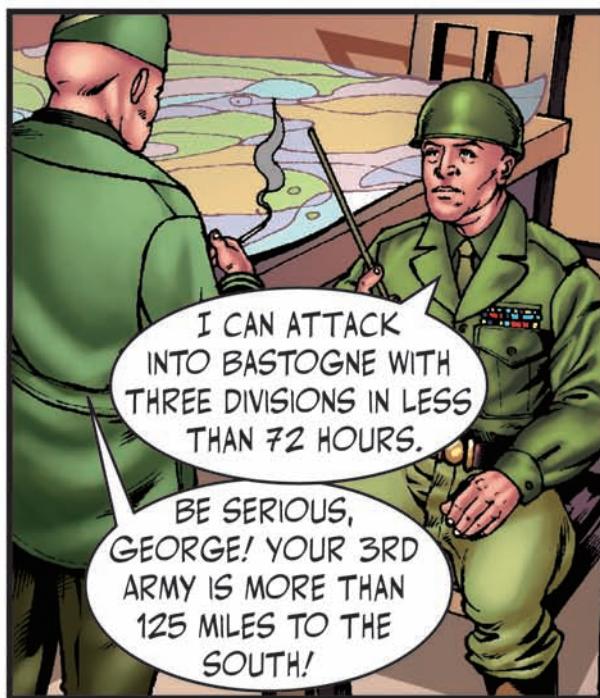


FORWARD OUTPOST OF THE 101ST AIRBORNE, BASTOGNE.



AS GENERAL EISENHOWER MET WITH HIS STAFF IN FRANCE, THE GERMANS SURROUNDED BASTOGNE AND PREPARED TO TAKE IT BY FORCE.

DECEMBER 19, 1944. FROM VERDUN, GENERAL EISENHOWER MET WITH HIS COMMANDERS TO DISCUSS OPTIONS FOR HOLDING BASTOGNE.



DECEMBER 20, 1944. MAJOR ANTHONY PARKER PREPARES TO STOP THE GERMAN ADVANCE AT A CROSSROADS ALONG THE NORTHERN BOUNDARY.



WITH MOST OF HIS UNIT DEAD OR CAPTURED, PARKER GATHERED ALL THE MEN AND EQUIPMENT HE COULD FIND AND TOOK CHARGE.



KNOWING THAT THE GERMANS WOULD ATTACK WITH OVERWHELMING FORCE, PARKER PREPARED AN "ALAMO DEFENSE"—TO FIGHT UNTIL THE LAST MAN WAS DEAD.

PARKER KNEW THAT THE BARAQUE DE FRAITUDE CROSSROADS LAY AT A CRITICAL POINT.



THE GERMANS COULD MOVE IN EITHER DIRECTION TO SURROUND OR PENETRATE THE ALLIED FRONT LINE.

PARKER REFUSED TO RETREAT EVEN THOUGH HE WAS SURROUNDED AND UNDER INTENSE FIRE FROM ALL SIDES.



SERIOUSLY WOUNDED BY MORTAR FRAGMENTS, PARKER'S SACRIFICE WAS NOT IN VAIN.



HIS OUTNUMBERED UNIT HELD FOR TWO DAYS AND SERIOUSLY HAMPERED THE GERMAN ATTACK TIMETABLE.

FARTHER SOUTH, LIEUTENANT ERIC F. WOOD, SURROUNDED AND CAPTURED BY GERMAN INFANTRY, MADE A MAD DASH FOR THE SAFETY OF THE FOREST.



SUCCESSFULLY REACHING THE FOREST, WOOD HID FROM THE GERMANS AND KEPT MELTING DEEPER AND DEEPER INTO THE THICK FOREST.



GIVEN FOOD AND SHELTER BY SEVERAL BELGIAN FAMILIES, WOOD GATHERED INFORMATION ABOUT NAZI POSITIONS IN THE AREA, AND HE DEVELOPED A PLAN.



OVER THE NEXT THREE WEEKS, WOOD WAGED A PRIVATE WAR ON THE GERMANS. HE BECAME A LEGEND TO THE LOCAL BELGIAN PEOPLE.



FINALLY CORNERED AND OVERRUN, WOOD KILLED SEVEN GERMANS WITH HIS LAST SEVEN BULLETS BEFORE DYING FROM MULTIPLE GUNSHOT WOUNDS.



MEANWHILE, ANOTHER BRAVE SOLDIER, CORPORAL HENRY WARNER, WAS REFUSING TO RETREAT FROM HIS OVERRUN POSITION.



OUT OF ANTITANK AMMUNITION, WARNER ATTACKED A THIRD TANK WITH HIS PISTOL, KILLING THE TANK COMMANDER IN A PISTOL DUEL.



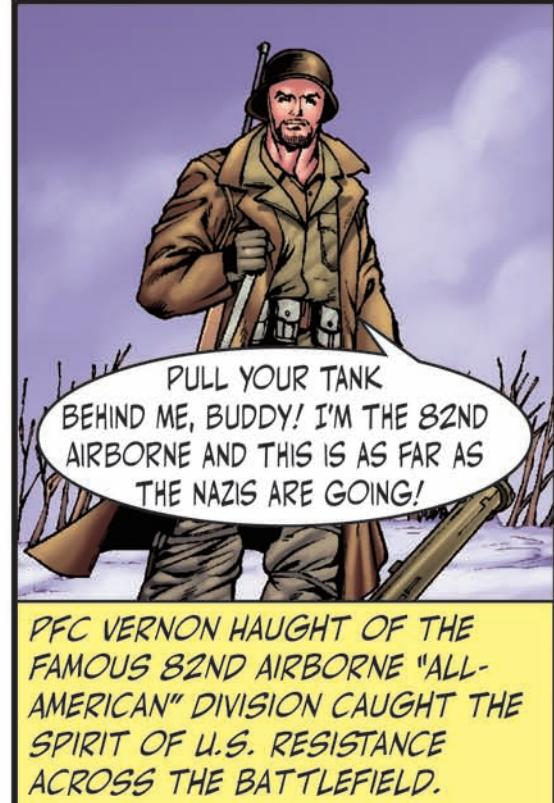
WITH ONLY HIS PISTOL, WARNER FORCED THE TANK TO RETREAT, BUT HE IMMEDIATELY REALIZED THAT HE WAS COMPLETELY SURROUNDED.



MORTALLY WOUNDED, CORPORAL WARNER CHARGED AND WAS FINALLY KILLED. HE WAS ONE OF 19 AMERICANS TO BE AWARDED THE CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR FOR ACTIONS DURING THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE.



THE MAIN GERMAN ATTACK TO THE NORTH WAS HOPELESSLY STALLED BY THE AMERICANS. THEY JUST WOULD NOT GIVE UP.



PFC VERNON HAUGHT OF THE FAMOUS 82ND AIRBORNE "ALL-AMERICAN" DIVISION CAUGHT THE SPIRIT OF U.S. RESISTANCE ACROSS THE BATTLEFIELD.

GENERAL BRUCE CLARKE FINALLY PULLED BACK FROM A HEROIC SIX-DAY STAND IN THE SMALL TOWN OF ST. VITH.



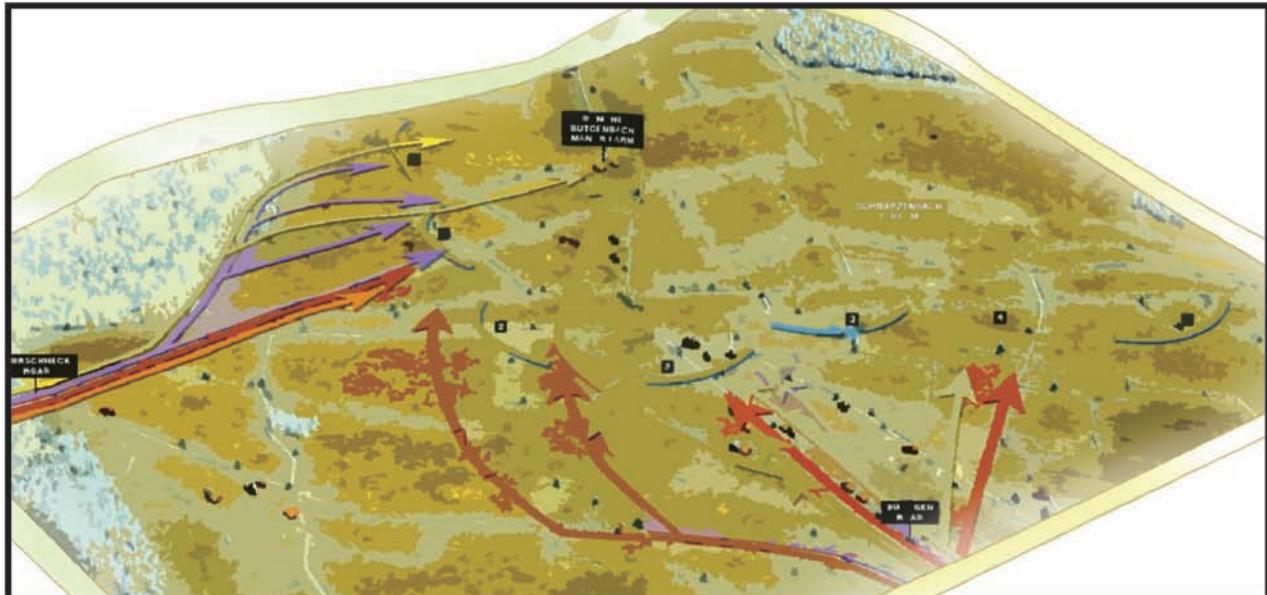
THE SUCCESSFUL STAND OF THE INEXPERIENCED 106TH INFANTRY AT ST. VITH PLAYED A HUGE ROLE IN DESTROYING THE GERMAN PLANS NEEDED FOR SUCCESS.



DECEMBER 21, 1944. UNITS IN THE NORTH BEGIN REPORTING "ALL QUIET" AS THE MAIN GERMAN ATTACK MOVES SOUTHWEST. THIS MOVEMENT CREATED THE "BULGE" IN THE LINE THAT GIVES THE BATTLE ITS NAME.

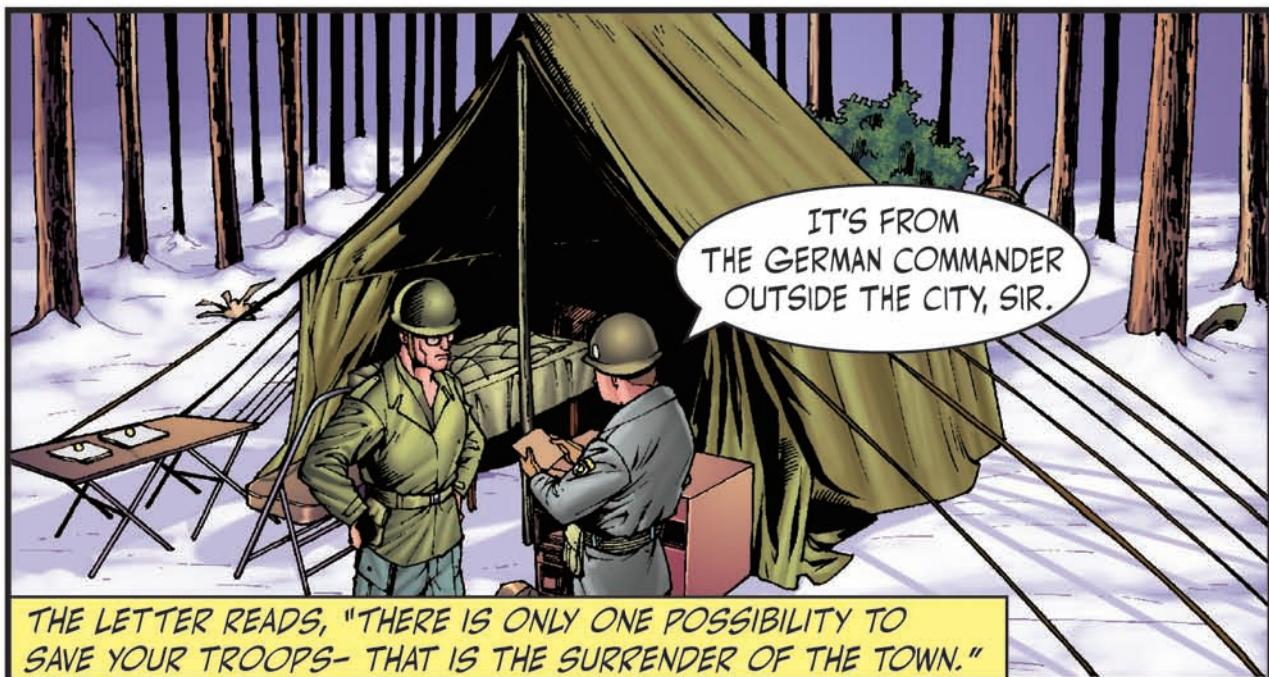


THE NAZI DO-OR-DIE OFFENSIVE WAS HOPELESSLY OFF SCHEDULE.



BY THE MORNING OF DECEMBER 21, HEROIC STANDS BY AMERICAN SOLDIERS HAD STALLED THE GERMAN ADVANCE ACROSS THE ENTIRE LINE.

DECEMBER 22, 1944. AS THE BATTLE RAGED ACROSS BELGIUM AND LUXEMBOURG, ALL EYES TURNED TO THE LITTLE VILLAGE OF BASTOGNE.



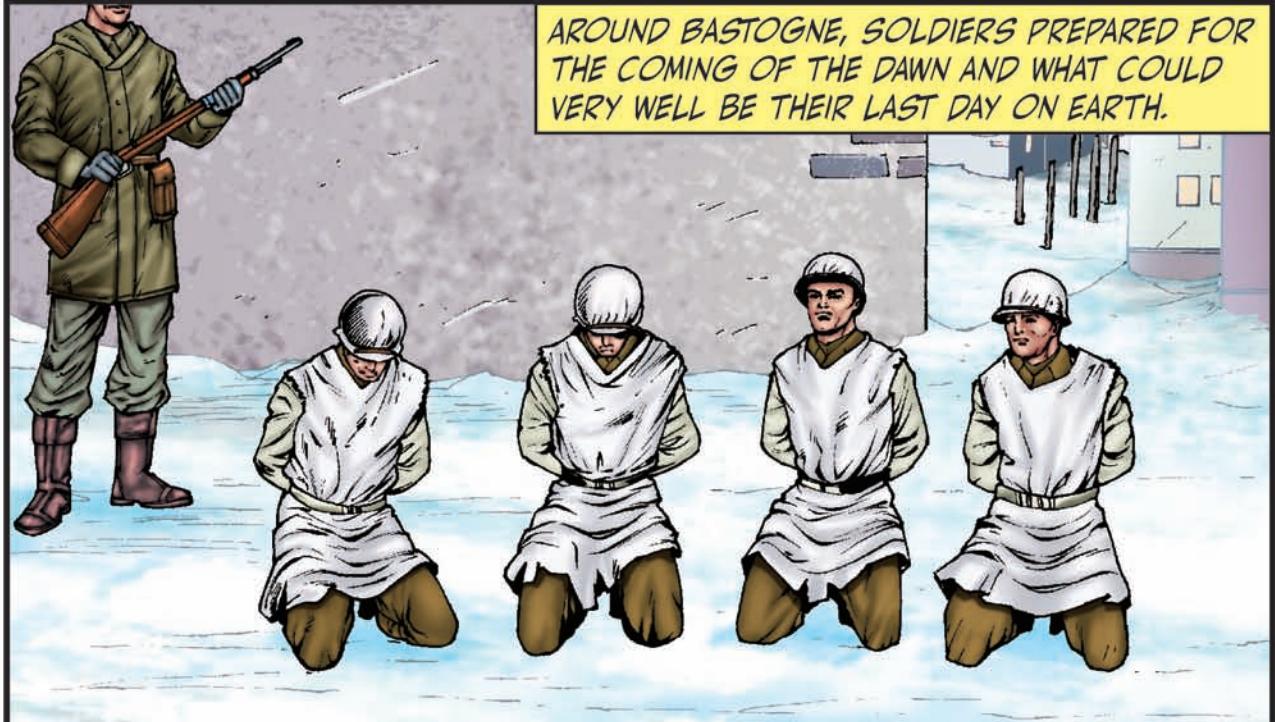
COLONEL HARPER DELIVERED GENERAL MCNAULIFFE'S WRITTEN RESPONSE BACK TO THE GERMANS.



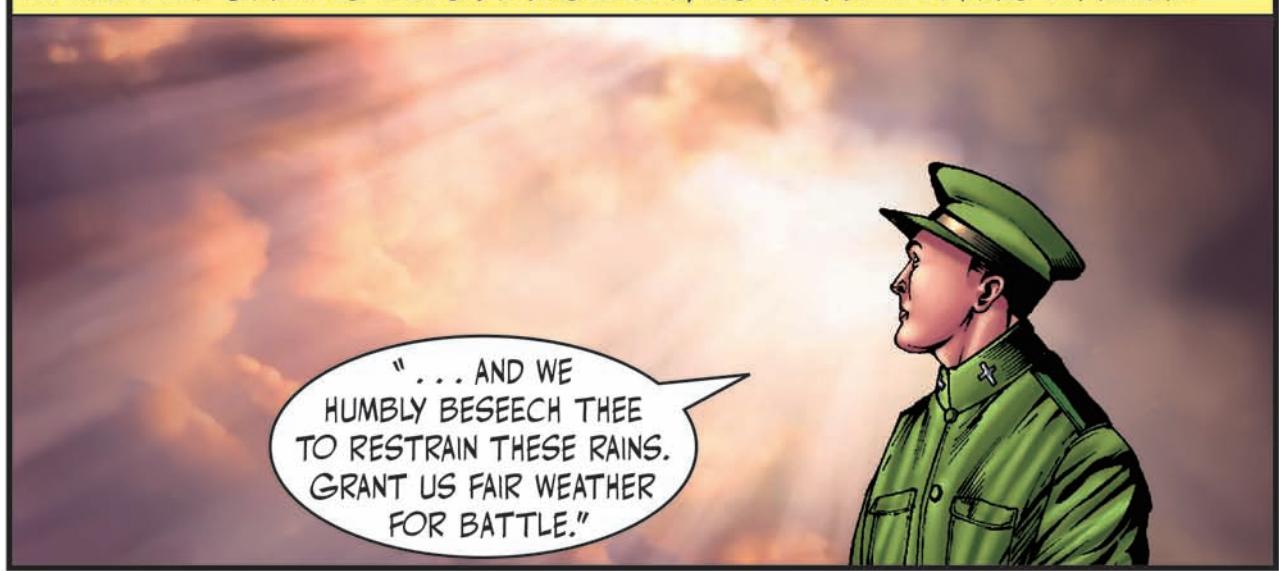
EVEN GENERAL PATTON, MANY MILES AWAY, HEARD OF GENERAL MCNAULIFFE'S "NUTS" REPLY.



AROUND BASTOGNE, SOLDIERS PREPARED FOR THE COMING OF THE DAWN AND WHAT COULD VERY WELL BE THEIR LAST DAY ON EARTH.



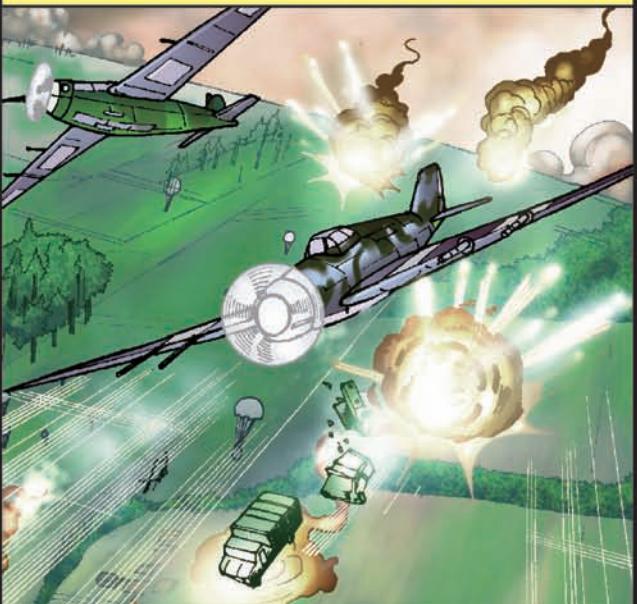
DECEMBER 23, 1944. AS LEAD ELEMENTS OF PATTON'S THIRD ARMY ATTACK THE GERMANS OUTSIDE BASTOGNE, HIS CHAPLAIN OFFERS A PRAYER.



"... AND WE HUMBLY BESEECH THEE TO RESTRAIN THESE RAINS. GRANT US FAIR WEATHER FOR BATTLE."



"HEARKEN TO US WHO CALL UPON THEE THAT WE MAY ADVANCE TO VICTORY, CRUSH OUR ENEMIES AND ESTABLISH JUSTICE AMONG NATIONS."



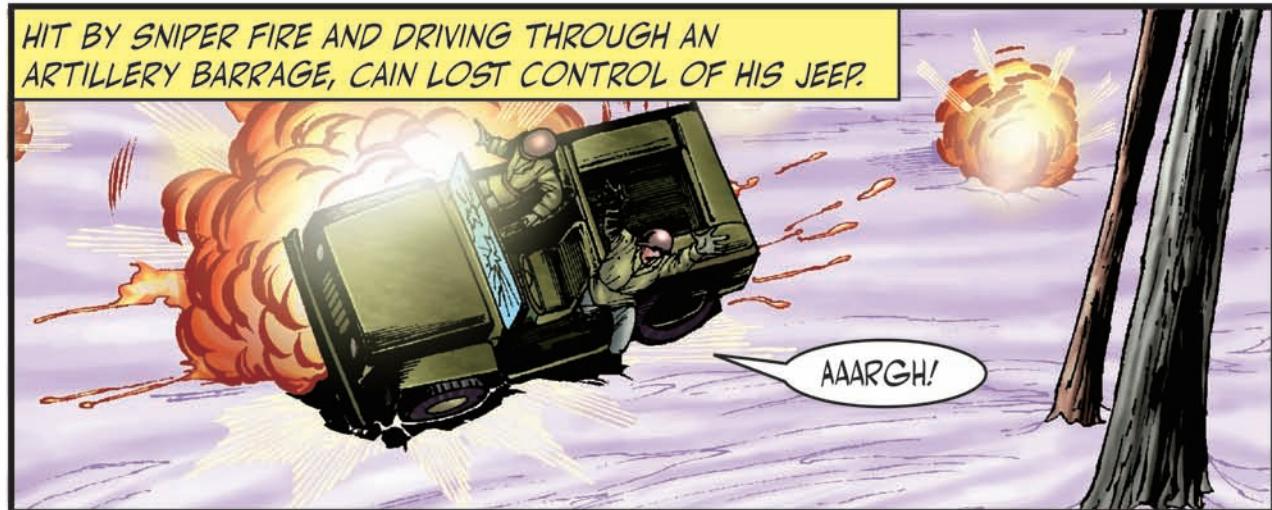
THE SKIES CLEARED. ALLIED AIRCRAFT, GROUNDED DUE TO BAD WEATHER FOR THE LAST WEEK, NOW FILLED THE SKIES.



OUTSIDE BASTOGNE, PRIVATE MAX CAIN WAS ONE OF THE EXHAUSTED BUT MOTIVATED THIRD ARMY SOLDIERS SPOTTING FOR THE ARTILLERY AND DODGING GERMANS AT EVERY TURN.



HIT BY SNIPER FIRE AND DRIVING THROUGH AN ARTILLERY BARRAGE, CAIN LOST CONTROL OF HIS JEEP.



AS A GERMAN SOLDIER WATCHES, CAIN PULLS HIS INJURED LIEUTENANT FROM THE JEEP TOWARD THE SAFETY OF A DITCH.



PRIVATE CAIN WONDERED YEARS LATER IF THE GERMAN SOLDIER MADE IT SAFELY HOME AND WAS THANKFUL FOR WHAT HAPPENED THAT DAY.



ACROSS THE ALLIED FRONT, GENERAL EISENHOWER OFFERED A HISTORIC APPROACH TO GETTING FRESH TROOPS TO FORWARD DEPLOYED UNITS.



AFRICAN-AMERICAN SOLDIERS, ASSIGNED TO OTHER SERVICE UNITS, WERE GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO VOLUNTEER FOR COMBAT DUTY WITH THE INFANTRY.



MORE THAN 4,500 SOLDIERS RESPONDED, MANY TAKING REDUCTIONS IN RANK TO JOIN THE FIGHT. THE OUTSTANDING BATTLE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THESE VOLUNTEERS HELPED PAVED THE WAY FOR THE RACIAL INTEGRATION OF THE U.S. ARMY.



AMERICAN SOLDIERS OF MANY BACKGROUNDS PLAYED AN IMPORTANT PART IN DEFEATING THE GERMANS.



CHRISTMAS DAY, 1944. HEAVY SNOWS BRING A SLIGHT PAUSE TO THE BATTLE AS THE SURROUNDING HILLS OF BASTOGNE ARE STRANGELY QUIET.

DO YOU
HEAR THAT?

I DON'T
HEAR ANYTHING.

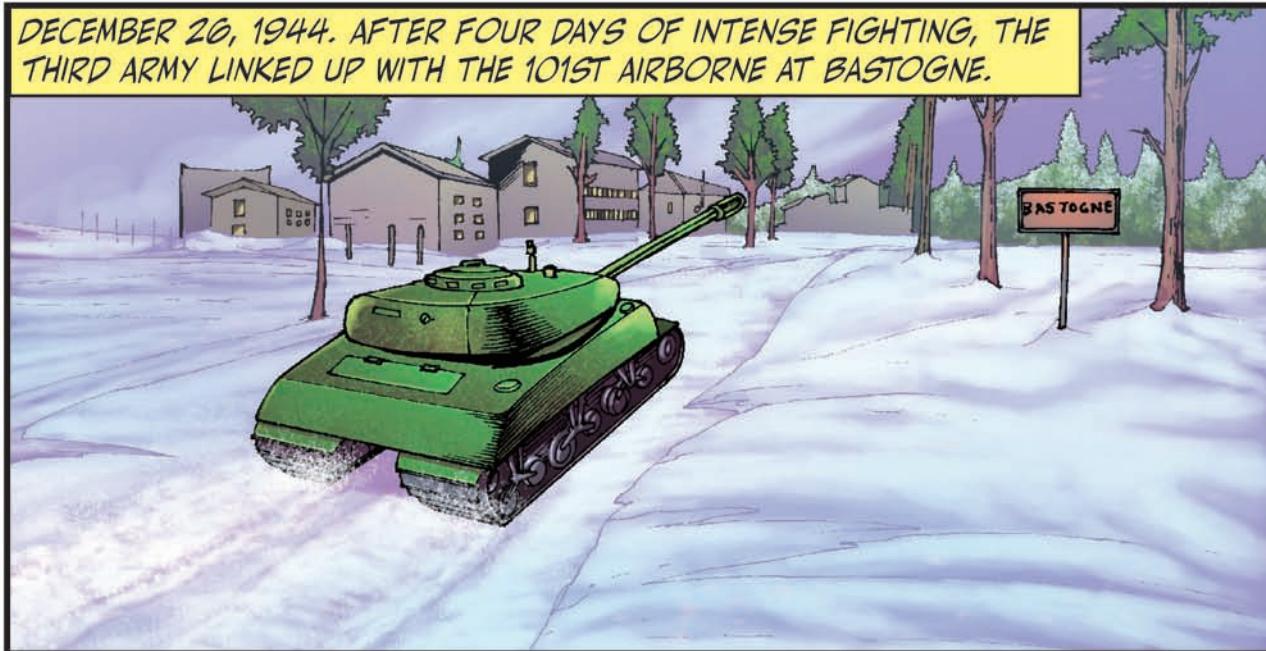
THAT'S MY
POINT. IT'S SO QUIET, YOU
CAN ALMOST FEEL SOMETHING
BIG IS ABOUT TO ... HEY!
DID YOU HEAR THAT?

THAT WAS
NO GERMAN TIGER!
THAT WAS A U.S.
SHERMAN TANK!

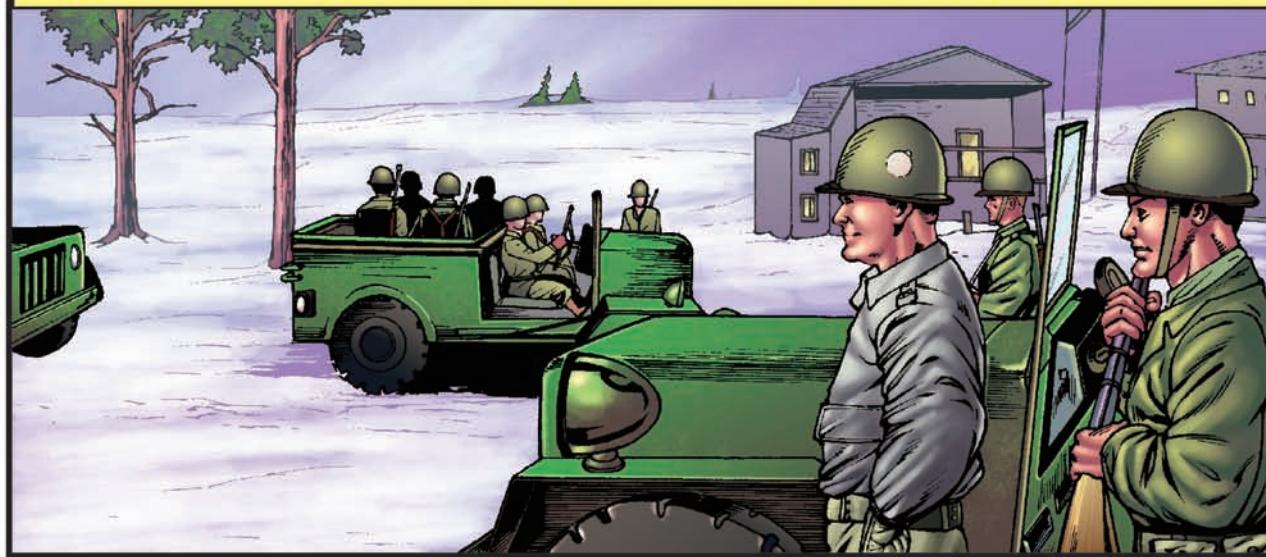
WHAT DOES
THAT MEAN,
JOE?

IT MEANS
THAT THIS IS MY
BEST CHRISTMAS
EVER, SAM!

DECEMBER 26, 1944. AFTER FOUR DAYS OF INTENSE FIGHTING, THE THIRD ARMY LINKED UP WITH THE 101ST AIRBORNE AT BASTOGNE.



CHRISTMAS MAY HAVE COME A DAY LATE FOR THE ALLIES, BUT IT DELIVERED A CELEBRATION THE SOLDIERS AND CITIZENS OF BASTOGNE WOULD NEVER FORGET.



THE SIEGE OF BASTOGNE WAS OVER.

FROM DECEMBER 27, 1944, THROUGH JANUARY 7, 1945, THE ALLIES ATTACKED TO TAKE BACK THE GROUND THEY LOST SINCE DECEMBER 16.



FROM THE NORTH, FIELD MARSHALL MONTGOMERY ATTACKED ON JANUARY 3, TRAPPING THE GERMANS BETWEEN THE BRITISH AND U.S. ARMIES.



SOME GERMAN UNITS TRIED TO HOLD THEIR GROUND BUT THEY WERE COMPLETELY WIPE OUT.



AS THE FIGHTING WOULD DOWN, GENERAL BRADLEY, 12TH ARMY GROUP COMMANDER, WROTE:

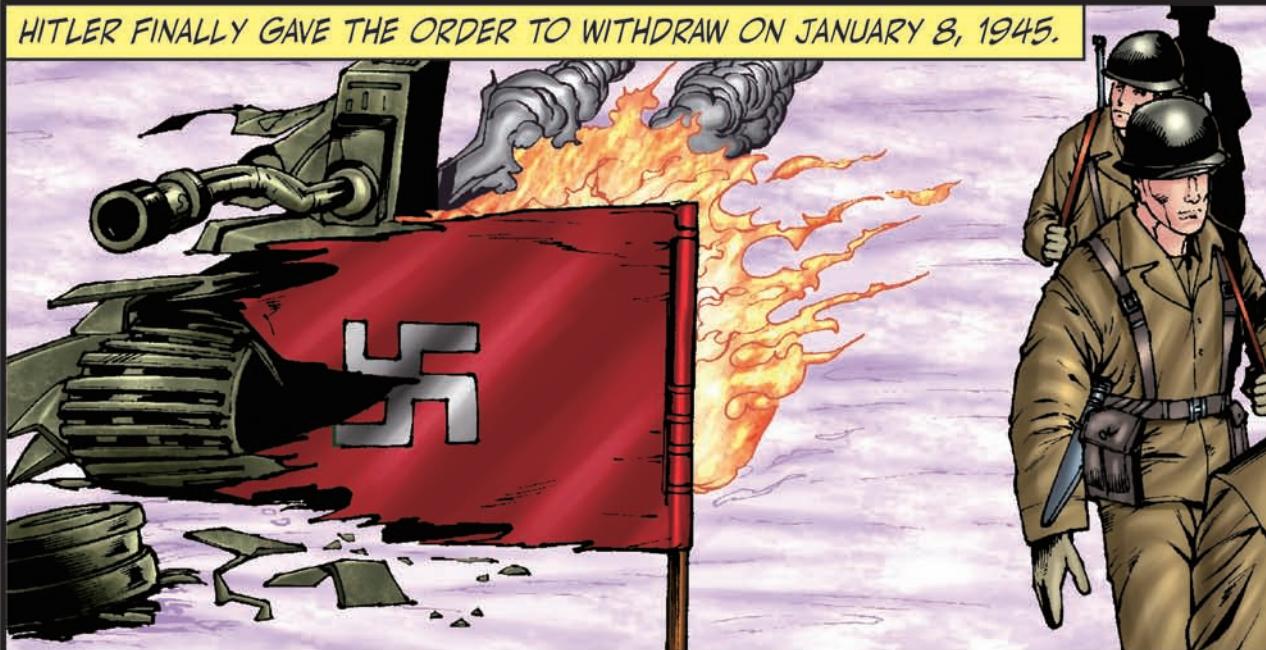


"OUR ASSESSMENT OF THE ENEMY INTENT TO LAUNCH A MAJOR ATTACK WAS WRONG, BUT OUR ESTIMATE OF HIS CAPABILITIES WAS CORRECT."

AFTER ENLARGING THE ATTACK ROUTES AROUND BASTOGNE, U.S. AND BRITISH TROOPS ATTACKED TO ELIMINATE THE "BULGE" IN THE LINE.



HITLER FINALLY GAVE THE ORDER TO WITHDRAW ON JANUARY 8, 1945.



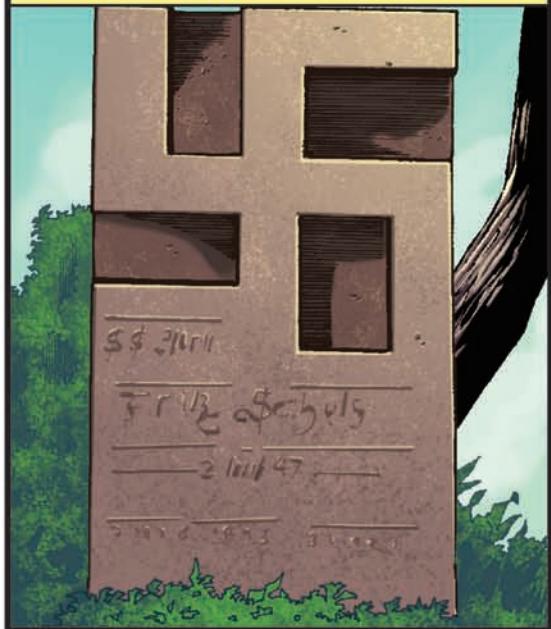
BY JANUARY 30, THE ALLIES HAD ELIMINATED ALL THE GAINS MADE BY THE GERMANS DURING THE ENTIRE ARDENNES CAMPAIGN.



FROM TEEHAUS DEEP IN BAVARIA, HITLER REALIZED THAT HE WOULD SOON FIND HIMSELF AT THE MERCY OF HIS ENEMIES.



IN LESS THAN 30 DAYS OF FIGHTING, 16,000 GERMAN SOLDIERS WERE KILLED AND ANOTHER 41,600 WERE WOUNDED.

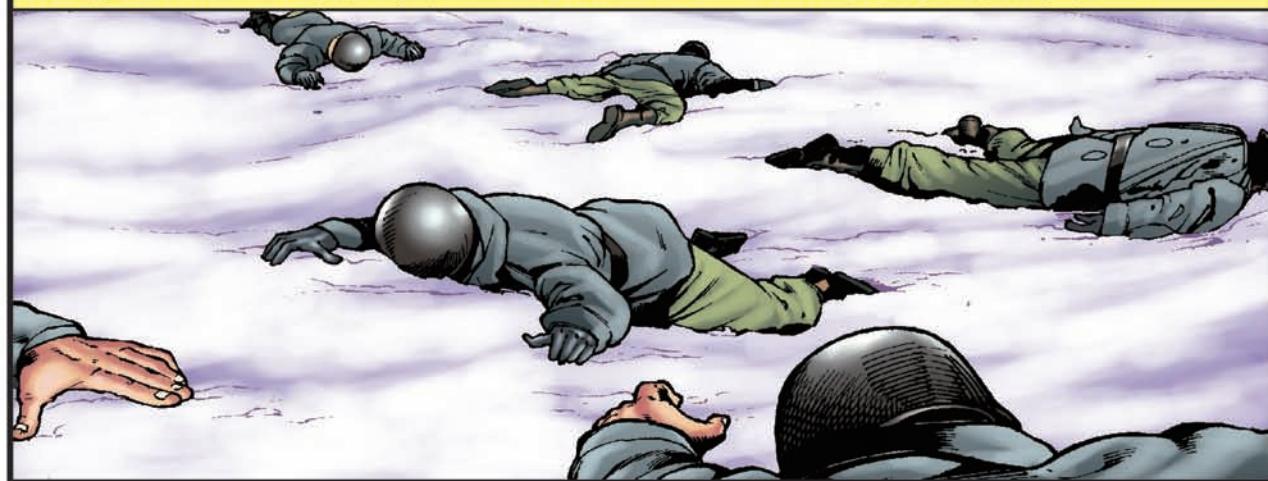


DEFEATED, PEIPER MADE HIS WAY THROUGH ALLIED LINES BACK TO GERMANY. ALTHOUGH HE SURVIVED, HE LEFT HIS TANKS BEHIND.



*IN GERMAN MYTHOLOGY, VALHALLA WAS A HALL IN WHICH GOD ODIN WELCOMED THE SOULS OF KILLED HEROES.

THE LOSS ON THE ALLIED SIDE WAS EQUALLY FEARSOME: 10,276 DEAD AND 47,493 WOUNDED. BUT WHILE THE ALLIES COULD RECOVER, THE GERMANS COULD NOT. THEY JUST DID NOT HAVE ENOUGH MEN OR RESOURCES LEFT.



AFTER THE WAR, REICH MINISTER OF ARMS ALBERT SPEER PUBLISHED A BEST-SELLING BOOK, INSIDE THE THIRD REICH.

THE FAILURE OF THE ARDENNES OFFENSIVE MEANS THE WAR IS OVER.



THE WORD SPREAD QUICKLY THROUGHOUT GERMANY THAT THE WAR WAS LOST.



NO LONGER STRONG AND CONFIDENT, HITLER ABANDONED HIS EAGLE'S NEST FORTRESS AND TOOK REFUGE IN HIS BERLIN BUNKER. HE WOULD NEVER LEAVE ALIVE.

AS THE ARDENNES OFFENSIVE FAILED, THE MUCH-DREADED INVASION FROM RUSSIA WAS UNDERWAY.



FROM HUNGARY TO CZECHOSLOVAKIA TO THE GERMAN BORDER, THE RUSSIAN ARMY SWARMED ACROSS EASTERN EUROPE.

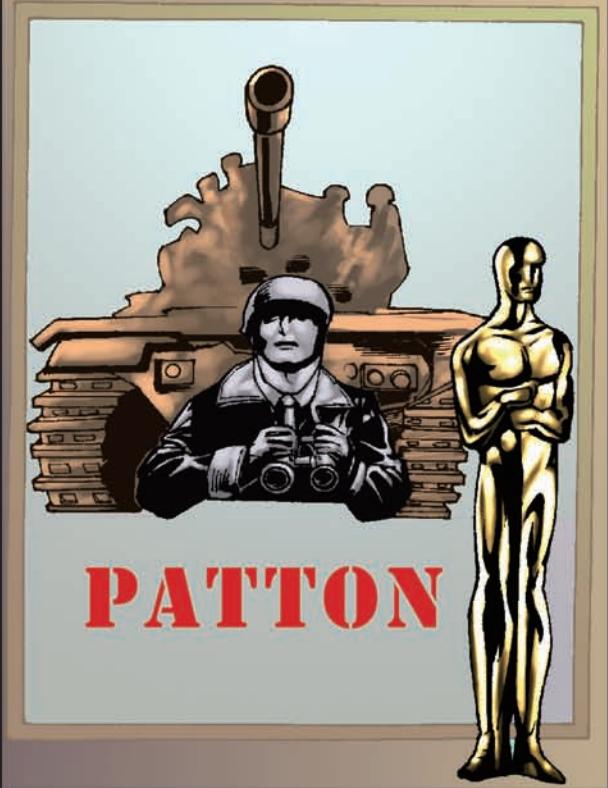
HITLER'S THIRD REICH, DESTINED TO LAST 1,000 YEARS, DIED AT THE AGE OF 12.



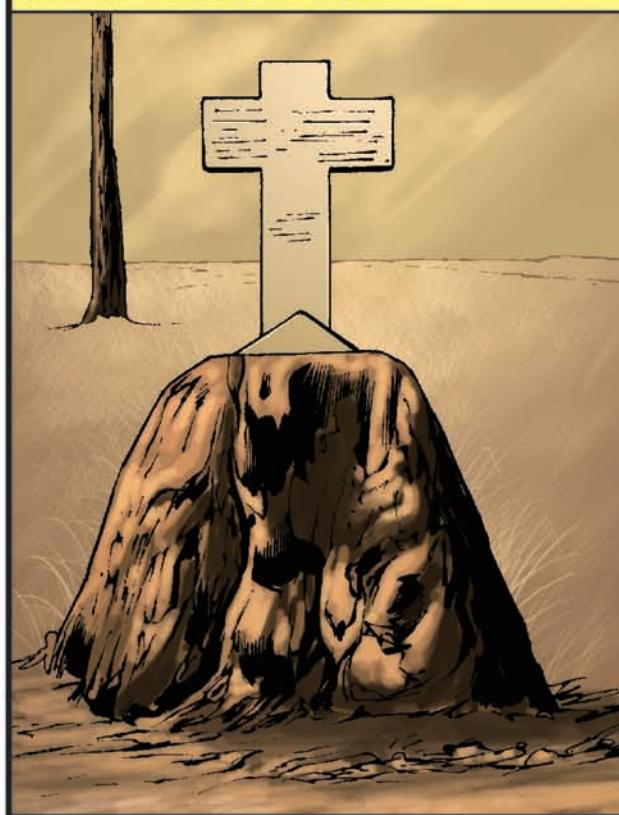
GENERAL PATTON WAS KILLED IN A CAR ACCIDENT IN 1945 AND IS BURIED WITH 5,000 FELLOW BULGE HEROES IN HAMM CEMETERY, LUXEMBOURG.



HE BECAME AN IMPORTANT AMERICAN SYMBOL OF MILITARY COURAGE. THE 1970 MOVIE OF HIS LIFE WON MANY ACADEMY AWARDS.



IN THE BELGIAN FOREST WHERE LIEUTENANT ERIC WOOD DIED, A SMALL MONUMENT READS, "ERIC FISHER WOOD, U.S. ARMY, WHO FOUND A HERO'S DEATH AFTER UNSPARING SINGLE-HANDED COMBAT."



HE WAS THE ONLY AMERICAN IN WORLD WAR II TO RECEIVE THE CROSS OF CHEVALIER OF THE BELGIAN ORDER OF LEOPOLD I WITH GOLD PALM, BELGIUM'S HIGHEST AWARD.



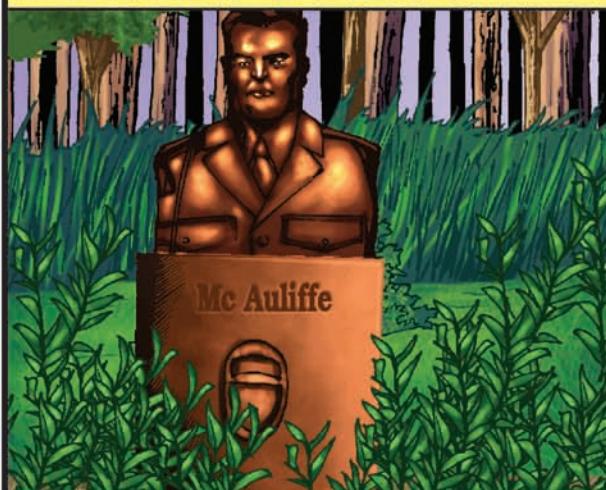
MAJOR ANTHONY PARKER SURVIVED HIS WOUNDS AND RETURNED TO TAKE COMMAND OF THE 589TH ARTILLERY BATTALION.



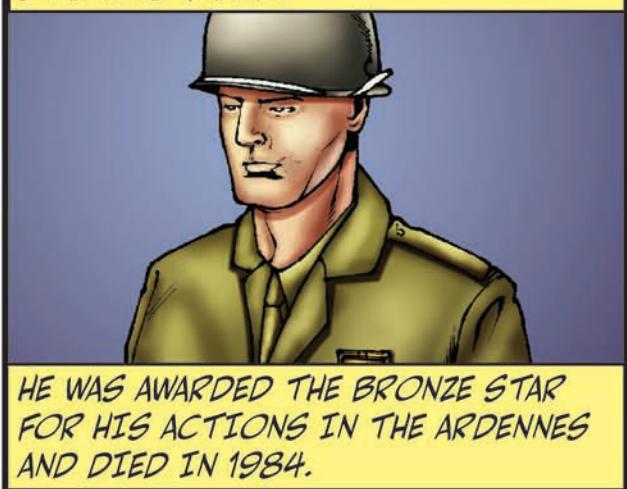
YEARS LATER, GENERAL JAMES GAVIN, COMMANDER OF THE 82ND AIRBORNE DIVISION DURING THE BATTLE, WROTE THAT PARKER'S STAND "WAS ONE OF THE GREATEST ACTIONS OF THE WAR."



THE CITY OF BASTOGNE NAMED THEIR TOWN CENTER "MC AULIFFE SQUARE." GENERAL MC AULIFFE IS CELEBRATED EVERY YEAR ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF HIS LEGENDARY "NUTS" REPLY.

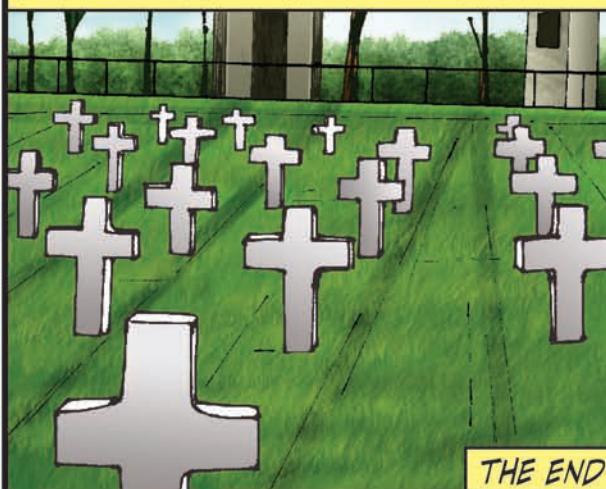


MAX CAIN RETURNED HOME IN 1946. THE MONEY HE SENT HOME WHILE AT WAR SAVED THE LIFE OF HIS STARVING FAMILY.



HE WAS AWARDED THE BRONZE STAR FOR HIS ACTIONS IN THE ARDENNES AND DIED IN 1984.

THE HAMM CEMETERY IN LUXEMBOURG PROVIDES THE FINAL RESTING PLACE FOR OVER 5,000 AMERICANS WHO DIED DURING THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE.



THE END

AFTER THE BATTLE

The great German offensive had been defeated, although it was not until mid-January that the Allies were able to recapture all the areas that had been taken. By that time the war had moved on—the Germans launched another smaller offensive in Alsace (codenamed Operation Nordwind) which never achieved its objectives. On January 12th, the Soviet Union began its great offensive in the east, in which the Russians drove deep into Poland and German-occupied East Prussia. The eastern and western Allies were now closing in on the German heartland.

The Battle of the Bulge had bled the German army dry on the western front, and it was now hard-pressed to prevent the Allies from crossing the River Rhine, the German troops withdrew on Hitler's orders when he knew the battle was lost. The Americans began a slow but steady advance. (NARA)



traditional western frontier of Germany. The Germans had lost almost 100,000 men in the campaign and almost all their remaining force of tanks. For their part the Americans lost about 80,000 men, enough to weaken their armies but not to prevent them launching their own offensive.

In early February 1945, the British and the Americans attacked all along the Western Front. Montgomery crossed the Rhine north of Germany's industrial region of the Ruhr, while Hodge and Patton launched their own attacks farther to the south. The Americans pushed the Germans back to the Rhine and then swept across it after capturing a bridge at Remagen. If the Germans had remained on the defensive in December 1945, they would probably have had the troops to delay the Allies. However, by concentrating all their best troops and launching them into the attack in the Ardennes meant that once they had been defeated the Germans had no troops left to plug the gap.



▲
U.S. soldiers moved out of Bastogne and further toward the Germans as the great German offensive was defeated. (NARA)

George S. Patton awarded the Distinguished Service Cross to Brigadier General Anthony McAuliffe for his bravery at Bastogne. (NARA)
▼

If the Germans had won the Battle of the Bulge, they might have been able to defeat the western Allies and force them to sign a humiliating peace treaty. However, the Germans probably overestimated their own ability and underestimated the abilities of the Americans. They also did not understand the Allied commitment to win, regardless of the cost. Above all, the Allied victory in the Battle of the Bulge meant that the Germans were now unable to stop the Soviet Red Army or the western Allies from sweeping into Germany, and the war would now be over by April 1945. In the end, the great German offensive designed to salvage a victory in Europe only managed to hasten the collapse of Germany, bringing an end to the evil Nazi regime, which had plunged the world into war.



GLOSSARY

allies	People or countries that give support of each other.	mythology	A popular belief about someone or something.
assessment	An evaluation about something or a situation.	panzer	A German tank used during World War II.
ammunition	Explosives, such as bullets, that are fired from weapons.	paratrooper	A member of troops that are trained to jump from an airplane.
artillery	Large, heavy guns that are mounted on wheels or tracks.	patriotic	About someone who loves his or her country and supports everything it stands for.
bulge	A swollen part of something.	PFC (Private First Class)	The rank of a person in the army that is above a private and below a corporal.
deployed	To have been spread out in battle in a specific formation.	regime	A form of government.
fortress	A place that is strengthened against attack.	resistance	The act of fighting back.
fuehrer	German for leader. Adolf Hitler used this title.	siege	A military attack on a city in order to force it to surrender.
fuel depot	A place for storing fuel.	stand	A fight of resistance.
howitzer	A cannon with a short barrel that is used for firing at high angles.	telegraph	A device for sending messages over long distances.
infantry	The branch of an army trained to fight on foot.	Third Reich	The name for Germany used by the Nazis during the years from January 1933 to April 1945.
integration	The act of incorporating people as equals in society.	treaty	A formal agreement between two or more countries.
mortar	Shots fired from		
rounds	weapons.		

FOR MORE INFORMATION

ORGANIZATIONS

December 1944 Museum

Rue de l'église 7
B 4987 La Gleize,
Stoumont,
BELGIUM
01132 80785191
Web site: <http://www.december44.com/anglais/index.html>

Bastogne Historical Center

Colline du Mardasson
B-6600 Bastogne,
BELGIUM
01132 61211413
Web site:
<http://www.bastognehistoricalcenter.be>

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Toland, John, *Battle: The Story of the Bulge*, Bison Books, 1999.

Zaloga, Stephen J., Campaign 115: *Battle of the Bulge (1)*, Osprey Publishing, 2003

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Perhaps the most striking image of the Battle of the Bulge is one of the massive German Kingtiger tanks advancing through the pine forests of the Belgian border. In many accounts of the battle, the Allies feared the Kingtigers the most. (Howard Gerrard © Osprey Publishing)



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Shiver in the frozen forests of the Ardennes as the German army launches a desperate last assault on the Allied forces in the fight that would become the “Battle of the Bulge.”

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