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INSIDE: AIR ASSAULT EXPERTS DEPLOY • OP REINDEER'S HOOF II

**GUARDS
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CHALLENGE**

Brecon exercise provides a testing end to troops' fit camp



**TRAINEES'
SENSE OF
ADVENTURE**

Phase One students tackle testing outdoor pursuits



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COMING OVER
THE HILL?**

Sturdy-but-agile Ocelot set to roar into life and replace Snatch





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“SSAFA made life a great deal easier for us both.”

Wally, 90, was awarded the Military Medal for his bravery in a dramatic battle outside Brussels on September 3rd 1944. Later, the D-Day Veteran, who had served in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, had a platoon within the Army Training Regiment named after him. Wally is now the main carer for his wife Dolly, and when the couple needed a break he contacted SSAFA Forces Help.

SOLDIER

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Cover picture (left): Iconic poppy petals roll off the production line ahead of Remembrance Sunday

Background image: Soldiers from 1st Battalion, Coldstream Guards tackle the Pen-y-Fan peak
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Size: XS-XXXL. Weight: from 400g. Colour: multi-terrain (Camogrom).



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Est 1945 – incorporating the
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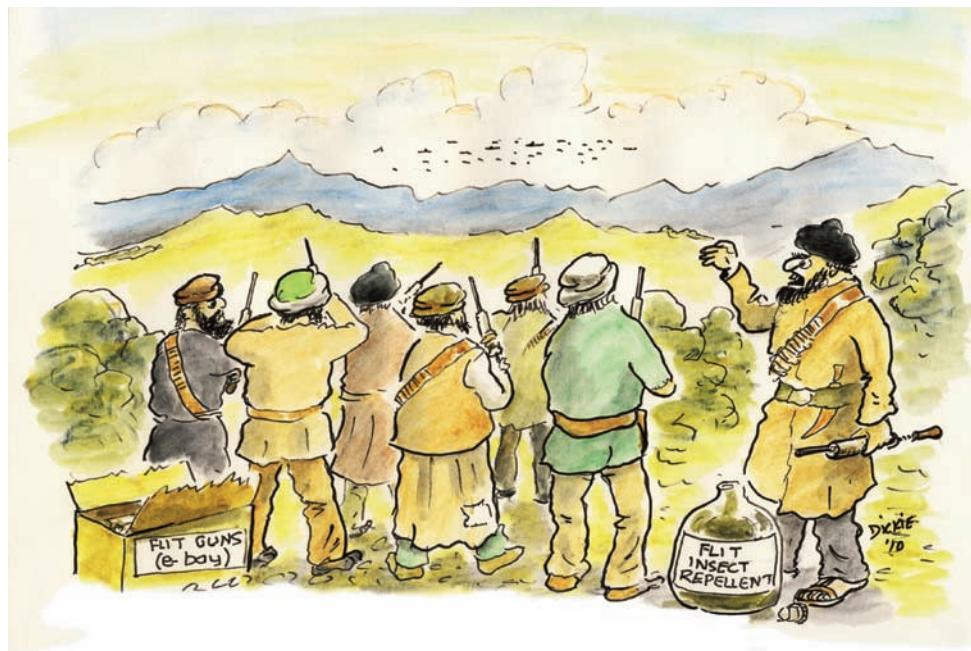
ARMY



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

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"Wait until we see the whites of their eyes, brothers. Squirt on my orders. Any we miss will be dealt with by our giant fly swat." • **Cyber crickets – Pages 31-33**

Embrace the brave new world

AFTER months of nervous anticipation and speculation ranging from the mundane to the extreme, the wait is finally over.

The coalition Government last month unveiled the cuts the military will be expected to make over the next ten years under the terms of the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR).

Taken at face value, things do not look good. Seven thousand soldiers will be out of a job, fleets of heavy artillery and main battle tanks slashed and budgets considerably lowered.

But scratch beyond the surface and there is cause for optimism, cause that has prompted Chief of the General Staff Gen Sir Peter Wall to label the review's outcome as "challenging but workable".

First and foremost, the mission in Afghanistan remains the Government's top priority and troops serving on the front-lines have been assured that they will continue to get all the support they need.

No combat units will be withdrawn from the order of battle and those at the top have pledged to ensure that as many of the 7,000 job cuts as possible are taken up by natural wastage through retirements and people leaving the Service.

More will be known in the coming months, but you can read all about the SDSR and its impact on the Army by turning to Pages 20 and 22.

As all-encompassing as the review process was, it has been heartening to see that it has not obscured Britain's admiration for its Servicemen and women in the build-up to the annual Remembrance period.

An estimated 41 million poppies have been produced to adorn the lapels of men, women and children up and down the country this month and we paid a visit to the Richmond factory responsible for manufacturing them.

By employing several former military

personnel, the Poppy Factory is a shining example of appreciation for the Armed Forces. Find out what goes into making the iconic paper flowers on Pages 39-41.

Jumping into the future, we also spent time with boffins from the United States to examine the next generation of military kit.

As it turns out, our hopes of seeing flying cars and bionic men are not too far off the mark (Pages 35-37), but even our crystal ball had failed to predict the possibility of deploying humble crickets onto the front line (Pages 31-33).

Back in the here-and-now, *Soldier* took a look at how the Army prepares its people for the physical and mental trials of war before and after they deploy.

Whether it is by making them tab over the biggest hills in Brecon (Pages 43-45) or face their fears in confined spaces (Pages 46-47), the training ensures the best of the best are also the fittest of the fit.

And with Christmas fast approaching, November sees the launch of our festive giveaway, *Op Reindeer's Hoof 2*.

Starting next month, *Soldier* readers will be able to win thousands of pounds' worth of amazing prizes kindly donated by Britain's Service-loving companies. Check out Pages 56-57 for more information.

Finally, this will be the final issue of *Soldier* under my editorship. I have been privileged to report on the British Army during such an operationally-busy time and I have met some truly remarkable people along the way.

I leave with immense pride and gratitude for the work you do around the world.

Sincere thanks to you all and I wish you safe and fulfilling careers. You deserve nothing less. ■

'Scratch beyond the surface and there is cause for optimism'

Stephen Tyler, Editor

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THE **informer...**

BRITISH TROOPS' GLOBAL INTELLIGENCE ASSET

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Picture: Sgt Rupert Frere, RLC

Food for thought: Brig James Chiswell talks to Col Amin Jhan, of the Afghan National Army's 3/215 Brigade, during the friendship feast

Army's airborne assets fly into action

SOLDIERS from 16 Air Assault Brigade (16 AAB) are settling into their roles in Afghanistan following the official start of Op Herrick 13.

The troops took over authority for operations in Helmand province from 4th Mechanized Brigade (4 Mech Bde) during a "friendship feast" held at the Lashkar Gah headquarters of the Provincial Reconstruction Team.

Brig Richard Felton, commander of 4 Mech Bde, said that the occasion provided him with an opportunity to say goodbye to his "friends" from the Afghan National Security Forces and local government.

He added: "The partnership and friendship that we have enjoyed with our Afghan counterparts has been exceptional throughout our time here.

"The hard work they have put into improving the lives of the people of

Helmand has been outstanding.

"Without their enthusiasm, determination and willingness to work together, the progress made during the Op Herrick 12 deployment would have been unachievable.

"These relationships will hopefully provide the basis for 16 Air Assault Brigade's tour and will allow them to continue with the progress."

Since arriving in theatre in April, 4 Mech Bde personnel have played a key role in improving the lives of Helmand province's residents.

A series of initiatives to rid highways of improvised explosive devices, build new roads and clear other routes of insurgent activity have provided a significant boost to the economy and allowed governance to spread.

Helmand governor Gulab Mangal said: "Security in Afghanistan means

security in the UK – we have a common enemy and I honour 4 Mech Bde for all they have done to defeat [it]."

Op Herrick 12 also saw Afghan personnel playing an increasingly-important role and 16 AAB will build on the successes by beginning to handover security responsibility to their hosts during 2011.

Brig James Chiswell, commander of 16 AAB, said: "The feast was an ideal opportunity for us to meet the senior figures that we will be living and working with during our deployment.

"4 Mech Bde have done a sterling job over the past six months and it is clear that they have made demonstrable progress both in terms of our relationship with the Afghan community and in the security of Helmand.

"We are very much looking forward to working with our Afghan partners to continue this excellent work."

Since its formation in 1999, 16 Air Assault Brigade has deployed to Sierra Leone, Macedonia and Iraq. It has also served on Op Fingal in Afghanistan in 2002 and completed tours of Op Herrick in 2006 and 2008. ■

120 THE NUMBER OF POLLING STATIONS OPENED TO VOTERS DURING SEPTEMBER'S AFGHANISTAN PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS, AN INCREASE FROM THE 107 AVAILABLE AT THE PREVIOUS BALLOT



IN A NUTSHELL

Force's fittest aim to join elite Army club

In brief

Soldiers taking part in their bi-annual Personal Fitness Tests (PFTs) can aim for membership of the elite 300 Club by hitting specific high scores in the press-up, sit-up and one-and-a-half mile run disciplines. The activities are designed to test core abilities required in the military, including stamina and stability.

Why 300?

All personnel undergoing a PFT have to complete the three challenges and are given a score out of 100 depending on their performance. Meeting the required standard in all three means troops reach the magic 300 mark.

What about gender and age differences?

These have been taken fully into account by the brains behind the 300 Club scheme. Different targets for the amount of press-ups and sit-ups required and a sliding timescale for the run have been introduced for specific age brackets. Likewise, males and females are set different goals in all but the sit-up category. For example, males aged under 30 have to complete 72 press-ups in two minutes to score 100 points, while females between 50 and 54 years of age are required to complete 28.

How tough is it?

Very. The press-ups and sit-ups have to be completed to set military standards, so any repetitions that show poor technique are not counted. In addition, the run requires Servicemen aged under 30 to complete the course at a seriously-quick five-and-a-half-minute mile pace.

What are the rewards?

Aside from the bragging rights of belonging to one of the Army's most prestigious groups, 300 Club members are also entitled to wear a T-shirt marking their achievement. In addition, one member each month wins a pair of trainers.

Does the 300 Club motivate you to reach new heights?
Tell us on Facebook at [www.tinyurl.com/soldiermag](http://tinyurl.com/soldiermag)



Fire drills: Soldiers perfect their close-quarter battle skills at Camp Bastion's innovative training village

Bastion welcomes village people

TROOPS arriving in Helmand for Op Herrick 13 have been put through their paces in a new training village at Camp Bastion.

The facility, which opened in time to be used by soldiers from 16 Air Assault Brigade, is modelled on a genuine Afghan settlement and is used to provide the final part of Service personnel's reception, staging and onward integration training.

Lt Col Didi Wheeler, commanding officer of 2nd Battalion, The Royal Welsh, the unit running the asset, said: "The Afghan village has significantly enhanced our training. It really brings to life what soldiers will be seeing on their upcoming tour. Rather than looking steely-eyed in depth, it's about engaging with the locals on the right and on the left as they patrol through. It gives the troops enormous confidence."

Built under contract by civilian firm KBR, the village is made up of several compounds modelled on those found throughout Helmand province.

Afghan craftsmen were drafted in to construct the area using local materials and the workers have recreated market stalls, a bazaar and workshops.

As many as 50 locally-employed civilians bring the village to life by manning the stalls and playing the part

of residents, while animals including chickens and goats add to the realism.

Soldiers are instructed by staff from the Operational Training and Advisory Group on topics including joint patrols, counter-improvised explosive device skills, medical extractions, shuras and close-quarter battle tactics.

CSgt Needham, who runs the shura stand, said: "It is our link with the people. If we can get the guys all the way up the rank range interacting with the local population, I think 16 Brigade will be doing a great job."

Lt Col Colin Weir, commanding officer of 1st Battalion, The Royal Irish Regiment, highlighted the value of allowing troops to complete some of their training in theatre.

He said: "The village is an exceptionally well-resourced capability and it is being used to its full effect."

"It is much closer to the front line here. It's the correct environment in terms of the temperature, the men have got all the kit and equipment they will deploy with and they're surrounded by the local Afghan population, so it's quite exceptional."

Future improvements planned for the village include cultivating a mini Green Zone using Afghan crops and introducing vehicle checkpoints.



Versatile vehicle: Force Protection Europe's Ocelot combines excellent blast protection with the ability to move quickly through Afghanistan's varied terrain

Agile cat set to join Helmand pack

PLANS to send new light protected patrol vehicles (LPPVs) to the heart of Op Herrick have moved a step closer after the MoD named its preferred bidder for the contract.

Force Protection Europe has been tasked with providing a replacement for the existing fleet of Snatch Land Rovers and Weapons Mount Installation Kit (WMIK) vehicles as part of the Urgent Operational Requirement process.

The first Ocelot vehicles will be available for training in 2011, subject to negotiations being successfully concluded, and will add to the array of protected transport currently used on operations.

Defence Equipment, Support

and Technology Minister Peter Luff said: "Small, agile but highly protected, the LPPV is at the forefront of technology.

"It will offer troops unprecedented levels of blast protection for such a light vehicle, enabling them to carry out tasks while moving with ease through alleyways or crossing bridges.

"It will be a valuable addition to the vehicles already available to commanders in Afghanistan and demonstrates the Government's commitment to providing our troops with the very best equipment on the front line."

There will be two variants of the LPPV – a patrol machine to replace the Snatch-Vixen and a fire support

option to take over from the existing WMIK vehicles.

The patrol variant will have a crew of two and will be capable of carrying four dismounted troops in the rear, including two top cover sentries to provide invaluable situational awareness.

A driver and commander will man the fire support vehicle along with a gunner. There will also be capacity to carry an interpreter or other mission-specific personnel.

Force Protection Europe's vehicle has been designed and developed, and will be manufactured, in the UK. It is estimated that 750 jobs will be created or sustained as a result of the programme.

● Born Free – Pages 54-55

Scots help police progress

PERSONNEL from 5th Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland have been celebrating a successful start to their latest operational tour in Afghanistan.

The soldiers have taken charge of the Helmand Police Training Centre in Lashkar Gar and have already held their first graduation parade for new recruits to the Afghan National Police.

More than 180 freshly-trained officers will be deployed across the province to provide additional security in urban centres while their Afghan National Army colleagues deter the Taliban threat in rural areas.



Chief of Helmand Police General Angar attended the parade along with a number of tribal elders.

The celebration was followed by a demonstration of policing skills from the students, who also displayed their patrolling and emergency response techniques.

"It is incredibly positive to see this sight so early in our tour," said Lt Col Adam Griffiths, commanding officer of 5 Scots.

"To be able to show the tribal elders of Helmand the standard of policemen who will soon be providing security in their towns and villages is great."

NEWS IN BRIEF

ALLIES STRENGTHEN TIES

■ BRITISH Armed Forces are in line to receive improved support after a trade agreement between the United Kingdom and United States moved a step closer to being ratified.

The Defence Trade Cooperation Treaty, which would reduce the red tape involved in military relations, was signed three years ago but the US has yet to formally accept the agreement.

Now the country's Senate Foreign Relations Committee has approved the treaty, which will be considered by both the Senate and House of Representatives.

Defence Secretary Dr Liam Fox said: "We are very keen to continue building upon the already-strong US-UK relationship and this treaty plays a vital part. I am encouraged to see that progress is being made."



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Picture: Cpl Barry Lloyd, RLC

Hearts and minds: A 4th Mechanized Brigade soldier interacts with local children during Op Herrick 12

Black Rats reflect on tour

THE outgoing commander of Task Force Helmand has praised the efforts of the soldiers who served under him on Op Herrick 12.

Speaking to members of the press via video link, Brig Richard Felton, the commander of 4th Mechanized Brigade – the Black Rats – said he felt “immense pride” in his troops’ achievements during their time in southern Afghanistan.

He explained: “They have done the hard yards, not me, and the progress that they have achieved is incredible.”

Brig Felton (pictured) told reporters that his intent on arriving in theatre in April was to protect the Afghan people and isolate them from insurgents.

The officer placed the improvement of the Afghan National Security Forces at the heart of his plan, allowing him to launch a series of consolidation missions focusing on intelligence, communications and counter-IED work at the end of the poppy harvest in June and July.

He said: “We saw a large rise in violence during this period and 37 of the Task Force’s troops were lost. This, as we expected, was the peak of the insurgents’ pressure.”

In response to growing enemy activity, Brig Felton increased the tempo of operations involving International Security Assistance Force troops, including deploying elements of the Theatre Reserve Battalion from Cyprus.

The tactic gave Task Force Helmand the momentum it needed to move into a continuity phase aimed at expanding governance and improving transport links for politicians and civilians, including the continued construction of Route Trident between Lashkar Gah and Gereshk.

The commander said: “We have made considerable progress in this. We have probably quadrupled the number of communities that are now protected.

“But this is intensive both in terms of the equipment and the manpower it needs and we have been working hard with our partners to make sure we can man the various checkpoints and patrol bases that are used within this model.

“The difference [Route Trident] is making, and will make when it is complete, to the local economy and people will be significant.”

Op Herrick 12 saw the number of Afghan National Army soldiers rise by ten per cent, while more than 1,000 police have been trained, many at the Helmand Police Training Centre.

The facility has helped to develop more than 1,200 policemen and 130 non-commissioned officers since opening in December last year.

Brig Felton added: “The product of the college is stark.

These police are well-motivated, have a good ethos, are well-trained and stand out as a beacon within their societies.”



NEWS IN BRIEF



CHILDREN across the UK have portrayed their experiences of Forces life by drawing heartfelt pictures of their Service mums and dads.

The Victory Services Club (VSC) in London invited youngsters to enter a competition giving their own perception of what it is like to have a soldier, sailor or airman for a parent.

The sought-after prize of a week’s accommodation at the club, train tickets to London courtesy of www.hmforces.co.uk, a personal black cab service and activities each day went to six-year-old Morgan Taylor for his drawing, which is pictured above.

On hearing of Morgan’s success, mum, Jen, said: “We have just moved to Catterick and it was their first day in their new school so to be told the news really did make both Morgan and my older son Ethan smile.”

The VSC decided to run the competition to give children a chance to express their feelings about their personal heroes.

Jill Quick, spokesman for the VSC, said: “Children are amazingly perceptive and tell you exactly what they think.”

“Lots of the responses have been very emotional to look at.”

For more information about the VSC, visit www.vsc.co.uk



Picture: Crown Copyright

Troops mark Hindu date

GURKHAS serving in Helmand have celebrated a Nepalese holy festival.

Soldiers from 1st Battalion, The Royal Gurkha Rifles based in the Nahr-e Saraj area marked the event in their checkpoints and patrol bases, setting up small temples for worship and blessings.

Dashain takes place each year in September or October and the main celebration observes the victory of the gods over wicked demons that harassed mankind in ancient times.

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Ford Kuga 2.0 TDCi Titanium 2WD with Appearance Pack, Convenience Pack, Bluetooth USB, 18" Alloys, various colours
Ford Galaxy 2.0 TDCi Zetec, Panther Black



Honda

Honda Jazz 1.4 ES 5dr, Milano Red
Honda Civic 1.4 Si 5dr, various colours
Honda Civic 1.8 Type S GT, various colours
Honda Accord 2.2 EX i-DTEC 4dr, Cobalt Blue
Honda CR-V 2.2 EX i-DTEC, various colours



SEAT

SEAT Ibiza SC 1.2 S A/C, various colours
SEAT Ibiza SC 1.4 Sport A/C, various colours
SEAT Ibiza SC FR 1.4 TSI DSG, Track Grey or Speed Blue
SEAT Leon 1.6 TDCi SE 5dr, Black Magic or Luna Grey
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Picture: Cpl Mark Webster RLC

Battle beast: Integrated Survivability Technologies' Wolfhound expertly combines firepower and space

Wolfhound joins the pack

THE Army's newest vehicle has rolled into action in Afghanistan at the beginning of Op Herrick 13.

Wolfhound, the biggest member of the tactical support vehicle family which includes Coyote and Husky, combines the firepower and protection of a Mastiff with the ability to carry extra cargo on its flatbed base.

An initial order for 100 of the six-wheeled assets was increased by 30 in June and delivery to theatre is expected to be completed by next autumn.

Defence Secretary Dr Liam Fox said: "Wolfhound's deployment on the front line marks a significant milestone for the range of vehicles our troops have at their disposal.

Carrying essential combat supplies such as food, water and ammunition, the tactical support vehicle fleet is providing vital support to troops on front-line patrols.

"Husky and Coyote have already proved to be great assets and the further protection offered by Wolfhound demonstrates our ongoing commitment to ensuring our troops have the best equipment available."

Built by Integrated Survivability Technologies, Wolfhound comes equipped with a 7.62 general purpose machine gun and hi-tech equipment including electronic counter measures and tactical satellite navigation.

The vehicle has already made an impression on soldiers from the 2nd Royal Tank Regiment, who are among the first to unleash it in Helmand.

Sgt David Roberts said: "We can carry extra food, water and ammunition and stay out on the ground for longer. We can also transport more of the lads' kit between checkpoints, all with the same fighting capability as Mastiff."

Chief of the General Staff, Gen Sir Peter Wall, said he was "delighted" to see Wolfhound roar into service.

He added: "This highly-protected transport vehicle is a critical addition to the range of vehicles available to commanders in Afghanistan and complements the Mastiff and Ridgback fleets very well.

"We continue to develop our vehicle fleets in light of experience and the evolving threat. This is another important step down that path."

Policy affords troops extra cover

AN insurance scheme designed for members of the Armed Forces has been taken up by more than 10,000 military men and women.

Service Life Insurance (SLI) guarantees cover to all personnel who are aged between 18 and 45, regardless of their gender, role or even the likelihood of deployment.

Although membership is optional, SLI complements the Armed

Forces Compensation and Pension Schemes and taking out a policy does not affect entitlements under either programme.

Soldiers can sign up using a form from their unit HR office or online at www.servicelifeinsurance.co.uk

For more information, contact SO2 Plans PS10(A) on 9621 89372, 0207 2189372 or email LF-DPSA-PS10-Plans-SO2@mod.uk

NEWS IN BRIEF

SOLDIERS have been urged to make sure they have their say in upcoming polls by registering to vote.

Elections for local and devolved governments are due to take place in 2011 along with a national poll on changing the voting system for choosing MPs for UK Parliament.

Soldiers can play their part by registering as either a Service voter, an ordinary voter or an overseas voter.

Full details are available in 2010 DIN01-175.

SERVICE personnel are being encouraged to use the Army's growing arsenal of communication tools in a bid to cut the cost of non-essential travel.

Enhanced video teleconferencing equipment is now available to support business, administrative and welfare functions via high-quality video and audio services.

Other facilities such as secure multinational video teleconferencing and the BT Meet Me system are also on offer.

For more information visit www.vtc.r.mil.uk or email LF-CBM-G6-ICC-S03@mod.uk

TROOPS from 32 Regiment, Royal Artillery have been honoured for their continued exceptional standards of equipment husbandry.

The unit was crowned champion of the annual Equipment Care Competition with the judges particularly impressed by its efforts to achieve and maintain "green" kit, its care inspection grades and its attempts to improve availability.

BAE Systems donated trophies for the winning team, which also received a £2,000 cheque. The Queen's Royal Hussars were named runners-up.



Picture: Sgt Rupert Friere RLC

Helmand's Husky boost

SOLDIERS serving in Afghanistan will have even more new vehicles to move around in thanks to an increase in the number of Huskies.

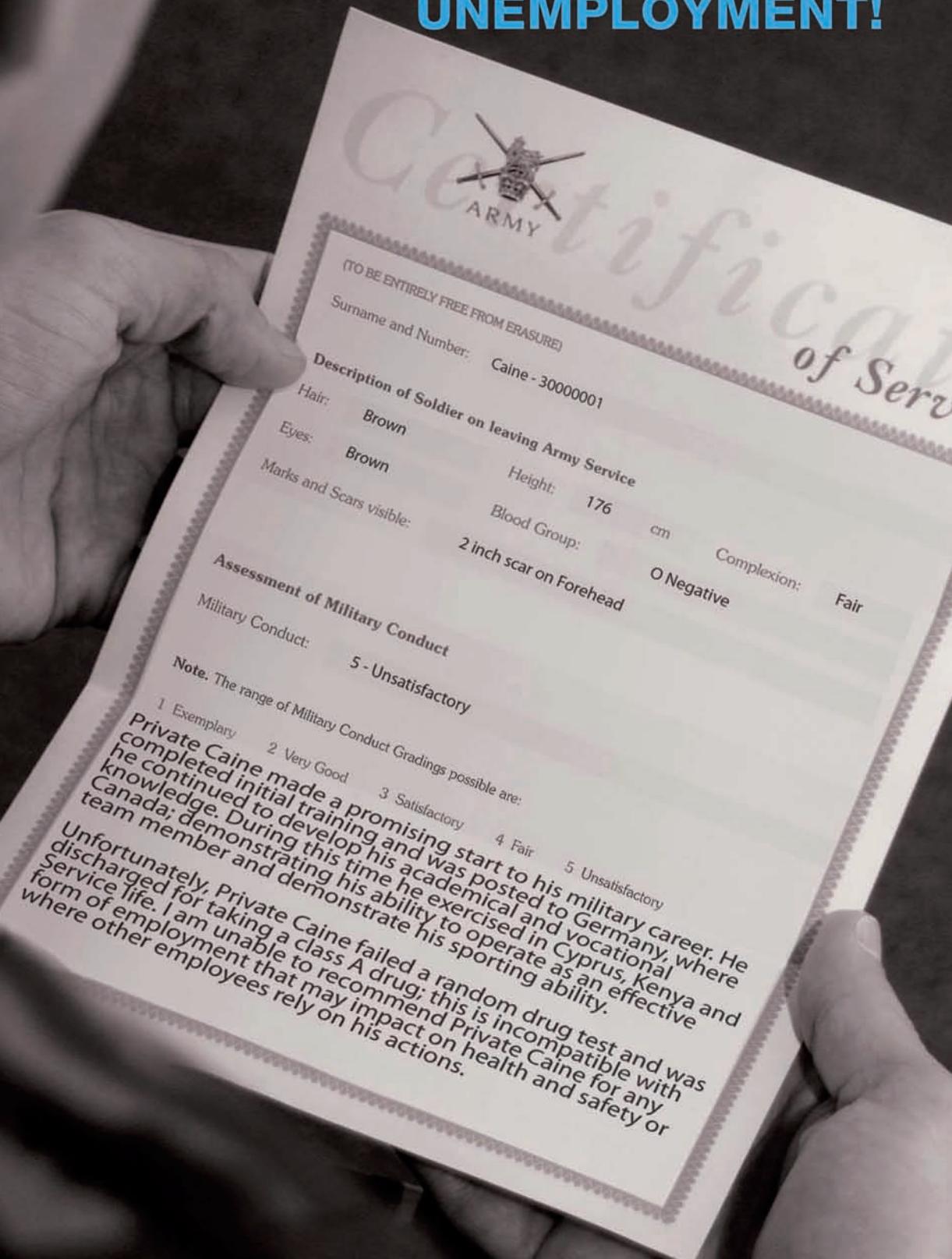
The Ministry of Defence has confirmed a £36 million contract with Navistar Defence which will see an additional 90 utility variants delivered.

The highly-protected and ultra-mobile Husky is fitted with a driver's night vision system, top-mounted machine gun and variable ride height.

The new order will bring the total number of Huskies in service to 340 thanks to an overall contract worth almost £220 million.

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IN MEMORIAM



CPL MATTHEW THOMAS (24)
ROYAL ELECTRICAL AND
MECHANICAL ENGINEERS
KIA SEPTEMBER 25 – AFGHANISTAN

AN ARMY mechanic who had been picked out as a “natural leader” was killed when the vehicle he was driving was hit by an explosive device.

Cpl Matthew Thomas, of the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, died following the incident in the Garmsir district of Helmand province on September 25.

Describing the character of the well-respected 24-year-old known as “Tommo,” a REME spokesman said: “Cpl Matthew Thomas was an intelligent, dedicated and courageous man whose all-round professionalism as a soldier, excellence as a sportsman, and deep, deep competence as a mechanical engineer were widely respected and admired.

“Though still a young man he was a natural

leader, setting the highest standards, showing enormous moral strength and nurturing those under his command at every turn.

“He died alongside these comrades with whom such a bond had been built and who meant so much to him. His passing is a sad day for us but we must count ourselves privileged to have served with such a talented, rounded and inspirational man.”

Defence Secretary Dr Liam Fox added: “Cpl Matthew Thomas has made the ultimate sacrifice protecting the national security of our country. His colleagues have praised a dedicated and courageous man who was a professional and inspirational soldier. I was deeply saddened to learn of his death.”



RFN SURAJ GURUNG (22)
1ST BATTALION, THE ROYAL
GURKHA RIFLES
KIA OCTOBER 2 – AFGHANISTAN

A GURKHA who was the lead man on patrols was killed in a blast when a suicide bomber detonated his explosives.

Rfn Suraj Gurung, of 1st Battalion, The Royal Gurkha Rifles, was killed in Afghanistan on October 2.

The 22-year-old soldier had been serving as part of Combined Force Nahr-e Saraj (South) and died during a follow-up foot patrol after an attack on his patrol base.

Only recently married, he leaves behind his wife and family in Nepal.

They said: “Our family is devastated with the news of Suraj’s death in Afghanistan.

“He was a very caring son and loving husband. He followed in his forefathers’

footsteps as both his grandfather and father served with the British in India and his father-in-law served in the British Army.”

Rfn Gurung was born and raised in the hill town of Gorkha in Nepal and passed the gruelling Gurkha selection for the British Army in December 2007. He joined 1 RGR, based in Brunei, in October 2008.

His commanding officer, Lt Col Gerald Strickland, said: “He was a very fine Gurkha soldier; tough but compassionate and always there for others.”

Maj David Jones added: “Rfn Suraj was everything that the man who killed him was not.

“He was brave, courageous, considerate, compassionate and kind.”



SGT PETER RAYNER (34)
2ND BATTALION, THE DUKE OF
LANCASTER’S REGIMENT
KIA OCTOBER 8 – AFGHANISTAN

AN honest, loyal and courageous soldier described as “one of the best Javelin commanders in the Army” was killed while on patrol in Helmand province.

Sgt Peter Rayner, of 2nd Battalion, The Duke of Lancaster’s Regiment, was leading his men in Nahr-e Saraj District when he was struck by an improvised explosive device blast.

The 34-year-old joined 1st Battalion, The King’s Own Royal Border Regiment in 1994, following in the footsteps of his father.

In a statement, his wife Wendy said: “He was a fantastic, loving husband and father, son, son-in-law, brother and brother-in-law who loved doing something which he believed in.”

Sgt Rayner completed two tours of Bosnia

and one of Macedonia as a Warrior driver and worked with the vehicle again on Op Telic 2 and Op Telic 9.

In 2009 he deployed to Afghanistan as part of the Theatre Reserve Battalion and returned earlier this year as the Arnhem Company Javelin platoon sergeant.

Lt Col Robbie Boyd, commanding officer of 2 Lancs, said: “He never let me down, always telling me the truth, presenting a fresh opinion, always diplomatic and always underpinning our chats with his sense of humour.”

Maj Paul Tingeay, officer commanding Arnhem Company, added: “He was an absolute master of his craft and there was no better Javelin operator.”



A/CPL DAVID BARNSDALE (24)
33 ENGINEER REGIMENT
(EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE DISPOSAL)
KIA OCTOBER 19 – AFGHANISTAN

THE commander of a team responsible for tracking down explosive devices in high-risk areas died when he was caught in a bomb blast.

A/Cpl David Barnsdale, of 33 Engineer Regiment (Explosive Ordnance Disposal), was serving with a Royal Engineers Search Team east of Gereshk when the incident happened on October 19.

The 24-year-old, who was an enthusiastic sportsman and Queens Park Rangers supporter, leaves behind mother Wendy, father Stephen, sister Vanessa and girlfriend Helen.

Lt Col Simon Bell, commanding officer of 33 Engr Regt (EOD), said: “My overwhelming memory of A/Cpl Barnsdale will be his irrepressible enthusiasm and no-nonsense

approach. Always wearing a wry smile wherever he was and whatever he was doing, always happy to set you straight and voice an opinion.”

A/Cpl Barnsdale, from Tring in Hertfordshire, joined the Royal Engineers in 2002. He was subsequently posted to 26 Armoured Engineer Squadron and deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan.

He moved to 33 Engr Regt (EOD) in October 2009 and was in line for promotion.

Capt Luke Sinnott remembered A/Cpl Barnsdale as “one of the finest individuals” he had worked with.

The officer added: “He fearlessly led his team in a very difficult environment and I can think of no man I would have sooner trusted with so much responsibility.”



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“MY MIND WAS BUZZING – HAD ED BEEN KILLED OR INJURED IN AFGHANISTAN?”
– THE APPRENTICE STAR’S ARMY LINK, PAGE 58



SEVEN members of 4th Battalion, The Rifles were due to take on the tough Snowdonia Marathon as this issue went to press to raise money for a charity that supports injured soldiers. Each of the team has been in the Army for at least 18 years and will be completing the gruelling challenge in aid of Care For Casualties, a group set up to look after wounded personnel and the families of the fallen from The Rifles. WO2 John Ineson said: “The marathon is said to be one of the most difficult in Britain. We know what we are committing to, but we are not fazed by it as we know it is for an extremely worthy cause.” The team (shown left to right above), includes WO2 Ineson, CSjt Will Williams, WO2 Danny McCreith, WO2 Gaz Case, CSjt Ed Pashley and Capt Rob Cutler. The seventh runner, WO2 Mark Whitby, is not pictured. To make a donation to the 4 Rifles’ team’s cause, visit www.justgiving.com/teamrifles

NEWS IN BRIEF

PLANS have been announced to provide extra nurses and improved care for veterans experiencing mental health difficulties.

Defence Secretary Dr Liam Fox revealed details of the new provisions following a report by Dr Andrew Murrison on the mental health support available to serving personnel and veterans.

The document makes a number of recommendations that the MoD and Department of Health will be looking to introduce.

These include an uplift in the number of mental health professionals conducting veterans outreach work; a veterans’ information service to be introduced 12 months after a person leaves the Armed Forces; the trial of an online intervention service; and the incorporation of a structured enquiry into the existing medical examinations performed while serving.

A FORMER soldier who served in Iraq has made the semi-finals of the 2010 Barclays Trading Places Awards.

Daniel Twiddy, who was with The Queen’s Royal Lancers, is hoping to win a share of £50,000 in the contest, which recognises people who have beaten the odds to succeed in business.

The ex-lance corporal spent three years building his plastering company only to see his van stolen.

He has since managed to replace the equipment and continue in his trade.



Picture: Cpl Mark Webster, RLC

Helping hands: Extra British personnel will be delivering training to the Afghan National Security Forces

Afghan forces get new trainers

MORE British troops will be dedicated to providing training for their Afghan counterparts, Defence Secretary Dr Liam Fox has announced.

A total of 320 extra personnel will now be involved in developing the Afghan National Security Forces, with 150 of that number taking on additional priority roles in central Helmand province.

The remaining 170 soldiers will fill posts pledged for Nato Training Mission Afghanistan institutions.

The additional manpower has been freed up after responsibility for Sangin District was passed to the United States Marine Corps.

The handover of the volatile area follows the transfer of Kajaki and Musa Qala to the US.



Security allows polls to prosper

INSURGENTS failed to disrupt Afghanistan’s recent parliamentary elections, initial feedback from the polls has suggested.

Only eight enemy attacks were recorded within 200 metres of the 120 polling stations in Task Force Helmand’s area of operations during the voting process in September.

And although numerous allegations of fraud have been made, the Afghan National Security Forces have been praised for making “visible efforts” to clamp down on dishonest voting.

Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs

Secretary William Hague said: “Despite major challenges, it represented another important step towards a secure and stable Afghanistan in which Afghans have responsibility for their own affairs.”

Turnout for the elections is still unclear, although the Independent Electoral Commission has estimated that between three-and-a-half and four million votes were cast. Allegations of fraud were acted on quickly, including the closing down of a polling station in Musa Qala after 700 votes were found in one ballot box.

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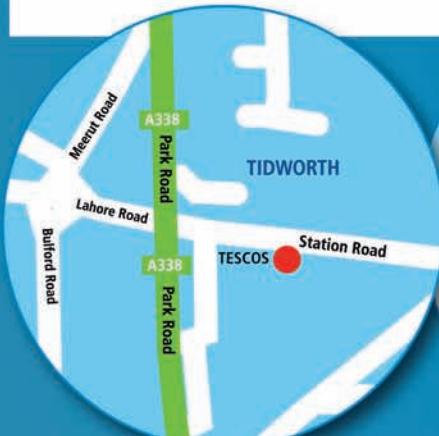
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Picture Graeme Main

Military masterclass: Michelin-starred chef Richard Phillips was tasked with creating a meal entirely from ration pack contents at Exercise Joint Caterer

TV chef tastes Service scoff challenge

MICHELIN-starred chef Richard Phillips was given an insight into the pressures of cooking on the front line after he accepted the challenge of competing in this year's Exercise Joint Caterer.

The television personality, who has appeared on *Daybreak* and *Ready Steady Cook*, was given the rations and kitchen equipment available on operations and tasked with creating an innovative two-course meal for ten in just two-and-a-half hours.

After lengthy deliberation the culinary master served a selection of two different breads followed by a chicken and mushroom pie with apple and blackberry crumble, shortbread biscuits or peach tart for dessert.

Phillips was impressed by the passion shown by the military chefs and was quick to highlight the challenges they face in the kitchen.

"There is a lot of tinned and air-dried produce, so it is hugely different to the stuff I would normally use," he explained. "We are very lucky, we cook with the finest ingredients in the

country. This is a challenge to produce good food, which tastes great, using nothing but rations.

"Any chef can make caviar taste good. But when you put a chef in this environment you soon find out who can cook.

"You really have to bring out the flavours of those ingredients.

"For chefs on the front line it could be easy for things to become stale. Thinking of imaginative meals while operating on a budget is difficult, hopefully I can give them a few ideas."

While Phillips competed against the clock at Sandown Park Racecourse, it was a different matter for the Army personnel taking part in the field team challenge.

The Service chefs went head-to-head with their Forces rivals in a contest that saw teams of three prepare, cook and serve a two-course meal for 20 people using ingredients found within the ten-man operational ration pack.

Soldier spoke to Cpl John Maxwell (RLC), part of the 14 Signal Regiment team, as he helped produce a menu that

featured chilli con carne with paprika rice and salsa; chicken pancake towers with onion rings; double chocolate brownies with mint cream; and apple and nutmeg tarts.

He said: "In the field we usually have all day to prepare our food, not just a couple of hours.

"However, we can face this kind of pressure. You constantly have guys coming in from patrol and you have to get it done. This is our bread and butter.

"We have had quite a few critics as we have prepared for this but I am enjoying it even though it is nerve-wracking."

Exercise Joint Caterer is aimed at providing Armed Forces chefs with an opportunity to develop their culinary skills and build team spirit.



NEWS IN BRIEF

ADMIN TRAINING REFRESHED

■ A NEW course has been rolled out to create greater harmony between all three Services when it comes to completing Joint Personnel Administration training.

Combat HR specialists from the AGC (SPS) and their Royal Navy and Royal Air Force equivalents now complete a common course with the same lessons, courseware and exams.

GARDEN FORCE REWARDED

■ GREEN-fingered volunteers at Blandford Camp have scooped the MoD's top conservation award.

The team of gardeners from the Dorset base's Garrison Kitchen Garden project have received the Silver Otter and Sustainability titles from the department's Sustainability and Energy Awards.

The project saw 30 vegetable plots created for members of the camp's community.

ATHLETES AID ABF

■ MORE than 60 members of the British Forces Germany community raised money for a Service charity by completing the Berlin Marathon.

The runners, including both civilians and military personnel, took to the 26.2-mile course in aid of ABF The Soldiers' Charity and were met in the German capital by the charity's chief executive Maj Gen Evelyn Webb-Carter.

SDSR Q&A

Picture: Cpl Gary Kendall, RLC



Will these cuts affect Operation Herrick?

The reductions to Army manpower will not have an effect on the Service's ability to maintain operations in Afghanistan at the current level.

Why are we cutting the Army now when we are so committed in Afghanistan?

Afghanistan remains the main effort for Defence and the Government is fully committed to ensuring that the campaign is properly resourced, funded and equipped. The Army must however play its part in contributing towards the cuts Defence is required to make. The majority of the savings taken will come from efficiencies in the generating force and will have a minimal impact on the deployed force.

What does transformation mean to 1 (UK) and 3 (UK) Divisional HQs?

The proposed model sees one of the divisional HQs optimised for commanding operations with the other dedicated to force preparation and generation. These roles are likely to rotate between the two HQs.

How will training be affected?

Training activity levels will continue, particularly for current operations. There may be adjustments once new structures are finalised, but these decisions have not yet been made.

Why is the Territorial Army not being cut like the Regular Army?

No decisions on the future size of the TA have been made under the SDSR. A six-month review will now be undertaken into the future role and structure of the Reserves.

Where will the 7,000 personnel reductions come from?

The majority of the reductions will come from efficiencies in non-front line organisations, but some will come from rationalising deployable combat support and combat service support organisations. The detail of exactly where these reductions will be made is not yet confirmed.

Will the Army have sufficient equipment to support a force of 95,000?

Yes. The forces we are deploying to Afghanistan today have the kit that they need. Army equipment is held in numbers sufficient to support the size and number of operations laid out in the Defence Planning Assumptions. In simple terms we hold enough equipment to send on operations, and to train follow-on forces.



Picture: Crown Copyright

Soldiering on: The Strategic Defence and Security Review will not impact on operations in Afghanistan

Front-line forces protected

THE Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) has presented the Army with a "challenging but workable" outcome, according to the organisation's head.

In a letter to the Service's commanders, Chief of the General Staff Gen Sir Peter Wall confirmed that operations in Afghanistan will remain the military's main effort despite the announcement of cuts across Defence.

He said: "Op Herrick will continue to be fully supported as we drive towards the successful conclusion of combat operations by 2015, including transition to an Afghan security lead and the supporting tasks we are asked to provide thereafter. Be in no doubt that the review emphasises and reinforces this imperative."

Under the terms of the SDSR, which was announced by Prime Minister David Cameron last month, the Army's manpower will be reduced by 7,000 by 2015, bringing the total number of troops to 95,000.

Although some of the 7,000 soldiers will be made redundant, Gen Wall said that "natural outflow" would account for as much of the figure as possible.

None of the job losses will see combat arm units removed from theatre.

Gen Wall added: "Headquarters Land Forces faces a major transition challenge, but it cannot be allowed to disrupt our commitment to operations in Afghanistan."

The SDSR also revealed that the number of deployable brigades will

drop from six to five, while the non-deployable regional administrative structure will be significantly reduced.

Challenger 2 tank numbers are being cut by 40 per cent, with a 35 per cent drop in the Army's heavy artillery assets also agreed.

Gen Wall said: "Without affecting training for operations, we will move as quickly as we can to take platforms we will no longer need out of service and acquire more modern equipment.

"Activity levels will be prioritised to operational outputs while reinforcing the knowledge and skills needed for combined arms manoeuvre capability when it returns to high readiness."

Under its new structure, the Army will retain its ability to command operations at a senior level through the UK-led Headquarters Allied Rapid Reaction Corps.

The Service will also be able to call on two divisional headquarters, five multi-role brigades, the specialism of 16 Air Assault Brigade, its contribution to 3 Commando Brigade and a revised form of Theatre Troops as well as the existing Joint Helicopter Command.

Reacting to the review, Defence Secretary Dr Liam Fox said: "The front line has been protected because Afghanistan is the Government's top priority.

"Tough decisions are required to reconfigure our Armed Forces to confront future threats while we also tackle the £38 billion deficit.

The MoD must become as effective and as efficient as possible."





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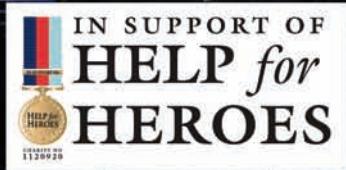
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SDSR IN NUMBERS

10,500

THE NUMBER OF COMBAT TROOPS THAT WILL REMAIN IN AFGHANISTAN

7,000

THE AMOUNT OF MANPOWER THE ARMY HAS TO CUT BY 2015

40

THE PERCENTAGE REDUCTION IN THE FLEET OF CHALLENGER TWO TANKS

35

THE PERCENTAGE REDUCTION OF THE ARMY'S HEAVY ARTILLERY ASSETS

16

AIR ASSAULT BRIGADE WILL BE RETAINED TO BE FIRST ON THE GROUND IN NEW CONFLICTS

10

THE TIME IN YEARS IN WHICH UNITS WILL WITHDRAW FROM GERMANY AND RETURN TO THE UK

6

THE LENGTH IN MONTHS OF A NEW STUDY LOOKING INTO THE FUTURE SHAPE OF THE RESERVE FORCES

5

THE FREQUENCY IN YEARS OF FUTURE FULL DEFENCE REVIEWS

Defence budgets delivered

THE MoD will see its budget reduced by eight per cent under terms announced in the Government's Spending Review.

Funding for Defence has been set at £33.8 billion for 2011/12; with £34.4 billion allocated for 2012/13; £34.1 billion for 2013/14; and £33.5 billion for 2014/15.

The Spending Review ran alongside the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) to help create a coherent Defence capability and a sustainable programme for the future.

At least £4.3 billion of savings will be made in non-front-line activities over the Spending Review period, while the MoD's administration costs will also be cut by 33 per cent.

The budget reduction will be managed in a number of ways, including the removal of older and non-essential capabilities such as Harrier jets and the Nimrod MRA4 maritime patrol aircraft.

Reductions of 17,000 Service and 25,000 civilian personnel have also been earmarked, while annual savings of more than £300 million will be made from 2015 from civilian and military allowances.

However, funding will be made available for priorities agreed in the SDSR, which include a fleet of new A400M transport aircraft; helicopters; additional resources for elite units; two new aircraft carriers; and a contribution towards a programme that will meet increasing cyber threats.



Home team: Capt Ash Hough (Royal Gurkha Rifles) offers advice during the Afghan-led Op Omid Char

Fantastic Four gets under way

AFGHAN National Army (ANA) soldiers have launched their most-ambitious mission to date.

Troops serving with 3/215 Brigade were taking part in Op Omid Char – which translates as "Hope Four" – as this issue went to press.

The mission, which was completely devised and led by the brigade in Nahr-e Saraj District, was designed to secure an area near Gereshk, restrict the

Taliban's movement and increase the ANA's profile.

It was also the first time that the force took control of its own artillery, engineering, reconnaissance and counter-IED work.

Brig James Chiswell, commander of Task Force Helmand, said: "Afghan-conceived, planned and led operations represent the future of security in Helmand province."

Brilliant beans up for grabs

THE brutal television recreation of the United States' Second World War campaign against Japan inspired last month's spine line competition.

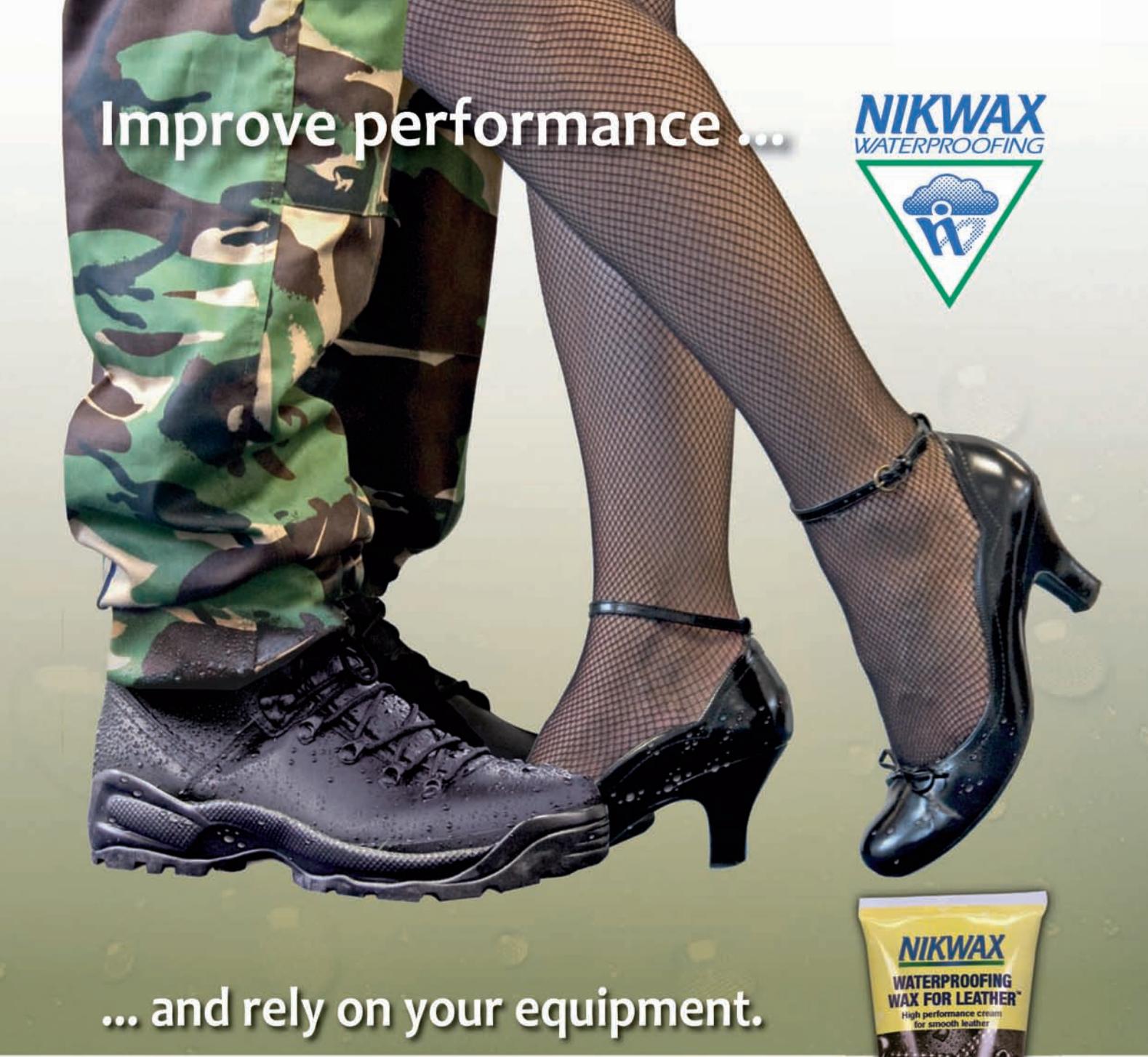
Each of the names printed on the side of October's cover – Dale, Seda, Chisholm, Milligan and Holmes – is one of the stars of HBO's hit series *The Pacific*.

We have again teamed up with Jelly Belly, www.jellybelly-uk.com, to offer up one of the company's selection boxes of gourmet jelly beans.

To enter, tell us what links the words adorning the side of this issue.

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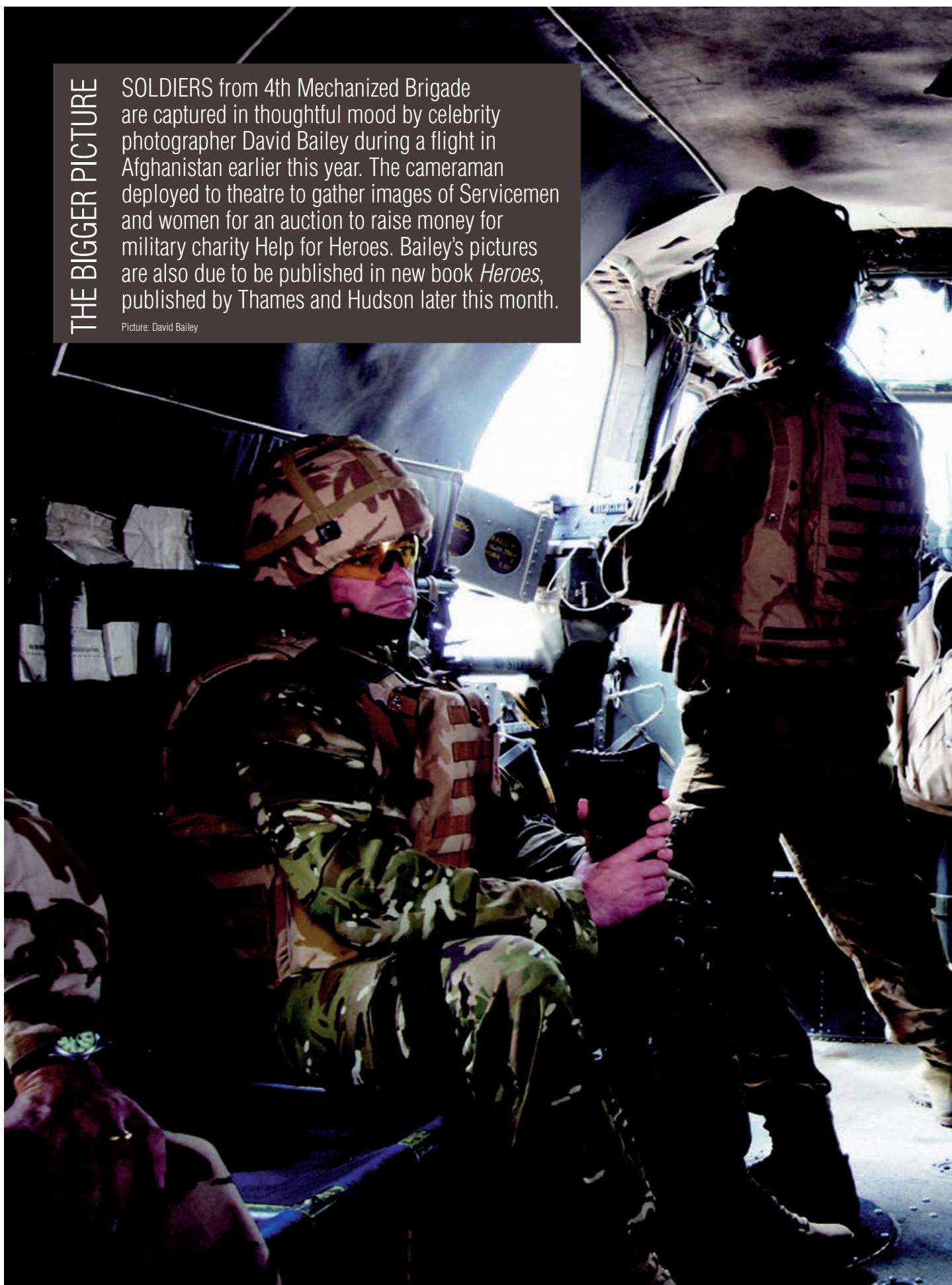


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THE BIGGER PICTURE

SOLDIERS from 4th Mechanized Brigade are captured in thoughtful mood by celebrity photographer David Bailey during a flight in Afghanistan earlier this year. The cameraman deployed to theatre to gather images of Servicemen and women for an auction to raise money for military charity Help for Heroes. Bailey's pictures are also due to be published in new book *Heroes*, published by Thames and Hudson later this month.

Picture: David Bailey







Defence industry salutes Darwin
as researchers and scientists
explore the future of...

Biological



Report: Andrew Simms

SCAN an inventory of the Armed Forces' current crop of operational vehicles and Mother Nature's influence is clear.

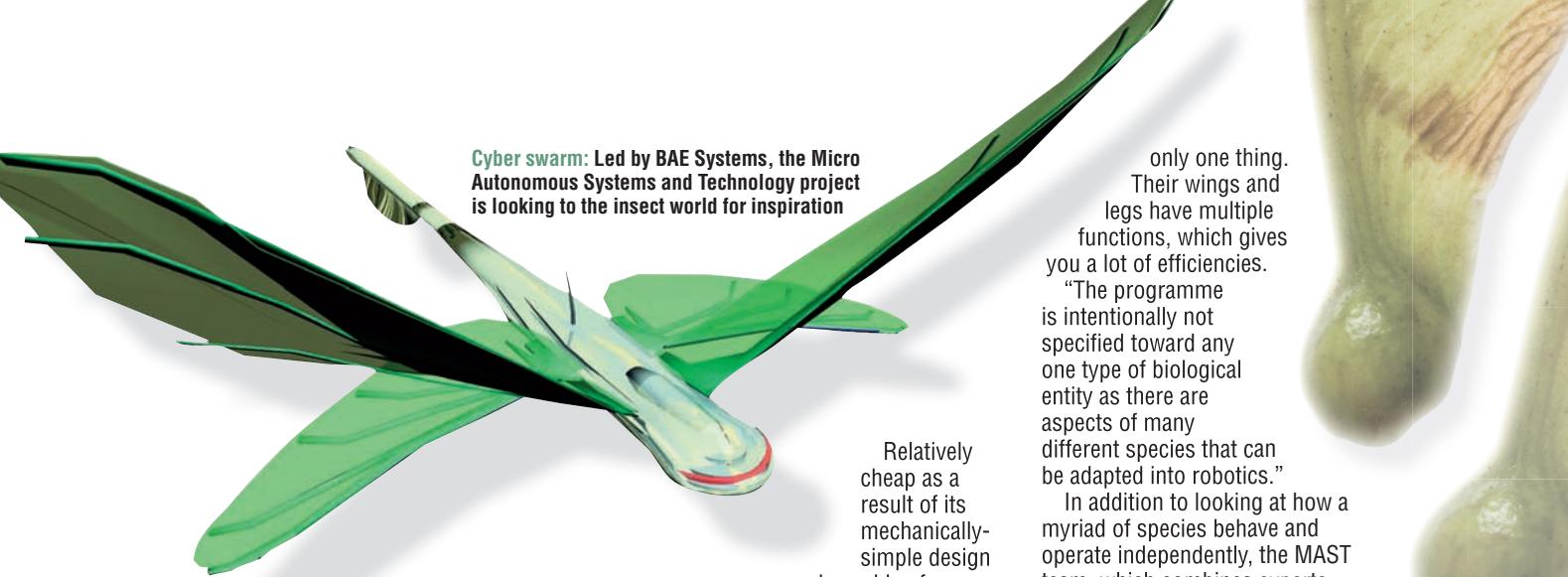
With Mastiffs, Jackals, Wolfhounds and Panthers prowling the dirt tracks of Helmand province and Tornados tearing across the Afghan skies, she has repeatedly been used as a source when it comes to the naming of new equipment.

But for the next generation of kit, scientists and engineers intend to raid nature's locker for more than just titles and are looking to share the lessons learned over centuries of evolution by using biology as the blueprint for future designs.

In the field of unmanned vehicles and battlefield robots in particular, "bio-inspired technology" has become the buzz phrase as researchers race to replicate the natural world's peak performers. >>



warfare



Cyber swarm: Led by BAE Systems, the Micro Autonomous Systems and Technology project is looking to the insect world for inspiration

>> "The field of robotics was getting itself into a bit of a rut," Scott Fouse, director of advanced technology laboratories at defence contractor Lockheed Martin, told *Soldier*. "Now people are saying why don't we open up the aperture a bit, look for some new ideas and look to nature for them. We are finding that it is providing a whole new way to look at things – creating ideas that are outside of the box."

"Nature has some pretty amazing qualities and everywhere you look you can see more and more work like this being done."

For Lockheed Martin, the firm behind the British Army's hand-launched UAV Desert Hawk, their salute to nature has taken the form of a single-winged nano air vehicle (NAV) modelled on and mimicking the flight of the maple seed.

Adopting the basic shape of the "samara" and adding flight controls and avionics was the idea of Dr Ned Allen, a senior scientist with the company, who grew up in the Midwest of America where he used to watch with wonder as the seeds of the silver maple tree spiralled elegantly and effortlessly to the ground.

For the young boy the seeds were not simply a sign of changing seasons but were amazing machines, tremendously efficient whirling aircraft designed and perfected by nature over millions of years to travel the greatest possible distance from their source.

Decades later and Dr Allen and his team are developing remote-controlled versions of those aerodynamic natural fliers and currently have two prototype designs – measuring 30 and 12 inches – flying.

"The maple seed is very stable and inherently simple and we wanted to maintain that," explained Fouse. "Our design only has two moving parts, the propeller and control on the wing."

"We believe it is a feasible design and are now slowly scaling down the size of the aircraft. I would not be surprised to see something like this flying on the battlefield in five years from now – and even sooner for specific missions."

Relatively cheap as a result of its mechanically-simple design

and capable of hovering, the maple seed flyer is powered by an electric motor and is being developed as an extra pair of eyes and ears for soldiers on operations.

Able to take-off and land vertically or simply pulled out of its operator's backpack and launched by hand like a Frisbee, it is envisioned the NAV could be used to reconnoitre buildings and confined spaces such as compound and cave networks without the need to put troops in harm's way.

With that same mission in mind, BAE Systems has signed a \$38 million agreement with the US Army Research Laboratory to lead an alliance of researchers and scientists from the military, academia and industry that will develop miniature robots to improve soldiers' situational awareness.

The Micro Autonomous Systems and Technology (MAST) collaborative aims to create swarms of tiny intelligence-gathering robots that can operate in places too inaccessible or dangerous for humans and nature is again being turned to for answers.

"When you start to look at very small devices, you start to look at the amount of electronics and amount of mechanical parts that you can shrink down and it becomes apparent that the normal way of building robots is not going to work," Bill Davies, BAE Systems' business development director for technology solutions, told *Soldier*. "Look at nature and what very small insects and animals can do and it is quite amazing."

"They are very multi-functional and constructed in a way where no one piece of them does

only one thing. Their wings and legs have multiple functions, which gives you a lot of efficiencies.

"The programme is intentionally not specified toward any one type of biological entity as there are aspects of many different species that can be adapted into robotics."

In addition to looking at how a myriad of species behave and operate independently, the MAST team, which combines experts in electronics, mechanics and autonomous processing with biologists and animal psychologists, is studying how animals work collectively.

"A focus of the programme is to create an ensemble of robots to perform a mission that they could not complete individually," explained Davies. "So we are looking at the way packs of wolves hunt all the way to how bees and flies do things – they communicate and perform tasks that require a lot more than they could individually do."

With the MAST project only a year-and-a-half old, robotic insects will not be swarming into Sangin district any time soon. But Davies stressed there was a desire to have the "technologies come together to provide a robotic assistant to the warfighter" in the next ten years.

So while the similarities between the British Army's new four-wheeled armoured support vehicle Husky and the Animal Kingdom's four-legged original may stop at their names, in the future military and biological collaborations are likely to have far more in common. ■



Lynx: Primary battlefield utility helicopter



Squirrel: Training helicopter



Gazelle: Observation and reconnaissance helicopter



Jackal: High mobility weapons platform



Coyote: Tactical support vehicle



Panther: Command and liaison vehicle



Mastiff: Heavily armoured patrol vehicle

BRITISH ARMY BEASTS



Python: Minefield breaching system



Mamba: Weapon locating radar



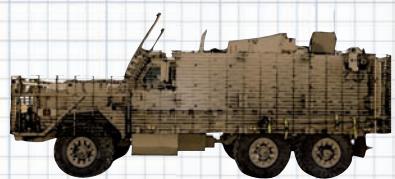
Terrier: General support engineer vehicle



Springer: All-terrain vehicle



Husky: Protected support vehicle



Wolfhound: Six-wheeled variant of Mastiff



Bulldog: Troop carrier

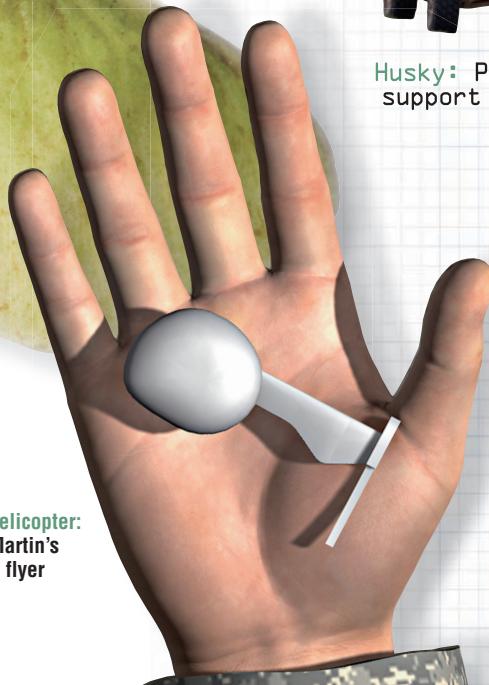


Osprey: Combat body armour



Warthog: All-terrain protected mobility vehicle

Handheld helicopter:
Lockheed Martin's
maple seed flyer





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ANYONE FOR CRICKETS?

***Soldier* meets the man behind
the charge of the bug brigade**

Report: Andrew Simms
Pictures: Graeme Main

WITH the US Army exploring the possibility of recruiting directly from the natural world, nature could soon be owed more than just a mention in dispatches for inspiring the designs of the next generation of military robots.

Animals already have a proud tradition of front-line service – be it dogs sniffing out improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in modern-day Afghanistan or horses leading the British cavalry charges during the Battle of Waterloo in 1815 – but researchers believe that insects could also play a role on the battlefields of tomorrow. >>

>> Aiming to co-opt the way some species communicate to give troops early warning of chemical and biological attacks, a Pentagon-funded project could see the humble cricket – with a little of help from science – become the military equivalent of the canary in the coal mine.

"One of the really interesting things about nature that man still has not been able to address is how to propagate signals over kilometre-scale distances with the use and storage efficiencies that insects can achieve," explained Ben Epstein of OpCoast, the New Jersey-based firm spearheading the research programme.

"[In China] swarms of cicadas call all day, at ear-splitting volumes, for weeks at a time."

By implanting a package of electronics in

crickets, cicadas or katydids, all of which "chat" via wing beats, OpCoast hopes to create living communication networks.

The hi-tech implants, containing biochemical and acoustic sensors and a device for modulating the hosts' wing muscles, would cause the carrier insects to change their calls in the presence of certain gases and liquids.

Such an alarm system would prove a useful weapon in the war against IEDs in Afghanistan, but Epstein told *Soldier* that while there was a chance that an

insect stumbling upon a roadside bomb could detect trace chemicals, troops should not expect to see crickets working to counter the threat any time soon.

"This [uncovering hidden IEDs] would be very challenging and is not presently our aim. We are more interested in trace detections of harmful substances or elevated levels of carbon dioxide to detect human presence."

Although the very mention of laboratory-modified crickets capable of sniffing out humans will cause science-fiction conspiracy theorists sleepless nights and have Hollywood scriptwriters reaching for their pencils, there is nothing sinister about OpCoast's intentions.

Able to access nooks and crannies beyond the reach of sniffer dogs and unmanned ground robots, the company believes that crickets could be a life-saving addition to search and

'A QUICK GLANCE AT THE LIST OF DICKIN MEDAL RECIPIENTS SHOULD SERVE AS A REMINDER TO SOLDIERS NOT TO UNDERESTIMATE NATURE'S ARMY'



rescue teams operating in the wake of earthquakes and other disasters.

"The thing about Hollywood is that it is very easy to dream up ideas and make them look realistic on screen in perhaps only months," said Epstein, who came up with the concept of drafting insects for duty during a visit to the Far East where he heard cicadas changing calls in response to each other.

"To develop real military systems is very different. It is a slower, step-by-step process that takes years of development and mounds of paperwork – something that Hollywood would not be interested in making a movie of."

However, with the US Army having digested OpCoast's preliminary study and approved a second phase of funding for the project, Epstein is confident his collaboration with the insect world could premier in the next five years.

Whether bugs go on to demonstrate the bravery of their animal forebears remains to be seen, but a quick glance at the list of Dickin Medal recipients should serve as a reminder to soldiers not to underestimate nature's army.

With dogs, horses, pigeons and even a cat among those decorated with the animal equivalent of the Victoria Cross, the gallantry award is proof that heroes come in all shapes and sizes. ■

Weird science: The work of US-based firm OpCoast could see insects, such as the cricket pictured left, implanted with a package of hi-tech electronics and acting as the military equivalent of the canary in a coal mine



CRICKET CHATTER

Soldier and Ben Epstein talk arthropods

Q. Insect infantrymen? What's all this about?

A. The idea is to simply leverage the communications of insects to serve as a carrier for a network. At the same time the insects would [continue to] call for their own natural purposes – usually for mating and territorial dominance.

Q. It doesn't sound simple. Which aspect of the programme is proving the most challenging?

A. Energy storage to drive the electronics that are onboard the insect, coupled with the size and weight limitations of the electronics.

Q. Will our six-legged friends take kindly to having to hop around wearing hi-tech comms cargo?

A. We have to assess how the cricket's behaviour and overall liveliness will be impacted by the carriage of the electronics. From our experiments thus far we do know that they adapt well, but clearly we have limits with respect to size, weight and power consumption.

Q. How many insects would make up a network?

A. We are working on models to address this question. The answer

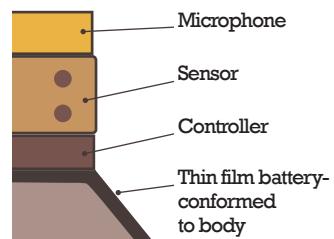
will vary according to how often the insects call, the amount of information to be conveyed and the overall purpose of the mission.

Q. Getting bugs to stay in a particular area of operations could be interesting. How do you stop a company of crickets from breaking ranks?

A. This is part of the mission plan and purpose of the insects. More likely the challenge will be to make them disperse sufficiently to cover the military mission area.

THE BUG LOCKER

Winging its way to war: scientists hope to harness the sweet sound of nature to act as a soldier's warning siren



A polyvinylidene fluoride film – referred to in labs by men and women in white coats as PVDF – is applied to the insect's wings and used to control muscle movements



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RANKED

**Crazy but true... combat concepts
being considered for front-line service**

1 FOOT in the future

CHITTY Chitty Bang Bang has a lot to answer for. When the "magical" motor sprouted wings and a propeller back in 1968 it sparked a Hollywood obsession with flying cars – think *Back to the Future*'s DeLorean – that has permeated into American military thinking. It was

perhaps inevitable that the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency's (DARPA's) appeal to industry for prototype vehicles that can drive and fly – taking off and landing vertically to avoid ambush or obstacles – would be greeted by some far-fetched ideas. At the extreme end of the spectrum is LAPCAD

Engineering's Fly Out of Trouble (FOOT) concept, which disregards rotors in favour of a jet engine-powered super car.



2 Incredible HULC

MORE *Iron Man* than the angry green guy who now shares his name with one of the military's cooler acronyms, the Human Universal Load Carrier (HULC) – an advanced robotic exoskeleton designed to augment troops' strength and endurance – is currently being tested at the US Army Natick Soldier Center.

The creation of defence contractor Lockheed Martin, the un-tethered, hydraulic-powered combat suit provides users with the ability to carry loads of up to 200lbs for extended periods and over all terrains.

With no joystick or other control mechanism, the exoskeleton uses an onboard microcomputer to sense what its wearer wants to do and moves in unison with them.



3 Rotary club

THE second flying wagon to feature on this list, AAI's concept car certainly looks a more plausible prospect. A cross between a Humvee and a helicopter, the fixed- and rotary-wing hybrid would use slowed rotor/compound technology to deliver a vertical take-off and landing capability. Boasting autonomous flight, the vehicle's driver would not be expected

to pick up a pilot's licence with control in aircraft mode being courtesy of a point-and-click system. "The real impetus for this machine is IED avoidance," Jon Tatro, AAI's director of advanced concepts, told *Soldier*. "Rather than wait for an EOD team to come along and investigate a suspect spot, troops would be able to just fly past it."



4 Beam me up Scotty

BATTERIES are a burden, whether for the dismounted soldier or the Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) providing an overview of the battlefield. The solution according to US-based firm LaserMotive is an "invisible extension cord" – laser power beaming and the wireless transfer of energy. The vision? During a break in the action, soldiers connect their "flats" to a sensor, which a circling aircraft then targets with its onboard laser and beams power down to the troops. For UAVs, the laser is mounted onto a vehicle and fires power up to the drone. When needed for a mission the aircraft uses its own batteries and goes off to gather intelligence before returning to the beam to recharge.

5 Mechanical mules

BORDERING on the ordinary when compared to the other car concepts in this countdown, the Troop Truck represents the fleet of unmanned ground vehicles revving up for military service.

Still laps behind their aerial counterparts and bomb disposal robots in terms of operational experience, it is envisaged that mechanical mules could be following soldiers into battle within a matter of years.

"The big idea is to unload personnel," said Don Bradshaw, general manager of Dakota Vehicle Systems, the firm behind Troop Truck. "Soldiers can send it back to a forward operating base to get more supplies and nobody has to go with it."



5 Fishy tail

NAVY personnel feeling left out by all the talk of land and aerial hi-tech wizardry should fear not – the need for maritime machines is not being ignored by roboticists across the pond.

Working alongside the US Navy, the Boston Engineering Corporation is fine-tun[ing] an aquatic robot with the ability to cover up to three times the distances of propeller-driven devices by mimicking the propulsion system of a

blue-fin tuna. Michael Rufo, one of the engineers behind the GhostSwimmer, said: “Fish are more manoeuvrable, efficient and stealthier than present underwater vehicles.”

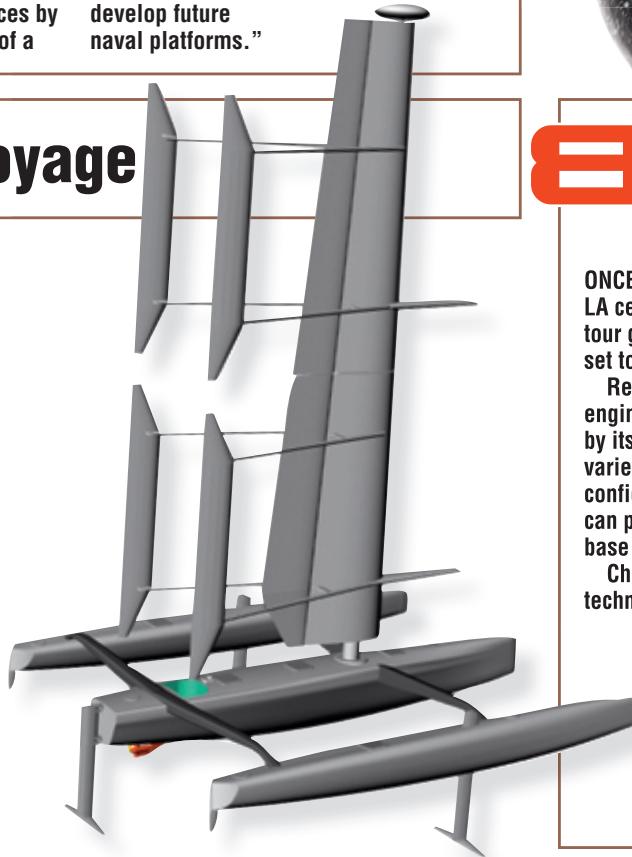
“The aim is to take what we learn from fish and use it to develop future naval platforms.”



7 Virtual voyage

AND where better to reel yourself a robotic fish than aboard an autonomous boat? While likely to be an unaffordable catch for most anglers, Harbor Wing Technologies has high hopes that seafaring forces will take the bait and invest in its unmanned surface vessel. Designed for surveillance, reconnaissance and environmental monitoring, the tri-hull craft is outfitted with a hard-wing airfoil sail and will be capable of long-duration missions in all conditions.

“Nothing else in the world can carry 1,500lb of payload, produce its own power and autonomously stay in the open ocean for 120 days,” explained Harbor Wing director Ken Childress.



8 War walker

ONCE the soul preserve of pampered LA celebrities, security personnel and tour guides, the Segway now looks set to trundle onto the battlefield.

Repackaging the performance and engineering prowess demonstrated by its personal transporters into a variety of two-, three- and four-wheel configurations, Segway believes it can provide the military with a robust base for a host of battlefield robots.

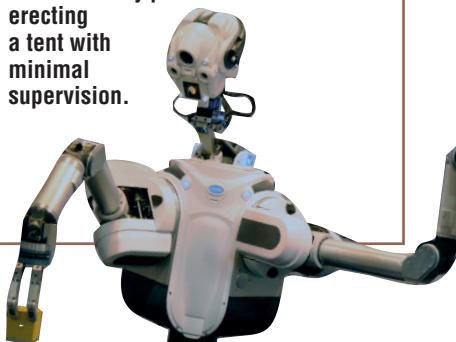
Chris Crimmins, a robotics technician with the company, said:

“We have high-power, high-speed capabilities and strength, which is a great starting point for other technologies to be put on top. It is a system you can add things to very simply.”

9 Tent technician

CONTRARY to what Will Smith tried to convince cinema-goers to believe in *I, Robot*, man-made mechanoids will not be enslaving humankind any time soon. DARPA's latest effort, the Autonomous Robotic Manipulation (ARM) programme, requires only high-level supervision by an operator.

A gun-toting super soldier ARM is not, but he is hot at basic problem solving and his creators believe he could one day perform tasks such as erecting a tent with minimal supervision.



10 Blast from the past

AS predicted by *Soldier* last year, the blimp is back.

Promoted from hovering over sporting events and advertising Goodyear tyres, the US Army has ordered three unmanned hybrid airships to bolster its operational intelligence and surveillance capabilities in Afghanistan.

It is anticipated that the first of the 300ft Long Endurance Multi-Intelligence Vehicles will be patrolling the skies above theatre by the end of next year. Developed by British company Hybrid Air

Vehicles under a programme led by Northrop Grumman, the battlefield blimp will give the US military an unblinking view of enemy territory for up to 21 days at a time.





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THE POPPIES' APPEAL

REMEMBRANCE ICON UNCOVERED

Report: Joe Clapson
Pictures: Graeme Main

REGARDLESS of age or historical knowledge, most people will recognise the significance of November 11.

Many will take pride in the fact that, at 1100 on that day in 1918, the Armistice was signed and the First World War officially ended.

Others simply understand that just over a month before Christmas, those who have sacrificed their lives in times of war are remembered by the rest of the country.

But much like the soldiers who fought side-by-side in Flanders' fields or do so today on the front lines of Helmand province, the nation's civilians show solidarity in how they mark their Armed Forces' sacrifices.

They wear a poppy.

Last year, sales of the iconic red paper flowers raised more than £34 million for The Royal British Legion, with every penny going towards safeguarding the welfare, interests and memory of those who are serving or have served in the Armed Forces.

But despite appearing seemingly overnight on the lapels of men and women up and down the country, not many people are aware of just much work goes into getting tens of millions of Remembrance poppies into circulation.

"The population does not worry about where they come from, they just see them being sold and are happy to buy them," said Bill Kay, general manager at the Poppy Factory in Richmond, Surrey.

"Hitting the streets this year there will be 41 million poppies and next year it's the 90th anniversary of The Poppy Appeal so there are even bigger ambitions."

Every single paper poppy sold in England, Wales and Northern Ireland will have come through the Poppy Factory under the focused gaze of 42 members of staff, largely made up of injured ex-Servicemen or

women or disabled dependants of Armed Forces' personnel.

The poppies start out as 100 gramme colour-fast red paper before being fed into a converting machine and being punched out into the iconic flowers.

At a rate of 2,500 petals per minute, the single blue machine churns out all the poppies that end up on the nation's school uniforms, suits and winter overcoats.

"There are 10,000 petals in every box, which are added to 10,000 green stems, black buttons and green leaves which are in turn sent out to all of our 50 home workers to put together," said Kay.

"People often ask what the factory does for the other 50 weeks of the year, not realising that this is a year-round operation."

In an attempt to provide worthwhile employment for five disabled ex-Servicemen, Maj George Howson founded the Poppy Factory in 1922, despite his pessimistic outlook that

"[he did not think] it can be a great success, but it is worth trying".

His gloomy prediction did not come to pass and, as a result of rapidly-increasing production, a bigger factory was required and the operation was moved to its current location in 1925.

The staff at the modern-day facility work at their own speed building commemorative wooden crosses and 110,000 poppy wreaths.

Retired petty officer Barry Oldfield, a submariner with the Royal Navy during the Cold War, downed his tools to talk about his work.

"I absolutely love this place, it's the finest thing I've done and when I'm off I miss it," he said. "I've lost a lot of people over the years and it makes me very proud to be part of making the poppies to remember them by."

"A lot of Army guys come in on visits and we have a dig at each other, just like the guys do these days – it makes it so worthwhile chatting about old times."



Shaun Johnson, who served in Northern Ireland with the Royal Artillery, was introduced to the factory by the Combat Stress charity.

He said: "I left the Army in 1994 and was diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and now this is getting me back on my feet."

"The Poppy Factory has been great for me as I take people on tours and I've rewritten all of the presentations."

Each year on the second Sunday of November, the nation marks its respect for its war dead by holding two-minute silences.

The Queen lays the first poppy wreath at the Cenotaph in London for the national ceremony before Laurence Binyon's poem *For the Fallen* is read aloud to declare "we will remember them".

Praising the continual affection Britain has for its Servicemen and women, Kay said: "The support for the Armed Forces never wavers regardless of political opinions."

"Our Forces have never been afraid to stand up and be counted and as a country we've always got behind the troops."

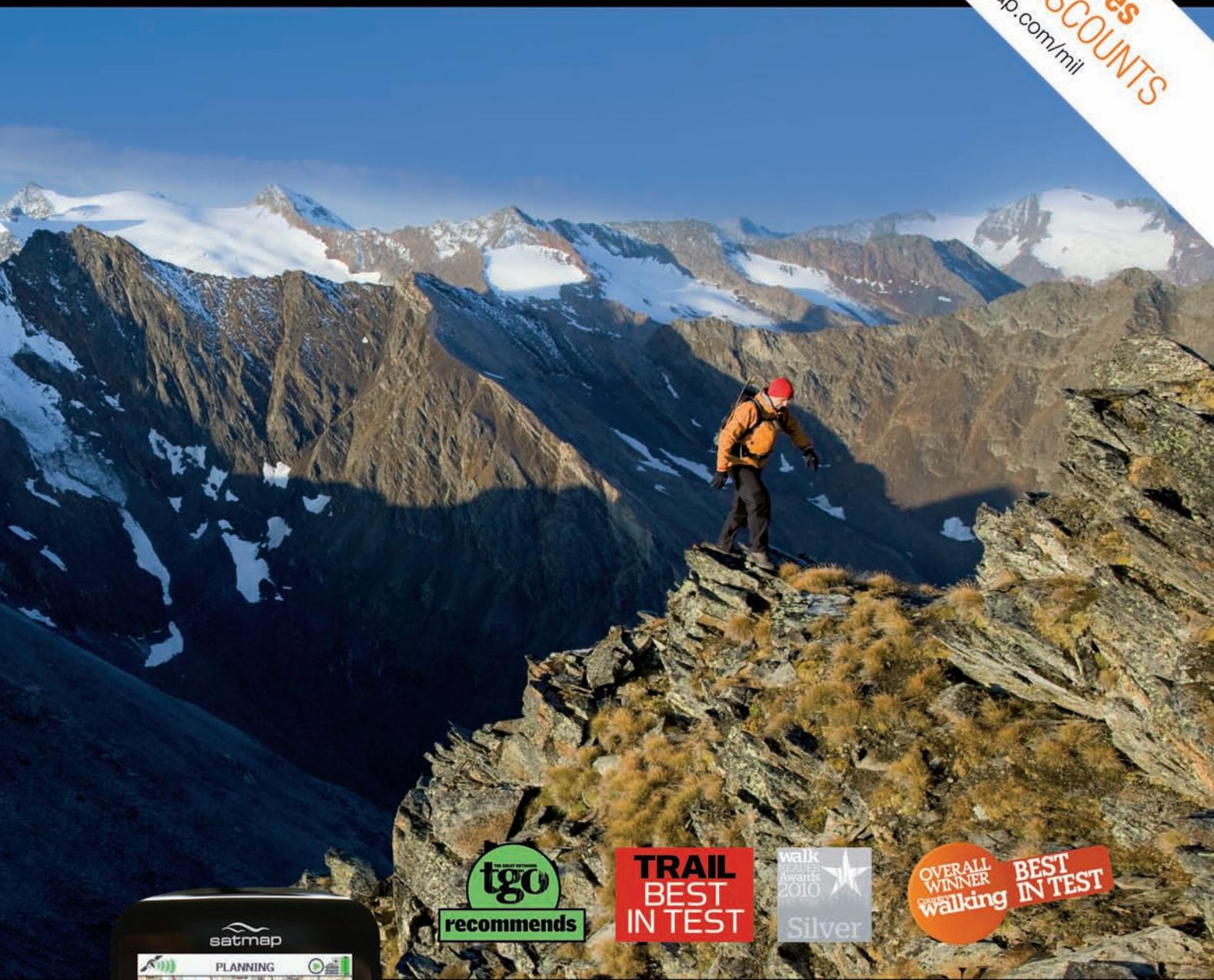
"Year-on-year the Poppy Appeal breaks its own records which is brilliant and shows the much-needed support is there."



A large industrial machine with a red frame and a metal roller is being used to create poppy shapes from red paper. The machine has a grid of holes, each of which is being processed by the roller. A man with grey hair, wearing a blue striped shirt, is standing next to the machine, operating it. The background is dark and out of focus.

Labour of love: General manager Bill Kay operates a press at the Poppy Factory while former Servicemen and women play an important part in turning rolls of red paper into 41 million Remembrance poppies

To make a donation to the Poppy Appeal and for more information visit www.britishlegion.org.uk or call 08547 725725



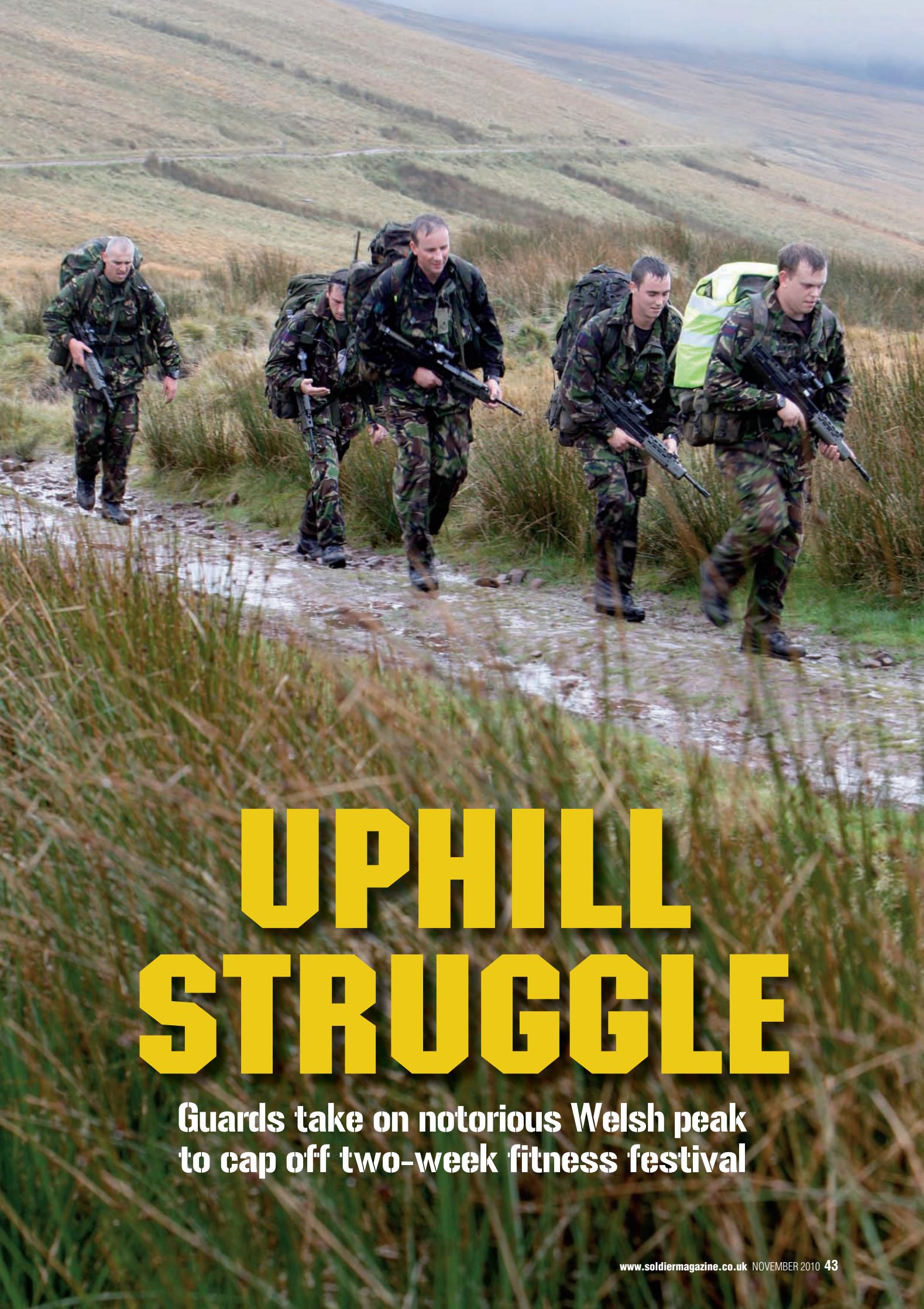
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UPHILL STRUGGLE

Guards take on notorious Welsh peak
to cap off two-week fitness festival

Report: Stephen Tyler
Pictures: Graeme Main

AS the inevitable rain poured down from the skies over the Brecon Beacons, soldiers from the 1st Battalion, Coldstream Guards continued their assault on the notorious peak of Pen-y-Fan.

Tackling a route usually reserved to test the very fittest members of the British military, the troops carried weapons and Bergens as they squared up to the near-ten-mile tab up and over south Wales' highest point.

The daunting exercise would have made a tough addition to pre-deployment training for theatre-bound personnel, but the men and women traversing the increasingly-steep and rocky landscape were not due in Afghanistan any time soon.

In contrast, the soldiers returned from serving on Op Herrick 11 in April and were in Wales to mark the end of a pioneering two-week fitness camp designed to build on the physical excellence they managed to build up before and during their tour.

Exercise Fan Finale was the showpiece event of a busy fortnight of sporting activities

and endurance tests and tasked troops with completing the timed course in teams of five.

Commanding officer Lt Col Toby Gray, who joined his men on the undulating Brecon terrain, told *Soldier* that although the challenge was a good test of fitness, it brought additional benefits for his personnel.

"They have coped with it well," he explained. "There is a level of robustness our soldiers have after Afghanistan and they have not been found wanting here."

"This exercise has built on the fitness side of life, but it has also helped to dispel a myth. A lot of the guys will have heard a lot about Pen-y-Fan but won't actually have been here before."

"Now they can see it is just a big hill. Coming here has also given the junior commanders an excellent chance to take control of a small team in a challenging situation."

Starting from a checkpoint near Pontsticill Reservoir, each team of guardsmen was led by a junior NCO as they made their way towards the series of three peaks which climb to 886 metres at the top of Pen-y-Fan.

Completing the route is a mission in itself, but doing so while carrying heavy kit and a rifle is a much tougher proposition and the march claimed its share of casualties.

Gdsm Robert Smithson was one of only two members of his five-man team to reach the finish line and admitted that he found Ex Fan Finale a testing challenge.

"It was hard work today," he said after completing the march. "It was quite tough to motivate yourself at times and we lost a couple to back injuries, although that was a chance for us to lift each other up and give



encouragement to keep going.

"On the whole, the fitness camp has been good and it has helped to pull everyone up to the same standard."

The Coldstream Guards set out for Brecon from their Aldershot base together and everyone from the youngest guardsmen to the battalion's chaplain and commanding officer completed the exercise.

Cpl Dave Wimbish said that Fan Finale had helped to develop teamwork among those taking part.

He added: "It was interesting and I didn't think it was too bad – I personally knew what to expect as I have done it before, but it was the first time for some of the guys.

"When you see the hill and think of the stories you have heard about it, it can be quite daunting. But once you get going you realise it's not really so bad.

"I think we should do it more often. It's a good way to get people back into the Army life after a tour and it acts as a bit of a leveller."

Before travelling to Wales, the Guards had

completed a series of activities introduced to boost their stamina levels after returning from post-operational tour leave.

Starting with personal fitness assessments, the troops took on a three-and-a-half-mile log run, a cross country race and a combat fitness test.

Sports bazaars were also arranged to give personnel the chance to try their hands at the variety of physical disciplines on offer in and around their Hampshire home.

Lt Col Gray explained: "We wanted to help the soldiers broaden their use of the facilities available in Aldershot.

"We have a year when we are not due to deploy before we move to Windsor and we want the soldiers to have the chance to make the most of it.

"They have taken to it positively. There are a lot of blokes who perhaps aren't the best footballers or rugby players, but they enjoy taking part in other sports and by providing opportunities in those, we are filling their time more constructively."

The relentless pace of pre-deployment

training and subsequent operations is well-documented and the fact that soldiers continue to perform almost-superhuman tasks in Helmand suggests that their fitness levels more than meet the mark required.

But exercises like the Coldstream Guards' fit camp prove that today's troops are every bit as professional even when they are not preparing for an imminent tour. ■

THE BIGGER PICTURE

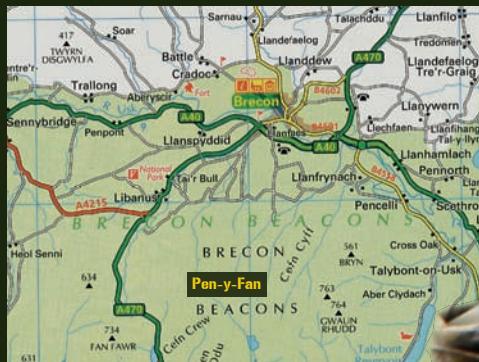
The view from the top of Brecon's Pen-y-Fan range



THE GUARDS' BIGGEST FAN

Standing 886 metres tall, Pen-y-Fan – which loosely translates as "top of this place" – is the highest of a series of hills located in the heart of the Brecon Beacons.

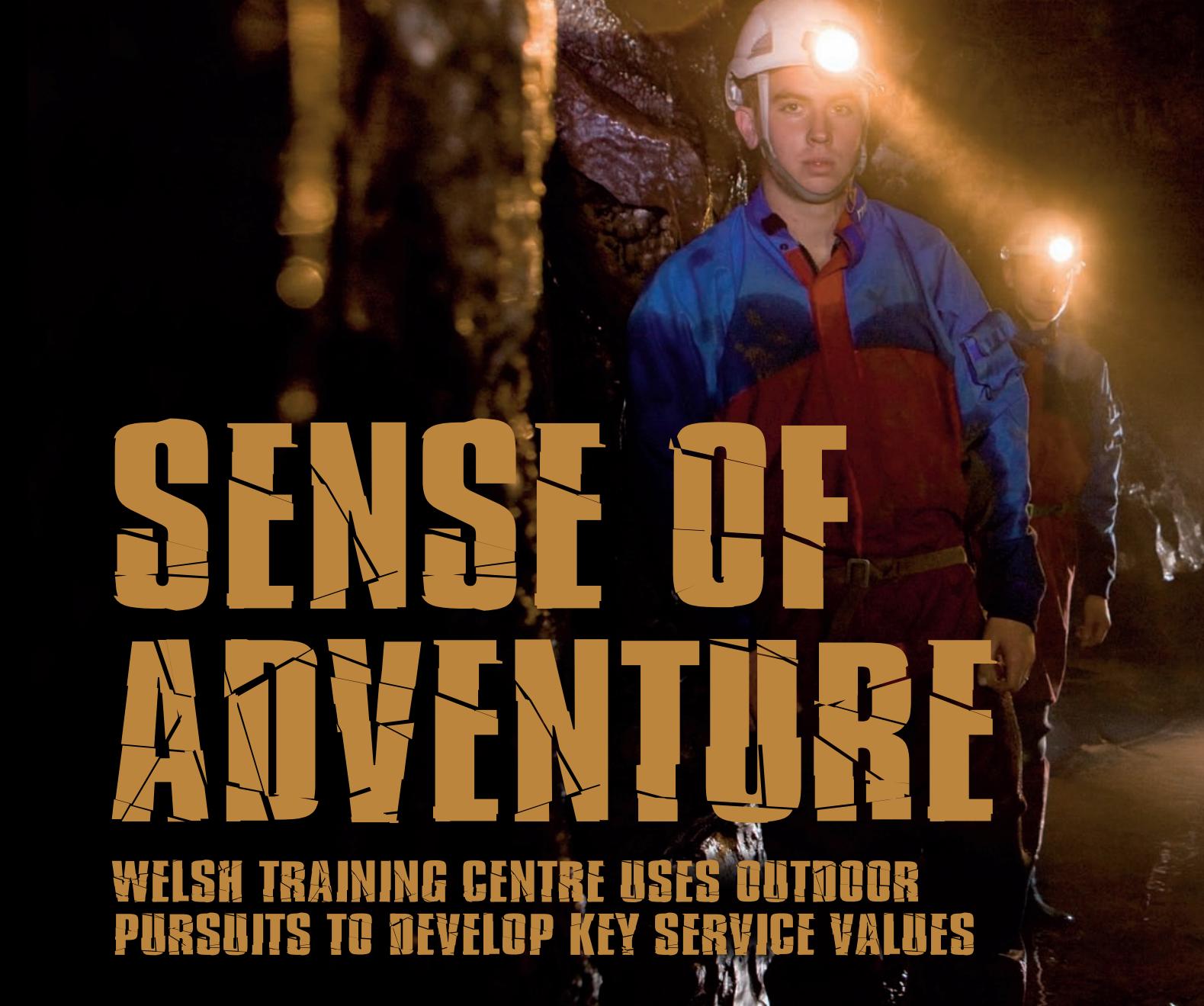
In addition to its use by the British military, the peak is hugely popular with civilian walkers and Territorial Army troops have previously helped the National Trust maintain the footpaths along the route.



Tough ascent: Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, Coldstream Guards overcame the challenge of Pen-y-Fan during Exercise Fan Finale, the final event of a two-week fitness camp held after the troops' post-operational tour leave



SENSE OF ADVENTURE



WELSH TRAINING CENTRE USES OUTDOOR PURSUITS TO DEVELOP KEY SERVICE VALUES

Report: Richard Long
Pictures: Mike Weston

THE prospect of adventurous training (AT) has traditionally been a key attraction for new recruits seeking a career in the Army. Whether it is mountaineering in the Swiss Alps or freefall parachuting in the skies above the UK, Service life gives soldiers the chance to test themselves in a range of activities that would not necessarily be available on civvy street.

But with operations in Afghanistan firmly at the forefront of military thinking, such opportunities could easily be overlooked as troops prepare for the challenges of Helmand province.

However, the Soldier Development Wing (SDW) at Sennybridge is ensuring these activities remain on the Army agenda by delivering high-octane pursuits such as rock climbing, kayaking and caving in the stunning Welsh countryside.

The centre is an asset of the Initial Training Group and welcomes soldiers under training (SUT) from ATR Bassingbourn and ATC Pirbright for a week-long package that forms part of their Phase One courses.

"The idea is that we offer values-based learning, working on the values and standards the Army delivers," WO2 Jon Gow (APTC), part of the SDW team, told *Soldier*.

"The adventurous training package is not about becoming good at kayaking or canoeing but it is about working in teams and developing the core values of the Service.

"With the SUTs, we take that feeling of being upside down on a cliff face and relate it to what things will be like on ops.

"The only adventurous training they may have done before is at school, which is pretty low level and does not relate to the challenges we face in the Army.

"With military training it is very hard to recreate that element of fear, so it is a really good tool for what we do."

Any week can see between 60 and 200 troops passing through the SDW and the programme is divided between a two-day overnight expedition and a choice of four outdoor activities – climbing, caving,

Adventurous training is about working in teams and developing the core values of the Service

canoeing and kayaking.

For officer commanding Capt Neal George (APTC), the centre has a much more important role than allowing young soldiers to try something new and he sees it as an opportunity to develop the attributes that are vital to operational effectiveness.

"It is not about the activities we offer, it is about what we are training to achieve," he explained.

"We are here to promote leadership and core values through perceived danger.

"We put them in a situation where we can get emotional results, such as fear and anxiety.

"There will be a flight or fight reaction to the scenarios we work through. We give them coping strategies and then put them in a similar situation to help them develop.

"When they experience those fears and anxieties on operations they know how to deal with them and cope.

"This is about life skills they can take away and learn from during their careers in the Army. It is important they know how to



Going underground: Personnel from 1 R Anglian find their way through Porth-Yr-Ogof cave

handle their emotions, whether it is in town on a Saturday night or out in Afghanistan."

Soldier visited the SDW on the day personnel were immersed in the surroundings of Porth-Yr-Ogof cave, a system that takes the Servicemen and women 25 to 30 metres underground.

Instructor Moe Morrison said caving proves to be particularly challenging as most people have not done it before and he believes that inexperience can have a distinct advantage in terms of training outcomes.

He said: "Most of the time it is the fear of the unknown that gets them, as well as how cold and wet it is.

"We try to gauge exactly who will be the most scared. We are not here to show them a good day of caving, we are taking them out of their comfort zones and stretching them.

"We try to use as many scenario-based activities as possible. For example, we may say we have a guy with a gunshot wound; the medic is scared and cannot get to him. They have to pull themselves together and we only get involved for the safety aspects.

"We have had trained soldiers in tears but we encourage them to solve their problems as a group. We will not be there

when the real trouble happens."

For the young troops that *Soldier* spoke to from ATC Pirbright, the activities were well received and they were keen to embrace the ethos of the week.

SUT Rebecca Daly said: "I just love all the adventurous training, it is about doing something different to everyday life and it gives you a great challenge."

"I think this has fitted in quite well with what we have been doing. It is good team building for the girls I have been working and living with."

SUT Siobhan Cockram added: "I have not done any AT before but we have heard from the other troops about how amazing this place is.

"I wanted to do caving for the challenge it provides and I have never done it before.

"It certainly builds up confidence levels and while we are here we are sharing with other people in the troop, so we integrate more."

With the SUT courses delivering obvious results, the SDW has recently opened its doors even further to give field force units a taste of Sennybridge when the diary allows.

Personnel from The Royal Anglian Regiment and The Rifles have visited the centre this year for post-operation packages and more could follow.

WO2 Gow explained: "AT can be quite costly, when people look at it they often ask 'why are we spending thousands on Alpine skiing and kayaking courses?'

"In my opinion what we are doing mirrors the way AT is now going, it is about the multi-activity approach.

"It has become a big part of what we do in terms of post operations. Brigades want people to do an AT package.

"At unit level it is hard to do, if we have a quiet week I can put an admin instruction out and give them what they need. We have all the staff." ■

Soldiers tackle the Sennybridge experience



Above, Life aquatic: SUTs from ATC Pirbright make waves on the River Usk during their kayaking course

Left, Princes of darkness: The 1 R Anglian cavers tackle the close confines of the underground maze

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Hello hills

Hello clouds

Hello sky

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Quay to success

**Sea stars' efforts making waves
on front-line operations in
landlocked Afghanistan**

Shipping forecast: MV *Eddystone*, a strategic roll-on/roll-off vessel, lies alongside the berth at the Sea Mounting Centre in Marchwood Military Port, near Southampton

Picture: Steve Dock



On the waterfront: Soldiers from 17 Port and Maritime Regiment RLC keep a close eye as a Royal Navy Merlin helicopter is towed onto MV *Hurst Point* at Marchwood Military Port



Report: Joe Clapson
Pictures: Steve Dock

THE varied terrain of southern Afghanistan makes tackling an already-tenacious insurgency much more difficult.

From desert expanses to the close confines of the Green Zone, Helmand province poses significant challenges for the international forces battling to bring security to the region.

Their job is made easier by the array of hi-tech vehicles, kit and equipment deployed to theatre, but getting the gear out to the front lines of a landlocked country presents yet another potential headache.

Luckily for Britain's Servicemen and women, a one-stop shop near Southampton is thriving on the task of setting everything from bullets to helicopters on their way to Op Herrick.

The Sea Mounting Centre (SMC) at Marchwood is where all cargo required for British military operations starts its journey.

"SMC has rail access onto the sea jetty and whatever goes out by ship comes

through here," said Lt Cdr Jeremy Ramsey, S02 Port Operations, SMC.

"Anything that is not flown, which is the vast majority of vehicles, will also come back in through here."

Dealing with tens of thousands of linear metres of cargo each week, the port operators from 17 Port and Maritime Regiment RLC have the complex task of organising the load for distribution around the globe.

The specialist soldiers' main focus is Op Sunderland, the continuous mission to provide troops in Afghanistan with everything they need.

"If the lads on operations haven't got the kit they require to do their jobs then it means we are not doing our job," said Sgt Brian Poole (17 Port and Maritime Regt).

"Logistically our role is to get the kit and equipment to wherever it needs to be."

En route to Camp Bastion, different items of cargo are dropped off at numerous other

bases including ports at Oman, Bahrain and Akrotiri in Cyprus.

Prior to departing from the UK, the upper and lower decks of the enormous vessel are precision loaded by expert drivers and operators with no space spared.

"If you can do a complicated jigsaw or the Rubik's cube you would be good here,"

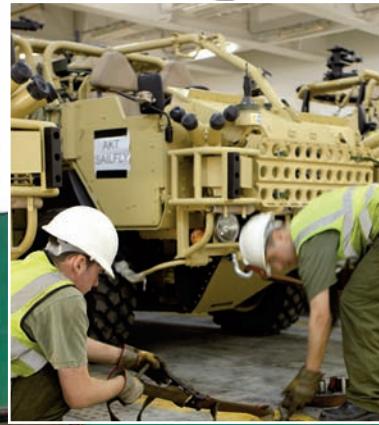
explained Sgt Poole. "It's very important that items are easily discharged when the ship pulls in at different ports and that things are put back in the correct place."

As well as equipping British troops for war, the diverse skills within 17 Port and Maritime Regt are utilised to check all vehicles and to deploy resources to less-hostile environments.

"We carry out a resupply to the Falkland Islands once a month and at the moment there's a runway being resurfaced there," said quay foreman Steve Tate.

"When I first arrived I was very surprised

If you can do a complicated jigsaw or the Rubik's cube you would be good here'



at the variety of things we deal with, from luxury coaches to front-line military vehicles and ammunition."

While launching firepower and equipment at the rear end of operations, soldiers at 17 Port and Maritime Regt are also prepared for action in theatre.

Sgt Tate explained that a section of the regiment is due to deploy to Afghanistan on Op Herrick, while other personnel have been involved in rescue missions in other parts of the world.

"Having a maritime regiment going to Afghanistan is weird because it's landlocked, but we will be getting stuck in," he said.

"The regiment has also been involved in beach operations as we can lay down tracks to stop vehicles slipping or getting bogged down in the sand."

"If a unit is planning an assault landing, we will be the first to deploy to do a recce, then the bigger things will move in."

Operating the only Army-run port in England, 17 Port and Maritime Regiment's sea-based skills play a crucial – if unlikely – operational role. ■

Varied vocation

Soldier visits Marchwood's trainers



► **L**IKE any specialist role within the Army, training to become a port operator or mariner is a challenging but ultimately-rewarding experience for those who succeed.

The programme at 73 Squadron, 25 Training Regiment, based at Marchwood, is intense and demanding but never short of new recruits.

"A diverse group of people come through here from all across the Army and it's not just beneficial to the individuals – it's of huge benefit to the Service as a whole," explained Maj Gavin Morgan, second-in-command of 73 Sqn, 25 Trg Regt.

"We train personnel to deal with everything from licences and effects on the road of boats coming in and out, to vehicle familiarisation and port operations."

Another key aspect of the in-depth training at Marchwood is the vehicle support specialist (VSS) course, which

enables soldiers to acquire licences on the ever-growing number of military vehicles, including tracked and road-roller assets.

WO2 Chris Wood, VSS troop commander, said: "We've got a lot of responsibility here because of the vast array of vehicles across the three Services.

"I also have new-to-service and urgent operational requirement kit and we have the capability to deliver training here, but will also go to wherever the equipment is needed."

The main customer for training at the site is the unique 17 Port and Maritime Regt and those aspiring to join up are put through their paces on land and at sea.

"The beauty of this place is that we can teach to load onto rails and onto boats," said Maj Morgan.

"Personnel training here can also learn to drive

cranes and work on mexeflote rafts, the main jetty vessel, ramp craft logistics and the landing craft vehicle."

While sat on a rigid raider during a rescue exercise on Southampton Water, Maj Morgan explained the need to continue the diverse amphibious tuition.

"Although Afghanistan is a desert, you need to keep the training up.

"We develop people so that they have the capability to command a waterfront. If we did not have that capability, we would not have been able to operate successfully in places such as the Falkland Islands."

Safety first: Sappers on board one of 73 Sqn's rigid raiders practice man overboard drills at Marchwood



Top Gear

TV man impressed by latest Armed Forces kit

Interview: Joe Clapson

THE truth behind kit and equipment on the front line is set to be laid bare for all to see in a unique TV series.

In Discovery Channel's *Frontline Battle Machines*, down-to-earth presenter and motoring journalist Mike Brewer offers his honest and at times emotional insight into life on the battlefield.

Brewer, a lover of all things "vehicle", told *Soldier* that the programme came about in response to inaccurate reporting about the quality and quantity of the Armed Forces' kit and equipment.

"Fellow producer Mike Birch and I had discussed

how sick we were of reading newspapers saying troops were under-funded, under-armed and under-manned and thought we should find out the truth," he said. "We spoke to the right people at the MoD and they understood that we required full editorial control and unprecedented access."

Driven by a passion for new technology and gadgetry, Brewer had read extensively about the kit used by British Forces in Afghanistan and wanted to find out for himself whether it was fit for the job.

Each show in the eight-part series features three key items of equipment, including armoured troop carriers, helicopters and guided missiles.

"We looked at everything from soldiers' boots and eye protection all the way up to Tornado jets," said Brewer.

"I took the same view to Afghanistan as I do with a car programme, testing and reviewing vehicles, asking questions like is it comfortable? Does it work? Does it serve its purpose?

"We spent a lot of time with Mastiff and I think it's the most audacious, fantastic piece of kit for moving troops around and it's incredibly well put together."

Viewers will also see Brewer compare the 34-tonne 550bhp Warrior vehicle to a sports car and fly in the back of a Tornado jet trying to cope with high gravitational force.

But one particular piece of kit stood out for Brewer after he was involved in a near-death experience when faced with a Taliban attack during filming.

"My favourite piece of equipment bar none has got to be the Chinook," he said.

"We had landed in a full firefight to pick up injured soldiers and I was watching the baddies fire at us.

"I had the scariest experience of my life when the Taliban were chasing us and I was in the back of that helicopter when the pilot, Flt Lt Ian Fortune, was shot."

Remarkable live footage on *Frontline Battle Machines* shows the moment Flt Lt Fortune

is shot in the face while Brewer and his crew are filming in the 12-tonne helicopter.

Viewers will hear the unflappable pilot say "ok chaps, just to let you know I took a round through my front windscreen which came up and hit me in the head" before he calmly flies the machine back to base.

Former car trader Brewer, known for his *Wheeler Dealers*, *Deals on Wheels* and *Driven* motoring shows, spent nearly two months in the war zone to find out about the equipment used by the British Armed Forces.

Speaking about his aims for the product of his labour, he was quite clear.

"The programme is not political but hopefully it will show the great job that is being done – I am completely bowled over by everything I saw out there," he explained.

"The ultimate front-line battle machine has to be the human being as I have come back overwhelmed with how people survive and believe in what they are doing.

"I think the kit that's out there is tremendous and all the soldiers love it and are really proud to use it.

"It is total rubbish what the newspapers say about there not being enough of it."

● *Frontline Battle Machines* with Mike Brewer is on Discovery Channel on Mondays at 2200. ■



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Report: Joe Clapson
Pictures: Steve Dock

A GROUNDBREAKING vehicle designed and built in Britain has moved one step closer to becoming the Army's new light protected patrol vehicle.

The Ocelot, developed by Force Protection and its partner Ricardo, has been chosen as the preferred bidder for the contract to replace the Service's existing fleet of Snatch Land Rovers.

Working from a blank canvas with no preconception of what the design should look like, Team Ocelot made soldier safety its priority and placed an emphasis on protecting the vehicle's key components.

The design team was also insistent that the 7.5-tonne beast must push the boundaries of military engineering and be easy to maintain and repair on location if it is involved in an explosion.

Graeme Rumbol, project manager for Ricardo, said: "We took a totally clean sheet for the design.

"It's the most-tested vehicle of its type and it's ready for production this year.

"The testing told us that you need to keep the weight of the vehicle in a blast – we make sure that every kilogram of weight stays in the vehicle.

"There's also more chance it can be driven away or provide a safe haven for occupants in that environment."

The four-wheel-steer patrol truck's modular design allows it to be reconfigured within two hours to meet a variety of different roles such as patrol, fire support and protected logistics.

The new breed – from the same family as the Ridgback, Mastiff and Wolfhound vehicles – has a top speed of 110kmph and can accelerate from 0-80kmph in just 19.75 seconds.

At the launch of the Ocelot, David Hind, managing director of Force Protection Europe, spoke of his aspirations for the vehicle's future and his pride for its British beginnings, which will create or sustain around 750 jobs.

"Ocelot is a really exciting opportunity and it's the start of a global trend in this line of vehicle," he said.

"This is British-designed and British-built. All of the design team are here and the intellectual property is with us – the vehicle will be built in the UK."

"We have carried out more than 20 tests and we can be confident that requirements will be met – no other vehicle can say that."

An integral part of Ocelot's safety system is the V-shaped spine at its core, which has been devised to split a blast and prevent the vehicle from being lifted.

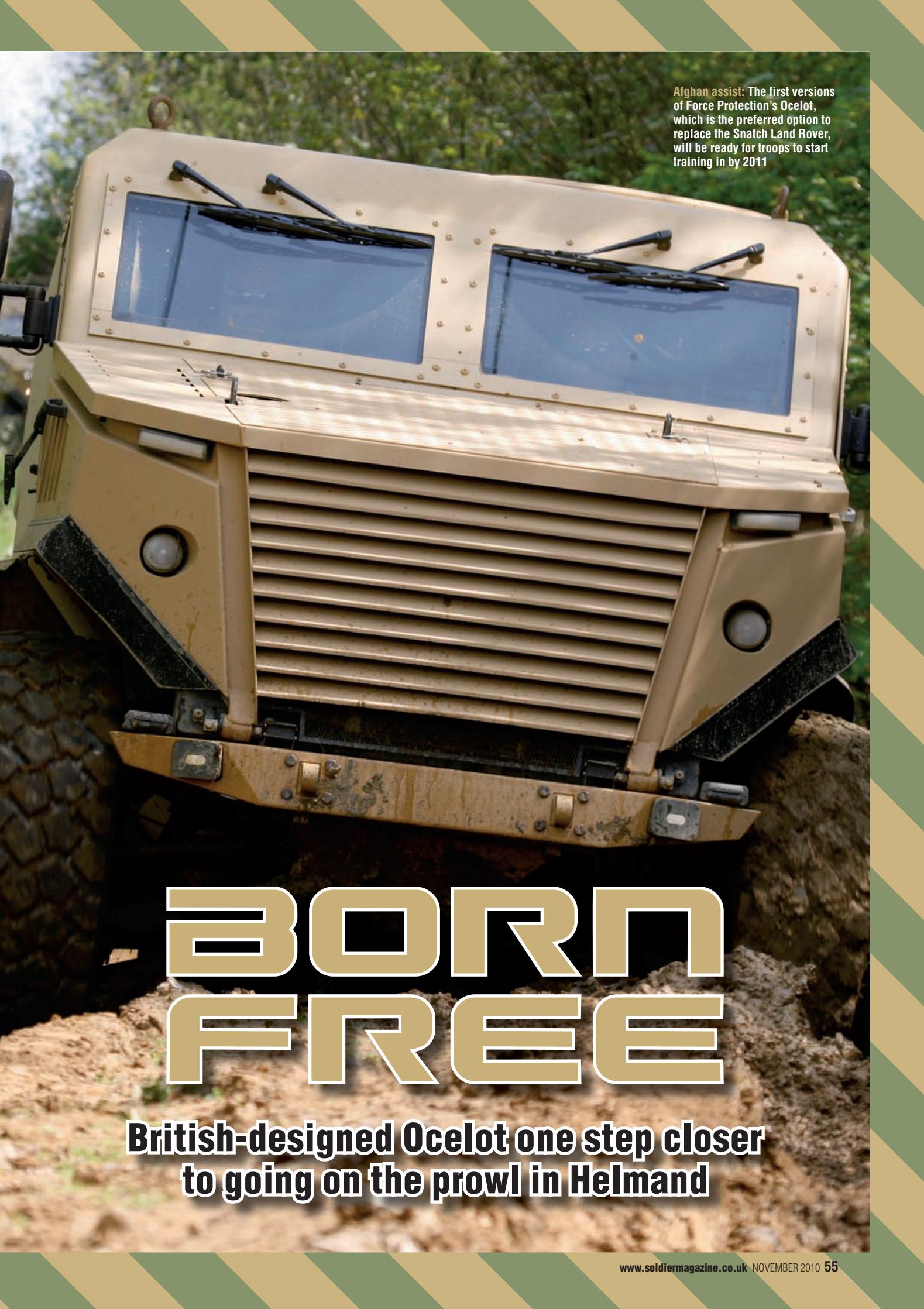
The armoured hull houses the main fuel tank, drive line, batteries and generator as well as the power-pack which includes the engine, gearbox, auxiliary fuel tank and electronic control units.

"We wanted to keep it simple because the environments they will be operating in will be austere and reparability is important and needs to be simple," said Rumbol. ■



OCELOT VEHICLE SPECIFICATIONS

Gross Vehicle Weight (GVW): 7,500kg (with max permissible payload 2,000kg)	Vehicle dimensions: Length 5.4m, width 2.1m, height 2.35m
Crew Positions: 2+4 (LPPV), 2+2 (WMIK), 2 (Logistics variant)	Wheelbase: 3.65m
Top Speed / acceleration: 110kmph/0-80kmph in 19.75sec	Engine: Steyr-Daimler-Puch six cylinder, four-stroke turbocharged diesel
Road Range: More than 600km at GVW	Transmission: ZF six-speed automatic
Turning Circle: Less than 12m	Axes: Independent, lockable differentials
Transportability: C-17, C-130, CH-47 (as an underslung load)	Suspension: Independent
	Brakes: Hydroboost four-wheel, anti-lock braking system
	Steering: Four wheel
	Climate Control: Compressor-driven with additional electrical-driven system
	Operating temperature: -32° to +54°C (including optional heating system)
	Max speed: 110kmph
	Fuel capacity: Greater than 200 litres
	Gradient: 60 per cent
	Side slope: 30 per cent
	Vertical obstacle: 0.5m
	Towed load: Designed to recover another Ocelot
	Seats: Attached to both the roof and the sides of the vehicle



Afghan assist: The first versions of Force Protection's Ocelot, which is the preferred option to replace the Snatch Land Rover, will be ready for troops to start training in by 2011

BORN FREE

**British-designed Ocelot one step closer
to going on the prowl in Helmand**

AT THE risk of sounding Scrooge-like, the team at *Soldier* HQ are usually firm believers in keeping Christmas tightly under wraps until long after the last trick-or-treater has been shooed from the door and the final firework of the ever-expanding Guy Fawkes season has fizzled out.

And while Noddy Holder's screeches are yet to haunt the corridors and there is no trace of tinsel to be found, our Aldershot offices already have a distinctly festive feel thanks to the imminent launch of Operation Reindeer's Hoof 2.

In readiness for the magazine's second Advent calendar-style competition, *Soldier*'s scribes have been engaged in an epic goodie-gathering campaign that has transformed our workplace into a Gucci grotto.

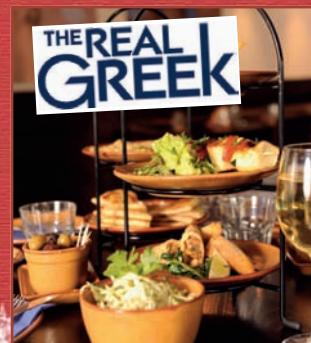
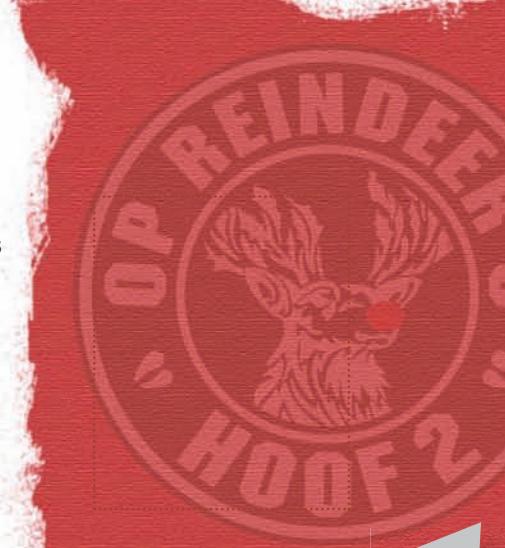
Starting on December 1 and aiming to bring some Christmas cheer to those serving in Afghanistan this December as well as to those having to celebrate the festive season without them, Op Reindeer's Hoof 2 will see everything from luxury hampers and hotel breaks to signed footballs and surf lessons given away via our Facebook page – www.tinyurl.com/reindeershooft. The prizes will keep coming right up until Christmas Eve and entry is open to any of *Soldier*'s fans – subject to age restrictions on certain prizes.

Managing editor Andrew Simms said: "The first Reindeer's Hoof mission was dreamt up at the proverbial eleventh hour last year and our original aim was to source 24 prizes, one for each day of Advent, but we were quickly forced to reassess.

"True to the old military adage that 'no plan survives first contact', the scale of the competition snowballed as leading personalities; sports clubs and companies of all sizes pledged their support. It was an administrative headache the team at *Soldier* were only too happy to have.

"Our call-to-arms to put a smile on the faces of British Forces was robustly answered. In the space of just two weeks more than 150 prizes – worth in excess of more than £18,000 – were donated and eventually found their way into the stockings of Service families.

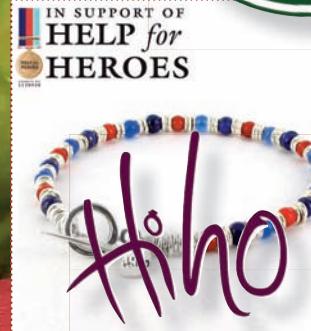
"With a good month's head start on last year's campaign, I am hopeful that Operation Reindeer's Hoof 2 will prove to be bigger and better than its predecessor." ■





SERVICE STOCKING

Soldier teams up with best of British for Armed Forces Advent calendar



Among those to have already pledged their support are: **Adrenalin Quarry**; **Bendicks**; **Birdworld**; **Bowplex**; **British Film Institute**; **Bristol Rovers FC**; **Brittany Ferries**; **Butlins**; **Camelot Theme Park**; **Character**; **Coral Reef**; **Coventry Blaze Ice Hockey Club**; **Crealy Great Adventure Park**; **Delta Force**; **Denbies' Wine Estate**;

Dickinson & Morris; **Diggerland**; **Doncaster Rovers FC**; **Duerr's**; **Epicure**; **Eurostar**; **Geometry PR**; **Green & Black's**; **Guildford Flames**; **Hiho Silver**; **Hotels.com**; **Intercontinental Brands**; **McLaren Mercedes**; **Montezuma's**; **Northampton Town FC**; **Old Orleans Restaurant and Bar**; **Pieminister**; **Plymouth Argyle FC**;



Pod London; **Sea Island Coffee**; **Snugpak**; **The Berkeley**; **The Fabulous Bakin' Boys**; **The Knights of Middle England**; **The Random House Group**; **The Real Greek**; **Tree Surfers**; **Walsall FC**; **Whipsnade Zoo**; **Wrigley**; **Yorkshire Tea**.

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LIFE OF RALEIGH

Bright spark quits TV show's boardroom to be with war-wounded brother

FOR candidates on BBC's *The Apprentice*, avoiding becoming the first victim of Lord Alan Sugar's firing finger is a major achievement, writes Stephen Tyler.

Successfully negotiating the daunting trip into the businessman's boardroom means progression in the competition and, crucially, one less rival to worry about.

But as exciting as the prospect of being a step closer to landing the main prize of a job with a six-figure salary was, one contestant on the current series gave it all up after receiving some shocking news on the eve of the show's second challenge.

Raleigh Addington stepped down from the process after being told that brother Ed, a captain with 2nd Battalion, The Rifles, had been seriously injured in an explosion in Afghanistan.

The 23-year-old Exeter University graduate explained: "At the start of the second task, I was contacted by the producer of the programme who told me that my mother was on the emergency number and I immediately feared the worst.

"My mind was buzzing with all kinds of emotions – had Ed been killed or injured in Afghanistan?"

The news was not good. His older brother had been clearing a route to resupply a base with food and ammunition when insurgents sprung a small arms attack.

During the battle, the vehicle in which Capt Addington was travelling struck a roadside bomb, throwing the officer to the ground ten metres away and knocking him unconscious.

He was evacuated to Camp Bastion before being extracted to Selly Oak Hospital in Birmingham, but the signs were not promising.

"Ed had suffered a collapsed lung, brain haemorrhage, multiple fractures to both legs and arms as well as other injuries," explained Raleigh. "He was lucky to be alive."

"There was never any question of me staying in the show and I knew that I had to be with my parents and my two other brothers to support Ed."

"I walked out in a daze, not really being able to comprehend the gravity of the events."

"Lord Sugar gave me a call after I left to make sure my brother and family were OK – it was great to hear from him."

Despite his horrific injuries, Capt Addington eventually regained consciousness and began a gruelling period of rehabilitation that included no less than 16 operations.

The blast has left the officer without much of the use of his legs or left arm, but his recovery has gone well and he is now able to move around using a walking stick.



Brotherly love: Raleigh Addington (left) gave up his *Apprentice* dreams after Ed was injured in Afghanistan

And despite being pleased to see his brother after coming round in hospital, the Army man admitted to thinking Raleigh had fallen at *The Apprentice*'s first hurdle.

"Raleigh was next to me as I woke up," he said.

"When I saw that he was there I was annoyed with him because I thought he had been fired from the very first task."

"He knows family comes first, but I truly believe that Lord Sugar lost his best apprentice that day."

He may have missed out on a dream job in Lord Sugar's empire, but the entrepreneur's

loss is the Armed Forces' gain as Raleigh has gone on to become operations director for Tickets For Troops.

The charity works with big-name groups across the UK to supply British soldiers and their families with tickets to top sporting, cultural and entertainment events.

The organisation has flourished in its first year and Raleigh has been a key force behind its progression by persuading everyone from football clubs to theatres to provide Service personnel with free entertainment.

He said: "It seems very fitting after what has happened to Ed and all the other members of the Armed Forces who have been severely injured or killed."

"The charity has been a massive success and attracted wonderful support from everyone, including Karen Brady [one of Lord Sugar's assistants on *The Apprentice*], who has agreed to become a patron." ■

I walked out in a daze, not really being able to comprehend the gravity of events



Launched in November last year by big names including David Cameron and Gary Lineker, Tickets For Troops is open to all serving personnel as well as those medically discharged from the Forces since 2001.

Eligible Servicemen and women register for the scheme on the charity's website and can then access a full list of upcoming events.

Tickets are issued either on a first-come, first-served basis or entered into a ballot depending on the occasion's popularity.

Troops are not required to donate any money for the tickets, but any money they do give is used to cover costs and to provide donations to other military charities.

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“At a time that was really hard for me and my family, SSAFA were a huge help. It’s such a relief to have the likes of SSAFA Norton House there to house the families of the soldiers and to have their support.”

Royal Marine Andy Grant had just six weeks left of his tour in Afghanistan when he was hit by a bomb explosion. The blast smashed his right leg, severed his femoral artery and caused shrapnel wounds to his whole body. Throughout the difficult weeks and months that followed, SSAFA Forces Help was there for Andy and his family, providing them with vital support when they needed it most.

TALKBACK

YOUR letters provide an insight into the issues at the top of soldiers' agendas . . . but please be brief. Emails (mail@soldiermagazine.co.uk) must include your name and location (although we won't publish them if you ask us not to). We reserve the right to accept or reject letters, and to edit for length, clarity or style. Before you write to us with a problem, you should first have tried to get an answer via your own chain of command.



Limited issue casts shadow of discontent

I WOULD like a response to an issue which I am sure a lot of soldiers feel strongly about.

As a Phase Two instructor I recently went to the quartermaster's stores, asked for a new pair of trainers and received a pair of Silver Shadows. I asked if, like those I instruct, I could have a pair of PT03 trainers instead but was told that they were only issued to Phase One recruits.

I complete all PT sessions alongside my recruits and have to spend around £80 every four to six months on new training shoes.

While I am sure that there are some reading this who will argue that the Silver Shadow is a good trainer, they are not as good as the PT03, which provides better stability and run tread.

In the wake of the Strategic Defence and Security Review I understand that money is tight, but why can't I be issued with the same kit as the 18-year-old lads I have to keep up with and lead? — Name and address supplied.

Maj Steve Davis, S02 Physical Training DTrg (A), responds: For many soldiers, the choice of training shoes is a personal preference, based on the varied range

and amount of physical activity each undertakes, both on and off duty.

However, many soldiers under Phase One training will not have the experience to make an appropriate choice, given the amount of developmental PT that will be programmed for them and therefore the financial case to provide them all with a continuing, one-time issue of the UK Gear PT03 training shoe was approved.

Recently, limited additional funding has been made available to issue Phase One Physical Training Instructors (PTIs) with the same shoe and it would be fair to say that Phase Two PTIs could be the next priority should funding become available.

Once the trained soldier leaves the ARTD [Army Recruiting and Training Directorate], the PT programme should be focused more on their unit's specific operational role and the Hi-Tec Silver Shadow provides a capability required by most at the best price, as confirmed by a recent footwear study.

Undoubtedly the PT03 would be a better shoe for many soldiers, but it comes at a price that cannot be justified when there are so many other demands on the MoD's budget.

● THIS month's free family holiday, courtesy of our ever-generous partners at Pontin's, goes to a *Talkback* debutante (see Page 69).

While the team at *Soldier HQ* were bemused that anyone would willingly indulge in the consumption of a Pot Noodle, we felt that the writer's 33 years of service were worthy of salute. We trust that the "old soldier" will consider eating something more substantial during a three- or four-night break for four in Pontin's Self-Catering Classic accommodation at a choice of four coastal Holiday Parks: Brean Sands in Somerset; Camber Sands in East Sussex; Prestatyn Sands in North Wales and Southport in the North West.

Terms and Conditions. 1. All places are subject to availability at time of booking. 2. Prize is for one bedroom Classic apartment, for up to 4 persons (adult or child) to be taken by March 30, 2011, excluding Bank Holidays and special events.

3. Open to UK residents aged 18 or over, except employees of the Ocean Parcs Ltd and their families.

PS . . .

I WRITE in reference to Maj Tristram Carter who commented on the poor state of soldiers' berets in October's magazine.

Perhaps the reason that this issue is not being seriously addressed is because, having pulled the bodies of their friends from a contact, some people realise that there are more important things in life to worry about than how their hat looks.

I'd also like to highlight that some of the worst atrocities in the beret-wearing world are committed by officers, generally ranked major and above. We've all seen "Ruperts" wearing some serious abominations. So let's set the example from the top, eh?

Perhaps this is just a classic example of someone lost in the mists of military time and not up to speed with the real soldiers of today's Army. — A lance corporal who takes pride in his beret and cap badge, but knows their overall importance in the greater scheme of things.

AS a member of an Army display team and the accommodation bookings NCO, I try to "house" our group in military accommodation wherever possible in an effort to save money.

On a recent stay at St Martin's Plain Camp in Kent, my friend and I ventured out from our dated training accommodation to the very local (less than 100 meters from the guardroom) hotel bar.

While in the bar, four Royal Air Force junior ranks from RAF Leeming booked in for an overnight stop at a cost of £99 each!

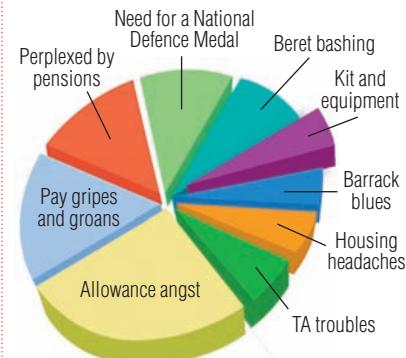
When I later questioned them in the bar they slavered "as drivers collecting RAF Regiment persons from Shorncliffe Garrison tomorrow, we need a good night's sleep".

Why did their travel cell allow this when there is plenty of room at St Martin's Plain or Shorncliffe? If we are all tightening our belts can the RAF please join the party.

It always seems that the Army pay and the RAF play. — Name and address supplied.

Slice of Service life

This month's ruminations from the ranks...



REMEMBER

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Specs appeal

HAVING just read the article on the contents of the holdall issued to deploying soldiers, "Bag of tricks" (August), the inclusion of protective glasses caught my interest.

I have recently been prescribed glasses and presented with a pair of Defence specs, but when I asked my unit about inserts for the ESS protective eyewear they did not know how or where to apply for them. The medical centre at my location only has the standard paperwork for applying for glasses and respirator and aviator inserts.

Can you provide more details on how I apply for these inserts? Are they only available to personnel notified for operations or for anyone who has the ESS protective glasses on issue?

I was previously issued the ESS protective glasses and wish to continue to be able to make full use of them. – WO2 (FoS) D Eyes, SHAPE, BFPO 26.

The Chief of Staff of the Defence Clothing Team responds: Tenders are currently being invited for the eyewear contract and it is therefore difficult to speculate as to whether we remain with our current supplier.

Equipment standards change all the time and to remain up to date with the latest innovations in technology the current eyewear is issued for the period



of an operation or specific exercises only. Maintenance or additional requirements are not supported outside the date of these deployments unless prior agreement has been arranged with PJHQ or Land respectively.

Should anyone be assigned to another operation or an exercise for which these items are funded they will receive a new set of ballistic sunglasses and the fitment as long as it is requested by the individual from the Black Bag kit list.

Your unit's medical centre will only become involved when ordering the lenses in accordance with their procurement arrangements.

PS . . .

IT is of significant concern to me when the experiences of soldiers during their time at the new Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham (QEHB) do not meet their expectations, "First-class care, dreadful dinners" (October).

I cannot comment on the specifics of individual cases, though I reply having had the opportunity to discuss the provision of catering with our partners at University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust.

QEHB offers more choice in menus to patients [compared to other hospitals], their selections being ordered by each ward and served at the bedside.

Patients can expect a continental breakfast, hot/cold lunch and supper, two snacks and a minimum of seven hot beverages every day. There is, in addition, an out-of-hours service and hot, plated food for those who may have missed mealtimes due to clinical treatment.

The quality of the dishes has been independently tested by Sheffield Hallam University's food technology department.

The menus are designed to cater for both medical and dietary needs, with the suppliers chosen after consultation and taste testing with patient representatives. In a recent survey of military patients, they were generally content with the food provided to them while at QEHB.

Where improvements can be made, or any deficiencies do arise, I can assure patients of the high priority in which they will be addressed. – Gp Capt Wendy Williams, commanding officer of the Royal Centre for Defence Medicine Clinical Unit.

PS . . .



THANK you for the article on 11 Training Battalion REME in Arborfield, "Getting technical" (October). The last 13 months of my National Service (January 1953 onwards) was spent at Hazebrouck Barracks, which was then home to 5 (Radar) Training Battalion.

While on holiday last year I met a couple living locally to the garrison who informed me that it was going to be closed down and sold off. I am delighted to see it has now been given a new life.

Hazebrouck has some history in that on August 13, 1955 the IRA raided the barracks, tied up the guard and stole the contents of the armoury. The perpetrators were caught in the Virginia Water area shortly afterwards.

After all these years, I still have a soft spot for Arborfield Garrison and its units. – Mr W. Deeley, Quinton, Birmingham.

Fictional threads for fictional folk

I READ with interest a letter in September's issue, "Head start for Op Herrick-bound soldiers", which expressed concerns over the choice of headdress worn by our battlespace role players.

While the writer, Capt Stephen-Martin, is absolutely right in his observation that Pashtuns would normally be seen wearing a lungee, rather than a pakul, I cannot see why that should be relevant to the context we use to deliver hybrid foundation training at Batus [British Army Training Unit Suffield].

Exercise Prairie Thunder is set in Khalia province, Pokharistan – a fictional country and home to a fictional population of which the majority ethnic group is Berian.

This exercise delivers training which reflects activity from right across the mosaic of conflict, including major combat operations against a hybrid, state-based enemy and stabilisation operations.

Although the British Army's current commitments mean that the brigades which we train quickly move on to mission-specific preparation for deployment on Op Herrick, our training is deliberately not focused on Afghanistan and the tactics, techniques and procedures used there. Our focus is on combined arms manoeuvre.

Clearly Capt Stephen-Martin has some



"Full marks for inventiveness, effort and needlework, Cpl Harrison... but I'm not quite sure you've captured the Pokharistan look."

spare time on his hands in order to survey photos in *Soldier* for accuracy, but I can't help thinking that a quick phone call to Batus would have been more helpful and constructive than a pompous and self-important letter put on public display.

I hope that he is more diplomatic in his future dealings with the inhabitants of Helmand province. – Col SW Carver, Commander Batus.



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Level playing field would lead to Service saving

PERSONNEL in Belize have recently had the Local Overseas Allowance (LOA) reviewed, which is great news, but can anyone please explain why there isn't a greater degree of parity across the ranks.

I currently receive £49 a day for living expenses for my family and myself (a sergeant), whereas a warrant officer class one who has the same number of children gets £64 a day. Why?

I know some will say that the difference reflects the higher rank and associated costs, such as mess bills, which come with it. However, I am at a unit with a combined mess and have to attend the same functions as warrant officers.

There is plenty of talk about cutbacks and the Army not having money for this and that – no wonder when the Service is giving money away. – **Sgt Hallam, BATSUB.**

Brig Mike Griffiths, DPS(A), replies: LOA contributes to the necessary additional overseas costs of maintaining the same lifestyle as you could reasonably be expected to afford in the UK.

The rates of LOA are calculated, by determining through survey, the lifestyle patterns of four marker ranks: single/unaccompanied captains and corporals and their accompanied equivalents with one four-year-old child.

The goods and services that the four marker ranks purchase, along with the activities they undertake, do vary



"The nightmares are the worst, doctor... it all seems to have started when I joined the LOA factor planning team."

considerably; as do the patterns of spend between the two chosen ranks of captain and corporal.

The spending patterns for the marker ranks are costed by pricing the goods, services and activities in the UK. The same elements are also costed in the overseas location. The difference between these two sets of figures is the basis of calculating the LOA levels. These are then factored to produce the LOA rates across all Service ranks, both single/unaccompanied and accompanied.

The "factor plan" is based on the premise that those on higher salaries will have more disposable income and therefore purchase more expensive

versions or greater quantities of any given product. This principle of linking salary and lifestyle results in a LOA system which pays different rates for different ranks.

However, due to the varying lifestyle patterns between accompanied and single personnel, it is not appropriate to compare costs between them, even when they are of the same rank.

You are not alone in challenging the logic and continued relevance of the current factor plan, which was introduced in the mid-80s. The MoD has initiated a review with a view to ensuring that it remains fit for purpose.

If it costs one person a set amount to live then it must logically cost all other individuals in the same circumstances a similar amount. However, many would continue to argue that the current underpinning logic for the LOA factor plan remains valid today.

If it is accepted that it costs everyone the same then the outcome of the review may see all personnel receiving LOA at a single rate rather than using differing rates for each rank level.

In the case of Belize, if this were based on the current corporal marker this would see LOA set at £38.98 in your circumstances, while single and unaccompanied personnel would see their LOA set at £20.43.

My staff are engaged with the other Services and MoD on the current review.

Air of annoyance over Canada 'cutbacks'

EARLIER this year my husband was selected for an eight-month posting to Batus [British Army Training Unit Suffield], during which he would receive two-weeks of leave. However, we were told that if he wished to use this period to return home to see me and our two children he would have to pay for his own flights at a cost of around £1,000.

Even though this is not an operational tasking, the length of the deployment away from his family is eight weeks longer than the normal six-month tour, which usually qualifies for travel at public expense. How can the Army justify this?

I have also enquired whether I am entitled to make any Motor Mileage Allowance (MMA) claims in my husband's absence, like those whose partners are on operational tours, only

to be told no on the grounds that he does not receive a welfare package.

Given that my husband has to pay for things which would usually be provided under a welfare package, such as phone cards and internet access, this seems a little unfair. – **Name and address supplied.**

Brig Mike Griffiths, DPS(A), responds: This year soldiers assigned to Batus are not eligible for publicly-funded Rest & Recuperation (R&R) flights. This is linked to the non-operational status of those attached there; their ability to access amenities provided for the permanent staff such as recreational facilities and the allowances that are paid for temporary duty overseas.

All those in Batus receive Longer Separation Allowance (LSA), Incidental Expenses (IE) for the first 30 days and the Temporary Duty rates of Local Overseas Allowance

(LOA) – 75 per cent of the single/unaccompanied rate.

As an example, for a married corporal on an eight-month detachment (240 days) his allowance package equates to LSA of £2,510.40, IE of £150 and LOA of £5,688 – a total of £8,384.40.

If a daily welfare package was provided (and some elements of one are), IE and LOA would no longer be paid meaning a loss of nearly £6,000 to most individuals balanced against the cost of a R&R flight.

Those coming from British Forces Germany will also retain their entitlement to residual rates of LOA for Germany (81 per cent of the full rates for those who are single or unaccompanied or ten per cent for accompanied personnel).

Recognising that many will wish to take advantage of being in Canada for a summer holiday, the decision was taken to retain the allowances.

At the same time, HQ Batus negotiated a range of flight options for return trips to UK at approximately £400 to coincide with the scheduled summer break in the exercise programme.



I CAN empathise with the Territorial Army soldier who has not been able to re-enlist as a Regular, "Rocky return to service for Reservist" (August). He is not alone in his situation.

I am also on a Full Time Reserve Service (FTRS) contract and have tried to transfer into the Regular Army. Even though I have no previous Regular service, I too am classed as a "rejoin".

On more of a personal note, my biggest regret is not joining the British Army earlier in my career. With my FTRS contract due to run out in May, and in light of the Strategic Defence and Security Review, there is no certainty that I have a future in the TA.

Having joined in 1993, the thought of not being able to continue to serve in uniform is devastating. I left my civilian employer after 18 years because I enjoy working for the Army and I can only hope that the worst case scenario does not become a reality. – **Sgt J Millican, 21 Engr Regt.**

I HAVE just heard word of the campaign calling for the striking of a National Defence Medal (NDM) and wholeheartedly support such an award.

Like thousands of others I am proud of my service in Her Majesty's Forces (1978-1987) and was awarded the General Service Medal for time spent in Northern Ireland, but nothing in recognition of deploying on Op Corporate (Falkland Islands 1983-84). Today

such "operational service" would be acknowledged with a medal and rightly so.

A decoration such as the NDM would at least go some way to recognising those aspects of my and many others' service.

I also agree with comments I have read relating to the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal (QGJM, pictured left) and believe it should have been presented to all veterans with five years of service. In

my case, I have 32 years of combined British and Canadian Regular service and in terms of operational deployments am now in double figures, but still missed out.

In the event that a Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal is struck, an opportunity exists in 2012 for the Government to do the right thing and implement a more inclusive and thoughtful qualifying criteria. I will not hold my breath.

I really do hope that the NDM campaign is given full consideration by the coalition Government, the MoD and the Queen and that those who have been treated so badly to date get their reward. – **Maj K Billinghurst, 2 RCR BG, Canadian Forces Base, Canada.**



Risky business: The Operational Allowance was introduced in 2006 and has recently been doubled in recognition of the dangers faced daily by British personnel in Helmand province. Picture: Cpl Barry Lloyd, RLC

Perplexed by privates' pay

WITH almost seven years of service in the Infantry, I have just been made aware that I am on the lower band of pay. How can this be justified when you consider what an average infantryman comes up against compared with a private from another arm of the Service?

Yes, we know what we sign up for, but surely current operations dictate that an Infantry private's pay should reflect the risks we undertake. I am aware that a rise to the higher band starts at lance corporal but the risks are the same regardless of rank when a platoon leaves a forward operating base.

I don't want to come across as ungrateful, but I am frustrated by this. I do not begrudge any soldier his money but I do believe, having served in some nasty spots, that we deserve to be on the same level as other privates. – Name and address supplied.

Brig Mike Griffiths, DPS(A), writes: Most private soldiers in the Army are paid on the lower pay band, the exception being a small number of technical trades that require highly-specialised initial training.

Although your assertion that Infantry privates often face significant danger on operations is accurate, especially in the current operational environment, it would be wrong to forget that other cap badges working alongside or in support of the Infantry are also facing similar dangers.

The pay banding of Army trades is calculated by the Joint Services Job Evaluation Team (JSJET) which awards a job evaluation score to every rank within each trade group. To achieve this, JSJET assesses each trade against five factors, these are: knowledge, skills and experience; complexity and mental challenge; judgement, decision and impact; use of resources, supervision

and impact; communication and, finally, working conditions. Danger in itself is not a factor, but it is represented within the constituent elements of working conditions – the physical environment, health and safety and bodily constraints.

JSJET results are the product of the overall assessment of a trade and therefore high scoring in one factor may be balanced by lower scores in the other factors and vice versa.

Despite the current high operational tempo, soldiers spend the vast majority of their service not on operations and it is these normal levels of activity that the JSJET process is primarily designed to support. The next JSJET Infantry review is provisionally planned for 2012.

I can reassure you that the MoD and the Armed Forces Pay Review Body are acutely aware of the danger faced by military personnel wherever they serve.

X-factor includes an element to compensate for such risks and was increased by one to 14 per cent in 2008. However, it is recognised that the danger in the current operational environment exceeds the current provision within X-factor and the Operational Allowance (OA) was introduced in 2006 specifically to address this.

The OA was recently doubled and is now worth £5,281, tax-free, for a six-month tour. Additionally, entitlements to payments such as Unpleasant Working Allowance, Unpleasant Living Allowance (Operations) and Longer Separation Allowance have been increased and extended, specifically to benefit those personnel serving on operations.

These operational financial benefits provide a far greater reward for personnel of all cap badges serving on operations than the difference between the higher and lower pay bands.

'Please help us to put Forces' families first this Christmas'

CHRISTMAS is a time when members of the public wish to show their support for the men and women in the Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force the most.

We are extremely grateful for the level of backing shown by people right across the country, which provides clear evidence of the respect and affection in which our Armed Forces are held.

It means a great deal to our personnel, particularly those serving abroad in places such as Afghanistan.

The generosity and heartfelt support of people at home is important in keeping up morale, often in very difficult conditions.

I am asking for your assistance in helping us ensure the men and women of our Armed Forces serving overseas have a good Christmas, surrounded by presents and mail from the people who care about them the most.

The MoD provides a comprehensive welfare package to all those serving abroad, including free phone calls home, free email and internet access as well as free mail services for families and close friends.

On top of this, we want the public to be able to show their support in ways which do not place undue strain on the postal and logistic system, particularly towards the front line, which involves helicopter flights or road convoys.

The Armed Forces mail system's main priority is to ensure that letters and parcels from families and friends get through to theatre in good time.

If the postal system is swamped by the general public's generosity in sending their own goodwill parcels to people they do not know, the all-important personal mail can be significantly delayed.

Although parcels from the public are well received, if it means that mail from family and friends does not get through it can cause disappointment and heartache.

For this reason, the MoD asks people to support an existing Service charity with a donation instead of sending goodwill parcels. These include:

- The Operational Welfare Fund, run by SSAFA Forces Help, which provides support direct to troops on the front line. Any money donated to this fund enables commanding officers on the ground to bid for items which their men and

women have asked for. <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/OperationalWelfareFund>

- uk4u Thanks!, which sends a special gift box full of presents to every Serviceman and woman on operations over Christmas. Last year the charity sent 23,000 boxes worldwide. Visit www.uk4u.org

There are many other Service charities providing valued support to our Armed Forces. More information can be found at www.mod.uk/publicsupportforourservicepersonnel

Thank you all for your support. – Lt Gen Sir William Rollo, Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff (Personnel & Training).

The editor, making a note to collect his Santa outfit from the dry cleaners, types: Companies, clubs and celebrities wishing to help put a smile on the faces of those military personnel serving overseas this Christmas as well as on those having to



Lt Gen Sir Rollo

celebrate the festive season without them, can also do so by pledging a prize to *Soldier's* second Advent calendar competition.

For more information on Operation Reindeer's Hoof 2 flick back to Pages 56-57 or to donate a prize email asimms@soldiermagazine.co.uk

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Driven barking mad by inaction

As a corporal currently 18 months into a posting within Bulford Garrison, I have lost all patience and respect for the Royal Military Police (RMP).

Since arriving in Wiltshire, my wife has complained to them about dogs barking throughout the night and the response from the Army's so-called finest has been "it's not our problem or our responsibility".

The police in Bulford, Amesbury and Salisbury believe otherwise on the grounds that the issue is within the garrison's jurisdiction.

We have also contacted the relevant department at Wiltshire Council who stated that the RMP are subject to the same regulations as civilian police and must respond to complaints regarding noise pollution.

My wife has also contacted the RMP about children writing graffiti on the walls of married quarters and about kids making noise in the park until the early hours. What did the RMP do about it? Nothing.

Is there an equivalent to the Independent Police Complaints Commission responsible for handling military police grievances? I don't see why they should be allowed to sit in a warm office drinking tea and eating biscuits while others who have to work the next day can't get any sleep. – **Name and address supplied.**

WO1 (RSM) J L Harrison, 3 RMP, writes: It is unfortunate that the soldier feels this way about the current policing service provided by the RMP in Bulford Garrison.

The RMP provide policing advice and support to all members of the military community and it is with regret that the

soldier does not feel he has been assisted adequately in this instance.

Although the focus of his concern is not, in essence, the sole responsibility of the RMP to rectify, the RMP do and should provide advice and support in such circumstances. But prior to involving the police, the soldier could have attempted to resolve this issue through talking to his neighbour, discussing his concerns with his unit families officer or with Defence Estates.

As an aside, Wiltshire Police ceased dealing with incidents of noise pollution in 2008 and will not respond to complaints of this nature. Complainants are advised to contact Wiltshire Council Environmental Services who may also handle the issue and take appropriate action.

In the event of children causing a nuisance, and when a complainant feels they cannot themselves ask children to behave responsibly, or when public order or criminal damage offences have been committed, then the RMP, MoD Police or the civil police will respond and take appropriate action. There are jurisdictional boundaries and the civil police should take the lead in this instance. However, the RMP will respond to incidents of criminality within the garrison areas.

If the soldier wishes to make a formal complaint concerning the support he received then he should do so to the senior RMP on duty at the time or to the RSM of the RMP unit as soon as possible. If he is still dissatisfied with the response he should contact HQ PM(A).

Is it 'fare' play to favour the microwave over McDonald's?

AFTER 33 years in the Army, this is the first time I have felt the need to write to *Soldier*. My gripe regards the different interpretations of the rules surrounding the Meals Out Allowance (MOA), which is covered in JSP [Joint Service Publication] 752.

The aim of MOA is to contribute towards the additional costs incurred by Service personnel who are required to eat regularly at commercial retail outlets. I believe the JSP is kept fairly vague to allow flexibility in where and what meals are purchased.

However, due to this lack of clarity, every time a member of the Staff and Personnel Support (SPS) chain of command changes, the qualifying criteria seem to shift.

By way of example, on my way to work on a Monday morning I buy two prepared salads, two microwavable pasta meals, a pot noodle, fruit portions and a pack of five drinks – all of which is stored in the fridge for the week ahead. This course of action results in a fairly-balanced diet compared to consuming Big Macs every day, only one visit to a retail outlet and a saving in cost.

Some SPS staff find this practice perfectly acceptable while others do not. So where do those who want to make an



honest claim, eat reasonably healthily and not have to make detours every day stand? – **Name and address supplied.**

Brig Mike Griffiths, DPS(A), replies: As you will be aware, the MoD does not provide free feeding but will compensate when the costs incurred by personnel are greater than that which they would have if they had access to messing facilities or Government-subsidised canteens.

You are correct in stating that MOA is to assist those who are required to eat

regularly at commercial retail outlets. These outlets are clearly defined as ranging from take away/fast food stores to cafes or restaurants.

Meals are defined as pre-prepared food, which can range from a meal consisting of several courses to the purchase of a sandwich. Therefore, buying food such as pot noodles and microwavable ready meals from the supermarket, which is prepared and eaten at your place of work, is no more expensive than if the items had been brought in from home – an option which is open to you and one which would incur no additional costs and therefore no MOA.

It is possible to aggregate the allowance to purchase a slightly more expensive meal one day and a cheaper one the next. However, it is not acceptable to do so in the manner you are suggesting as you must be purchasing meals at commercial retail outlets.

With regards to the interpretation of the policy by SPS personnel, my own staff have discussed the issue with those in the Directorate SPS(A) to ensure consistency in the future.

BULLETIN BOARD

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Armed Forces Christian Union: 01252 311221; www.afcu.org.uk

Armed Forces Humanist Association: www.armedforceshumanists.org.uk

Army Benevolent Fund: 0845 241 4820

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

Army Families Federation: 01980 615525

British Limbless Ex-Service Men's Association: 0208 590 1124; www.blesma.org

Career Transition Partnership: 0207 766 8020

Children's Education Advisory Service: 01980 618244; enquiries@ceas.detsa.co.uk

Confidential support lines: UK 0800 731 4880; Germany 0800 1827 395; Cyprus 080 91065; Falklands #6111; from operational theatres Paradigm Services *201; from anywhere in the world (CSL operator will call back) 0044 1980 630854. Lines open 1030-2230 (UK) every day.

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

Family Escort Service: 0207 463 9249

Forces Pension Society: 0207 820 9988

Joint Service Housing Advice Office: 01722 436575

Medal Office: 94561 3600 or 0141 224 3600

Mutual Support (Multiple Sclerosis group): 07962 023654; www.mutualsupport.org.uk

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

Regular Forces' Employment Association: 0121 236 0058; www.rfea.org.uk

Royal British Legion: 0845 7725 725

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

St Dunstan's: 0207 723 5021; www.st-dunstans.org.uk

South Atlantic Medal Association: 01495 227577

Services Cotswold Centre: 01225 810358

Service Personnel and Veterans Agency: 0800 169 2277 (from UK); 0044 1253 866043 (from overseas)

DEFENCE DIARY

Until January 2011: The Ministry of Food Exhibition. The story of food from farms and gardens, to shops and canteens. Imperial War Museum, London. Tel: 0207 416 5000.

November 12 onwards: The Lord Ashcroft Gallery: Extraordinary Heroes. The world's largest collection of Victoria Crosses and George Crosses. The new gallery will examine the concept of bravery and the personal stories behind the medals. Imperial War Museum, Lambeth Road, London SE1 6HZ. Call 0207 416 5000 or visit www.iwm.org.uk

November 27 & 28: Birmingham Military Tattoo. Massed bands, displays, field gun competition plus much more to be held at the National Indoor Arena, Birmingham. Tickets £13.50 to £21.50, concessions available. Call the box office on 0844 338 800 or visit www.birminghamtattoo.co.uk

Until December: Photographic exhibition – The Battle of Britain. Imperial War Museum, Duxford, Cambridgeshire CB22 4QR.

December 2: The First Afghan War. Fund-raising lecture at the Royal Geographical Society in aid of the Afghan Appeal Fund. Presented by Jules Stewart with an introduction from Chief of the Defence Staff Gen Sir David Richards. Venue: South Kensington, London SW7 2AR. For further information visit www.afghanappealfund.org.uk

December 4 & 5: The British Military Tournament will be held at London's Earls Court. Presented by ABF The Soldiers' Charity, it will bring together all the best elements of the world-famous Royal Tournament. Tickets cost £29 to £65 from Earls Court on 0870 903 9033 or visit www.britishtilitarytournament.com

December 4 & 5: Wartime Christmas festival. Take a step back in time and discover how Christmas was celebrated during the two World Wars and beyond, from the Christmas truce of 1914 to the front line today. Festive market with local crafts and produce. The Tank Museum, Bovington, Dorset BH20 6JG. Book by calling 01929 462359 or visit www.tankmuseum.org

Until September 2011: Exhibition – A National Hero of 95 years ago: Capt Charles Fryatt. In-the-spotlight display gives visitors unique access to intriguing items in the controversial story that caused national outcry when Capt Fryatt was arrested and executed during the First World War. Imperial War Museum North in Manchester. For more information, log on to www.iwm.org.uk

SEARCHLINE

Martin Stubbs is trying to locate a cine film that was taken of his father **23412873 Terence Brian Stubbs (Stubber) MELF** on a beach in Cyprus between November 1957 and March 1959. Terence was with his mates and was filmed by an officer playing football on the beach. Contact M Stubbs by email marstu456@tiscali.co.uk

A researcher is trying to locate two Army personnel who could help him with a tragic submarine incident that happened on March 14, 1943 in the waters around Libya. The soldiers (**Fred, whose surname is not known, and Harold Donnell**) were based at Headquarters 8th Army in Libya at the time of the incident. Gp Capt Colin Wing RAF was the CO. Contact James Cadwallader by email jimcad@ntlworld.com

Airborne Forces have celebrated their 70th anniversary this year. These volunteers initially wore their own regimental cap badge and

headdress until the maroon beret was introduced by Gen "Boy" Browning. It was these men who mounted the first operations in North Africa, Normandy, Arnhem and many more. In just 70 years of service, nine Victoria Crosses have been awarded to Airborne Forces, six in the Second World War, two in the Falklands and one in Afghanistan. To mark the 70th anniversary, a 64-page, A4 colour book packed with historical detail has been published. Now available at £8 including postage. To order your copy, send a cheque to DRA Books, 14 Mary Seacole Road, The Millfields, Plymouth PL1 3JY or call direct on 01752 312061 and pay by card.

Tony Davie is married to the widow of **Capt John Love RA**, a former Army Air Corps pilot who was killed in an accident on the Okehampton Ranges, Devon in 1960. If you served with John and can tell me anything about him, especially the circumstances of his death, his wife Margaret and I would be very pleased to hear from you. Contact Tony at 26 Fetti's Brook Road, Chineham, Hants RG24 8RW or send an email to ajdavie@btinternet.com

Dhekelia Station Officers' Mess, Cyprus has a number of individually-named, silver-plated ashtrays. Purchased sometime between 1960 and 1979, I would like to return these to the individuals named on each ashtray. If you served and were part of the officers' mess, Dhekelia, during this period and would like the ashtray returned, write or call before December 31, 2010. Contact Maj J Mann, QM 62 (Cyp) Sp Sqn RE, BFPO 58, email john.mann@cyp.mod.uk or phone 00357 2472 4752.

A founder member of the **Highland Fieldcraft Training Centre Association** has lost touch with the organisation after moving north. Would the secretary please get in touch, plus old comrades of 23 Medium Wireless Section, 6 Comd Signals and any former cadets and staff of the OTS, STC Mhow, Central India from 1944. Contact Mike Sinclair by email at mowgli@york.uk.net

A former soldier wishes to make contact with anyone who served with **8th Railway Squadron Royal Engineers** from late 1954 to late 1957, or anyone who served at Longmoor during that period. Contact John Barnes by email at ernest1234@terra.es

A daughter is trying to locate former soldiers who served with her father (now 92 years old) at Biggin Hill during 1940. Her father **2040039 Alexander Redgate RE, South London Search Light Battery**, was stationed at Biggin Hill to look after the pilots and aircraft during the Battle of Britain. Contact Ann Greenfield by email at annapan2@btinternet.com

15 Battalion REME requires Territorial Army volunteers for Op Herrick 15. Covering a 12-month mobilisation period with tour dates between September 2011 and April 2012. Anyone interested should contact the ROSO, 101 Fs Bn REME via their company PSAO by December 10 this year.

REUNIONS

Devon Festival of Remembrance: To be held in The Princess Theatre, Torquay on November 11 at 1900. Festival theme is 150th anniversary of the formation of the Cadet movement. Guest speaker is WO1 M Tomlinson CGC, MC. Tickets £8 from the theatre or phone 01803 380842 or 0844 947 2315 (local call). Further information from the RBL county office on 01392 272211.

South Notts Hussars: Reunion and Remembrance dinner to take place at the TA centre, Hucknall Lane, Bulwell, Nottingham NG6 8AQ on

NO. 828 HOW OBSERVANT ARE YOU?

November 13. Tickets cost £25 each and are available from the secretary at the TA centre.

JACIG: Twentieth anniversary dinner to be held at RAF Henlow Officer's Mess on November 18. All former JACIG officers and senior NCOs are welcome. Full details are available from Sqn Ldr Ashton on 01462 857489 or by email at j1j4s02@jacig.mod.uk

2011 Aliwal Dinner: To be held at the Telford Golf and Spa Hotel on January 29, 2011. All ex and serving members, including attached personnel of 16/5 Lancers, 17/21 Lancers and QLR are invited to this weekend function. Nine- and 18-hole golf competition on Saturday. Further details of the event and application forms can be obtained by visiting www.deathorglory.yuku.com or phoning Bill Cook on 01952 740411.

Gloucestershire Regiment 28/LXI. Reunion for 2011 will mark the 60th anniversary of the Battle of the Imjin, Korea. The all-ranks dinner of Bristol/ Gloucestershire RGBW Association Back Badge will take place on April 2, 2011 in Gloucestershire. For full details and booking forms visit www.glosters.org/bb2011 or send an SAE to Back Badge and Imjin 60 Reunion Team, 45 Coleridge Gardens, Burnham-on-Sea, Somerset TA8 2QA.

Ex-Army apprentices. A dinner for all ex-apprentices, regardless of where you trained, on June 24, 2011. This will serve two purposes: firstly to celebrate Armed Forces Day on June 25 and secondly to donate all proceeds to the Army Apprentice National Memorial Fund. To assist planning we need replies by December 31, 2010. Bring partners or form your own groups. Send emails to chepchappy@btinternet.com or send a SAE to Colin Weir, 20 Graburn Road, Formby, Liverpool L37 3PB. The Memorial will be dedicated on September 7, 2011 at the Arboretum, Alrewas, Staffs.

COMPETITIONS

Spine Line winner: Pte G Stewart, Army Foundation College, Harrogate.

Facebook winners: J Tomas, Aldershot; R McKellar, QinetiQ, Cumbria; Mrs D Astbury, Dover; J Jamieson, Ballymena; Ms E Guyer, Cardiff.

Lebanon winners: Spr S Garbett, 39 Engr Regt; M O'Shea, London; Cpl S Duncan, 5 Armd Coy, BFPO 22; A Davies, Plans Branch, HQ Land Forces; I Blower, Telford.

Modesty Blaize winners: Sgt K Richardson, HQ 11 MI Coy, BFPO 15; K McMurtrie, The Castle, Edinburgh; J Partington, Ferndown; J Holliday, Bath; Maj C Powers, 1 Yorks, BFPO 17.

PT-1000 winners: Sgt J Taylor, IMATT(SL), BFPO 622; SSgt M Pocock, Middle Wallop; Maj A Fisher, MoD St Athan; Sgt D Remzi, 28 Engr Regt, BFPO 31; E Rochead, MoD, Fareham.

ROADSHOW DATES

The Army Presentation Team wants to hear from members of the public who would like a personal invitation to its hi-tech roadshow. The event starts with a drinks reception, is followed by a presentation and questions and culminates with a finger buffet. There will be a range of military personnel on hand to answer any of your questions. Call 01276 417000 or e-mail your name and address to apt.mod@btinternet.com with the event you are interested in attending.

November: 8, Abergele; 10, Newport; 11, Swansea; 24 Bexleyheath; 25 Bromley. **December and January 2011:** No presentations.



OUR merry band of satirists did not need a second invitation to poke some light-hearted fun at Nick Clegg after seeing the Deputy Prime Minister's protruding finger in last month's magazine.

The coalition Government's second-in-command provoked a veritable deluge of entries ranging from the rather ridiculous to the simply sublime.

Mr Simon Harrison, who works at Headquarters Land Forces, used the Liberal Democrat politician's lofty role as inspiration for his entry, penning "**Policy or not, guys, this is the very same finger that goes on the Trident button when Dave is on his holidays**".

Grantham man Wayne Baker wryly suggested that Britain's Members of Parliament may be partial to telling the odd untruth with his suggestion of "**Honest, it has a built-in flashlight. I'm the Deputy**

TEN details have been changed on this photograph of Army chefs at the Combined Services Culinary Challenge held at Sandown racecourse. Circle the differences in the upper image and send the panel to **HOAY 828, Soldier, Ordnance Road, Aldershot, Hampshire GU11 2DU** by November 30.

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

September competition: First correct entry drawn at random and winner of the £100 was **Cpl Swain, 151 Tpt Regt, TA Centre, Brentwood, Essex.** Runners-up **Spr Garbett, 39 Engr Regt, Waterbeach, Cambridge** and **Gavin Smith, HMP Shepton Mallet**, each win a £25 gift voucher.



Picture: Cpl Gary Kendall, RLC

"I will happily discuss Defence cuts with anyone. Anyone, that is, who can beat my new personal bodyguard in an arm wrestle."

WIN A BOOK: Write your own caption for the photo above and send it to us by November 30. The best, in our opinion, will win a copy of *Embed* by Nick Allen.

Prime Minister, would I lie to you?"

But this month's leading light is Gavin Hall from 103 Bn REME in Crawley. His offering of "**Nick Clegg kept the troops amused by showing off his buddy buddy earpick skills**" bags him a copy of Paddy Heazell's *The Hidden History of Orford Ness*.

You may be thinking that the gentleman standing next to Blue Dave in this month's picture (above) looks familiar. If so, you are right – it is none other than Arnold Schwarzenegger. Do your worst.

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Picture: Steve Dack

Outward bound: Half of the soldiers currently based in Germany are to return to Britain by 2015, following comrades who served at Osnabrück Garrison

‘Use review as a force for good’

FOR much of the summer, the standard-issue reply to any question on funding, plans or the future in general has been “wait until after the Defence Review”.

So, did October’s Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) shed any light on the difficult issues of the day? I would have to say no. If anything, it may have caused more uncertainty for many families.

There are quite rightly concerns about the review – firstly that it was conducted in such haste. Secondly, that it was purely Treasury-driven.

This would be disputed by the Government, but listening to Mr Cameron’s speech he repeatedly referred to cost savings. These may be hard economic times, but if this was a Defence Review it should have been conducted with Defence primarily in mind, not economics.

So, what are the issues facing families and when can we expect to know more?

It is reassuring, but not surprising, that maintaining military effort in Afghanistan was given priority and that neither equipment nor operational allowances were impacted, but in some cases enhanced.

However, those soldiers on the front line (and consequently their families) are also the people that the other changes will affect.

The dates for pulling forces out of Germany were sooner than expected. According to Mr Cameron, half of the troops

are to be back by 2015. If that includes the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps, another 5,000 are needed. That will concern families in Germany now, although it will probably affect those with posting orders in 2013/14.

But what about investment in the estate in Germany if we’re withdrawing? Upkeep of facilities and provision of services are key to the quality of life for families overseas. Someone will have to ensure that they don’t lose out in the lead up to withdrawal.

There’s also the question of where the 20,000 troops and their families from Germany will go to. The review announced a wholesale study of the Defence Estate and accommodation.

The line that worried me about accommodation was “some of which may be MoD-provided”.

It is part of a soldier’s terms and conditions of service that they have accommodation made available to them. It is also understood that the rent on accommodation (single or families) is abated as part of the remuneration package.

Any move towards market-provided accommodation and market rents or even mortgage payments would require the increase to be reflected in the soldier’s pay.

A recent AFF survey found that 71 per cent of respondents would consider

leaving the Army if Service Families Accommodation (SFA) was withdrawn.

The reasons for not buying property were complex and individual to each family and it is difficult to see how any package from the MoD as an alternative to SFA could work.

The MoD has been set the task of saving £250 million in allowances every year. By far two of the costliest are Continuity of Education Allowance (CEA) and Local Overseas Allowance (LOA). Those who don’t see the use of CEA will no doubt call for its cut, but for those of us who use it to remain mobile it is essential. Looking at LOA, changes to elements of it had already been mooted so this should come as no surprise to families. It will, however, make an overseas posting

even less attractive as the low exchange rate and cost of living combined with reduced employment opportunities make it financially punitive.

We will not know many of the actual details of the SDSR for months to come, so a further period of uncertainty is likely. But this is also an opportunity for the MoD to actually conduct a Defence Review properly, flesh out the bones of what was announced in the House of Commons and make a positive impact on the lives of all our soldiers and their families. ■

The SDSR may have caused uncertainty for many families’

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www.erskine.org.uk

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www.oswaldstoll.org.uk

Sir Oswald Stoll Foundation provides appropriate housing with support to vulnerable and disabled ex-service personnel, including those who have been homeless.

www.blesma.org

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

www.veterans-aid.net

Tel: 020 7828 2468, info@veterans-aid.net

www.veterans-uk.info

A wealth of information about pay, pension and support services to both military personnel and the veterans community

www.army.mod.uk/welfare-support/family/default.aspx

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

www.nivets.org.uk

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



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23 year old single learning disability nurse currently living in Reading. No children, just a fat hamster. She is sociable, chatty and likes a laugh. Ex-pad brat, if you want to know more write to her. Enjoys all music except heavy metal, likes films, socialising with friends and spending time with her family, singing and going out for dinner. Would like to write to an Army officer, 23-35 any regiment, all letters will be answered. P041

Sheree, (43), 5'6", brown hair, slim build and enjoys driving, holidays, travelling, having fun and meeting people. Would like to hear from you, 43-48. P042

Suzanne (29), 5'6", black hair and brown eyes, size 18 and been told she is good looking. Enjoys walking, reading, going out with friends, having a laugh, watching TV, loves music of all kinds, loves spending time with her kids and family. She has four children who she loves very much and would do anything for and just really wants to have a soldier as a pen pal to give her support to. P043

Pen Pal replies

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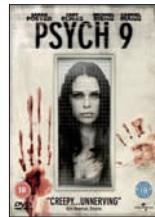
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Shock Therapy: Director Andrew Shortell delivers a nerve-chilling hospital-based horror with *Psych 9*, released by indi Vision

Dark and damaged

Bitchy bombshell Sara Foster trades *90210* glamour for psychological terror

Interview: Joe Clapson

AN ABANDONED hospital, a serial killer on the loose, faces popping up on CCTV monitors and electric-shock treatment are just the beginning for the chilling horror that is *Psych 9*.

Add in a mentally-scared woman who works the nightshift at the disused St John's Hospital and a creepy British psychiatric doctor, and you've got a seriously warped movie.

The usually tanned and radiant Sara Foster, of *90210* fame, has traded her uber-bitchy, ultra-fashionable Jen for the emotionally-unstable, dark-haired and washed-out Roslyn, the film's chief protagonist.

Soldier caught up with Foster to discuss the brave switch from Beverley Hills gossip and glamour to traumatising mind games in a disturbingly remote location.

"It's a bit of a change from anything I've done before and it's very seldom that you get this type of opportunity," she said.

"There is a danger that you can get pigeon-holed in this line of work and when this presented

itself, I just grasped it."

Directed by acclaimed newcomer Andrew Shortell and co-starring Cary Elwes (*Saw*, *Twister*), Michael Biehn (*The Terminator*, *Aliens*) and Gabriel Mann (*The Bourne Supremacy*, *Buffalo Soldiers*), the film is as far removed as possible from anything Foster has done before.

With a message that "the abused become the abusers", the bold script from Lawrence Robinson touches on serious issues including rape, murder and mental illness.

On tackling the challenging role, Foster said: "My first thoughts when I saw the script were that I could not do it because it was intimidating and I was afraid of failing or the movie failing."

"But then I changed my mind and took it on. It was a lot of pressure because I'm in almost every scene and there was no-one to bounce ideas off."

The plot revolves around Roslyn working alone at night and experiencing numerous harrowing events, which may or may not be linked to a series of gruesome killings attributed to The Nighthawk, a killer who remains at large.

There are several candidates in the frame for the slayings, including Roslyn, but the audience does not know anything for definite – and neither does the unhinged character.

"For the role I just dived in headfirst and shut myself off from the outside world. I became Roslyn and I was her morning, noon and night," said Foster.

"I didn't speak to anybody and nobody visited me during the filming process – I was completely removed from everyone."

The film will please horror fans and those who enjoy sitting in fear in front of a screen but this is definitely one to miss if you are squeamish or looking for a light-hearted flick to pass the time.

It is one of those films which some viewers will spend asking "why would you do that?"

Despite working long hours on a cold Prague location, surrounded by movie-set blood and often with no fellow cast members to speak to, Foster remained level-headed.

"Actors aren't fighting in a war or curing cancer," she said.

"Film, TV and entertainment is crucial because we are all looking for a way to escape from stress or loss and other things."

"But we also have to stop and remind ourselves how fortunate we are to be in our jobs – tell your guys in the British Army I am with them all the way and good luck in Afghanistan." ■

● *Psych 9* is out now on DVD.

From gory thrillers to a chilling nightmare on the slopes, *Soldier* checks out the latest DVD releases...

The Tortured out now

FROM the makers of *Saw*, this is a gory thriller with an exciting twist. The plot revolves around a psychopathic serial killer and the parents of the young boy he just brutally tortured and killed. The murderer is caught by the police and handed a lenient sentence by the justice system, which, as you would expect, angers the parents. They take matters into their own hands and extract the killer from jail to exact their revenge in the most gruesome way they can. This all goes to plan until the end of the film when an unexpected twist grabs the audience by the scruff of the neck and genuinely surprises.



Daniel Crowder, Greater Manchester ACF

Vincere out now

THIS film will never be a box office smash – it's in Italian and foreign language films never do well – but more's the pity. This is excellent. On the surface *Vincere* is a tragic retelling of the life of Ida Dalser, Mussolini's secret wife, and how the dictator's disownment of her and their son led to their early deaths in lunatic asylums. On another level it is a brutal exposition on Italy's fatal experiment in "leftist fascism" and the logical fallacies that the Catholic Church was willing and eager to embrace to regain statehood and to ensure its survival.

Marco Bellocchio's directorship and writing are exquisite.

Capt Dan Knowles, 35 Engr Regt



Goemon out now

A MOVIE that lays out the tale of feudal Japanese history, betrayal and ninja violence. The first two may not interest you, but rest assured the last facet alone is reason to get a beer or two and kick back for more than two hours. Yes, time does drag on a bit in places, especially with the dubbed voices, but there's just enough plot and sometimes dark humour to tie the large action sequences together, some of which are absolutely spectacular. The story is kind of *Robin Hood* meets classic animated film *Ninja Scroll*. Overall there is too much fluff between the action for my liking, but if you're patient I'm sure you'll enjoy it.



James Dobbs, civvy



Hospital hell: Lawrence Robinson's challenging script takes Foster out of her comfort zone and places her in an unbearable world of mental anguish

Frozen out now

THIS spine-tingling horror will leave you without any fingernails and probably giving serious reconsideration to any ski trip you may have booked. A trio of 20-something best friends (**Shawn Ashmore, Kevin Zegers and Emma Bell**) are

hoping to spend some quality time skiing and snowboarding in a picturesque resort, but a typical day on the slopes turns into a living hell. The ski area closes and the group are left to freeze to death dangling above the snow. This is a realistic man-versus-nature film with a simple but effective plot that will frighten the life out of you and make you very wary of chairlifts.



Richard Long, Soldier

Win... The A-Team

THE A-Team does nothing more and nothing less than fans of the cult 1980s TV show would expect. It is packed with fight scenes, explosions and customary one-liners delivered by an all-star cast. The movie follows the exploits of BA Baracus et al as they – rather aptly – battle to find the true perpetrators of a crime they were framed for in order to clear their names. Twentieth Century Fox are kindly offering five readers the opportunity to win a copy of the DVD. To have a chance of winning, tell us during which decade *The A-Team* aired on TV. Answers on a postcard to the usual address or by email to comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk

Closing date: November 30



Win... Beneath Hill 60

THIS remarkable film finally puts one of the most astonishing tales of the First World War onto the silver screen and pays homage to some real-life unsung heroes. Directed by renowned actor/director **Jeremy Sims** and written by screenwriter **David**

Roach, *Beneath Hill 60* is the gripping true story of the 1st Australian Tunnelling Company based on the diaries of Capt Oliver Woodward. **Soldier** has teamed up with Momentum Pictures to offer five readers the chance to win a copy of the DVD. To enter, tell us who directed the film. Answers on a postcard to the usual address or send an email to comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk



Closing date: November 30



Wrestle mania: EA Sports MMA manages to recreate the discipline's variety, with bouts often ending up being fought on the floor

EA's fighting chance

Mixed martial arts title grapples for success in crowded cage scrapping genre

Interview: Joe Clapson

FINALLY the chance to pit your wits and fists against the toughest names in Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) is here – in a safe, not actually getting hit, sense.

EA Sports MMA brings the authenticity of one of the world's most intense combat disciplines to the comfort of your armchair, giving players the opportunity to choose from top fighters such as Randy Couture and Frank Shamrock.

Alternatively, gamers can opt to climb the ranks of the worldwide circuit, travelling the globe learning fight techniques and skills from the masters with self-created prodigies to become the ultimate MMA champion.

Soldier met up with producer Nick Laing to get his thoughts on EA's groundbreaking offering.

"We wanted to make sure the control system was consistent so that everyone could use it," he said. "We wanted the key details to be about timing and for the strategy to be true to the chess game that is MMA."

"That is the case whether you are in striking range, in a clinch game or grappling."

The multi-platform release will please those who enjoy a stand-up fight as well as the grapplers who like nothing more than to go to the floor as the control system, using a modified *Fight Night* engine, suits either style.

Whatever their situation, the power is in the player's hands as long as they keep a level head, according to Laing.

"The key to the fight game is about strategy and timing yourself so you can take the advantage," he said. "If you start 'button mashing' you're going to tire your fighter out – you have to manage your stamina carefully. Just like in real life you have to stay calm."

Gamers can select from various weight classes, rule sets and take on challengers in an array of cage types or a ring. The brutal action continues online, including the ability to create and share custom fighters.

This is the definitive MMA experience, featuring multiple disciplines, regulations, locations and fighters from all over the globe. Players have the ability to take on opponents in a ring, hexagonal or circular cage and the whole fight environment comes to life with barking cornermen and strict referees.

Announcer Jimmy Lemmon Junior provides

fighter introductions, while MMA legend Frank Shamrock and Mauro Ranallo call the action for those watching.

When creating a brawler, you immerse yourself in the world of MMA training and fighting and begin your quest to become champion.

There is even the opportunity to take the reins on the commercial side of the sport by becoming a promoter, setting up fight nights with friends or simply by trash-talking opponents and providing your own commentary.

With huge attention to detail and advice taken on board from the best fighters in the business, EA seems to have won the current battle for best MMA game on the market.

The fact that British troops would be sure to play his game was not lost on Laing.

"I am well aware that soldiers are massive game players and particularly when it comes to the fight games," he explained.

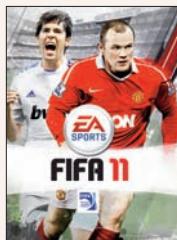
"I would absolutely love to get out to Afghanistan, set up a room full of screens and watch the place just go nuts watching and playing EA sports games."

"I'm sure *EA Sports MMA* will go down well with those at home and on operations if they get the chance to play it. Good luck to you guys."

From the battle of the footballing powerhouses to a shady shooter, we check out the latest releases...

Fifa 11 for all formats

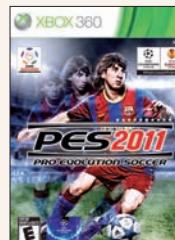
IT would not be autumn without the latest version of the all-conquering *Fifa* series and gamers will not be disappointed this year. Since overtaking the *Pro Evolution* stable in the console pecking order a couple of releases ago, *Fifa* has not looked back and the controls in this version are nigh-on perfect. The difficulty is pitched just right as well, with cheap ways of scoring that worked in previous games no longer as effective and opposition defenders and goalkeepers much more able. The array of licensed teams and leagues and an in-depth career mode round off the best sports title on any system.



Out now

Pro Evolution Soccer 2011 for all formats

LINING up in the opposite half of the 2011 console football cup final is *Fifa*'s traditional rival *Pro Evolution Soccer*. The immediate strength in Konami's title is its appearance – the graphics and animation are top notch and the series' clunky menu system has been given a more user-friendly overhaul. But a lot of the good work is undone once the whistle blows. A new passing system that leaves the direction and power of each kick entirely up to the player is novel, but it too frequently results in misplaced balls. The master league mode is still good fun, but this is ultimately too frustrating.



Out now

Medal of Honour for all formats

THE game that has courted massive controversy, including criticism from none other than Defence Secretary Dr Liam Fox, finally hits the shelves. The reason for its panning from certain sections of society is its setting – rather than a fictional war, players take on the role of US troops fighting the Taliban and some of the action is very close to the bone. The decision to allow multiplayer users to fight as insurgents is equally dubious. As a game, *Medal of Honour* is solid and realistic, but several bugs and an on-the-rails mission structure that rules out exploring make it no more than average in an already-crowded market.



Out now



Breath control: *Soldier's* Joe Clapson fights to break out of a choke hold administered by Ashley Grimshaw at the launch of *EA Sports MMA*, which is out now

Dead Rising 2 for Xbox 360

THE follow-up to Capcom's refreshing take on the zombie apocalypse adopts the original's high body count and cheeky sense of humour and multiplies them many times over. Playing as Chuck Greene, a father framed for starting a zombie outbreak in the American setting of Fortune City, gamers hack and slash their way through hundreds of thousands of flesh-eating monsters as they try to clear the protagonist's name. The action is fast-paced and exciting and the weapons range from chainsaws strapped to either end of a paddle to a giant moose head used to barge the undead out of the way. Great fun and highly recommended.



Out now

Sengoku Basara: Samurai Heroes

IF swiping your way through a never-ending stream of angry opponents is your bag, chances are that *Sengoku Basara: Samurai Heroes* is the game for you. Players choose from one of 16 imaginatively-recreated samurai warriors and fight literally thousands of enemies en route to a series of boss battles. Fun in theory, but the reality is much more mundane as the game soon descends into deep levels of button-bashing tedium. It looks pretty good for a Wii title and is initially quite fresh, but after you've seen the special moves and fought through one mission there is little else to keep you entertained.

Out now

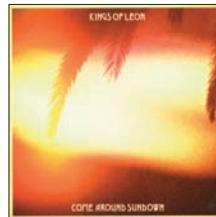


Win... Copies of *EA Sports MMA*

ANYONE who enjoys fight games, one-on-one contests or the ability to create a monster to take on the world should play *EA Sports MMA*. You can adopt the persona of the best in the business or train in gyms across the world with your own prodigies, learning different styles of mixed martial arts as you go. There is also the opportunity to trade blows with rivals online and to become a promoter arranging your own fights. EA Sports are giving five readers the chance to win a copy of the game. To enter, just tell us what MMA stands for. Answers on a postcard to the usual address or by email to comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk



Closing date: November 30



A ray of sunshine: Kings of Leon continue to glow brightly with the release of their fifth album *Come Around Sundown*, out now

Return of the Kings

Tennessee rockers deliver rapid follow-up to world-beating breakthrough record

Review: Richard Long

AFTER seemingly conquering all before them with the multi-million selling album *Only By The Night*, it would be safe to assume Kings of Leon would be enjoying a well-deserved musical hiatus.

The Followill clan now sit proudly at the top of rock's tree, but instead of resting on their laurels the Tennessee-based quartet has released what seems like an incredibly swift follow-up to their monster record of 2008.

Come Around Sundown could prove to be a complicated affair for the band. Newcomers will undoubtedly be eager to hear the new *Sex on Fire* while stalwart fans will be cautious of another venture into the mainstream.

But for brothers Caleb, Nathan and Jared and cousin Matthew, the recording process was very much business as normal, with any added weight of expectation seemingly irrelevant.

"I don't think we've ever been a band to have the stopwatch out for that radio hit," explained drummer Nathan.

"You know, the formula where it's got to be

two-and-a-half minutes to three minutes long, or something like that."

Singer Caleb added: "We don't like to ever over-think anything. I mean the amount of times we go in there [the studio] and actually record a song, it's unbelievable."

"We'll go in and play it three times and if they say 'give us one more' we're all like 'come on, we gave it to you three times, that's what the song is going to be'."

"There's a lot of vulnerability on this record and that is [down to] the fact that a lot of it wasn't rehearsed. Back when people were making real music, that's what you loved when you could hear a pop here or a crack here, a door opening."

"I remember when we were doing *Youth and Manhood*.

"I forget which track it is, but if you listen closely – and we're probably the only ones that can actually hear it – but while the track is being played, you can hear someone shooting a game of pool in the background."

"You can hear the balls cracking. And, you know, that's awesome, it's got to stay."

While the process of recording the music remains unchanged, the end result is far removed from the youthful exuberance and raw rock sound

that embraced *Youth and Young Manhood* and *Aha Shake Heartbreak*.

The album's first single *Radioactive* hints at something new and exciting, an upbeat anthem that ultimately lacks the increasing annoyance that *Sex on Fire* provoked with every radio play.

There is also a definite homely feel to the record, with tracks *Back Down South* and *Pickup Truck* paying particular homage to the roots they are so clearly proud of.

Mary proves to be one of the more interesting numbers and has the feel of a Buddy Holly or doo-wop ballad, only cranked up three or four levels on the rock scale to create a strangely enjoyable musical experience.

However, on the whole this fails to escape the suffocating shackles of *Only By The Night*.

One cannot help but wonder if Kings of Leon would have been better served waiting a little longer to produce what was always going to be a difficult record.

The 2007 release *Because of the Times* remains their standout offering to date, an album that combined raw energy with a slightly polished feel, and the band needs to discover that magic once again if they are to avoid becoming lost in the soft rock mainstream. ■

From Scandinavian gangsters to a slick collection of collaborations, we try the best and the rest...

Audio Secrecy by Stone Sour

FORMED in 1992 by SlipKnoT frontman **Corey Taylor**, **Stone Sour** have enjoyed radio play courtesy of early singles *Bother* and *Through Glass*. Their third album sees the



singer writing about his past and the heavy edge is still present in the form of *Mission Statement* and first single *Say You'll Haunt Me*. But fans of the more melodic side of this Iowa quintet will be far from disappointed as the band's power-ballads give Taylor an opportunity to show off his incredible, unique voice and prove to the doubters he is more than just the masked man fronting SlipKnoT. All in all, *Audio Secrecy* could well be one of the highlights of their career and is an album for both old and new fans alike.

Pte Stephen McManus, 1 Yorks

Record Collection by Mark Ronson

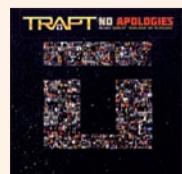
BACK with his third album, **Mark Ronson** shows no sign of stopping the successful collaborations with guest vocalists any time soon. *Version*, which everyone will remember for the smash hit *Valerie* that featured the considerable talents of **Amy Winehouse**, sold millions worldwide and the same formula has been repeated on *Record Collection*, making you wonder if the famed producer is something of a one-trick pony. **Duran Duran** frontman **Simon Le Bon** and **Ghostface Killah** are but two of the big names drafted in to add to his wall of fame. This is a slick and competent record, that's for sure, but only time will tell if it can reach the dizzy heights of its predecessor.



WO2 Mo Morris, RLC

No Apologies by Trapt

FROM the label that brought you **Buckcherry** and **Drowning Pool** comes the second album of Californian four-piece **Trapt**, *No Apologies*. This record is a delightful fusion of catchy heavy guitar riffs and well-written melodic choruses that had me engaged right from the very start thanks to the brilliant opening song *Sound Off*. Although a little short, this offering continues to produce the goods with a positive and hard-rocking sound throughout the 11 tracks and it proved to be a great listen while out in the car. The softer tunes were mellow enough to disrupt the wife's incessant moaning and the heavier numbers made drowning her out a pleasure.



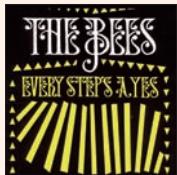
Capt Fraser Dowling, AGC (ETS)



Southern boys: Kings of Leon pay homage to their roots in new album *Come Around Sundown*, which follows hot on the heels of *Only By The Night*

Every Step's A Yes by The Bees

THE fourth studio album from **The Bees** buzzes into life with the toe-tappingly catchy *I Really Need Love*, but the further you fly into *Every Step's A Yes*, the more the pace slows to a honey-like consistency. *Winter Rose* has an epic feel to it and *Silver Line* benefits from a stripped-back psychedelic sound, but the down tempo tracks that follow fail to inspire. The going becomes monotonous and you end up longing for something fun and experimental like previous hit *Chicken Payback* to get the stripy chaps' mojo going again. This is by no means a bad album – lyrically it can be quite astute – but the sting in its tail is a lack of energy and ultimately that prevents it from taking flight.



Stephen Tyler, Soldier

The Preview by Chiddy Bang

THIS is an appetite-whetting eight-track sample by Philadelphia hip hop stars **Chiddy Bang** prior to the release of their debut album *Swelly Life* next year. The duo have only been around since 2008 but have stormed the US with their distinct sound – it is fresh which is rare to hear these days. They have managed to encompass a wide range of styles which will appeal to just about everyone as hip hop, indie, pop, techno and electro combine strongly with some pretty good lyrics. The result is a collection of very catchy, hard-to-fault rap anthems. If this is just a taste of what Chiddy Bang are all about, we're going to see these guys at the top of the charts for a long time to come.



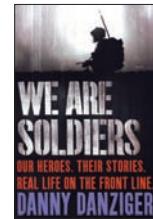
Rodge Tapply, ex-RE

Until One by Swedish House Mafia

SUPERSTAR DJ trio **Swedish House Mafia** combine a collection of their solo work to create the hotly-anticipated album *Until One*. Artists such as **Coldplay**, **Daft Punk** and **Miike Snow** all feature in the mix in what proves to be a highly-euphoric dance record. The **Tinie Tempah** collaboration *Miami 2 Ibiza* provides a superb opening and the early tunes offer an upbeat feel that gets the pulse racing. But, rather disappointingly, the novelty and enjoyment gradually wears off as the tracks skip by and the music drifts into an almost repetitive stream. Dance aficionados will undoubtedly be impressed and the trio will win a few converts, but for casual listeners it may prove difficult.

Richard Long, Soldier





Service stories: *We Are Soldiers*, published by Sphere and available in hardback, features troops telling their own stories

Professional pride

Army appeal is laid bare as experienced journalist goes in search of troops' tales

Interview: Stephen Tyler

In an age of 24-hour television news channels, audiences around the world are closer to breaking military stories than ever before. Within minutes of major events at home and in theatre, the media is awash with front-line feedback, top-level interviews and in-depth political analysis.

But although the coverage drills deep into the facts and figures behind the latest Op Herrick developments, it often fails to capture the views of Britain's Servicemen and women.

The gap in the market was not lost on seasoned journalist Danny Danziger and the author set about plugging it by travelling the length of the nation to hear the realities of war straight from those who have experienced them.

The result, *We Are Soldiers*, is a compelling collection of first-hand accounts not just from those who have gone toe-to-toe with the Taliban but also from the personnel who perform just-as-important roles away from Helmand's hot spots.

"This came about because I felt that I knew nothing about what it was like to be a soldier,"

Danziger explained. "There is tonnes of stuff on the news and reports about Afghanistan, but none of the kind of thing I wanted to know that you would only get by asking these guys and girls.

"Why do we only hear about soldiers' lives when they die? These guys love what they do and that's something that is currently getting lost.

"There's a great deal of excitement and adrenaline and a sense of people doing something they really want to do. They are out there because they are pursuing their dreams."

Chronicling the experiences of an organisation as diverse as the British Army is a mammoth task that took Danziger more than a year to complete.

Splitting the Service into its various arms, the writer interviewed 34 soldiers whose roles cover everything from patrolling Afghanistan's Green Zone to teaching comrades foreign languages.

In a pleasant departure from the norm, each interview is presented as a first-person account straight from the horse's mouth.

And although tales of squaring up to insurgents are inevitably the real page-turners, even the descriptions of supposedly more mundane jobs provide a gripping insight into the modern-day role of a soldier and their motivation for serving.

"One of my favourite interviews was with a guy

who had to service the photocopying machine on the Falkland Islands," Danziger told *Soldier*.

"He was taking malaria tablets as he thought he was going to Afghanistan but ended up on the other side of the world. The combat troops get all the glory, but there are other arms and services doing equally-worthy stuff."

A military novice himself – barring an error-strewn Officer Training Corps exercise forced upon him by his school headmaster – Danziger admits to developing an admiration for the men and women he interviewed and their passion for their careers.

For the reader, it is easy to see why. Regardless of their duties, the troops cast under the book's spotlight are shining examples of the tenacity and professionalism on show in today's Army.

"This book looks at who these people are, why they are doing the job and how they felt during certain moments – it's really the inside story," concluded Danziger.

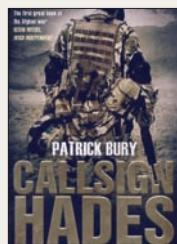
"What I love about soldiers is their modesty – if I had done what some of them have done, everyone would know about it in a second."

"It's not just a job, it's about duty and patriotism and for those who like it and want to do it, it's a fantastic life." ■

From soldiers in Sangin to the scent of sandbags, a flick through this month's literary releases...

Callsign Hades by Patrick Bury

CENTRING on 1 Royal Irish's deployment to Sangin in 2006, the author describes his experiences of Army life from training at Sandhurst to returning home from tour. **Bury** writes this soldier's view expressively and honestly, and with a humorous undertone that never detracts from the seriousness of operational life. Not a book for Army readers though, as those with military experience may find that Bury's limited time in uniform exposes some of his viewpoints as naive, unbalanced and somewhat cynical. That said, it is clear that he has a profound love for his regiment and the men that served in it.



Capt Jim Vincent, RLC

Amexica by Ed Vulliamy

NOT to be confused with the film of the same name, this title offers a harrowing insight into the secret wars being waged along Mexico's border with the USA. The quality of **Vulliamy's** research and the passion with which he emerges himself in the story stand out. Incredible descriptions of the destitution caused by the cross-border drugs trade throw a new light on a situation recently brought to the world's attention by former Mexican president Vincente Fox, who called for America to take responsibility for the misery its drug lust has caused. Tragic and often brutal beyond belief; this is not an enjoyable story, but it is a gripping one.



Capt Dan Knowles, 35 Engr Regt

Sky Men by Robert Kershaw

A TITLE that reaffirms the old adage about not judging a book by its cover (or its title), it would have been very much the loss of this former "crap hat" if I'd passed up the opportunity to read *Sky Men*. Penned by an ex-Para officer and based on interviews with soldiers from around the world, this book is an education on airborne forces. I, for one, didn't know that the British once had daredevil dogs that jumped into battle without being pushed or that German paratroopers landed on the backs of cows. From Arnhem and Vietnam to the Israel Defence Force's raid on Entebbe and the British in Afghanistan, *Sky Men* gets a green light from me.



Anthony McNally, ex-12 Regt RA

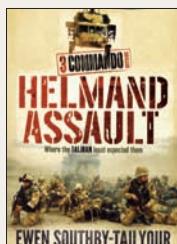


Through the ages: From the battlefields of Helmand to the likes of Bosnia, *We Are Soldiers* mixes tales of current conflicts with historical accounts

3 Commando Brigade: Helmand Assault

EWEN Southby-Tailyour

captures the often insurmountable missions faced by the Royal Marines of 3 Commando Brigade during their tour of Helmand province in the winter of 2008/09. Detailing everything from the difficulties encountered



in the initial planning stages of Op Herrick 9 through to the "black humour" of those facing an extremely-determined, well-organised and numerically-superior enemy force, the author has an uncanny knack of integrating personal recollections to paint a picture of events on the ground. By far one of the best accounts of the fighting in Afghanistan I've read.

Rodge Tapply, ex-RE

Helmet for my Pillow by Robert Leckie

ORIGINALLY written in 1957 and recently turned into the HBO mini-series *The Pacific*, this title stands up to any piece of contemporary military writing based on a soldier's view of conflict. **Leckie** writes honestly and pragmatically about

fighting in South East Asia during the Second World War and his descriptions will resonate with today's generation of Service personnel. Violent and emotionally compelling, his story is truly a human one and charts the campaign of a normal American and the making of a bond with his fellow marines. An excellent read and a stark reminder that war has not changed that much in 65 years.

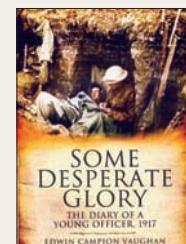
Capt Shaun Fardy, AGC



Some Desperate Glory by E C Vaughan

EDWIN Vaughan

served with The Royal Warwickshire Regiment during the Great War and this intensely personal account of his experiences illustrates that, despite the technological advances made in the intervening 82 years, at the human level at least, very little has changed. The author describes the horror in graphic detail and admits his fear with a disarming candour. Yet between all ranks within his platoon there is a sense of purpose and a level of camaraderie that endures to this day. This is not a book for the strategist but an offering which deals with the reality of trench warfare at such an intimate level that one can almost smell the sandbags.



Lt Col (Retd) Nick Sim, ex-PWRR



Badge of honour: The Range Rover marque guarantees a high level of luxury and performance, but also carries a price to match

Range of opinions

Snarling exterior sparks serious debate as Land Rover unleashes its latest creation

Review: Stephen Tyler

If the men and women over at Marmite were to design a car, it is highly likely the outcome would be the Range Rover Sport. Much like the foodies' love-it-or-hate-it yeast product, the beefy exterior of Land Rover's latest luxury model instantly divides opinion.

In the supporters' camp, fans point to the muscular styling, distinctive front grille and aggressive stance as reasons to back the beast.

Detractors are not so easily convinced and counter the hype by flagging up the boxy appearance, squat frame and blunt front end.

Both sides have convincing arguments, but *Soldier* refused to be swayed by such superficial judgements and took the Range Rover Sport out on the open road to make up our own minds.

The vehicle's cabin is every bit as luxurious as you would expect. Comfortable heated leather seats can be moved up, down, backwards and forwards at the touch of a button.

The prospect of steering such a hefty car – the Range Rover stands nearly five metres long and more than two metres wide – is quite daunting for

someone used to a "regular" ride.

But Land Rover has performed a minor miracle by designing a driving position that makes everything seem that bit smaller.

Although the person behind the wheel is left in no doubt about the size of the vehicle, they feel in complete command of the road because the excellent all-round visibility makes knowing how much space is around you an intuitive process.

Technology plays a huge part in the Range Rover experience and the 2011 Sport meets the standard. Keyless entry and push-button engine start come as standard and are allied to touches including an automatic steering column height adjuster, which we found slightly temperamental.

The centre console features a five-inch touch screen through which drivers can control the in-built digital and analogue radios, CD player, satellite navigation system and television tuner. USB and iPod connectors are also on offer.

Once on the move, the Range Rover continues to impress. The six-speed automatic transmission is smooth and refined and provides immediate grunt when the accelerator hits the floor.

The three-litre diesel engine we tested was fluid on the motorway – or at least as fluid as the M25 on a Friday evening allows – and responsive

enough to cope with traffic on the quieter roads in and around *Soldier*'s Hampshire HQ.

Impressed with the Sport's handling of the highway, we decided to put its dimensions to the test in the narrow confines of the short stay car park at Heathrow Airport's Terminal Three.

Despite our nerves that we would struggle to fit through the gate at the entrance, the Range Rover passed comfortably through and on to the circular ramp, where the clever transmission prevented the car from rolling backwards while in a queue.

Choosing the tricky option of reverse parking into a tight bay with cars on either side, our success in guiding it in unscathed and straight at the first attempt had little to do with our mastery of the controls.

Instead, we utilised the onboard parking camera. The moment the reverse gear is engaged, an image transmitted from the vehicle's back end flashes up on the driver information screen. Throw front and rear parking sensors into the mix and there is no need to fear the Sport's size.

Ultimately, the Range Rover's mix of upper-class refinement and Premiership footballer-style brashness will continue to provoke debate. Look beyond its appearance, however, and it is hard not to be won over. ■

We take a closer look at the raft of features included in the 2011 Range Rover Sport 3.0 TDV6 HSE...

Bodykit and alloy wheels

WHETHER it is for the right or wrong reasons, there is no denying that the Range Rover Sport is a real head-turner. Distinctive light



clusters at the front and rear, an imposing low stance and sculpted appearance make it instantly recognisable. For drivers not content unless every man, woman and child stops for a second take, the Sport can also be adorned with an extravagant aesthetic pack. The model on show on these pages features diamond-cut alloy wheels and a bodykit that adds refinements including masculine door sills on either side and a front grille that makes the vehicle appear slightly menacing. A flashy addition, but not for all tastes.

Mark out of ten: Six

Memory electric seats

WITH a selection of six footers on the *Soldier* staff, we harnessed our collective height to test the Range Rover Sport's comfort.



The seats are undeniably luxurious and lend themselves well to a relaxed driving style. They can also be heated to provide a touch of warmth in the winter. However, the real challenge was whether they would allow our taller testers to stretch out. The height, pitch and position can be altered using well-placed switches on the front seats' outside edges and they were easy to manoeuvre into combinations to suit most driver styles and sizes. Three separate positions can also be stored in the off-roader's memory.

Mark out of ten: Eight

Power and performance

ALTHOUGH anyone buying the Sport with visions of tearing up race tracks is going to end up disappointed, the Range Rover's



engine is a lively customer. The three-litre diesel variant we tested started quietly and performed well, if unspectacularly, at low speeds. But take it out onto a motorway and hit the accelerator and it comes into its own. A pleasing growl accompanies the turbocharged powerplant as it kicks into life and the 0-60mph speed ranges from 10.4 seconds for the three-litre TDV6 245PS to a much-quicker 5.9 seconds from the five-litre LR-V8 SC. Special filters also ensure the diesel engines are among the cleanest on the market.

Mark out of ten: Seven



Outgoing auto: With a less-than-subtle bodykit and distinctive alloy wheels, the Range Rover Sport is a good choice of motor for drivers who want to be noticed

Technology and entertainment

IT may be a prestige purchase for automobile aficionados, but the Range Rover Sport has also made a play for the hearts and minds of gadget fans. Kicking off with keyless entry and push-button start, it adds four individual climate zones, mobile phone controls on the steering wheel and even a cooler built into the console. But it is the Sport's entertainment system that stands out. A touch screen controls the various outputs – DAB and analogue radio, CD, iPod, navigation and even television – and the fact that it is all directed from one place makes the dashboard clean and uncluttered. A reversing camera is the icing on the hi-tech cake.



Space and comfort

AS previously mentioned, the Range Rover Sports' front seats are easily-adjustable to allow drivers of varying heights to enjoy their ride. But what of the experience for the passengers? For anyone sat in the front, the cabin is spacious and well-appointed and the armrests are perfectly positioned. The leather upholstery is top-class and looks the part as well. Move into the rear of the vehicle, however, and all is not quite so rosy. Despite the Sport's size, the back seats offer little leg room for taller occupants if similarly-lengthy individuals are sat in the front. The car recovers some of its pride thanks to a cavernous boot.



Soldier-specific sales

THERE is no denying that buying a Range Rover is a major investment. But luckily for serving personnel, Land Rover offers hefty discounts on the prices civvies have to pay. All members of the Armed Forces are eligible to receive 13 per cent off the price of any car in the range, equating to savings of up to £7,722. With the offer in place, the three-litre HSE TDV6 model on show on this page drops from a retail price of £57,809 to £50,399 – £7,410 less. Servicemen and women can find out more by calling Peterborough-based Marshall Military Sales on 01733 213231 or visiting the company's dedicated website.



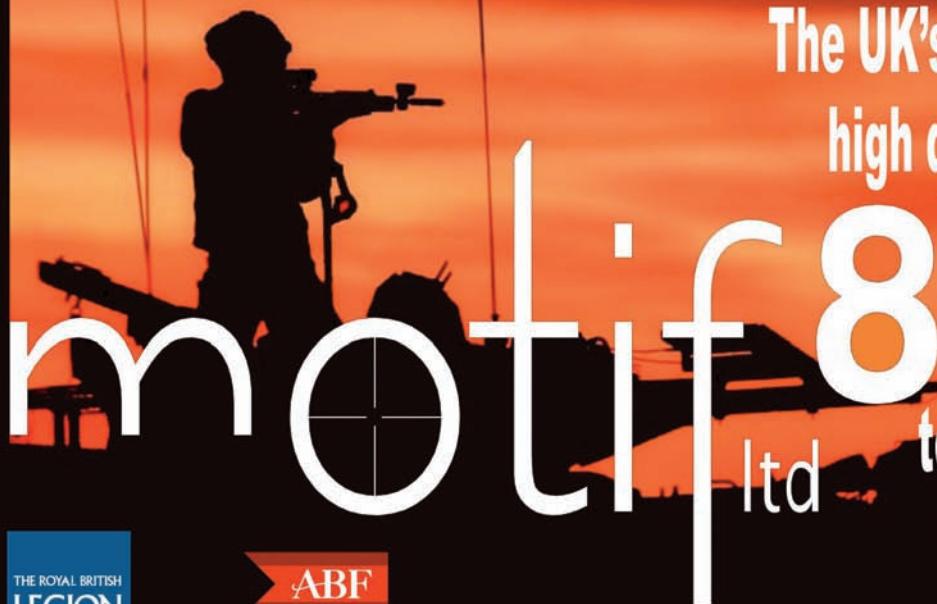
www.landrovermilitarysales.co.uk

Mark out of ten: Nine

Mark out of ten: Seven

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SOLDIER SPORT

Picture: Graeme Main

KINGS OF THE RING: ARMY BOXERS MOVE TO STATE-OF-THE-ART GYM FOR START OF NEW SEASON

ALSO IN THIS MONTH'S ISSUE...



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WOMEN TRAIN WITH
THE ROYALS



P98 **DISABLED SKIING**
SERVICE STARS TARGET
TOP HONOURS



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ARMY RIDER SHINES
IN NEW SERIES



P105 **FOOTBALL**
VETERAN DEFENDER IN
LAST HURRAH



PUSHED TO THE LIMIT



Looking on: Sport scientist Gareth Turner keeps a close eye on the Army Under-23 football squad as the players are pushed to the limit in a series of gruelling fitness tests



Ahead of the field: The Lucozade Sport Science Team brought Premiership-standard training drills to Aldershot to ensure Service footballers are fully prepared for the season



Speed machine: The Serpentine Test used light signals to measure players' speed and reaction times as they raced across a 30-metre course while dribbling a football



Sprint finish: The Under-23 players face further tests in the New Year to ensure standards in fitness and endurance are at optimum levels ahead of the Inter-Services



A new approach: The Army Under-23 squad has introduced elite-level training to boost fitness levels

A game of science

Report: Richard Long

Pictures: Graeme Main

FOOTBALLERS from the Army's Under-23 side have faced a series of energy-sapping fitness tests as part of a Premiership-standard pre-season programme.

Sport scientist Gareth Turner visited the squad to conduct stringent examinations of their endurance and sprint capabilities as part of a week-long training camp in Aldershot.

The Lucozade Sport Science Team member gave expert advice on the importance of hydration and nutrition and carried out testing procedures that are used by some of the biggest names in the game.

"This was all about football-specific fitness testing," Turner told *SoldierSport*.

"These are the types of tests that go on during pre-season at professional clubs across the country and they are used by quite a few Premiership outfits.

"As a team they were collectively much better than the average semi-pro sides and there were some stand-out scores for both speed and endurance.

"They really enjoyed it and there was some great camaraderie and banter between the players. They encouraged each other and really got stuck in and hopefully they got some good information out of it.

"The players look to be in really good shape but there is always room for improvements to be made."

The session allowed players to tackle

a number of challenges that form part of the demanding Lucozade Sport Performance League.

The Serpentine Test, a drill that measures speed and reaction time, saw the footballers racing across a 30-metre course while dribbling a ball between three mannequins, with a light signal determining the direction in which the object should be passed.

This was followed by the Yo-Yo Test, a procedure designed to replicate and measure work rate as the intensity of exercise progresses.

Turner will return to Aldershot later in the season to ensure the squad is in peak condition for the Inter-Services campaign and the tests will help players to meet the high standards now demanded by the squad's management.

"We are trying to be professional in the way the team is run and the facilities we organise," said Maj Dave Manners (AGC), chairman of the Under-23 side.

"The aim was to test them now and again in the New Year ahead of the Inter-Services. It also gives them targets and goals and they know they are being monitored closely.

"The kit they were using was absolutely fantastic. Things like this will hopefully give us an extra edge and that little something more on the pitch."

As part of the training week the team also played two friendly matches, drawing 2-2 with the Sandhurst Devils before suffering a narrow 3-2 defeat to Itchen College. ■

Royals' seal of approval

Report: Richard Long
Pictures: Graeme Main

CHAMPIONSHIP side Reading have helped the Army's women footballers prepare for the new season with a day of training under the scrutiny of manager Brian McDermott.

The Service squad travelled to the club's training ground in Arborfield where they were put through their paces in a series of sessions led by the Royals' team of expert coaches.

After observing the professional outfit work on their defensive shape and attacking play, the women took to the pitch for some quick passing and shooting drills.

First team coach Nigel Gibbs worked with the group once his commitments with his own squad were complete and midfielder Brian Howard was on hand to make up the numbers in a small-sided match.

While the outfield players watched from the sidelines before getting their opportunity to play, the goalkeepers were thrown straight in at the deep end.

Goalkeeping coach Sal Bibbo incorporated the Army stoppers in his work with the Reading players and the Reds duo were pushed to the limit.

"The club could not have done any more for us, they were brilliant,"

coach WO2 Jim Murchie (REME) told *SoldierSport*.

"They were really open with all the sessions and we spoke to Brian McDermott about his approach to coaching and why he works on different things.

"Our players got to see how the professionals train and they got coaching from Premiership-standard, A-licence coaches.

"Our two goalkeepers could not stop talking about how involved they were, they really enjoyed it.

"Seeing how Reading work has changed the way we plan and carry out our own sessions and it will certainly hold us in good stead for the season."

The Army squad has welcomed a number of new players for the upcoming campaign and the team enjoyed a 2-1 win over the Metropolitan Police during their training week.

The Reds faced Middlesex in the opening match of their Southern Counties competition as this issue went to press and will lock horns with Sussex and London before next year's Inter-Services showdown.

They play the Royal Navy on March 3 and the Royal Air Force on March 10. ■

Safe hands: The Reading coaching staff have been helping Army goalkeepers hit top form ahead of the new season

EXPERT ADVICE



In the game: Reading goalkeeping coach Sal Bibbo incorporated the Army stoppers in his first team training session to give the Reds' players a taste of how the professionals work



Midfield maestro: Royals star Brian Howard joined the Army players for a small-sided match at the end of a hard day of pre-season training for the Service squad in Arborfield



Interested spectators: Army coach Capt Sandra Hodgson (RLC, left) and Reading manager Brian McDermott (right) watch from the sidelines as the women take to the pitch





Para power: Capt Martin Hewitt has made rapid progress in his sport and has now set his sights on international glory at the 2014 Paralympics in Russia

Fast track to success

**Interviews: Richard Long
Pictures: Graeme Main**

In the increasingly-competitive world of international sport there are few events where competitors can progress from novice athletes to elite-level performers in the space of a few years.

But for the stars of the Combined Services Disabled Ski Team the path to the top has been exactly that, with three members now plying their trade as part of the Great Britain Europa Cup squad.

The sport was only introduced to Service personnel in recent times and the athletes now compete alongside their able-bodied colleagues in divisional, Army and Inter-Services competitions.

SoldierSport spoke to the skiers during the team's launch at The Snow Centre in Hemel Hempstead, where coach SSgt Mark Scorgie (RE) welcomed eight newcomers to the ranks.

"Up there on the slopes they are not disabled," he explained.

"They can race against their counterparts in military events and beat them. That gives them a great sense of pride and independence.

"It is no surprise to me how well they have done and that is down to the positive mentality of the Servicemen and women.

"The majority are injured on ops. One day they are fit, keen and dedicated soldiers, the next they are in hospital. Nothing has changed in their manner and, for me, as professional soldiers they are professional athletes.

"To take them from being injured personnel to top-level sportsmen is a natural progression."

With the team launch now complete, the skiers will travel to Austria for an intensive skills and technique camp before the adrenalin-fuelled racing circuit gets under way.

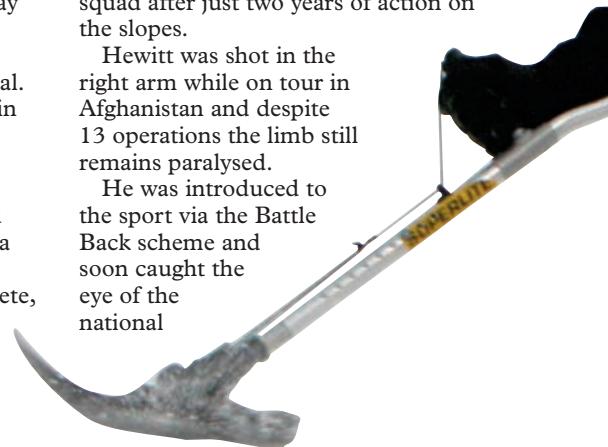
'They can race against their counterparts in military events and beat them'

The Royal Engineers, divisional, Army and Inter-Services competitions all feature on the calendar while the more experienced competitors will also be tested in national championship races in Switzerland, Sweden, Germany and Austria.

The new members have inspirational figures to emulate as Army skiers Capt Martin Hewitt (Para) and Sgt Mick Brennan (R Signals) are now in full-time training with the Great Britain squad after just two years of action on the slopes.

Hewitt was shot in the right arm while on tour in Afghanistan and despite 13 operations the limb still remains paralysed.

He was introduced to the sport via the Battle Back scheme and soon caught the eye of the national



selectors, who immediately invited him to train with the development squad.

After shining at international level, the officer is now in full-time training and balances his schedule between Service competitions and his increasing international commitments.

"I skied at university and college and have always enjoyed it," he told *SoldierSport* during a break in training.

"When I got shot I went from being extremely busy on ops to laying in a hospital bed with nothing to do.

"It is so easy to slip into a circle of decline. I was looking for something to keep me focused and maintain that drive and commitment.

"This was physical, it gave me that challenge and it was something new.

"The opportunity was there and there was a chance to progress to a high level in a short space of time.

"The whole team has done extremely well. We now have three members who are racing at international level and that is thanks to the tremendous support and backing we have from our coaches and sponsors."

Hewitt has set two goals for the season – to race at the national championships and world championships early next year, before looking ahead to the Winter Paralympics in 2014.

"The quality and standard of skiing on the adaptive

circuit is extremely high," he explained.

"The world number one has been going for 22 years and is now on his fourth Olympic cycle. There is a huge task ahead and I have set my performance targets with a view to representing Great Britain in 2014."

The skier has an increasingly-hectic schedule and is also in training for a daunting trek to the North Pole in support of the Service charity Walking With The Wounded.

He will be part of an eight-man team that will embark on the expedition in March and their efforts will feature in a BBC documentary due to be screened later in the year.

For teammate Brennan, the 2014 Games are also a key motivating factor and the double amputee is hoping to reach the pinnacle of his sport.

"My aspiration is to gain a medal at the Paralympics," he said. "I would like to become the British number one and I want to do as much as I can to be a role model for other young disabled and able-bodied people.

"I had never skied before and I saw this as a chance to be the same as everyone else.

"I am not at a disadvantage and if I'm not racing I can go skiing with friends and family.

"In Army competitions I can compete equally alongside able-bodied athletes and we now have three members in the national squad.

"Hopefully that success will keep growing and eventually the British team will be made up entirely of military and ex-military personnel." ■

SPORT SHORTS

TELEMARK racing has been given recognised status as a winter sport following a successful "apprenticeship" period.

The move will significantly reduce the cost for competitors taking part and plans are now in place for the next Army championships.

The event will be held in Austria from January 8 to 19 and entry is open to all Service members and civilians. Instruction will be available, meaning everyone from novices to expert racers are welcome to compete.

For full details visit www.telemark.army.mod.uk or read DIN 10-041.

THE Weymouth and Portland National Sailing Academy is offering its support to the Armed Forces by introducing a ten per cent discount on selected services.

Personnel will benefit from reduced rates for a range of activities such as sailing and windsurfing through to treatments including sports massage and physiotherapy.

For more information on the scheme visit www.wpnsa.org.uk

A FINE display of military bearing and teamwork saw personnel from 29 Regiment, Royal Logistic Corps presented with the best Army unit award at the Nijmegen International Four Day Marches.

The event attracted around 5,000 Service entrants from 20 nations who tackled the 100-mile route in full uniform and boots while carrying a 10kg dead weight plus food and water.

ANGLING ace Sgt Mick Herbert (Mercian) continued his fine form on the riverbanks to successfully retain his Infantry Fishing Championship title.

The experienced senior NCO was drawn alongside fellow Army fisherman WO2 Nick Simpson (Yorks) in the opening section at Portland Waters in Grantham and both competitors recorded impressive weights in excess of 30kg.

However, Herbert just shaded the count to take the win and a steady second day saw him retain his crown.

More than 30 anglers took part in this year's competition, much to the delight of Army team manager WO2 Jason Eccles (R Anglian), who finished third.

Simpson made up for his disappointment by winning the Army masters competition just days later, when he triumphed in a field of nearly 100 Service fishermen on the waters at Cudmore in Staffordshire.

THE Territorial Army inter-unit and individual cross country championships will be held at Liverpool's Beacon Park on December 11.

For more information and entry forms email WO2 Jock Castle via Castle@armymail.mod.uk





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Fight club: Light-middleweight Spr Shane Sadler (RE) takes to the ring for a sparring session at the Army's new state-of-the-art boxing gym in Aldershot

Home of the brave

Interviews: Richard Long
Pictures: Graeme Main

ARMY boxers will be looking to continue their pursuit of excellence on the canvas after moving to a new purpose-built gym in Aldershot.

The training centre boasts three rings as well as an array of bags and equipment that will allow the fighters to reach the peak of physical fitness ahead of this season's key clashes in the Combined Services Championships and Amateur Boxing Association (ABA) competitions.

Coach Sgt Tony Davis (APTC) believes the new gym will build on the professional ethos he has introduced during his time in charge and he hopes to see his boxers pushing for honours among the upper echelons of their craft.

"This is a state-of-the-art facility," he told *SoldierSport*. "It is almost like a mini version of the gym used by Team GB up in Sheffield."

"We now have three rings which we can use full time and that makes things a lot easier from a training point of view."

"I want to get more guys involved in the international set-up with England. With the Commonwealth Games now over everything is geared towards the 2012 Olympics. It is a long shot but you can never say never in boxing, stranger things have happened."

Team captain Cpl James Allen (REME) was full of praise for the new facility and, like Davis, was quick to point out its similarities with Sheffield.

"I guess the coach has had an input on the designs and has taken a few ideas from there," he explained. "Whatever they are doing is definitely good enough for us."

"The training has been very good and having three rings to work with makes things so much smoother. You can do what you want, there are no limits."

"Every single piece of equipment is brand new which

means the kit is reliable and serviceable."

Allen took over the role of captain from previous incumbent Spr Adam Whitfield (RE) and is hoping to build on the team's success in recent seasons.

He said: "I train hard and I want to lead by example, it is a huge honour."

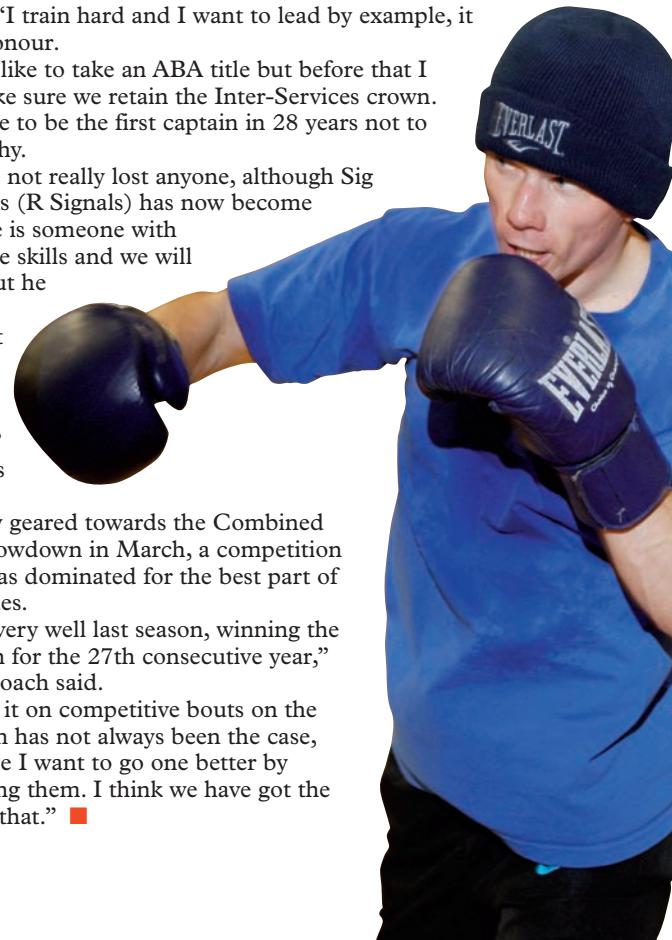
"I would like to take an ABA title but before that I have to make sure we retain the Inter-Services crown. I would hate to be the first captain in 28 years not to lift the trophy."

"We have not really lost anyone, although Sig Nikki Gittus (R Signals) has now become a coach. He is someone with considerable skills and we will miss him but he is still here passing that knowledge on, which could be invaluable."

For Davis the season is inevitably geared towards the Combined Services showdown in March, a competition the Army has dominated for the best part of three decades.

"We did very well last season, winning the competition for the 27th consecutive year," the proud coach said.

"We won it on competitive bouts on the night, which has not always been the case, but this time I want to go one better by whitewashing them. I think we have got the team to do that." ■



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Electric dreams

Interview: Richard Long
Picture: Nick John

MOTORCYCLE ace WO2 Pete Ward (QRH) has celebrated a superb second place finish in the inaugural TTXGP zero-emissions race series.

The Army star's superb form saw him qualify for the world championships in Spain and he was in action on the track in Albacete as this issue went to press.

Ward's consistent performances over the season saw him finish within 15 points of the overall champion and the Mavizen TTX02 rider said he was thrilled with the outcome from what has been an outstanding first season on the bike.

"It has been really good," he told *SoldierSport*. "The Mavizen technicians gave me a bike that allowed me to really push hard for the championship.

"If the leader had not finished the last race we would have won, that's how close it was.

"We have been consistent all year and the performance of the bike has been awesome. It is a very quiet machine but it has the speed and acceleration of a 600cc motorcycle, which is phenomenal.

"It has gone a lot better than I expected. Before the first race I had not ridden in two years and the leading rider opened quite a gap.

"I was a bit concerned but we got straight back in and we were consistent all year."

The series saw riders

'We have been consistent all year and the performance of the bike has been awesome'

competing on machines that produce no toxic or noxious fumes in races across Europe, including the famous Snetterton and Brands Hatch circuits.

Ward battled wet and windy conditions at Brands Hatch to finish third in the final UK race and secure his runners up spot.

Similar series have been running in Europe and the USA, with the top riders travelling to Spain for the world championship.

"We have a good chance of being in the top three or four," Ward explained. "A lot will depend on how the bike performs in the hot conditions, but we have got as good a chance as anyone.

"If we can get away with the leading pack then anything can happen on the day."

As with any motor sport the TTXGP teams rely heavily on sponsorship and funding in order to compete at the top end of the championship series.

The Mavizen team spent in the region of £20,000 over the course of the season and Ward is hoping new revenue streams will become available to help ease the burden ahead of the new campaign.

"Hopefully we can get some good sponsors onboard for next year," the track star said.

"The team has struggled for money at times and we need more support so we can push our development even further."

Ward is an experienced motorcycle racer, having competed at club level in 600cc and 1,000cc classes.

He has also raced in enduro and off-road events in recent years, enjoying a number of victories.



SPORT SHORTS



Picture: Steve Jenkins-Cross

SERVICE teams took to the lush turf of Tidworth for a day of hard competition in the third annual Adjutant General's Corps (AGC) Polo Cup.

The tournament was again split into two divisions and the Royal Navy defended their title from last year, beating the Infantry 2-0.5 in the final.

A highly-competitive second division saw some tough matches involving the AGC White team, the Royal Logistic Corps and two Royal Artillery sides.

The AGC players defeated the RLC 5-0.5 in the final.

The event helped raise money for SSAFA Forces Help.

ARMY oarsman Capt James Kayll (LD) has set his sights on a new world record ahead of taking part in one of the toughest rowing races on the planet.

The officer is part of a four-man team that will compete in the 2011 Indian Ocean Rowing Race, a gruelling event that follows a 3,100 nautical mile route from Western Australia to the paradise island of Mauritius.

Friend Tom Kelly and brothers Ed and Ollie Wells will join Kayll in the boat and the foursome hope to raise more than £100,000 for four charities, one of which is The Light Dragoons Charitable Trust.

The team also hopes to beat the existing world record, which stands at 68 days, 19 hours and 40 minutes.

"Undoubtedly we will find ourselves in situations we have not experienced before and we will need to dig deep to get through it," Kayll said.

For more information about the race visit www.indianocean3100.com

SOLDIERS from The Royal Dragoon Guards and The Rifles had the honour of escorting the Super League trophy onto the pitch at Old Trafford during last month's grand final.

The Rugby League showpiece saw LCpl Christopher Styles (RDG) and CSgt Mark Isherwood (3 Rifles) walking on the hallowed turf before St Helens' clash with Wigan Warriors.

Leeds Rhinos fan LCpl Styles was injured in Afghanistan during an IED blast that claimed the life of colleague Tpr Ashley Smith.

CSgt Isherwood, who recently returned from Helmand, said: "It's a credit to Rugby League and its supporters the way they have supported soldiers out on operations through the charity Help For Heroes."

SPORT SHORTS

ARMY golfers lifted their second Inter-Services crown in three years after overcoming their Forces rivals in three days of tough competition.

The players faced the Royal Navy in the opening contest at West Lancs Golf Club and won the morning foursomes matches by four points to one, with newcomers 2nd Lt Jack Musgrove (RA) and Cpl Guy Dunstall (RLC) in top form.

But the afternoon singles competition proved to be an extremely tight affair.

Army champion Cpl Chris Bradley (AGC (RMP)) managed to beat the Navy number one to get an early point on the board and Cpl Ben Churchill (RE) maintained the momentum with an emphatic six and five scoreline.

However, the Navy came storming back to claim the next three matches before fine play from the experienced Lt Col Mark Snape (REME), Maj Rick Smart (AAC) and Capt Al Paterson (RLC) ensured the Army stayed on top to claim victory on day one.

With the Senior Service defeating the Royal Air Force on the second day the tournament was in the balance.

The Army made a good start against the airmen as number one pairing Bradley and Churchill took the opening foursomes match.

But the advantage was short-lived as the RAF won the next three clashes before Smart and Stewart stopped the rot to secure what proved to be a precious half a point.

A morale-boosting team talk set the tone for the singles competition, with Bradley winning the opening duel on the 18th hole.

The next two matches were halved but the Army got back on the winning trail courtesy of Dunstall, who played exceptional golf to beat the experienced Chris Audin.

Smart and Musgrove were also triumphant, leaving debutant LCpl Paul Stewart (Infantry) to secure victory with a fine three and two win in the final singles clash.

THE Army tug-of-war squad gained valuable experience of elite-level competition when they travelled to South Africa to take part in the sport's world championships.

Pullers in the 580kg open tournament were drawn against teams from Belgium, the Netherlands, South Africa, Switzerland, the USA, Italy and Ireland in what proved to be a hard-fought contest.

The event took more than four hours to complete as the athletes battled temperatures in excess of 40 degrees and the Service side came close to beating a number of their rivals before triumphing over the hosts.

In the 640kg competition the Army squared-off against Spain, the Netherlands, Chinese Taipei, Ireland, South Africa and Italy and finished sixth overall.

Interview: Richard Long

Picture: Trish Morrison, RAF

FOR serving personnel nearing the end of an operational tour, thoughts inevitably turn to some well-deserved rest and relaxation while on leave.

But for Maj Helen Carter (RAMC) there are no such luxuries, as the ultra athlete will be swapping the heat and humidity of Helmand for the bitter temperatures of Antarctica when she competes in The Last Desert race.

The gruelling 250km event falls just weeks after her return from Afghanistan, where she has had to balance her work commitments with the dedicated training regime that is required for such a feat.

Speaking from theatre on the eve of the race, Carter told *SoldierSport*: "Out here I have to limit my training due to the tempo on ops and my job.

"Therefore there were times in the summer when I was getting up at 0500, going for a run and then taking part in unit circuit sessions prior to the start of the working day.

"I have also managed to get an hour's spinning session in most weekdays. Due to time constraints my longest run has been seven-and-a-half miles but I have just continued with the running, circuits and spinning throughout the tour, averaging around eight training sessions each week.

"My priority has been my operational role and I have just juggled my training around any spare time I have."

Antarctica forms the final leg of The Four Desert series, an event that has also seen the 38-year-old running across the Atacama (the driest desert in the world), the Sahara (the hottest desert in the world) and the Gobi (the windiest desert in the world).

"The race will be significantly different from the previous three and a lot of it is completely unknown," Carter said.

"The Last Desert will be weather dependent and there are rumours that there may be a 150km stage and that will be a huge challenge.

"The kit list is much larger than

the previous races and I am going to have to get used to racing in lots of layers in extremely cold temperatures.

"I am only used to competing in the heat and out here in Afghanistan I have been training regularly in 40 degree plus temperatures.

"So unless I can find a large freezer to train in then my acclimatisation phase will be when I arrive in Ushuaia before the race.

"This will be the toughest of the races – both mentally and physically."

No British woman has completed The Four Desert series before and the challenge has yet to be conquered by a member of the Armed Forces.

The officer will be up against a female compatriot in the race and she has set her sights on beating her rival and achieving the highest British ranking in the event.

Carter starts her Antarctica adventure on November 17 and will be supporting injured personnel from 4th Mechanized Brigade through the Black Rat Fund, as well as Hounds for Heroes.

Visit www.virginmoneygiving.com/HelenCarter to sponsor her fund-raising effort. ■





Picture: Graeme Main

A wise head: WO2 Richard Wilson (right) marshalls the AGC defence during their clash with the AMS

Stalwart's final campaign

FOOTBALLERS often struggle to know when the time is right to hang up their boots and walk away from the game they love.

But for veteran defender WO2 Richard Wilson (AGC) there have been no such difficulties, with the 37-year-old vowing that his 20th season of corps football will definitely be his last.

After helping his side lift the Massey Trophy division two title last year, the senior NCO was prepared to walk away from the game on a high. But with a personal landmark on the horizon he has returned to action for one final campaign.

"I thought the 2009/10 season would be my last," Wilson told *SoldierSport*.

"But I'm fit enough and I run most days so I thought 'why not play for another year?' My job is flexible and I can get the time off to play so here I am."

"I think this year will be my last. I would like to go into coaching, I've got a four-year-old so working with youngsters is something I'm interested in."

Despite playing for nearly two decades, the former Army player views the last two years as the most successful of his career.

"Two years ago we won the Woolwich Cup and last season we won the division two title to get promoted," he explained.

"But for as long as I've played we have flattered to deceive. When we have our top 15 players available we are a match for anyone but as soon as we lose two or three we struggle."

The AGC started the campaign with a 0-0 draw against the REME and then enjoyed a 2-1 win over the AMS in the Woolwich Cup.

"Before the season started we would have been happy just to stay up, but we have some good players coming through so we will have to see what happens," Wilson said.

"I have played lots of civvy football and I had a couple of years with the Army side but there is no better team spirit and camaraderie than with the AGC."

"They are a great bunch of lads and are fantastic to be around. I will miss it greatly."

Strongmen lift debut title

A DOMINANT display of strength and vigour saw the Army powerlifting team storm their way to a convincing victory at the first ever Combined Services Championships.

The Army athletes outgunned their Forces rivals to win all but one of the categories during a terrific day of competition at RAF Wittering.

Sgt Aaron Hull (R Signals) produced an amazing performance to win best lifter in both the squat and bench press events.

But a fine showing from the Royal Navy strongmen meant the action went down to the last lift of the day, with Cpl Ollie Hardy (REME, pictured) winning the deadlift to seal an Army victory by just three points.

Other notable performances came from Bdr Daz

Munro (RA) and Sig Dan Allum (R Signals).

Capt Neil Thomas (AGC), Combined Services and Army powerlifting chairman, said: "It was excellent to see the Army produce such a result."

"Powerlifting in the Forces has always been well contested but we were deserved winners on the day. The challenge will be retaining the trophy next year."

The victory was especially sweet for the Army as the competition trophy is named after Service lifter Sgt Mickey Yule (RE) who was injured by an IED in Afghanistan earlier this year.

The team returns to action later this month when Sir John Moore Barracks in Folkestone hosts the Army Powerlifting Championships on November 24.

SPORT SHORTS

MARKSMAN Maj Angus McLeod (Scots) fired his way to a silver medal in the fullbore target rifle pairs' competition at the Commonwealth Games in Delhi.

The Scotsman, who partnered Ian Shaw in the event, also finished seventh in the singles contest on his tournament debut.

The medal success caps a fine year for the officer after he won the Hopton Trophy at the UK Open Championships and helped Scotland claim their second successive victory in the Home Nations Match Rifle Competition.

Target rifle shooting is not an Olympic sport so the Commonwealth Games is viewed as the pinnacle of the discipline and only two competitors per country are selected to shoot.

Any serving personnel interested in target rifle shooting should contact the Army squad via email at ATSCCaptain@gmail.com

PTE Isoa Damudamu (RLC) and the England Sevens squad suffered a narrow 17-14 defeat to South Africa in their bronze medal match at the Commonwealth Games.

The powerhouse forward scored against eventual champions New Zealand in the semi-final, but the Kiwis stormed their way to a 33-12 victory to end any hopes of gold.

A late Springboks try decided the third place play-off, meaning England returned home empty handed.

ULTRA marathon man SSgt Jim Offord (RE) has broken the world record for the fastest 100km on a treadmill while carrying 40lb.

The super-fit soldier took 26 minutes off the previous best, which stood at 15hr 26min, and is about to embark on his next endurance test.

Offord is part of a Royal Engineers team that has set a target of running ten marathons in five days with 40lb Bergens on their backs.

The fund-raising effort starts on November 1 and their route will take them from Sheffield down to Brighton as part of the St Dunstan's Forces Challenge.

To sponsor the team visit www.justgiving.co.uk/10squaddies



Picture: SAC Nick Cox

final word



We asked soldiers from C (Bruneval) Company, 2nd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment how they were feeling in the hours before deploying to Afghanistan

INTERVIEWS: JOE CLAPSON
PICTURES: MIKE WESTON



LCpl Clive Webber (2 Para)

The training has been thorough and I've just done the section commander's battle course so it's good to come back with great people to work alongside. It should be a good tour, which will hopefully mean everyone returns home safely. I'm a team commander with a few blokes under me and I'll be telling them to do what they've done in training.



Pte Andre Ferreira (2 Para)

I'm looking forward to the tour but I'm a bit apprehensive because, after all, it is Afghanistan. We have worked as hard as possible and we're ready to go. I'm a gunner on the General Purpose Machine Gun so will provide 70 per cent of the fire power for my section. That is a lot of responsibility for me, but I'm pleased to take on the role and it's a privilege to have that weapon.



Pte Geoff Dunn (4 Para)

Training has been excellent and we've had quite a good build up. Compared to the past, training has differed and the nature of it has changed, but the mentality of the lads always remains the same. I am feeling very positive about going out – they are predominately young lads I am serving with and I am keen to get through it safely with all of them.



Pte Callum Wright (2 Para)

I cannot wait to get deployed as it's what we've trained for. My two brothers are out there. Preparation has been good and now I just want to get on with the job rather than sitting around. I will be using the Sharpshooter rifle and I am 100 per cent confident in the kit we've got. Everyone is absolutely buzzing, we spend 24/7 together and we're just desperate to get out there.



Pte David Kealy (2 Para)

I'm looking forward to the tour. There's nothing in particular that I'm looking forward to but I just want to get it done. I'm on the Sharpshooter rifle and I look at it as quite a responsible role. But I'm an infantryman doing the same thing as the others – we're all in it together. We're taking over from 1 RGR and are looking to continue the good work they've done and improve the situation.



Pte Aaron Macfadyen (2 Para)

I am optimistic, enthusiastic and anxious about the deployment but I'm definitely keen to go out now after all the training. My own specific aim is simply to come back alive and just do my job. Training was set up for the situation we're in which was great, so although you can't predict everything that will happen there shouldn't be any major surprises.



Pte James McInnes (2 Para)

I'm feeling alright about heading out and I'm looking forward to getting involved. I only joined in 2009 so knew about Afghanistan and wanted to do something about it. I was standing on nightclub doors and thought becoming a soldier would be a better thing to do. The Paras are the fittest Army group to go out there which will definitely help us on the ground.



Pte Aaron Stone (2 Para)

There's quite a lot of excitement about going out to Afghanistan. I look at the news and see what's going on and I'll just apply what I've learnt to the job and learn from what people have done before. I stood up for the job as second Vallon man because I knew it would be of use. I just want to play my part, work hard, not make any mistakes and look after the people to my left and right.



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