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MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH ARMY



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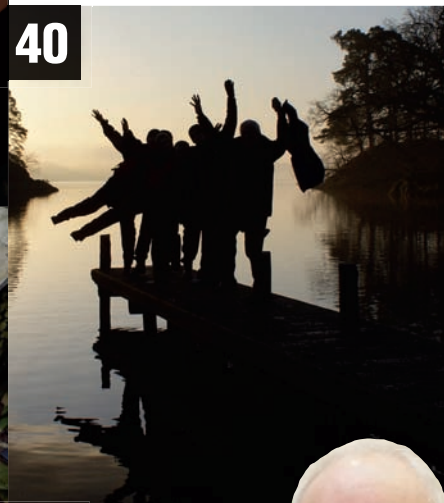
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Cover picture (left): Snowboarding in Austria provides a much-needed morale boost for Service personnel (pages 88-89) Picture: Graeme Main

Background image: Officer cadets from Imjin Company head up into the mist surrounding the Galloway Forest Park in Scotland to locate insurgents during the rural phase of Exercise Dynamic Victory (pages 38-39) Picture: Steve Dock



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those of the British Army or the Ministry of Defence.



"I feel Mr Timperley has rather met his match with Angelica and her friends."

● Knife crime crackdown – pages 47-49

Armed to endure times to come

HAPPY New Year to all our readers. I hope those of you who were fortunate enough to get some time off this festive season made the most of it and are returning to the Forces fold feeling refreshed.

After all, let's face it, the months ahead may not be the most comfortable ones we have ever encountered. In various sections of the issue, a somewhat bleak picture is painted of soldiers' mood at this juncture in our Service's history.

This surplus of gloomy words seems to have triggered a degree of alarm in some quarters.

But the beginning of a fresh year seems as good a point as any at which to acknowledge that, despite the constant heroic feats of this organisation's people, nothing makes us exempt from the concerns over income, career and living standards that affect those in civvy street.

As your official magazine, it is our job to report on and share feedback about the worries we all have, as well as the abundance of successes and triumphs.

The Chief of the General Staff acknowledges the value of such dialogue in his response to his briefing team's latest report (pages 50-51).

The full version is available to read on the Army intranet and I would recommend doing so.

While I am sure most commanding officers, given the choice, would not select redundancy, pension changes and restructuring as the first ports of call on the journey to a stronger force, they continue to work to ensure that the British Army's future is the brightest it can be.

Away from home, the mission in Afghanistan continues apace with the latest phase of transition announced (page 7).

Commitment to success, it seems, is not on hold because times are tough.

The UK has faith in our ability to continue excelling when it comes to protecting the nation – not least demonstrated in the hefty security task handed to us at this year's Olympics (page 8).

And showing that leadership excellence will not fall victim to economic pressures either, officer cadets at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst have worked hard to impress during Exercise Dynamic Victory (pages 38-39).

Letting off steam during times of stress is crucial and this has been demonstrated by Service snowboarders on the slopes (pages 88-89).

The team are growing in size and they are keen to boast the sport's benefits in preserving both morale and the all-important love of being a soldier (page 98).

In the same spirit-lifting vein, we take a look behind the scenes of a new exhibition that is attempting to open up the world of military operations in southern Afghanistan to those who find it difficult to imagine (page 37).

A wider understanding of the sacrifice made on missions has

never been more important in making Servicemen and women feel valued – something the all-singing Military Wives Choir discovered for themselves over the festive period (page 9).

For those who are leaving the Army this year, our features on Remount (page 40-41) and the endeavours of a former soldier in his valuable new career (pages 47-49) may reassure you that life on civvy street has much to offer.

Finally, as we launch into another 12 months of (perhaps harder than ever) toil, please make use of this, your magazine.

Tell us what is happening and what you think (page 55) and in return we will keep on celebrating the brilliant work you all do.

Enjoy the issue. – **Sarah Goldthorpe, Editor** ■

‘Please make use of this, your magazine. Tell us what is happening and what you think’

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THE informer...

BRITISH TROOPS' GLOBAL INTELLIGENCE ASSET

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Picture: Sgt Rupert Frere, RLC

Working together: A soldier from The Parachute Regiment plots a patrol route through northern Nad-e Ali with a member of the Afghan National Army

Transfer of Nad-e Ali welcomed

RESPONSIBILITY for maintaining security in several key areas of Afghanistan is to be handed over to the country's home-grown forces, it has been revealed.

The second phase of the transition process, announced in November by president Hamid Karzai, will include the Nad-e Ali district of Helmand province where British forces have operated since 2006.

It means Afghan troops will soon be in charge of security for more than half of the country's population.

Task Force Helmand commander Brig Patrick Sanders praised the move.

"I think this is a sign of the enormous

progress made in Nad-e Ali in the last 12 months," he said. "The levels of violence have dropped and we are seeing Afghan forces providing security by themselves with limited International Security Assistance Force support."

The milestone follows the handover of lead responsibility in Lashkar Gah, the capital of Helmand province, by British troops in the summer.

Others areas included in the latest transition stage are Balkh, Takhar, Daykundi, Samangan, Kabul and Nimroz provinces. In Helmand, Nawa and Marjah districts will also be marshalled by the Afghans.

Defence secretary Philip Hammond

commented: "This is testament to the increasing capability of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) and to the incredible endeavours of the British and allied personnel who have trained and partnered them.

"There is no doubt that the work and achievements of our Servicemen and women is making the UK a safer place and protecting our national security."

The whole of Afghanistan is expected to have started the transition process by 2013 and the ANSF will lead on security operations across all regions by the end of 2014.

Gen Sheren Shah, commander of the Afghan National Army's 3rd Brigade, 215 Corps, said: "I have seen big changes in Nad-e Ali in the past few years. Now there are shops, businesses and construction projects happening. Children can go to school to learn.

"The peace process will continue and nothing will stop us."

10,000

THE VALUE, IN POUNDS, OF THE GIFTS THIS TITLE GAVE AWAY TO SERVICE FAMILIES LAST MONTH (PAGE 29)

NEWS IN BRIEF

SALARY STANDSTILL

■ ARMED Forces personnel are to receive an average one per cent increase in their salaries for the two years following the public sector pay freeze, Chancellor George Osborne has revealed.

The freeze will end in March 2013 but the Government has stated that wider pressure on public finances means a further period of pay restraint is needed.

The Armed Forces' Pay Review Body will decide the precise awards individuals will receive.

APACHE COURSE CONCLUDES

■ AIRCREWS have returned to the UK after completing a major training mission in the US.

Exercise Crimson Eagle, the conversion to role course for Apache personnel, was split between El Centro in California and the Gila Bend auxiliary air force base in Arizona.

Trainee Maj Alasdair Mack (AAC) said: "The programme has been hugely enjoyable and certainly very demanding.

"We are now at the stage where we are comfortable with the inner workings of the aircraft and using its systems to best effect."

Prince Harry – better known as Capt Wales in the ranks of the British Army – was also present on the two-month serial.

MORE OP OLYMPICS DETAILS

■ A TOTAL of 13,500 military personnel will support the Olympics at its peak later this year, it has been revealed.

In a message to Servicemen and women, the Chief of the Defence Staff Gen Sir David Richards also confirmed the Army's role would include explosive ordnance disposal, along with canine and search capabilities. Work on precise numbers and details continues.

AMERICA EXITS IRAQ

■ THE US has marked the end of military operations in Iraq during a flag lowering ceremony in Baghdad.

The majority of its 5,500 remaining soldiers have now departed the country, with security in the hands of the national authorities.

American president Barack Obama said his nation had left behind a "sovereign, stable and self-reliant Iraq".



Picture: PO (Phot) Terry Seward, RN

Grateful: The Prime Minister paid tribute to the dedication of Army personnel who served over Libya

Cameron hosts Ellamy crew

BRITISH soldiers involved in Nato-led operations in Libya have been honoured during a special reception at Downing Street.

Prime Minister David Cameron used the event to pay tribute to the professionalism, dedication and bravery of the military personnel who helped liberate the country from the rule of Col Muammar Gaddafi.

Speaking at the function, Mr Cameron thanked the troops for their "incredible courage".

He added: "You flew over 3,000 missions, that was 2,000 strike sorties – one fifth of the total flown by Nato.

"You carried a very big burden along with some fantastic allies and some very brave other countries, but you played a huge part and the whole nation should

be very grateful for your work.

"It wasn't just what you did; it was how you did it."

Operation Ellamy drew to a close at the end of last year.

Personnel from 4th Regiment, Army Air Corps had a crucial responsibility in the mission, guiding the fearsome Apache helicopter through its first ever maritime operation.

"I think we have given Libya the chance of a better future and our world is safer, our nation is safer, if more countries take the transition from dictatorship to democracy," Mr Cameron added.

As personnel arrived at the Prime Minister's house they were greeted by a performance from the Military Wives Choir (pictured opposite).

Stage debut for injured troops

WOUNDED personnel are taking to the stage in an innovative new recovery project that will see them lighting up the West End.

The Theatre Royal Haymarket Masterclass Trust and The Royal British Legion have brought together 30 injured Servicemen and women who will write, produce and perform their own play – *The Two Worlds of Charlie F*.

The project has been organised in

partnership with the Army recovery capability and Royal Navy recovery pathway and will be known as The Bravo 22 Company.

Actor Ray Winstone is the organisation's ambassador and personnel will perform their play in two shows at the Theatre Royal Haymarket on January 22.

● Tickets are available from www.bravo22company.com





Picture: BBC/Guy Levy

On a high note: The military wives, led by choirmaster Gareth Malone, have received widespread acclaim for their stirring performances of *Wherever you Are*

Single success for military wives choir

STARS of the BBC Two television programme *The Choir: Military Wives* have used their success to conquer the music industry.

Spouses and girlfriends of Armed Forces personnel were brought together last year for the series, which saw them taught to sing by musical maestro Gareth Malone.

They later performed at the Royal Albert Hall remembrance concert.

The song, *Wherever You Are*, was written specifically for the occasion and is based on their experiences awaiting the safe return of their men from

operations in Afghanistan.

The single was released on December 19 and, as this issue was going to press, was hotly tipped to be the UK's Christmas number one.

Pre-orders for the track were three times that of That That's *Progress* album – the previous record holder.

Choir member Mechelle Cooney, whose husband is a sergeant major in the Royal Marines, told *Soldier*: "We are all truly overwhelmed by the amount of support and kindness everybody is showing us – people of all ages.

"I feel so proud of the whole choir

but, most of all, I am proud to be associated with the military.

"We are a team and we all work together. That's what being a wife or partner is all about."

Last month the women performed at Downing Street and on the hit BBC television show *Strictly Come Dancing* (pictured above).

Their single was also strongly backed by Radio 2 breakfast show presenter Chris Evans.

Proceeds from the track will be donated to military charities The Royal British Legion and SSAFA Forces Help.



Sappers' quick-fire construction

BRITISH soldiers have constructed a checkpoint in impressive time to stop the movement of insurgents across Helmand.

Eight sappers from 35 Engineer Regiment worked at full speed to build Checkpoint Khaki on Route 601 – a major highway in the Lashkar Gah district.

It followed a request from the Afghan National Police for help preventing the Taliban

from moving freely along a section of the road.

Cpl Damian Monks, who led the construction team, said: "We were told we needed to pull out all the stops to get it done in four days, but that just motivated us to finish it in three. The boys worked really hard."

Troops were protected by Warrior armoured vehicles from 5th Battalion, The Rifles during the operation.

NEWS IN BRIEF



BASTION GETS MRI SCANNER

■ THE UK-led Anglo-American Role 3 Hospital at Camp Bastion has opened its first magnetic resonance imaging scanner centre.

The hi-tech equipment will enhance the facility's ability to diagnose and care for personnel with a variety of injuries, including damage to the brain and head.

"This machine adds diagnostic capability to our concussion rehabilitation centre," said Lt Col Martin Bell, deputy medical director for Regional Command (South West).

"It can ultimately provide us with a much better idea of how to treat wounded soldiers."

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Picture: Sgt Wes Calder, RLC

High impact: Soldiers from the Brigade Reconnaissance Force worked alongside Afghan personnel during the helicopter-borne operation in Nahr-e Saraj

Combined force swoops on bomb factory

BRITISH and Afghan military personnel have conducted a daring dawn raid on a suspected IED factory in Helmand province.

The operation saw more than 90 soldiers from the Brigade Reconnaissance Force fly in on three helicopters to the site in northern Nahr-e Saraj.

Scimitar armoured vehicles and Warthog all-terrain troop carriers loaded with heavy machine guns protected the landing area as the platforms swooped in.

Once on the ground, personnel came under attack as they approached the targetted compound. But after two short firefights the insurgents withdrew.

The troops discovered the building had recently been abandoned but found a captive member of the Afghan Uniform Police (AUP) who was due to be executed later that day.

Intelligence officer 2nd Lt Barnaby Smith (QDG) said: “This Afghan-led operation not only recovered a member of the AUP but disrupted the insurgents in their backyard, denying them the freedom of movement they have recently enjoyed in an area where they thought they were safe.”

As the soldiers left the scene they spotted suspicious activity at another compound where they discovered 30 kilograms of opium, an AK-47, sub-machine gun and large sums of cash.

Lt Col Jasper de Quincey Adams, the commanding officer of QDG who oversaw the mission, said: “This was another classic example of the Afghan National Security Forces and the International Security Assistance Force working together to relentlessly pursue

the insurgency throughout Helmand.

“All the soldiers and airmen involved in the operation worked together to deliver a high-impact effect.

“This sends a clear message to our Afghan partners that we will continue to offer support, however dangerous or complex the mission.”

The Brigade Reconnaissance Force consists of soldiers from 1st The Queen’s Dragoon Guards and 1st Battalion, The Yorkshire Regiment.

Clinic aims to defuse ‘time bomb’

MEDICAL experts at a private clinic say the problem of addiction in former Service personnel is a “ticking time bomb”.

According to MoD-funded research published by Kings College London in 2010, Regular soldiers who served in Iraq or Afghanistan are 22 per cent more likely to misuse alcohol than other full-time troops.

Separate studies have found that coexistence of post-traumatic stress disorder and alcohol problems in Servicemen and women is far more common than in the general population.

In response to the issue, the Life Works treatment centre in Woking is offering £300,000-worth of free places to veterans of Iraq

and Afghanistan.

Its founder Don Serratt explained: “Currently there is little or no provision for returning combat veterans with addiction issues.

“These people cannot be simply given a leaflet and sent home. They need specialist, sometimes prolonged, help. Without it, they are a ticking time bomb. We are offering places to ex-combat personnel because these people have risked their lives for us and we want to do something in return.”

The clinic is inviting doctors to refer suitable patients. Approaches from family members and therapists will also be considered.

Mr Serratt added: “Untreated addiction is the hidden cost of conflict.”



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Pictures: Graeme Main

Step forward: A new DVD will teach military personnel how to recognise disturbances in the ground

Sign awareness stepped up

SOLDIERS bound for the front line of Helmand are set to benefit from a new DVD that will teach them expert tips on ground sign awareness.

The learning tool, which has been produced by the collective training group’s development team, will be rolled out over the coming months.

It has been designed to help save lives by showing personnel how to identify anything that could be considered as out of the ordinary.

Members of the unit, together with a film crew, deployed to Cyprus last May to shoot the footage.

The end product follows a group of insurgents through varying terrain and highlights the different indicators they unwittingly create.

It is hoped the DVD will be used as a teaching aid by ground sign awareness instructors but it will also be beneficial to soldiers without such expertise.

“Those who have not trained in this area can put the film in and go from zero to hero,” explained WO2 Dan Flood (RE), a search adviser who offered subject-matter guidance on the project.

“This is another tool in the counter-IED bag. It is all about creating the right mindset and for soldiers to ask ‘is this the ground I want to be on?’”

“It will help them consider the different elements of ground sign awareness. For example, a footprint will tell them if someone has been in the area and disturbed earth will have different colours and textures.

“There may not be an explosive but

when you look at the bigger picture the threat assessment goes up.

“The good thing about this DVD is that you can play it in full or use the menu and chapters to look at specific areas. If an instructor has three 40-minute lessons he can break it down and focus on different elements.”

The Army called on the experience of Flt Lt Scott Ripley-Jones, from the Royal Air Force Regiment, who has taught ground sign awareness to personnel in Afghanistan.

The officer oversaw key scenes in the production to ensure they accurately recreated the sorts of clues left behind by those who bury devices.

“I had to cover elements such as the effects of weather, terrain and time,” he explained. “I also had to orchestrate the movements so what we see on the screen mirrors what the guys will find in Afghanistan.

“This is a life-saving skill and can prevent a soldier or his mates from being blown up. It can also be used to gather information on insurgent activity in a particular area.

“The DVD works cleverly. Not only does it tell a story but it includes all the important lessons. It is not here to replace instructors but it will reinforce the message they put across.”

● Copies of the DVD will be made available to all Infantry units, training centres and instructors who complete courses in Brunei. They can also be obtained from the British Defence Film Library by calling 01494 878252.



GOOD DRILLS

SLEEPING ROUGH FOR SOLDIERS

A FORMER soldier who spent two years living rough has returned to the streets to raise money for various military charities. Mike Collins will complete his six-month Winter Coastal Endurance Challenge in Folkestone in March. He is using only basic camping equipment to survive.

SERVICE SUPPORTS WOMEN

A NETWORK for female soldiers has been launched by the British Army. Working in partnership with the Service’s employment branch, and with the Chief of the General Staff Gen Sir Peter Wall as its patron, the group will aim to provide support to Servicewomen on any gender-related issues. For more information visit ArmyNet.



HEINOUS HYENA

A SOLDIER on exercise in Keyna was dragged from his poncho during the night by a wild hyena. Pte Steven Wishart (1 Scots) was three weeks into Exercise Askari Thunder 3 when the attack took place. In an interview with Garrison FM, the Serviceman said his life was saved when a fellow soldier shone a torch on the animal and scared it off. He explained: “I felt this enormous pressure on my leg and was dragged into a bush. I was screaming but it wouldn’t let go.” He said the experience, which left him with a centimetre puncture wound to the leg, would make him think more carefully about wild animals in future.

BAD DRILLS

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Bravery saluted at Buckingham Palace

AWARDS for outstanding acts of bravery and impressive performance in Afghanistan have been presented to five members of 1st Battalion, The Royal Irish Regiment at Buckingham Palace.

Commanding Officer Lt Col Colin Weir was awarded the Distinguished Service Order medal and Maj Jamie Humphreys received an MBE, while Lt Paul McFarland, Sgt Peter Keogh and LCpl Ratu Qalitakivuna were handed the Military Cross.

Lt Col Weir led his battlegroup through an extremely dangerous six months between October 2010 and March 2011 in an area of intense insurgent activity.

His soldiers fought from isolated checkpoints that were attacked several times a day.

The Serviceman's citation states: "He was the ringmaster throughout, always inspirational, always clear minded."

Maj Humphreys received his decoration for the fearlessness, skill and determination he showed while leading his men during the three-month battle for Saidabad.

"His successes proved to the cowed population that the Taliban were no longer in the ascendancy," the officer's citation says.

The decisive courage shown by Lt McFarland when acting as a human shield to save one of his soldiers from a Taliban grenade led to him being awarded the Military Cross.

The 28-year-old was on a patrol when



Picture: Stuart Bingham

Rapturous reception: Shrewsbury welcomes 1st Battalion, The Royal Irish Regiment home from ops

a hand grenade came flying over the wall of a compound he had recently helped to secure.

"He turned his back on the grenade, diving on top of the prostrate soldier," states the citation.

"In doing so, he deliberately placed himself between his men and the imminent explosion.

"Had he [the soldier] not acted as he did, he would most certainly have been killed or at the very least, catastrophically wounded."

Sgt Keogh received the same honour for courageous action when his patrol came under attack shortly after moving on from a checkpoint.

Despite heavy and accurate fire striking all around, the soldier ensured his patrol regained control, returning fire and assaulting the enemy position.

"His aggressive and precise action led to a demonstrable physical defeat for the insurgent," the citation explains.

"It was also a telling psychological blow to the enemy."



Upgraded Lynx fleet complete

THE last of 22 upgraded Lynx support helicopters has been handed over to the Army Air Corps three months ahead of schedule.

A ceremony in Yeovil marked the arrival of the last Mk 9A, the first of which were delivered to Afghanistan in May last year.

The project followed an urgent operational requirement to provide commanders with a more versatile, light helicopter.

The improved platforms, which also have more powerful engines, can operate all year round in the heat of the desert, providing fire support,

troop transport and casualty evacuation.

Other altered features include updated instruments and digital displays, a modified gearbox and strengthened rear fuselage to deal with the extra power.

Commanding officer of 9 Regiment, Army Air Corps, Lt Col Mike Keating, said: "The Lynx Mk 9A has revolutionised the provision of light utility helicopter support in Afghanistan. A delight to operate and maintain, the platform's utility continues to expand as its versatility in theatre increases on a daily basis."

■ SNAPPY entrants in last month's spine lines competition figured out that the names printed on the side of December's issue were runners-up in the Army Photographic Competition 2011.

The five lucky winners have signed copies of Andy Johnson's novel *Thunder in May* winging their way to them.

This month we have three Firefly Triglighthouse illuminated compasses up for grabs courtesy of Self Powered Safety Products.

These handy tools are worth £85 each and are suitable for day, night and dusk navigation.

Winners will also receive a bivvy marker and map reader with their prize.

To be in with a chance of winning, tell us what links the words on the side of this issue.



Answers should be navigated to the usual address or emailed to comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk by January 31.

Winners will be drawn at random and the usual rules apply.





“THE INBETWEENERS MOVIE IS HILARIOUS BECAUSE IT ACCURATELY CHRONICLES WHAT CAN HAPPEN DURING LADS’ HOLIDAYS”

– COMEDY QUARTET MAKE SUCCESSFUL BIG-SCREEN DEBUT, PAGE 76-77



Engineering excellence: Capt Charlotte Joyce of 4 Regiment, Army Air Corps has been rewarded for her efforts in keeping the British Army's fearsome attack helicopters flying. The dedicated 29-year-old was named young woman engineer of the year by the Institution of Engineering and Technology. The officer has recently deployed on Operations Ellamy and Herrick to oversee day-to-day maintenance of the Apache platform Picture: Sgt Rupert Frere, RLC

Department reassures Army's ranks

THE Ministry of Defence has reaffirmed its commitment to the Military Covenant at the end of a tough 12 months for those in the Armed Forces.

Responding to claims made by the Army Families Federation (AFF) in this month's *Home Truths* column in *Soldier* (page 67), military bosses have stated that backing for UK personnel is stronger than ever before.

Catherine Spencer, the organisation's director of communications, raised a number of points in the article.

Answering to suggestions that a private soldier could be £1,306 worse off in terms of real pay, a spokesman said: "The Government has committed to giving soldiers on less than £21,000 per annum a pay increase of £250.

"They will continue to get this in April 2012 and this is in addition to their annual pay increases.

"Annual increments for soldiers are not affected by the one per cent pay award cap and where personnel are eligible to progress up the incremental scale they will continue to receive it.

"Additionally, if a soldier is promoted they will receive the associated pay rise.

"The Government has also shown its commitment to support our Armed Forces most closely involved in operations through the doubling of the operational allowance, which focuses public money on those for whom the personal risk is particularly high."

Questions were raised about morale levels following redundancies and the MoD responded by saying: "The scheme will ensure those leaving are treated fairly, while simultaneously managing downsizing in a way that supports our people to meet the new capability requirements.

"We will provide tax-free lump sum payments to compensate soldiers for lost career expectations.

"For those embarking on a new career beyond the British Army, we will do everything within our gift to assist that transition."

And in relation to the belief that Service families feel offended by threats to the military lifestyle, the spokesman said: "The Government has had to make tough decisions to deal with the fiscal challenges facing the country.

"This impact is being felt across all sectors of society and while soldiers and their families are protected as much as possible from the effects of the economic situation, no one – not even the military – can be immune from the circumstances we face as a nation."

Concerns were highlighted by the AFF regarding expenditure needed to cover the Germany rebasing, but the MoD has stated: "The preliminary moves already announced will be achieved at no additional cost.

"It makes practical and financial sense to consider consolidating larger, otherwise underused sites.

"It is estimated the move from Germany will save the MoD £250 million a year – the additional cost of having the Army in Germany."

The move home also raised questions about the housing needs for those returning to the UK, with space at Abingdon a particular concern.

"The Army endeavours to provide suitable accommodation for its soldiers and their families as close as possible to their place of work, normally within a maximum of a 20 mile radius," the spokesman said.

"In the case of Dalton Barracks, Abingdon, a very small number will be housed beyond that at Arborfield.

"A package of allowances is available to military personnel to ensure that no-one is disadvantaged financially if they are required to travel to their place of work."

And commenting on the state of accommodation, he said: "Since 2006, more than 4,300 properties have been extensively upgraded to the top standard for condition, with more than £264 million spent on Service Families Accommodation upgrades and improvements.

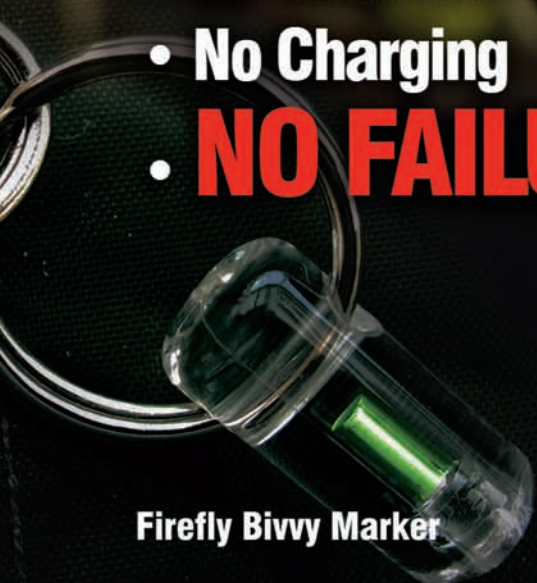
"Some £100 million has been allocated to the programme between now and 2013 and, in terms of Single Living Accommodation modernisation, £900 million has been spent on the first two phases, with a further £200 million to support specific projects."

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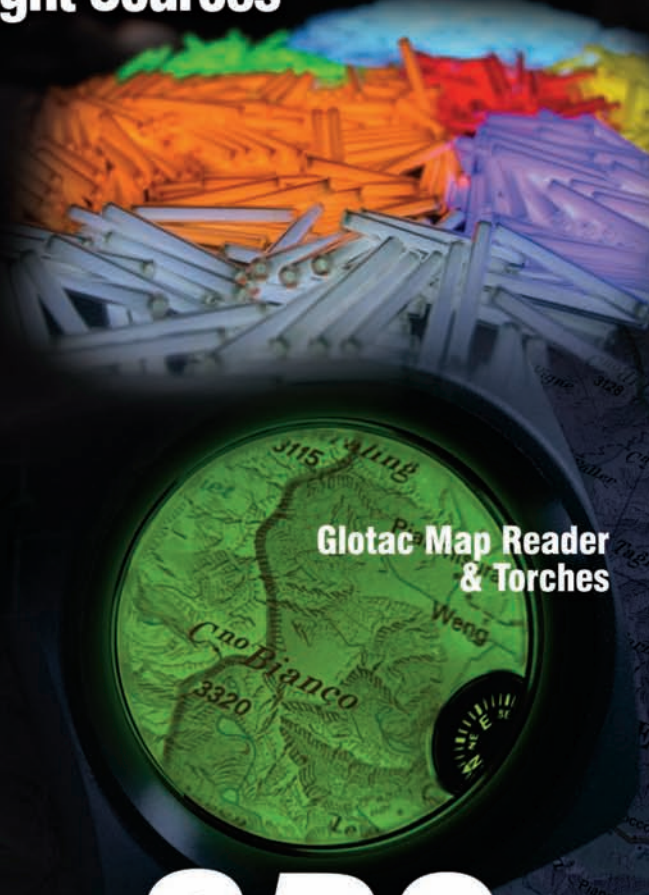
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Chance of a lifetime: Army personnel tested their mountaineering, pulking and avalanche rescue skills in the French Alps ahead of their Antarctic expedition

Freezing foray to follow Scott

A RMY explorers are tackling the sub-zero temperatures of the Antarctic on a mission to commemorate the endeavours of Capt Robert Falcon Scott.

The personnel form part of a 24-man British Services team that is embarking on the two-month trip, which includes a detailed scientific study of the region's Peninsula Arm.

The mission will follow Scott's model and the party will set up base before conducting forays into remote areas. They also plan to make a series of daring ascents of previously unclimbed mountains and peaks.

Lt Col Paul Edwards (RLC) is leading the group and a total of 13 soldiers involved, along with seven personnel from the Royal Navy and four from the Royal Air Force.

The expedition marks the 100th anniversary of Scott's heroic efforts to reach the South Pole and the team will conduct a number of scientific investigations in an area that is warming faster than anywhere else on the planet.

It is hoped their research will help form a greater understanding of why such climate change is happening and the project is linked to an educational outreach programme for the general public and primary and secondary school children.

As part of their training, the Servicemen and women travelled to

the French Alps before the Christmas period for an intense week of ski mountaineering, pulking, crevasse and avalanche rescue drills, learning how to survive in such challenging temperatures and conditions.

The Servicemen and women departed to the Antarctic mainland on December 27 having sailed across the Drake Passage from Puerto Williams in Chile.

Lt Col Edwards said: "I've always wanted to explore the wilderness and I have been mountaineering since I was 11 years old.

"I have made second ascents of mountains before but I have never been first. Antarctica is an exceptional

challenge and that is why I wanted to launch an expedition to go there."

Maj Al Mason (AGC) added: "This is a chance in a lifetime and something very different from the norm.

"The major appeal for me is the exploratory nature of what we will be doing and the opportunity to climb in areas where very few people have visited before.

"The key to the whole mission is the detailed planning and teamwork; something which the Services excel at."

The group is raising money for Help for Heroes and donations to the cause can be made on their website

www.bsae2012.co.uk

Community engagement

THE Service's effort to engage with diverse communities received a welcome boost when the Army Presentation Team appeared live on the Sikh Channel.

The station, thought to have an audience of almost one million, invited the group to give the same talk they take to various locations around the country.

Sikh soldiers Capt Makan Singh and Pte Pardeep Kaur (both RLC) then joined the visitors on-air to answer questions about life



in the military.

Col Simon Browne, commander of the group, said "This was an excellent opportunity for us to engage with a community which, despite strong historical links with the British Army, is currently under-represented in its ranks."

The channel, which is available via Sky and online, has booked the team for a follow-up appearance later this month when a panel will once again answer viewer's questions.

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IN MEMORIAM



FUS JAMES WILKINSON (21)
2ND BATTALION,
THE ROYAL REGIMENT OF FUSILIERS
DIED NOVEMBER 26

A HAPPY, enthusiastic and immensely popular young soldier who was destined for a distinguished career in the Army was killed during training manoeuvres in Kenya.

Fus James Wilkinson, of 2nd Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, was taking part in Exercise Askari Thunder when he died on November 26.

The 21-year-old joined his unit in May last year and volunteered for a place in the fire support group, completing his cadre in October with an exemplary pass.

His deployment to Kenya was the first time he had been engaged in a battalion-level exercise.

Lt Col Mike Butterwick, CO of 2 RRF, said: "His personality was infectious and his

professionalism was absolute.

"He had already been identified as a potential leader and would have attended a fire team commander's course in 2012. I am sure this would have been but the first step in his career."

Fus Fuad Madatov added: "James was a very reliable person and was an excellent soldier.

"He was always a funny guy to be around and we had a lot of banter with each other."

Fus Wilkinson, from Manchester, was a highly capable footballer.

He recently married his wife Sarah, who is due to give birth to their daughter next month.

A family statement said: "Being in the Army was in James' blood – it was what he always wanted to do."



RFN SHELDON STEEL (20)
5TH BATTALION,
THE RIFLES
KIA NOVEMBER 27 – AFGHANISTAN

A YOUNG soldier who earned a glowing reputation for his sharp intellect and leadership was killed by an improvised explosive device while on patrol in Helmand province.

Rfn Sheldon Steel, of 5th Battalion, The Rifles, was engaged in a mission to disrupt insurgent forces and reassure the local population in Babaji when he was wounded.

The 20-year-old was airlifted to Camp Bastion where he was declared killed in action.

Rfn Steel joined the Army in 2009 and achieved much in his time with the battalion.

He passed the sharpshooters' course with ease and was crowned "top dog" in September, when he won D Company's annual competition to find their best rifleman.

Lt Col Tom Copinger-Symes, CO of 5 Rifles, said: "Unquestionably a rising star and clearly destined for the corporals' mess following this tour, Rfn Steel had made his mark across the battalion in double-quick time."

2nd Lt Allan Tuffin added: "Very few could match the potential that was clear in Rfn Steel. He was dedicated to his work and more focused on his career than any rifleman I know.

"He was a loyal friend, an exceptional soldier and an integral member of the platoon."

Rfn Steel leaves behind his mother Victoria, sisters Cody and Carys and brother Kameron.

A family statement said: "Sheldon was loving, caring and affectionate with his family. He loved being in the Army."



SPR ELIJAH BOND (24)
35 ENGINEER REGIMENT,
ROYAL ENGINEERS
DIED DECEMBER 8

A SKILLED sapper who forged a reputation as one of the rising stars in the Royal Engineers died after he was caught in a bomb blast in Helmand province.

Spr Elijah Bond, of 35 Engineer Regiment, was on a reconnaissance task in the Deh Adham Khan region when the device detonated.

His colleagues provided immediate first aid before he was evacuated to the military hospital at Camp Bastion.

The 24-year-old was then flown to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham, where he died of his injuries.

Spr Bond joined the Royal Engineers in 2008 and excelled during his pre-deployment training, volunteering for the general purpose machine

gunners' course and completing the Pashtu patrol language programme.

Lt Col Kevin Copsey, CO of 35 Engr Regt, said he was notable for his "complete reliability, enthusiasm and commitment".

He added: "It was in Afghanistan that Spr Bond displayed his true ability, supporting the remainder of his troop by working selflessly and without complaint; characteristics for which he will be forever remembered."

WO2 Steve Driver added: "He was one of the characters in the squadron. He had a real lust for life and was at the centre of everything."

Spr Bond leaves behind mother Lizz, father Mark, sisters Kimberley and Bethany and brothers Jose and Isaac.



Royal reveres Highlanders

THE Duke of Edinburgh has presented 4th Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland with its new colours during a historic ceremonial service at RAF Kinloss.

The Highlanders were in Afghanistan when the Queen bestowed a similar honour on the regiment's six other battalions in July, so Prince Philip visited the unit in December to inspect the troops and perform the presentation.

Some 500 soldiers from 4 Scots deployed to Helmand province in April in support of 3 Commando Brigade and they paraded through the centre of Inverness last month to celebrate their return.

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Eager engineers excel

SAPPERS from 28 Engineer Regiment have been testing their readiness to deploy during a three-week exercise near Kietz in Germany.

The unit was confronted with a variety of military tasks that included building a temporary land bridge strong enough for armoured vehicles and troops, constructing a prisoner of war facility and clearing minefields.

They also used M3 amphibious rigs to create secure river crossings.

Commanding officer Lt Col Chas Story explained: “The skills we have learnt here are the same skills that we need in Afghanistan.

“But they are essential no matter where else we might be asked to assist in future.”

He added: “The regiment is expected to take on a variety of roles during a deployment from opening up supply lines, building bridges and reconstructing routes to clearing an area of improvised explosive devices, building bases, digging trenches and establishing communications.”



Picture: Cpt Obi Igboeisiokwu, RLC

Hip-hop homecoming

UK RAP sensation Professor Green headlined a star-studded show in Germany to welcome home personnel from 7th Armoured Brigade based at Bergen-Hohne following their recent operational tour.

Almost 1,500 soldiers from the brigade's 12 regiments filled the Heide-Mark Halle auditorium in Fallingbommel for the British Forces Foundation-organised concert.

The bill also included performances from comedians Simon Evans and Craig Campbell and German opera singer Friederike Krum.

Brig Paul Nanson, commander of 7th Armoured Brigade, said: “It’s great to be able to offer something like this to our soldiers who all served so well in Afghanistan.”

Picture: Cpt Obi Igboeisiokwu, RLC

Service hails top hangar makeover

SOLDIERS from the Royal Engineers have created a new theatre reception centre at RAF Akrotiri for troops passing through the Cypriot base on their way home from Op Herrick.

Exercise Pinestick saw the sappers deploy to the Mediterranean island for three months where they helped to convert hangar space into accommodation blocks complete with washing areas.

“It will provide a bespoke facility for troops returning home from operations as they come through decompression at Akrotiri,” explained Capt Iain West.

“The guys take a lot of pride in this work and they don’t get to use their specialist trade very often.

“They wanted to leave a great finished product and were determined to prove to everyone that they are just as good, if not better, than their civilian tradesmen counterparts.”

LEAGUE OF GENTLEMEN

	SWAG	FORCE FOR GOOD	QUIDS IN
1	£50,000	LOOT FOR LEARNING Walking with the Wounded, the charity dedicated to funding further education and training for injured Service personnel, has handed over cash to help an educational charity support youngsters in 150 schools	SkillForce
2	£12,000	WALKING AND WAGGING Pete Almond and his springer spaniel Henry walked 1,250 miles from Land’s End to John O’Groats, calling at various Army bases along the way	Hounds for Heroes, a charity set up last year to provide assistance dogs to Forces and emergency services personnel
3	£2,000	RUNNING RALLY A team of 25 soldiers from 2nd Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland ran the length of the Forth and Clyde Canal from Edinburgh to Glasgow to raise funds for Scotland’s veterans	Erskine
4	£852	FISHING FUN A team of 11 soldiers from the Armour Centre in Bovington took part in a 24-hour carp fishing match at Warmwell Fisheries. A raffle was also held afterwards	Help For Heroes



“WE WILL HAVE CLARITY EARLY THIS YEAR ON HOW WE WILL FURTHER REDUCE MANNING LEVELS. I APPRECIATE THIS IS UNSETTLING FOR MANY”

– BRITAIN’S TOP SOLDIER OFFERS REDUNDANCY REASSURANCE, PAGES 50-51



Picture: Steve Dock

Cross Channel cousins: Cpl Joe Rossiter (PWRR) helps to secure a road for the arrival of a French Infantry fighting vehicle during Exercise Gaulish last year – a tactical-level training serial which saw British troops partner their counterparts from France. The exercise was held in the wake of the Defence Cooperation Treaty signed by premiers David Cameron and Nicholas Sarkozy, which paved the way for Armed Forces personnel from both countries to train together, share kit and combine arms if necessary. Exercise Citadel Guibert, detailed below, further demonstrated strengthening Anglo-French relations

Brits bolster multinational mission

UK SERVICE personnel have been tested alongside their international counterparts during a major exercise in Sennelager.

Members of the Headquarters Rapid Reaction Corps France, a 420-strong force that includes ten British soldiers, descended on the German training area for a two-week command post and combined arms serial.

The exercise was designed to train personnel in taking control of Nato-led peace support operations.

And it was the first time the unit had ever deployed in its entirety away from its base in Lille.

Brig Stephen Shirley, deputy chief of staff of combat service support in the headquarters, told *Soldier* that UK participants had learnt a lot.

“All of us have realised that the British way is not always the right way,” he explained.

“I think we can be a bit arrogant sometimes but just because something isn’t done our way doesn’t mean it does not work.

“Soldiers have to know when to say that they don’t want something done a

certain way, and when to say okay.

“It’s challenging, but the more we train together the easier it gets.”

A fictional but realistic scenario saw the English-speaking corps drafted in to stabilise a region invaded by neighbouring forces and in need of humanitarian support.

Teams of writers on raised platforms in the exercise control centre tested troops with scenarios ranging from earthquakes and IED incidents to large-scale logistics problems.

WO2 Gary Bent (AGC (SPS)), a British Serviceman attached to the force, praised the serial.

“We have got to see how an exercise is run at corps level and in the Army you don’t see that very often,” he said.

“We had a really good build-up with lots of briefings and when we deployed we were fully in the picture.”

The exercise stretched some 500 kilometres to Leopoldsburg in Belgium where the unit’s rear support command was based.

Brig Gen Philippe Bras, chief of staff for the deployed headquarters, said the event had bolstered relations between nations involved.

“This exercise is a good opportunity to improve,” he added.

“We are very happy to have the contribution of Brig Shirley and his team and are looking forward to continuing to build on our relations with the UK.”

Among the international soldiers supporting the exercise were members of 7th Armoured Brigade.

**● French connection
feud fuelled –
Talkback, page 62**

“I THINK WE CAN BE A BIT ARROGANT SOMETIMES BUT JUST BECAUSE SOMETHING ISN’T DONE OUR WAY DOESN’T MEAN IT DOES NOT WORK”

– BRIG STEPHEN SHIRLEY (HQ RAPID REACTION CORPS)



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THE BIGGER PICTURE

STARS from the Northern and Southern Hemisphere teams celebrate at the end of a pulsating Heroes Rugby Challenge match at Twickenham Stadium. The visitors celebrated a 36-22 triumph at the world-famous venue but the real winners were Help for Heroes. Proceeds from the day – combined with money generated at the first game in 2008 – have seen the military charity benefit to the tune of more than £2 million. Picture: Graeme Main





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**TOUGH
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Giveaway gratitude

Thank you to all our kind competition donors!

LAST month the team at *Soldier* rallied round to gather more than £10,000-worth of prizes for our readers.

The giveaway, named Operation Reindeer's Hoof, is the third time the publication has handed over an exciting host of Christmas gifts to Servicemen and women and their families.

The hat-trick effort saw hundreds of presents – from tool kits to shopping vouchers and holidays – awarded to individuals across the Army.

And it takes the total amount we have given away in the last three years to in excess of £40,000.

A big thank you to all the following companies for their support and for helping to give readers a great start to the New Year.

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Picture: Steve Dock

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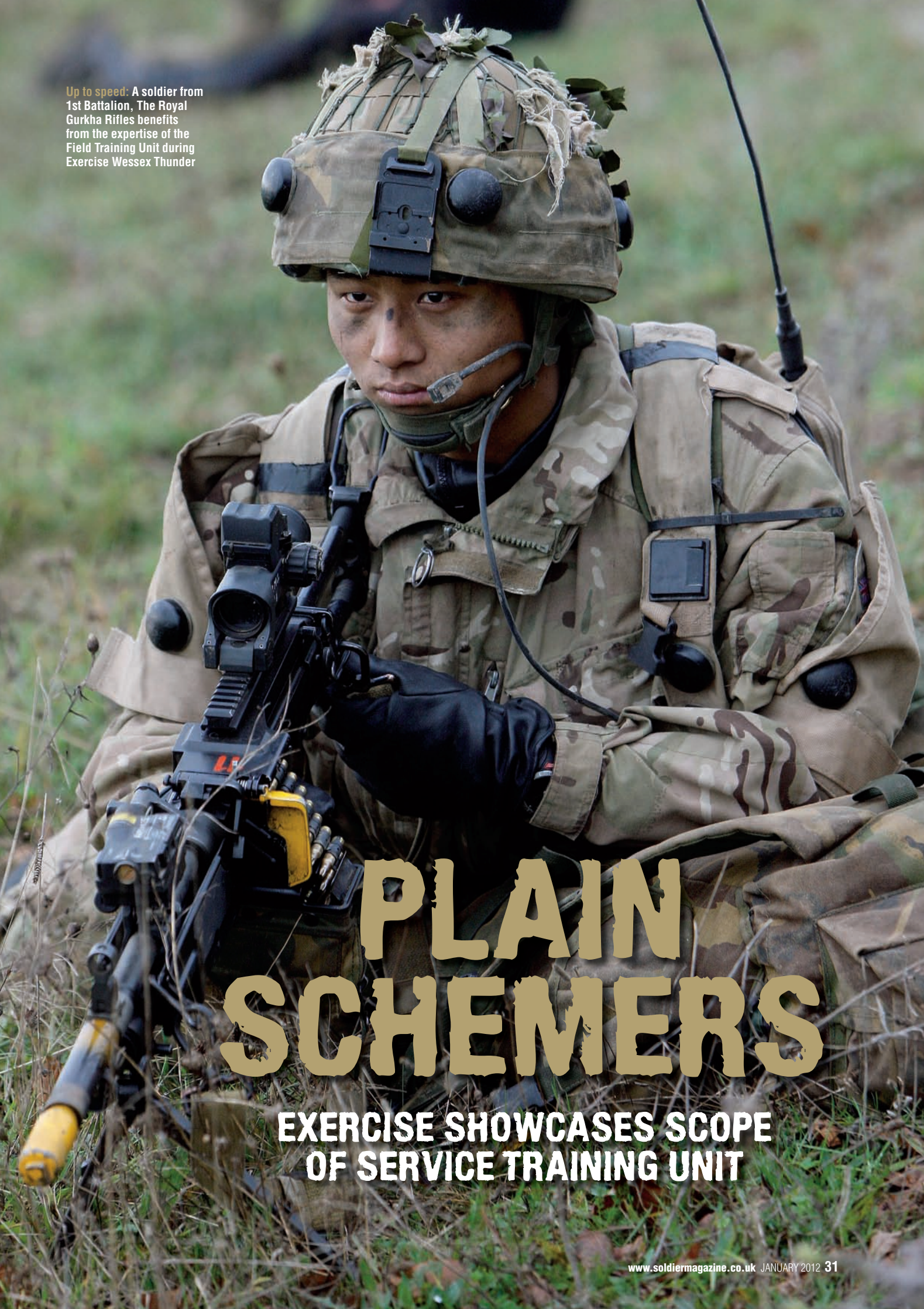


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BEHIND YOUR PERFORMANCE

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Up to speed: A soldier from 1st Battalion, The Royal Gurkha Rifles benefits from the expertise of the Field Training Unit during Exercise Wessex Thunder

PLAIN SCHEMERS

**EXERCISE SHOWCASES SCOPE
OF SERVICE TRAINING UNIT**

Report: Joe Clapson
Pictures: Steve Dock

BY failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail," uttered Benjamin Franklin in the 18th century.

And the architects of current British Army exercises are in full agreement.

The Field Training Unit on Salisbury Plain is involved in almost every UK-based serial and is responsible for ensuring that soldiers are ready for all operations. But until now it has remained something of an unseen organisation.

Soldier visited personnel at the centre as 1st Battalion, The Royal Gurkha Rifles were put through their paces on the challenging Exercise Wessex Thunder.

Unit commander Lt Col Adam Griffiths explained the extremely important role his modest team of 45 staff play in the evolution of Servicemen and women.

"We design, deliver and develop foundation packages, mission specific and contingent operations training," he said.

"The aim is to provide members of the British Armed Forces with the capability to be successful on all of their deployments."

In this instance, it was the unit's job to coordinate an energy-sapping foundation exercise for 850 "blue force" troops to fight a state army and insurgency while taking account of civil populations and difficult terrain.

Cameras, observer controllers and high-tech instrumentation meant every movement of "players" on the mock battlefield was monitored, with evidence used for feedback during after-action review sessions.

"The technology we use here means the people running the exercise can see where every single person is on the ground," said Lt Col Griffiths.

"There is also the ability to hear what is being said across the network. But it's not a test, it is a chance to take risks and try out new ideas to see if something works."

The aim of this training is to ensure battlegroups – from headquarters down to soldiers on the ground – are up to speed with core skills and drills but also agile enough to adapt to changing circumstances.

Only this way can they be reassured the Service is fully prepared for future operations.

During its current 12-month cycle the Field Training Unit will create scenarios for 20 formations – between 17,000 and 20,000 personnel – to give them the chance to work with relevant assets, including intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition and reconnaissance kit, helicopters and vehicles.

During the final stages of Wessex Thunder, troops from 1 RGR were required to defeat an opposition force and secure the area, while dealing with all aspects of modern conflict.

From downed aircraft and injured soldiers to angry civilians and journalists asking difficult questions, the "bluefor" skills and drills were given a stern test.

Methods of attack, casualty evacuation procedures and other actions were recorded, with mobile reviews in the field and at the end of the serial to detail positive and negative feedback.

Describing his experience on the exercise,

Maj Ed Oldfield, officer commanding information exploitation with 1 RGR, said: "For the first seven days our company bounced around different exercises, working on planning and convoys, rural and urban environment training, counter insurgency and advance-to-contact drills.

"The after-action reviews are a very useful tool because you can't hide from evidence and for the vast majority of the time we could see what had happened. Feedback from the unit is that we have all got a little bit better after each session, which is an encouraging sign."

On the nature of Wessex Thunder, Lt Col David Robinson, commanding officer of 1 RGR, added: "It's damned hard war-fighting training, but linked in with a contemporary operational environment as well.

"The major difference between this and mission-specific training is that there is a conventional force with an armoured threat and capable systems to match our own – so we're using lessons learnt from conflicts other than southern Afghanistan.

"It really is a learning environment and with evidence you can see if you're getting things right or wrong."

At the same time as ensuring the dynamic process of Wessex Thunder went to plan, the field training team was working on ideas for Pashtun Dawn – the UK's largest exercise – and the tri-Service Joint Warrior, both of which will take place later in the year.

Maj Rupert Whitelegge, responsible for tactical operations, explained the complex nature of organising realistic packages.

"There are a lot of elements involved which come from the most unbelievable corners of the

Army, from linguistics to medical specialists to government departments," he said.

"We need to be up to speed on all the new kit and skills and drills to ensure the right people get trained properly at the right time."

With operations in Afghanistan continuing and soldiers on constant alert to deploy to other areas of the globe, the group must keep the Army primed and ready for action.

"Exercising personnel don't see the organisation or what goes on behind the scenes – it's as if they are in a real environment on operations," explained Lt Col Griffiths.

But away from their gaze, the Field Training Unit researches, schemes and acts to ensure the Army is successfully prepared for whatever situations it may face in future. ■

**'IT IS
DAMNED
HARD
WAR
FIGHTING'**

Main picture, Quick response: Soldiers administer first aid to a simulated casualty during Exercise Wessex Thunder

Below, left to right: SSgt Carl Reid (RAMC) discusses a scenario with another observer controller; A Gurkha rifleman looks after a casualty before evacuation; Troops at the 1 RGR Battlegroup headquarters under observation from FTU staff; A casualty is moved to a safe area from a simulated accident; A member of the FTU uses an area weapon effects simulation distribution situational awareness terminal to locate the position of troops during the final exercise on Salisbury Plain





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Interview: Joe Clapson

TAKING up the lead part in a comedy series penned by Ricky Gervais and Stephen Merchant was never likely to be a controversy-free business.

But the star of *Life's too Short*, which hit television screens at the end of last year, has told *Soldier* he has been overwhelmed by the reaction of its audience.

Warwick Davis was already a household name following his roles in the *Star Wars*, *Willow* and *Harry Potter* movies.

But now the 3ft 6ins actor is enjoying another surge in popularity thanks to his latest performance – so much so he requires security staff to marshal adoring fans.

"Without wishing to sound like my character in the series, it is strange because I've been in a lot of big movies – films that people remember and are fanatical about – and I'd got used to being recognised in the street.

"But with *Life's Too Short* it's been a whole different thing; there's so many people just wanting to say hi.

"I went to a Paul McCartney concert recently and couldn't walk around freely because of the crowds wanting to stop and talk to me – it was very flattering."

In the comedy, Davis plays an actor who runs a dwarf talent agency similar to his own Willow Management, founded in the 1990s to represent short actors as real talents rather than objects of fun and ridicule.

But the star pointed out he is very different to his egotistical, self-important fictional namesake.

"My character is a monster," the father of two said. "When we were making the show we loved the idea of playing about with the fiction-versus-reality line."

It was Davis who formed the idea of creating a "mockumentary" after being approached by a number of television companies to make a series on his own life.

"I thought it might be fun to manipulate that concept," he said.

But the actor gives full credit to the writers of *The Office* and *Extras* for the success of the show.

"Anyone can have an initial idea but it's a very specialist thing to be able to develop it the way Ricky and Stephen do," Davis added.

"They really get into the head of a character and understand what might happen to them."

As well as providing moments of hilarity and excruciating awkwardness, the programme has put the spotlight on people with dwarfism.

"It has certainly got debates going and people talking which is brilliant," said the actor.

"Some have said it's in bad taste but this show highlights the kinds of things that really happen.

"I am actually slightly offended by people who think they have the right to take the moral high ground on my behalf."

He added: "What is overriding any criticism is the love and warmth coming from everyone, including the little people community."

Aware that British Army personnel enjoy a laugh, Davis was eager to thank his audience.

"I feel very proud and hugely honoured that soldiers might choose to watch my show, especially if it can provide some sort of escape from what they are going through," he said.

"It is a privilege to be in a position to make people laugh."

The humble performer's nephew Luke Shah was a lance corporal in 1st Battalion, Scots Guards and was working to become an officer at Sandhurst when he was killed in a car accident.

"He had served in Iraq and the Army was incredible in training and shaping him," the actor recalled. "Personally I would have loved to do that sort of thing but I would struggle physically."

"I would really like to walk up hills and fells but it's just too painful because of my condition."

Davis may not have ever had much chance of a military career but his size has certainly not hindered a second surge in fame.

And this extremely funny series has already proved remarkable in tackling narrow-minded ideas of what he and other small people can achieve. ■



Picture: Ray Burmiston, BBC Pictures

BIG DEAL

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TEN years after British troops first entered Helmand province, the Imperial War Museum in London has opened an interactive display cataloguing the story of personnel who have deployed there.

War Story: Serving in Afghanistan sees visitors delving into the world of Operation Herrick through artefacts that reveal immense tales of triumph and courage. Here, we get a taste of the front-line effects on show to the public.

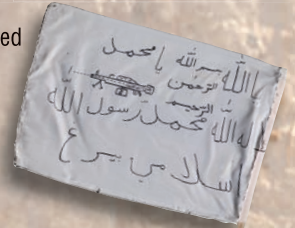
SHRAPNEL FROM ROCKET ATTACK

Sgt James Shimmins (Para) was on the roof of the Sangin District Centre when Taliban insurgents struck in a deadly attack in 2006. He recalls: "I got blown clear across the roof but I didn't have any injuries at all, just bits of shrapnel that I pulled out of my webbing, daysack and kit. I was very lucky."



ENEMY EMBLEM

A Taliban flag containing text from the Islamic call to prayer. Sgt Joseph Coyne (R Irish), who deployed on Op Herrick 13, helped to clear areas previously dominated by the insurgents through regular patrols with his unit. He said: "We had an area to our east that we couldn't patrol in. Eventually when we did push forward we identified that it was a Taliban flag and just ripped it down."



E-BLUEY LETTER

Pte Ryan Talbot (RLC) became a father during his tour of Helmand on Op Herrick 13. His girlfriend Jayde tried to include him in the first months of his son Rhiley's life by sending frequent e-blueys as well as photographs and emails. The letter says: "Be careful on the ground, love you millions."



DAMAGED WATER CARRIER

In 2010 Gdsm Terry Brazier (IG) was on patrol in Nad-e Ali when he discovered bullet holes in his CamelBak rehydration system caused by insurgents firing at him. The soldier said: "I tried to have a drink from it but there was no water left. It was only when I took it off and looked at it that I realised it had three bullet holes through it. I felt so lucky. Things like that really make you realise how close to danger you are out there."



● For more information on the exhibition, which runs until November this year, visit www.iwm.org.uk

OBJECTS OF AFFLICTION

Herrick relics tell story of Afghanistan mission

Out of the shadows: The display sheds light on the experiences of British personnel in Helmand province

Picture: Sgt Rupert Frere, RLC



Above and right: Officer cadets from Falklands Company take over duties at a police station during the exercise in Scotland

Below: A hopeful at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst records his observations ahead of a debrief on the scenario



Report: Sarah Goldthorpe
Pictures: Steve Dock

“DAY eight in the *Big Brother* camp,” Capt Chris Howard (AGC (ETS)) jokes to an officer cadet in a less-than-convincing Geordie accent as he watches the hail-soaked hopeful operate during Sandhurst’s final training chapter.

The coaching adviser’s light-hearted words reveal a serious truth at the heart of Exercise Dynamic Victory – soldiers who do not use their brains on this serial have nowhere to hide.

The test makes a departure from reality television, though, with the significant brainpower it requires of its 250 “contestants” during ten days in Dumfries and Galloway.

Any troops not thinking their way through the increasingly realistic scenarios

presented on this exercise can expect to be pulled up on their mistakes very quickly.

Company level after-action reviews are held regularly, with every decision and move scrutinised thanks to detailed feedback from tactical engagement simulation kit.

Working in a similar way to Laser Quest games, this advanced equipment uses helmet and webbing sensors and a laser attached to each rifle to track the actions of soldiers.

In one of the episode’s scenes, an Afghan patrol is injected with realism through the use of props which replicate a quiet market place with national music playing.

Regular soldiers play road gangs and

amputee veterans have volunteered to be soaked with fake blood to simulate sudden and severe injuries.

“IT’S LIKE BEING IN BIG BROTHER – THESE GUYS ARE CONSTANTLY BEING WATCHED”

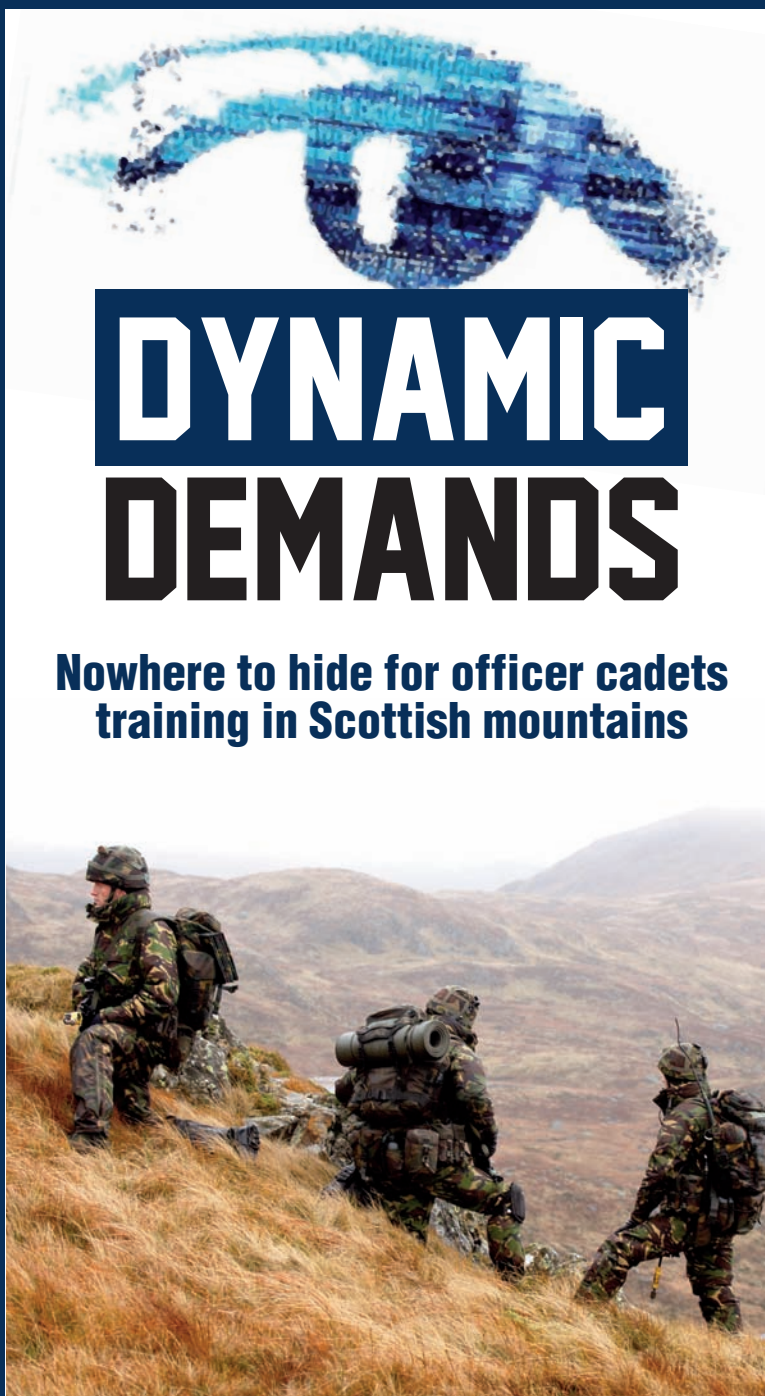
Officer cadets from the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst negotiate this dangerous ground, dealing with potential insurgent activity while trying to engage with civilians and help support the economy.

All the time their leadership skills are being tested to the max.

“This exercise will never sit still,” Capt Howard explained to *Soldier*.

“It’s like being in *Big Brother* – these guys are constantly being watched.

“It isn’t pre-deployment training. These principles will be the same in any theatre and an operations room is an operations



DYNAMIC DEMANDS

Nowhere to hide for officer cadets training in Scottish mountains

room wherever you go.

"What we are doing here is the basics – we are just making the exercise as realistic as it can possibly be.

"Now there is no hiding from thinking."

Dynamic Victory is a fitting conclusion to three years of hard slog at an academy that is transforming the way it trains officers.

Project Wellington, detailed in last month's *Soldier*, has replaced rigid lectures with a more flexible approach to learning.

A new teaching environment with hi-tech simulators and interactive classrooms has been created and tutors themselves are being coached to ensure their methods are as relevant to the revised approach as possible.

Col David Hudson, the colonel in charge of training at the academy, said: "Most people just get this exercise and absorb it, but it is completely different to what it

was five years ago.

"Each year we improve."

Commenting on the operational backdrop to this event, he added: "We can adapt very easily but some of the people here will be in Helmand province within six months of leaving so we have to make sure training is relevant.

"Cadets have to go out and win the hearts and minds of the population.

"What are the dynamics? Who are the good people and bad people?

"It's about getting intelligence right, thinking and analysing."

Troops were also put through their paces with live firing tactical training, demanding video conferences with senior officers and testing questions from academics and specialists who are there to ensure the simulated situation is complex enough.

All of this guarantees that even the last

hurdle brings these soon-to-be graduates up to the highest possible standard.

OCdt Matthew Teasdale, due to join The Mercian Regiment, praised the serial's realism. "Things keep changing and it keeps you on your toes," he said.

"We are constantly keeping track of everything we did wrong in previous exercises as we know they'll be traced here.

"The after-action reviews are good to see where everyone was and some of the results have been surprising.

"This exercise is the pinnacle for us. We have really come out to show what we've got on this one.

"If people can get through this they feel like they have done Sandhurst."

And only when they say goodbye to the academy, does the real and most important test begin for these officers: serving and leading the British Army. ■

DURING to dream is not a pastime necessarily associated with ever-practical members of the British Armed Forces.

But one former Serviceman is making it his mission to get military minds thinking outside the box when it comes to leaving the Army and stepping out onto civvy street.

Neville Barton, a Royal Tank Regiment veteran, has set up a charity called Remount.

And since it came into existence in 2007, the organisation's free residential courses for Service leavers have gone from strength to strength.

They aim to give direction and – more importantly – confidence to the thousands of personnel who embark on new and alien careers every year.

"Freedom can be frightening," Barton explained to *Soldier*.

"One of the problems troops face when they leave the British Army is keeping up their self-esteem."

By running four-day adventures at Brathay Hall in Cumbria, the charity volunteers work to help soldiers explore what career opportunities they might wish to pursue in the years ahead.

For many, this will be the first time they have even contemplated what is available to them with their qualifications.

"These people are our community's assets and we have to take care of them because we need them," Barton added.

His own experience of depression after leaving the Army motivated him to set up the organisation for others.

"We all know the quickest way to keep your confidence up is to have a slug of alcohol, and that is how some people can become alcohol dependent," he warned.

"But if we show soldiers how to express the qualities they have in other ways, there is no need for them to become stuck."

During the courses, personnel are encouraged to talk about their strengths, skills and what activities they enjoy.

Outdoor pursuits such as rowing, climbing and walking are organised alongside group sessions where attendees discuss their hopes for the future.

The trip culminates with the soon-to-be civvies drawing up proactive plans for realising these ambitions.

"For many, a career in security or truck driving is all they can think about," the charity founder said.

"But we get them to really consider what their hidden talents are.

"We had one guy recently who, when talking about boredom, mentioned that he wrote stories.

"We were able to show him that he had an aptitude for writing and he now works for the BBC.

"We also had a guy who originally said he would become a police officer but during the weekend he discovered he really wanted to be a teacher.

"The atmosphere on the courses is like anything is possible."

Part-time trainer Jeff Farish, a former Royal Air Force Serviceman, explained the reception he and other tutors get from troops sent on the trip by their regimental sergeant majors.

"Military people are selfless so often they are not very good at thinking about themselves," he told *Soldier*.

"At the start they usually talk about their families, saying 'we' all the time.

"While that is good, I make the point that now is the time to start thinking about 'me'. It's a different mindset."

He added: "These courses are not counselling or intervention but we do let people know it's okay to share any concerns and apprehensions.

"We send them away at the end with direction, as opposed to them just saying 'I'm leaving the Army and there's no jobs'."

Chris Sharpe, also a volunteer trainer, first encountered Remount when he was sent there by his sergeant major as a guinea pig towards the end of a successful 11-year career in The Rifles.

He admitted that he first embraced the Cumbria trip purely for some time off, but was soon appreciative of it for a host of long-term reasons.

"I threw myself into the course and it was brilliant," he said.

"Remount didn't give me the answers but they have provided me with the tools

to find them.

"So many people waste their resettlement money on training for things they will never do because they haven't really thought about it properly.

"But at the end of a Remount weekend everyone takes something away."

Sharpe is now working as a qualified first aid instructor.

With a growing number of redundancies planned for years to come in the British Army, it seems Remount's workload could be set to increase dramatically. But Barton is confident his team are up to the job.

"We are in the position now where people can't ignore us and we have the capacity to take on 1,000 soldiers a year," he said.

"But quite often those who need us most are the ones less likely to volunteer.

"They are ensnared in a hierarchical system and are afraid to take advantage so we all have a responsibility to help.

"Senior NCOs need to tell their soldiers to come.

"If troops are prepared to join us and take control of themselves, the world really is their oyster."

And with courses not costing the soldiers or veterans who attend a penny, there is nothing to lose. ■

'Senior NCOs need to tell their soldiers to come'



COME TO CUMBRIA

The tranquil setting of Brathay Hall gives troops time and space to think about life after the British Army



MAKING A SPLASH

Charity launches troops into civvy life with confidence



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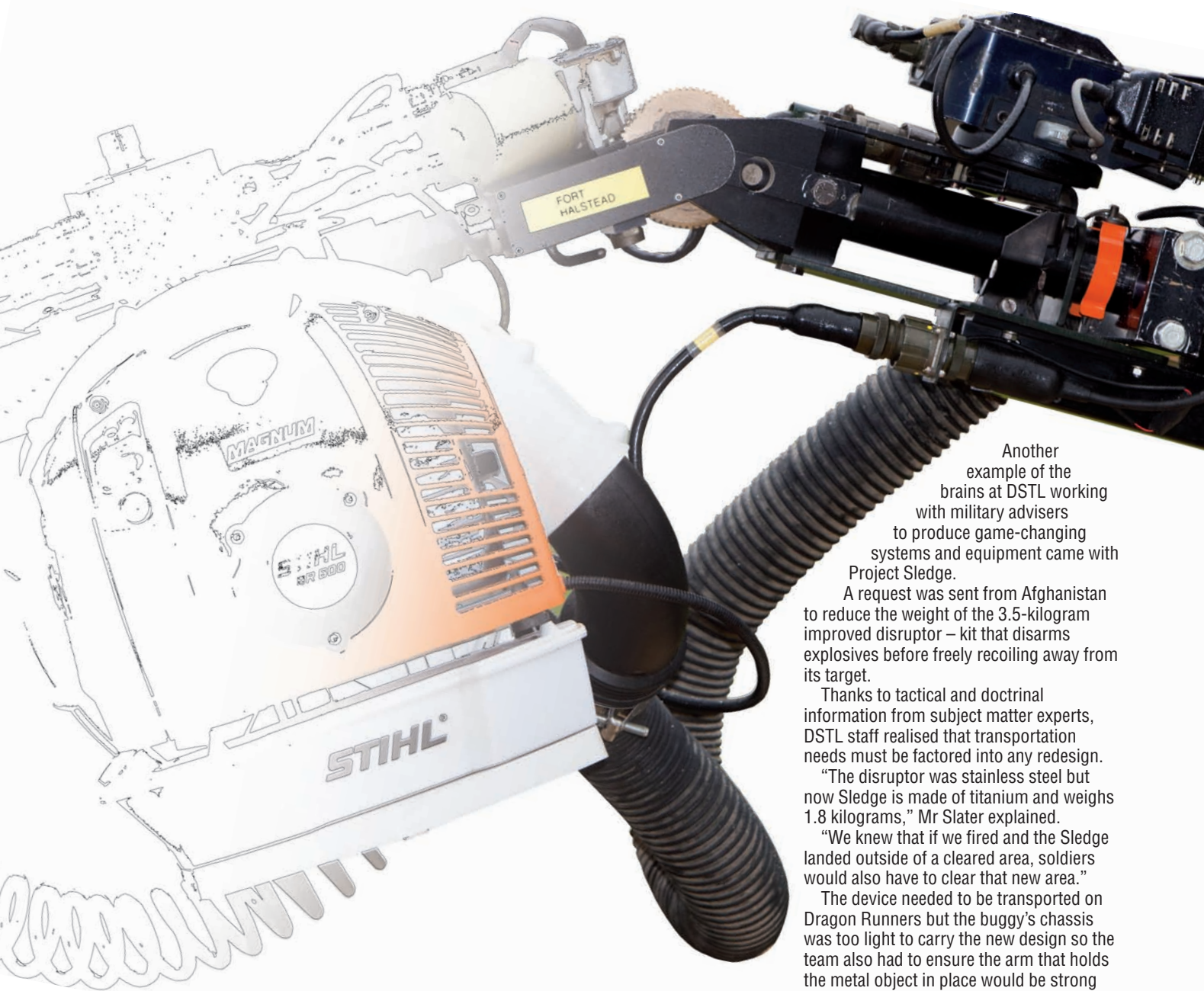


***You've got nothing to lose
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COMBAT CONSULTANTS

MILITARY ADVISERS
CRAFT CLEVER KIT





Report: Joe Clapson
Pictures: Mike Weston

ENSURING that cutting-edge equipment is at the disposal of soldiers is essential to the British Army's success.

It is for this reason that military advisers work alongside scientists and engineers at the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (DSTL) to design, build and test items that swing the balance of power in the UK's favour.

At the lab's Fort Halstead base, these experts keep the Service's kit and gadgets ahead of the technological curve.

One of the latest prototypes shown to *Soldier* during a recent visit was an ingenious piece of machinery that combines landscape gardening with a potentially life-saving bomb disposal robot.

"It's a commercial leaf blower strapped to a conventional Wheelbarrow," explained military adviser Maj Chris Yates (RLC).

The soldier revealed why it was so desirable for the hi-tech hybrid to produce a rush of air.

"This kit significantly reduces the time it takes to render an improvised explosive device safe," he said.

"Without it, the operator has to clear the

device by hand and there have been several deaths among military personnel while doing that."

Using knowledge of the terrain in Helmand province and acting on feedback from recent operational tours – not to mention his own background in explosive ordnance disposal – the Serviceman has been able to ensure the new device does its job.

Explaining the reasons for altering the Wheelbarrow's tried-and-tested design, Martin Slater, principal engineer at the centre, said: "The whole problem with an IED is that it is buried.

"The people here thought 'what can we do to prevent someone having to use their hands to find devices?' and they came up with this.

"It's a straightforward idea and simply a case of buying a leaf blower off the shelf then integrating it onto the current system.

"Now the Wheelbarrow can do its job while reducing the risk to operators."

A number of these modified devices are now being used by British personnel on Operation Herrick.

Another example of the brains at DSTL working with military advisers to produce game-changing systems and equipment came with Project Sledge.

A request was sent from Afghanistan to reduce the weight of the 3.5-kilogram improved disruptor – kit that disarms explosives without freely recoiling away from its target.

Thanks to tactical and doctrinal information from subject matter experts, DSTL staff realised that transportation needs must be factored into any redesign.

"The disruptor was stainless steel but now Sledge is made of titanium and weighs 1.8 kilograms," Mr Slater explained.

"We knew that if we fired and the Sledge landed outside of a cleared area, soldiers would also have to clear that new area."

The device needed to be transported on Dragon Runners but the buggy's chassis was too light to carry the new design so the team also had to ensure the arm that holds the metal object in place would be strong enough to meet the demand.

A modular clip-on system was soon created, complete with counter-balances and gizmos that would not look out of place in a sci-fi blockbuster.

"To reduce the recoil we have a makeshift parachute and there's a small sandbag to balance the vehicle," added Mr Slater,

whose design is now being used by numerous teams across Helmand.

Describing the off-the-wall thought process required to dream up such groundbreaking machines, the engineer said: "We have to ask whether ideas will interfere with things that soldiers currently do; it's a case of looking at the bigger picture.

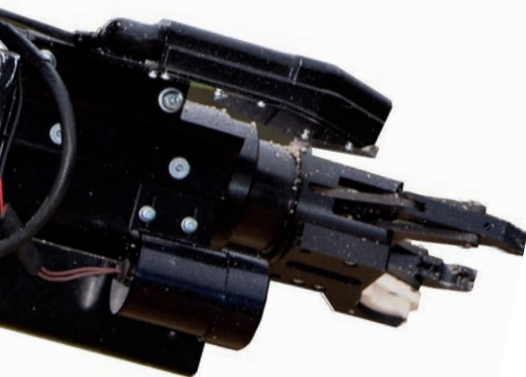
"There's a level of knowledge already in DSTL to utilise, but the military adviser is on-hand to work alongside engineers.

"The parachute idea was a bit whacky and immature but we're used to that sort of thing. We have the simple attitude of 'if it works, it works'.

"Unlike in the commercial world, our inventions are not about making money

**‘OUR INVENTIONS
ARE NOT ABOUT
MAKING MONEY
– THEY ARE
ABOUT MAKING A
DIFFERENCE AND
SAVING LIVES’**

Turning a new leaf: The Wheelbarrow arm design fitted with the off-the-shelf leaf blower is helping to save lives in southern Afghanistan



– they're about making a difference and saving lives."

Within the group of military advisers are ex-Armed Forces personnel who measure soldiers' performance in the field to gauge if changes in approach or kit could help them.

Scott Bell, an ex-WO1 with 2nd Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland, leads the security and operations team.

"We are heavily involved with the soldiers at the Infantry Training Development Unit as they are the guys on the ground," he revealed. "Recently on Brecon we've been taking measurements such as time spent in contact or time taken by a platoon commander to give orders.

"We are also interested in where performance drops off. It could be that after five days without rest, guys are falling asleep when they should be awake or they're

taking longer to make calls."

Such data is fed back to aid decisions on how best to assist troops.

A self-generated idea came to the team in the form of a laser-guided unmanned vehicle – based on the design of an agricultural tractor – to carry soldiers' kit while on patrol.

"We were looking at reducing the dismounted burden and worked with Boeing on an assisted carriage prototype," said Duncan Stewart, a land battlespace systems analyst at the lab.

"However, Boeing trialled it on a mission and found it wasn't really up to the task of following dismounted soldiers."

Nevertheless, DSTL does not see negative results as failures: all evidence adds to the group's ever-widening font of military and technical knowledge.

"This particular trial was only ever a demo project looking for examples of how a vehicle might be used," said Mr Stewart.

"I am sure at some point we will have autonomous vehicles working with Servicemen and women."

From driverless kit carriers to revolutionary concepts, the experience and knowledge of military advisers is crucial in the mission to produce next-generation technical innovations.

Their input ensures that impressive imagination is translated into a tangible and meaningful boost to front-line operations for the British Army. ■

Below, Ready to fire: Design engineer Martin Slater adjusts the lightweight Dragon Runner bomb disposal robot fitted with the Sledge disruptor and parachute assembly



In-flight: The disruptor and parachute viewed at different stages after being deployed during trials at Fort Halstead



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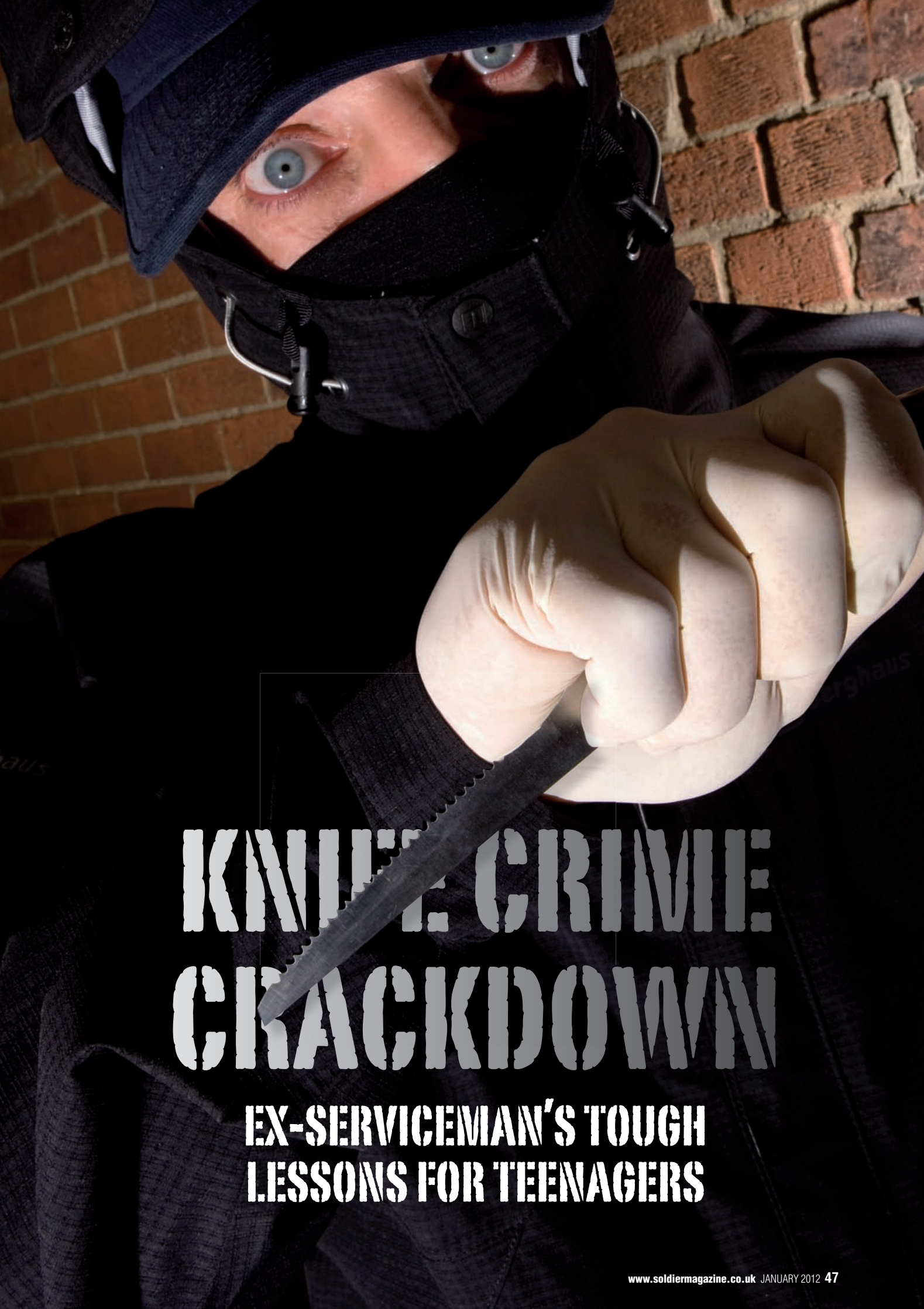
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KNIFE CRIME CRACKDOWN

**EX-SERVICEMAN'S TOUGH
LESSONS FOR TEENAGERS**

Report: Joe Clapson
Pictures: Graeme Main

A FORMER British soldier is tackling knife crime head-on by running safety awareness courses for those at risk of becoming caught up in criminal culture.

Steve Timperley, who served in The Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters Regiment, is overseeing the Knives and Edged Weapons Programme.

And with 150,000 British youngsters between ten and 15 years old admitting to having a knife in a 2008 survey, his endeavours are more crucial than many parents would care to believe.

Soldier spoke to the former Military Corrective Training Centre instructor during one of his safety advice sessions for year ten and 11 pupils at The Gilberd School in Colchester, Essex.

"I am highly trained in skills of persuasion and physical extraction," the 44-year-old father of one explained.

Having spent part of his Army career working in both Umm Qasr's prisoner of war camp and a civilian jail in Basra, it is unsurprising that the veteran of seven operational tours has a somewhat different perspective to most teachers.

"I once had a situation in Iraq where one guy was coming at me with a broom handle with a spike on the end while a riot was occurring," Timperley recalled.

"But I was able to use my spatial awareness and objects in the room to make a risk assessment to ensure my safety."

It is such experiences that qualify the

weapons awareness instructor to speak bluntly about the dangers of handling and being attacked with sharp objects.

"Don't try to reason with idiots, just walk away and don't get drawn into things that can spiral out of control," he told his teenage audience.

"Always assume an assailant is carrying a knife. I'm not saying you should be paranoid, just be observant."

For under-16s, the workshops are

based around personal safety. The ex-sergeant explains the dos and don'ts of walking in the street and teaches the schoolchildren how to weigh up the benefits of certain actions against potential cost.

A key part of Timperley's work with this age group is getting feedback about their experiences with blades via anonymous questionnaires.

The ex-soldier, who left the Army four years ago, is no longer surprised by the responses he gets.

But he said the majority of adults are ignorant or naive to the truth about knife crime in British society.

"In feedback from our surveys we always get responses saying that they [the young people] have carried a knife or would carry one if they felt threatened," the former senior NCO said.

"I think it's accepted that knife crime

exists but we need to be proactive with 11-year-olds and upwards who are coming into that environment."

Adam Thorne, deputy headteacher at The Gilberd School, added: "I think parents across the country have an attitude of 'I'm sure it happens, but not with my kids'."

"So it's a surprise when pupils say they know of people who carry these weapons."

"If someone like Steve tells the pupils something they are more likely to listen, purely because of his direct experience and because he is not a teacher."

"Working with this programme is a proactive way to educate people on the reality of knives on the streets."

In light of such feedback, it is perhaps inevitable that Timperley's candid company has gone from strength to strength since it was established in 2009.

The organisation now has 100 fully-qualified instructors – from a variety of professional backgrounds – working in more than 30 towns across the UK.

The founder said this network allowed a standardised, consistent message to reach a wider audience.

"I want to create a central resource to deliver a warning about blades in order to protect people," he said.

"There are many knife awareness initiatives which are run locally but unfortunately they rest on the shoulders of a few people. But this programme will be very useful for schools and communities across the country."

"I TEACH PEOPLE TO WALK TALL AND PROUD AND APPEAR CONFIDENT"



Knives & Edged Weapons Awareness Programme (KEWAP) - Est. 2009

KEWAP Student Survey (U18s)

Date: 10... 12... 2011...

It is very important to this survey that you answer the following questions honestly. Your personal details are not recorded. Thank you!

Please Tick

Have you ever carried a knife or an edged weapon before? YES NO ☒ ☐

If you were ever seriously threatened would you consider carrying a knife for your own personal safety? YES NO ☒ ☐

Do you know of anyone who carries or has carried a knife before (including rumours)? YES NO ☒ ☐

Have your friends or members of your family ever been threatened by someone saying that they might or will use a knife against them? This question is also directed at you! YES NO ☒ ☐

Are you concerned about the rise in knife crimes within your part of the UK (town or city)? YES NO ☒ ☐

Would you 'really' know what to do if an edged weapon attacker threatened you? YES NO ☒ ☐

With a straight-talking military style, Timperley does not skirt around the edges of the subject for young listeners. He simply states the facts and imparts his knowledge and extensive experience.

"One in three injuries are caused by a victim's own knife," he said.

"And in the UK more murders are committed each year with blades than with guns."

This facts-based approach to teaching is borne out of a 22-year Army career and Timperley's firm belief that even those without weapons are old enough to know about the growing problem.

"It's the ability to be a chameleon, adapting to your environment and the people you are talking to," he explained.

"I teach people to walk tall and proud and appear confident."

He added: "My goal for the programme is to create greater awareness of knife crime in general and improve personal safety."

"I try to come up with answers that safeguard people's lives."

The initiative has an ethos of engaging everyone from 11-year-old schoolgirls to adults with a history of violence.

And with the commitment and unrivalled life experience that a British Army background brings, its founder's success in encouraging youngsters to say no to knives is set to endure for years to come. ■

Pointed lectures: Ex-soldier and self-defence expert Steve Timperley spells out the dangers of knife crime

WWW.KEWAP.ORG.UK



FROM pensions and pay to post-Afghanistan ops and paperwork, the UK's top soldier has reacted to the issues troops are talking about the most.

Every four months Gen Sir Peter Wall's briefing team reveal the main topics discussed by Servicemen and women at feedback sessions across the country.

Here, we sum up the headline views, vexations and responses from the latest report, which can be found in its entirety on the Chief of the General Staff's Army intranet homepage.

● REDUNDANCY

Troops think the notification process works well but suspect more non-volunteers will need to go in future. Personnel believe redundancy will result in higher workloads for those left in the Service.

CGS says... I appreciate this is unsettling for many, however the detail of this plan is still being worked

through and it would be unhelpful for me to speculate on the outcome at this stage.

During this early period of transition, I recognise that gaps are appearing as redundancy bites; hence reorganisation must commence as soon as possible to address this. This will be driven by the Army 2020 study which reports in the first half of this year.

● POST 2015

Troops are asking what the British Army will do after it is withdrawn from combat operations in Afghanistan.

CGS says... The switch to a contingency posture will provide excellent opportunities for commanders and soldiers at all levels. It is, after all, our more usual posture: the past ten years of campaigning have been the exception. Success in Afghanistan cannot be compromised and that remains our main effort.

In parallel we shall gradually shift our training towards a contingency capability.

The Army's tremendous operational experience will continue to be in demand.

● ARMY IN 2020

There is a sense of nervousness among personnel about what the future Service will look like and whether some units and cap badges will be removed.

CGS says... Design work is progressing well and we plan to announce the blueprint for the future Service in the first half of this calendar year.

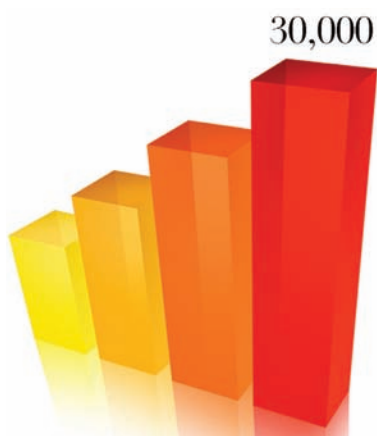
The new force structure envisages closer integration between Regulars and Reservists, the majority of the Army based in the UK and a fusion of deployable and regional brigades.

It will make more systematic and strategic use of the military's skills and credibility to grow the capacity and capability of other nations in order to develop both the ability of fragile states to manage threats within their borders and the potential for partner countries to conduct wider peacekeeping missions.



TAKING IT TO THE TOP

Chief of the General Staff responds to feedback from the ranks



● RESERVIST BOOST

There is some concern at the scale of recruiting needed to achieve the target of 30,000 trained Territorial Army soldiers and doubts that employers will support this.

CGS says... I am confident we can achieve these numbers but we need to be clear what terms and conditions of service and employment relationships we will have, to ensure the Reserve can play its full role in the new force structure.



● PROCESSES

There is much annoyance among units with the amount of process personnel are required to go through. There is also comment on the lack of authority to match responsibility at unit level.

CGS says... This is a key area which we must improve and all commanders must drive this forward.

It is acknowledged that our working practices need to change and while I welcome the measures that are now being implemented, there is still much work to be done.

“IT IS ACKNOWLEDGED THAT OUR WORKING PRACTICES NEED TO CHANGE”

● PENSIONS

The top issue being raised with the team. Many do not understand the system and want to know what the new Armed Forces pension scheme will offer them.

CGS says... It is acknowledged that the future Armed Forces pension scheme remains one of the greatest concerns. We continue to ensure our particular case is heard and understood by the government, and the Future Armed Forces Pension Team is conducting detailed negotiation with relevant departments on our behalf.

As soon as the structure of the scheme emerges you will be informed. I welcome the personal engagement of commanding officers in communicating developments to their personnel and supporting the consultation process this year.



● HOUSING

Frustration has been expressed over the temporary halt in upgrades to Service Families Accommodation.

CGS says... I understand frustrations about the freeze in upgrades to accommodation. The quality of some lodgings is not yet up to the standard we aspire to. It is unfortunately one of the impacts of the continuing financial climate and one of the many difficult decisions defence has had to take.

While I welcome the recent investment in Single Living Accommodation and Service Families Accommodation, and I am glad to see further upgrades are planned for the coming years, more funding is needed sooner rather than later.

“I UNDERSTAND FRUSTRATIONS ABOUT THE FREEZE IN UPGRADES TO ACCOMMODATION”



1. BATTLE OF THE SOMME

SOME people claim it as a victory as the German front line was pushed back more than five miles in places and the enemy suffered heavy losses, but British casualty figures are almost beyond belief. Nearly 20,000 fell on the first day alone and, over the whole four-and-a-half months, more than 400,000 British and British Empire soldiers were killed or wounded. The offensive, which began on July 1, 1916, was finally called off when the battlefield churned into impassable mud and the War Committee in London concluded that "it was not likely to lead to decisive results".

2. BATTLE OF WATLING STREET

PERHAPS the biggest battle ever fought on British soil took place in 61 AD. Queen Boudicca's rebel army from East Anglia had terrorised the Romans, burning down three cities. According to some estimates, her host numbered nearly a quarter of a million by the time it confronted 10,000 Romans, but discipline and organisation won the day. Thanks to a charge in their famous wedge-shaped formation, the Romans routed and then slaughtered the Ancient Britons, who had brought their families along to watch what they expected to be a famous victory.

3. BATTLE OF HASTINGS

A TURNING point in English history with an entire Anglo-Saxon ruling class removed and replaced by the conquering Normans. King Harold's army of 1066 was exhausted and depleted after he had to race up to Yorkshire and back to defeat another claimant to the throne but at first the battle swung in favour of the English. The Norman cavalry charges broke on the Saxon shield-wall and then a rumour spread through the ranks that William the Conqueror was dead. It was untrue and gradually the Norman monopoly on archers and cavalry secured a decisive victory.

RANKED

(NOT SO) GREAT BRITAIN'S WORST MILITARY DISASTERS

John Withington, the author of *Britain's 20 Worst Military Disasters: From the Roman Conquest to the Fall of Singapore* (published by History Press, £13.49), charts ten tussles Blighty would rather forget



5. BATTLE OF ISANDLWANA

PERHAPS the most humiliating defeat in the history of the British Army. Some ambitious politicians fomented a war against an extremely pro-British Zulu king in 1879 and Lord Chelmsford duly mounted an invasion. As he tried to bring the enemy to battle, he kept splitting his forces, while the Zulus managed to conceal a huge army of perhaps 20,000. They fell on the 1,250 Chelmsford had left behind at his camp and virtually annihilated them. Back in London, people could not at first believe that a British Army equipped with guns and artillery had been defeated by tribesmen fighting mainly with spears.



6. SURRENDER OF YORKTOWN

BRITISH casualties were relatively light, around 150 killed and 300 wounded, but the capitulation had momentous consequences – the loss of the American colonies. The army of Lord Cornwallis was trying to build a fortified base for the Royal Navy in Virginia, when a force of 16,000 French and US soldiers cornered him. Help from the other British formation in New York was too slow in coming and, with sickness reducing his effective strength to around 3,000 after a three-week siege, Cornwallis surrendered on October 19, 1781.



7. THE FALL OF SINGAPORE

THE biggest mass surrender in the history of the British Army and in the view of Churchill "the worst disaster". Singapore was supposed to be impregnable but determined, resourceful and highly mobile Japanese forces exploded the myth in February 1942, even though they were always significantly outnumbered. Only 67 days after setting foot on the Malaysian peninsula, the Japanese forced 85,000 British and Empire troops to surrender. The Japanese lost barely 3,500 men in the campaign. Of the British forces who surrendered, at least 10,000 would die in captivity.



4. THE FIRST AFGHAN WAR

THE most disastrous retreat in the history of the British Army took place in 1842. More than 16,000 left Kabul – made up of about 700 British soldiers, 4,000 Indian sepoys and 12,000 camp followers – to cover 90 miles through a number of treacherous passes to Jalalabad in the dead of winter. From the outset they began falling to cold, exhaustion and the attacks of Afghan tribesmen. A week after they had left, a solitary, half-dead Army surgeon reached Jalalabad. Apart from a few hostages, he was the only survivor.



8. BATTLE OF CASTILLON

THIS relatively small battle of 1453 had big consequences – the loss of the Hundred Years War with France. England's best general, John Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury – the “English Achilles” – was going to relieve Castillon when he got a report that the French force which had been besieging the town was beating a hasty retreat. He decided to attack at once, but the story was wrong and his men were cut down by artillery as they tried to scale earth ramparts built by the defenders. Talbot was killed and his army destroyed. Castillon surrendered and within three months the war was over.



9. BATTLE OF NEW ORLEANS

ANOTHER terrible humiliation. Untrained American frontiersmen were expected to be no match for the Redcoats who had defeated Napoleon. However, a slow build-up enabled the natives to erect formidable defences and when the British did attack in January 1815, they ran into fire from artillery and sharpshooters. The action lasted for only 25 minutes before the Redcoats had to make an ignominious withdrawal. The commander, Lt Gen Sir Edward Pakenham, was lost and the British suffered about 2,000 killed, wounded and captured. Just 55 Americans died.



10. CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE

THE most famous blunder in British military history. “Two such fools could hardly be picked out of the British Army,” was one soldier's verdict on the cavalry commanders, Lords Lucan and Cardigan. But it was a confused order by the commander-in-chief, Lord Raglan, that sent the Light Brigade – regarded by many to be the finest light cavalry in the world – on a suicidal charge against Russian guns. Out of the 600 men who set off on October 25, 1854, 300 were killed, wounded or captured. One onlooker considered it “the most useless and shocking sacrifice of the lives of hundreds of brave men that was ever witnessed”.



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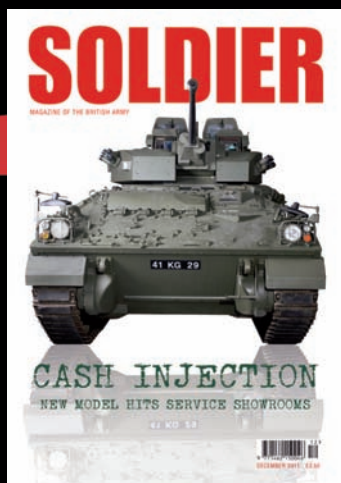
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Choir strikes a chord for nation's unsung heroes

I WAS completely overwhelmed, as I am sure many others were, by the recent BBC series *The Choir: Military Wives* featuring Gareth Malone.

The Service spouses and girlfriends were absolutely outstanding. Their commitment and dedication was amazing and wonderful to see but did not come as a shock – such traits typify Forces partners.

Having previously worked as a housing and community officer in Germany, I am aware of how much wives contribute to cohesion within a garrison.

All too often these ladies are unsung heroes who work tirelessly in the background while their men are away.

It should not be forgotten that they do not usually have the comfort of having their own families living close by to provide additional support when needed.

The programme brought this home and showed how these wonderful ladies cope so well in difficult circumstances. It was a real joy to watch and a credit to all military wives, wherever you may be. – **Tony Hayward, Bovingdon, Hemel Hempstead.**



Picture: Twenty Twenty TV/Jon Hall

On song: Choirmaster Gareth Malone and his all-star cast of military wives and girlfriends at Chivenor



'Badly dressed? Put a sock in it, sir'

I WAS shocked to see an Army major moaning about the standard of an amateur boxer's dress in December's issue of *Soldier*.

It says a lot about the letter writer that he was more concerned with how the guy was dressed than how he performed on the night.

Firstly, it takes a lot of courage to step into the ring to face an opponent in front of an audience

Striking appearance: LCpl Shaun Dick (Scots), pictured in blue, left, fought for the Combined Services in a showdown with the US military

and I commend all those who do so.

Secondly, boxers don't use their socks to score points – it is skill with their gloves that wins bouts.

Thirdly, I'm all for the guy wearing odd shoes if it puts his opponent off. As a keen practitioner of contact sports, I wear a gumshield that displays the words "bring it" whenever I smile.

No doubt the next time the major writes to *Soldier* it will be about the length of a boxer's sideburns. Get out of the 1970s. – **Name and address supplied.**

'Is there a leave deadline for new dads?'

HOW long after becoming a father does a soldier have to take his paternity leave?

My child was born in November 2010 and as I was soon to be at home for Christmas, I did not take any extra time off. I was originally informed I had a year to use the two-week entitlement but am now being told differently. – **Name and address supplied.**

Brig Tim Hyams, DPS(A), writes: Paternity leave is granted to eligible individuals after the birth of their child. It must be used only for the purpose of caring for the baby or supporting the mother. This policy is explained clearly in both chapter 22 of JSP 760 and DIN 2011DIN01-037.

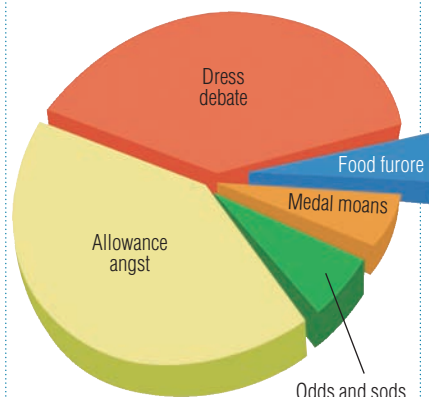
The entitlement of two weeks may be taken consecutively or as two separate periods, but regardless must be used within 56 days of the birth of the child. Your commanding officer may defer that ruling, but only if justified on operational grounds.

I recommend you speak to your regimental administrative officer as the rules governing entitlement were revised in April 2011 to incorporate two types.

First, that which is referred to now as ordinary paternity leave – granted for the same period and subject to the previous ruling. Second, a period referred to as additional paternity leave, for which you may qualify.

Slice of Service life

This month's ruminations from the ranks...





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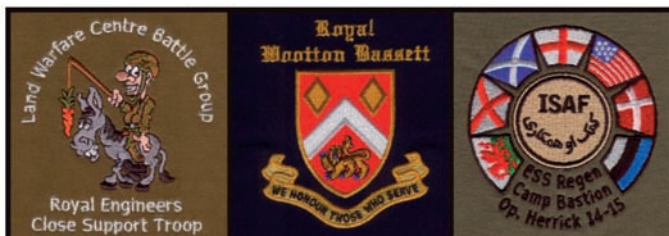
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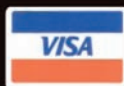
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'Give troops their head when it comes to helmets'

I READ with disgust the recent direction issued on helmet scrim. I cannot believe that as Europe plunged into economic chaos and the recession continued to bite – not least in respect of Army manning levels – a scientific study was commissioned into whether headgear is more effective with nets and rubber rims or without.

Is this really the biggest drama facing the British military as we continue to doggedly fight a war in Afghanistan (in which no-one has yet worn foliage in their helmets)?

Those who have been in Iraq and Afghanistan know why we do what we do.

Rims keep covers on and prevent wearing of the material when placed down.

Scrim is extremely effective against all backgrounds in operational theatres.

Elastic straps, on the other hand, serve no useful purpose and should be demonstrated once in recruit training and never again revisited unless we find ourselves fighting a conflict in North West Europe or similar.

Of greatest concern is that the practice of green taping Mk 7 covers is about preserving the cut-outs of the helmet, which have been designed to fit the nape of the neck and optics.

Untailored covers obscure both these excellent features.

Edicts like those outlined by the recent Infantry briefing note have no real scientific basis and are an excuse to destroy individualism, implement “make-do” changes to poorly thought out clothing and equipment, and are a further attack on the morale and spirit of the infantryman.

In 25 years of service, I have only worn foliage in my helmet once and that was during basic training – where this practice should remain! – Sgt Martin Berry.

Maj Chris Hellier, Capability Directorate Combat, responds: The study was conducted by the scientific adviser to Task Force Helmand in response to an increase in head strikes, from small arms, sustained by troops in theatre.

It was undertaken in Afghanistan with the Joint Force Support Equipment Capability Branch and involved a variety of personnel including Infantry soldiers and Royal Marines with a considerable collective experience of operational areas including Northern Ireland, the Balkans and Iraq.

Both the adviser and support branch are permanently established in theatre to enhance the capabilities available to British troops and therefore the trial did not incur any additional cost.

Force protection is considered extremely important, not only because it preserves fighting power but because it is our moral duty. There are a number of threats to counter and all are being addressed simultaneously. In respect of small-arms fire, numerous approaches are being explored.

Shot detection is one of these and

we have recently delivered sufficient numbers of the Boomerang system to all tactical bases.

Early this year significant numbers of fighting vehicles will also be fitted with the technology, allowing our troops to immediately identify firing points.

In parallel, we are attempting to reduce the burden on the dismounted soldier in order to increase his agility and decrease the likelihood of him being acquired. Another aspect of this approach is to ensure his profile is optimised for camouflage and concealment.

The study, which relied upon military judgement, clearly identified that a helmet covered by a face veil net was more visible against a variety of backgrounds than the multi-terrain pattern (MTP) camouflage helmet cover.

The face veil is single tone in colour and consequently emphasises the shape of the helmet, whereas the MTP breaks it up.

The tape or elastic around the rim further exaggerates the signature and provides a distinctive outline that aids the insurgents' recognition and target acquisition.

The elastics allow for the attachment of foliage or scrim (strips of fabric), which provide the best form of camouflage by blending with the environment and further breaking up the helmet's distinctive form.

The Mk 7 has been ergonomically designed to interact with both day sacks and optical systems, the shape is therefore significantly different from the Mk 6 with distinct cut-outs.

Early this year the Mk 7 cover will be issued, which will preserve these features. In the meantime the theatre policy is that only one centimetre of tape should be visible if used to secure the Mk 6 cover.

The aim of the recent Infantry briefing note, *Helmet Camouflage and Concealment*, was to identify bad practice and to reiterate the well understood principles of camouflage.

Complying with the direction is a matter of force protection and battlefield discipline, which is ingrained in basic training and repeatedly thereafter.

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'Beans and bangers not fish dishes'

I AM currently deployed on Op Herrick 15 and am writing with regard to the 24-hour multi-climate ration menus which were introduced to theatre in May 2009.

Why has most troops' favourite breakfast meal, beans and sausages, been replaced by inferior cold options such as strawberry porridge and tropical muesli?

These dishes are for an acquired palate and are generally disliked.

In respect of lunch, how can soup – which features in four of the 20 menus – be considered filling?

As for other packs, tuna and salmon are no good for non-fish eaters and the pasta/bean salads taste of vinegar.

There is, however, good variety when it comes to the main meals although if you've had fish for lunch you don't want it again for dinner.

The biscuits provided are great but there are too many types of bland nuts, the energy bars are of a poor quality and the fruit purees are disgusting.

I am aware of the range of cultures of the men and women serving in the Army but what has happened to the good old British menus such as Lancashire hotpot?

On average, my troop give away half of every ration pack.

Surely in this day and age soldiers should not need to supplement rations out of their own pockets.

We are marching on half-empty stomachs and losing weight, which in turn affects our operational effectiveness.

Finally, can the feedback forms found in the boxes still be returned for entry into a prize draw? – **Sgt Coburn, 39 Regt RA.**

Lt Col Simon Blake, Logistics Support, responds: The pack you refer to was from one of the first batches of the new rations which were produced in response to the need for a complete refresh, identified as far back as 2006.

This resulted in an increase from ten menu choices to the current selection of 20.

Due to the desire to provide an Omega 3-rich diet, several of the packs contained fish, either in the form of a snack option for lunch or as an element of the main meal.

However, as a result of feedback

received from forms enclosed in the rations, visits to theatre by members of the Defence Fuel and Food Services (DFFS) team, selection panels held to pick new products for inclusion and letters such as yours, the number of fish dishes appearing in the menus has been reduced considerably.

Hopefully the supply chain will enable you to have access to, and be issued with, the full range of 20 menus currently available in theatre.

In answer to your specific points; for breakfast the only hot choice available in the old operational ration pack menus was beans and sausages.

Based on opinions received it was clear that not all British troops wanted a hot breakfast, especially in the heat of the Afghan summer.

To counter this and provide more variety it was decided to have approximately 12 hot menus and eight cold options.

The breakfast cereal options have the milk and sugar combined in the pouch and only need the addition of water. These are equally good when mixed with hot water.

While some troops may not like a cold choice for breakfast, generally these have been received very positively by most soldiers in theatre.

For the lunch menus the soup is a snack item which has again been given the thumbs up by the majority of personnel.

In the old operational ration packs, soup was provided in every menu in the form of an instant powder. This was not a popular item.

It required the addition of

water and about five to ten minutes of preparation followed by the need to clean cooking utensils.

Most soldiers threw the soup away – discard rates for this item were as high as 85 per cent.

The new boil-in-the-bag soups come in a range of excellent flavours, require no preparation and can be eaten straight from the pouch.

The pasta/bean salads have been revamped recently but still feature as part of the snack menu.

Again, this is to provide the requisite balance of nutrients and calories and menu choice for deployed troops.

Fish – cunningly disguised in the paella – only appears in one main meal.

There are no snack fish pouches. The paella has been kept in as many customers like the culinary variety this item provides.

You will be pleased to note that DFFS continually evolves and changes the range of fruit and snacks provided.

It has reduced the number of nuts while increasing the type – giving a choice of nine including salted, plain, mixed fruit and trail mix.

Additionally, the introduction of beef jerky, Polo mints and Tutti Fruitti sweets in some of the menus have also been deemed very successful.

A range of energy bars have been introduced and while you personally may not like these, a great deal of time and effort is spent selecting items that provide a good source of energy and also meet the unique MoD shelf-life requirements (for food safety purposes and the demand of an extended logistic supply chain).

All feedback forms that are returned are entered into the prize draw. This is held yearly.

While it is realised that this may involve postage, more efficient delivery systems for these forms are being considered.

Analysis is taken very seriously on all comments received by this and all other means of feedback.

Within a finite budget, ration pack development and research is constant in order to improve the range of food items and choice but ultimately, to ensure it is fit for operational and training purposes.



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Picture: Steve Dock

Savings spark vex in the city

I AM writing in respect of recent cuts to the Recruitment and Retention Allowance (London).

Why was the decision taken to restrict the changes to sergeants and above? As a consequence, a newly-promoted sergeant will get paid less than they did in their previous rank in the event of being posted to the city.

Personnel – regardless of seniority – currently receive around £120 a month through the payment, which is basically the same as Local Overseas Allowance (LOA).

Those in Germany are given a subsidy to compensate for the higher cost of living so why shouldn't the same apply to soldiers based in the capital?

All other employees, whether public or private sector, are paid London weighting for obvious reasons.

NHS workers, for example, receive 20 per cent of their salary to offset the expense of working in the city with a minimum payment of £4,036 per annum and maximum of £6,217.

Compare that to our £1,401 a year and it is clear that those in the Armed Forces are already disadvantaged.

While I am unhappy about the pay freeze across the public sector, I can just about live with it considering the state of the economy.

What I cannot accept is taking what is effectively a four per cent pay cut as a consequence of losing London weighting.

Throughout my 23 years in the British Army I've never come close to a four per cent rise and I am now being asked to take home

less. It beggars belief. A response is eagerly awaited. – [Name and address supplied](#).

Brig Tim Hyams, DPS(A), writes: As a result of the Strategic Defence and Security Review, the MoD was directed to make extremely challenging reductions to Service allowances.

All of the savings measures were agreed reluctantly by the Adjutant General and his fellow principal personnel officers from the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force.

One of the steps proposed was the removal of this allowance, paid to individuals on the strength of a unit within five miles of Charing Cross as well as to those assigned to Hounslow and Woolwich.

It was introduced to counter a reluctance to serve in designated London locations; contributing to the higher costs encountered, compensating for the reduced quality of the supporting infrastructure and for the additional pressures of commuting.

However, the supporting infrastructure (such as gyms) has since improved and, with the MoD effectively reduced to a single building, the majority of personnel in the city reside in barracks.

Soldiers also receive subsidised accommodation, messing, removals and travel allowances and, as such, already are protected from the bulk of extra costs associated with living in London.

In agreeing the Recruitment and Retention Allowance (London) savings measure, the MoD conceded that the

payment needed to be reviewed.

It was also agreed that while the study was being conducted, it would be appropriate to continue to pay it to the Service's lower earners.

The anomaly of a corporal in receipt of the allowance, in addition to their basic salary, receiving more than a newly-promoted sergeant receives as a basic salary is well understood.

This situation is short term in nature while the review is conducted. That said, it would be inappropriate to second guess the outcome of that work.

Although you suggest this allowance is "basically the same" as LOA, there is a significant difference. The aim of the latter is to contribute towards the necessary additional cost of day-to-day living when personnel are required to serve overseas.

LOA rate setting is a detailed and mechanistic process; a wide range of areas of spend are priced and, where appropriate, adjustments are made for local conditions and lifestyle.

Finally, tri-Service allowance policy exists to support the specific set of circumstances faced by the military.

These by their very nature will be different to those encountered by various other public sector employees and form the basis against which their own conditions of service are justified.

It is unhelpful therefore to draw too direct a comparison between conditions of service for Armed Forces personnel and those of other public sector workers.

'Armed Forces veterans fought for freedom too'

THE letter responding to a veteran's suggestion that reducing the travel allowances afforded to personnel based in Northern Ireland, "Some home truths about a home posting" (*Talkback*, December), caught my attention.

While I tend to agree with Capt Jim Draper's stance regarding the need to preserve warrants, his rebuttal and sanctimonious comments went a little too far for my liking.

Remarks such as "I have become increasingly alarmed about the number of ex-personnel who seem to enjoy pushing their small-minded opinions into the Army's official magazine" and "long may he enjoy the freedom defended for him by many Servicemen and women who live in a state of risk" suggest this officer has watched Jack Nicholson in *A Few Good Men* too



"... and another thing..."

many times. Who does Capt Draper think he is?

Mr Spence [the author of the original letter] and many of us other old soldiers

defended his freedom – probably while his mother was dusting his rear end with talc.

I spent three tours in Londonderry during the early 70s and was there for Bloody Sunday, something that Capt Draper in all likelihood first heard of at Sandhurst.

A further four tours were spent in other parts of Ulster, where I now live and regularly see serving soldiers out and about in the city of Belfast.

Many married personnel do serve unaccompanied, but not in the main for the reason stated. In my experience it is so they can purchase a property elsewhere.

While his initial argument may have been sound, Capt Draper rather spoils it by directing his comments at all ex-Servicemen and women rather than just the individual who provoked his response. – Victor Hunt, ex-Army, Belfast.

STAND PROUD

■ SHAME on A Kelly [a former soldier who bemoaned veterans having to march at the rear of an Armed Forces Day parade in Liverpool].

Did he not watch the remembrance service at the Cenotaph?

Many of those ex-Servicemen and women taking part were only too happy to be able to march, whether at the front, in the middle or at the rear of the procession. – Bryan Ledger, ex-RAF.

FOLLOW LEGION'S LEAD

■ AS somebody who served for nine years in the British Army with the Royal Irish Rangers, I never thought I would ever suggest following France's lead.

However, when I joined the French Foreign Legion in 1988 I was given a pass that afforded me 75 per cent off in-country travel on public transport.

Why can't the British Army and government do the same for its soldiers? I am sure personnel would welcome such an initiative. – Anthony O'Keefe, Canada.

French connection feud fuelled

I REFER to the letter penned by SSgt Will Bennett, "Viva la France" (November), his unfair condemnation of a corporal uneasy over Britain's bilateral treaty with the French and his pandering to our European neighbours.

The historical facts are that the two nations have always regarded each other as enemies.

British armies have defeated the French in Africa, Europe, India and North America while our fleets have kept the high seas open.

The last naval encounter between the two countries was in July 1940 when the British destroyed a French fleet at anchor in Algeria.

The action prevented France's ships from being commandeered by the German navy. The French were given a six-hour ultimatum to move to England or America but our so-called friends refused at a cost of some 1,000 sailors' lives.

The only periods of close friendship came during the two world wars when the common foe was Germany.

Even though it was the men and women of the British Empire, and later of America, who liberated France and Europe, the French again adopted an anti-UK stance in the post-war period.

Two examples of this were Charles de Gaulle refusing to support our entry into the European



"He said something along the lines of 'where were you at Waterloo' and then it kicked off."

Common Market and his decision to opt out of joining Nato for fear that his military might have to serve under a British general.

As for the Falklands and Exocet missile issue, the French reaction was not one of friendship but at the direction of Washington.

That said, I concede that millions of French people remain very vocal in their appreciation for those who died fighting to free their nation. – Joe Hopkins, ex-RE and RWAFF.

Early leaver rues loss of resettlement entitlement

AFTER serving in the Forces for more than 24 years and coming to the end of my career, I cannot believe that personnel such as myself can be treated so badly in regards to leaving for civvy street.

I applied for early release due to personal circumstances and have lost all entitlement to resettlement and termination leave.

Why is it I suddenly become undesirable and not worthy of the assistance that a normal leaver would receive?

I understand that it was my choice to leave but surely a bespoke package should

be available to help everyone in what is already understood to be such a difficult time. – WO2 Darran Kalthofer, RADC.

Maj C Lovick, Directorate of Manning (Army), replies: Any Service person who has submitted their notice to terminate may apply under the early release scheme to shorten their mandated 12 months' notice subject to approval by the chain of command.

The terms under which early release is granted are set out in the application

form, which has to be signed by the applicant and most clearly states: "I understand that if granted early release I will forgo any entitlement that I may have to terminal leave and graduated resettlement time."

Therefore it is to be assumed that WO2 Kalthofer was fully cognisant of the terms and therefore content to complete transition to civilian life without undertaking the full resettlement package to which he would have been entitled had the full notice period been served.



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APPOINTMENTS

Air Chief Marshal Sir Stuart Peach appointed **Commander of Joint Forces Command** (December 2011).



COMPS

Spine line winners: Tracey Gellatly, Blairgowrie, Perthshire; Lt Col A P Lee (RA), Air Warfare Centre, Lincoln; Capt N E Stokes, 580 Tpt Sqn, Cardiff; SSgt W A White, Light Aid Detachment, St Helens; Lt A Lappin (RN), HMS *Nelson*, Portsmouth Naval Base.

Panic Button winners: C Davies, Mosely Hill, Liverpool; Mr M Cross, Epsom, Surrey; Mr B Pearson, Barnham Broom, Norwich; Nicola Crowe, Ripley, Derbyshire; Jill Mann, Newton Abbot, Devon.



DIARY

January: The ballot for tickets to **The Queen's Birthday Parade** opens. Call **020 7414 2479** for information about applications to attend the parade in the seated stands.

February: Two weeks of events called **Frontline Australia** to mark the 70th anniversary of the bombing of Darwin. Visit www.frontlineaustralia.com.au for more information.

February 2: Talks by **adventurers with a military link** in aid of The Light Dragons Colonel's Appeal at the Royal Geographic Society. For further information contact Paul Gummer on 0207 3995784 or email paul.gummer@eu.jil.com

April 7-8: Convoy For Heroes at Prestwold Hall in Leicestershire. Booking is now open and the organisers are aiming to assemble 1,000 vehicles for a new attempt at the Guinness World Record for longest Land Rover convoy. Contact Patricia Stoner on 07850 428821 or visit www.convoy4heroes.org.uk for more information.

May 12: British Military Train 1945-1990 – The 2012 Berliner Tribute. In celebration of the calm professionalism of railway people, civilian and military, a steam locomotive will head a train of 1960s' carriages including a dining car from Berlin to Hanover and back. Fares start at £90 with proceeds going to The Royal British Legion in Berlin. There will also be a pre-train party in Berlin on May 11. For reservations and further details contact militarytrain2012@gmail.com or call Neil Howard on 07982 786529.

Until further notice: The Lord Ashcroft Gallery: Extraordinary Heroes. The world's largest collection of Victoria and George Crosses. The new gallery examines the concept of bravery and personal stories

behind the decorations. Imperial War Museum, Lambeth Road, London SE1 6HZ. Telephone 0207 416 5000 or visit www.iwm.org.uk

Until further notice: Exhibition of War Correspondents – reporting under fire since 1914. Featuring some of the people whose words, images, voices and faces bring the story from the front line to those at home, sometimes at considerable risk to themselves. Imperial War Museum North, The Quays, Trafford Wharf Road, Manchester M17 1TZ. www.iwm.org.uk



DIRECTORY

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

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

ABF The Soldiers' Charity: 0845 241 4820

Army Welfare Service: 01980 615975; www.army.mod.uk/welfare-support/welfare-support.aspx

Army Families Federation: 01264 382324; mil.94391.2324; www.aff.org.uk

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

Career Transition Partnership: 0207 766 8020

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

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

Family Escort Service: 0207 463 9249

Forcesline: 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.

Forces Pension Society: 0207 820 9988

Gardening Leave: 01292 521 444; www.gardeningleave.org

Help for Heroes: 0845 673 1760; www.helpforheroes.org.uk

helpforheroes.org.uk

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Medal Office: 94561 3600 or 0141 224 3600

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

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

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

Remount: 01451 850 341; www.remount.net

Royal British Legion: 0845 7725 725; www.britishlegion.org.uk

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

SSAFA Forces Help: 0845 1300 975; www.ssafa.org.uk

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

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

The Not Forgotten Association: 020 7730 2400; www.nfassociation.org



INTELLIGENCE

The following **Army Briefing Notes, Defence Internal Briefs and Defence Information Notices** can be found online at www.armynet.mod.uk

ABN69/11: Launch of the Army Women's Network

ABN 70/11: Individual reinforcement training pipeline

ABN 71/11: Introduction of new uniforms

ABN 72/11: Chief of the General Staff's fraud policy statement

ABN 73/11: Publication of the Assistant Chief of the General Staff's sitrep 5 – update on key issues

ABN 74/11: Briefings for Gurkhas and Commonwealth personnel made redundant in tranche one on regularising immigration status by applying for settlement in the UK

ABN 75/11: Changes to Open University fee structures

DIB 97/11: PUS writes to all staff about MoD Your Say 2011 results

DIB 98/11: Search and rescue helicopters project to proceed under Department for Transport responsibility

DIB 99/11: Afghanistan – announcement of the second tranche of transition areas

DIB 100/11: Public sector pay awards – Service personnel

DIB 101/11: Public sector pay awards – civilian personnel

DIB 102/11: Armed Forces redundancy programme – announcement of tranche 2

DIN 2011DIN01-241: Early Years Foundation

Stages in overseas settings – policy

DIN 2011DIN01-238: Change to PAX scheme effective from December 1, 2011

DIN 2011DIN01-235: Tax changes and pensions

DIN 2011DIN01-233: Policy on the care of Service personnel under the age of 18

DIN 2011DIN01-232: Self-administered adrenalin injectors (Epipens) and deployability

DIN 2011DIN01-231: The Queen's Diamond Jubilee bank holiday and the Queen's birthday privilege day for 2012

DIN 2011DIN01-230: Criminal Injuries Compensation (Overseas) scheme

DIN 2011DIN01-229: Armed Forces Buddhist (spiritual and moral leadership) conference

DIN 2011DIN01-227: Armed Forces Act 2011

DIN 2011DIN01-226: Future Armed Forces pension scheme

DIN 2011DIN01-225: Talent retention solution

DIN 2011DIN01-224: Details of engaging leaders workshops

DIN 2011DIN01-223: BR3 – issue of October 2011 edition

DIN 2011DIN01-222: Temporary suspension of processing applications for divorce and transfers

DIN 2011DIN01-219: The Command Qualification Two process

DIN 2011DIN02-018: Transmission of STRAP/TK induction/clearances

DIN 2011DIN02-017: Volunteers for specialist HUMINT duties – Op Samson

DIN 2011DIN02-016: Volunteers for specialist debriefing duties

DIN 2011DIN03-038: Reinforcements training

and mobilisation centre

DIN 2011DIN03-037: Recovery of human remains following an incident at sea or on water

DIN 2011DIN04-187: The formation of DE&S logistic commodities and Services operating centre

DIN 2011DIN04-186: Equipment tables, scales and schedules

DIN 2011DIN04-185: Declaration of obsolescent signal kit pyrotechnic pistol No 1 Mk 3 (all colours) and L89A1, L90A1, L91A1 and L92A1

DIN 2011DIN04-184: Framework contract for the supply of commercial online databases and items of digital media to the MoD

DIN 2011DIN04-183: Obsolete DS&TE PT controlled test and measurement equipment

DIN 2011DIN04-182: Keystone/Cougar communication system out of service date

DIN 2011DIN04-181: Changes to current TrilogiView hosting arrangements

DIN 2011DIN04-180: Amendment to 2010DIN04-177 rescind obsolete declaration of Temo(E) controlled test and measuring equipment

DIN 2011DIN04-179: Declaration of obsolete float signal submerged N3 Mod 4

DIN 2011DIN04-178: Configuration accounting service provision for Royal Navy and Royal Fleet Auxiliary surface ships

DIN 2011DIN04-177: New arrangement for the provision of defence accommodation stores for Territorial Army and cadet units

DIN 2011DIN04-176: Declaration of obsolete rocket hand-fired signal distress Red No 1 Mk 1

DIN 2011DIN04-175: Declaration of obsolescence Foden recovery

DIN 2011DIN04-174: Declaration of obsolete trailer recovery 20T

DIN 2011DIN04-173: Declaration of obsolescence – Mektron data storage system

DIN 2011DIN04-172: Equipment tables, scales and schedules

DIN 2011DIN04-171: Declaration of obsolescent matches waterproof safety No 4 Mk 2

DIN 2011DIN04-170: Relocation of Fleet-wide equipment – training stores and boats – Fleet general stores from Foxhill to Abbey Wood

DIN 2011DIN04-169: Declaration of obsolete signal smoke parachutist orange No 1 Mk 5

DIN 2011DIN04-168: Guidance on conducting Fleet trials

DIN 2011DIN04-167: Amendment to DIN 2011DIN04-129 rescind obsolete declaration of Temo(E) controlled test and measuring equipment

DIN 2011DIN04-166: Trade receipts deliveries, booking in procedure LCS Donnington

DIN 2011DIN04-165: Declaration of obsolete signal smoke parachutist No 1 Mk 5

DIN 2011DIN04-164: Declaration of obsolete divers supervisors pack No 1

DIN 2011DIN05-046: Defence courier service – changes to procedures for despatching protectively-marked material

DIN 2011DIN05-045: Application governance for current and contingent operations

DIN 2011DIN05-044: Copyright and Crown Copyright material: policy, responsibilities and procedure for use

DIN 2011DIN06-034: Updates to JSP 375, volume 2 – health and safety handbook

DIN 2011DIN06-033: Environmental protection guidelines (maritime) and maritime environmental and sustainability assessment in the Royal Navy

Continued on page 66.

NO. 842

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The results will be announced in the March issue.

November's competition: First correct entry drawn at random and winner of the £100 was **Miss P Fairclough**, Catterick Garrison, North Yorkshire.

Runners-up: **Bdr Allman**, 39 Regt RA, Newcastle upon Tyne and **SSgt K Peterson**, Chicksands, Bedfordshire.



DIN 2011DIN06-032: Faulty safety equipment – 2kg and 5kg aluminium CO₂ fire extinguishers manufactured between 2006 and April 2011

DIN 2011DIN07-184: Joint operations planning course 2012

DIN 2011DIN07-183: Joint Service sail training – Exercise Scotwest 2012

DIN 2011DIN07-182: Training – Institute of Naval Medicine – courses to be held April 1, 2012 to March 31, 2013

DIN 2011DIN07-181: Maritime Warfare School – aviation warfare – 2012/13 course dates

DIN 2011DIN07-180: Exercise Snow Lion 2012 – Territorial Army and Army cadets alpine skiing and snowboarding championships

DIN 2011DIN07-179: Joint Service adventurous training charts

DIN 2011DIN07-178: ARTD staff leadership school course programme and policy, April 2012 – March 2013

DIN 2011DIN07-177: The Defence Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Extraction Training Organisation course index and details

DIN 2011DIN07-176: City and Guilds Intelligence Management Award

DIN 2011DIN07-175: Operational electronic intelligence training courses 2012/2013

DIN 2011DIN07-174: Army educational services support to NCO and WO command, leadership and management

DIN 2011DIN07-173: Qualified weapons instructor intelligence surveillance reconnaissance course

DIN 2011DIN07-172: Junior officers hydrography, meteorology and oceanography acquaint courses 2012-2013

DIN 2011DIN07-171: Exercise West Coast Warrior

DIN 2011DIN07-170: Adventurous training centre (Castlemartin) – request for junior NCO

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DIN 2011DIN07-169: Exercise Snow Warrior 2012

DIN 2011DIN09-015: Order of the British Empire Service 2012

DIN 2011DIN09-013: Royal garden parties 2012 – civilian staff

DIN 2011DIN09-012: The Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal

DIN 2011DIN09-011: Royal garden parties 2012 – civilian staff

DIN 2011DIN10-044: Army Sailing Association offshore race training week and regatta, May 14-18

DIN 2011DIN10-042: Exercise Snow Method 2012 – Army snowboarding freestyle boardercross championships



REUNIONS

57 (Bhurlpore) Battery, 32 Regiment, Royal Artillery: Reunion dinner on January 21 at Larkhill. Medals parade will also be held on the same day. Ex-members, serving or retired, are welcome. Contact Steph Manning on 01980 845577 or email bty_57@live.co.uk as soon as possible in order to gauge levels of interest.

RAMC Reunited 2012: Reunion will take place at the Royal Court Hotel, Coventry on February 3. Contact Mick McCran on 01522 879307 or at michael.mccran@ntlworld.com for further details.

The 2012 Aliwal Dinner: All members of 16th/5th Lancers, 17th/21st Lancers, Queen's Royal Lancers and attached units are welcome. Event takes place on February 4 at the Telford Golf and Country Club. For more details phone 07890 207391 or email wjcfive@yahoo.co.uk

Joint Helicopter Support Unit: Old and new faces are invited to celebrate the JHSU's 30th



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anniversary at the Victory Services Club in London on March 31. The event costs £40 and will run from 1730 to 2330. Visit www.jhsu.webs.com for further details.

79 Port Enabling Sqn (formerly 79 Railway Sqn) are disbanding on April 26. Former members are invited to attend a parade. For further information contact Maj Chris Bowen on 023 8066 4314, mil 94273 8314 or at chris.bowen723@mod.uk

Junior Leaders Regiment, Royal Engineers Cassino Troop 1989-1990 is looking for lost members for a reunion scheduled for late April. If you were a member of the troop and are interested in attending please contact Peter King at 4 Turner Close, Catterick Garrison, North Yorkshire DL9 3SP or email peterliamking@live.co.uk

RMP Memorial Parade at the National Memorial Arboretum. This parade will be held on Saturday, June 16 at 1115. For 2013 the date will return to the first Saturday in June. Email rhqrmp@btinternet.com for further information.

David Sykes is planning a reunion for all members of **4 Sqn, 22 Signal Regiment** who served between 1970 and 1975. Considers September/October as a suitable time as hotel prices should be favourable. Anybody interested can contact him by email at churchill422@sky.com



SEARCHLINE

The Household Cavalry Association (northern branch) has been established in Greater Manchester. All personnel, wives/widows and attached other arms are sought to meet old friends from both mounted or armoured squadrons. Contact Alan Lister on 0161 7259851 for further details.

Dominic Mabbett is looking for his brother **Cpl Jon Mabbett** who is believed to be serving with **47 Air Dispatch Squadron**. Contact Dominic on 07528 576980 or email dmabb@hotmail.co.uk with any information.

Myra-Ann Simpson is looking for a **John Meyers** who was posted in Wick in 1943. If anyone knows of his whereabouts contact myra.ann.simpson@hotmail.com

PhD student Kim Webb is looking for British **Army personnel** who are willing to share their experiences of **higher education in the UK**. Contact her at k.v.webb@durham.ac.uk

Ann Hamlet is gathering memoirs from **veterans who served in Italy between 1943 and 1945** for a book she is writing. Contact her by phone on 01342 844082 or email at info@italystar43-45.co.uk

Tom Pierce is looking for fellow former Royal Engineer, **LCpl Neil Sutcliffe**, who he served with in Plant Troop on the Pacific atoll of Christmas Island from 1956-1957. Contact Bob Aslett on 01395 264940 or by email at branston@talktalk.net

Former Royal Engineer Sgt John Chamberlain is looking for **ex-sapper David Joseph Chapple**. They served together with 48 Field Sqn, Royal Engineers in Ripon, Yorkshire between 1963 and 1967 before Chapple left the Army and went to work for GCHQ in Cheltenham. Contact John on 01634 301281.

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Picture: Graeme Main

Dull prospects: Rising accommodation costs and lower standards of housing stock are leading British Army personnel to feel gloomy about the years ahead

Storm brewing over future living standards

AS WE move into the Army Families Federation's 30th anniversary year I have to ask if the future has ever seemed more demoralising.

Every couple of weeks some announcement has inflicted another blow to our Armed Forces.

Pay freezes, allowance cuts, pension reviews and redundancies are the headlines, but more uncertainty and feeling undervalued have also led Service families to question what's around the corner.

Prospects are equally grim for the next few years: officials continue to see the best of a bad situation, yet we are heading towards the twin pitfalls of lower pay and no obvious improvement to conditions with our eyes open.

If you survive the continuing redundancy tranches there are a host of other challenges to face.

The Office for Budget Responsibility's own figures demonstrate that private soldiers can expect their "real" pay to be worth £1,306 less in 2014 – with WO1s £3,363 down.

I see a wave of discontent growing as families see accommodation costs rising, yet investment in housing falling.

In my darker moments I think it might even be a strategy to ensure there are sufficient volunteers for redundancy.

Despite being reminded that this is the "toughest economic climate in a generation", I along with many British Army families find it difficult not to be offended by this threat to our lifestyle.

How does this square with the Military Covenant, if at all?

It is saddening to see how little has changed since Kipling wrote about soldiers coming home from a previous foreign campaign of someone else's choosing: "O it's Tommy this an' Tommy that an' Tommy go away. But it's 'thank you, Mister Atkins', when the band begins to play."

Soldiers must be protected in both the good times and the bad.

Yet the recently announced pay cap leaves me wondering whether the covenant is only observed when convenient.

The community does not feel valued today and initiatives like the pause in expenditure on housing make the situation worse.

Our already failing stock cannot afford to be left to decline; the future costs to put it right will be so much greater.

The financially questionable rush home from Germany, which in order to succeed requires exactly the sort of huge capital expenditure we cannot afford, has led to the farcical situation facing the unit posted back to Abingdon.

They are to be quartered an hour away at Arborfield due to insufficient housing supply. I fear this is just the tip of a very large iceberg.

With these black clouds of impending doom massing it would be easy to roll over.

But we owe it to our Servicemen and

women to fight as hard for them as they have for their country and so our organisation liaises with the Ministry of Defence, Army command and equally importantly the media to ensure that feelings of our families – and soldiers themselves – are known.

‘Many Army families find it difficult not to be offended by this threat to our lifestyle’

The Army Families Federation is relied upon by senior command to give an honest "unstaffed" view and ground truth, however unpalatable it might be.

By contacting your local coordinator you can be sure that we will continue to give them an unabridged account of what the Service community really thinks.

Without the volume of your comments we are just another whining voice asking for money; with them we provide tangible and reliable evidence to influence policy.

Since its humble foundations three decades ago this federation has grown to become a serious lobbying group, listened to and respected by all.

From the local successes of our coordinators to fighting for the Continuity of Education Allowance, we remind those at the top that even though the Army cannot strike and has no official grass roots voice, families can see through the spin to a systematic erosion of the package.

As Kipling said: "An' Tommy ain't a bloomin' fool – you bet that Tommy sees!" ■

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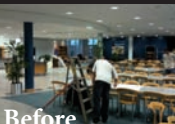
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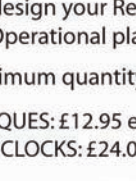
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soldier REVIEWS

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JANUARY'S FRESH START

P76 MOVIES **HAPPY HOLIDAYS**

P78 GAMES **BRIGHT SKIES**

P80 MUSIC **AMY'S NEW TUNES**

P82 BOOKS **NOVEL IDEA**

P84 TOP GEAR **READY TO RUN**



Hormonal horrors:
The Inbetweeners Movie is available on Blu-ray, DVD and digital download format

Adolescent angst

Outrageous teenagers make big screen debut with suprisingly nostalgic result

Review: Joe Clapson

FOR those well versed in the awkward, exaggerative, female-obsessed *Inbetweeners* foursome of the television screen, this film will not disappoint.

But viewers coming to the movie fresh should prepare themselves to be whipped-up in a whirlwind of misguided testosterone, faeces and teenage bodily fluid.

Despite featuring base humour and immature acts of sexual deviance from the "pussy patrol", *The Inbetweeners Movie* is hilarious because it accurately chronicles what can happen during lads' holidays.

Straight after their A-level exams, the not-so-cool clique that is Will (Simon Bird), Jay (James Buckley), Neil (Blake Harrison) and Simon (Joe Thomas) head to Malia in Crete on a mission to satisfy their pent-up urges.

From the outset, viewers are painfully aware of just how grubby Jay is as he finds a somewhat unusual use for cooked ham under the instruction of a woman he meets on the internet.

Will is the same nerd we all know and love, and

unsurprisingly he still hasn't shaken off his geeky school persona.

And we also see that Neil, although lacking in the academic department, is clearly years ahead of his friends when it comes to sexual experience – evident when he entertains a tattooed pensioner in his bedroom.

During the naive boys' first holiday away from their parents they make the same mistakes as every other know-it-all school leaver, prompting frequent audience cries of "I know someone who did that".

When the airport transfer bus pulls up at the teenagers' "hotel" they are faced with a dilapidated high-rise building and a man holding a dead dog.

The standards of the establishment are obvious when the lads are then informed that there is a 50 Euro charge for defecating on the floor.

But as we know too well, it is out on the town that this group is looking to make their mark.

The stand-out moment of a film packed with memorable one-liners comes in the form of a dance sequence initiated by Neil in a bid to impress some ladies.

Needless to say the whole affair is toe-curling and Will, in one of his many pairs of beige chinos, is spectacularly bad.

Scriptwriters Iain Morris and Damon Beesley have inserted a few predictable gags, including the moment a penis is etched on Will's back in sunscreen, but these don't detract from the film.

The storyline involving four girls – Alison (Laura Haddock), Lucy (Tamla Kari), Lisa (Jessica Knappett) and Jane (Lydia Rose Bewley) – provides a pleasing end just when you think you might get short-changed.

There are also poignant moments reflecting the true friendship between these schoolmates, particularly when Jay realises that Simon is heading to university.

His dream of setting up a business with his pal selling car stereos to Premier League footballers is well and truly over, as indeed their boyhood years might be.

From learning the hard way that a bidet is not for solids, to acknowledging the fragility of friendships, this eye-wateringly funny film highlights the coming of age of four boys.

And although maybe not one to watch with your grandma, it is certainly a must see for anyone who is – or once was – single on their first holiday without their parents. ■

● *The Inbetweeners Movie* is out now

From a mega mockumentary to a mutated circus clown, *Soldier* checks out the latest DVD releases...

Rare Exports: A Christmas Tale

THIS truly has to be one of the most bizarre festive films I've ever seen. Set in Finland, a mining company drilling into a mountain discover the grave site of the "real" Santa Claus. This version of Father Christmas isn't the jolly old chap we all know, but in fact something akin to the devil who eats anyone being naughty. Naturally, everyone is ill-behaved. This evil Santa has helpers in the form of hundreds of naked, long-haired men who run around stealing kids and generally killing everyone. The hero is a little boy who, having done his research, convinces his dad they should blow the old man up. Bizarre!



Rodge Tapply, ex-RE

Faces in the Crowd out now

A RUN-OF-THE-MILL thriller is elevated by an intriguing premise here. After surviving a serial killer's attack, **Milla Jovovich's** character suffers from face blindness and cannot recognise her foe. Take away that strange condition and you will have seen this film a hundred times before. It does have a genuinely creepy thread running through it as the faces of her friends change every time she sees them, but this also serves to be extremely confusing. Poor acting, dodgy effects and a ridiculous beard – which remarkably becomes a major plot point – combine to make this a very average film.



Cpl Jools Finch, MPGS

Troll Hunter out now

THIS low-budget independent movie made in 2010 was brilliantly filmed on location in Norway in a "mockumentary" style. It follows three student filmmakers investigating a string of mysterious bear killings. After interviewing several people they meet a strange man who informs them that there are weird creatures living in the Scandinavian forests and mountains. He then reveals that he is actually a troll hunter keeping a government secret. With some good camera work and computer-generated imagery, this title is great to watch if you enjoy horror or fantasy films such as *The Blair Witch Project*.



Dan Crowder, civvy



Woeful womanisers: The antics of *The Inbetweeners* has transferred successfully to the big screen with some genuine laugh-out-loud moments

Five Minarets in New York out now

A SLICKLY-choreographed opening firefight belies the serious messages this film attempts to convey. Turkey has dispatched two cops to New York to collect a terrorist the FBI has arrested. This transaction seems straightforward until the criminal is sprung from custody en route to the airport. The bureau is unsurprisingly miffed by this embarrassment, likewise the two Turks. During the repatriation mission they start to realise that their "terrorist" may be a man of peace and that their nation has been duped. Sub-plots to the main narrative pit confessions from torture against an incorrect belief that Islam represents violence. Powerful.

Capt Neil Johnson, AAC



Elite Squad: The Enemy Within

SET 13 years after the events of the first film, this feature is a massive improvement on its predecessor. It revolves around the maturing of a former captain, now a lieutenant colonel, who after a disastrous operation during a prison riot, gets caught in a bloody political battle with the government and paramilitary groups. The movie is semi-fictional and focuses on the special military police in Brazil and their explosive relationship with the country's politicians and death squads. With a very solid plot and some fantastic special effects, this is definitely one worth watching.

Dan Crowder, civvy



Assassin: City Under Siege out now

THERE are not really any assassins in this movie but a city is sort of under siege. It is a fairly straightforward superhero origin film masquerading as a Hong Kong action flick. **Aaron Kwok** stars as Sunny, a circus clown who becomes infected with a biochemical virus that mutates him and his friends into superhuman beings. Borrowing liberally from the likes of *Batman*, *Spiderman* and even *The Terminator*, all the usual stereotypes are present and correct. Having said that, it was very enjoyable to watch. With its tongue firmly in cheek, special effects and winning characters, the feature provided solid entertainment with some genuine laugh-out-loud moments.

Cpl Jools Finch, MPGS





Sure-fire hit: *The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim* takes gaming to a new level with its improved artificial intelligence capabilities

The sky's the limit

Developers Bethesda hit new heights in stunning addition to *Elder Scrolls* saga

Review: Cpl Mike O'Neill, RLC

THERE is no doubt that the fifth instalment in Bethesda's hugely popular *Elder Scrolls* series is a great game.

Skyrim is the classic role-player of its time and with around 300 hours of nail-biting adventures to work through, its vast potential is undoubted and truly enormous.

After playing for more than three hours and, having killed my first dragon, I soon realised what an amazing experience it is.

Like all *Elder Scrolls* titles you start life as a prisoner and character creation is again part of the escape plan.

The story soon runs away like a fast flowing river and you are swept along with it.

Before long you assume the guise of Dragonborn, who is able to absorb the almighty power of dragons by killing them, but I won't spoil the plot any further.

In *Skyrim* you have the ability to dual wield not only weapons but magic.

Therefore you can dungeon crawl with one hand blasting fire into your enemies' faces while

the other shoots arcs of lightning to electrify them. It truly has to be seen.

On the whole, the combat is fluid and has been improved greatly from previous offerings.

Seasoned veterans of the series who are used to moving backwards while swinging at the enemy will soon realise this simple but effective tactic no longer works.

Standing and fighting using skills like blocks and power attacks are now the way forward thanks to the game's artificial intelligence.

These features have also created a total overhaul in the enemy's approach and if you are not careful you can easily be outflanked.

I found myself shooting a bow at a bandit only to find his mates had come around the back of me – all four of them.

A basic crafting system has been added to provide a welcome sideline should you ever get bored of the action.

Raw materials found out on the ground can be harvested to improve your weapons and armour, while also making new items. And as your skill level in this sacred art gets better you can craft further goodies.

A lot of thought and detail has been invested in this element of the game and it is a welcome

addition to the fold, but it seems as though some of these ideas have been borrowed from titles such as *World of Warcraft*, which is not necessarily a bad thing.

The Xbox graphics have coped well with the upgrades, being the ageing machine that it is, but I envisage those who have a powerful gaming desktop/laptop will find it a beautiful piece of artwork and a pleasure to play.

A brief spot of online research revealed there were more than 2,000 downloadable mods to the PC version in the week of release. That's quite a busy fan base.

If role-playing games are your thing then I can't recommend this enough, whatever platform you play it on.

In summary, this is a superb offering that is well made and produced from a gaming house that has a proven track record.

Bethesda has improved greatly on the success of previous releases such as *Oblivion* and *Morrowind*, and while I tackle these new adventures I cannot help but wonder what the series' six instalment will bring to the table. ■

● ***The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim* is out now on Xbox 360, PS3 and PC**

From muscle-bound madness to Bond's golden generation, we check out the best and the rest of this month's titles...

Assassins Creed Revelations

THIS is the fourth game in the *Assassin's Creed* series and the programmers seem to have taken the best bits of the previous releases to make an addictive mix of real-time strategy, hack and slash and stealth. The weapons have been enhanced with the addition of bomb making to your lethal arsenal and there is plenty of activity to keep you occupied for quite some time. The city of Constantinople looks amazing and the addition of zip lines makes it a lot quicker to move around the landscape. The only fault comes when playing as Desmond in the animus – which is too simple and boring – but this is a minor problem in an immersive game.

Sgt Wallace Stephenson, Int Corps



WWE 12 for all formats

THE back cover of this offering states it is "bigger, badder and better". To be honest, big and bad would be a more accurate description of this year's instalment of the *WWE* series. Mediocre graphics and over-simplified controls combine to provide a less than satisfying experience. Add to that a reversal system that is impossible to master and it's easy to get frustrated. On a more positive note, there is a wealth of single and multiplayer options to keep you busy and the game boasts a large roster of stars to choose from. This will have a lot to offer for fans of *WWE* but anyone else should think twice before buying.

Stephen Smith, MoD Corsham



Goldeneye Reloaded for PS3 and Xbox

IT is nice to see a title that was adored on the Nintendo 64 brought up to date for the Xbox 360. The graphics, sound and game engine are of the highest quality and I was hooked from the moment I started. The story is the same as the original, with a few added bonuses, and the two-player split screen is great fun. But beware, as soon as you opt for the four-way mode the graphics suffer. The characters range from Jaws and Goldfinger to Scaramanga and Bond and if you like *Call Of Duty* you will love this. Overall the game looks great, feels authentic and is jam-packed with everything you would expect from a 007 adventure.

Cpl Neil Holbourn, R Signals





Enduring appeal: *The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim* boasts more than 300 hours of breathtaking action and adventure that will keep hardened gamers entertained

Saints Row The Third for all formats

THIS is a dirty, violent and well-worth playing game. It is no *Grand Theft Auto* but you'll be having too much fun to notice. Graphically it leaves a little to be desired but it doesn't detract from the overall experience. The plot is not the most engaging but the sole purpose is to enjoy yourself and experiment. Ever wanted to fly a jet naked while mowing down pedestrians? Here's your chance. *Saints Row The Third* doesn't take itself seriously in any way and the tongue in cheek references to other titles should get a laugh out of most gamers. This is a fun and comedic experience that fans of Sandbox Games should play if they can't wait for *GTA 5*.

SSgt Graeme Russell, Scottish Tpt Regt



Need for Speed: The Run for all formats

ELECTRONIC Arts build on their impressive pit-lane pedigree in *Need for Speed: The Run*. This is something special and wraps a Hollywood-esque action movie plot around a racing gameplay core. It's a fantastic concept that I haven't seen before in a game from this turbo-charged genre. The basic plot sees you drive from San Francisco to New York in an array of glamorous and sexy motors. The graphics are simply outstanding and the gameplay is fast and addictive, the online options are great and I have never seen such an amazing variation of tracks in such a title before. If you are into high-octane racing games this is a must.

Sgt Rupert Frere, RLC



The Adventures of Tintin for all formats

IF you can remember the cartoon version of *Tintin* you will recall it was a bland affair. So it came as no surprise that this game is, to put it lightly, capable of reducing even the most enthusiastic gamer to the lowest depths of a waking coma. The action revolves around the ginger-quiffed boy and his dog Snowy as they navigate the world. Mechanically it's sound but there are a few issues, such as the combat, which can be cumbersome. But there is some entertainment to be had and Tintin fans will get some fun out of it. The rest of us will be too busy experiencing bizarre, dream-like sensations as we coma away for the next few months.

LCpl John Murphy, QARANC





Fond farewell: Singer Amy Winehouse showcases her range, unique tone and ability to make delightful songs on her final album

Legendary lioness

Final Winehouse album secures star's place in history as mesmerising vocalist

Review: Sarah Goldthorpe

FEW would dream of making a bigger impact on the world of music – and tabloid headlines – than Amy Winehouse did during her final years.

Messy relationships, court appearances, drug binges, alcohol dependency and enough revealed cleavage to fill any self-respecting red top to the brim, this singer has certainly been an easy target for ridicule.

But, unlike many women the lairy Londoner shared column inches with, nothing about her behaviour ever whiffed of hunger for publicity.

It was just an unfortunate accompaniment to the even more astonishing music she was making.

The vodka-glugging, tattoo-adorned rehab regular staggered in and out of the limelight seemingly unaware of the attention her social life was attracting.

But hidden beneath all this was the true essence of Winehouse – the work she unleashed upon the world.

Dark yet delightful vulnerability infiltrated every word of her lyrics while the striking voice that

resonated from her smoke-soaked lungs left jazz, Motown, soul and hip-hop solo artists everywhere running for cover.

It is against this standard that Winehouse's third and final album *Lioness: Hidden Treasures* has been released.

Following the star's death last July, her long-time musical partners Mark Ronson and Salaam Remi listened back to the various recordings she made during her all-too-swift career.

The result is a 12-track collection of previously unreleased songs and alternative versions of existing classics such as the *Back to Black* single *Tears Dry on their Own*.

Treats include *Our Day Will Come*, a reggae reworking of the classic 60s' Doo-Wop song that is already getting regular airplay.

New offering *Between the Cheats* and the original version of chart hit *Valerie* stand out, as does a collaboration with Nas, an artist she adored, and American jazz singer Tony Bennett.

Winehouse never sang a song the same way twice and this latest album reminds us of her range, unique tone but above all her ability to make delightful records.

Fans expecting 100 per cent unheard material may find the familiar tracks a frustration, but they

only serve to maintain that a song recorded twice by this superb artist is as good as new anyway.

Blogging after the star's death, Russell Brand recounted his first experience of hearing her live: "From her oddly dainty presence, that voice – a voice that seemed not to come from her but from somewhere beyond even Billie and Ella, from the font of all greatness.

"She wasn't just some hapless wannabe, yet another pissed-up nit who was never gonna make it. She was a f***ing genius."

How poignant that the singer's personality is so tangibly returned to us in this chart-topping record's lyrics and melodies, yet forever lost.

The only intolerable thing about it is the fact it has been forced to sit on shop shelves alongside the usual insipid, dead-behind-the-eyes churn from this year's *X Factor*.

If you're somehow reading this Amy, I can only apologise unreservedly. Though I suspect it will take a lot more to dissuade discerning music fans from uncovering what this album has to offer... ■

● ***Lioness: Hidden Treasures* is out now on Island Records and a £1 donation from each UK album sale will go towards the newly-created Amy Winehouse Foundation.**

From dizzying dance floor divas to a commanding comic collection, we check out the new releases...

Young Foolish Happy by Pixie Lott

PIXIE Lott returns with her follow up to *Turn It Up* and there is no denying she has talent in those vocal chords. She has range and style and her lyrics are personal and projected with feeling. The music is a smash and grab of contemporary pop while elements of RnB, dance and grime seep into the mix without losing the main objective of appealing to the mass market. Proceedings are also given a twist with cameos by **Pushy T** and **Tinchy Stryder**. This will probably be top of the playlists on many a teenager's iPod but next month it will be replaced by the next artist with a short shelf life and in reflection the verdict should be, kind of nice... ultimately forgettable.

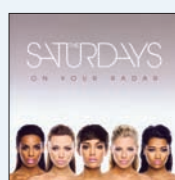
SSgt Charlie Lloyd, RLC



On Your Radar by The Saturdays

COMPARED to previous releases, the third studio album from **The Saturdays** is a much more dance-orientated offering and the formula clearly works. This is the sort of thing you can listen to almost anywhere. Add to the mix the fact the girls have shown their support for the Forces by helping launch the 2010 Poppy Appeal and performing for the families of 16 Air Assault Brigade last year and it makes it all the more easy to enjoy their music. *Notorious* and *All Fired Up* offer a strong start and the impressive standard continues throughout. All that's missing now is a number one and a visit to the troops in theatre. This is a highly-recommended purchase.

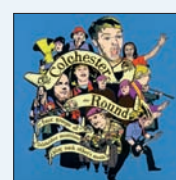
LCpl Adam Jackson, 3 Para



Colchester Round by various artists

MOVE over *X Factor*, this is the real deal. Imagine **Motorhead** pounding away to a **Beethoven** masterpiece and you get the gist. Four bands from Colchester tackle each others compositions and put their slant on proceedings. This can be a bit repetitive at times but **The Band of The Parachute Regiment**, along with their collaborators, make a good fist of it. Despite the different genres on offer each effort has a subtlety about it. Rock and mediaeval music may not be the most likely bedfellows but the guitars really provide a different perspective, as does the pomp of the military men. This may not be to everyone's liking but it does show the true colours of real musicians.

Steve King, Soldier





A legend lives on: Amy Winehouse's posthumous third album seals her legacy with a touching collection of new compositions and reworked favourites

My Life II by Mary J Blige

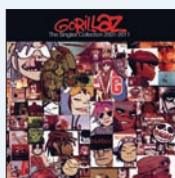
GRAMMY Award-winner **Mary J Blige** makes an exceptional return to the mainstream on new album *My Life II*. Her vocals are strong and forceful and the beats and rhythm are just brilliant. This offering features a selection of classic tracks – which still sound amazing – alongside some impressive new material. A number of guest artists come together to provide the customary rap interludes but it is the unique voice of the star performer that ultimately shines through. The tracks are all superb and it is difficult to name an overall favourite. The only downside is the bad language but, on the whole, this is a great album that is jam-packed with catchy and soulful RnB songs.



Kim Cresswell, Army wife

The Singles Collection by Gorillaz

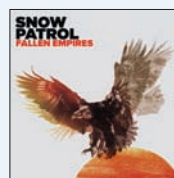
ANIMATED pop stars **Gorillaz** celebrate a triumphant run of chart success on this inspired selection of hit singles from the past decade. The stunning videos that accompany the tracks often detract from the superb music produced by **Damon Albarn** et al, but this album leaves you in no doubt as to the band's enduring quality. The brilliant *Dirty Harry* fuses choir singing with hip-hop while *Dare* – which was painful listening when first released – has aged considerably well. The two remix offerings late on spoil proceedings slightly, but overall this is a stunning tribute to a group that has consistently pushed the boundaries over the course of an impressive ten-year spell.



Richard Long, Soldier

Fallen Empires by Snow Patrol

ROCKERS **Snow Patrol** have boasted about a proud change of direction on their sixth studio album *Fallen Empires*. But fans of their middle-of-the-road and comfortable sound should not worry too much as this new approach is anything but revolutionary. Hints of electronica and synths are far from groundbreaking but once they return to what they do best there is some enjoyment to be found. The single *This Isn't Everything You Are* and *Those Distant Bells* hark back to the good old days, while *New York* and *In The End* add to the catalogue of stadium anthems. These tracks play to the band's tried and tested formula and simply highlight the fact that change isn't always a good thing.



Andrew Simms, Soldier



National history: *Death of Kings*, published by HarperCollins, is the latest offering from celebrated author Bernard Cornwell

Educating England

Bernard Cornwell switches to Saxon storytelling but insists Sharpe will march again

Interview: Sharon Kean

HAVING established charismatic soldier Richard Sharpe as one of the UK's most popular men in uniform, the temptation and financial rewards for Bernard Cornwell to write exclusively about his Napoleonic Wars hero must have been immense.

However, the author has switched his attention from the character, who was played on screen by Sean Bean, in a bid to pique public interest in a different era of national history.

The acclaimed writer's new *Making of England* series transports readers back to the kingdom of Wessex during the 9th-century reign of Alfred the Great and charts bloody battles with invading Viking hordes.

"I've always found it very strange that the English have no idea where England came from," Cornwell told *Soldier*.

"We think history began in 1066. The Americans have July 4 and the French have July 14 but people assume there has always been an England. There hasn't and this is what this series of books is about – where did this country come

from and how did it start?

"I think it was very touch and go," the London-born writer explained. "There was a moment during King Alfred's reign where you could say that the Saxon society and language had been squeezed down to the Somerset marshes and we almost became Daneland."

The latest addition to the series, *Death of Kings*, has just arrived in British bookshops and its fighting-filled pages represent an ambition fulfilled for the author.

"I've always loved the Saxons, I think they are a fascinating group of people and I always knew I would like to tell this tale," Cornwell said. "But that by itself is not the story. Ten years ago I met my real father for the first time and I discovered that his family went back to the 6th century in England, so that became part of the plot."

He added: "The extraordinary thing is that this is about battles in Surrey and you don't think of that county as being a battlefield."

"England's making is a story of war – it wasn't a political process, it's a process entirely of fighting and no one knows about this wonderful tale."

Cornwell's passion for the subject matter is such that he has no imminent plans to conclude his Saxon storytelling. The same is also true in

respect of his most famous creation.

"There will be another *Sharpe*," revealed the author. "At least one more, although I don't know when. I wrote the first series nearly 30 years ago and I got him as far as Waterloo and thought that was it. But then along came the television programme and it was obvious people wanted more books."

"We got up to 1811 the second time around, so maybe next will be the Battle of Albuera. It will definitely happen, he's not dead. Sharpe will march again."

Having written about wars set centuries apart, both in America and the UK, Cornwell's interest in military history is clear.

But the novelist insists he is unlikely to focus on more contemporary campaigns.

"I can't quite imagine an Afghanistan novel, I have interest in it but it's not what I want to write about," Cornwell said.

"The thing with writing historical novels is that, on the whole, there are no ghosts. If you produce a book about the Second World War there are still plenty of people alive who remember those they lost in that conflict."

"I think you write what you like to read and for me that's historical novels." ■

From a fearless reviewer to heroic tales from Helmand, a flick through this month's literary releases...

Born Fearless by 'Big' Phil Campion

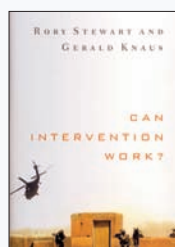
IF this book – an up close and personal look at the often murky work of private security contractors operating in the world's most dangerous regions – had been written 15 years ago it would have been a revelation. However, many memoirs have since been penned on this subject and I'm afraid that *Born Fearless* seems a bit "same old, same old". That's not to say that there aren't interesting stories within, and you can't help but admire the bravery and tenacity of the author, but after the umpteenth time of being told that he has risen from a care home to become a SAS soldier it all starts to get a bit tiresome.



WO2 Ian Barraclough, REME

Can Intervention Work?

PRESENTING a well thought-out argument which compels us to change the way we conduct interventions, this book by **Rory Stewart** and **Gerald Knaus** consists of two essays. The first deals with Afghanistan, drawing attention to why we seem unable to deliver security. The second is based on Bosnia, a supposed successful intervention. But was the success for the reasons commonly stated? This is not just an excuse to bash the military; we are tasked by the civil power and if they have not presented a cohesive plan we hold no blame. Worth a read if only for the year-by-year quotes from politicians and generals about Afghanistan.



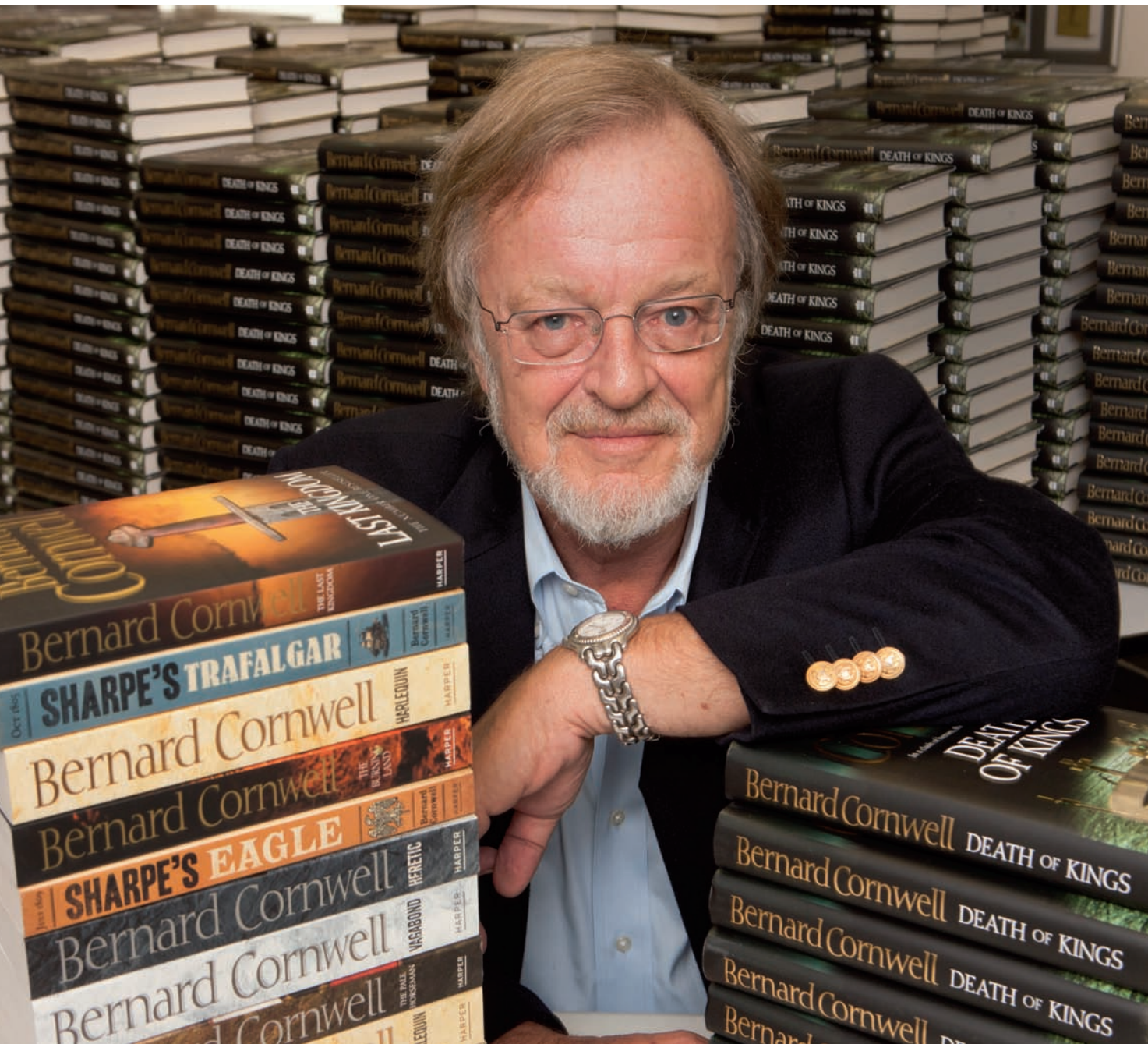
Capt Douglas Searle, RLC

Captured at the Imjin River by D Green

THIS story of **David Green's** national service with the Glosters is a sobering one, even for a generation of soldiers that has grown up fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan. A volunteer for the Korean War, he faced major battles, the loss of close friends, hardships of capture and two years incarceration in Chonsong prison camp. The title portrays beautifully the long periods of boredom interrupted by bursts of frenetic activity that any soldier will recognise, but this warts-and-all tale is aimed at Korean War or Gloster enthusiasts. An historical narrative provides some operational-level context, but more would have been better.



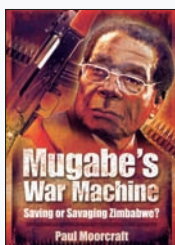
Maj Inigo Jones, MoD Main Building



Protagonist preserved: Bernard Cornwell vows his *Making of England* series will not come at the expense of his most famous creation, Richard Sharpe

Mugabe's War Machine by P Moorcraft

PAUL Moorcraft charts the story of Robert Mugabe's rise to power after toppling the white government of Ian Smith in Rhodesia. Feted as Zimbabwe's saviour, the leader initially cleaned up policing, improved education and strove towards a professional military with the aid of British mentoring teams. Following Mugabe's first term in power, political in-fighting and tribal disputes began to destabilise Zimbabwe leading to corruption, hyperinflation and widespread atrocities. This is a very well researched offering but with the ZNA, ZANLA, ZIPA, ZIPRA, ZANU and ZAPU to deal with, it is often dry and confusing.



WO2 Ian Barraclough, REME

Running the Gauntlet by Luke Duffy

THE author enlisted in The Parachute Regiment at the age of 18 and served for ten years. Iraq was lawless and in turmoil at the end of the Gulf War and Western construction firms, contracted to rebuild the infrastructure, did so under endless insurgent attacks. Security companies, hired to provide protection, attracted ex-soldiers from around the world by offering good money and an exciting life. **Luke Duffy** joined such an organisation on leaving the Army in 2005 and found himself caught in gun battles on the streets of Iraq. This well written debut is a down to earth and realistic account. Hopefully more books will follow.



Lt Col (Retd) Dawson Pratt, R Signals

Blogging from the Battlefield

IN much the same way that we can read about the exploits of the Armed Forces during the world wars via letters and journals kept by those involved, this book by **Maj Paul Smyth** allows us to see a snapshot of life on the front line in Afghanistan.



Based on extracts taken from the *Helmand Blog*, the views of personnel from all three Services and across all ranks chart the actions of Op Herrick 11. The thoughts and feelings of those involved in firefights, the medical staff who dealt with injuries and pilots who provided air support make this a worthwhile read. Proceeds are being donated to The Royal British Legion.

Sgt Wallace Stephenson, Int Corps



Shock absorbers: After a quick warm-up, the trainers softened to perform extremely well under high pressure

Top of the league

Freerunner finds form in Service-tested trainers designed to survive 1,000 miles

Review: LCpl Aaron Palmer, RLC (V)

RIGHT out of the box, UK Gear's *PT-1000* trainers look the part. Normally when I acquire a pair of running shoes I ignore their aesthetic because, to be quite frank, there aren't many pairs that are going to boost your street cred.

However, I have to say that this footwear does look awesome.

The styling is decent and there are respectable safety features built in, such as the reflective all-round detailing.

This is barely noticeable on first inspection of the shoes but once you are out in the dark nobody is likely to miss you.

Initially when running on solid surfaces, I found the sole of UK Gear's creation rather firm. But on grass, soil and gravel this allowed for less of an impact when landing on uneven ground.

Even with the harder sole, the shoes performed extremely well on the first few runs – both over two- and eight-mile trips and on and off road.

At the end of each exercise, my feet were cool with no blisters or rubbing and my legs felt better

for not having to carry a heavy pair of trainers.

As a freerunner, I initially found the grip of these shoes to be somewhat slippery on both concrete and walls.

But after a short period of warming up, the contact soon softened up and the footwear started to perform very impressively.

From a freerunning and parkour perspective, the shoes are great because they are extremely lightweight and hug the feet. This is useful for precise movements and landings, which can often be problematic in other trainers. Flips and other aerial moves can be performed with ease and jumps are helped by the reduced weight on the feet.

Impact on the ground was initially a worry for me when testing these shoes due to the firm sole, but the cushioning inside does a tremendous job of protecting the feet and legs on what can be quite heavy landings.

As with most UK Gear products, the wear resistance is good with strategically-placed hard rubber and strong canvas to protect against knocks and scrapes. This prolongs the shoe's life in general.

As an aspiring physical training instructor, I now plan to use these for both fitness work and

freerunning activities.

The latter is slightly harsher on footwear than everyday running because of the jumps, landings and climbing but so far this footwear has proven its worth when it comes to durability.

Weeks later, after a good few miles in the *PT-1000s*, I've found that the soles have worn in a bit and have softened up enough to make running on hard surfaces more pleasant.

The upper fabric is brilliant at keeping the foot cool even during the most arduous routes.

I have discovered that if I stop for a short period my feet start to warm up but as soon as I start moving again, it feels as if there is a cool breeze blowing over them – something really appreciated on those long runs.

Training to become a PTI within the TA, I think these trainers are going to help with the tough work I have ahead of me.

I'm looking forward to completing my course and seeing how they perform in that setting.

They were designed with the input of the Army Physical Training Corps so they should be perfectly suited to the task.

All in all, a brilliant pair of shoes for both fitness training and freerunning. I can't wait to get some more miles done in them. ■

A run through the formidable features of UK Gear's *PT-1000* footwear...

Research masters

THE *PT-1000s* have earned the right to bear the British Army's famous cross swords insignia after being rigorously tested by the fitness specialists at the Royal Army Physical Training Corps. They were trialled by 40 instructors, who between them ran for thousands of miles in prototypes. After eight years of development – combined with durability testing at the world-leading Satra laboratories – the footwear was deemed ready for public consumption. David Hinde, UK Gear's founder, said it was the result of a strategy to build "the world's most durable and sustainable running shoe".



Mark out of five: ★★★★★

Good science

WITH a design brief to build a shoe that makes no compromise on biomechanical performance or comfort, the footwear features UK Gear's classified "force dynamic system" using the company's own compounds and materials. It includes a Dureva midsole – a material with a unique molecular structure that is only found in UK Gear footwear which provides sustained cushioning and support. An antimicrobial treatment also works to inhibit the growth of bacteria, fungus and other odour-causing organisms, increasing the shoe's hygiene and lifespan.



Mark out of five: ★★★★★

All-terrain tolerance

A SHOE that is built to last but does not look after its wearer's comfort is useless. UK Gear has recognised that with this design, which is anatomically shaped around the heel and ankle to improve fit and to help prevent Achilles tendonitis. A removable ethylene vinyl acetate sock liner reinforces the trainer, while the top front area features a breathable material called hawk air mesh. This provides first-class upper support and temperature control. Inside the *PT-1000s*, impact pads claim to give "sustained cushioning". And they do, keeping the body pain-free on impact with the ground.



Mark out of five: ★★★★★



Running free: Physical training instructor hopeful LCpl Aaron Palmer is looking forward to covering more miles in the lightweight and cooling *PT-1000* trainers

Handsome head-turners

DESPITE being built like a tank, these trainers do not let themselves down in the looks department. "On unwrapping the *PT-1000s* I was genuinely surprised at how good they looked," said LCpl Palmer. "Aesthetics don't usually bother me but I won't complain when my footwear looks decent." As well as turning heads with their red and black pattern, the shoe's 360-degree reflectivity enhances visibility when used in the dark. This increases safety when running at night. The back heel is higher than most trail shoes, and does look different in comparison, but this is to prevent ankle twists.



Mark out of five: ★★★★★

Champion performance

THIS is the first footwear specifically designed to stand up to 1,000 miles of running. However, the shoes have not been built heavy and bulky to achieve that aim. Although initially stiff, they mould to the feet quickly after a few runs and are very lightweight. They are quick to dry after a day out on the trails in deep puddles and also perform well on rugged terrain – including grass, Tarmac and the dust of Afghanistan. "For freerunners these shoes are comfortable, durable and reliable," said LCpl Palmer. "I was impressed and think they will definitely last a long time."



Mark out of five: ★★★★★

Win... a pair of *PT-1000* trainers

SOLDIER has teamed up with UK Gear to give away a pair of *PT-1000* road and trail running shoes to one lucky reader. For your chance to win this month's top gear, tell us the name and rank of the soldier who reviewed the running shoes. Answers on a postcard to the usual address or by email to comps@soldiermagazine.co.uk. The high-performance sportswear manufacturer is also offering a 30 per cent discount on all its products to Servicemen and women. To take advantage of this deal, visit www.ukgear.com and use the code "MILITARY30" when placing an order.



Competition closing date: January 31



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Picture: Graeme Main



RUNNING COOL: ARMY STARS
HIT THE AUSTRIAN SLOPES FOR
SNOWBOARDING SHOWDOWN

Boarders take flight

Riders hit the breathtaking Austrian slopes on quest for Army championship glory

Interviews: Richard Long
Picture: Graeme Main

THE landscape of Army winter sports has traditionally been dominated by the ski stars who have taken to the snow-kissed slopes in their own unique style.

But a new discipline is rapidly emerging from these mighty shadows and with more and more athletes joining the fold each year, it has become one of the fastest growing pursuits in the Service.

Snowboarding is proving to be a major draw for troops seeking adrenalin-fuelled action and *SoldierSport*

caught up with the riders at the Army championships to learn more about its appeal.

"It is ideal decompression," explained Lt Col John Connelly (RLC), secretary of the Army Snowboarding Association.

"Soldiers can come away from the military environment and they are put under pressure in a completely different setting.

"The training value is immense and you can see young guys growing in confidence.

"We have an identity with other board disciplines such as skateboarding and wakeboarding.

"Up until now people were disaffected with winter sports, it was two planks and nothing else.

"Now there is no excuse not to get out there and find something that matches your mindset.

"Alpine skiing has been the traditional fabric of Army winter sports. My aspiration is to push our event to the same level so people cannot imagine not having snowboarding around."

The Service set-up has recently been restructured to produce more elite riders, while also allowing emerging talent to develop.

In the past, novice athletes were included in the Army championships but they are now learning their trade in corps competitions before progressing to the next level.

"This is the first year they have not been here but we have not lost that inclusive element," Connelly said. "We are trying to push more

guys towards the top end but we are hosting Exercise Snow Method later in the season.

"It is a slope-style and boarder cross competition that will see everyone from complete beginners to our best people taking part."

A total of 112 open riders took to the Stubai Glacier in Austria for this season's Army championships, with 24 female competitors also joining the fray – compared to just six the previous year.

LCpl Sarah Daffern (AMS) made her competition debut and has set her sights on further progress after what was a baptism of fire.

"I learnt to snowboard in Cyprus on the dry slopes," she said.

"I came here and had one hour to practise linking my turns before the

event got under way.

"I did okay, considering it was my first time on the snow.

"I'm on the Army wakeboarding team so the skills are quite transferable and I'm now learning how to do jumps.

"It is a brilliant sport and great fun. You can go from a beginner to being at an advanced level pretty quickly and there are lots of people on board who can help you progress."

The increasing numbers and ever-improving standards are linked to the growth of the discipline at corps level, with the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, Royal Signals and Royal Engineers proving to be particularly fruitful.

Connelly said: "We are getting more and more regiments competing and we have some really strong corps sides that are laying a huge foundation.

"They will funnel into the Service team and hopefully the Great Britain set-up as well."

The Army championships are comprised of three events – parallel giant slalom (where two riders race against each other on an identical course), boarder cross (in which competitors negotiate jumps, rollers and tightly-banked corners)

and slope-style (a contest that sees tricks performed over a series of jumps and obstacles).

Capt James Scott (KRH) finished third in the slalom and spoke glowingly of the efforts made by those organising the contest.

"They have done a great job and have compensated for the lack of resources with a tremendous amount of hard work," the skilled rider explained.

"The guys love it. Young soldiers see this as cool, where as skiing is often seen as an officers' pursuit.

"A lot of Service personnel do not even try snowboarding until they join the Army.

"This gives them the chance to do what they want and they really enjoy it."

While some corps have fully embraced the sport's emergence, others are still playing catch-up.

Capt Ben Obese-Jecty (Yorks) was frustrated in his attempts to assemble an Infantry team but believes there is definite potential among the ranks.

"I sent out briefing notes to try and get more people involved but they use the excuse that we are too busy," he explained.

"There are 36 battalions within the corps so that means we have the potential to form 36 teams.

"Infantry skiing is very well established but for some reason snowboarding does not have the same mass appeal.

"But I think it is an attractive

prospect for our younger soldiers and in modern pop culture it gets a lot of exposure.

"Maybe they do not realise it is here within the Army and as a sport it is not that expensive."

Olympic hopeful Capt Simon Nicholson (REME) won the opening two events in the men's competition, with Sgt Sarah Marriott (RAMC, pictured right in pink) matching the feat in the women's contest.

The final results and standings from the championships will appear in next month's issue.

For more news and information on snowboarding and the Army Winter Sports Association visit www.awsa.org.uk ■

'There is no excuse not to get out there and find something that matches your mindset'

'Young soldiers see this as cool, where as skiing is often seen as an officers' pursuit'



“IT IS A BRILLIANT SPORT AND GREAT FUN. YOU CAN GO FROM A BEGINNER TO BEING AT AN ADVANCED LEVEL PRETTY QUICKLY”

– LCPL SARAH DAFFERN (AMS)



War of attrition: The Army Under-23 side battled their way to a slender 10-5 win over the Royal Air Force in their opening Inter-Services fixture at Aldershot

New breed claim Services crown

Report: Richard Long
Pictures: Graeme Main

ARMY rugby's young guns found a clinical edge in challenging wintry conditions to sink the Royal Navy and reclaim their Inter-Services title.

Driving rain and strong winds provided the backdrop for the tournament decider and the Reds proved to be true masters of the elements as they ran in three tries in what was a resounding 24-9 win.

Skipper LCpl Matt Bowman (REME, pictured right), Pte Semi Lave (RLC) and Spr Nick Ash (RE) all crossed for the Army and with the Senior Service only troubling the scoreboard via the boot of AB Aaron Lewis, the result was never in doubt.

Points were at a premium in the Under-23s' opening fixture against the Royal Air Force and after battling their way to a 10-5 victory they travelled to Portsmouth to face the defending champions on their home turf.

Bowman settled any early nerves when he cut through the static Navy line to score from a tapped penalty.

Fullback Pte Lawrence Wadham (2 PWRR) kicked the extras with a superb effort from out wide before Lewis reduced the arrears with his first penalty of the evening.

But the Army continued on the front foot and scored the try of the match shortly before the half-hour mark.

A Navy clearance found touch on the right and a quick line out from

Wadham found LCpl Raymond Bishop (1 R Welsh) infield.

The winger burst through a host of tacklers and spun the ball to Lave, whose electric pace left the home defence in tatters as he flew to the line.

Wadham kicked the extras to extend the lead and with Lewis continuing his fine form with the boot, the Army held a 14-9 advantage at the interval.

With the weather deteriorating in the

second period unforced errors became commonplace as both sides struggled.

The hosts created the better of the chances early on but Lewis lost his accuracy in the howling wind as two relatively easy kicks sailed wide.

Wadham added some welcome points for the Reds with a penalty after 60 minutes and replacement Ash sealed the win with a late try following good work by Lave.

The outstanding Bowman led from the front and his strong showing will make him an undoubted contender for the senior side ahead of this year's Inter-Services.

Lave and Bishop proved to be sublime attacking threats on the wings, while Wadham was calm and composed at fullback.

"We are absolutely delighted," team manager Maj Greg Ehlen (AGC) told *SoldierSport* after the win.

"The value of our training camp and the ethos of the boys really shone through.

"The Navy clawed themselves back to within one score and they put us under real pressure in the second half. But we stuck to our patterns with discipline and found our attacking feet once again.

"These are always hard physical encounters but they are played in the right way.

"We knew we were in for a battle but our team spirit was absolutely first rate and that saw us through." ■



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Not For The Ordinary

Fraser's field of dreams

Service's cycling star takes to the road on quest to qualify for Olympic spectacular

Interview: Richard Long

WITH Great Britain's cyclists dominating the field at the 2008 Olympics they can rightly expect the very best in terms of funding and coaching ahead of this year's Games.

For athletes such as Victoria Pendleton and Sir Chris Hoy a ticket to the sporting extravaganza of 2012 is a near certainty, but for those less fortunate the path to London is far from smooth.

Army sensation Maj Claire Fraser (RA) is one such competitor and her bid to earn Guyana a place in the road race and time trial disciplines is proving to be one of the biggest challenges of her career.

The 33-year-old began her quest at the Pan American Cycling Championships last year but she missed out on an automatic qualification spot in a strong field that included rivals from the USA, Canada and Colombia.

She then competed at the World Championships in Denmark, where she was again denied.

Fraser's hopes now rest in a gruelling qualifying series that will see her racing at competitions around the globe in an effort to secure the points needed to realise her Olympic dream.

"On every start line there will be about 200 women and they are all chasing the top eight spots," the officer told *SoldierSport*.

"You have to accumulate enough points to qualify for the Games. From these events the top 100 riders earn a slot for their country.

"To be in the top 100 you need to gain 120 points, which means you have to compete in a fair few races.

"It is far easier if you are in a big team but Guyana only has me and I'm not winning at the moment. Every time

I race I set a new personal best but it is a very complicated system, which it should be as the Olympics are such a big deal.

"It would be nice if they just set a course and you achieve a qualifying time, like in athletics or swimming."

Fraser appointed a new coach last year to help boost her campaign and is also hoping to secure a place on a Union Cycliste Internationale registered team.

She added: "I don't want to get my hopes up.

"To be in a team environment means all the support is there for you, if I am on my own I have to pay to have those people.

"The race calendar for 2012 is out now but as I am not part of a professional set-up places are like gold dust. So I have to contact the race organisers and ask for a place.

"There are lots of events and lots of opportunities. There is a chance to compete in New Zealand and South America, which is very appealing, and there is also the tour of Thailand.

"We have just had a rest period and I'm now coming back, I am itching to get on the bike.

"I am feeling very strong, I have done a lot of strength and conditioning work and I feel so much better for it.

"If my place in the team comes off that will put me in a good position."

Fraser qualifies to race for Guyana through her father and she visits family in the country on a regular basis.

"At a lot of races people look at my shirt and ask where Guyana is. So I'm not only representing them in sport, but I'm representing them as a country," she said.

"We are desperately trying to grow cycling there and the more people who come forward and race, the more talent we will have coming through.

"We only have three other women who cycle and if we can get others involved that would be great."

The aspiring Olympian has also been quick to praise the backing received from the Service and believes her efforts to date could not have been possible without such help.

"The Army support has been

unbelievable," she explained. "I am in full-time training now but when I was at work they were incredibly flexible.

"When you are not at work you feel as though you

should be there, but being able to train full-time is just amazing."

With such a tough task ahead, Fraser remains focused on the short term. However, the possibility of competing at the greatest sporting event on the planet is something that clearly excites the cyclist.

"For me it is tinged with hope, anticipation and wanting to be part of it," she explained.

"If I don't get there I'm not sure how I will feel.

"I was brought up in London and the Olympic site is within touching distance of my parents' house.

"Just to get there would be amazing. In the road race if you ride at a certain distance at the back, or if you get lapped, you may get pulled out. So if I make it to the start line I want to finish.

"I have had a look at the route and I know parts of it well, it seems like a good course but it will be tough. At the Olympics you expect nothing less." ■

"When you are not at work you feel as if you should be there, but being able to train full-time is just amazing"



CYCLING'S SUCCESS STORY

2007: Fraser's main focus is on triathlon and she competes at the European and World Long Distance Championships, racing for Great Britain at age group level.

2008: The officer gets her first opportunity to represent Guyana and begins cycling in earnest, moving up to a category three licence.

2009: Finishes 11th in the time trial and eighth on the road at the Caribbean Road Race Championships in Barbados and also takes part in first elite triathlon in Puerto Rico.

2010: Achieves category two licence and races at the Central American, Caribbean and Commonwealth Games. Fails to hit top form as a bad chest infection impacts on performance but the experience holds her in good stead for winter training programme.

2011: Fraser competes at the Pan American Cycling Championships in Colombia against athletes from the USA, Canada and South America. In September she gains further top-flight experience by taking to the saddle at the World Championships in Denmark.





Hemispheres unite in Services support

Report: Richard Long
Pictures: Graeme Main

AS a member of New Zealand's World Cup-winning squad, Adam Thomson had a year to remember in 2011.

And last month he added another notable victory to his personal highlights reel as he guided the Southern Hemisphere to glory in the Heroes Rugby Challenge at Twickenham Stadium. While the 36-22 triumph

offered a superb sporting spectacle to a near 30,000-strong crowd, the real winners on the afternoon were Help for Heroes.

The clash with the Northern Hemisphere, combined with proceeds from the inaugural charity match in 2008, took Rugby Union's fund-raising total past the £2 million mark and some of the sport's biggest names were on hand to back such a worthy cause.

England legends Lawrence Dallaglio and Jason Leonard managed a home side that included fellow 2003 World Cup winners Will Greenwood and Danny Grewcock, while their rivals from the south boasted South African star AJ Venter and Australians Joe Roff and Phil Waugh.

The match also saw the all-conquering Army team strongly represented in the shape of Cpl Ceri Cummings (REME, pictured left), LCpl Matt Dwyer (WG) and LBdr Ifereimi Boladau (RA).

And it was the north that struck first

blood courtesy of Saracens hooker Scott Spurling.

Fly half Nils Mordt boomed a cross-field kick from deep inside his own half to Tom Gleeson on the left wing and the Munster man guided the ball to Spurling, who sidestepped Roff and sprinted home from 60 metres before Cummings added the extras.

Thomson fired an immediate response when South African Andries Strauss gathered from the restart and offloaded to the onrushing flanker, who smashed through a lightweight defence to score under the posts.

Sias Ebersohn extended the lead from a penalty and then played a key role in his side's second try.

The South African Under-21 sensation broke clear down the left before playing the ball inside to

compatriot Pieter Van Vuuren, who fed Jackson Willison for an easy score.

Cummings slotted a penalty to keep the north within touching distance but Cpl Inus Ras, of the South African National Defence Force, ensured the south finished the first period on top when he bundled home on the stroke of half-time.

Royal Navy wing Josh Drauniniu joined the action in the second period and the flying winger ghosted home as the Southern Hemisphere maintained their advantage.

Centres Greenwood and Gleeson combined to reduce the arrears before Van Vuuren capitalised on a gaping hole in the home defence for an easy try with just minutes remaining.

Cummings was on the end of a flowing passing move involving Greenwood and Rugby League stalwart

"The players have gone away thinking they have done something incredibly positive"

Heroes Rugby Challenge in numbers

12

POINTS SCORED BY CPL CERI CUMMINGS, WHO KICKED TWO CONVERSIONS AND A PENALTY BEFORE CROSSING FOR A TRY

2

THE TOTAL IN MILLIONS RAISED AT THE CHARITY'S TWO GAMES, WHICH HAVE ATTRACTED SOME OF RUGBY UNION'S TOP STARS

24

TEST CAPS WON BY WORLD CUP WINNER ADAM THOMSON, WHO LED THE SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE TO A 36-22 WIN



On the charge: Army powerhouse LBdr Ifereimi Boladau launches a Northern Hemisphere counter attack in the Heroes Rugby Challenge at Twickenham

Sean Long to complete the scoring at the death.

The Army fullback and teammate Boladau impressed alongside their illustrious colleagues, while Navy stars David Pascoe and Marsh Cormack, who flew home from operations in Afghanistan to take to the field, enjoyed fine afternoons.

Speaking after the game, Cummings told *SoldierSport*: "There was nothing resting on the game and I just wanted to go out there and put on a good show.

"But to play with the boys we had and against a World Cup winner in Adam Thomson was just incredible.

"I learnt so much from them and they loved being involved.

"Some of the guys turned up and all they knew was that we were playing a

charity match.

"They didn't know what it was for and it was just another game to them until we visited the Personnel Recovery and Assessment Centre at Tedworth House. From then on they realised what a good cause it is.

"The game itself was fun all the way. There was a great atmosphere and I was very happy with my performance.

"The fact I scored the last try and made the final hit of the match put things into context and reminded everyone that we are Servicemen first, sportsmen second."

Northern Hemisphere coach and former soldier Dean Ryan was thrilled to be involved in a special week that culminated in a day to remember at the world-famous Twickenham.

He said: "It is fantastic that we have been able to make this contribution.

"We have had the opportunity to go behind the scenes and understand the work of Help for Heroes and it has been a very grounding and humbling experience for all involved."

Southern Hemisphere rival Nick Mallett, who is among the favourites to replace Martin Johnson as England coach, added: "Every single player who gave up their time has gone away thinking they have done something incredibly positive for a great cause.

"It is a wonderful experience to have the north and south come together. The visit to Tedworth House was unbelievable and it was an absolute honour to be involved in such a fantastic game of rugby." ■



CAPTAIN MARVEL

HOME skipper Hugh Vyvyan was honoured to be involved in a fantastic week and was delighted to support such a worthy cause. He said: "It has been great to play alongside the Armed Forces guys as well as the older pros. I thoroughly enjoyed the game and was glad to be part of the occasion."



GLOBAL GIANT

WORLD Cup winner Adam Thomson led the south to glory after scoring his side's opening try. He said: "It is all about the badge on the chest. I thought we were coming to throw the ball around and have some fun but it was a physical game and the quality was right up there."



HEROES RETURN

WILL Greenwood headed an impressive roll-call of England legends who starred for the north. The centre was joined on the pitch by fellow World Cup winner Danny Grewcock, while Lawrence Dallaglio and Jason Leonard managed the team from the Twickenham sidelines.



Army athletes reign supreme

Service stars receive top honours after outstanding year of sporting achievement

Report: Richard Long
Pictures: Graeme Main

THE Service's all-conquering Rugby Union side added another accolade to their ever-expanding trophy haul when they were named team of the year at the Army Sports Awards.

A host of established stars and emerging athletes gathered at MoD Main Building for the annual ceremony, which celebrated another triumphant 12 months across a wide range of disciplines and events.

Victory at the International Defence Rugby Competition helped seal the award for the Reds, who also regained their Inter-Services crown with a 44-10 triumph over the Royal Navy at Twickenham.

Skipper Sgt Darrell Ball (RE) told *SoldierSport* the honour capped a tremendous year for the squad

and he hopes the fine form can be reproduced in 2012.

"It is a privilege just to be nominated, so to win is the icing on a very big cake," he added.

"It is an acknowledgement of all the hard work we have done over the season. We have set the bar very high and now have to maintain our standards at that level.

"When February comes around the guys will be hungry for another Inter-Services title and we want to show that consistency over the coming years ahead of the next Defence World Cup."

A debut appearance for the England masters team helped hockey stalwart Maj Paula Nicholas (AGC) to the sportswoman of the year title.

The officer starred for the Army in another successful Inter-Services campaign and has also developed her skills off the pitch with coaching roles in the Hampshire Under-13 and Wales Under-16 camps.

"I am completely shocked," Nicholas said on collecting her trophy. "I didn't even know I had been nominated until I got the letter through.

"It is a huge honour and privilege.

"This has been my first season with the England team and it is a wonderful experience to

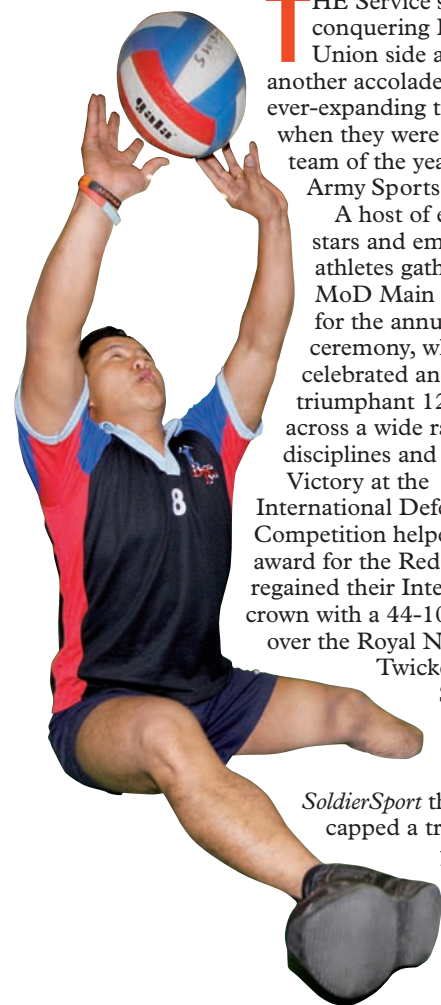
compete with such talented players.

"I am now hoping to earn a place at the world masters in August and I'm also looking forward to the Inter-Services in March."

The sportsman of the year award was presented to gliding sensation Maj Allan Tribe (REME).

The officer was unable to collect his prize due to his commitments on Op Herrick but his performances at international level, along with his efforts with the Battle Back programme, saw him triumph in a strong field.

Capt Neil Thomas (AGC) was named sports official of the year for





Top, Flying high: Sportsman of the year Maj Allan Tribe (REME). **Pitch perfect:** Maj Paula Nicholas (AGC), 2011's leading sportswoman

his tireless work in powerlifting.

The Service strongman has taken a starring role at a number of national and international events, ensuring officials conduct their duties to the highest possible standards while also being responsible for drugs testing.

"This has come as a complete surprise," Thomas said. "If I had known how much work I was letting myself in for I would have thought twice about it but the skills I have learnt during my time in the Army helped me adapt."

The event also saw the Service honour outstanding performances in adaptive sport for the first time.

LCpl Netra Rana (1 RGR) was presented with the award following his successes in sitting volleyball.

Over the past 12 months the lower leg amputee helped the Battle Back team reach the national play-offs and represented Great Britain at the European Championships.

He is now pushing for a place at the Paralympics later this year.

Rana told *SoldierSport*: "I was not expecting this award and it was a surprise just to be nominated."

"I have improved a lot in the past year. I have been very busy with different tournaments and I now have almost 20 British caps to my name."

"The Paralympics are a once in a lifetime opportunity for us and as a team we all want to do well for our families and friends." ■



Driving force: Women's skipper Maj Rachael Cooper (RA) fires the Army to Inter-Services success

Ruthless Reds march on

Report: Richard Long

THE Army women continued their domination of the Inter-Services indoor hockey championships as they steamrolled their Forces rivals en route to a 15th successive title.

A four-minute hat-trick from OCdt Gemma Darrington was the highlight of a convincing 8-0 romp over the Royal Navy in the Reds' opening match.

The attacking ace started the scoring with a penalty stroke before Capt Nic George (R Signals) fired home to double the lead.

The onslaught continued as Darrington converted from two short corners and Capt Lucy Butler (RLC), Musn Annabel Lamb (CAMUS) and Maj Rachael Cooper (RA) were also among the scorers as the Army sealed a convincing win.

Skipper Cooper maintained her fine form against the Royal Air Force with two first-half strikes and completed her hat-trick with a confident penalty stroke after the interval.

Further goals from George and WO2 Sharon Stones (REME) sealed a comfortable 5-1 victory.

Manager Maj Tracey Prowse (AGC (SPS)) was delighted with the result and praised her side for securing yet another title. She added: "We have got a fantastic squad this year and we have

played some great structured hockey.

"The team has also earned a place at the national league qualifiers on January 7 and that shows what a tremendous group they are."

"We only had a day of training ahead of the Inter-Services so we have done really well. Hopefully we can maintain that form at the qualifiers."

"This tournament gets harder and harder. We get more and more nervous each year and it becomes quite difficult as we have won it so many times."

"But we produced some quality hockey and we had three or four new players who all did well, so I'm really pleased."

While the women secured yet another crown, the men saw their hopes dashed by a crushing 8-3 defeat at the hands of the Navy.

The Senior Service sailed to a 5-0 interval-lead and despite a spirited second-half showing, the Reds slipped to an agonising defeat.

They restored some pride with an 8-5 win against the Royal Air Force, but with the Navy beating the airmen 7-2 the trophy headed to Portsmouth.

The masters team celebrated Inter-Services success thanks to an 8-4 win against the Navy and a 4-4 draw with the RAF, but the Under-23s missed out after losing 4-3 to the airmen in their tournament decider. ■

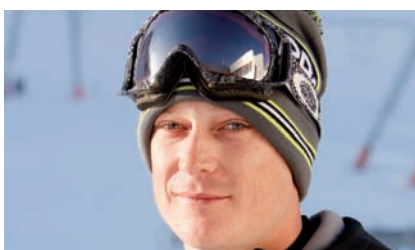
Picture: Lt Col Charles Jackman

final word



We asked soldiers competing at the Army snowboarding championships in Austria if sport and adventurous training are still relevant in an era of Service cutbacks

INTERVIEWS: RICHARD LONG
PICTURES: GRAEME MAIN



Cpl Kierran Sumner (REME)

I think this event is absolutely fantastic. When I first started in the Army a Herrick tour came around every three years and now it is two. Opportunities like this are great for morale and it is good for team building as well. If I had not been in the Army I would not have got into the sport, it is such an expensive discipline but the funding we receive helps so much.



LCpl Brian Elvidge (RLC (V))

I think sports like snowboarding are very important. It is great for morale and is a fantastic opportunity for the lads to bond. The Army has a strong reputation for delivering quality and that has to continue. These events give soldiers some much-needed downtime. Out here everyone races against one another and it is good to see a sapper or lance jack beating a captain.



Capt James Scott (KRH)

We deploy on Op Herrick 16 in March so I was quite pessimistic about getting here. Work has been thrashing us so I am delighted to be competing. There are so many attractions on civvy street and the British Army needs great incentives in order to recruit good people. Guys are asking 'what is the point in enlisting?' so sport and adventurous training are a big draw.



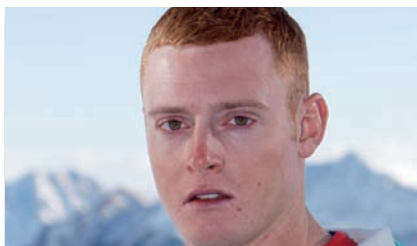
LCpl Sarah Daffern (AMS)

I am attached to the King's Royal Hussars and we are about to deploy to Afghanistan so this is a good chance to enjoy ourselves before the tour. I've always wanted to try snowboarding but I've never had the access before, so I am thankful to the Army. I was determined to get involved and compete and hopefully I'll be here next year and the year after that.



Capt Ben Obese-Jecty (Yorks)

Without opportunities such as these there is not a lot to keep the interest of the average soldier. Maintaining the X factor is extremely important for the Army and for young guys activities like snowboarding are an attractive prospect. They can progress quickly and the people at the top are looking at international competitions and the Olympics; that is a great draw.



Spr Paul Crawshaw (RE)

Sport brings the lads together and I think that is crucial for the Army. We have got a rider in the Great Britain squad so there are opportunities to progress to a high standard and you always want to push yourself. I was on a very tough tour in Afghanistan on a search team but having this on the horizon was something to look forward to. I saved my money and here I am.



LCpl Chris Maxted (REME)

When I joined the REME I heard about snowboarding and the opportunities have been great. The corps is very big on the sport and if you are good enough you have the chance to compete. You get things so much cheaper than you normally would. Sport and adventurous training encourage people to stay in the Army and knowing you can get away year after year is a huge incentive.



Sgt Christina Todd (RAMC)

We need some perks of the job. We are going to Afghanistan a lot more now and things like this are a huge boost for the guys coming back off tour. It is very important for retention and it is also a big attraction for those coming into the Service. I was asked if I wanted to give it a go. I like to try new things and it is my favourite sport so far, I just love it. The Army set-up is very good.

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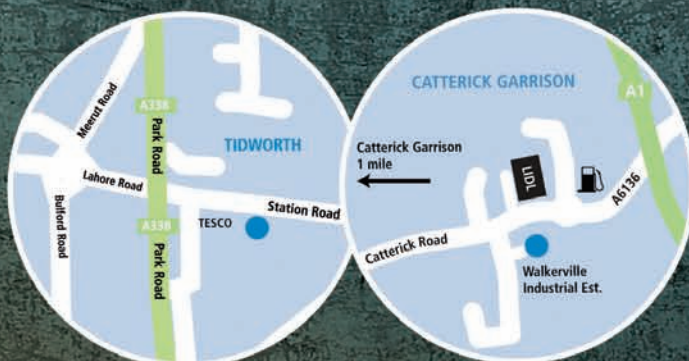
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