

2012 HOPEFULS: THREE SERVICEMEN TRAINING FOR GLORY

Defence**F**ocus

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FIFTY PER CENT PHASE

With half the Afghan population now living in transitioning areas we look at how it works



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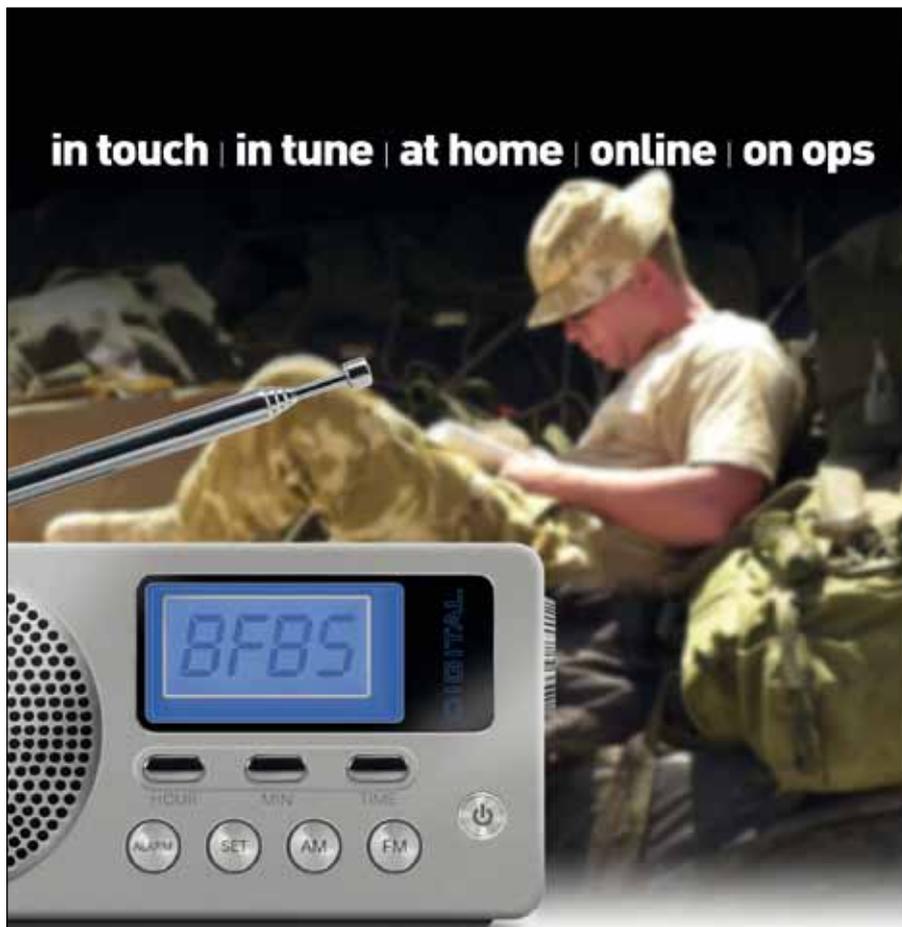
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DANNY CHAPMAN

IT'S BEEN a bad month for operations in Afghanistan. Three tragic incidents have meant that the public perception of the mission has taken a bad knock in Afghanistan, the UK and US.

In early March there was the largest loss of UK Service personnel due to enemy action in a single incident since operations began. Less than a week later a US soldier went on a rogue shooting spree killing 16 innocent Afghan civilians and then this week (end of March) two UK Servicemen were killed by a rogue member of the Afghan National Army.

Of course the biggest tragedy here is the loss of lives and the heartache for the families of those involved, be they in Afghanistan, the UK or the US. But terrible as these incidents are, do they signify any larger pattern or worsening situation?

Certainly they have not caused any change in the strategy of ISAF. Days after the first two incidents David Cameron said, standing next to Barack Obama at a joint

press conference that "recent days have reminded us how difficult our mission is and how high the cost of this war has been for Britain, for America and for the Afghans themselves," adding, "but we will not give up on this mission, because Afghanistan must never again be a safe haven for Al-Qaeda to launch attacks against us."

The goal, they reaffirmed is for Afghan forces to take full responsibility for security in 2014, adding "we won't be in a combat role after 2014."

The transition of responsibility for security to Afghan control is therefore what it's now all about.

Transition is not an easy process to understand which is why we have a feature in this issue helping to explain it. But it is a process that is well underway, indeed as our cover page states, 50 per cent of Afghanistan is now "transitioned."

I'm sure the process will stay on target and I hope, like all of us, that we see far, far less of the type of incidents we have seen over the last month.

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Picture: Cpl Al Crowe RAF

IN MEMORIAM

DEATHS ON OPERATIONS - 11 FEBRUARY 2012 TO 27 MARCH 2012



Senior Aircraftman Ryan Tomlin

Senior Aircraftman Ryan Tomlin, from 2 Squadron Royal Air Force Regiment, was killed in Afghanistan on

Monday 13 February 2012 by insurgent small arms fire during a partnered patrol to reassure and interact with the local population in Nad 'Ali district.

During his tour he

supported squadron operations out on the ground around Bastion.

Aged 21, from Hemel Hempstead, he leaves behind his mother Diane, father Kevin and sister Michelle.

SERGEANT NIGEL COUPE, CORPORAL JAKE HARTLEY, PRIVATE ANTHONY FRAMPTON, PRIVATE CHRISTOPHER KERSHAW, PRIVATE DANIEL WADE AND PRIVATE DANIEL WILFORD were killed on the border of Helmand and Kandahar provinces in Afghanistan on Tuesday 6 March 2012. They were on a patrol to dominate the area and maintain freedom of movement when their Warrior armoured fighting vehicle was struck by an improvised explosive device, resulting tragically in the deaths of all six men.



Sergeant Nigel Coupe

Sergeant Nigel Coupe, from 1st Battalion The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment, was deployed to Afghanistan attached to 3rd Battalion The Yorkshire Regiment

as a Warrior Sergeant in 7 Platoon, Corunna Company.

He served as a Warrior instructor in the UK and then as a vehicle commander, the role for which in Afghanistan his expertise was vital to ensuring the Company was

fully prepared for operations.

Aged 33, from Lytham Saint Annes, Lancashire, he leaves behind his wife Natalie, two children Ella and Jasmine, mother Elaine, father Alan, sister Linda and grandfather Roy.



Corporal Jake Hartley

Corporal Jake Hartley, from 3rd Battalion The Yorkshire Regiment, joined the Battalion in December 2008 and had a very bright future in the Army.

He was already promoting well ahead of his years, which is testament to his soldiering ability, and had an innate ability to inspire those around him and make them achieve more than they ever imagined was possible.

And his knowledge of his profession was first class.

Aged 20, from Dewsbury, West Yorkshire, he leaves behind his mother Nathalie, stepfather Mark, brother Ethan, and uncle and best friend Luke.



Private Anthony Frampton

Private Anthony Frampton, from 3rd Battalion The Yorkshire Regiment, joined the Army in 2010. In Afghanistan he was

employed as an Infantry Dismount and Warrior Gunner.

A true team player with an infectious sense of humour he possessed a real talent for Armoured Infantry gunnery.

Aged 20, from Huddersfield, he leaves behind his mother Margaret, stepfather Martin, his father Gary, sisters Gemma and Nicola, great-uncle Pat and extended family.



Private Christopher Kershaw

Private Christopher Kershaw, from 3rd Battalion The Yorkshire Regiment, joined the Battalion in September 2011 and was immediately put

on a Warrior driving cadre, thoroughly enjoying working on the Warriors where his talent for the role became evident. He also proved himself an extremely effective Light Machine Gun gunner and was subsequently selected

to fill this role on operations. He proved himself, in a very short time, to be an excellent soldier.

Aged 19, from Bradford, he leaves behind his parents Brian and Monica, and sister Sarah Louise.



Private Daniel Wade

Private Daniel Wade, from 3rd Battalion The Yorkshire Regiment, joined the Army in January 2011 and arrived in the Battalion in July 2011 where he was immediately

placed onto a Warrior driving cadre, which he passed with flying colours.

It did not take him long to establish himself as one of the best drivers in the Company.

He was also an excellent

shot and he proved himself, in a very short time, to be an excellent soldier.

Aged 20, from Warrington, he leaves behind his mother Lisa, his sister Stacey, his fiancée Emma and unborn baby Lexie.



Private Daniel Wilford

Private Daniel Wilford, from 3rd Battalion The Yorkshire Regiment, joined the battalion in April 2010.

He deployed to Canada as a Warrior Gunner in June

2011 before deploying to Afghanistan in the same role in February 2012.

He was an extremely effective Warrior gunner and had a thorough knowledge of the vehicle and its weapon systems.

He had proven himself an extremely competent soldier and was being considered for promotion.

He leaves behind his mother Diane, stepfather Paul, his brother Alex and his grandparents.



Captain Rupert Bowers

Captain Rupert Bowers, from 2nd Battalion The Mercian Regiment, was killed in Afghanistan on Wednesday 21 March 2012 by an improvised explosive device blast while

leading a patrol to clear a position of the threat of insurgents in the Nahr-e Saraj district of Helmand province.

He commanded a small team in a Forward Operating Base responsible for training

and developing members of the Afghan National Army.

Aged 24, from Wolverhampton, he leaves behind his wife Victoria, and newly-born son Hugo, as well as parents Patrick and Jane, and sister Juliet.



Sergeant Luke Taylor RM

Sergeant Luke Taylor, from the Royal Marines, was killed in Afghanistan on Monday 26 March 2012 by gunshots at the main entrance to Lashkar

Gah Main Operating Base in Helmand province.

He joined the Royal Marines in 1997 and over the course of his impressive career gathered extensive operational experience doing a job that he loved. He was

outstandingly professional, selfless, dedicated and talented, and approached everything he did with passion.

Aged 33, from Bournemouth, he leaves behind his wife Nicola and their young son Roan.



Lance Corporal Michael Foley

Lance Corporal Michael Foley, from the Adjutant General's Corps (Staff and Personnel Support), was killed in Afghanistan on

Monday 26 March 2012, in the same incident as Sergeant Luke Taylor, while manning Lashkar Gah's Main Operating Base front gate as part of the guard force.

A key member of the Task Force Helmand Headquarters

Staff he provided close support to the Commander.

Aged 25, from Burnley, he leaves behind his wife Sophie, three young children Calum, Warren and Jake, parents Craig and Debbie, sister Lisa and brother Jordan.

IN TRANSIT

WITH 50 PER CENT OF THE AFGHAN POPULATION LIVING IN AREAS OF TRANSITION, IT'S ALL CHANGE WRITES IAN CARR

Look up “transition” in the Oxford English Dictionary and it will define it as “a passing from one place, state or condition to another”. That seems fair enough, but like many things in Afghanistan, when applied to the transfer of responsibility for security, the definition is not quite so straightforward. Which is why Brigadier Tim Bevis has spent 12 months in Kabul as Director of the ISAF Transition and Assessment Group developing and refining “what we mean by transition”.

The ISAF brief describes transition as a Joint Afghan NATO Inteqal (the Dari and Pashtu word for Transition) Board, ultimately resulting in the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) taking responsibility for security. It also makes clear that transition is a lengthy process, not an event. And although working towards a full ANSF lead is not time-conditional, 31 December 2014 is concentrating the mind.

“Our model of transition,” says Brigadier Bevis, “is security with a big S, governance with a reasonable-sized G and development with a small D – development is a slower burn over a longer time frame.” The problem is – well, one of the problems is – each geographical area has a different starting point, and maybe a different end point, and a different journey to get there.”

At the beginning of his tour the Brigadier became familiar with the typical view from the ground when assessing whether an area was ready, which was, he says: “Well it’s not perfect, so I’m not ready to transition just yet”. Which, if you are not careful, can become a continuous roll to the right.” Happily, this was balanced by a strategic view which was, if you transition early, the Afghans will have longer to develop with more time to make mistakes while ISAF is still there to help.

“That’s where the stages became the answer,” said Brigadier Bevis. The stages he is referring to are the four implementation stages of transition – five if you count stage zero, the pre-transition stage. “With the four different stages it allows you to go in very early. The last year has been all about getting people into transition – and 50 per cent



Way forward: an officer from 2nd Battalion The Parachute Regiment plots a patrol route with his Afghan National Army counterpart

of the population is now under ANSF responsibility. What we are going to see over the next year is the ISAF teams working harder on managing them through the various stages, and looking at what does it really mean to reach an end.”

So what are these stages? “When you go into stage one it is really all about managing the shock of the change, and you

ameliorate things by at first not changing very much,” the Brigadier said. “You change over flags, and the coordination meetings and conferences are chaired by an ANSF guy, not an ISAF one, but actually the forces remain pretty much unchanged. The whole point of stage one is don’t go too far too fast.” In simple terms going from there through stages two, three and four

is essentially a down ramp for ISAF and an up ramp for ANSF. “You go from the point where you carry on partnering one to one until you reach the point where you only get involved in the more complex operations because they can do the simple ones themselves,” he adds.

“By the time you are getting to stage three that’s when the real changes happen because essentially you only have advisers out in the field with the ANSF. By stage four – sustain, you could say what we do is mostly behind the wire, giving high-level advice, and we only intervene, with ANSF coordination, to help in specific areas.”

The beauty of the staged approach is that the transition progress can continue with ISAF support being tailored to meet the local unit’s needs, and that input can be altered if the threat type changes. “They might be happy doing counter-narcotic clearances, but may need help doing searches,” said Brigadier Bevis.

Staging also means that the planning process can be better taken into account as it helps to target ISAF support. “There may be places where you are happy to progress, but certain bits of kit won’t be delivered for another nine months. You might feel that the police are not as mobile as they should be, you look at the programme and see that they’ve got 100 vehicles coming. As long as that plan works out that’s good enough, you don’t have to stop the process, it just means you fill in those gaps until the ANSF are ready.”

Introducing this approach also gets buy-in from the locals and helps them to focus on the problems they are facing. “You go through the transition plan with them and ask them which of these issues apply to you? They may not have problems with narcotics, some places may see themselves as not having a particular problem with insurgency even if the level of violence is high. You get them to prioritise and you agree a reasonably small list of vital tasks.”

What can be difficult is being able to interpret the situation from an Afghan point of view. Abiding views, intertribal or interethnic conflicts may cause problems, but equally local remedies that are seen as perfectly acceptable - tribal deals,

marriages, commercial arrangements - may appear odd to ISAF eyes. The mindset needed to keep transition on track tends to fly in the face of normal military staff planning. “HQ may be asking you what the timeline is for something, and you can’t give a definite answer. You may have been trying to advance things in a certain province for months, several roulements may have gone

to want to step up to the mark and take control of a situation. “But they will have to sit back and try and advise. We have to be flexible enough to let Afghans deal with things in their own way. Culturally speaking that will be hard for our people to do,” the Brigadier said. But that means that the ANSF and Afghan Government will also need to mature, and the signs



Picture: POA(Phot) Hamish Burke

“ Our model of transition is security with a big S ”

through without things progressing. Then suddenly you convince the President to change the Provincial Governor and you will do in 10 days more than has been done in the last year,” said Brigadier Bevis.

Reaching a successful conclusion to transition also depends on an Afghan-shaped interpretation of what is acceptable, rather than by judging everything through Western eyes. “The original concept was, everything finishes and it looks like this,” said the Brigadier. That concept is now being seen as too inflexible and doesn’t take into account what an area was like originally – what were the residual levels of violence like, how entrenched were land disputes? “Achieving enough is what we have to do. We may look at the circumstances and say ‘that’s not thorough, its not homogeneous or cohesive’, but the locals will look at you and say ‘why should it be, it never was and it never will be?’” he adds. “To them, that’s a perfectly acceptable view.”

For Brigades deploying to future Herricks a different type of job may well await them from what has been done in the past. It is in the military make-up

are that it’s happening. Dr Ashraf Ghani, Chairman of the Transition Commission, is proactively campaigning for members of the government to get things moving and sort out the problems blocking progress.

Militarily, there are, as you would expect, some commanders who are better than others, but the Brigadier says in his experience whenever they have been given the chance to step up, the response has been impressive.

The challenge the ISAF advisers now face is tempering the ANSF professionalism to seek Afghan not Western solutions to problems. “It’s interesting to hear the initial irritation during planning – ‘where are the UAVs, when are we going to get more vehicles, give me more helicopters’. We have to say, you need to work out how you are going to do it with a lot less,” adds Brigadier Bevis.

And will they manage to do that? “Of course they will. They are a very flexible people. They might not do it the way we would – they might call a shura when we might conduct a search – but they will get there.” DP

IMPLEMENTATION

STAGE 0 PARTNER

ISAF led/ANSF partnered ops

STAGE 1 SUPPORT

ANSF led/ISAF partnered

STAGE 2 MENTOR

ANSF led/ISAF support and mentoring

STAGE 3 ENABLE

ANSF led/ISAF advised and enabled

STAGE 4 SUSTAIN

ANSF led/selective ISAF advice and enablement



COMMANDING VIEW

AIR CHIEF MARSHAL SIR STUART PEACH TALKS ABOUT THE CREATION OF JOINT FORCES COMMAND TO IAN CARR

DF: Why was Joint Forces Command created?

JFC: It was one of the major recommendations that came out of Lord Levene’s Defence Reform Review of 2011. The big idea behind it was to bring better coherence to the joint (or “foundation”) capabilities that exist in Defence. Those capabilities are the cross-cutting functions – like intelligence, training, cyber and doctrine – that act as the operational glue between the Services. Setting up the Joint Forces Command (JFC) is designed to improve Defence coherence and thereby improve our success on operations. That is our key driver.

DF: Was the recommendation a surprise?

JFC: No. The creation of the JFC has a logical rationale, and as the Chief of Joint Operations at the time that Levene’s report was published, I could absolutely see the benefits of a more joint approach in support of operational output. There were many capabilities from a joint context that were vital to Defence but that risked becoming less visible without an advocate. These joint capabilities ranged from those residing in the Defence Academy – educating and training our people, through to the provision of systems that provide secure communications and robust command and control. Lord Levene and his panel of experts argued that capabilities such as intelligence and surveillance – key enablers in the battle space, had no one to champion them. Now they do.

DF: How will these capabilities be embraced?

JFC: JFC will provide coherence because it will be a central node of ownership. It will deliver guidance and command and give a clear sense of direction. It will deliver both the things the Chief of the Defence Staff needs for operations and the corporate assurance and governance that MOD needs as a department of state. The organisations the JFC is inheriting, like Defence Intelligence, are complex and important and often an amalgam of capabilities. Ultimately they exist to deliver an efficient output. We must protect that while making sure that we understand where any overlaps exist, and implementing the lessons that we have learned through experience.

DF: What have you been doing to get JFC ready for the Initial Operating Capability on 2 April?

JFC: I’ve been visiting the units that are joining, us both around the UK and abroad, meeting the people and listening to all their inputs. Using their contributions, I have been thinking about the behaviours and the style of operation we will have in



the JFC: it will be about making sure we are outputs and outcomes focused. We are also preparing for the transition to full operating capability in a year’s time.

DF: What has been achieved so far?

JFC: Given that it is only nine months since the review, the progress made has been remarkable. We have grown a Top Level Budget (TLB) from the smaller budget represented by PJHQ. That has meant aligning various units, capabilities, sites and budget areas. It has meant aligning discrete elements such as the Defence Academy with more wide-ranging elements such as Defence Intelligence. Add to that the Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre and the overseas Permanent Joint Operating Bases, and you can see this TLB is quite a diverse and complex

organisation. I pay great tribute to my team for achieving so much in such a short time.

DF: What will the creation of JFC mean to other commands?

JFC: For the commands joining JFC, we will provide coherence for their functions by joining the dots between them and realising the synergies that were previously closed to them. They will of course retain their responsibilities - the Surgeon General for example will retain responsibility for medical support. It is our role to support their outcomes – by providing the budget support, governance, assurance and capabilities that they need to achieve success. I also want to help them to focus on the right outcomes. For example, this new Command will lift from the shoulders of the Chief of Joint Operations some long-term burdens such as the maintenance of runways and ports on our overseas operating bases – to allow him to focus 100 per cent on current operations. Those commands outside JFC will swiftly see – if they haven't already – that we have the same ultimate aims as them. My role, quite simply, is to support the delivery of success on operations. We will have an intimate relationship with the Single Services. Indeed, all of our outputs will be complementary to theirs – geared towards operational success.

DF: What other areas will JFC be looking at?

JFC: We will be putting a lot of effort into the development of 'Joint Warfare' and the generation of Joint Force packages. As the overarching Joint User, we will focus on capability development in support of military capability management. But we will focus also on joint and combined training, including in the synthetic world, and look to speed up the 'lessons learned' process. In addition, we will look to increased force testing and experimentation in order that future capability can be guided.

DF: What will JFC be working on in the future?

JFC: A crucial role will be to provide a focus for future capability development. We will look at what we think we are going to need in the future and ask: what's the evidence, how can it be justified, and how can we make sure it is affordable? That approach is already making a difference in terms of how we are planning for the future. After we go live as a TLB we will further develop the Command and review the elements that come under our mandate. We will do that in harmony with the Single Services. We are seeking to identify synergies across the Command and, with a structured and collaborative approach, apply them to achieve efficiencies, which is what the Secretary of State has asked everyone across Defence to do.

DF: Will the organisations that JFC is inheriting be expecting it?

JFC: They already know, and it is not as if we are inheriting organisations that are not already doing great things with a strong sense of identity, role and purpose. We are inheriting organisations that are incredibly busy, supporting the main effort, supporting other operations, planning for contingency, developing doctrine, training and

educating our people, ministering to the sick and injured. These are all busy organisations already full of change programmes. But we can bring coherence to the way change is managed, and the way in which Defence does business.

DF: Will this new Command require a new mindset?

JFC: Lord Levene made it clear that Defence needed a stronger joint approach, and JFC will look to lead the development of that ethos. Although this is easier to say than do, our ambition is high and I am confident that my exceptionally strong team can deliver. We have already found that the Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre brings intellectual rigour to board-level discussions. Having the Defence Academy in the team means we are always thinking about training the next generation. Having Defence Intelligence in the team has a big effect on our situational awareness and understanding of what might happen in the world. Integrating these organisations means that together we are already a powerful engine for good ideas.

DF: How big will JFC be?

JFC: Including forces deployed on operations under command of the Chief of Joint Operations, the total number of military and civilian personnel in the Joint Forces Command will be around 30,000. The HQ, though, will be very small – around 150 people. We are working very hard on developing a house style of command which will be open and transparent and supportive of all the elements within the Command. From going around the units and meeting the outstanding personnel, both military and civilian, that will be part of this new Command, I have seen that there is a real hunger and enthusiasm to make this happen. This is an exceptional opportunity for Defence as a whole.

DF: What would your definition of Joint be?

JFC: We're better together than apart. 

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Gym'll fix it: Senior Aircraftman Chris Platts at Northolt's gym

RAF NORTHOLT – THE PLACE TO BE

FIVE YEARS' CONSTRUCTION WORK HAS COMPLETELY TRANSFORMED LIVING AND WORKING AT RAF NORTHOLT

Fast approaching completion, the five years' construction work at RAF Northolt has delivered hundreds of brand new accommodation spaces, a new five-bay hangar, office buildings, recreational facilities and a new childcare centre. Located on the fringes of North West London, the station is home to a variety of units and activities, with approximately 1,800 personnel now based there. Approximately 700 staff live on site too.

Perhaps most famously, RAF Northolt is home to 32 (The Royal) Squadron, who provide air transport for the Royal Family and British Government. It is also home to the Queen's Colour Squadron who combine operational duties with a ceremonial role representing the Royal Air Force at significant state occasions.

RAF HQ Music Services, the Central Band of the RAF, the British Forces Post Office parcel sorting facility, and No 1 Aeronautical Information Documents Unit, at the heart of the air cartographic world, also operate out of Northolt as well as an RAF Police unit and Special Investigations Branch.

Construction work at the station, which has been taking place for the last five years, has been delivered for the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) by their contractor VSM Estates Ltd under Project MoDEL (MOD Estates London).

The 600 new Single Living Accommodation spaces are a world away from the crumbling post-war 'H Blocks' which existed previously, where up to seven personnel shared dormitories with just one washbasin between them. Now, en-suite bedrooms are hotel standard, with fitted furniture, double bed, desk and a comfy armchair.

The living blocks, completed in 2008-09, are also allocated carefully to the various trades on the base so all those working on similar shifts are placed together to minimise disturbances to others.

Pilot Officer James Betts is one of the beneficiaries of the new Single Living Accommodation and he now lives just a stone's throw from his office on base. He pays £120 per month for his room which includes gas, heating, lighting and even a daily cleaning service.

"For this area of London, it is pretty good," he says.

RAF Northolt is just yards from Ruislip Gardens tube station, which is just a short ride away from the centre of London.

Pilot Officer Betts explains that there are six officers sharing his floor with a shared sitting room and well laid-out kitchen facility filled with a washing



Ironman: Senior Aircraftman Sam Baxter deals with a few pressing issues



Clean-living: Pilot Officer James Betts tests the communal washing facilities



At ease: Pilot Officer James Betts relaxes



Drink up: Senior Aircraftmen Sam Baxter and Chris Platts order a pint

machine, fridge, microwave and hob, although he still prefers to dine in the Officers' Mess, where he enjoys Pay As You Dine meals where troops pay only for meals they consume.

It's a no-brainer," Pilot Officer Betts says. "I can have a starter, main course and dessert, all for about £1.75."

The purpose-built accommodation beats anything he had previously experienced: "I'm 25 metres away from my meals, 50 metres from work and 400 metres from the gym. I can't really go wrong, can I?"

Care has been taken by the MoDEL integrated project team and their contractor VSM Estates Ltd to introduce eco-friendly features, where possible, to the new buildings. For example, beneath a number of the new car parks, rainwater is harvested and then carefully drained off, which helps prevent flooding during heavy rain.

And in 2009, the then Station Commander, Group Captain Guy van den Berg, keen to encourage fewer car journeys on site, authorised the purchase of 35 bicycles as part of the station green travel plan, enabling personnel to scoot around the 476-acre site with ease.

Among other improvements to Northolt delivered under the project are new facilities for the various units at the base.

Sporting facilities now include new football and rugby pitches and a floodlit all-weather sports pitch next to the new gym which is packed with a contemporary

fitness suite for exercise classes. The new childcare centre has won praise from the local authority.

The final construction feature, a new dog section, was delivered by Project MoDEL at RAF Northolt at the end of February 2012.

The new dog section includes 22 kennels and a quarantine building for the police dogs on site. The old kennels, which were decrepit and draughty, have made way for this new bespoke facility, which includes solar roof panels to generate heat and power.

The price tag of around £200 million for all this work was covered by the sale of surplus MOD sites at Woolwich, Mill Hill, Eastcote, West Ruislip, Uxbridge and Bentley Priory.

DIO Team Leader for Project MoDEL, David Salmond, said: "The delivery of the dog section has marked the end of more than five years of construction at RAF Northolt and the realisation of the vision to deliver a fit-for-purpose anchor site for defence."

He added that station personnel have provided very positive feedback about their new accommodation and other improvements to the site which he hopes will improve the quality of life for all those who live and work there.

Senior Aircraftman Chris Platts bears testament to this. He has been living at RAF Northolt for four months, following his posting from RAF Lossiemouth in Scotland and says: "Northolt is definitely the best place to be." **DF**

APPLIED SCIENCE

JONATHAN LYLE, THE DEFENCE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY LABORATORY'S NEW CHIEF EXECUTIVE, TALKS TO IAN CARR



Picture: Tim Gander

DF: What is the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory's (Dstl) role?

JL: Dstl is a trading fund of the MOD. We exist to maximise the impact of science and technology for UK defence and security. We work with the best people and the best ideas in the world. Working with both large and small companies and with universities we develop battle-winning technologies. We provide support to UK operations both now and in the future. Also, we look after some niche areas which are sensitive or operationally-critical, and where there are international connections which need to be handled within government.

DF: How do you deliver this expertise?

JL: We help our customers across government by giving advice to support business cases. We do research that informs their requirements, and we provide test and evaluation at the end of a project. Two years ago the management of the defence research programme was put into Dstl. At first, industry were concerned by that as they thought we would eat all the pies and spend all the budget-in house. In fact, last year 60 per cent of the programme was spent externally.

DF: Who are your main customers?

JL: As a trading fund our money flows from customers in MOD and other government departments. Our annual turnover is about £550m, about £400m of that comes from the Defence Research Board's non-nuclear research programme which is owned by the Chief Scientific Adviser. There's a range of people in MOD who draw on that who come to us for help. That includes policy, capability and operational customers in the UK, front line commands and the Surgeon General. Our next biggest customer is Defence Equipment & Support (DE&S). Last year £90m of Dstl's income was for supporting DE&S by delivering specific tasks and projects. We also do a lot of work for Defence Intelligence.

DF: How do you help in the acquisition process?

JL: We support DE&S in many ways such as assembling evidence for decisions, evaluating new concepts, technology development, and supporting urgent operational requirements. In addition, we execute a research programme which is, in large part, exploited through MOD's equipment programme.

DF: Have you any examples of where that research has made a difference for acquisition?

JL: Open systems architectures on ships, aircraft and land vehicles have enabled cost-effective and rapid upgrades to platforms. Working with colleagues in Abbey Wood (DE&S) and with key vehicle suppliers in the Land area we have

created what we call a generic vehicle architecture. This means that any new electronic systems, whether they be defensive aid or surveillance systems, as they evolve and develop, can be plugged and played easily into the system through a standard software interface. That means you can get more rapid and effective upgrades which has a big effect on through-life costs and efficiency.

DF: How can research save MOD money?

JL: Last year we conducted a trial in Cyprus looking at ways to save fuel at forward operating bases (FOBs). The cost of getting a gallon of fuel to a FOB is huge. We mocked up an environment to be like Afghanistan. We demonstrated that using a range of technology such as insulation, solar panels and other energy management techniques we could save 40 per cent of the energy used in theatre. Some of those things are deployable straight away, some will have to be developed.

DF: Has Dstl played a part in supporting operations?

JL: We have played a huge role supporting operations both in Iraq and in Afghanistan, and more recently in Libya. In Afghanistan there have been more than 350 separate theatre deployments by Dstl personnel over 10 years to support in-theatre trials and provide scientific advice and operational analysis. We are very proud of the direct support we have provided to the front line, working closely with Permanent Joint Headquarters (PJHQ).

DF: What sort of things do you get involved with?

JL: We apply scientific method to help address the challenges in theatre. We have worked on heat stress, looked at water requirements for troops on patrol, and force protection of vehicles and dismounted soldiers in open areas. We have developed approaches to counter sniper threats and the whole spectrum of the IED environment. Our role is to give a very quick response to issues that arise in theatre. We look at methods, techniques and technologies to provide solutions. We have access to a lot of intellectual knowledge that we can call on. We trial the ideas in theatre and if, as has happened so many times, they have merit, they are turned into operational requirements which we hand over in a managed way to our colleagues in DE&S. But not all solutions are equipment, some of them are changes in tactics or procedure, which is again where our advice, based on operational analysis, can help the commander on the ground.

DF: How do you strike a balance between being reactive and proactive?

JL: We have priorities set for us by PJHQ. Our scientists in theatre have a 24-hour reach-back service to Dstl and to our suppliers in industry and in universities. The scientist says "I have a problem" and this intellectual network is harnessed to hand back advice quickly. In that sense it is reactive. But that reactive expertise is built on the proactive investment in the research programme, and the capability which that has allowed us to build up over the years. The technology we have on the shelf is only there because five or maybe ten years ago someone put investment into the research programme. I know that senior colleagues in MOD's London Main Building absolutely get that. Investment in people, technology

networks and facilities is what sustains your capability in the future.

DF: So part of your role is looking at the technology of tomorrow as well as today?

JL: Yes, we deal with a huge spectrum, from supporting operations to looking at the far future. Our horizon-scanning team looks at technology that could be of advantage to us. The important thing is to try and spot the trends and use that to set your priorities for the programme. In the medium term we have people looking at the equipment capability that will be needed from 2020 and beyond, and what systems and technology we will need to invest in to deliver that.

DF: How far ahead is the horizon you are scanning?

JL: That's the amazing thing about technology horizons, they can be very long or very short. People keep reminding me, the next generation in computer technology is 18 months away, not 25 years. Horizon-scanning is about looking beyond the immediate.

DF: Does Dstl's success depend on the quality of its staff even more than most organisations?

JL: From the day I walked through the door two years ago as Director of Programme Office, I was bowled over by the enthusiasm and professionalism of the workforce; everyone, not just the scientists and engineers, but across all the parts of the organisation. It is important that we continue to invest in the workforce. I've been struck by how even quite recent graduates, because of the work they are doing, demonstrate a deep understanding of defence systems and how our Armed Forces work. It is important that we have people who have the expertise to help the MOD with its challenges. That means not just understanding the technical side, but understanding the customer as well.

DF: Is it difficult to recruit the people you need?

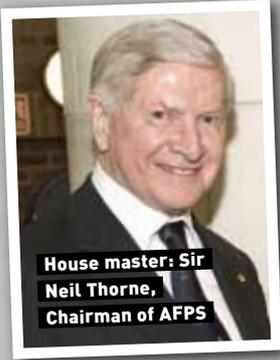
JL: We are still attracting some fantastic graduates from top quality universities with top qualifications. We will have to be watchful as the economy picks up as recruiting and retaining these people will get harder. I would say that those who choose to work for Dstl do so because of the quality and range of the work, the chance to work closely with the customer, and the fact that we recognise scientific excellence.

DF: So what's the biggest thing on your desk?

JL: Three things shape my job: austerity, current and future operations, and the transformation happening across defence. With the empowerment of front line command, we will have to adapt the way we work with customers. Some staff are worried that we will be doing less science. We will be doing shed loads of science, but we have to get better at programme and customer management. The relocation of staff from our Fort Halstead establishment in Kent is also one of the biggest things for me to deliver and in a way that treats the workforce fairly and properly.

DF: How do you keep these plates spinning?

JL: By having a fantastic team. It's a tremendous privilege to lead an organisation that plays such an important role in the nation's defence and security. 



House master: Sir Neil Thorne, Chairman of AFPS

COMMONS KNOWLEDGE

THE ARMED FORCES PARLIAMENTARY SCHEME GIVES POLITICIANS A TASTE OF MILITARY LIFE WRITES IAN CARR

For many, the machinations of the Westminster village may seem a world away. But, like it or not, the decisions made there affect us all. So when Parliament is moulding our future it would be nice to think that those expressing their views at least know what they are talking about.

Yet for the more active among us, leaving such things to chance is not an option. Which is why, 24 years ago, philanthropist Sir Neil Thorne founded

the Armed Forces Parliamentary Scheme (AFPS).

"When I entered the House," he told *Defence Focus*, "there were very few Members of Parliament with direct military experience and there are even fewer today, which was having a serious effect on the quality of our debates on defence issues."

One problem facing MPs who want to learn about what makes the military mind tick is getting access to troops at a working level. When they do have contact with the

Armed Forces, for example, as a member of a select committee, the opportunities for MPs to get a good understanding of what life is like for the troops are rare.

"I know from when I was a member of the House of Commons Defence Committee that the military tend to treat you as if you are at least a two-star officer," said Sir Neil. "Well you won't learn anything about what



Picture: Matt Clark

Sky's the limit: Godfrey Bloom MEP, advanced postgraduate

goes on at the coal face that way.”

So, from the outset, the idea behind the scheme was to give politicians from all the main parties a chance to get access at an appropriate level. Which means getting MPs into a uniform sweating alongside soldiers, sailors or airmen.

“When I was setting it up, I told the Services I wanted the members to be crawling through the bushes with the Corporals, feeling the weight of the kit and the wet of the ditches,” said Sir Neil.

Over the last two decades the AFPS has expanded to include Members of the House of Lords, MEPs, and even the occasional flash of pinstripe can be seen. “I quite like to get high-fliers from the Treasury who might one day be standing next to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and who can ask ‘is that wise Chancellor?’ when he is considering cuts to the Defence Budget,” said Sir Neil.

Each year a two-day introduction to Defence is held at the Defence Academy at Shrivenham where MPs get to experience the nuts and bolts of military life. They learn about the role of the military in a democracy, the strategic context for defence, and how forces are generated to achieve military strategic objectives. Discussions are mixed in with practical sessions where attendees get to handle equipment and have their knees buckle under the weight of a Bergen.

Those who want to carry on must commit to spending 22 days on the scheme in the first year, and 20 days each year if they come back for the second and third level. The MPs attach themselves to a Service of their choice and at some stage during the year embed with their chosen unit for five consecutive days. “That’s where they learn what members of the Armed Forces are all about,” said Sir Neil.

To make it more meaningful, students are given a notional rank and a uniform with a specially designed AFPS crest. As a motivator, promotion can be gained as members progress through the course.

In the first year, graduates learn about life at company commander level. “Looking at Service life from the perspective of a Lieutenant Commander, Major or Squadron Leader is most appropriate because the company commander should know quite a lot about everybody under their command, their backgrounds, and what they have to do on a day-to-day basis,” said Sir Neil.

In the second year, postgraduates experience life at the next command level (Wing Commander and equivalent) and then in the third year they learn about the responsibilities of a full Colonel and rank equivalents. Rounding off the course, a fourth year looks at how today’s military co-operate in a joint environment.

For people whose diaries are groaning with engagements, signing up is a huge commitment. But it is clearly considered to be worth it. Even politicians who have direct and recent experience of Defence make time for the course.

Last year, former Defence Secretary Bob Ainsworth took part. “The lectures and question sessions were invaluable. Access to this quality of debate is hard to come by,” he told *Defence Focus*. Another former MOD Boss, John Reid, now Lord Reid, has also been on the course, saying: “It’s invaluable for an understanding of the issues which we have to confront.”

Advanced members attend a number of high-calibre lectures at the Royal College of Defence Studies in Belgrave Square. Commandant Vice Admiral Charles Style said that having the AFPS

defence agenda and Chief of the Defence Staff General Sir David Richards has encouraged every peer and Member of Parliament to sign up to the scheme.

After the last election, when MPs were quizzed on constituency doorsteps about Afghanistan, 74 MPs said they wanted to sign up to the AFPS. “That was a record year,” said Sir Neil, who was only too happy to accommodate them all.

The politicians’ interest does not surprise Vice Admiral Style. “For a period after the Second World War, and with national service lasting into the early 60s, it used to be that Parliament was full of people who knew military business first hand,” he reflects. “But it isn’t like that now, and meanwhile the world is a tricky place, so AFPS has to be a good investment for national parliamentary knowledge and



Food for thought: Member of Tynwald, Manxman Juan Watterson



High flier: Madeleine Moon MP of the Defence Select Committee



On target: Baroness Fookes of Plymouth, advanced postgraduate

Pictures: LA (Photo) Jay Allen

members was a mutually beneficial arrangement. “If we are discussing some really difficult developing international security problem, and we have an ex-Defence Secretary in the group, they can give us a hugely valuable insight into how such things are handled.”

The scheme has MOD backing. “This couldn’t be done if MOD didn’t support it, because they provide the attachments,” said Sir Neil, who has an annual meeting with the Defence Secretary who he says, often comes up with new ideas for the scheme’s development.

The public, too, are pushing the

decision-making.”

But with the well-being of those who comprise the Armed Forces ever close to his heart, Sir Neil sees another equally important role for his initiative. “I always say to the MPs on the scheme, ‘look, the Admirals, Generals and Air Marshals always have avenues they can follow to make their points – it’s the soldiers, sailors and airmen who haven’t got a line to the Secretary of State, that are relying on you to speak up for them’.” And, thanks to AFPS, when the politicians speak, it is safe to assume that they know what they are talking about. **DF**

DRAWING FIRE

THE NATIONAL ARMY MUSEUM IS CELEBRATING COMMANDO COMIC'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY WITH A FREE EXHIBITION THAT'S DRAWING DADS AND THEIR LADS IN BY THE BATTALION-LOAD. REPORT BY IAN CARR



Waiting game: heroes were often modelled on Hollywood stars - could this be Kirk Douglas?

Artwork © DC Thomson

Over the top: stunning artwork captures the imagination
Artwork © DC Thomson

For the last five decades, the story book heroes in DC Thomson's Commando comics have been locked in mortal combat with the 'Hun' or fighting off 'Jap' ambushes in the jungles of Second-World-War Burma. It would seem that no-one has told them that "for you Tommy, ze vorr is over".

Which is just fine by today's regiments of schoolboys who still swarm into newsagents to spend their pocket money on the latest action-packed edition, and run home shouting things like "try that for size you square-headed rat" as they mow down imaginary baddies with a stick as a Sten gun.

Well OK, they probably buy it online, but it is nice to know that in a world of iPhone apps and role-based shoot 'em ups, there is still a place for plucky sergeants getting their arrogant officers out of a spot of bother and keeping the fighting spirit up with a refreshing cup of tea.

To celebrate Commando's diamond anniversary, and as part of its series looking at how the British Army is depicted in popular culture, the National Army Museum has created an exhibition of some of the comic's stunning covers.

And to judge by the crowds of dads and lads, and a fair few mums and daughters, milling around the ticket desk, the exhibition has been a huge success.

So why have these comics endured? Maybe it's the simple morality behind the plotlines that has kept comic addicts coming back for more for so long. Or maybe it's the comfort you get in knowing that if nowhere else in life, at least here, a good bloke (and occasionally the good bloke is a Jerry) will always triumph over a bad 'un – even if the personal cost has been high.

But for many, the comic's success relies on a lot more than this, and if anything, their quality should attract a great deal more critical acclaim than they do. One admirer of the genre is Robert Fleming, Curator of Fine and Decorative Art at the Army museum, who put the "Draw your weapons" exhibition together.

"I was a big fan when I was 12," he said. "Like everyone else I thought the bold stylised form was really exciting. In fact I'm



Picture: Harland Quarrington

**Comic guy: Robert Fleming,
Curator of Fine and Decorative Art**

sure that reading these comics is where I got my interest in military history from and started me on my career." Robert also says that he has been told by quite a few blokes visiting the exhibition that the comics had a part to play in them joining up for a career in the Services.

According to Robert, the black and white artwork gives the pocket-sized comics a gritty realism and portrays the intense action of combat as well as the surge of emotions that are associated with conflict. The writers pride themselves on the quality of the research that goes into each edition, getting details of uniform and equipment exactly right. The stories themselves may be fictional but they are all set against an authentic background based in solid fact, even down to the language used in the speech bubbles.

"I've put up an information panel about that," explains Robert. "Some of it may seem politically incorrect, but that is how soldiers talked to each other, and it would be wrong to shy away from that."

OK, the themes may be simple, but they do present you with the tough questions of morality and the hard choices troops have to make in times of conflict. As you turn the pages you ask yourself if you would discover

the strength of character to do the right thing and help get your mates through it all, like the everyman heroes in the stories – just as many of us wonder if we would be able to crack on like our troops who are on operations when the going gets tough.

War is not glorified, nor is it trivialised. What is celebrated is that, in the face of adversity, given the right circumstances, normal human beings can be heroic. As Commando's editor Calum Laird says: "It's about the ordinary bloke in extraordinary circumstances."

And what's wrong with that? With British forces routinely making sacrifices in Afghanistan, life, you could say, is very much imitating art, and perhaps that's the real reason the comic has endured – qualities like courage, endurance and determination are as valid today as they ever have been.

The exhibition, which is open till the end of April, not only uncovers some of the real life stories behind the artwork, but also links the themes to the extraordinary experiences of the real life British Commandos, and explains why the fighting elite were created. So why not go along? Who knows, you may come out shouting "Good grief! Take a look at that Jerry, Sir – he's got the nerve of the devil!" **DF**



MARIE COLVIN

IN HER OWN WORDS: WHY WAR REPORTING IS SO IMPORTANT

Marie Colvin knew the dangers of war reporting – she lost an eye in 2001 covering the Sri Lankan civil war.

But she believed that journalists had to take the risks of going to the world's war zones and bear witness to the horror of conflict. That belief cost Colvin her life in February when she was killed in Homs while covering the Syrian uprising.

In November 2010 she gave an address to St Bride's Church in Fleet Street, known as the journalists' church, at a service commemorating the journalists who had been killed reporting conflict this century. As a tribute, we are printing the views that she expressed in that address.



Picture: Getty Images

Your Royal Highness, ladies and gentlemen, I am honoured and humbled to be speaking to you at this service tonight to remember the journalists and their support staff who gave their lives to report from the war zones of the 21st century. I have been a war correspondent for most of my professional life. It has always been a hard calling. But the need for front line, objective reporting has never been more compelling.

Covering a war means going to places torn by chaos, destruction and death, and trying to bear witness. It means trying to find the truth in a sandstorm of propaganda when armies, tribes or terrorists clash. And yes, it means taking risks, not just for yourself but often for the people who work closely with you.

Despite all the videos you see from the Ministry of Defence or the Pentagon, and all the sanitised language describing smart bombs and pinpoint strikes, the scene on the ground has remained remarkably the same for hundreds of years. Craters. Burned houses. Mutilated bodies. Women weeping for children and husbands. Men for their wives, mothers, children.

Our mission is to report these horrors of war with accuracy and without prejudice. We always have to ask ourselves whether the level of risk is worth the story. What is bravery, and what is bravado?

Journalists covering combat shoulder great responsibilities and face difficult choices. Sometimes they pay the ultimate price. Tonight we honour the 49 journalists and support staff who were killed bringing the news to our shores. We also remember journalists around the world who have been wounded, maimed or kidnapped and held hostage for months. It has never been more dangerous to be a war correspondent, because the journalist in the combat zone has become a prime target.

I lost my eye in an ambush in the Sri Lankan civil war. I had gone to the northern Tamil area from which journalists were banned and found an unreported humanitarian disaster. As I was smuggled back across the internal border, a soldier launched a grenade at me and the shrapnel sliced into my face and chest. He knew what he was doing.

Just last week, I had a coffee in Afghanistan with a photographer friend, Joao Silva. We talked about the terror one feels and must contain when patrolling on an embed with the armed forces through fields and villages in Afghanistan...putting one foot in front of the other, steeling yourself each step for the blast. The

VITAL NUMBERS

THERE ARE PEOPLE OUT THERE READY TO HELP YOU

expectation of that blast is the stuff of nightmares. Two days after our meeting Joao stepped on a mine and lost both legs at the knee.

Many of you here must have asked yourselves is it worth the cost in lives, heartbreak, loss? Can we really make a difference?

I faced that question when I was injured. In fact one paper ran a headline saying has Marie Colvin gone too far this time? My answer is that it was worth it.

Today in this church are friends, colleagues and families who know exactly what I am talking about, and bear the cost of those experiences, as do their families and loved ones. We must also remember how important it is that news organisations continue to invest in sending us out at great cost, both financial and emotional, to cover stories.

We go to remote war zones to report what is happening. The public have a right to know what our government, and our armed forces, are doing in our name. Our mission is to speak the truth to power. We send home that first rough draft of history. We can and do make a difference in exposing the horrors of war and especially the atrocities that befall civilians.

The history of our profession is one to be proud of. The first war correspondent in the modern era was William Howard Russell of *The Times*, who was sent to cover the Crimean conflict when a British-led coalition fought an invading Russian army.

Billy Russell, as the troops called him, created a firestorm of public indignation back home by revealing inadequate equipment, scandalous treatment of the wounded, especially when they were repatriated - does this sound familiar? - and an incompetent high command that led to the folly of the Charge of the Light Brigade. It was a breakthrough in war reporting. Until then, wars were reported by junior officers who sent back dispatches to newspapers. Billy Russell went to war with an open mind, a telescope, a notebook and a bottle of brandy. I first went to war with a typewriter, and learned to tap out a telex tape. It could take days to get from the front to a telephone or telex machine.

War reporting has changed greatly in just the last few years. Now we go to war with a satellite phone, laptop, video camera and a flak jacket. I point my satellite phone to south-south-west in Afghanistan, press a button, and I have filed.

In an age of 24/7 news, blogs and twitters, we are on constant call. But war reporting is still essentially the same - someone has to go there and see what is happening. You can't get that information without going to places where people are being shot at, and others are shooting at you. The real difficulty is having enough faith in humanity to believe that enough people, be they government, military or the man on the street, will care when your file reaches the printed page, the website or the TV screen. We do have that faith because we believe we do make a difference.

And we could not make that difference - or do our job - without the fixers, drivers and translators who face the same risks and die in appalling numbers. Today we honour them as much as the front line journalists who have died in pursuit of the truth. They have kept the faith as we who remain must continue to do.

Thanks go to St Bride's for permission to print this address - www.stbrides.com



RN Benevolent Trust: Grants, advice and income supplements for veterans. Call 0239 2690112 or email rnbt@rnbt.org.uk.

RN Association: Comradeship for all serving and ex-Service members of the RN, RM, QARNNS, WRNS, Reserves, RFA and RNXS. royal-naval-association.co.uk

Royal Marines Benevolent Fund: Relieves hardship among serving and former Marines and dependents. royalmarines.charities@charity.vfree.com or call 02392 547201.

ABF The Soldiers Charity: Support to soldiers and veterans. www.soldierscharity.org or call 0845 241 4820.

RAF Benevolent Fund: Help for RAF personnel past and present. rafbf.org or call 0800 1692942.

Civil Service Benevolent Fund: Helps anyone who has worked for the Civil Service and their dependents. Advice about support and financial help. csbf.org.uk or call 0800 056 2424.

Army Welfare Service: HQ AWS has relocated to Upavon. Confidential support for soldiers and families. army.mod.uk/welfare-support/family/default.aspx or call (UK) 01980 615975.

RAF Association (RAFA): Comradeship and care for current and former RAF members. rafa.org.uk/welfare.asp.

HIVE: Tri-Service information covering issues like education and health. 167 offices. hive.mod.uk.

Royal British Legion: Charity providing financial, social and emotional support to vets and serving, and dependents. www.britishlegion.org.uk or call 08457 725 725.

SSAFA Forces Help: Supports serving personnel, veterans and

the families of both. Practical and financial assistance and emotional support. ssafa.org.uk or call 0845 1300 975.

Harassment, bullying or discrimination: JSP 763, The MOD Harassment Complaints Procedures, is a guide for Services and civilians. Navy: 023 9272 7331. Army: 94 391 Ext 7922 (01264 381 922). RAF: 95471 ext 7026. Civilians 0800 345 7772 (+441225 829572 from overseas) or em: PeopleServices@pppa.mod.uk.

Matters of conscience and whistleblowing under the Public Interest Disclosure Act. Call 0800 3457772. Select option four.

Service Personnel and Veterans Agency: Pay, pensions and personnel support for the Services and veterans, including the JPA system, and Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre: 0800 0853600; 0800 1692277 or veterans-uk.info

MOD Occupational Welfare Service: Confidential advice on work and personal issues. Call 0800 345 7047

Service Complaints Commissioner: To make a complaint or seek advice, contact: SCC@armedforcescomplaints.independent.gov.uk

Naval Personal & Family Service and Royal Marines Welfare

For out-of-hours' emergencies call the NPFS duty worker in the relevant next-of-kin area or RM unit. NPFS East and Overseas - 02392 726 159 (via Officer-of-the-Watch). NPFS North - 01436 674 321 - (via duty naval base officer Ex. 4005) NPFS West and Eire - 01752 555 220 - (via Officer-of-the-Watch). RM Welfare - 01752 836 395 - (via duty officer, guardroom RM Stonehouse).

FOUR MONTHS TO GO

Nick of time? Captain Nick Beighton faces a tough battle for a place in the Paralympics



Picture: Graham Harrison

MAKING A SPLASH

RAF officer Andy Hadfield faces a do-or-die race to win selection for the Men's Kayak Slalom

Flying Officer Andy Hadfield was only 15 years old when his schoolmate Chris introduced him to canoeing. Twelve years on and he is preparing to compete in April's Kayak Slalom trials for a place on Britain's Olympic team.

He joined the RAF in late 2010, deciding to serve his country after failing to qualify for the Beijing Olympics in 2008. "As much as I wanted to be an Olympic athlete, I always wanted to be a fast jet pilot which is why I applied to the RAF straight after Beijing," he says. However, halfway through officer training at RAF Cranwell, Fg Off Hadfield was informed that he was to be made redundant. He leaves this autumn.

However, his RAF training has been valuable. "My graduation was certainly one

of the proudest days of my life," he says.

"I thought the training was excellent. It has given me skills in man-management, leadership, and improving awareness of how to motivate and lead others." And, on news of his redundancy, he vowed to have a crack at qualifying for London 2012.

He plunged straight back into full-time training, winning silver in last September's National Championships. A seasoned international athlete that has competed in World Cup races and European Championships, he's now training flat-out at the National Water Sports Centre in Nottingham for a place on the Olympic team.

Having missed selection in 2008, he is

even more determined to step up to the mark. "It's been a dream since watching the Sydney Olympics and my desire is as strong as ever," he says.

But first you've got to qualify. "Whoever finishes first overall in the trials will go to the Olympics. If you finish in the top three, you'll be selected for Team GB to race at the European Champs and World Cup."

While Fg Off Hadfield would love nothing more than to stay in the RAF, he's philosophical that after London 2012 his future lies elsewhere.

His biggest regret is that he never took part in operations, but he'll leave with fond memories and lifelong friendships. "The camaraderie with your close mates during basic training will be very hard to match."

He is particularly grateful to the RAF for the "fantastic" RAF sports lottery which sponsors him and whom he hopes to do proud at the forthcoming trials. He says: "If I can get to the Olympics, I can be very confident about winning a medal."

WITH FIERCE COMPETITION FOR PLACES ON TEAM GB'S OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC SQUADS, LORRAINE MCBRIDE MEETS SOME OF THE ARMED FORCES CONTENDERS

HELMAND TO LONDON

Captain Nick Beighton has dealt with life changing injuries to be competing for a place at the Paralympics

RECOVERING in Headley Court from a horrific IED blast which cost him both legs, the last thing on Captain Nick Beighton's mind 15 months ago must have been competing in the London Paralympics. Yet thanks to the medical treatment he has received since his injury, Captain Beighton has been given a chance under UK Sport's talent identification programme to do just that. Of course, with his military determination and his classic rowers' build - pre-injury he was 6ft 7ins tall - as he himself puts it: "Adaptive rowing chose me."

The Royal Engineers officer was injured on patrol in October 2009. He was in a medically-induced coma for 13 days and woke up in Selly Oak Hospital. Now he is a disabled athlete on the cusp of qualifying for the Paralympics but he has no time for clichés of being an inspiration.

"My first objective was just getting up and about, walking, then doing the sports I enjoyed," he says. "The Paralympics and

Olympics are the pinnacle for most athletes. If people find that inspirational, brilliant, but I do it for my own rehabilitation, sanity, fitness and aspiration."

Ask if he has any pinch-me moments on his progress and he says: "These things don't just happen. It takes a lot of hard effort both by me and everyone who has supported me and I appreciate that."

He praises the Army's support, particularly the medical staff. "You can't put a value on it," he says. "The doctors and nurses at Selly Oak saved my life, then the physios and occupational therapists at Headley Court gave me my life back."

With the Paralympics looming, his goal is to book his place with partner Sam Scowan in the trunk and arms mixed double scull event comprising a male-female pair in each boat. "We finished in the top six at the World Rowing Championships last September. We now

need to prove to the selector that we're the best crew."

The upcoming Varese International Regatta in Italy in April, is his best chance to book a place in Team GB followed by the World Cup in May.

"The Olympics aren't going to come back to the UK while I'm competing," he says. "And to think that two years ago I'd never have dreamed that this would be an opportunity is very exciting."

More than a million tickets have been sold for the Paralympics so far. "It's testimony to the fact that people aren't just interested in the Olympics but the Paralympics too, and seeing British athletes do well," says Captain Beighton.

He is heading towards the trials full of confidence but selection is all in the lap of the Gods. He refuses to contemplate whether he'll quit rowing after the Paralympics. His immediate plan is to return to work. Whichever way, it has been a life-affirming experience.

"The thing is, Olympians who succeed have done so by their own effort but people who make the Paralympics have not only done that, but dealt with life-changing injuries. I think that is inspiring."



Sticking his oar in: Flying Officer Andy Hadfield trains in a bid to make Team GB

AN OARSOME GOAL

Royal Marine Captain Dan Ouseley is training hard for the Olympic trials that could get him on the rowing team

ROYAL MARINE and Olympian Captain Dan Ouseley should give glimmers of hope to any clumsy school kid always picked last for the school football team. When he was such a 14-year-old no-hoper, instead of moping, the youngster took up rowing.

Back then, he knew next to nothing about rowing. But with his strapping physique he quickly relished the physical challenge on the river, and says: "To be honest, I fell in love pretty quickly."

For the last 15 months, Capt Ouseley, who is a member of the Armed Forces Elite Sports Programme, has been in full-time sports training. He is in the running to qualify for Team GB but selection trials and the World Cup will play a key part and he'll find out in June whether he's done enough.

Following the trials and World Cup there will be further testing before coaches reveal who will race in the heavyweight men's pairs, four and eight, at the Olympics.

Remarkably, Capt Ouseley has pursued his rowing ambition while building a career with the Royal Marines, which he joined in 2005 to fulfill a

schoolboy dream. "The Marines are great at selling themselves and the Commando brand is a very powerful tool to attract young men, and to be honest, I was a sucker for the challenge of the Commando test and the ethos of the Royal Marines," he says.

Capt Ouseley served as a troop commander with 40 Commando, attached to 52 Brigade in Afghanistan in 2007, based in Sangin. "We carried out patrols, reconstruction and reassured Afghan locals, but the other side of the job was going out, fighting the enemy," he says.

An 18-month posting at the Commando Training Centre followed his Afghan tour. "I enjoyed that, got a lot out of it and learned a lot," he reflects. This was followed by a gruelling landing craft course in Dorset, something that he thrived on. "There was a real sense of being involved with something unique to the Royal Marines' experience," he says.

He explains how landing craft have barely changed since the Second World War, and describes the challenge of driving a boat through rough seas to discharge troops onto the shore into battle.

He spent a further year there

as a boat troop commander, but his most rewarding period was as troop commander with 40 Commando and at the Commando Training Centre in Lympstone. "I was much more involved doing the kind of things that I joined up for such as issuing orders, troop attacks and crawling around in mud."

Now his focus is unflinchingly on London 2012. Training twice-a-day, seven-days-a-week, he puts in the hours on the river combined with a gym workout inbetween. That's not the only sacrifice. Capt Ouseley's healthy diet rules out all pleasures but the odd beer, the last thing he needs in the boat is any unnecessary ballast.

For many athletes the trials are daunting and the thought of missing out on a home Olympics is unbearable. But Capt Ouseley is confident of hitting his best form.

"It's something that I think about but I try to stop myself because, if I indulge those fantasies, I'm not concentrating on the grind of getting better," he says.

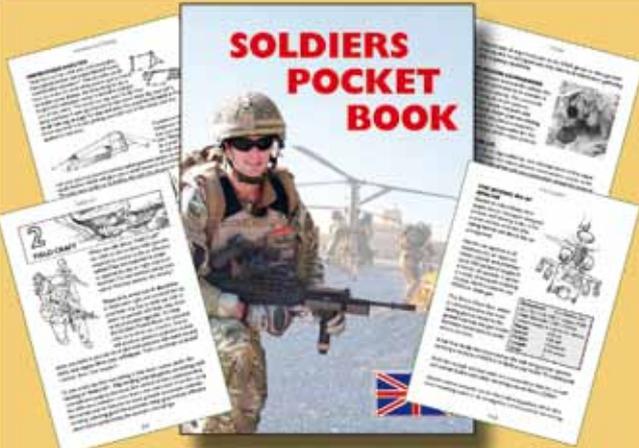
Should qualification go to plan, Capt Ouseley will be competing in his second Games. He reached the 2004 finals in the Men's Eight in Athens, an event in which he finished ninth, leaving him frustrated.

"But it's my second time around," he says, "and my job with the Marines has given me a bit of perspective to enjoy the racing and embrace nerves rather than let them take over."

Row your boat: Captain Ouseley is the one on the far left



Picture: Peter Spurrier



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ARMED FORCES TOY GIVEAWAY

SUMMER is almost here and we all know what that means. It's a new campaigning season for all those young Field Marshals in your house, and what could be better for them than reinforcements from HM Armed Forces?

Defence Focus has two Army Guardsmens' multi-packs, a quad bike mini-set, a crawling infantryman, and a training assault course to get the troops in battle-ready condition (one of these toys will be deployed to five lucky readers).

As acting Defence Secretary for your little Generals, you will need to put in a requisition by email. Those fortunate enough to be chosen using the most rigorous of selection criteria (aka names out of a helmet) stand to win. Procurement can be simple!

What are you waiting for? Do your duty and get your Generals the troops they need! For more information on all the latest action figures for the forces check out www.character-online.co.uk



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dmc-newsdesk@mod.uk by
30 April 2012. Include the phrase
'Action Stations' in the
subject line.





MBE

My boss handled my MBE nomination in secrecy so it was a huge shock.

I was honoured for my job as a sniffer dog handler in Northern Ireland at the height of The Troubles, and in Germany, as well as for my charity work with the British Legion.

I found out about the award when my boss teased me saying 'I've got a letter on my desk with your name on it, why would that be?' I said "I don't know sir, you tell me!" So he read it out word for word. I had no inkling, it was thrilling.

Prince Charles presented it and, although it wasn't the Queen, my daughter said "don't worry dad, he is the future King!" and we had a wonderful day.



FORMER YUGOSLAVIA

In 2002, I went to Banja Luka as part of NATO's Stabilisation Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina after the bulk of the fighting was over.

By now I was a team leader for an air transport security team. We searched soldiers before they boarded to make sure they didn't have any military 'souvenirs' stashed away.

One of my team found an anti-personnel mine, which looks just like a canister for a respirator. It could have detonated and he got in severe trouble with the Royal Military Police (RMP). What on earth he thought he'd do with it, God only knows.



KOSOVO

In 2002, I was a criminal intelligence analyst in Pristina. There is always organised crime in a failed state and the devil finds work for idle hands.

Criminal gangs were in operation even before NATO



Picture: PO (Photo) Terry Seaward

MY MEDALS

Warrant Officer Bill Veazey joined the RAF Police aged 18 in 1980. Here he recalls policing around the world. Interview: Lorraine McBride

forces got rid of Serb rule and gangs saw an opportunity for profiteering and racketeering.

By 2002 the Kosovan police did most policing, albeit heavily shadowed by the UN, and we were there to assist.

It was really interesting. We worked with the RMP and multinational partners including Norwegians, Swedes and Fins. Everyone brought something to the party.

The Scandinavians had a hard work ethic but also enjoyed their time off. At the police club, we had British, Swedish and Norwegian nights and even arranged a sauna

for the Fins. On Brit night, we ate roast beef and drank beer. It was great to experience multinational life on operations.



OP HERRICK

In 2007, in Kandahar Airfield, we had several incidents of incoming rockets, which always had potential to affect flying operations.

Our priority was to fix the damage and get the airfield open again. My role was to go on force protection patrols with the RAF Regiment into villages,

showing a military footprint, but also giving confidence to the locals that we'd protect them.

We had plenty of VIPs coming through. Three weeks after we watched Tony Blair live on Sky News resigning, Gordon Brown came out as the new Prime Minister.



NORTHERN IRELAND

In RAF Aldergrove, north of Belfast, I spent many nights patrolling with just my German Shepherd, Zeus. It wasn't scary though as I had total confidence in him. At 22, I was single, and I remember building up a total bond with Zeus.

One night we found someone behind the Sergeants' Mess. Zeus's ears pricked up, he was up on his toes, and I knew from his body language that something was wrong. It was very dark and tense so I dropped down to see what he was looking at.

I shone my torch behind some pallets and spotted a man hiding his eyes. I ordered him to stand but saw that he was just drunk and for some reason had decided to have a kip there. It was a big relief, but I didn't get too close, otherwise Zeus would have chewed him!



LONG SERVICE

They always say that this is the 'Don't Get Caught' medal, but of course, as a policeman, there is nothing to get caught for!

With more than 32 years' service, this medal represents more than a third of the RAF's entire existence. I'm leaving in August and hope to get work as a defence contractor.

I joined the RAF because I wanted to be a dog handler. I still consider myself one at heart even though I hung up my dog lead in 2001. I love dogs to pieces - I just happen to look after computers now instead. Would I do it all again? - absolutely.



UNDER PRESSURE?

ONE IN FOUR UK ADULTS MAY HAVE HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE, YET MOST ARE UNAWARE OF IT. IF LEFT UNTREATED IT CAN LEAD TO SERIOUS PROBLEMS



By Surgeon Commander Nick Imm, a GP at Navy Command HQ, HMS *Excellent*.

Hello from Whale Island in Portsmouth. When was the last time you had your blood pressure checked? High blood pressure (or hypertension) is very common – it's thought that nearly one in four adults in the UK have the condition. Unfortunately, many of these are not aware of it.

Most of us have a better idea of our car or bike tyre pressure than our own blood pressure. This is a shame for two reasons – if high blood pressure is left untreated it can lead to serious medical problems. But it can usually be managed with improvements to lifestyle and simple medication.

As we get older, blood pressure naturally tends to rise – so a man in his sixties will usually have a higher blood pressure than a teenager. It should still be within safe limits though.

Having untreated high blood pressure increases your risk of a stroke and heart attack. It can also cause kidney failure and damage your sight. All serious stuff.

When you have your blood pressure taken by your doctor or medic, the measurement comes as two numbers, for example 120/70. The first number is the pressure of the blood when the heart is squeezing and the second number is the pressure when it's relaxed, between heartbeats.

So, what should it be? The healthy upper blood pressure limit for an adult is 140/90. The target levels are lower for people with diabetes.

If you have your blood pressure taken and it's high, what can you expect to happen? Often it's worth repeating as blood pressure varies

throughout the day and is increased temporarily with stress (for example, visiting the doctor!) and exercise.

To be sure, a 24-hour reading can be taken wearing an automatic armband that records lots of measurements. The results are processed by a computer to find the average through the day. Your doctor will want to check your height, weight, urine and cholesterol level. An ECG (heart tracing) can be used to check the heart is not under strain.

In most cases of high blood pressure, no particular cause can be found. There are several well-known risk factors though. These include being overweight, drinking too much alcohol and being under continual stress. You are also more likely to have high blood pressure if other members of your family have the condition. Sometimes, it can be the result of other medical problems and your doctor will check for these, especially if your blood pressure is really high.

If lifestyle changes don't bring your blood pressure down, your doctor will prescribe daily medicines to keep it under control. Usually just one or two tablets a day is all it takes to bring your blood pressure down and greatly reduce your risk of serious medical problems in the future.

You should have your blood pressure checked at least every five years – more often if you have other medical problems or if it's on the verge of being high. If you're out of date for a check-up why not make an appointment with your medic or practice nurse this month?

For more information you could try the British Heart Foundation – the website is at www.bhf.org.uk

Stay healthy and I'll see you next month. 

■ This is general advice only. If you have any medical concerns please make an appointment to see your medic or GP.



EXERCISE FOR HEALTH

THE HUMAN BODY IS DESIGNED TO CARRY OUT EXERCISE FOR OPTIMUM PHYSICAL FITNESS AND GOOD HEALTH.



By doing exercise, the fat stored in the body is lowered and dangerous levels of body fat can be brought within a normal range. This will reduce the chance of contracting heart disease, cancer, high blood pressure, diabetes, and other diseases. It can also improve your appearance, and delay the aging process.

Aerobic exercise is the most beneficial to your health. It strengthens your lungs and heart, boosts the immune system and maintains healthy body cells. Any physical activity that increases your heart and breathing rate should require effort and be done three to five times a week for 30 minutes. Aerobic activity allows your body to supply oxygen which is used by your muscles.

OSTEOPOROSIS

Exercise is also important for bone strength.

Osteoporosis is more common in women, who can experience rapid bone-strength loss as early as age 40, when oestrogen production drops during the menopause. Osteoporosis can occur in men but typically not until age 65. Weight-bearing exercises will help to slow the loss of minerals from your bones. While walking and stair-climbing will raise your heart rate as your bones

and muscles work against gravity, which in turn will release chemicals that tell your bones to prepare for more of the same, so your bones become stronger.

BACK PAIN

The best way to deal with back pain is also to stay active.

"The advice 20 years ago was to rest, but research has shown that inactivity only makes it worse," says Dries Hettinga of Backcare, a charity that offers support to people with back pain. "When you're in pain you may want to stay in bed and not move, but that results in further loss of mobility and will only prolong the pain."

Staying active means regular daily activities including walking to the shops, getting off the bus one stop early, gardening, or taking the dog for a walk. For more information, visit www.backcare.org.uk



This article comes to you from CS Healthcare, the specialist provider of health insurance for civil servants. Telephone 0800 917 4325.

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SUDOKU

			9	2		5	
4					3		
			6			8	1
	2	5				3	7
	9	4		3	6		
7	3			8	1		
8	2		4				
	4					7	
5		6	8				

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 to 9

7	2	8	4	5	1	6	3	9
9	5	1	3	6	7	2	8	4
4	6	3	2	8	9	5	7	1
3	7	5	8	1	6	9	4	2
2	4	9	7	3	5	1	6	8
1	8	6	9	4	2	7	5	3
6	1	4	5	9	8	3	2	7
8	9	2	6	7	3	4	1	5
5	3	7	1	2	4	8	9	6

Solution to the March 2012 puzzle

Send in your Sudoku solution by 30 April 2012 and you could win a Victorinox Swiss Army Soldiers Knife. Our address is on page 4. For more info, visit www.victorinox.com



CHESS



Compiled by: Carl Portman

IT IS that time of year again folks. It's time to get your entries in for the Combined Services Chess Championships 2012.

Your chess strength does not matter – you will be sure to find someone to have a good game against and a finer group of people you could not wish to meet on the chess circuit.

If you are military or a MOD civil servant (or retired from any of those) then you are eligible. The only rank you have to worry about is your back rank on the chess board.

The tournament will be held at RAF Cosford from 3-7 May and this is a qualifying event for the Nato Tournament 2012 to be held in France. There are seven rounds, accommodation will be arranged on site and the entry fee for all five days is a meagre £15.

Five days might seem like a lot but there's a really excellent social evening and quickplay chess event included. I would especially encourage female participants as quite frankly we never seem to get any and I don't have a clue why that is. Are there any female chess players out there?



I challenge you to do better anywhere. Check out the details at www.servicesshess.co.uk for full contact details and an entry form.

Your chess problem this month (players unknown) sees you as white to move. Your queen is en-prise. What are you going to do to save her honour?

Send your answers to me at carl.portman@hotmail.co.uk please. A chess related prize awaits.

The answer to March's problem was 1.Rc8! now if 1...Qxb8 then axb. If 1...Rxc8 2.Qxc8+ Kh7 3.a8=Q winning. The winner to be announced. The December/Jan winner was Alan Pickles from DSG Land Supply at MOD Donnington.

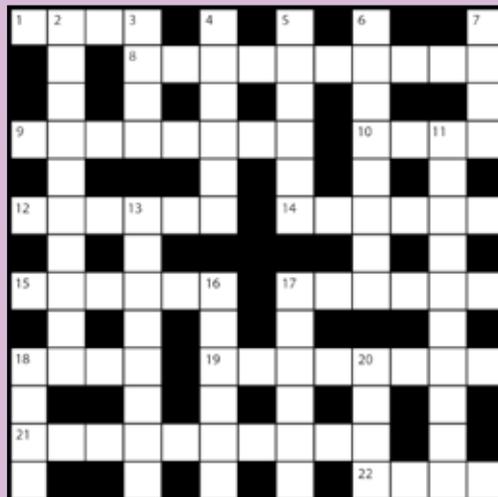
TOPICAL CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 1980s boy band consisting of twin brothers Matt and Luke Goss (4)
- Branch of medicine concerned with the treatment of mental and emotional disorders (10)
- See 19 Across
- Degree of warmth (4)
- Criminals may be sent here (6)
- See 15 Across
- And 14 Across. Author whose most recent novel is The Fear Index (6,6)
- Dixon, the judge who has just left Strictly Come Dancing (6)
- False god (4)
- And 9 Across. She is the subject of the movie The Iron Lady (8,8)
- Body of qualified voters (10)
- Delicate fabric made of thread in an open web-like pattern (4)

DOWN

- Physicist who discovered the atomic



- nucleus and won the 1908 Nobel Prize in chemistry (10)
- Blemish on the skin (4)
- Snake that suffocates its prey (6)
- During the Leveson inquiry into press ethics, this singer claimed there was a press countdown to her 16th birthday (6)
- Steven Spielberg film based on a novel by Michael Morpurgo (3,5)
- Liquid-filled blister (4)

SOLUTION (NO PEEKING)

- Across**
- Bros 8: Psychiatry
 - Thatcher 10: Heat
 - Robert 17: Alesha
 - Idol 19: Margaret
 - Electorate 22: Lace
- Down**
- Rutherford 3: Spot 4: Python
 - Church 6: War Horse 7: Cyst
 - Arithmetic 13: Sherlock
 - Tomboy 17: Aerial
 - Ides 20: Abel

- Addition, subtraction, multiplication and division (10)
- BBC series starring Benedict Cumberbatch (8)
- Girl who behaves in a boyish manner (6)
- Radio antenna (6)
- Julius Caesar was assassinated on the ____ of March (4)
- In the Bible he is slain by his elder brother Cain (4)



OFFERS

WIN A BREAK AT FAIRLAWNS HOTEL & SPA

TWO lucky *Defence Focus* readers can win a short break for two at Fairlawns, a hotel, restaurant, health club and spa in the West Midlands.

Set in extensive grounds to the north of Birmingham, Fairlawns provides a great base from which to explore the area's leading attractions, or simply relax.

Our winners will be offered a warm welcome as they make use of the full range of facilities which includes a superb health club. And, for a small supplement, there is a spa where guests

can choose from a wide range of treatments. There is also the opportunity for a second night's stay at a discounted rate.

On offer to the winners is:

- A club double room for one night
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- Dinner for two, including wine
- English breakfast
- The opportunity to stay a second night for only £50 bed and breakfast.

For more, visit www.fairlawns.co.uk



TO WIN
 Just email your name, address and phone number to dmc-newsdesk@mod.uk by 30 April 2012. Include the phrase "Fairlawns" in the subject line.



WIN CHOIR'S CD

Following the phenomenal success of their Christmas Number One single, *Wherever You Are*, the Military Wives are back with their debut album, *In My Dreams*, which already having reached Number One in the charts, looks set to achieve record sales.

It features a brand new title track,

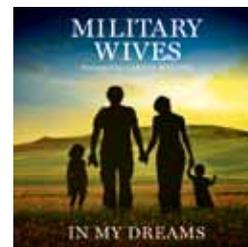
arranged especially for the album by Royal Wedding composer Paul Mealar (who also penned *Wherever You Are* for the choir). Other songs include *With or Without You* (U2), Adele's smash-hit *Make You Feel My Love*, and the Coldplay classic *Fix You*.

The choir, consisting of the partners

of Armed Forces personnel who are based predominantly at RMB Chivenor in Devon are joined on the album by choirs from Catterick, Lympstone and Portsmouth, just a few of the choirs now in existence, with more emerging every week.

The album also features X Factor finalist, Jonjo Kerr, who is currently serving in Afghanistan with 3rd Battalion The Yorkshire Regiment.

Defence Focus has 10 copies of *In My Dreams* to give away, including one copy signed by the choir and one signed by Gareth Malone. *In My Dreams* is out now on Decca Records.



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