

IRONMAN: AMPUTEE ROYAL MARINE CONQUERS TRIATHLON

DefenceFocus

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FINAL TESTS

Hundreds of ground crew have kept RAF planes flying over Libya

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EDITOR'S NOTE

DefenceFocus

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DANNY CHAPMAN

So maybe the Arab Spring has become the Arab Summer, in Libya at least (no sign of summer in London yet), with joy on the streets as it looks like the game is up for Gaddafi. Even if he has not been caught by the time you read this it would seem there is little hope left for his former regime, and the "Free Libya Forces" and National Transitional Council will be taking over the running of the country.

There is already much difference of opinion amongst commentators over whether the toppling of the Gaddafi regime vindicates the NATO mission in Libya or whether the country will now descend into civil war. Time will tell. One thing is for certain though, and that is all three Services, in particular the RAF and Navy, have been very busy indeed over the last five months supporting the NATO campaign, and their involvement has clearly made a difference.

Defence Focus writer Tristan Kelly visited the base in Italy a couple of weeks

ago where the RAF personnel involved in Operation ELLAMY are based. And in this issue we herald the work of the often unsung ground crews who have made it possible for the Tornados and Typhoons to strike at key Gaddafi targets. While the message from our leaders at the moment is clearly one of the mission is not over yet and won't be until the Libyan people are safe from violence, how long the RAF are needed in Italy and the various Royal Navy ships needed in the Mediterranean remains to be seen. Of course we'll keep our online pages updated with the latest developments.

Apart from events in Libya it has been a pretty quiet month in Defence. It's Ramadan so things in Afghanistan have been fairly quiet, with the exception of some large scale attacks by the Taliban, notably against the British Council offices in Kabul.

I guess September, with the return of Parliament, the end of Ramadan, a new brigade beginning operations in Helmand, and the 10th anniversary of 9/11 all occurring, things will become hectic again. Maybe the English summer might begin too.

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IN MEMORIAM

DEATHS ON OPERATIONS - 26 JULY TO 26 AUGUST



Marine James Robert Wright

Marine James Robert Wright, from J Company, 42 Commando Royal Marines, serving as part of Combined Force Nad 'Ali (North), was killed in Helmand province, southern Afghanistan, on Friday 5 August 2011.

He was wounded by a grenade, which was fired into his unit's base at Checkpoint Kamiabi when it came under attack following an extraction back to base after his patrol engaged insurgents in Nad 'Ali district. He was evacuated to the hospital at Camp Bastion where sadly, despite medical treatment, he later died of his wounds.

Aged 22, from Weymouth, Dorset, Marine Wright joined the Royal Marines in November 2008. Joining J Company he made many close friends, and had been carving out a very successful career. He was an immensely proud J Company 'Jester' and lived up to the true spirit of the Company; hardworking, professional yet socially robust. For Marine Wright, being in the Royal Marines was the supreme job, and he was looking forward to a long and successful career wearing the coveted Green Beret.

He leaves behind his grandparents, father David, mother Sallie, sister Katie, and partner Shelley, who is expecting their baby.



Lieutenant Daniel John Clack

Lieutenant Daniel John Clack, from 1st Battalion The Rifles, was killed in Afghanistan on 12 August 2011.

The ten-man patrol he was leading was struck by an improvised explosive device, killing him and injuring five other members of his patrol while they were entering the village of Dactran, Nahr-e Saraj district, Helmand province, to speak to the local nationals, and discuss a shura due to take place the next day.

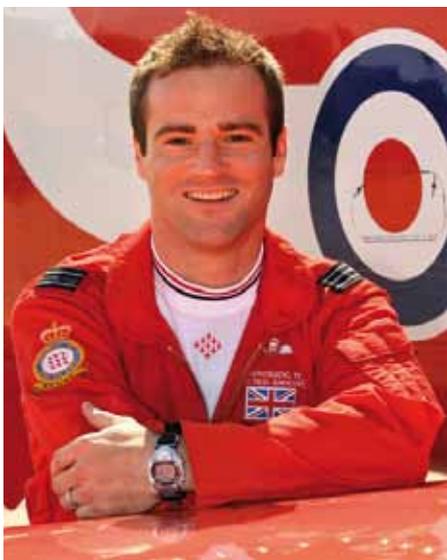
Aged 24, from North London, Lieutenant Clack studied at Exeter University before working, for a short

while, in Switzerland, driving for a ski chalet company, exercising his passion for skiing and adventure.

He joined the Army in 2009 and commissioned from the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst into The Rifles in April 2010, serving as 8 Platoon Commander, C Company.

Since his arrival, Lieutenant Clack had become immensely popular with his Riflemen, to whom he showed great empathy and loyalty. He was known as a man of integrity, and driven by doing the right thing.

He leaves behind a loving family: his mother Sue, father Martin, brother James, and fiancée Amy Tinley.



Flight Lieutenant Jon Egging

Flight Lieutenant Jon Egging of the Royal Air Force Aerobatic Team (The Red Arrows) was killed when his Hawk T1 aircraft - Red 4 - crashed around 1km south east of Bournemouth Airport on Saturday 20 August 2011.

Flight Lieutenant Egging, aged 33 from Rutland, flew the Harrier GR9 before joining the RAF Aerobatic Team. He became interested in flying at an early age, inspired by his airline pilot father who used to allow him into the cockpit for take off and landing.

Flight Lieutenant Egging joined the RAF in 2000. Selected for fast jet training

he flew the Tucano and Hawk before becoming a 'Creamie' Qualified Flying Instructor on the Hawk at RAF Valley, teaching both students and instructors. He went on to serve with IV (AC) Squadron - 'Happy IV', based at RAF Cottesmore, flying the Harrier GR9.

He was proud to support coalition ground forces when flying operational missions in Afghanistan. He became the Squadron Qualified Flying Instructor during his last year on 'Happy IV', making the transition to teach on the Harrier Operational Conversion Unit, RAF Wittering, in 2010.

He leaves behind his wife, Emma. *(Note: this is not an operational death)*



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Image: 'Nurture Nature' Barry John
Courtesy of the 'Other Worlds' project

Armed and dangerous:
Senior Aircraftman Boland
from 3 (Fighter) Squadron
removing the pins
from a Typhoon

GROUND WORKS

A TEAM OF HUNDREDS IS MAKING SURE THE RAF'S FAST JETS GET THE JOB DONE IN THE SKIES OVER LIBYA. TRISTAN KELLY REPORTS.

“Put these in your ears,” says Squadron Leader Phil Leighton as he hands me some ear plugs seconds before yet another Typhoon screams along the runway.

The jet disappears into the clear blue sky over the southern Italian air base of Gioia del Colle bound for Libyan airspace. Our attention is then taken to a stationary, though no less noisy, Tornado GR4 sitting on the apron in front of us, connected to a starting unit with its fuselage being swept of any possible debris. Squadron Leader Leighton, the Chief Engineering Officer for II (Army Cooperation) Squadron, shouts over the roar that the engines have failed to fire properly.

TESTING TIMES

The Tornado is one of 16 from II (AC) Squadron stationed at Gioia as part of 906 Expeditionary Air Wing (EAW). The pressure is on to quickly diagnose the engine problem. The squadron are currently operating at twice their normal tempo, with planes departing on sorties day and night. News coverage almost exclusively focuses on the ‘pointy end’ of operations - the final blasts and bangs as air crew reach the climax of their missions to degrade the fighting ability of forces loyal to Colonel Gaddafi’s former regime. So it’s easy to forget the effort on the other side of the Mediterranean that is putting them there.

Of the 600 or so RAF and Army personnel deployed to Gioia del Colle, only a very small proportion actually kit up and ascend to the cockpit. The vast majority, such as Squadron Leader Leighton, are employed in servicing the multi-million-pound aircraft, organising the armaments, communications and intelligence, and countless other tasks.

It takes three hours to remove a Tornado engine and the same time to reinstall it. But after further checks it is with visible satisfaction that Squadron Leader Leighton informs me that this Tornado engine has now fired and the problem has been rectified, meaning a lengthy scrutiny by his engineers has been avoided. Diagnostics have brought up a couple of avionics issues, so Squadron Leader Leighton will hand the plane over to experts in that area for further checks. But the plane should be back out on the runway, ready for that night’s sorties.

Further pressure is applied to the engineers by the fact that each Tornado used on Op ELLAMY enters primary maintenance on the base after approximately 200 flying hours have been completed. As missions over Libya are lasting five to six hours rather than the



Nuts and bolts: 3 (Fighter) Squadron armourers attach weapons to a Typhoon



Heavy lift: an airman from Movements removes a Tornado engine from a truck



Sunny forecast: Flying Officer Rebecca Parfitt of the Mobile MET Unit



Tickling over: Senior Aircraftwoman Philippa Williamson from General Engineering Flight works on the engine of an aircraft tractor

usual three to four, checks are required after only around 35 sorties. Then, a further team of engineers will fully check the power, flight, avionics and weapons systems. After two such maintenance regimes the jets return to the UK for an in depth service and overhaul.

AIR TO GROUND

Over on the other side of the sprawling area of the base that the Italian Air Force has given to British forces for the duration of the operation, a Typhoon of 3 (Fighter) Squadron sits ready to receive its compliment of air-to-air and air-to-ground missiles.

Crouching under the wing is Weapons Technician Corporal Owen Watkins, ready to carefully manoeuvre an Enhanced Paveway II ground attack missile from a hydraulic jack onto the aircraft. It will take up to an hour to fully load and calibrate. He is one of numerous armourers who load dozens of missiles onto the Typhoons each day.

It’s mid-August and more than 700 missiles have been dropped by the RAF crews based in Italy. But Corporal Watkins is not complaining, for him the chance to put his training into action has been extremely rewarding. “It’s nice to do it,” he grins. “Back in the UK we have been using just practice missiles, so to be out here doing it with the real stuff is great.”

What Corporal Watkins doesn’t like is seeing any of the missiles again when the plane returns. From time to time planes do return with weapons not deployed. This is unpopular with engineers - it means having to go through the laborious process of removing the weapon before certain maintenance procedures can be carried out. But they’d rather have the extra work than a trigger-happy pilot. “We appreciate that if the pilot can’t positively identify the target and is clear to drop, he can’t fire, but it’s disappointing to see them come back.”

Making his final checks he attaches the bright red ‘missile-armed’ warnings and the Typhoon is ready for the pilot and final pre-flight checks. Corporal Watkins will return to the aircraft on the runway to remove the warnings and will be one of the last to see the aircraft leave on its mission, hoping it will return somewhat lighter in a few hours’ time.

NO BRAKE IN OPERATIONS

For Corporal Watkins and the Typhoon engineers the focus is on getting the plane ready for action and in the air as soon as possible, but for Corporal Neil Dobson and his fellow ‘Squippers’ it is all about stopping the thing when the job is finished.

In addition to maintaining the pilots’

Underrated: II (AC) Squadron engineers jack up a Tornado GR4 at Gioia del Colle so they can replace a bracket on the right hand wheel



Pictures: SAC Sally Raimondo

night-vision equipment and flight suits, Squippers (Survival Equipment Fitters) are concerned with the Typhoon's arrester parachutes. Unfolding what looks like a giant green jellyfish, Corporal Dobson explains that while Typhoons can land and stop perfectly adequately using only their brakes, parachutes are used due to the extremely high level of operations.

"Using the brakes generates huge amounts of heat," he says while pulling straight all the 15 or so fabric tentacles of the 'jellyfish', carefully checking for damage. "The engineers need to access the engines quickly on landing to check oil levels etc, but if the brakes are cooked it means they can't access them immediately, so it really slows the whole process down. If they deploy the chute and use the brakes less we can turn the plane around much quicker."

The packing process, not dissimilar to getting a very large sleeping bag into a very small stuff bag, is carried out by a team of two and can take up to an hour. 276 have so far been packed on the operation. The level of operations is also taking its toll on the chutes, which detach completely on deployment and are recovered from the runway, with most having to be replaced

after 20 deployments, compared with around 50 on normal use in the UK.

TYPHOONS, TORNADOS AND THUNDER

At 'Hotel Gioia', the three-storey green office block that has been taken over by 906 EAW as the HQ for the operation, is another piece in the jigsaw: Flying Officer Rebecca Parfitt and her Vaisala field met station. A reservist from the Met Office she is part of the Mobile Met Unit and is based in Italy to make sure pilots and planners have the latest readings and forecasts.

Speaking of her Vaisala (a mobile weather unit) with the same enthusiasm as pilots of their fast jets, Flying Officer Parfitt explains that while it may be clear blue skies and topping 30 degrees Celsius today, the weather here can change rapidly, and violently. "Thunderstorms here are a key feature" she says. "We are 1,000ft up and have some interesting local topography. The westerly winds drive air up the hill and gives it that extra punch it needs to generate some fairly big thunderstorms."

Combined with Met Office data from the UK as well as Italian state forecasts, she delivers around seven updates to pilots and planners a day, with the weather

forecast divided into colour states; blue being good and red bad. In turn these are aligned with the limits on what conditions planes can either depart or return in. "We very much try and tailor each forecast to each individual sortie," she explains, "when they are going, what they're flying and what they are aiming to achieve when they go there. But it's not just the air assets that we provide information for; it's also engineers and communications people. Everyone needs to know if there is a thunderstorm or strong winds coming."

With the mess tent buzzing with activity as the chefs and caterers prepare for the 7pm rush it is obvious just how many different skills and roles it takes to keep just one jet in the air.

Tornado crewman Weapon Systems Officer Flight Lieutenant Mark Tolman of II (AC) Squadron says that despite the aircrew receiving much of the glory, the effort of all the 'backroom staff' is not lost on the pilots. "There's no way that the pilots or the engineers could do it on their own," he says. "It's the support team, the guys behind that you don't normally see or hear about that make the difference. You need absolutely everyone otherwise it just doesn't work." 



Press pack: Afghan journalists explain how life has changed over the last two years (inset) the conference facility in the Governor's media suite, Lashkar Gah

Pictures: Michelle Callus

FREE PRESS

SHOCK AS LOCAL JOURNALISTS TELL IAN CARR AFGHAN GOVERNMENT IS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Two years ago I visited the Governor's media centre in Lashkar Gah to interview some local journalists to get their views on life in Helmand province.

The media centre was a basic, narrow room in Hotel Bost. In the room was an old table with an oilcloth sheet on it. The surroundings were grim, as were the media sitting opposite me.

"As reporters we are really pleased with the Taliban, they are really fast at getting information to us," I was told as fingers were jabbed at me. "People are not happy with the foreign forces," they said. "Things are getting worse day by day."

This year I had a chance to go back and meet many of them again. What a difference. The media centre now has a fully equipped conference facility, which is often filled to capacity, and the media suite frankly would be the envy of many a British government department.

The demeanour of the journalists was, to be honest, still grim, but their views had changed. "In Helmand over the last two years there has been lots of change. The Afghan National Army has improved and there is security over a wide area. If you remember, before, just a few kilometres from the Governor's office used to belong to the Taliban," said Mohammed Haroon.

"With the government too there have been many improvements. The way it works in Lashkar Gah they now want to do the same in other districts. Because of this, people now make homes here and grow crops, people are even moving here from Kandahar," said Mr Khanzad.

"People are happy about their security and between civilians and the military there has been good co-operation," he said.

Not everything is perfect of course. They told me that people in remote villages were still frightened of the insurgents, and corruption in the administrative and judicial

systems was a major worry. Although even this concern was balanced. "Because of projects in Marjah and Nad 'Ali people see that the government is doing something for them, so they are starting to trust them," said Haroon.

Attitudes to ISAF were still cool, but a tacit nod was given to their role in having provided a chink of light for the future.

"For three decades people come, they fight and then they leave. But now with our security forces improving, if they can be given the equipment and material they need, they will be able to establish security," said Khanzad.

The journalists were at last able to look at issues other than security. "Now there is less poppy, people grow more wheat, but it is very cheap. If the farmers could export to other places, other countries, they would get better prices and it would be very helpful," said Noor Ahmad Noori.

That sounds like a good news story. 



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PEACE FOR A GENERATION

Eastern promise: in East Patrol's part of the buffer zone, a farmer is permitted to exploit the land

FOR 37 YEARS THE UN HAS SUPERVISED THE CEASEFIRE IN CYPRUS. IAN CARR MEETS THE UK TROOPS ON OP TOSCA

There is no weekend in Nicosia, just day six and day seven. Such are the demands of the job for the 300 troops of 3 Royal Anglian Group and the various military attachments which make up the UK's current contribution to the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP).

Many people still think of Op Tosca, the UK's biggest overseas operation after Afghanistan, as the 'flip flop' tour. But anyone posted here who thinks that the most important piece of kit they will need is a Frisbee is in for a shock.

Since the 1974 Turkish response to a military coup on Cyprus, which was backed by the Greek Government in Athens, Cyprus has been divided by a buffer zone. For almost four decades, two opposing forces, of around 60,000 troops, have jealously

situations aren't handled properly.

"You can't understand this until you go out into the buffer zone and see for yourself," says Colonel Hughes. "As you travel round it you will see that, in places, it looks like a scene from Gallipoli, with machine gun bunkers and trench line observation posts. I can assure you that both sides take this very seriously."

The buffer zone is a difficult concept to get your head round, and its uniqueness embodies the challenges that face those who must patrol it. The issues are complex. For a start each side has a different idea about what the zone actually is. "The Turkish view is that it is a no-man's land, whereas the Greek Cypriots see it as a buffer zone but with all the land in between being legitimately owned by people who have the right to use it for economic

George Best lies on a table. On a desk stands an unopened bottle of champagne. In what was once a comfortable residential area, a car stands abandoned after its owner fled to take cover from a hail of bullets.

More poignant reminders that a state of peace is not something you can take for granted include the battle-damaged buildings, some of which, like the hospital, were strafed almost to destruction.

The central buffer zone fulfils the stereotype of a contested frontier keeping two communities apart. At the crossing points, uniformed officials stamp your passport before you go on your way.

But elsewhere the nature of the zone is not so black and white. It is almost a state of mind. Within it, to the east and west, there are 15,000 people living and working.



No-fly zone: an abandoned passenger jet in the UN Protected Area

Picture: Ian Carr



No show: in Nicosia's buffer zone, shops have been closed for nearly 40 years

Picture (L&R): SSgt Ratislav Ochotnický



Front line: buildings in the buffer zone are stark reminders of the war

scrutinised each other's every move. Every sandbag added to a fortification, each aerial added to a checkpoint, is noticed and protested against.

Sandwiched between them are 860 unarmed UN troops. It is their job to patrol this buffer zone, often in searing heat, and impartially maintain the status quo by spotting and reporting any infringements of the conditions of the ceasefire and intervening as necessary. For, although the fighting between the Greeks and the Turks may have stopped nearly 40 years ago, no peace agreement has ever been signed.

Colonel Gerard Hughes, UNFICYP Chief of Staff, explains: "It is our job to maintain a stable platform for the Cyprus peace process by preventing any reoccurrence of the fighting, or any military activity which would disturb that process."

But surely there isn't anything to worry about anymore is there? If this is your point of view, a thousand incidents a year would prove you wrong. Some may seem trivial, after all, what's a bit of name-calling between adults, or stone-throwing. But things can escalate all too easily if

activity," said Colonel Hughes.

Then there is the nature of it to understand. It runs for 180km across the north, occupying three per cent of the land, including some of the most valuable agricultural land on the island. It is 7.4km at its widest, and at its narrowest, in the centre of Nicosia, it is a little over three metres wide. "Here it's called 'Spear Alley', because the Greeks and the Turks used to lean out of their bedroom windows and try and stab each other with bayonets taped to broom handles," Lieutenant Chris Finbow tells me later as I trudge round it in 40-degree heat.

The central part of the buffer zone in Sector 2 runs through the centre of Nicosia. Walking along it is a bizarre experience. Butting right up on either side is the vibrant capital city going about its business, yet in this narrow corridor the clocks stopped nearly 40 years ago. Shops are frozen in aspic, their shelves filled with forgotten brands waiting for customers who never come. In a showroom, cars sit under a layer of dust with just 38km on the clock. In a tailor's shop, a framed picture of a youthful

In places it is quite porous, with people regularly moving across it.

Ensuring that those moving through, farming the land or working in the factories in the zone, have the necessary permission to do so is also the job of the patrols. It requires tact and professionalism. "We might see someone harvesting asparagus and ask to see their permit," says Gunner Chris Cobb of West Patrol. "They might not like it, which is understandable. It's like someone telling you what to do in your own garden. We let them have their moan, keep it friendly, and keep the temperature down."

Sometimes the patrols have to deal with hunters, "You can get eight or so with dogs and guns. We're unarmed and they can get a bit uppity; after all you're spoiling their fun. If they don't have the right permits we get them to leave. Sometimes, as they slope off, they may fire off a round behind you just to make a point. But they know there's no point in shooting you, it would only make their lives difficult," said Gunner George Turrell.

The responsibility for patrolling Sector 2 lies with the UK. It is arguably the most

Picture: Ian Carr



Blues in twos: Gunners Chris Cobb and George Turrell of West Patrol

Picture: Ian Carr



No careful owners: a showroom in the buffer zone in Nicosia

Picture: SSgt Ratislav Ochotnický

complex of the sectors. "In the city, you have the dense urban issues and the proximity of population," explains Lieutenant Colonel Richard Lyne, 3 Royal Anglian Group's Commanding Officer. "In the west, you have primarily farming and minor commercial activity. In the east it's more about land ownership and construction." For example, two farmers may have a dispute over who owns a piece of land and it may fall to the patrol to calm things down. "Expansion of the city as you see it today is constrained on either side by the buffer zone," continues Lieutenant Colonel Lyne, "so the value of that land is increasing almost on a daily basis, so land ownership issues are a constant theme. The variety of issues is the great thing about this operation. Whatever happens in the buffer zone has some kind of military impact either directly or in second or third order effect terms. Nothing can be

dealt with in isolation."

Knowing exactly where the boundaries of the buffer zone are is not straight forward either. "With today's surveying technology you would expect a set of very precise datum points," said Lieutenant Colonel Lyne. "But, when it was established, it was done quickly by drawing a line on a map with a green crayon. So, for example, whole blocks of buildings are in the buffer zone because they appear under the line."

It is cartographer Sergeant Liam Asquith's job to fine tune what is in and what is outside the buffer zone, and to provide the information needed for the authorities to make decisions about plans for developments within the zone. For that is another factor that UNFICYP must take into account in maintaining the status quo.

And, to help restore a state of normalisation, the use and development

of land in the buffer zone is under constant review. "We change the use of the zone where we want to change it. It's not a free for all," said Lieutenant Colonel Lyne. "Everything has a nuance. It is essential that you understand the context and likely outcomes before making any decisions or taking action because the knock on effect either on your patch, or in a neighbouring sector, could be considerable."

The operational planning here is the same as in any other theatre of operations, and having situational awareness is an important way to get ahead of the game. "If I send a unit out," says Lieutenant Colonel Lyne, "they are as situationally aware of what's going on in the buffer zone as I am."

A crucial element of the UNFICYP troops' work is building up relationships with the opposing forces; getting to know the individuals and understanding the background to why things have happened. "That way if a violation is reported, such as overmanning at a checkpoint, it is solved much more quickly because you are talking to someone in the Opfors (opposing forces) who knows you and who will sort it out," said Lieutenant Colonel Lyne.

Things at the micro-level really matter. When the Opfors leaders come together for discussions, at an impartial location in the buffer zone, it is the UNFICYP troops' job to make sure it happens and goes smoothly. "That sounds easy, but if you are there to enable them, you'd better make sure it's done right. You don't want to be the person that upsets it all because you have got your timings wrong and one side arrives early and gains a perceived advantage. All these little diplomatic niceties are great when they work, but if you cock it up, it has the potential to cause great affront – all perhaps because a soldier didn't understand that all-important operating context," added Lieutenant Colonel Lyne. "That's great for the wider development of the guys," he added, "where else are they going to work in a mission where their direct involvement and the decisions they make as soldiers has such an impact?"

Lieutenant Colonel Lyne sees the type of work in Cyprus as a fundamental part of the role and development of a soldier. "In any military activity you need people with a spectrum of experience, from combat operations to peacekeeping roles," he says. "At the end of combat ops in Afghanistan, who knows what the next challenge will be? It may well be a peacekeeping op. Today you need soldiers with that delicate balance of mindsets, who can wade in and get things sorted, but who are also able to step back and think about things – the UNFICYP experience certainly exposes you to a unique challenge in that respect." 

Raising to Distinction



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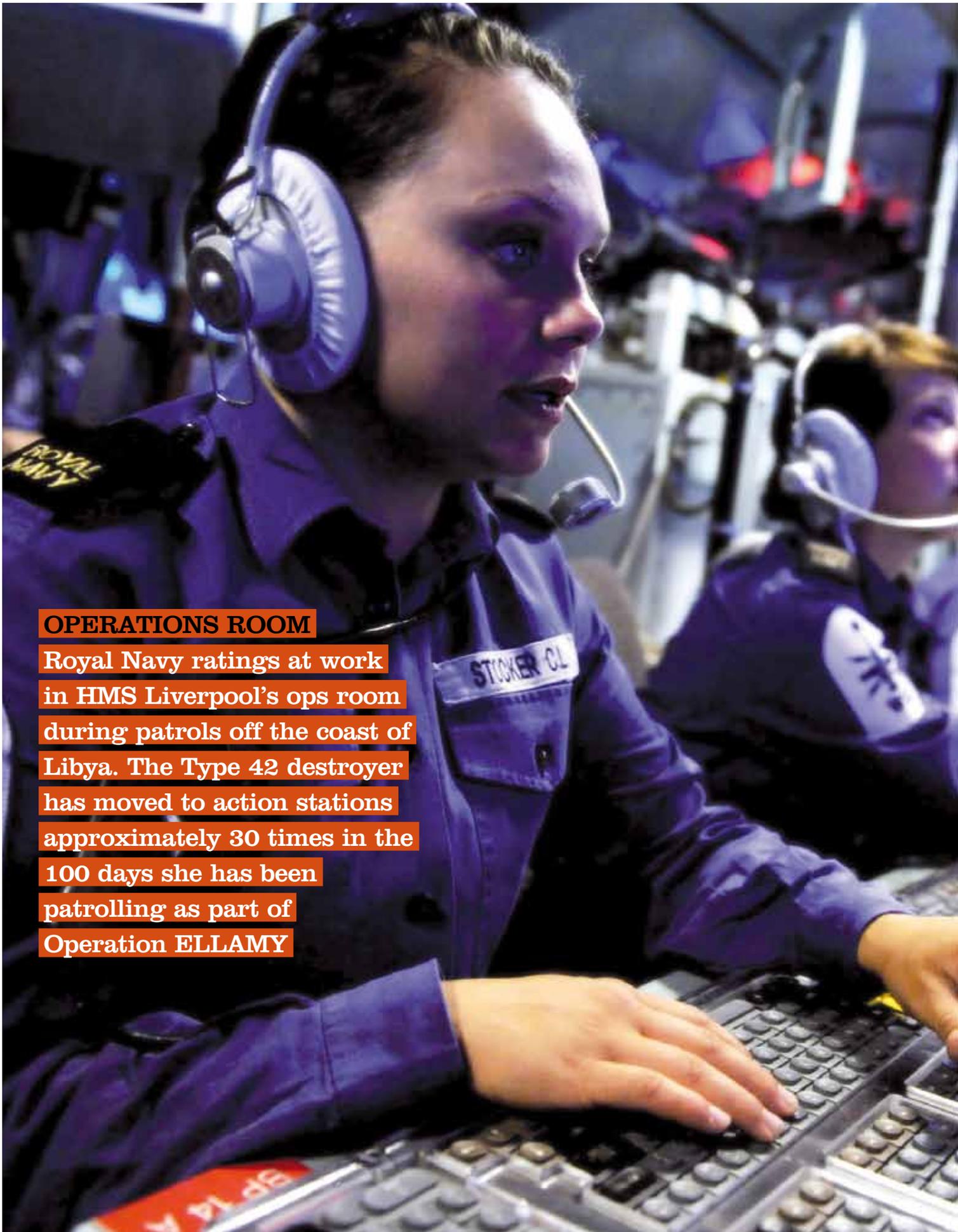


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OPERATIONS ROOM

Royal Navy ratings at work in HMS Liverpool's ops room during patrols off the coast of Libya. The Type 42 destroyer has moved to action stations approximately 30 times in the 100 days she has been patrolling as part of Operation ELLAMY

Picture: LA(Phot) Caz Davies



VITAL NUMBERS

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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.

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

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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).



Man with the plans: Major Mike Eytte and his team are preparing the way for 2014

Picture: Ian Carr

DESIGNS ON THE FUTURE

AT LASHKAR GAH A ROYAL ENGINEERS TEAM IS HELPING BUILD A FUTURE BEYOND 2014 WRITES IAN CARR



Material world: concrete is replacing mud as the building material of choice

Building a new future for Afghanistan has a more tangible meaning for Royal Engineers Major Mike Eytte and his team than it does for most people.

Based at Lashkar Gah, they work for the Helmand Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) as an engineering design consultancy, giving advice on a range of projects that have been identified as critical to the long-term success of the transition of authority for security in the province to the Afghans.

“Our job is to plan and deliver work in accordance with PRT requirements. The newly-formed 28 government line ministries are, with our help, beginning to prioritise projects and to start to take on the work that, until now, the PRT has been

doing on their behalf,” said Major Eytte.

An important part of the team’s work is to develop Afghan expertise so that they will be able to plan, build and maintain their own infrastructure in the future.

At the moment, the FCO and DFID are the thematic heads for the district planning budget, signing off work in accordance with the programme of work prioritised by Governor Mangal.

“We provide expertise across the whole engineering process, including design and the placing of contracts for packages of work. We know how to tender, project-manage, and go through the acceptance and handover stage of a project. We also perform the function of clerk of works throughout the build phases. These are skills that the construction industry in the

Picture: Ian Carr

UK take for granted, but here they are new concepts,” said Major Eytley. And it is these types of skills that the team needs to pass onto Afghans in the line ministries.

At the moment Major Eytley and his team regularly go out on the ground to check on their projects. The fact they are soldiers helps. “We have to beg, borrow or steal trips on patrols when we want to take a look,” said Major Eytley.

Usually the stops are made en route as part of the patrol, with the engineers having no more than 20 minutes to make their assessments. “Because we are trained soldiers, we can get out to these places, and we are used to making quick, detailed appraisals. But we’ve also got to check that the contractors are doing what they should be doing.”

With the clock ticking to 2014, when the Afghans will need to be able to cope for themselves, and with an involvement in more than 100 projects ranging from the building of checkpoints to the construction and development of Bost Airport and the Helmand Police Training Centre, there is a lot to do.

There are 17 in the team, with a core of eight who have a range of engineering skill sets, each of whom has responsibility for roughly a dozen projects at any one time. There are two Afghans attached to the team who have been brought in from Kabul. “People with the right skills are hard to find, but it is our intention to grow those skills; we are pushing hard,” said Major Eytley.

According to him, the development of the road network has delivered the biggest gain so far. “It benefits the military and civilians alike, as it connects the district capital with villages and allows the economy to grow,” he said.

New canals and irrigation systems are also being created, with much of the maintenance already being taken care of by Afghans. Such work, of course, is critical for the future of communities that depend on agriculture, but more has to be done.

An important part of the team’s work is carrying out needs assessments to help the thematic heads and line ministries to identify priorities, and to compile a list of what already exists and make decisions about what could be improved. “We also have to make sure that Afghans know how to maintain things; they can’t just keep building new things,” said Major Eytley.

To ensure that good practice is followed, a database of competent companies who have demonstrated their ability to tender for and produce work of an acceptable standard is being compiled. Of the 500 or so companies on the database, Major Eytley’s team has done business with 150 of them.



Grand designs: 3D computer simulations, like this one of buildings at Bost Airport, help contractors understand what is required



Dig for victory: work underway for hardstanding buildings at a police checkpoint

Pictures: Charlie Walsh



“We help companies to understand what they need to do to satisfy pre-qualification questionnaires, just saying ‘yes we can do the work’ isn’t enough. We send out the invitations to tender, and afterwards we back brief the companies who haven’t been shortlisted to explain why,” said Major Eytley. It’s time-consuming work, but essential.

Naturally, when sending out tenders, Major Eytley and his team must translate the specifications into Dari and Pashto, but in a country where so many are illiterate, often documents cannot be read and many even struggle to understand the concept of plans, maps and drawings. To get round this, the engineers include in the requirements printouts of 3D computer simulations of what the end result should look like.

But it is not just the Afghans who have had to learn to look at things a new way: “I

have had to teach our guys, when designing, they need to do it to Afghan standards using local materials and building methods, such as using arches and mud blocks, and to do it to traditional standards,” said Major Eytley.

But, while mud has been used successfully for centuries, concrete is becoming the must-have material, presenting the engineers with another challenge. “Using concrete is OK as long as they use it properly, reinforcing it correctly and remembering to tamp it down to remove air pockets,” said Major Eytley.

So there is a lot for the team to do, from ensuring that local contractors know how to lay concrete properly to helping the Government decide what matters most to the district. But if it’s a checkpoint, or a Chamber of Commerce that needs building, Major Eytley and his men are the guys you want on the job. **DP**

NEVER WASTE A GOOD CRISIS

ANDREW MANLEY, THE MAN CHOSEN TO MANAGE THE NEW DEFENCE INFRASTRUCTURE ORGANISATION (DIO), TALKS TO LEIGH HAMILTON ABOUT HOUSING, REBASING AND BUDGETS



Picture: Harland Quarrington

DF: The DIO is a newly-formed part of the MOD. Can you explain what its key tasks and priorities are?

AM: DIO was stood up on 1 April this year and its task is to manage all of the property assets of the MOD. It's also there to maintain and construct new facilities and to provide all of the soft facilities management, including cleaning and catering on the estate.

The core of Defence Infrastructure is the old Defence Estates organisation. Some people say that the big difference between the two is that Defence Infrastructure not only determines where people live and work, it also determines how people live and work. There is not a single person in the military that doesn't live in one of our houses, work in one of our offices or train on part of our estate. Every day we touch the lives of every single person working in this organisation.

We manage everything that Defence Estates did, plus some stuff that was out in the TLBs, plus all of the PFI contracts that look after the estate.

In numbers, we've gone from being around 4,000 people to around 7,000 people and, while Defence Estates spent about £1.9bn a year, Defence Infrastructure will spend £3.2bn.

Amongst our priorities is focusing on what we call an operational model, which is identifying what it is we do and how we do it. We also need to fix the less-than-perfect management information systems that underpin what we do.

Our relationship with the user is also a priority area, and we are putting together a set of processes that will mean we work with the user to determine their long term demands of the estate and then do the operational planning year-on-year.

We contract everything in from industry, so we are in the process of realigning a lot of the contracting that we are doing. The MOD engages about 500 different contractors on the infrastructure side, and we should rationalise that down into a much smaller number. The other priority is to rationalise the estate.

DF: There seems to be less media criticism lately of Service accommodation - have there been improvements?

AM: The quality of Service accommodation has improved, especially family accommodation. Through a gradual programme of investment 96 per cent of it is now considered 'good' or 'very good'.

We've also invested a huge amount of money in the Single Living Accommodation Modernisation (SLAM) project. We have 130,000 single living bed spaces around the UK. Some of it is very, very good, but half is still to the standard that we would consider unacceptable. A lot of this is used for very transitory moves of troops who are moving around the country or going to an overseas assignment, but our intention is to try to bring all of that older accommodation up to standard, as far as possible.

DF: Are further improvements to accommodation possible in the current financial climate?

AM: Budget restraints are not helping at the moment, but then the problem with Defence Infrastructure is that there is always a greater demand for accommodation, workshops and training estates than there ever is budget to provide it. One of the DIO's key functions is to provide a balance between the demand of the user on one side and the available budget on the other. That's exactly what the organisation is there to manage, so that tension is an inherent part of our business model.

We spend a large sum of money, but that doesn't absolve you of making hard choices. Single Living Accommodation is one we feel very sensitive about, and it has a very obvious manifestation for single personnel who can one day be living in a brand spanking new living accommodation block that we built in the last two or three years, and suddenly find themselves in something that probably dates back to the 60s that hasn't been upgraded for some time.

DF: You have been made the Senior Responsible Owner for basing. How significant a change will the rebasing review have on the estate, and what will it mean in practice for personnel?

AM: The biggest challenge that the DIO has got this minute is how we rebase the Army out of Germany and associated moves for the other two Services. The Secretary of State has announced that, by the end of the decade, the Army will be fully based back in the UK, with the exception of Expeditionary Forces. That, of course, will have a significant impact, and we now have to work out exactly which garrisons and bases we will use to accommodate the whole of the Army in the UK.

It will be the first time, I think, that we will have the majority of the Army in the UK for several hundred years, which is no mean undertaking. You're not just talking about the soldiers, but their families and all the support structures for them.

On the ground it means that we will invest in certain bases to increase the capacity, and we will recycle some RAF bases into being Army garrisons. We will equally look to close down a number of things

which we consider to be redundant. Directionally, what it says is we will be in fewer places, but where we are, we will have a bigger presence and a more sophisticated lay down of all the facilities you would expect to find in a garrison town.

The RAF rebasing means one very big change in that we will migrate the activities at RAF Leuchars in Scotland up to RAF Lossiemouth, which is about 126 miles further north, and Leuchars will become an Army garrison.

What does all this mean for individuals? It means another move for a lot of people, but it's not unusual to find military personnel who have moved every two or three years during their career in this organisation.

Our plan is to work with the Services to try and mitigate as far as possible the impact of those moves for people, such as moving them as part of the natural cycle in their careers.

As you look at the new employment model, which is to try to provide greater stability for service personnel families going forward, obviously we're

“Every day we touch the lives of every single person working in this organisation”

looking to try to get a situation where the lay down becomes rather more permanent. That allows us then to invest in a more routine basis in the sites that we value, and stop spending money in one place just to find that we'll then move units out of it.

We are working on a plan on how we do rebasing but this is a project that is going to last a decade.

DF: Is the future bright for DIO?

AM: At the moment we've got a government which has made some very clear decisions about the future of the military. We will progress with the implementation of those decisions. That's point number one.

Point number two is that we are in a time of tight budgets at the MOD following the global financial crisis. They always say never waste a good crisis, because a good crisis can be the basis on which to initiate positive changes. The next point is that, with my arrival from outside plus the preparedness of the current management team in DIO to really tackle the issues, we've suddenly got the opportunity to move forward and really transform this organisation.

It's probably a once-in-a-decade opportunity to change what was an estates organisation, that was not much loved by anybody in Defence, into something that might just be seen to be dynamic, effective and efficient. **DF**



CONSPICUOUS GALLANTRY CROSS

Afghanistan was definitely my favourite tour. In 2006, we were going into Musa Qal'ah for a recce in Scimitar tanks and got fairly close to a village but didn't realise that the villagers had fled. All that remained were a few tractors and trailers, which we now know were filled with insurgents. We kept a few Spartan vehicles on high ground to give us cover, but as we moved through the village our first vehicle got hit by a rocket-propelled grenade. Seconds later, our second vehicle got hit by an improvised explosive device, instantly killing three soldiers. Insurgents tried to ambush us from both sides, raining down

“ I picked Compo up, chucked him over my shoulder and ran back to our Scimitar ”

machine gun fire.

Travelling in a third Scimitar, all my training kicked into life and I fired into the ambush area. We didn't think that anyone could have survived the explosion when suddenly our commander spotted a body lying 50 metres from the blown up Scimitar.

With the vehicle in flames, we initially thought the 'body' was an insurgent, but realised it was Trooper Martyn Compton. Immediately, I put on my helmet and webbing and exchanged glances with my commander, sharing silent agreement that I would run 70 metres to get Compo. Luckily, as I fought my way forward, two soldiers sprinted the length of the blown up vehicle and gave me some fire cover while I ran to Compo, who was barely conscious.

I picked Compo up, chucked him over my shoulder, and ran back to our Scimitar and

Picture: Harland Quarrington

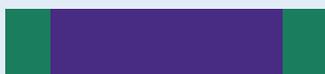


MY MEDALS

Corporal of Horse Andy Radford, aged 29, joined the Royal Engineers in 1997. He now serves in The Life Guards and has been awarded four medals. Interview: Lorraine McBride.

somehow extracted back to HQ. But there was no time to switch off. While a Chinook flew Compo to Camp Bastion hospital, we went back down with the Paras to extract bodies, including one of my best mates.

It was an honour to be recognised, but at the same time a total squadron effort. At my investiture, the Queen was very well informed; in fact, she pretty much knew everything about Compo and asked how he was. I was very impressed.



NORTHERN IRELAND

Joining the Army was all I ever wanted to do as a small boy. I

was influenced by my gran who was forever reminiscing about my granddad and her brothers who fought in the Second World War, including my great uncle who won a Military Medal. My first tour to West Belfast was a very good eye-opener, mainly because we didn't know who was who. I mainly built anti-riot screens for riot marches, which was something you'd never see in England. Our reception was definitely mixed and locals either loved or hated us. My 'lowlight' has to be getting hit with a brick in the throat by a kid, which was more funny than anything else. He was probably only 10, the same age as my eldest son, but he had a good throw on him!



IRAQ

Tours like Iraq are what most people join the Army for, though I had mixed emotions; I didn't know what to expect but as a section second-in-command, I enjoyed the responsibility. Saddam was still in power when we went in. I was one of 40,000 soldiers stationed in Kuwait waiting to go over the border. Then, when we crossed, there was nothing. We stayed well clear of the population. As an Engineer, I looked for mines and helped build the field hospital. I missed my family, but you try your best to crack on with the job and the camaraderie was brilliant.



AFGHANISTAN

I have loads of memories of Afghanistan, and every single day was a memory in itself. I had transferred in 2004 to The Life Guards where the ceremonial side makes me so proud, and my first Trooping [the Colour] was a great day, despite a few nerves. A perk of rank is that I get to pick my own horse, so I normally pick Jorrocks.

Afghanistan was very different to that. Obviously, the day in Musa Qal'ah, when I won my Conspicuous Gallantry Cross, is going to remain in my mind, but as hard as it undoubtedly was at times, our entire troop stuck together with non-stop banter every day. Anything is fair game, and any issue that anyone has is picked on. It sounds harsh but if you show you're fed-up, you get twice as much stick, so it's best to put up and shut up or give it straight back.

One of the funniest moments was in Now Zad when we were mortared all day, every day. There was a lull in mortar fire when we decided to dress up in anything we could find before making our own camp video to lighten the mood. Even the Afghan soldiers joined in.



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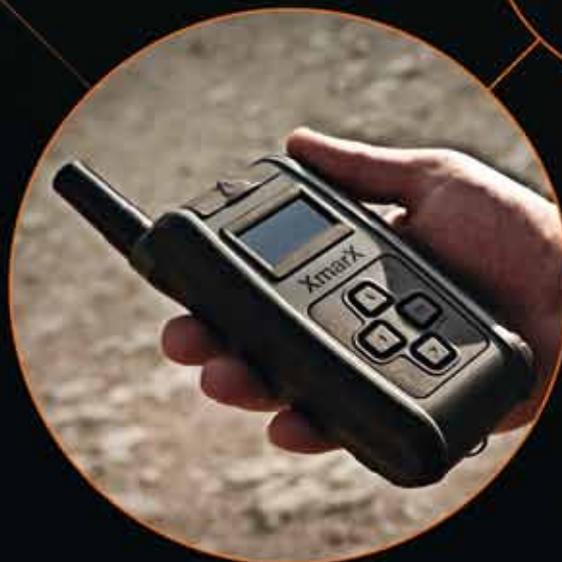
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Bag of tricks: Royal Navy Leading Medical Assistant Iola White (foreground) provides healthcare advice to local Afghans

NAVY MEDICS ON PATROL IN HELMAND PROVINCE

MEDICAL ASSISTANT TANYA WILSON IS ONE OF AROUND 75 MEMBERS OF THE ROYAL NAVY CURRENTLY PROVIDING NEARLY 80 PER CENT OF THE FRONT LINE MEDICAL COVER IN HELMAND PROVINCE.

Having joined the Royal Navy in 2008, MA Wilson was last year offered the chance to attach to the Royal Marines for their six-month tour of Afghanistan, and she jumped at the chance.

Providing lifesaving medical support

to over 450 patrols per week, the team of Navy medics, with an average age of 25, can expect to be out on the ground with their infantry colleagues for anything between one and twelve hours at a time.

As well as looking after the British Marines and soldiers, the Navy medics

also mentor the Afghan warriors who serve alongside the ISAF troops and pass on valuable healthcare advice to the local population.

One of 25 female Navy medics serving in Helmand at the moment Medical Assistant Wilson is currently working as



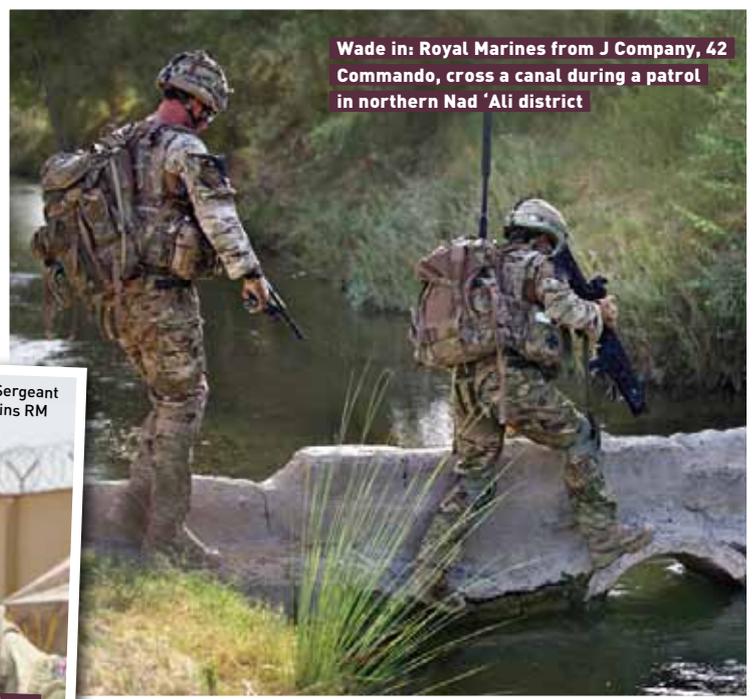
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Wade in: Royal Marines from J Company, 42 Commando, cross a canal during a patrol in northern Nad 'Ali district



Picture: Sergeant Ben Perkins RM

All smiles: Medical Assistant Tanya Wilson

Picture: Leading Airman (Photographer) David Hillhouse

the medic for J Company, 42 Commando Royal Marines.

She has swapped the wards of the Queen Alexandra Hospital in Portsmouth for the front line in Afghanistan where, since arriving in Nad 'Ali back in April, she has been busy taking part in regular patrols and operations with the men of J Company. She says it's been quite challenging:

"The work out here is so different to what I do at the hospital. I see a lot more primary healthcare and constantly feel on standby, waiting for something to happen. It means it's quite stressful because you can never properly relax or be off duty."

Over the course of the deployment, Medical Assistant Wilson has had to deal with serious life-threatening injuries from improvised explosive devices, and other wounds sustained by the troops in combat

on the ground.

As well as providing immediate first aid at the scenes of incidents, she has also found herself treating the Marines for less serious ailments:

"When I'm back at the patrol base, I treat the guys for all sorts of things that might be bothering them. We've seen quite a lot of heat injuries too, which isn't surprising given the conditions."

During the summer, temperatures in Afghanistan can reach up to 50 degrees Celsius, and Medical Assistant Wilson says the heat has been the hardest thing to get used to; especially when she and the Marines have to conduct patrols in full body armour, and carry up to 35kg of kit.

For Medical Assistant Wilson, that comprises mostly medical equipment and supplies that she might be required to use when out on the ground, as well as body

armour, rifle and ammunition:

"The weight is heavy but I need to make sure I have everything, in case anything happens while on patrol. I can't complain really because what I carry isn't anything compared to the amount of stuff the guys have to have with them."

The Navy medics currently in Helmand will return to the UK when 3 Commando Brigade's deployment ends in October and, following a short period of leave they will resume their normal roles of looking after the sailors on board the Royal Navy's warships and at shore establishments.

Medical Assistant Wilson has enjoyed her experiences: "It's been really tough at times but the best thing about working with the Marines, and J Company in particular, is their professionalism, banter and the morale they provide. They've really made me feel part of their team." 

MAN OF STEEL

AMPUTEE MARINE JOE TOWNSEND HAS RACED TO IRONMAN GLORY. INTERVIEW: LORRAINE MCBRIDE

FEW PEOPLE could match Marine Joe Townsend's sheer athletic achievement, and grit. On a sweltering day this summer (one of the few), he completed the 140-mile Ironman Triathlon for the Headley Court team, and was the only double amputee to complete the entire course.

The Triathlon comprises a 2.4-mile swim, a 112-mile bike ride and a 26.2-mile marathon, which Marine Townsend undertook on a racing wheelchair.

He lost both legs in Afghanistan, in February 2008, in an IED explosion. "Suddenly, I was thrown up into the air with a huge bang," he says. "It was surreal. I remember flying through the air and hitting the ground. "When it dawned on him that he had been injured, he thought, "Crap, it is me who has been hit!"

Amid the chaos, and despite a shattered elbow, he showed remarkable composure by reaching for a tourniquet.

"I could see my right leg was missing and the other was hanging off," he remembers. "But I knew that I had to stop the bleeding." Amazingly, he didn't feel a thing, as adrenaline and shock surged through his body. "But when I woke up, I was in a lot of pain," he explains.

His next memory is of being patched up by his fellow Marines, who loaded him onto a stretcher and raced towards a helicopter to fly to Camp Bastion. There he fell into darkness until he woke up, a fortnight later, in Selly Oak's intensive care unit to see the pale, drawn faces of his dad and brother by his bedside.

In his morphine fog, Marine Townsend thought he was still fighting in Helmand and asked, in bewilderment, "What the hell are you two doing out here?"

It was the start of a five-and-a-half-month marathon stay in hospital that was often touch and go. "During those first few weeks, I was rushed into emergency surgery a few times and they didn't know whether I would come back out," he says. "My mum was called in a few times to say goodbye."

After six weeks, Marine Townsend was moved to the burns and plastics ward to begin the slow path to recovery. For a

Marine used to being at peak fitness, you sense that some moments must have been overwhelming, and he doesn't disagree. "It was gutting to go from being big into physical fitness to totally dependent on others. I couldn't wash, eat, and when I started in the gym, I could barely lift half-a-kilo. My body fat just stripped down to nothing."

Luckily, he made the mental leap almost instantly, so was able to banish any thoughts of "why me?" from his mind. He credits the Marines for making morale-boosting visits to him in hospital. Then, when he arrived at Headley Court in June 2009, he met other injured Marines in the same boat and felt instantly at home.

"Headley Court has the biggest military banter you could possibly find," he says. "To have that support from the lads, when you are laughing and joking, makes everything easier." He also credits patients' remarkable progress to Headley Court's dedicated, caring staff.

"My physio, Kate Sherman, has been with me from day one, and it is down to her nagging that I have pushed as far as I have." But he also knows the frustration of how slow treatment can be, and counsels lads who struggle mentally. "I gee them up and tell them, 'Look, I've done it mate, you can do it too'."

Marine Townsend's own watershed came last summer, when he vowed to give up his wheelchair after struggling to adapt to his prosthetic legs.

"It was such hard work, and I found myself spending more and more time in a wheelchair," he says.

"Eventually I decided the only way that I was going to get rid of my wheelchair was if I gave it up. I spent a couple of months of really hard graft on my legs, getting used to them, and now I'm full time on them."

Since then, he has stoically learned to live with the phantom pains. And six months' hard training has transformed his fitness. Although, in January, he could barely swim, after a few lessons in Headley Court's pool, he improved enough to take the plunge in Heron Lake off the M25.

During the Ironman event in Bolton, Marine Townsend climbed out of the

grey lake buzzing that he'd smashed his personal best by 25 minutes. Next, he piled onto an adapted race bike that he pedalled with his hands, and set off.

The final segment was the marathon, but nothing prepared him for the warmth of the crowd. "They were amazing. Tens of thousands of spectators lined the streets, and they all knew my name for some reason. It was surreal, but when I came along feeling tired and people screamed my name it really helped me pick up the pace."

The toughest part of the course was the bike ride, but even pain wasn't enough to dampen his spirit. "I was going to make it to the end. I wanted to be an Ironman."

At one stage of the marathon, hundreds of able-bodied triathletes shuffled at a snail's pace, but when they spotted Marine Townsend they broke into applause and reinvigorated themselves.

Crossing the finish line, he let go his feelings. "I was filled with a massive sense of overwhelming emotion. I don't like to admit it, but I cried my eyes out," he says, finally showing that he is flesh-and-blood like the rest of us.

Every penny raised by the 20-strong True Spirit Headley Court team will be split between Headley Court, the British Limbless Ex Servicemen's Association, the Royal Marines Association and ABF The Soldiers' Charity.

So what's next? Marine Townsend, aged 23, is taking a breather before returning to Headley Court for more rehab. He has endured more than 40 operations to date so, understandably, he's hazy on what his future holds. But he would make a natural motivational speaker.

He dreams of representing GB in the Paralympics Triathlon in 2016, and only a fool would bet against him.

"Along the way, there have been so many massive achievements for me," he grins. "From being bed-bound, to sitting in a wheelchair, walking on prosthetics, relearning to drive, and learning to cycle and ski, but Ironman is definitely the biggest achievement of my life." **DF**

To donate, log on to www.truespirit.org.uk



Pictures: Hayley Wright

No ordinary Joe:
Marine Joe Townsend
at the Ironman finish line



R&R: Colonel David Richmond, Marine Townsend and
Sergeant Khym France relax after the Triathlon



By Nick Imm, a Naval Surgeon Commander in HM Naval Base, Faslane

Hello from the medical centre at HM Naval Base Clyde.

Compared with most tumours, testicular cancer is rather unusual. Firstly it tends to affect younger men - it is the most common cancer in those aged 20-35 years. In fact, one man in 500 can expect to develop the disease by the age of 50.

Secondly, it's also unusual for another important reason - when it is diagnosed early, it has a cure rate of more than 90 per cent.

Some men are more at risk than others. Your risk is increased if you have a first degree relative (brother, father, son) with the condition or if you have a history of undescended testicles.

So, what are the symptoms of testicular cancer?

- a lump in the testicle
- swelling of the testicle
- an aching sensation in the abdomen or groin
- a feeling of heaviness or dragging in the scrotum

TESTICULAR CANCER IS THE MOST COMMON TYPE TO STRIKE YOUNG MEN BUT HIGHLY TREATABLE IF CAUGHT EARLY

TESTICULAR CANCER

Test set: test yourself
often and keep healthy



“ Not all lumps are cancer so don't panic – cysts and swollen veins are common too. ”

Obviously, you're only going to find a lump if you look for it. That's why all men should check their testicles about once a month. When you're relaxed - after a shower or bath - gently roll each testicle between finger and thumb. You'll probably notice the epididymis - a soft bit at the top of each testicle. Other than that they should be like smooth plums. What you need to be concerned about are any irregular hard lumps or swellings.

If you do find a lump, make an appointment to see your GP. Don't put it off for ages - you'll only worry more. Ask to see a male doctor if it would make you less anxious. Not all lumps are cancer so don't panic - cysts and swollen veins are common too. Your GP will be able to tell you if any further tests are needed.

If your GP is concerned, you'll be quickly referred to your local hospital for an ultrasound scan. This is simple, painless and takes just a few minutes. The scan can tell the difference between simple cysts and cancerous growths and any further treatment will depend on the result.

New medicines have led to a high cure rate for testicular cancer. Most patients cured of this condition will have no long-term side effects and most will retain their fertility. As with most medical problems, the quicker you seek help the better, so get in the habit of checking yourself every month.

Stay healthy and I'll see you next month.

■ This is general information only. If you have any medical concerns please see your medic or GP. **DF**

SUMMER FOOD POISONING

A SIMPLE SUMMER BARBECUE CAN BE DEADLY IF FOOD IS UNDERCOOKED. FOLLOW OUR TIPS FOR AL FRESCO DINING

Every year in the UK it is estimated that there are around one million cases of food poisoning, resulting in 20,000 people needing to be hospitalised and nearly 500 deaths. Almost half of all cases are due to bacteria such as Salmonella and there are significantly more cases during the summer. The barbecue appears to be a key factor in the seasonal increase.

Very often when barbecuing, basic hygiene is forgotten and people do things they would not dream of doing in the kitchen.

The most common problem is cross-contamination, often caused by using the same tongs for raw and cooked meat.

Although the barbecue may heat up the tongs and so help destroy some bacteria, if a raw steak is put on and then a cooked burger taken off, there is an immediate transfer of germs. The same applies to the transfer of food to plates. If you have raw meat on a plate and after cooking it put it back on the same plate, the cooked food soaks up the raw meat juices and its associated bacteria.

Bacteria such as E. coli and Salmonella are killed by heat. Raw meat must be cooked properly to a safe internal temperature to avoid food-borne illness.

Colour alone is not a reliable indicator that meat is safe to eat. Meat can turn brown before all the bacteria are killed but a digital food thermometer can provide an element of accuracy. Make sure you check each piece of meat or patty as heat can be transferred unevenly across the barbecue. Roasts, chops, other beef cuts and fish should be cooked to an internal temperature of at least 145°F.

Remember to always clean your digital food thermometer



in warm, soapy water between temperature readings to avoid cross-contamination.

Useful tips:

- Wash your hands thoroughly after handling raw meat
- Use separate utensils for raw and cooked meat
- Never put cooked food on a plate or surface that has been used for raw meat unless it has been washed thoroughly
- Do not put raw meat products next to cooked or partially cooked meat on the BBQ
- Cover and refrigerate leftovers within one hour otherwise throw away.

This article is intended as general information only. If you or a family member have any medical concerns, please contact your GP or medic.



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

SUDOKU

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

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

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

Solution to the August 2011 puzzle



Send in your Sudoku solution by 30 September and you could win a Maglite torch. Our address is on page 4. For more info, visit www.maglite.com, and for nearest stockist details call Burton McCall on 0116 234 44.

CHESS



Compiled by: Carl Portman

I have two news items for you this month. The first is to tell you that the MOD finally has a chess team competing in the annual CSSC games this month. I am privileged to be the captain and I will tell you how it went and introduce you to the team next issue. We are called The MOD Hatters which says it all really! We'll be playing quickplay chess at 25 minutes per game so we'll need to be on our toes. Still, we are the MOD and strategic war games should be what we are good at – no pressure then.

The second point is to note in your diary that the best chess players in the world will be playing in the London Chess Classic from 3-12 December at the Olympia Conference Centre. Check out the details online at www.londonchessclassic.com and please do find reasons to go. The organiser, Malcolm Pein, has done everything possible to make this festival of chess one of the best experiences you will ever have. You can even play the great Viktor Korchnoi if you book in time, so keep watching the website.

Study the following position from the game Nunn-Seirawan, Monaco 1994. White



is in check and therefore to move, and black is relishing the position when the king goes to e2. How did white surprise black? Send your answers to me at carl.portman282@mod.uk

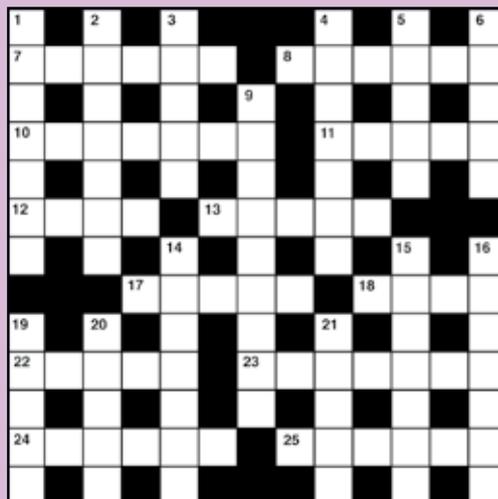
The first correct answer out of the hat wins a copy of the DVD 'The ABC of the Modern Slav' by Andrew Martin, valued at over £20 and supplied by those lovely people at Chessbase, so please visit www.chessbase.com

The answer to August's problem was 1. Bxc7+! Kxc7 (1...Ka8 2.Rxe1 Rxe1 3. Qd8+ mating and if 1...Kc8 then 2.Rxe1) 2. Nb5+ Kb8 3. Qa7 checkmate. Winner to be announced. July and August winners will be announced shortly.

TOPICAL CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 7. See 20 Down
- 8. Roundabout route caused by traffic problems (6)
- 10. Mo Farah, Jessica Ennis or Usain Bolt (7)
- 11. Traditional pieces of clothing worn by Scotsmen at weddings (5)
- 12. British nobleman (4)
- 13. Muslim religion (5)
- 17. Greek holiday island, the second largest of the Ionian Islands (5)
- 18. Lima is the capital of this South American country (4)
- 22. Her album '21' has been a huge hit in 2011 (5)
- 23. 'Harry Potter and the Deathly _____: Part 2', the final part of the film series (7)
- 24. And 3 and 4 Down. July baby whose brothers are Brooklyn, Romeo and Cruz (6,5,7)
- 25. The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge had a triumphant tour of this country in July (6)



DOWN

- 1. Lewis Hamilton's Formula One team (7)
- 2. Instrument which sounds a warning to ships (7)
- 3. See 24 Across
- 4. See 24 Across
- 5. See 9 Down
- 6. Temporary infatuation (5)
- 9. And 5 Down. This newspaper closed under controversial circumstances in July

(4,2,3,5)

- 14. Either of the front legs of a horse (7)
- 15. Dismissal from an important position (7)
- 16. Nationality of 2011 Wimbledon finalist Maria Sharapova (7)
- 19. Machine for shaping wood or metal (5)
- 20. And 7 Across. British boxing legend who died in May 2011 (5,6)
- 21. Sound made by a sheep (5)

SOLUTION (NO PEEKING)

- Down**
- 1. McLaren 2. Foghorn
 - 3. Seven 4. Beckham
 - 5. World 6. Crush
 - 9. News Of The 14. Foreleg
 - 15. Removal 16. Russian
 - 19. Lathe 20. Henry 21. Bleat
- Across**
- 7. Cooper 8. Detour
 - 10. Athlete 11. Kilts
 - 12. Earl 13. Islam 17. Corfu
 - 18. Peru 22. Adele 23. Hallows
 - 24. Harper 25. Canada

TO WIN,
just email your name, address
and phone number to
dmc-newsdesk@mod.uk by
10 Oct 2011. Include the phrase
'Sicily' in the
subject line.



MAMMA MIA! WIN A HOTEL BREAK FOR TWO

To celebrate the launch of Michelin-starred chef Giorgio Locatelli's latest book, 'Made in Sicily', Refettorio, one of London's finest Italian restaurants, located at the Crowne Plaza London - The City, will be the setting for a Made in Sicily promotion from 3 October to 10 December 2011, priced from £275.

Maintaining its authentic links with

everything Italian, Refettorio promises once again to bring 'a little corner of Italy' to the heart of the city. During the promotion, Refettorio's head chef, Alessandro Bay, will produce a special Sicilian-inspired taster menu, replicating dishes from the book.

The Sicilian-themed package includes the following:

- One night's accommodation
- A bottle of Prosecco and home-made amaretti biscuits in room upon arrival
- Three-course Sicilian dinner in Refettorio
- Breakfast
- A signed copy of the book 'Made in Sicily'

The Crowne Plaza London - The City at 19 New Bridge Street, EC4V 6DB, is delighted to offer one Defence Focus reader and their guest the Made in Sicily package, with an exclusive upgrade to a Club Room.

The prize is subject to availability and must be taken by 31 January 2012. Please note the menu lasts until 10 December 2011. Should the prize be taken after this date, guests must choose from an alternative menu.

For further information about the Made in Sicily package, and bookings, contact: 020 7438 8000, visit www.crowneplaza.com/londonthecity or www.refettorio.com.

Terms and conditions: The prize is for a Made in Sicily package and will include an overnight stay for two, a bottle of Prosecco and home-made amaretti biscuits in room on arrival, three-course Sicilian dinner in Refettorio restaurant, breakfast, and a signed copy of Giorgio Locatelli's Made in Sicily book. It is valid until 31 January 2012 and is subject to availability. There is no cash alternative. Travel and all extras are not included in the prize. Entrants must be over 18 years of age.

TANK WARFARE

WORLD OF TANKS is the first and only team-based online action game dedicated to armoured warfare. Throw yourself into epic tank battles of the Second World War with other steel cowboys worldwide. Your arsenal includes more than 150 armoured vehicles from America, Germany and the Soviet Union, detailed with historical accuracy.

A flexible system of authentic vehicle upgrades allows you to try any of the vehicles and weapons in the game. Whether you prefer to exhaust your foes with highly manoeuvrable light tanks, make deep breaches in enemy lines with all-purpose

medium tanks, or become a heavy sniper with long-range howitzers, each tank has its own advantages and can be extremely effective when operated by a true tank ace.

But being a great tank commander alone isn't enough to win. In World of Tanks, victory is achieved by combining your combat skills with other team members, each playing their own role on the battlefield.

This fantastic prize comprises a gaming mouse, keyboard, headset from Roccat gaming products, and Gold credit for the online game. For more log on to www.worldoftanks.eu or www.gem.co.uk



TO WIN,
just email your name, address
and phone number to
dmc-newsdesk@mod.uk by
10 Oct 2011. Include the phrase
'Roccat' in the
subject line.



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WE FLY HIGHER.**

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created the 'Schools Build a Plane Challenge'
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Rising in size and profile every year, it is
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