

PULL-OUT POSTER: WHERE ARE YOU IN THE PECKING ORDER?

Defence**F**ocus

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TORNADO FORCE

Taking a turn with Kandahar's air support

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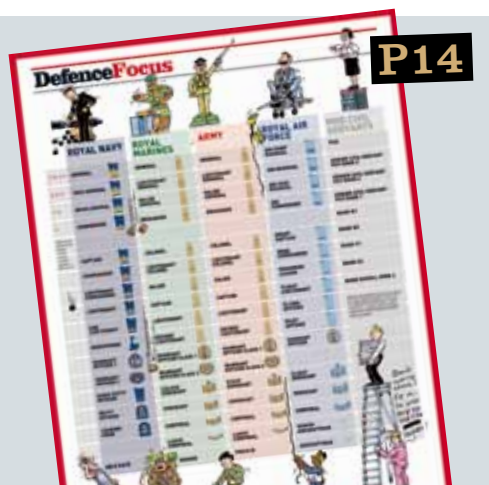
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EDITOR'S NOTE

DefenceFocus

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FIONA SIMPSON



Last month saw a return to Afghanistan for our reporter Ian Carr. He's been going out there regularly since 2006, reporting for *Defence Focus* on most aspects of the operation.

On a visit there last year, the commander of Task Force Helmand mused in an interview with Ian that there were probably few other commentators who had such a continuous connection with the country. Our Man in Afghanistan!

Among other things, on this visit he was back with Joint Force Support to see how they are getting on with taking apart Camp Bastion.

On Ian's first visit, Bastion was just a few tents in the desert, with no proper landing strip. As the year progresses, it could be a case of Groundhog Day as the

last few to leave the camp will be back to living in a few tents in the desert.

Ian also met some of the pilots in Kandahar from across the spectrum of the RAF. Those who fly Tornados and those who control the Reaper remotely-piloted air systems.

We also take a look at another lot of airborne types. These ones are closer to home this time – the Medical Emergency Response Team training at RAF Brize Norton. They were practising the life-saving treatment which a casualty will receive in a Chinook helicopter during the flight to the hospital in Camp Bastion – a time which is critical for survival.

Here at *Defence Focus* we believe in giving the public what they want. So this month sees a reprint of the Pecking Order poster. First appearing in the magazine in 2008, it has definitely been one of our most popular features, with regular requests for copies from across the Department. So here it is again. Don't say we never give you what you want!

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IN MEMORIAM

DEATHS ON OPERATIONS – 10 APRIL TO 31 MAY 2014

ON 26 APRIL 2014, FIVE SERVICE PERSONNEL LOST THEIR LIVES FOLLOWING THE CRASH OF A LYNX HELICOPTER IN SOUTHERN AFGHANISTAN



Captain Thomas Clarke

After enlisting as an army officer in May 2007, Captain Clarke had a bright and promising future in the Army, marked as a rising star of the Army Air Corps.

He completed his helicopter training in May 2010 and the gifted aviator was posted to 652 Squadron to fly the Lynx helicopter.

His family said: "We cannot express enough our devastation at the loss of a

truly wonderful husband, son, brother and friend.

"Tom brought so much happiness and love to everyone he knew with his sparkling blue eyes and cheeky smile. We are all poorer today without him."



Flight Lieutenant Rakesh Chauhan

Flight Lieutenant Chauhan – Rak to his friends – was completing his third tour as an intelligence officer in Afghanistan.

He was regarded as an exceptional and well respected officer with a contagious sense of humour.

The commander of the deployed Lynx detachment paid this tribute: "Flight Lieutenant Rakesh Chauhan

was an outstanding Royal Air Force officer in every respect. Bright, articulate and loyal – certainly the best intelligence branch officer I have known.

"He will be sorely missed by all who knew him."



Warrant Officer Class 2 Spencer Faulkner

After joining the Army in 1992 and completing his flying training, Warrant Officer Class 2 Faulkner supported the UK Armed Forces on

numerous Afghanistan tours.

He was regarded as an extremely experienced aviator and was highly respected by all who worked with him.

The commander of the deployed Lynx detachment

said: "Sharing a cockpit with him, you would get insight into the true man: a loving husband and dedicated father to his two children, Natasha and Jack.

"I feel honoured to be able to call him a friend."



Corporal James Walters

Corporal Walters joined the Army in 1996. Operating with the Lynx helicopter force, Corporal Walters, or Bungle as he was known, proved to be

a highly competent crewman and deployed on numerous occasions to Afghanistan.

His commanding officer notes that Corporal Walters was a committed soldier who served with immense skill and bravery.

His family gave this tribute: "We cannot begin to comprehend the tragic loss of a beautiful and loving husband, daddy, son and brother.

"James has left a huge hole in our hearts."



Lance Corporal Oliver Thomas

Lance Corporal Thomas volunteered to be mobilised from the Army Reserve for deployment to Afghanistan in December 2013. He was

part of the UK's contribution to the International Security Assistance Force.

His commanding officer said: "Lance Corporal Oli Thomas was the embodiment of his generation: bright, gifted, with an enquiring mind

and laser-focused on the task in hand."

"In only a short time he made an immediate and lasting impression.

"His absence has left an enormous gap in a close-knit team."



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TIME TO SCRAMBLE

WHEN THE AIR HORN SOUNDS IT'S TIME FOR THE TORNADO PILOTS IN KANDAHAR TO GET GOING WRITES IAN CARR

There's half-an-hour to go. If the air horn doesn't sound in that time, Tornado pilot Flight Lieutenant Joe Rigg can relax. If it does, then he will need to be in the air within 30 minutes, but more usually in less than half that time.

That means dropping everything, donning his flying suit, grabbing his kit and racing to the fighter jet which will already be being made ready for take off by the ground crew.

Although at the moment, stretched out on the sofa playing a gentle melody on

his acoustic guitar, Flight Lieutenant Rigg seems pretty relaxed already.

But looks can be deceiving. "It's just like a scramble during the Battle of Britain," he said. "The only difference is that instead of a bell we respond to an air horn.

"Every time you hear it the adrenaline starts pumping. There's an immediate step-up in arousal as you get your kit on and run out to the cars to get to the jets. So in the last half-an-hour of a shift, if the phone rings, you do think 'is this a call?'"

But don't interpret this tension as a sign of nerves. What it means is that the

pilots know that if there is a scramble as the clock ticks down, it could result in an exhausting and extremely long day.

"Being on Ground Close Air Support (GCAS) is an eight-hour shift. But as we get into those last 15 minutes, a scramble could end up in a six-hour sortie on top of that. So if we did get launched it can mean a 14-hour day. That's the boundary of when we can still be deemed safe to fly," said Flight Lieutenant Rigg.

Based at Kandahar Airfield, the Tornado detachment element of 904 Expeditionary Air Wing stands ready to

Tuned in: Flight Lieutenant Joe Rigg listens out for the scramble air horn



Pictures: Corporal Obi Igboehisokwu

launch at a moment's notice to support ground forces anywhere in Afghanistan.

Flying in pairs, often the sight and sound of the Tornado GR4s screaming over the landscape has proven to be sufficient to deter insurgents, without the need to release any weapons.

But when it is necessary, the aircraft can use precision weapons to attack ground targets. It also provides critical detailed intelligence and reconnaissance through its Raptor and Litening III sensor equipment so that the analysts in the Tactical Imagery-Intelligence Wing can provide ground commanders with all the detailed information they need about the battlespace and what is happening around them.

"Last time I was here we got scrambled 250 miles away to the north west," said Flight Lieutenant Rigg. "We got called because the American assets that would normally deal with that area were engaged on another task. That's how it works, it's very flexible."



Flight time: Flight Lieutenant Joe Rigg in the cockpit of a Tornado GR4



Ground sign: crew from 904 Expeditionary Air Wing prepare Tornados for take-off

Looking at a huge integrated communications screen, called J-Chat, which brings together information about what's happening in the battlespace, such as troops coming into contact (TICs), experienced pilots can get a feel for when they might get a call before the air horn sounds. "If you see a number of TICs you get the feeling that assets that are already airborne will get pulled across to give support to those on the ground," he said.

This reallocation of priority means

whatever task those aircraft were doing would now be left unsupported, so the GCAS pilots and weapons officers know there's a good chance they will get launched. "That could be to support a TIC or to relieve some assets that have been retasked to support them and who might now be running out of flying time or fuel," said Rigg.

In eight months of this, his third detachment, he has scrambled maybe half-a-dozen times. "It's not as common as it was. With the security situation improving we're not seeing as many TICs now."

The last time was when the US consulate in Herat was attacked by insurgents. "That's possibly the most typical example of what we get called to do. Or it can be because we need to go and have a look at something that has been spotted that we are interested in."

The Tornados are called to deal with a broad range of task. "It's not always kinetic or dynamic," said Rigg. "For example, when we got to the American consulate we saw the damage from the insurgents' bomb and people needing to be medevaced so that was dynamic. Then I have done a surveillance trip where we had to just sit in an eight-mile wheel circling over an area."

When not on the GCAS shift most planned sorties now are long, well-choreographed reconnaissance missions. It's times like this when Flight Lieutenant Rigg relies on his supply of Percy Pigs to

ease the routine. "They're a kind of real fruit jelly sweet, so I see them as one of my five a day."

But what is it like when you are on a GCAS shift knowing that the air horn could sound at any moment? How do the pilots keep calm and carry on?

While they are waiting, apart from watching DVDs, many take the chance to catch up on coursework, learn a language, or, as in Rigg's case, master a new melody on the guitar.

But as soon as the call comes, all that changes, and the pace goes into overdrive. "You learn to control it. You are rushing, but if it means you are going too quickly, fumbling with the zip on your flight suit, that will slow you down, so it is a case of more haste less speed.

"You know you are going to support someone who needs your help so it's no use if you are quick but you have forgotten something crucial when you get to where you have been sent," said Flight Lieutenant Rigg.

"The first time I scrambled I was number two to a very experienced guy. He was the one who taught me that it is no good to just go running out of the door without being organised and that taking two minutes to double check will save you time in the long run."

On the race to the planes the pilots are already planning as much as they can, although often they launch knowing only which bit of airspace they have to head for. "That's a lot easier in some ways, because



Nosing out: a Tornado GR4 from 2 (AC) Squadron at Kandahar Airfield

Picture: Sergeant Ross Tilly RAF

there's nothing you can do except truck to that airbase and have a generic game plan ready."

But whatever comes next they know that they are going to be kept busy dealing with the challenges of a dynamic environment. "You've got to be constantly thinking about the airspace, what other aircraft are around; where is the air-to-air fuel tanker? Has it had to be rerouted? What's my fuel level looking like? Maybe the American F-16s are close and busy and desperate for fuel, so should we let them have first sip just as they would for us when we get busy."

But on those occasions when the Tornados are on a task but are then called off to another job, is it hard to fly away from

the troops on the ground that they have been helping? This is something else the pilots have to get used to.

"We work on the principle that whatever we have been called to do is more important, and the guys on the ground are fantastic.

"Even if you are in the middle of something and you say 'sorry guys we've been retasked', they totally understand. It works both ways; they know there are times when they have had air support called to them from somewhere else. They are brilliant."

And with that, the last half-hour of the shift has passed without a scramble. Time to relax and bag up some more Percy Pigs for the next time. **DF**



Air power: on patrol over Afghanistan

Picture: Flight Lieutenant Joe Marlowe

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TAKING A LONG LOOK

RAF'S REAPERS IN KANDAHAR FLY TIRELESSLY IN AFGHAN SKIES SUPPORTING COALITION TROOPS, WRITES IAN CARR

Getting a massive crate delivered to your door with a Reaper inside it must amount to every model aircraft enthusiast's dream come true. Yet that's exactly how these remotely-piloted aircraft arrive at Kandahar Airfield (KAF).

Then it's just a matter of bolting the bits together. Of course, all you need now is a runway, an air traffic control tower, qualified pilots. Oh, and a number

of experienced sensors operators, a team of engineers with expertise in electronics, satellite technology, communications and navigation, a ground crew, and a hangar to keep it in. And then you're good to go.

The RAF owns five Reapers which operate from KAF. Another five are about to follow. Although they carry cutting-edge technology, as aircraft, they are comparatively simple in design and construction. Comparative that is to say

a Tornado GR4. Which is why they can be delivered, and if needs be, stored in crates ready for their next deployment.

"The way they are constructed means that most of the maintenance is taken care of by simply replacing a whole unit and then repairing the damaged one in the workshop," said the UK Reaper detachment commander. "Which means that we can minimise downtime and keep them flying for long periods and turn them around

Flight time: an RAF Reaper taxiing at Kandahar Airfield



Picture: Corporal Steve Bain

quickly after sorties.” Which is the whole point of the Reaper.

As their main purpose is surveillance, reconnaissance and gathering intelligence they don't need to be complicated aircraft as the flying part of their sorties tends to be mundane and routine. What they do have to be good at is flying evenly and patiently for hours, hovering up information and keeping a close watch on what's happening on the ground thousands of feet below.

Standing next to one of these machines, or watching one land and taxi back to its hangar can fill you with awe. You can find yourself thinking you are in the presence of a single-minded and determined intelligence, if you have a creative imagination that is.

What is really impressing you in fact is the combination of high-end technology under the control and command of a team of professionals, working together to achieve a common goal.

In itself, Reaper is less intelligent than a highly trained sheep dog. It certainly isn't capable of thinking for itself. Although, like the farmer's best friend, it will respond without thinking to every instruction it receives from its master.

This is an attribute which the pilots and the sensors operators need to bear in mind when learning how to handle the aircraft. “Sometimes you can find yourself wondering why it has just responded the way it has, and then you examine your instructions and you realise it has simply done exactly and literally what you have told it to do,” said the detachment commanding officer.

But before such a revelation leads to visions of errant aircraft taking pilots by surprise, the commanding officer calmly emphasises that the safety procedures and levels of redundancy built into the technology processing each instruction makes the Reaper fail-safe.

“Every time you give it an instruction, you back it up with a safety command, so that if there is a problem it will simply default to that command. If, for example, there is a break in the satellite link that we use to communicate with the platform, it will realise and immediately adopt its safety holding pattern instruction and go and circle over a predetermined part of uninhabited desert for as long as we need to sort the problem out.”

Being able to fly for as many as 14 hours at a time is one of the things that make Reaper so effective as an instrument for surveillance. “It gives us time to scrutinise something we are interested in thoroughly,” said Alex, a UK Reaper sensors operator. “That's what Reaper is really good at, giving tireless surveillance support

to troops on the ground, or building up a pattern of life over many hours.”

Because the sorties are so long, they are flown by a rota of pilots thousands of miles away at RAF Waddington or Creech Air Force Base in the US. But the landings and take-offs are performed by pilots at Kandahar in specially designed cockpits, known as bubbles. Once airborne, or while approaching the landing, there is a handover between the mission pilots in the UK or the US and those based in Kandahar.

Because Reapers are designed to fly economically for hours, they are light in weight and their wings are shaped to create a lot of lift, which is something that the pilots need to adjust to when learning how to launch and land them.

noise. Because you are in a cockpit on the ground, you don't feel the turbulence or movements that flying in an aircraft gives you,” said the commanding officer.

While Reaper is flown in the main by experienced conventional aircraft pilots at the moment, as the role of Remotely Piloted Air Systems increases, and the workload grows, so the UK is looking at building up a cadre of pilots trained specifically for flying these remotely-controlled platforms rather than converting manned aircraft pilots.

Although the Reaper's main role is surveillance, they have the capability to fly armed with precision air-to-ground missiles and bombs. If these weapons are used, the pilots must observe exactly the same rules of engagement as they would in



Gentle touch: a pilot remotely controls a Reaper

Picture: Senior Aircraftman Andrew Morris

The UK commander in KAF is also one of the pilots. Having previously flown Nimrod aircraft, he had to get used to their lighter flying qualities. “Because of the lift they can be a bit bouncy on landing, but designs on the landing gear are smoothing that out,” he said.

There are very strict criteria constraining the landing of a Reaper, and they are very firmly adhered to. “If everything isn't perfect, we go round and try again,” said the UK commanding officer.

What does take the pilots a little time to get used to is how you use the joystick to control the platform. On a conventional aircraft pushing the stick backwards or forwards alters your angle of attack, climbing or descending.

But on a Reaper those movements alter your speed. Move it forwards and you go faster, backwards makes you go slower. “And you have to get used to there being no

conventional fighter aircraft.

“We load lightweight weapons in case we get retasked during a sortie so we can go and help troops on the ground if needed. But that's not our main purpose,” said Alex the sensors operator. “We keep payloads light so that we can stay airborne for as long as possible, that's what's most important to us. If you need rapid air support with heavy weapons, Reaper would certainly not be at the top of your list.”

There is no doubt that the role of platforms like Reaper is set to grow. And the UK commander is keen to broadcast its abilities to the military community. “It's a hugely important combat intelligence asset, and I'm keen to get unit commanders to come along and talk to us and see what we can do for them.”

After all, when you have capability like Reaper by the crateload, it's only natural to want to show it off to your friends. **DP**

Defence Focus



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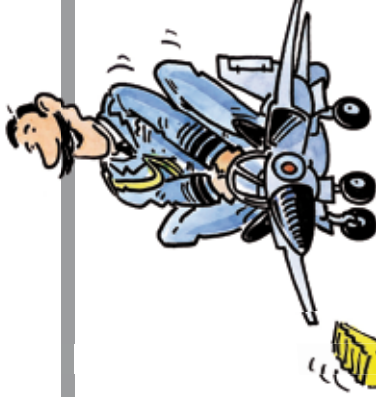
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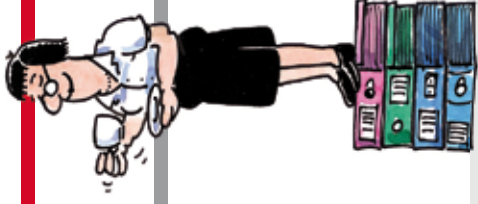
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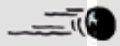
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(Stars are allocated to the most senior ranks across defence)



FOOTBALL SUPPORTERS



Sport relief: Liverpool FC runs a veterans' programme for ex-Service men and women

FROM PREMIERSHIP HIGH-FLYERS TO CONFERENCE BATTLERS, TWO TEAMS FROM THE SPECTRUM OF BRITISH FOOTBALL HAVE SIGNED UP TO SUPPORT THE ARMED FORCES

Almost one year on since the launch of the Armed Forces Corporate Covenant and already 130 companies have signed up, pledging their support for the Services.

In May, Liverpool FC became the first premier league club to sign the Corporate Covenant. The signing was a natural step for the club who already had an existing programme of support for veterans.

The Liverpool FC Foundation has been running a successful military veterans' programme in the local Merseyside community since November 2012.

The scheme currently has more than 1,000 ex-military Service men and women.

It uses football as a platform to help veterans recapture their spirit of service and comradeship and get back to physical fitness. It delivers a range of initiatives including weekly football and coaching sessions, 11-a-side games, veterans' football league tournaments and a five-a-side football league.

Jason Molloy, from Bootle, served in the Artillery Regiment for seven years, during which time he took on tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. He joined the Foundation's military veterans'

programme when it began.

"Unfortunately I had to return from duty on medical grounds," said Jason. "I was in the recovery unit in Preston and I met another ex-Service man, who was telling me about the Foundation's programme, so I signed up. It's one of the best decisions I've ever made."

"This programme has helped me to readjust to civilian life. It's great to be able to speak to other ex-Service personnel about their experiences and continue to work together as part of a team."

As well as the chance to play on a team and get some world class coaching, the scheme promotes health, education and re-employment opportunities. It also helps to build confidence and self-belief for those adjusting to life outside the military.

Any company, big or small from any industry, can sign up to the Corporate Covenant. The company might be an employer of a member of the Armed



Pictures: Liverpool FC



On the ball: Armed Forces veterans training at Liverpool

recognised that this can be extended to the Armed Forces community.”

Seemingly a world away from the hallowed ground of Anfield, one of those smaller clubs pledging their support is Conference National side Aldershot Town FC.

The club, in a garrison town, was reformed from the ashes of Aldershot FC in 1992. Being on the doorstep of a number of army bases means that the club has strong ties to the military, so the decision to sign the Corporate Covenant seemed only natural.


Richard Graham (below left)



of Aldershot Town explains: “The troops and families stationed in Aldershot are an integral part of our community. As a community- focused football club we

wanted to be sure that we did everything in our power to make them feel valued, to feel part of our club, and to be welcomed at our stadium.”

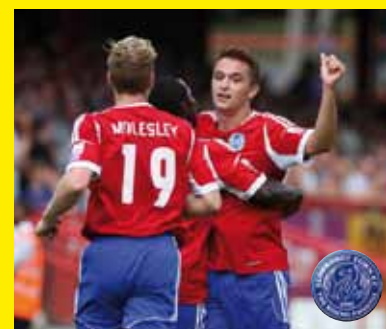
As part of its commitment to the troops and their families the club is launching its “Seats for Soldiers” initiative for next season. Special match days will be selected where army families will be invited to attend. The specially-dedicated match days in 2014/15 will allow the whole of the Aldershot Town FC family, players, fans and sponsors, to publicly express their admiration for the Forces.

“There are many other community sports clubs throughout the country and we’d encourage each one of them to join us in opening the doors of their clubs to these fantastic men and women, to whom we owe so much,” said Richard. 



LIVERPOOL FC PLEDGES INCLUDE

- Exclusive football coaching with Liverpool FC Foundation coaches for over 100 veterans in the community
- A number of free tickets for Armed Forces and their families for Liverpool home matches
- Networking opportunities with local employers and health experts for veterans in the community



ALDERSHOT TOWN PLEDGES INCLUDE

- Providing special match days for serving personnel and their families
- Offering a discount to members of the Armed Forces community
- Supporting employees who are members of the reserve forces

Forces community but it doesn't have to be, it's about just wanting to publicly show support.

And the benefits work both ways. Membership of the Corporate Covenant scheme means companies can build a reputation as a Forces-friendly business at a time when public support for the Armed Forces is at an all-time high.

James Franklin, head of the Armed Forces Covenant Team, says: “Some companies may think that they have no connection to our Armed Forces, but many will already employ reservists, or be based in a community where the Armed Forces and their families live.

There is a lot that businesses can do to recognise the important contributions made by the Armed Forces community, and signing the Corporate Covenant is their opportunity to do this publicly.

“Sporting teams play an important role in community cohesion and it's great that teams both big and small have

BAGGING UP BASTION

BY THE END OF THE YEAR CAMP BASTION WILL HAVE CLOSED. IAN CARR TALKS TO THE MAN WHO WILL MAKE IT ALL HAPPEN

It takes an experienced eye to see it, but Bastion, when viewed from above, is a good example of the contrast between British and American town planning.

As a chartered civil engineer, and Joint Force Support's infrastructure expert, Lieutenant Colonel Laurence Quinn has such an eye. Walking round a vast briefing table, the surface of which was covered by an aerial photo of the camp, pointing out features, Colonel Quinn gave *Defence Focus* a loving account of the rise of Bastion.

He could have been describing the way a small English settlement develops over the generations, driven by the needs of industry and the pressures of population, from a hamlet to a huge conurbation.

"We started off with a little base with a few tents and a flight line that we called little

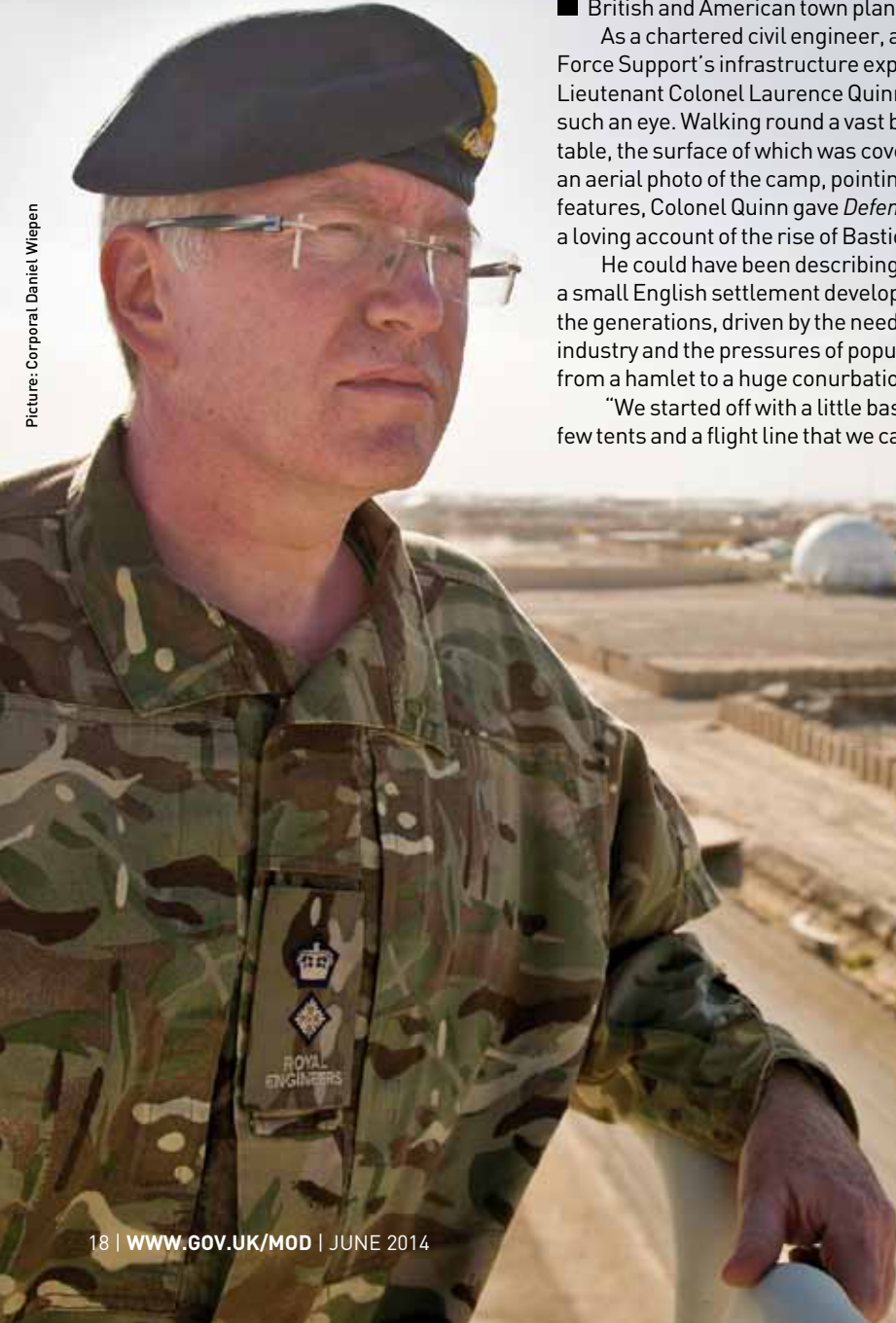
Heathrow; you went out on a bus to a little tactical landing strip that wasn't guarded, and that was it," he said.

He explained how, little by little, we added bits of land and filled them with accommodation and people. It sounds almost quaint.

"And then along came the Americans. And they did it in just one hit. Splat!" he said, pointing at the map. "All very well organised on a classic American street grid with a single central power system. All the might and muscle of the American machine while we Brits went building merrily along filling in bits here and there, leading to Bastion 2, then 3 and so on. Very organic," he said.

At its peak Bastion was equivalent in size to Reading. But now it is time to take it all down, and it is Colonel Quinn's fascinating if daunting task to work out how to do it. He was here at its birth. He has watched it grow and he will be here at the very end.

"I volunteered because this is the last great infrastructure challenge," he said. "I can't see us ever building anything on this scale again. It is an awesome base, probably the biggest the British Army has ever built, certainly since the end of the Second World War. And remember, everything you see



Picture: Corporal Daniel Wispen

View point: Lieutenant Colonel Laurence Quinn, Royal Engineers, looks out over Bastion from a tower at the heart of the camp



Give me a lift: a Chinook at Camp Bastion

here, everything, has been brought in by helicopter or by plane.

"It's been a constant struggle to build this in the middle of what Alexander the Great called the Desert of Death in the face of an enemy who wanted to kill us."

Yet it seems that, when it comes to breaking it all down, the British approach to town planning is resulting in fewer headaches for the infrastructure experts.

To start with, there's the issue of the power supply. "Because the Americans have just one power grid they can't just turn it off. So they're having to find ways to hollow out their real estate.

"But the British have separate generators spread all over the camp, so it's a lot easier for us to roll up the different parts and move back, bit by bit, into Camp Bastion, the original base," said Colonel Quinn.

Another advantage of the organic build has been that Colonel Quinn can dissolve it without having to worry about maintaining defensive integrity. "I've got previous stop lines that I can pull back to, so to get rid of Bastions 3 and 2 I can just pull back to the previous defensive perimeters," he said.

That's not to say that all this is easy. As other bases closed and equipment and personnel moved into Bastion and then, as the troop numbers dwindled, so Colonel Quinn has had to plan very carefully how he juggles accommodation and capability requirements within Bastion.

He likens it to solving a Rubik's Cube puzzle, where you have to keep moving things around. But not only must he maintain a healthy urgency in the minds of the last tenants of Bastion that they really must get on with the packing, it must all be done in the proper manner.

Redeploying the kit that the UK wants

to retain, including 3,345 vehicles, 50 aircraft and 5,500 twenty-foot equivalent units worth of items, has been part of the process. Getting rid of damaged or used items has been another. Thousands of tyres, tonnes of damaged ballistic glass and hundreds of air conditioning units and printer cartridges have been scrapped or sold because it's simply not cost effective to bring them all back.

Another part of the process which has occupied Colonel Quinn has been establishing the policy for what the estate should look like when the base is closed. What PJHQ calls the remediation standard.

In other words, managing what the reputational, environmental and financial risk might be for the future by making sure everything meets an acceptable standard before coalition forces leave.

Colonel Quinn established three sets of conditions and found examples to represent each standard, costing them up. "So I set the dials, costed the solutions, offered them up for PJHQ to decide which met their needs, and now we have a remediation standard that we can apply

right across Bastion. The same will apply to Kandahar, although that will be different, because in Bastion we control the estate, but we don't own Kandahar, we just have a few compounds around the place."

Now Colonel Quinn has a detailed list of what is going to happen to each asset, right down to barbed wire fences and septic tanks. And, to make sure it all happens, he has created what he calls a countdown.

"So I can say to people 'right, the dining facility will close on this day, so you'll have your last meal in there at D minus 10, thereafter you'll have boiled water and ration packs. At D minus three you'll be out of tier two accommodation, so you'll have your last shower and your last flush at 08.00, and then you'll be in tents'. It's going to be a very different place in the last two to three weeks."

In the closing stages Colonel Quinn will have a team of engineers providing the last critical maintenance, turning off the power, disconnecting the water and telling the Afghans how they can reconnect it if they want to, and leave them with all the manuals, with everything in a safe condition.

Colonel Quinn knows from talking with Afghans that they are greatly impressed by Bastion, and he hopes that, whatever the camp's future might be, that it will continue to be of value.

And how does Colonel Quinn feel Bastion will be remembered? "In different ways. Some will remember the Battle of Bastion; some will remember it as a reliable refuge in a hostile environment.

"It has been a place which has sustained operations providing everything from bottled water to fast air support. It's been a place to do your laundry, and for guys who were stationed out in the forward operating bases to come back to for a bit of normality, to get a shower and a shave and a cup of coffee.

"It's been a fantastic facility that has enabled us to support the campaign in Helmand. It's a bit sad that it's all going." DF



Intense: tented accommodation at Bastion

SKY-HIGH HOSPITAL

MILITARY MEDICS PRACTISE THEIR LIFE-SAVING SKILLS HIGH UP IN THE AIR. EMILY BIRD REPORTS



Joe is in a bad way. He has lost both of his legs and is suffering from catastrophic haemorrhage after stepping on an improvised explosive device.

He desperately needs life-saving treatment. Fortunately for him, the Medical Emergency Response Team (MERT) quickly arrives to continue the medical interventions that the medics on the ground began when they rushed to his side after the explosion.

Once he is on board the RAF Chinook helicopter that will take him to hospital, the MERT can start a blood transfusion and deliver an anaesthetic to Joe even within the confined space of the aircraft.

Thankfully, Joe is not a real person. He is a mannequin being used during an exercise at RAF Brize Norton. During these exercises military medical professionals preparing to deploy to Afghanistan undertake crucial clinical training.

Last month, 10 of these highly-

skilled military medics took part in a MERT training course. They were put through their paces in lifelike scenarios, treating volunteers made up to appear seriously injured, as well as lifelike training mannequins like Joe.

One trainee, RAF Sergeant Suzi Smith, is a qualified nurse at the A&E department in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham. She has been preparing for her three-month deployment to Afghanistan as an emergency nurse.

"Since joining the RAF, I have been wanting to do a MERT tour," said Suzi. "There was a lot I didn't know before I did this course. It has helped me to understand what I am expected to do as a nurse.

"It's also helped me to get my head around my role communicating with the air crew and the team, relaying messages back to the receiving facility."

Suzi is no rookie, she has deployed to Afghanistan on three separate tours, but never as part of MERT. This time round, she

will be working with them in a hospital that provides an intensive level of care to deal with major trauma injuries.

Using a Chinook helicopter to evacuate casualties, the MERT flies with either an emergency-medicine or an anaesthetic consultant on board and a nurse who is also qualified in emergency medicine.

Effectively, the Chinook is a fully equipped mobile resuscitation room carrying a supply of blood for in-flight transfusions. This means that MERT personnel can deliver life-saving treatment during the flight to the hospital in Camp Bastion, the most critical period after the injury has occurred.

In Afghanistan the team are often in the thick of it. Rescuing injured personnel from the front line means that they will sometimes come under fire themselves. The MERT course helps to give realistic examples of the types of situations and casualties they may face

while on deployment.

"I've seen how the patients come in through MERT. It's good that I have seen that and I can use that experience," said Suzi. "These kinds of courses are very important, without them we would get out there and just be thrown in at the deep end. Now we all know our roles, so if we have to, we can drop into any formed team as an individual, knowing what we have to do and where we fit in."

While the number of military casualties has decreased as the UK's combat role comes to a close, it is still essential that the MERT remains fully operational and ready to deploy 24-hours-a-day, right until the end of combat operations.

KEEP IN TRAINING

Lieutenant Colonel Paul Reavley is the clinical director of MERT training and a veteran of three Afghan tours. He has seen MERT develop over the years and, crucially, how it's changed the expectations of survival on the front line.

"The care that we could deliver to a patient with a massive haemorrhage, whether through wounds or loss of limb,

used to be limited," said Paul. "We didn't carry blood or the equipment that we do now. We were there to try and enhance the patient's journey and improve the level of care delivered at scene."

Since the early days of MERT, the medic's role has involved continuing in the air the treatment given on the ground to the patient as they travel to hospital.

MERT members can now resuscitate patients, give patients blood and plasma and use anaesthetic and haemorrhage control skills all from the back of a Chinook as if it were in the hospital emergency department. Being able to intervene at this critical stage gives the patient an increased chance of survival.

"In keeping with trauma care and policy, we have developed the capability to deal with a patient who has lost a lot of blood and is near to death," said Paul.

"Patients that we would previously not have expected to survive we are now routinely able to save, and many of the techniques we have learned in Afghanistan over the last decade are now being used by the emergency services here in the UK to save lives."

Sometimes the team are faced with

having to make difficult decisions about clinical care in high-pressure situations. The training they undertake before deploying helps them to understand these mentally challenging elements of the job.

"We expect all the trainees to come here with the right clinical skills, but it's the other factors that we want to know they can deal with – especially how they operate under stress," explained Paul.


"There will be days when they have to make difficult clinical care decisions. They need to know that this job, while very exciting and rewarding, can be emotionally challenging. So helping them to understand this forms part of our training."

As the military medics are put through their paces ahead of their tour of Afghanistan, Paul reflects on the success of MERT and looks to its future.

"We have been part of a very successful system but we are just a part of it," he said. "We have learnt that there are things we can do that we didn't think possible. We've changed the way we treat patients, not just in MERT but also in the whole care system.

"It has given us a lot of confidence and new levels to aspire to the next time we treat critically ill patients." **DF**

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Lieutenant Commander Jim Cobbett has been on operations and peacekeeping missions at sea and on land with the Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm for the past 28 years. Since leaving HMS *Ocean* in late 2012, Jim now has the important role of promoting flight safety awareness throughout the Royal Navy along with the RN Flight Safety Centre team.

Here, Jim tells of his experiences in the Royal Navy and talks us through some of his medals.



UNPROFOR BOSNIA

Flying over Sarajevo on a Saturday night during 1993 was dangerous. It was early on in the protection campaign in the former Yugoslavia, and I was flying the Sea King Mk4 with 845 Naval Air Squadron. Our unit was based in Croatia and my role was to fly personnel or equipment from place to place. As the roads in some areas were pretty bad, sometimes helicopters were the best mode of transport.

You could see the devastation and destruction where houses had been cherry-picked for cleansing as piles of rubble were in place of where houses once stood, next to houses that had been left untouched.

We transported British military and UN personnel to places they needed to get to, and we flew important influential people that were involved in the peace talks. Many visiting politicians and even the odd celebrity that came out to entertain the troops were also ferried about. I once flew 80s model Samantha Fox, comedian Jim Davidson and Iron Maiden's Bruce Dickinson to various locations in Bosnia.

Part of our transportation duties involved on-call casualty evacuation. One time we had to pick up a Canadian



In the wings: Lieutenant Commander Jim Cobbett at his base in Yeovilton

Picture: POA(Phot) Mez Merril

MY MEDALS

Lieutenant Commander Jim Cobbett on his 28 years working in the Royal Navy and some of the medals he's picked up along the way. Report by Emily Bird

corporal who had suffered injuries following a road traffic accident at Srebrenica when his vehicle had gone down a ravine. He received first aid, but it became apparent he needed further medical attention so we picked him up from Srebrenica and took him to a field hospital near Sarajevo. It was a three-and-a-half-hour flight to pick him

up, take him to the hospital and return to our base in Split. The weather was awful. Not long after we were back, we received another call saying that he needed neurosurgery, and quickly, so we collected him from the field hospital and took him to Split so he could be taken to a specialist hospital in Zagreb. It was night-time and the weather

had worsened, so navigating through the mountains while being shot at by anyone willing to have a go was not easy. We got him to Split and from what I understand he recovered from his injuries.

It's pleasing that I've helped to make a difference to somebody's life and saved a life just by doing my job. Along with other aircraft members I received a joint commander's commendation following on from this incident.

Although this recognition is nice, for me it's doing a good job that gives me the greater satisfaction. It's a huge team effort for everyone involved and I'm grateful to the other members for the support that we get.



NORTHERN IRELAND

When the Omagh bomb went off in 1998 I was commanding the 846 Naval Air Squadron detachment. Our on-call aircraft had to work really hard during that time and my work following the incident mainly involved ferrying people around. The threat of attack wasn't as prominent as it once was in Northern Ireland, but I could tell it was still there.

We moved people who carried out patrols and quite often the weather was atrocious. We occasionally transported people, but mainly we were doing underslung loads, delivering rations and stores, and most flying was done at night.

It was really gratifying that we often received letters from troop commanders thanking us for going the extra mile and picking them up and taking them where they needed to get to, after they'd been in the rain for hours and were soaked to the skin. It was nice to be part of a unit that was appreciated by the guys on the ground. Getting that support back was really good and gave us all a really positive feeling.



OP VERITAS

I was the aviation officer in HMS *Fearless* in 2002 and our unit had been doing an exercise with another group of ships out in the Indian Ocean. Straight after we were tasked to go to the northern Gulf. It was during the early days of the Afghanistan operation.

HMS *Fearless* only had two flying spots but we had seven aircraft in the ship, so it was a puzzle trying to get them in the air. It was not the typical tasking for that type of ship – it was an amphibious assault ship and we were carrying out anti-smuggling operations. Basically, there were static oil tankers that had



been impounded and we had to make sure that the crew on board the ships had supplies and were cared for medically too while making sure no one took off with the oil.

I had to co-ordinate all the flying off the ship and it was hard work, doing such long hours and shifts. For my efforts on that ship, I received a joint commander's commendation.



OP TELIC

In 2003 I deployed to Iraq with the Commando Helicopter Force HQ. One of the initial objectives of the campaign in Iraq was to secure the oil and gas platforms on the Al Faw Peninsula from amphibious assault so that they were not blown up by the Iraqis as this would have caused a huge ecological disaster.

In the build-up to the assault, I spent a lot of time off the ship working closely with 40 Commando Royal Marines. I was the aviation expert that could give advice on how many troops and what loads each of the different helicopters could take. My counterpart in 40 Commando would then tell me their requirements – that they needed this number of troops

and this equipment on the ground at this time. Between us we put together an elaborate plan and I spent the next few weeks following them around, giving them aviation guidance while they did their training before the assault.

We also had a steady supporting and reinforcing role in the Iraq operation and we were split between working on shore and on the various ships that were there. We worked with navy Sea Kings, RAF Chinooks and US Air Force helicopters and it was at the time when two Sea King aircraft from HMS *Ark Royal* collided – it was very sad. I remember the raid – we'd been in the desert in Kuwait and had the briefing in the tent and then it was out of our hands and up to the aircraft crew to carry out the plan.

During my 5 months on this operation there was the constant threat of attack – especially chemical weapons. I spent years training, and putting this training into practice is a great thrill, but there is a big difference between sitting in a sand hole in the middle of the desert wearing a respirator because there might be a chemical weapon attack and training during an exercise. Being able to fall back on my

training and experience has given me everything I need to do a good job.



OP ELLAMY

In 2011 I was Lieutenant Commander Flying in HMS *Ocean* on a seven-week exercise in the Mediterranean near Cyprus, when, at quite short notice, we were given instructions to head to Libya.

As it happened we took Apache helicopters with us on the exercise so when we were called up to go to Libya we had the right equipment.

We tested missiles at sea using home-made targets and, once this was done, we then positioned the ship off the coast of Libya.

We worked out routines to integrate Apache and army personnel, but we also had American combat search and rescue helicopters on board the ship too. They provided assistance for the whole of the NATO force in Libya. This was a 24/7 capability and we all worked well together.

We were breaking new ground with operating Apaches at sea and having to refine or develop procedures and then using them for real. Our ship had six helicopter spots but we had 14 helicopters embarked, and having to co-ordinate all these movements was challenging.

The helicopters were shot at a lot and you could see from the ship that there was a lot of activity in Libya. The aircraft often came back with little fuel. One of my roles was to ensure that the ship was on the correct flying course and the deck didn't move around too much. Considering what these guys had gone through, I did my best to make everything as easy as possible for when they returned. We all worked really well together, as 17 per cent of the UK targets were done by Apaches from HMS *Ocean* – a great achievement by everyone involved.



TOP TIPS

TO REDUCE YOUR SALT INTAKE

CUTTING DOWN ON SALT CAN ADD YEARS TO YOUR LIFE

Many people in the UK eat too much salt. This can lead to health problems without people even realising.

Use the following hints and tips to understand why too much salt is unhealthy and how you can make changes to bring down the salt content of your daily food.

HEALTH REASONS

Eating too much salt can be bad for your health, as it can lead to high blood pressure. This in turn can increase the risk of a heart attack or a stroke. About a third of adults in the UK are affected by high blood pressure.

HOW MUCH SALT SHOULD WE EAT?

Adults should eat no more than six grams of salt a day – that's around one full teaspoon.

Babies and children under 11 should have less salt than adults.

Babies under a year old need less than one gram of salt a day, as their kidneys can't cope with more. If a baby is breastfed, they will get the right amount of salt from breast milk. Formula milk contains a similar amount.

Don't add salt to your baby's milk or food and don't use stock cubes or gravy as they're often high in salt.

Remember this when you're cooking for the family if you plan to give the same food to your baby.

Avoid giving your baby processed foods such as ready meals as these are often high in salt. However, food manufactured specifically for babies should meet the recommended levels. If in doubt, always check the label.

The daily recommended maximum amount of salt children should eat depends on age:

- 1 to 3 years – two grams salt a day
- 4 to 6 years – three grams salt a day
- 7 to 10 years – five grams salt a day
- 11 years and over – six grams salt a day

Making sure your child doesn't eat too much salt means you're also helping to ensure that they don't develop a taste for salty food, which makes them less likely to eat too much as an adult.

HOW TO REDUCE SALT INTAKE

The good news is that cutting back on your salt intake can be done by following these simple steps:

- Avoid foods that are known to be high in salt – this includes many prepared meats, for example bacon, salami and ham, as well as cheese. Eat these foods in moderation to help reduce your overall salt intake.
- Swap a salty snack for fruit – crisps, nuts and other snack foods are often very high in salt. Instead make a healthy choice such as fruit or vegetable sticks.
- Don't add salt to food at the table – if you are used to salting your food, it may take a while to adjust. But if you persevere then it is likely that soon you won't miss it. In some cases, you might well find that you were adding salt automatically rather than because the food needed it.
- Use other flavours when cooking – try using herbs, spices, vinegars, chillies and other ingredients to add flavour to your food when cooking. Just make sure you don't choose another high salt alternative; stock cubes, soy sauce and yeast extract are all high in salt content too.
- Check the salt content of everyday food items – a lot of the salt that we eat is actually found in food that we buy ready prepared. Bread and breakfast cereals both contain salt, as do ready meals, pizza, soup and sauces. Check the label before you buy and choose an item with lower salt content wherever possible. Most food has a red, amber or green information label – avoid those with a red for salt content.

MAKING THE CHANGE

One good way to put these tips into action is to keep a diary of what you eat. You can write down the salt content of what you have eaten and then look to see where would be a good area to cut back.

For example, if you find that your main source of salt is from ready meals, consider swapping one meal a week for a lower salt alternative or cooking batches of meals at home and freezing them. You will then be more in control of the salt content and also might find that your home cooking is tastier and more economical too.

A quick and easy change is to choose lower salt versions of everyday foods, for example tinned baked beans and vegetables often come in a low salt option.

Making this switch for a few of your normal shopping products could pay dividends.

HABIT FORMING

Making a few small changes to your eating habits could help to avoid high blood pressure, with the associated risks of heart attack.

Avoiding adding salt to food is one way to do this but also making informed choices about what types of food you eat will mean a lower salt intake and a healthier diet overall. **DF**

Statistics sourced from NHS Choices at www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodfood/Pages/salt.aspx



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SUDOKU

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

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

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

Solution to the April 2014 puzzle

CHESS



Compiled by: Carl Portman

There are not many chess jokes around but this is a cracker that I am sure you will like.

Two elderly gentlemen played chess every week for years until sadly one of them died.

The living player was lying in bed one night when his chess partner appeared as an apparition and said 'I have some good news and some bad news'.

'What's the good news?' the sleepy man asked. 'Well, it is absolutely fantastic up here. All the greats are in town and you can play the likes of Morphy, Alekhine, Tal and even Bobby Fischer any time you like'.

'Really, that's just unbelievable, but what's the bad news?'

'Ah,' said the apparition, 'you have black against Capablanca next Thursday!'

Some people dream about chess but I never have. I do however imagine what it would be like to go back in time and sit opposite someone like Capablanca or, better still, Lasker.

There we would sit in his library, cigar smoke dancing wildly in the beams of



sunlight, lighting up the board as the great man ponders his move.

In this position from the game Lasker – Schewe from Berlin in 1890 it is Lasker (white) to move. What did he play and why? The first correct answer out of the hat wins a copy of the book *Survive & Beat Annoying Chess Openings* by Schiller and Watson, kindly donated by Chess & Bridge Ltd of London.

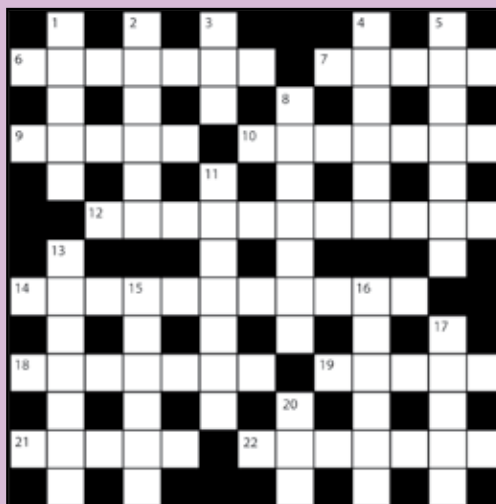
Send your answers to me at carl.portman@hotmail.co.uk please.

The answer to March's problem was 1. Rxh6! The winner was Alan Pickles from DSG Land Supply. Winner of the April problem will be announced.

TOPICAL CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 6. Faltskog, one of the female members of ABBA (7)
- 7. Group of soldiers (5)
- 9. Kevin Whately plays this television policeman (5)
- 10. Type of pizza that is folded in half before cooking (7)
- 12. Northern Ireland golfer, one of the favourites for the 2014 US Open (4,7)
- 14. Argentinian footballer who hopes to star in the 2014 World Cup (6,5)
- 18. Silvery fish which is sometimes smoked (7)
- 19. See 3 Down
- 21. Italian city, a major world fashion centre (5)
- 22. John Forsythe plays Blake Carrington in this 1980s television series (7)



DOWN

- 1. Man-eating giants in folklore (5)
- 2. Country which is bordered by the USA to the north (6)
- 3. And 8 Down, 19 Across, 20 Down. JD Salinger's most famous book (3,7,2,3,3)
- 4. Host country of the 2014 World Cup (6)
- 5. _____ Abbey, the television series about the aristocratic Crawley family (7)

- 8. See 3 Down
- 11. Tour de France sport (7)
- 13. Abuja is the capital of this African country (7)
- 15. Anthony Perkins plays _____ Bates in the movie *Psycho* (6)
- 16. Sunbathers hope to acquire one (6)
- 17. Colour of the cue ball in snooker (5)
- 20. See 3 Down

SOLUTION (NO PEEKING)

- Down**
- 1. Ogres 2. Mexico
 - 3. The 4. Brazil 5. Downton
 - 8. Catcher 11. Cycling
 - 13. Nigeria 15. Norman
 - 16. Suntan 17. White 20. Rye
- Across**
- 6. Agnetha 7. Troop 9. Lewis
 - 10. Calzone 12. Rory McIlroy
 - 14. Lionel Messi 18. Herring
 - 19. In The 21. Milan
 - 22. Dynasty

CARPET COMBAT

Ever fancied yourself as a Royal Marines commando, driving across the desert on your camouflaged quad bike? Or maybe you prefer taking part in a bit of target practice with a Royal Artillery gun whilst simultaneously being the architect of a Royal Navy dock compound. And achieve all this in your slippers, with a cup of tea and a biscuit.

Well, for one lucky *Defence Focus* reader this could all be a reality. Albeit on a much smaller, and more plastic, scale. The winner will scoop up a selection of H.M. Armed Forces toys, perfect to give your own little soldiers, or to keep for the big kid within.

The prizes include a Royal Marines commando desert raiding party set, complete with camouflage-clad action



PRIZE
This month *Defence Focus* is giving away this action packed range of figures and kit

figure, two Royal Artillery light guns with real firing ammunition, a Royal Navy dock compound set and Armed Forces micro-figures to populate and command your newly-created Armed Forces empire.

TO WIN

To be in with a chance of winning, just email your name, address and phone number to dmc-newsdesk@mod.uk by Friday 4 July 2014. Don't forget to put **Action Figures** in the subject line.

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