



# Defence**F**ocus

Royal Navy | Army | Royal Air Force | Ministry of Defence | ISSUE #268 MARCH/13



## MINI CHOPPERS

British troops first to fly high-tech kit p14

# SMALL STEP FOR MANKIND

Giant leap for amputees p12



## PRIME LOCATION

From Whitehall to Hollywood p22



# WHAT'S THE VALUE OF YOUR ARMED FORCES PENSION?



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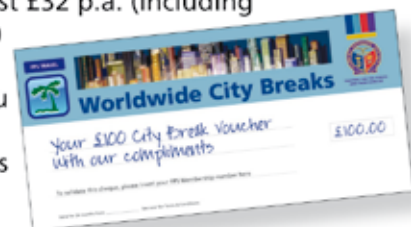
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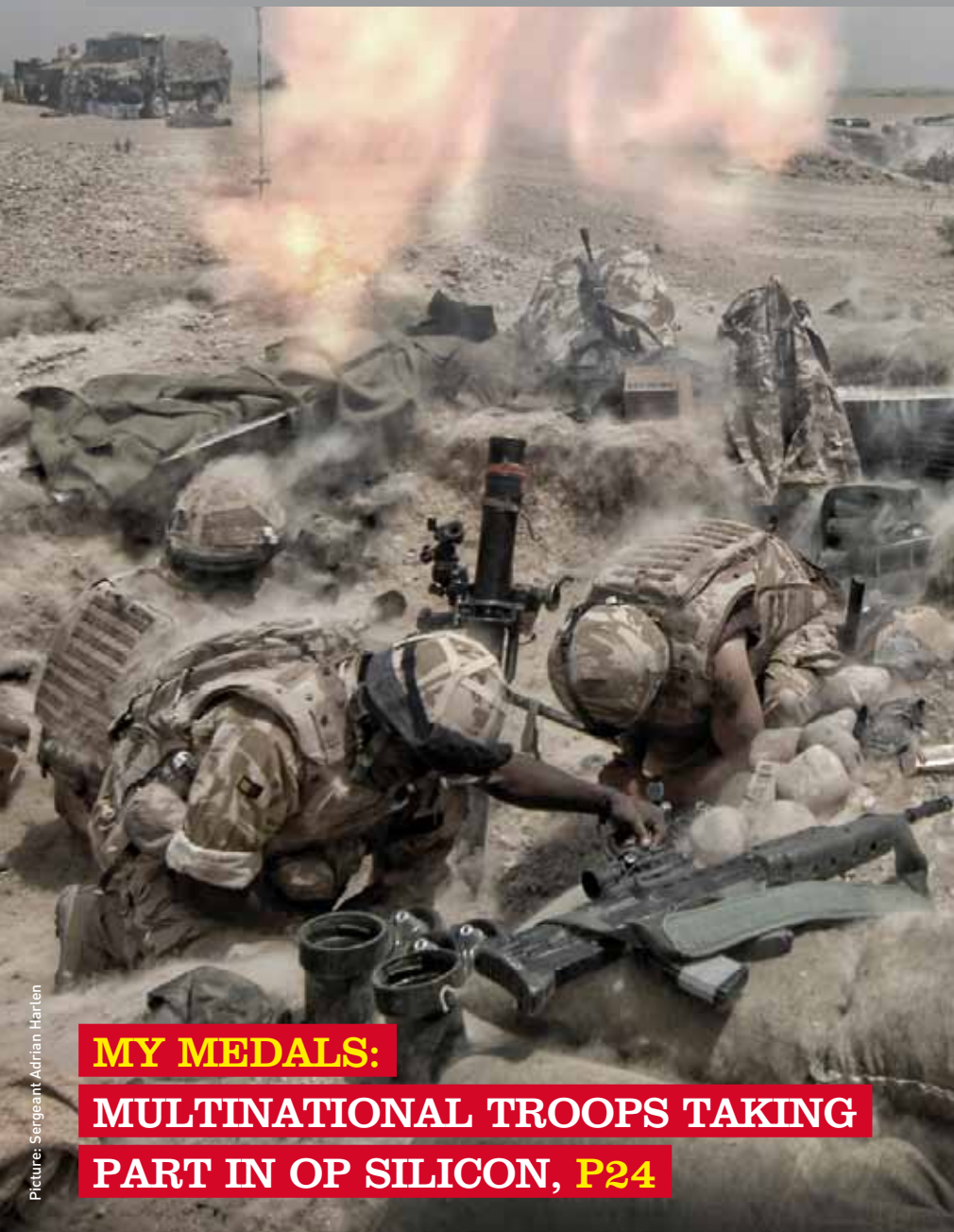
68 South Lambeth Road, Vauxhall, London, SW8 1RL

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# NAVIGATOR



Pictures: Sergeant Adrian Hartlen

**MY MEDALS:**  
**MULTINATIONAL TROOPS TAKING**  
**PART IN OP SILICON, P24**



## Regulars

### **P6 BIG PICTURE**

Royal Marines conduct ice-breaking drills as part of cold weather warfare training

### **P16 VERBATIM**

First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope retires from the Royal Navy

### **P24 MY MEDALS**

Army photographer Sergeant Adrian Hartlen looks back

### **P31 LAZY DAYS IN LEEDS**

One lucky reader will win a pampering spa break in Leeds

## Features

### **P5 ARMY BASING**

Where the Army will come home to

### **P8 PREPARING FOR THE FRONT LINE**

1 Mechanized Brigade carry out pre-deployment training for Afghanistan

### **P10 FUTURE OF FORCES BROADCASTING**

BFBS sign a new 10-year contract that will deliver more channels and great value

### **P14 MINI CHOPPERS PROTECT TROOPS**

Black Hornet will provide ground troops with vital situational awareness

### **P18 APPLIANCE OF SCIENCE**

The Army exploits science to help identify the needs of Future Force 2020

### **P22 MOD IN THE MOVIES**

Tom Cruise shoots his new blockbuster at MOD Main Building

### **P28 BATTLE OF THE BULGE**

Signs of a hernia to watch out for and how it can be treated with no lasting effects



**P18**



**P14**

# EDITOR'S NOTE

## DefenceFocus

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Level 1 Zone C  
MOD, Main Building  
Whitehall  
London SW1A 2HB  
General enquiries: 020 721 8 1320

**EDITOR:** Fiona Simpson  
Tel: 020 721 83949  
email: fiona.simpson102@mod.uk

**ASSISTANT EDITOR:** Ian Carr  
Tel: 020 721 82825  
email: ian\_carr@dmc.mod.uk

**ASSISTANT EDITOR:** Tristan Kelly  
Tel: 020 721 84252  
email: tristan.kelly569@mod.uk

**ASSISTANT EDITOR:** Leigh Hamilton  
Tel: 020 721 85988  
email: leigh.hamilton933@mod.uk

**ASSISTANT EDITOR:** Lorraine McBride  
Tel: 020 721 82341  
email: lorraine\_mcbride@dmc.mod.uk

**ART EDITOR:** Mark Eagle  
Tel: 020 721 83658  
email: designer\_defencefocus@dmc.mod.uk

**DISTRIBUTION AND SUPPORT:** Shell Daruwala  
Tel: 020 721 8 1320  
email: shell.daruwala932@mod.uk

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email: richard.stillman@tenalps.com

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## FIONA SIMPSON



In any big organisation, even MOD, change is always on the agenda, whether at the centre or out on the front line.

It's human nature to be suspicious of change and we don't all

embrace it with open arms. But here at *Defence Focus* we will always do our best to try and explain it to you.

Some of that change is technological. Lorraine McBride, a reluctant convert to the mobile phone, is a self-confessed technophobe. In this month's edition, however, you can go on a journey of discovery with her as she looks at some of the amazing applications of wizzy gadgetry in MOD, including futuristic miniature helicopters and the new bionic legs that are now

available to amputee Service personnel.

You can also read Tristan Kelly's report into the virtual videogame-like training world of the Army's Urban Warrior exercise.

It's all change for the Army too, with the recent basing announcement (opposite) which will see thousands of troops returning from Germany in the next few years. This isn't our last word on the subject, look out for more in-depth coverage of how this mammoth task will be achieved in the April edition.

Ian Carr talks to the soldiers during their final stages of training before heading to Afghanistan on Herrick 18, looking at how the mission has changed, with a lot of the responsibility for operations now having passed over to the Afghan National Security Forces.

You see, we might think we are all standing still and that it takes a frustrating age to get anything done, but actually change is all around us. Now, go and give it a big hug.

## Ministry of Defence online

[www.gov.uk/mod](http://www.gov.uk/mod)

### The Defence News Blog

Get a daily update of all the major defence stories running in the media with the MOD's official position on the key issues, as well as a Defence Diary with upcoming events of interest. Visit [www.blogs.mod.uk](http://www.blogs.mod.uk) and subscribe to the daily alerts.

### YouTube

At Defence Headquarters YouTube the latest videos from across Defence can be found, including clips of soldiers on patrol in Helmand and briefings from senior personnel.

### Afghanistan Blog

Updated daily with official news on the UK mission in Afghanistan as well as with stories from across the media and personal blogs from Armed Forces personnel currently deployed.

[www.ukforcesafghanistan.wordpress.com](http://www.ukforcesafghanistan.wordpress.com)

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# A FOND FAREWELL

## DETAILS OF WHERE BRITISH ARMY UNITS WILL BE STATIONED ON THEIR RETURN FROM GERMANY HAVE BEEN ANNOUNCED

**A**fter more than seven decades serving in Germany, the Army has detailed plans for when and to where units will move when they leave the country for good.

The Regular Army Basing Plan sets out the future laydown of the Army as it moves back to the UK and restructures to deliver its future operating model via Army 2020.

Under the plan, around 70 per cent of the Army will be brought back from Germany by the end of 2015, with the final 4,300 returning by the end of 2019. A move that is expected to eventually save £240 million a year.

The troops will be based across the UK, with major concentrations around Salisbury Plain, Edinburgh and Leuchars in Scotland, Catterick in North Yorkshire, Aldershot, Colchester, Stafford and the East Midlands. The new basing plan will make the best use of the defence estate and provide better

accommodation and facilities for troops and their families.

The Government is investing £1.8 billion in the new basing plan and £1 billion of this will be spent on building brand new accommodation. This will result in around 1,900 new family homes being built and more than 7,800 new rooms, along with more than 800 upgraded rooms, for single soldiers, and more than 450 upgraded homes for families. The rest of the investment will be spent on technical infrastructure.

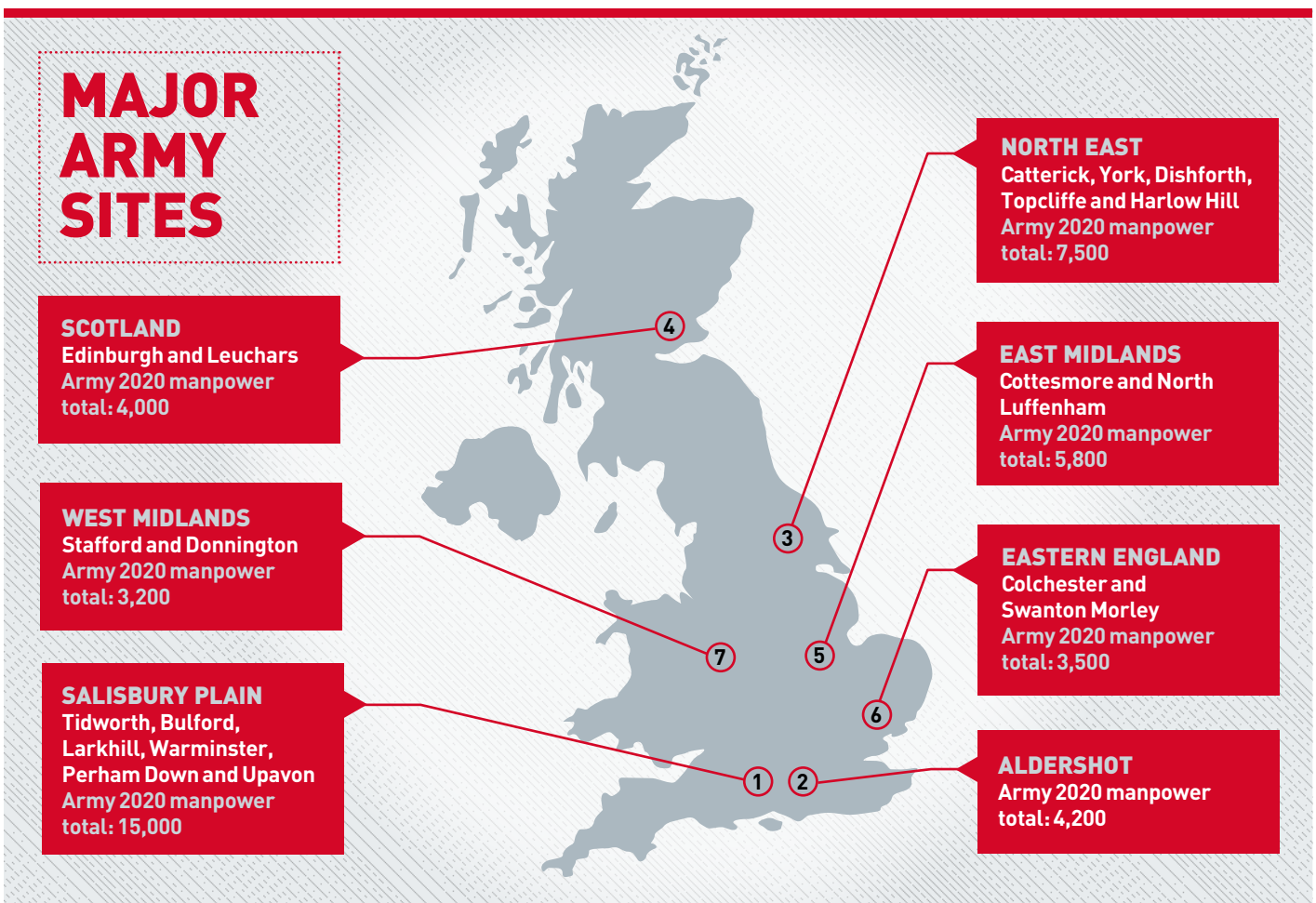
The plan is a critical milestone in the Transforming Defence agenda, delivering the battle-winning Armed Forces set out in the Defence Vision, and Future Force 2020 as set out in the 2010 Strategic Defence and Security Review. The plan is also key to Army 2020, providing a basing laydown in the UK required to generate military capability in the most effective and efficient

way to deliver success on future operations.

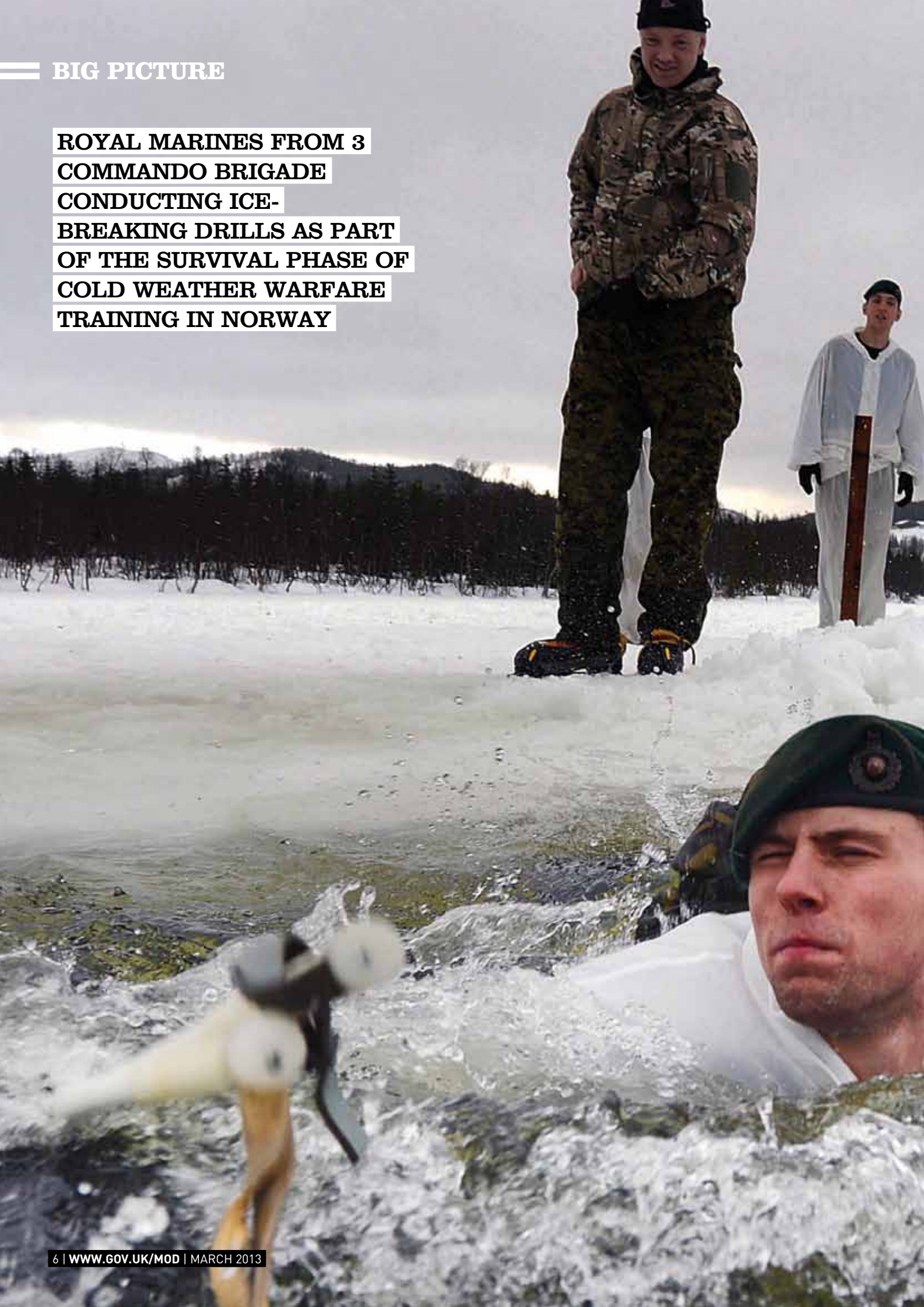
General Sir Peter Wall, Chief of the General Staff, said: "This announcement is very welcome news for the Army. The plan provides an excellent springboard for operations overseas and it affords welcome certainty for where people will live."

The moves also aim to fulfil the Government's commitment to give Regular Army personnel more certainty about where they will be based in future. They form part of the wider commitment under the New Employment Model to give Service personnel and their families greater stability, allowing them to integrate into local communities, their spouses to find long-term jobs and their children to have continuity in education. More details can be found on the Defence Intranet. **DF**

**LOOK OUT FOR MORE ON BASING IN THE NEXT EDITION OF DEFENCE FOCUS**



**ROYAL MARINES FROM 3  
COMMANDO BRIGADE  
CONDUCTING ICE-  
BREAKING DRILLS AS PART  
OF THE SURVIVAL PHASE OF  
COLD WEATHER WARFARE  
TRAINING IN NORWAY**







Picture: PO[Phot] Sean Clee



# SELF-SERVICE

**AS 1 MECHANIZED BRIGADE DEPLOY TO HELMAND, THE NEXT FEW MONTHS WILL BE CRUCIAL WRITES IAN CARR**

**T**his is set to be a critical summer for the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). So far, with the help and support of ISAF troops, the Afghans have impressed both their international partners and themselves in the progress that they have made.

With the ANSF now taking the lead in about 80 per cent of operations, and

conducting as much as 90 per cent of their own training, Helmand has been transformed. But this will be the first time that they will take the lead during the traditional summer fighting season.

It is a vital stage in their march towards taking on full responsibility for security prior to the drawdown of international forces. Will they cope?

Brigadier Rupert Jones, the next commander of Task Force Helmand, believes they will. While acknowledging that they still need some help with a number of what the military call "enablers" – medical support, surveillance and fire support, he is convinced that the ANSF will do well. "This summer will be a very important moment in the campaign. It is vital that the ANSF



Picture: Richard Watt

**Hand-in-glove: soldiers from 1 Mechanized Brigade show how they operate with Afghan forces**



come through it having made real progress so that their will and their confidence are boosted. They and I are very confident that they will succeed."

In April, Brigadier Jones will deploy with 1 Mechanized Brigade to Helmand province as Herrick 18. Partly because of the improvement in the quality and fighting professionalism of the ANSF, and partly due to the changing role of British troops, he will be taking with him just 8,000 troops, which is approximately 1,000 fewer than his predecessor.

"The shape of our operation is changing," said Brigadier Jones. "Our job is to be in the background, preparing and deepening the institutional development of the Afghan police and army, and providing moral support and encouragement."

The intent of the tour is to build on the success of previous deployments in delivering as smooth a transition as possible. An important part of the soldiers' work will be to build the ANSF's self-confidence.

On a snow-swept Salisbury Plain, weeks before deploying, the troops demonstrated elements of the role they will play. In previous years, these demonstrations of skills would have involved flashes and bangs, as troops dealt with ambushes and coped with casualty evacuations. This year, however, instead of the scurry, shouted commands and pyrotechnics, the emphasis was on how our troops encourage and advise the Afghans in training their troops in basic policing and soldiering skills.

"With nine out of 10 precincts in Nad Ali having already transitioned, we are no longer mentoring or even partnering, we are advising," said Lieutenant Colonel Robin Lyndsay, the Police Mentoring and Advisory Group's commanding officer. "We are increasingly lifting off in terms of the depth of support we provide. We no longer provide tactical support at the checkpoint-level, we now offer advice at the district-level, and increasingly we will be lifting off there so that by 2014 they will be self-reliant."

This will be Lieutenant Colonel Tom Bewick's third tour in Afghanistan. He is experienced enough to get things into perspective in terms of what will be asked of him as the commanding officer of the Battle Advisory Group. "I will be General Sherin Shah's seventh advisor. So there is little I can tell him about combat in central Helmand. What I can do is help transition to be as smooth as possible."

British soldiers tend to be proactive people who want to get stuck in and sort things out. So standing back can be a challenge. Talk to the soldiers



**Eyes front: a "potential new recruit" to the Afghan police is photographed and fingerprinted before his training programme begins**

Picture: Andrew Linnett

and they shrug, agreeing it's not always easy to hang back, and even tougher to hand over control. It takes self-discipline. Happily, this is yet another quality in the soldier's make-up. They understand the need for this approach, which helps, and it is seen as evidence of a job well-done but not yet completed.

Many from 1 Mechanized Brigade have been to Afghanistan before, so they are in a good position to make comparisons.

Colour Sergeant Martin Wear, a logistics specialist, gives an example. "Logistics used to be done by us, but now the Afghans mostly sort themselves out. Their system is working properly, and they trust it. It's more demand-led now, so they actually get what they ask for rather than getting stuff they haven't."

Previously the Afghan supply chain would push things down to the checkpoints whether they had been requested or not. So a checkpoint that needed rifles might get a delivery of training shoes instead.

During his tour, Colour Sergeant Wear expects to be spending his time tweaking what is now a pretty effective infrastructure. The trick he says, is in knowing the best way to introduce an idea diplomatically. "The Afghans will bring in their own system that works for them. If you want them to

consider a new idea you need to work out who has the real influence, and then find a way of making your idea his idea."

As the number of NATO troops killed by their Afghan counterparts has risen, dealing with these attacks forms part of the preparation. But the troops are keen that the threat is seen in context. "Many Afghan warriors have risked their lives to save UK troops," said Lieutenant Colonel Bewick. "Yes, it's one of the threats we face, but when we visit our Afghan colleagues they treat us as friends and guests." Having said that, each unit trains its own "guardian angels" – soldiers who stand watch over their comrades, even when they are with their Afghan allies at a meeting, or "shura". It's not a new concept, but it's been refined. "It's very much about being alert on the inside while looking relaxed," said Major Gary Sawyer, the man responsible for drawing the procedures together.

"We take basic soldier skills and apply a bit of science, looking at behavioural indicators and ways to assess the situation. But it's not something that dominates our relationship with the Afghans. When we go into a compound we are genuinely pleased to see them, and they are pleased to see us. We have a joint interest in understanding the way each of us lives our lives." **DF**



**Cool and calm: various units from 1 Mechanized Brigade show off their kit**



**Cold war: troops training on a chilly Salisbury Plain prior to deploying to Helmand**

Picture: Corporal Si Longworth

Picture: Richard Watt



# BREATH OF FRESH AIR

## FORCES BROADCASTING, A VOICE FOR THE FORCES FOR OVER HALF-A-CENTURY, IS CHANGING FOR THE BETTER

**F**orces broadcasting has grown from very humble beginnings on the wireless in Algiers in the Second World War. It broke into TV in Germany in the 1970s, and in the modern day its programmes can be found on the air and online at local garrisons in the UK and in countries around the world.

In October 2012 the future shape of the service was secured when MOD signed a new 10-year contract for forces broadcasting, following a tendering process. This service starts its roll-out on 1 April this year.

TV and radio are set for some changes that will improve the service in many areas while making sure that the popular programme types continue. All this will be delivered by the British Forces Broadcasting Service (BFBS), who will be building on a track record of more than 60 years of award-winning broadcasting to the Service community.

Project sponsor for MOD, Chris Williams, said: "From 1 April the services delivered by BFBS will start to change. By the end of this year, audiences will see and hear more of the programmes that they want, and there will be improved



**Allan 'Dusty' Miller,**  
British Forces  
Broadcasting Service's  
(BFBS's) General  
Manager in Camp  
Bastion in Afghanistan

broadcast schedules in some overseas locations."

To make sure the service was fit for purpose the tender team went back to basics and asked reps from across the Services what they wanted from a broadcast service.

"They told us they wanted a radio and TV service with the best of UK broadcast entertainment, lots of sport and UK

news," said Chris Williams. "So we built that into the specification and also made sure we sought a service that would help to maintain the links between personnel around the world and home."

Chris continued: "And you won't be surprised that we wanted a broadcast service that matches the pick of the crop of UK terrestrial services, for less than we paid in the past, which is vital in the current economic climate."

### CHANGE THE CHANNEL

So savings and improvements, but what will this new service look like? The BFBS's television service, which is available at overseas locations, will be getting a new sports channel which will feature the best from channels such as ESPN and Eurosport as well as some military sport. This is in addition to Sky Sports 1 and 2.

Families will be catered for with a new BFBS Extra channel which will show the best of family entertainment, and the young ones will be equally happy with daytime broadcasts of CBBC and CBeebies – replacing BFBS Kids.

The changes won't stop there; additional TV channels for those



deployed on Operation Herrick will be launched in the second half of 2013. And new TV services to reach forces audiences in Diego Garcia, Nepal and Brunei are also planned during the same period.

**RADIO CONNECTIONS**

One of the major changes is the move to an integrated worldwide and local radio network for the forces audiences. This will bring together the existing BFBS overseas stations and UK digital broadcasting with a chain of local stations within the UK.

From 1 April BFBS Radio will provide this new local service, replacing the existing services in Aldershot, Salisbury Plain, Blandford, Catterick, Colchester and Edinburgh, but using the same FM frequencies. Live local breakfast shows will be broadcast from these locations as well as core BFBS Radio programmes such as the *Total Ops Connection* from Afghanistan and the weekend request programme *Access All Areas*.

Music and entertainment programmes remain the focus of the output, with all the latest community and local information.

BFBS Radio is also set to serve its local communities with interviews and local news provided by reporters covering the areas where the Armed Forces live and work.


These local radio stations will also receive live news bulletins from British Forces News and the schedules will also feature new sports, welfare and consumer programmes.

**BFBS ONLINE**

BFBS online services will continue at [www.bfbs.com](http://www.bfbs.com) so that wherever personnel and their families are based and can access the web, they can access BFBS.

The recent launch of the British Forces News app means that the latest Armed Forces news is available 24/7 via a smartphone or tablet. It mirrors the content on the main British Forces News website at [www.bfbs.com/news](http://www.bfbs.com/news) so video reports can also be accessed on the app.

The BFBS Radio app also streams live radio straight to your device and listeners can use the app for all of the message-sending features found on the BFBS website.

All this will be coming in soon, so make sure you look out for changes in your area. Whether you listen to the radio, tune in on your TV or log on your smartphone, there'll be plenty of ways to keep up-to-date with BFBS. 



Picture: Alison Baskerville/LNP

# THE NEW BFBS SERVICES AT A GLANCE

The new service starts on 1 April. All locations that currently receive a radio or TV service will continue to receive a broadcast after the switchover.

**BFBS TV**

A new line-up with more live TV from the UK:

- **BBC1**
- **BBC2 and CBBC** during the day
- **ITV**
- **BFBS Extra** - the best of Channel 4, Channel 5, Watch, Dave, plus selected content from Discovery Channel, National Geographic, ITV2, 3 & 4, the History Channel, Sky Atlantic and CBeebies during the day
- **Sky Sports 1**
- **Sky Sports 2**
- **BFBS Sport** - providing the best of sports from a range of channels including ESPN, Sky, BT and Eurosport
- **Sky News** - to include Forces News from July 2013
- **Nepali TV** - for the Gurkha audience outside Nepal

Movies will be available on the first four of these channels. Extra entertainment channels for those deployed on Op Herrick are planned for later in 2013.

New TV services for forces audiences in Diego Garcia, Nepal and Brunei are also planned for the second half of 2013.



**BFBS RADIO**

■ **BFBS Radio, BFBS Radio 2 and BFBS Gurkha Radio** will continue with new schedules

■ Five new themed music channels via the set-top box in most areas and BFBS online:

- BFBS Beats – continuous dance and R&B
- BFBS Dirt – between rock and a hard place
- BFBS Rewind – 40 years of hits for the British Forces
- BFBS Unwind – cool, calm and relaxed
- BFBS Shamishran – the best of Nepali and Hindi music for Gurkha listeners

**BFBS LOCAL COMMUNITY RADIO IN UK**

■ New live and local FM radio services located at six major UK locations: BFBS Aldershot, BFBS Salisbury Plain, BFBS Blandford, BFBS Catterick, BFBS Colchester, BFBS Edinburgh.

■ These add to the existing BFBS Northern Ireland FM services in Aldergrove, Ballykinler, Holywood and Lisburn and the BFBS Gurkha Radio service on AM in the UK.

**WATCH THE BFBS WEBSITE – [WWW.BFBS.COM](http://WWW.BFBS.COM) – FOR MORE INFORMATION**

# HEROES TO GET 'BIONIC' LEGS

**MILITARY AMPUTEES WILL BE GIVEN THE LATEST PROSTHETIC LIMBS, REPORTS LORRAINE MCBRIDE**



Picture: Corporal Richard Cave

Steve Lambert working in Headley Court's prosthetics workshop

**W**ar heroes who have lost their legs on operations will now have access to the most technologically advanced prosthetics available, including the Genium 'bionic' leg, thanks to new funding announced by the Defence Secretary Philip Hammond and Chancellor George Osborne.

The Government has made £6.5 million available from the special reserve to guarantee that all serving personnel and veterans injured while serving in Iraq or Afghanistan will be able to have the latest prosthetics, where clinically appropriate.

The new microprocessor knee known as a 'bionic leg', made famous by Private Derek Derenalagi in the London Paralympics, will dramatically improve quality of life and speed of rehabilitation for troops and veterans. It will provide better stability and mobility as well as improving the ability to step over obstacles, negotiate stairs and walk backwards safely.

The announcement was made at the Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre at Headley Court where the new Genium

leg was unveiled. Mr Hammond said that providing world-class medical care and rehabilitation for personnel remained a top priority and that clinicians would now have freedom to choose across the range of 'bionic legs' to best suit the amputee.

He said: "That's great news for Service people going through the process. I've talked to some of the guys waiting to be fitted with new limbs and they definitely have their shopping lists ready. They know all about these limbs, they've talked to people in the States who've tried them. They're ready to go for it."

Surgeon General Air Marshal Paul Evans was impressed by the sophisticated next generation of 'intelligent' microprocessor knees.

He said: "When you put all this together, it makes a complex piece of gadgetry work very effectively to provide a greater degree of freedom and movement."

Injured in Afghanistan last June, patient Lance Corporal Bryan Phillips, 27, of the Irish Guards said: "The Defence Secretary showed an interest in how

many different legs suit so many different people. I'm definitely keen to try a new leg and it could make my life easier."

The Genium limb costs £31,000 but one-size-doesn't-fit-all as every patient is different. The latest artificial leg joins a range of prosthetic limbs but Headley Court Lead Clinician Mark Thoburn stressed that each patient will be matched with the best limb taking into consideration their injury, socket joint, fitness and lifestyle.

Mark relishes his job helping severely injured amputee patients at Headley Court by prescribing and fitting the best artificial limbs. He said: "It's a fantastic job and hard work, but well worth it."

Paralympic rower Captain Nick Beighton, who lost both legs in Afghanistan in 2009, welcomed the new artificial limbs.

He said: "I'd love to try the Genium and see if it can offer me anything extra. It's not necessarily going to work for everyone but, for people who are a bit more able on their legs, it will offer them even more functionality to get out and do a little bit more with their life."

Asked what the latest technology means to amputees, Commanding Officer of Headley Court, Group Captain Clare Walton, said: "It's about independence and quality of life so this really guarantees an investment in their future."

The first patients are expected to be fitted with the new prosthetic limbs by late spring, once Headley Court's clinicians have trained in fitting the new limbs.

Group Captain Walton said: "Some of the technology is awesome. It's just really impressive to see, but in real terms it's about what it allows patients to do, and that's what we as clinicians want to know, that we're giving our patients the best care available and this is it."

"You know what soldiers are like, any Gucci piece of kit and they'll want it. This has been around for a bit and there is a real anticipation so it's really good news that we'll be able to do that for them." **DF**



# GENIUM 'BIONIC' LEG



## BIONIC SPORTSMAN

Paralympian Derek Derenalagi made the Genium bionic

leg famous in the London 2012 Paralympic Games in the discus event.

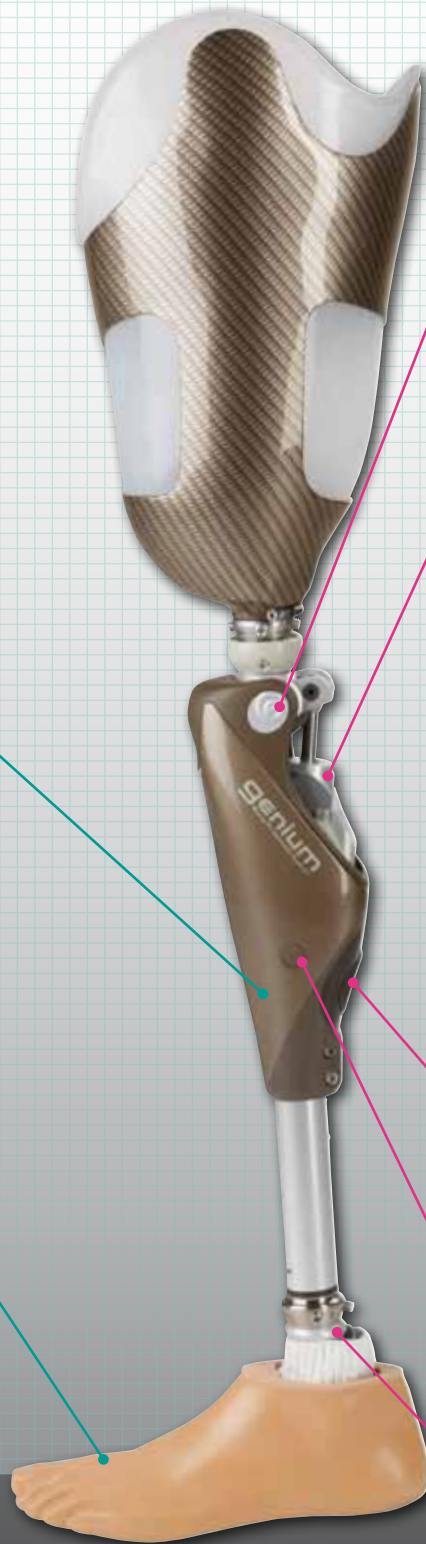
## CARBON FIBRE FRAME

The 'shin' conceals cutting-edge technology. The frame is made of carbon fibre - a strong and lightweight material. Comes with a six-year warranty.



## PROSTHETIC FOOT

The prosthetic will be fitted with a silicon foot that's a suitable size and weight to match the original limb where practical. Lead Clinician Mark Thoburn says patient Captain Nick Beighton who had size 14 feet before losing his legs in an IED blast now uses size 12 silicon feet. Why? "Because it's easier to buy shoes!"



## GYROSCOPE, ACCELEROMETER AND ANGLE SENSOR

Detects position, speed and angle of leg to correct its movement.



## HYDRAULICS

When standing still, valves close, locking knee and allowing leg to bear weight. This gives amputee stability in stance and walking.

## CHARGING PORT

This enables user to recharge the built-in battery that powers the leg for five days.

## KNEE MOVEMENT SENSOR

Detects movements in knees and forces bearing on the leg, adjusting the weight accordingly.

## ANKLE SENSOR

Measures ankle movement.



Way to row: Captain Nick Beighton hopes to try the Genium

“ I'd love to try the Genium and see if it can offer me anything extra ”



# A TINY EYE IN THE SKY





## BRITISH TROOPS IN AFGHANISTAN ARE THE FIRST TO USE STATE-OF-THE-ART NANO SURVEILLANCE HELICOPTERS

**B**ritish soldiers on the front line in Afghanistan have been issued with the Black Hornet Nano Unmanned Air Vehicle. The device measures just four inches by one inch and provides troops on the ground with vital situational awareness.

The Black Hornet is equipped with a tiny built-in camera which gives troops reliable full-motion video and still images. Soldiers are using it to peer around corners or over walls and other obstacles for any hidden dangers, and the images are displayed on a handheld terminal.

This revolutionary new system is carried easily on patrol and is capable of performing in harsh environments and windy conditions.

The Black Hornet weighs as little as 16 grams and has been developed by Prox Dynamics AS of Norway as part of a £20m contract for 160 units with Marlborough Communications Ltd in Surrey.

Sergeant Christopher Petherbridge of the Brigade Reconnaissance Force

in Afghanistan said: "Black Hornet is definitely adding value, especially considering the lightweight nature of it. We use it to look for insurgent firing points and check out exposed areas of the ground before crossing which is a real asset. It's very easy to operate and offers amazing capability to the guys on the ground."

Minister for Defence Equipment, Support and Technology, Philip Dunne, said: "Black Hornet gives our troops the benefits of surveillance in the palm of their hands. It is extremely light and portable whilst out on patrol.

"Intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance systems are a key component in our 10-year equipment plan and now that we have balanced the defence budget we are able to confidently invest in these kinds of cutting-edge technologies." **DT**

Picture: Sergeant Rupert Friere

**Sergeant Scott Weaver**  
of the Queen's Royal Lancers  
launches a Black Hornet  
Nano UAV from a compound  
in Afghanistan

# THE FINAL RUN ASHORE FOR ROYAL NAVY CHIEF

**AS ADMIRAL SIR MARK STANHOPE STEPS DOWN AS THE HEAD OF THE ROYAL NAVY, HE TALKS TO IAN CARR ABOUT THE SERVICE AND THE DAY A 90-FOOT DIVE NEARLY FINISHED HIM**

**DF: What has being Head of the Senior Service meant to you personally?**

**MS:** To serve my country by leading the Navy I joined in 1970 has been a huge honour and privilege.

While it's a very different Navy these days, and definitely a better one, the Fleet is actually doing much the same as it always has done, and always will do – from the sea, protecting our prosperity and security.

Serving as the maritime advisor for Government and shaping the Fleet for the future has been an enormous responsibility and a stimulating professional challenge.

**DF: What is the most important role for a Service Chief – is it to lead or to serve those they command?**

**MS:** Both, although leadership is for nothing if it is not to serve our people and the public.

**DF: Just before taking up post as 1SL, you went to Afghanistan to meet the “two frigate’s worth” of RN personnel serving there. It bothered you that the public weren’t aware of the RN’s role. Has that situation improved?**

**MS:** Yes, but only a little. Even when in 2011 the Navy’s contribution in Afghanistan amounted to more than 10 frigates’ worth, the sailors and marines were, because everyone wears the same uniform, understandably still mistaken for soldiers by the public.

But it's not just about the RN's profile, it's about raising the maritime in our national consciousness. I think operations and events such as Libya, the Olympics, the Diamond Jubilee River Pageant and this year's 70th anniversary of the Battle of the Atlantic amongst others are helping people remake the link between wealth and water, as well as re-engage the public of this island nation with the Royal Navy.

**DF: Because of Afghanistan there was a concern that some RN personnel might only ever serve on land-based ops, which could lead to a loss of some important capability. What's the situation now?**

**MS:** The imperative of Afghanistan certainly meant that we had to shift our priorities by placing an emphasis on the skill sets, training requirements and force generation issues associated with this land-locked country.

Regenerating the Lead Commando Group, our high-readiness amphibious force, last year therefore



Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope steps down as First Sea Lord this month



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presented a greater challenge. But the marines are a highly adaptable bunch and we regained what otherwise might have been lost ground remarkably quickly. We probably have some way to go yet, but we are certainly focused on the regeneration of this critical maritime contingency requirement.

**DF: Lord Levene's report advocated more responsibility and accountability for Service Chiefs. How has that impacted on what you do?**

**MS:** Apart from personally spending more time at Navy Command Headquarters in Portsmouth, from a Service perspective, implementing Lord Levene's recommendations have been about restructuring our governance, redesigning our headquarters and refocusing the waterfronts and air stations.

But it's ultimately about outputs, not process, and the alignment of accountability, responsibility and authority. For the Navy, Levene is about meeting the defence requirement by providing warships, submarines and aircraft at readiness, by placing the future equipment requirements and priorities within naval control, and then delivering everything as efficiently as possible.

**DF: Has not being at the Defence Board table been a shock to the system?**

**MS:** No. If the Levene model is to work then board structures and membership needed to change too. The creation of the Armed Forces Committee on which the Service Chiefs now sit allows CDS and VCDS to go to the Defence Board with a stronger, more informed and often more unified military voice.

While the absence of the Service Chiefs from the Defence Board is a concern for some people, I can honestly say that, having served with both board structures, the advocacy and debate between the Chiefs is now much deeper and richer.

**DF: What kind of Navy does the country need in the future? Are there skills and equipment gaps in delivering that?**

**MS:** In a word, we must remain 'adaptable' in terms of people and platforms. And so that we can act where we need to independently we should retain our current full spectrum force.

That is because as I look back over my career, the vast majority of the 800 or so operations in which sailors and marines have been involved worldwide have been in response to the unforeseen.

If we learn only one thing from history, it is that our future will be even more unpredictable. Being genuinely adaptable is an enormous challenge.

Equally we must be a sustainable force, able to generate the expertise we need from within our own structures. That means having what I call a 'right-sized Navy', both equipment and personnel.

**DF: Despite Afghanistan bringing a high cost to many, including families, it is clear that Op Herrick has been motivational for many regular and reserve personnel. Post-2014, what effect will a world without Herrick have on morale, recruitment and retention?**

**MS:** The stability and freedom which is beginning

to emerge in Afghanistan are a direct result of the courage, resolve and sacrifice made by our people and their families over the years.

As we look beyond the combat phase in Afghanistan, for the RN it will be business as usual in home waters and around the world.

For instance, continuing to maintain confidence in the legitimate use of the sea for trade and resource extraction, helping other nations develop their maritime capabilities especially in the vicinity of the world's most fragile states, ensuring credible contingency for crisis management and defence, and of course delivering the strategic deterrent.

Morale, recruitment and retention are not Afghanistan-centric, but a feature of what we do, how we do it, and how we motivate, inspire and lead our people on an operation.

**DF: Will adventurous training prove even more important in terms of recruitment and retention, skills development and spotting future leaders?**

**MS:** Adventurous training and all sport for that matter always makes a vital contribution to the morale component, they always will.

But when it comes to recruitment and developing leadership and teamwork, there's no substitute for being trained and tested in exercises, on operations at sea or ashore, for our marines, all balanced by a varied programme and, of course, the occasional run ashore!

**DF: Have you a message for all those who have served in the RN during your time as 1SL?**

**MS:** It has to be a message of gratitude for their sense of duty, courage and humour, and my thanks also to their families for their unstinting support.

**DF: And a message for your successor?**

**MS:** Good luck, we all need luck. The Royal Navy has a formidable future maritime equipment plan, including both carriers, but above all it has brilliant people who are confident operating in the demanding maritime environment. They will support you always.

**DF: Is the RN as attractive a career prospect as it was when you joined – and any favourite dits? (that means anecdotes for us landlubbers - Ed)**

**MS:** Let me put it like this. The importance of the maritime for our global prosperity is on the increase and so are the threats.

The Royal Navy therefore has a clear and enduring sense of relevance and purpose, which last year for example meant, in the margins of operational activity, also engaging with nearly half the world's nations.

Dits? Plenty! But there's one that brings together the worst and best part of my time. I was on watch on the bridge of a submarine in heavy seas when it dived to 90ft underwater for what felt like forever.

Eventually, and not before 5,000 gallons of seawater had passed me by and entered the control room, the boat returned to the surface, and with it a very relieved Mark Stanhope – wet but alive! **DF**

# THE APPLIANCE OF SCIENCE

THE ARMY IS HARNESSING THE POWER OF SCIENTIFIC METHOD TO HELP IDENTIFY THE NEEDS OF FUTURE FORCE 2020 AS PART OF TRANSFORMING DEFENCE. REPORT BY TRISTAN KELLY



Eyes right: a soldier from 2nd Battalion The Royal Welsh takes part in a virtual military simulation experiment





**Looking to the future: a soldier during Exercise Urban Warrior, CENZUB, France**

In December last year, a company of soldiers from 2nd Battalion The Royal Welsh invaded a small town in northern France. This wasn't a dramatic end to friendly Anglo-French relations but part of an exercise currently being played out by the British Army to better understand the needs and capabilities of the Army in 2020.

The town in question was the French Army's CENZUB urban warfare training facility and the "invasion" formed the live element of Urban Warrior 5, the fifth in an annual series of force development experiments led by Army HQ. But this year the experiment has taken on a new twist and is using both computer-modelling and a virtual-video-game-like environment to generate evidence in a new and unprecedented way.

Colonel Tim Law, Assistant Director Concepts and Experimentation at Army HQ, explained: "Urban Warrior 5 is different. The reason why it is different is because we felt that some of the evidence we had taken from those earlier Urban Warriors was not particularly objective; it was rather dependant on the view of the most senior or most vociferous person present. What we need is an authoritative, objective view to say that 'if we do not have this capability we won't be able to do the following task' and 'if that is not funded that is the impact'.

"So what we are doing here on Urban Warrior 5 is a pathfinder exercise to find out how we gather that intelligence."

The experiment has been divided into three distinct sections: constructive (computer-

modelling), live (real-world exercises), and virtual (using computer software akin to video games).

To this end, following on from their cold and wet December exercises in CENZUB, the soldiers of 2 Royal Welsh, together with a team of scientists from the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) and Niteworks, who designed the experiment, moved to Warminster in January. Here, they were stationed behind banks of PC monitors where they moved their virtual on-screen avatars with Xbox controllers.

Colonel Law explained: "The database we are using here is exactly the same as the area we used in France so these soldiers recognise the ground. When they drive somewhere and stop outside a building it is the same building they saw in France. They are like computer gamers in a game such as Call of Duty."

The virtual enemy in the experiment, as well as the battle scenario, are based on MOD-agreed possibilities that the Army might face in 2020 and are formed of regular military in uniform and some non-uniformed adversaries such as you might find in Afghanistan or Iraq. There are also civilians in the battlespace, some of whom are randomly generated and are controlled by the individuals controlling the avatars.

"That is one of the strengths of the virtual environment over the physical environment we saw in France," Colonel Law said. "We can increase the amount of clutter in terms of the civilian perspective, so the number of cars, shop fronts and random civilians walking around can be decided by us. And



Picture: Corporal Steve Blake



**British soldiers during Exercise Urban Warrior, CENZUB, France**

Picture: Corporal Mark Larner RY



Picture: Corporal Mark Larner RY

# URBAN WARRIOR



Screen time: scientists take an overview role on Exercise Urban Warrior

Picture: Corporal Steve Blake



Entry level: soldiers on exercise testing tactics and equipment

Picture: Corporal Steve Blake

that constrains our rules of engagement as of course we don't want to cause civilian casualties."

However, the soldiers are not here to train, in fact they have been chosen for the high level of training that they have already had which enables them to run through scenarios so that commanders and scientists can throw in variables and test the outcomes. "Each experiment, whether that be in the virtual, live or constructed environment runs with a baseline order of battle," Colonel Law said.

"So for example, this is the company commander's plan. What we then do is add another tank troop and see what change it makes to the outcome. Did it create more difficulty or was it better? If better, what is better?"

He explains that other variables could include the level of airborne surveillance, troop numbers or even the weather.

This level of control, married with live human input in laboratory-type conditions, is the real benefit, according to Dr Nigel Paling, Dstl scientific advisor. "A computer simulation is fine and it is very good at looking at weapons and platforms and kinetic effect but there are no commanders and teams inside that computer simulation. If I want to understand command and control, or if I want to understand what more information does, I need the actual military teams to be doing their job within these experimental environments."

Dstl has provided the modelling at either side of the experiments and has also provided the scientific approach that links the experiments together. Data collected from all the experiments will be fed into a further simulation model to be run by Dstl in April, to produce further analytical results, all leading to a full report later in the year.

## LOOKING TO A FUTURE FORCE


It is not just variations on current capabilities that

the experiment is testing. The nature of the virtual environment allows commanders to test equipment and capabilities not currently deployable, but which could be possible in 2020. "We are trialling the impact of things we wouldn't physically be able to use in a live exercise," explains Urban Warfare 5 Chief of Staff Lieutenant Colonel Charles Barker.

A large part of the rationale behind the experiment is driven by the changes facing the Army as it transforms under the Future Force 2020 programme and the desire to make that force the most capable possible. "What we are trying to do here is to make sure that we are relevant for the future," said Colonel Law. "We are trying to build an objective evidence base to allow us to determine exactly what we need in order to fight and win the wars of tomorrow."

For Dr Paling it signifies a shift in thinking in Whitehall. "What we are doing through 'Transforming Defence' in many ways is to transition from an equipment acquisition focus to a capability focus and that is very complicated from the Army's point of view because you can't characterise an infantry company just by the equipment it has, you characterise it by the collective performance," he said.

"What we are learning is how to exploit the other information associated with capability and not just equipment to give a better set of evidence to decision-makers." He explained that from the evidence those decision-makers might well wish to invest in new equipment, but they might want to do that in a different organisational structure, a different training regime or even a different recruiting strategy; what Urban Warrior 5 is providing is the objective evidence to make those decisions.

In the words of Colonel Law: "It is all about the Army seeking to modernise and find its way to the future." 



# IN OR OUT, 'ACCESS TO SUCCESS' COULD SECURE YOUR FUTURE

You may have chosen Service life rather than carry on your education. The good news is that serving your country doesn't stop you becoming better qualified. The even better news is that, for as little as £75, you can find out how a year's worth of university level study could fit around your duties and postings. And, more importantly, put you on the road to a successful career whether you want to stay in the Armed Forces or it's time to think of leaving.

'Access to Success' is a funding programme created by the Open University (OU) together with the government to benefit people like you who didn't go into higher education after school. It offers you the chance to take university courses that would normally cost over £3,000 for the small sum of

£75. This is obviously such a good deal that you won't be surprised that a lot of people are trying to take advantage of it. Places are limited and registrations will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis so you'll need to get your skates on if you want to be one of the lucky ones. Of course, what you must do first is work

out whether the scheme is right for you or anyone in your family.

## WHAT IS 'ACCESS TO SUCCESS'?

The scheme isn't for everyone. Entrance is restricted to those who:

- have no previous higher education qualifications and are new to the OU
- live in England (being in the Services or part of a Service family counts as that wherever you are posted)
- have an annual household income under £25,000.

It's aimed at people who may not have previously considered going to university but perhaps have gained more confidence through their work or Service experience. If you're in that situation, you may want to test yourself without necessarily committing yourself. 'Access to Success' is a way to discover whether you have it in you to study part-time for the sake of your future and still get on with your daily Service or household duties. It's a low-cost, low-risk opportunity to challenge your abilities and take the first step towards becoming better qualified.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit [www.open.ac.uk/learning/access](http://www.open.ac.uk/learning/access) Or call 0845 300 6090 and quote 'LAPAAE'

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Or call **0845 300 6090** and quote 'LAPAAE'





# PRIME LOCATION

FROM HOLLYWOOD MOVIES TO FASHION PHOTO SHOOTS, MOD PROPERTY HAS PROVIDED THE BACKGROUND FOR SOME CLASSIC MEDIA MOMENTS. REPORT BY LEIGH HAMILTON



Show me the money: there are financial and PR benefits to having Tom Cruise film at MOD locations

On a frosty February afternoon at Main Building, the arrival of one man resulted in levels of excitement seldom seen in the corridors of Whitehall. Word quickly spread that Tom Cruise was in the building. Yes, mega movie star Tom Cruise.

Why on earth should he be at MOD? Well, some scenes from his new sci-fi thriller *All You Need Is Kill* are being filmed at certain locations owned by the department. For a few seconds in the Hollywood alien invasion film, Main Building's north door will be the star.

From stately homes to bunkers, control towers to railway lines, renting out land and buildings is big business for MOD.

Following a decree from the Treasury in 2002 that all government departments should make more efficient use of their assets to generate revenue, MOD rents out locations to the media industry.

The process is now managed by Landmarc Support Services who maintain and manage the defence training estate across the UK and deliver it to the standard required to carry out MOD's operational training. Some 70 per cent of all income generated from filming and other opportunities goes back to the department.

The first point of contact at Landmarc is filming and events manager Tony Burlton, a former MOD civil servant: "MOD is used an awful lot in films, but, unless you actually know the site or buildings really well, you wouldn't actually notice them in a movie.

"Lots of filming takes place on MOD property; from *EastEnders* to *Songs of Praise*, an episode of which was filmed at Horse Guards. Some of the latest film version of *Les Misérables* was filmed at Portsmouth Dockyard and some of *Spooks* was filmed at the Royal College of Defence Studies in Belgravia.

Stately homes might not be the first thing you think of when you consider what property is owned by a department whose responsibility is defending the country. Although the number of grand houses owned by MOD has decreased over the years, Minley Manor in Hampshire and Halton House in Buckinghamshire are definite money-earners.

Tony explained: "Because the big houses take an enormous amount of up keep, we don't have as many as we used to. Obviously the money they make from filming can help offset some of the costs

Picture: David James, copyright Warner Bros



of maintaining these buildings. "

Halton House seems to be the jewel in the MOD's property crown.

"Halton House has done everything: *The Duchess, Evita, Miss Marple, Bride and Prejudice, The Charge of the Light Brigade* and *The King's Speech*, to name but a few.

"As a site it's very interesting because it has woods, it has an assault course, it's got great gardens, it's got the mansion, it's got industrial kitchens, it's even got an art deco 1930s cinema, so there's a lot they can do on one site. That's quite important when film companies are looking to do as many scenes as possible in one area to keep costs down. Halton is probably the most used site that MOD has."

Although large film companies are MOD's main clients, land is also rented out for fashion photo shoots and making adverts and music videos.

PR filming also takes place on MOD property to promote the department, such as news pieces or filming for a TV programme. This type of filming may not generate revenue, but it is good publicity for the department.

One element which appeals to those renting MOD locations is the attitude of those involved. The can-do approach of Service personnel is really appreciated by the film industry.

"The MOD estate offers a high degree of privacy, and film companies find, especially with the Services, people bend over backwards to actually help the company when they're filming. Personnel like being involved. It's something different and interesting for the people on the bases and the training estate, so the media industry find us a very helpful organisation to work with."

Being able to provide privacy is a major draw. Most of MOD's sites have no access to the general public, so filming can take place away from prying eyes.

Once production has finished and the final cut of the film is in cinemas, although it may take months to set up and execute one scene, a MOD location may only be seen for a matter of seconds.

Tony said: "Any scene takes a long time. With *All You Need Is Kill* the time MOD will be on screen will be very, very short for the amount of effort that's gone into doing it. It takes a long time to organise a shoot like that.

"Shooting of *All You Need Is Kill* has been ongoing for the best part of a year. They filmed on the training estate at Barton Stacey in Hampshire and at Main Building.

"Obviously it is quite difficult to do



Dr Yes: Whitehall was closed to allow filming for the latest James Bond film *Skyfall*

Picture: SKYFALL – Blu-ray & DVD, MGM Studios Inc. TM Danjaq, LLC

anything in Main Building because of security constraints. What they actually wanted was the loading bay and the approach to north door so it wasn't too disruptive. "

During 2012, £631 million of inward investment came into the UK as a result of foreign films being shot here. If MOD can offer a unique site which means a film will come to this country instead of going elsewhere, then potentially the benefit to the country is substantial.

Tony clarified: "In terms of the defence budget, what filming generates over a year is about a quarter-of-a-million pounds. This has to be seen in the wider context of the benefit to the overall UK film industry, which generated £1 billion for the economy in 2012.

"No operational or training requirements are interrupted by filming or photo shoots. As the Ministry of Defence, our core priority is defence.

"When *Anna Karenina* filmed on Salisbury Plain last year, that was all worked around planned training exercises. It's the same on a base; unless operational requirements allow it, we can't film."



Big boom: scenes for TV series *Blitz Street* were filmed on the MOD training estate

One of Tony's more challenging tasks over the past couple of years came in the form of organising the closure of the whole of Whitehall to allow filming for *Skyfall*.

"It took about three months' planning to get the various permissions from every department and say to them 'on this day, this is what's going on. Whitehall will be closed'.

"The scene was a chase between Parliament Square and Trafalgar Square with Daniel Craig running down Whitehall. My job was to coordinate it on behalf of the government departments involved who are obviously end-to-end on that street.

"I had to engage with the Treasury, the Home Office and even Number 10 and MOD. If anything happens around the government buildings, everyone has to be aware of it."

With the list of blockbusters doing no harm at all to MOD's profile, can you get any bigger than facilitating James Bond running down Whitehall in *Skyfall*?

"We're working on locations for the new Muppet film and *Cinderella*," explained Tony. You decide. **DF**



# MY MEDALS



Sergeant Adrian Harlen, 39, joined the Royal Artillery in 1996 before switching to photography nine years later. Based in London District, he looks back on five of his nine medals.

Interview: Lorraine McBride



## CYPRUS

Cyprus, 1997, was my first tour, my first time on a plane and my first trip abroad, which was very exciting.

We did a lot of riot training to keep the Cypriots and Turks apart. We observed whether they came into the buffer zone or tried to put an extra sandbag or two on their fortification wall.

It was hard work but it was fun. We manned the towers in no-man's land, west of Nicosia, with the Turks and Greeks either side, us stuck in the middle. It could be very tense at times when people cocked their weapons.

Once the Turks trained a spotlight late at night on a

Greek observation post (OP).

The Greeks didn't like it so they shone their spotlight straight on the Turkish OP. This escalated over a week until one night at 2am, when the Greeks were normally asleep, I heard them dragging something heavy. Suddenly, they produced this Second World War anti-aircraft spotlight and shone it straight on the Turkish OP 100 metres away. It lit up like the Blackpool Tower, this poor little Turkish soldier froze, and everyone fell about laughing.

One morning, I was in the cookhouse when I heard over Greek radio that Princess Diana had died. I dismissed it as a sick joke. It wasn't until two hours later when I returned from guard duty that news spread

and the truth sank in. I couldn't believe it.



## KOSOVO

I deployed to Kosovo in 1999. It felt like my first real tour as Cyprus had been a bit fluffy and my overriding memory is feeling that we were going to do a proper job.

Initially, we spent three months in Macedonia waiting to cross the border. We even had a big eve-of-tour speech from our battery commander to boost us, but instead of calming nerves it did the opposite! It was the first time I'd seen the Apache helicopters, Challenger tanks and aircraft all ready to do the job. As it turned out, we all got

stuck in a massive traffic jam.

On the way up the main road from Macedonia into Kosovo we saw mass graves, which felt sickening.

I vividly remember driving past camps packed with cheering Macedonians throwing flowers because we'd liberated their country after the Serbs had kicked them out and committed terrible atrocities.

I was in Pristina as part of a peacekeeping unit patrolling through a village when a Serb invited me into his home filled with relations having a party, but sadly, because I was on duty, I told them that I couldn't join in.

Suddenly, they got very scared when they realised that the Macedonians were coming back. Every single



tour is completely different. Cyprus had its ups and downs but Kosovo definitely had more downs than ups.



## IRELAND

It was on my second tour in Ireland when an Army photographer taught me my job. It was already a hobby and I loved the artillery but the thought of getting paid for what you enjoy is what life is about.

I was in Belfast at a quiet time, the IRA had gone back to their day jobs but the old and bold soldiers trained us well so nerves were always on edge.

Based in a tower block, we occupied the top two floors, observing activity in the Falls Road and reporting on the locals from a distance.

We could only get in or out at silly hours which was a drama. The OP at the top of the building controlled lift access. Meanwhile, the infantry unit had cordoned off the road and the lower flats. We were always on edge when the lift arrived and alert when the door opened to make sure nobody was inside, though once a little old lady stepped out with her shopping. Nobody knew how she got in.

I ended up doing three tours of Ireland and asked for an extension because I applied to be a military photographer, but I missed the camaraderie of the Royal Artillery.



## IRAQ

I was in Iraq in 2006 and 2009 during the height of the IED attacks. It was after Saddam had been captured and the role focused on rebuilding the country.

I joined the three-strong combat camera team and we photographed everything, including ministerial visits, repatriations and patrols on the ground.

Shooting repatriations is difficult. Soldiers stare at you as



if to ask what are you doing, but they don't realise that we do it for the bereaved as a record of an important moment.

We did loads of strike opportunities at dawn, breaking down somebody's door following intelligence that someone had hidden weapons. Once I was in a strike op with our combat camera team.

We entered this building with four infantrymen in front. One went left, two headed upstairs and one darted right.

I was so busy taking pictures with my pistol by my side that I got sucked into the action and suddenly I was alone when a guy emerged from a curtained cubbyhole unarmed and bleary-eyed. Luckily I lived to tell the tale.

Based at Basra air station, we never knew whether we'd be hit by mortar fire. We'd hear it going up, whistling and getting louder, and I'd just want the ground to swallow me up. It gave me a fatalistic attitude that life could be over on the roll of a dice.



## AFGHANISTAN

I've got so many different memories of Afghanistan but getting blown up stands out.

When we got there, 42 Commando were ordered to retake Sangin to relieve the patrol base that was getting smashed every night.

We spent two days in the

back of a Viking sitting on hard ammo boxes with our knees under our chins in stifling 55-degree heat.

I think we had six mine strikes that night, which was surreal. It felt like being in a Second World War submarine film. Above the drone of the engine we heard over the radio the Taliban had us in their sights and an attack was imminent, but there was nothing we could do. Each mine strike felt weird; we'd feel a pressure wave sweep through the vehicle closely followed by a mighty eruption that felt as if we'd been kicked in the teeth.

I thank my lucky stars that we all made it out but the driver's ears and nose were bleeding and the vehicle wasn't going anywhere. His foot was twisted because the accelerator pedal shot through his foot.

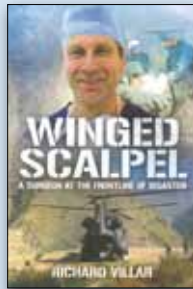
At 4am I gave first aid in the dark, thinking 'blimey, why am I doing this?' But we were there to do a job and get each other through as a team.

Ultimately it's purely adrenaline that pulls you through and it's not until you have time to reflect that you think 'I was lucky there'.



# WINGED SCALPEL

By Richard Villar  
Pen and Sword, £19.99



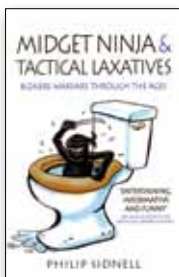
FEW PEOPLE know better the dangers and occasional near futility of providing medical aid in a disaster zone than ex-SAS surgeon-turned-author Richard Villar.

He shares his extraordinary experiences in the aftermath of the world's crippling earthquakes, when he is often the first man in as buildings are collapsing or bombs are dropping.

Arriving into a stricken disaster area, his dedicated surgical team take nothing for granted; water, power, shelter and the rule of law are likely to be non-existent. There is also the unenviable pressure of deciding who should live or die.

In short, Villar and his tiny, dedicated team meet challenges that most of us can only imagine. *Winged Scalpel* radiates colour with flashes of black humour. Villar recalls his bafflement when he intervened in an Indonesian hospital midway through surgery to fix a patient's broken shoulder after the presiding surgeon was flummoxed when he failed to locate any fracture.

Glancing at the x-ray, Villar's heart sank and broke the bad news: "You're operating on the wrong shoulder!" Weaving between death, destruction, humanity, sacrifice and the odd stray snow leopard, all human life and death is here. **DP**



# Midget Ninja and Tactical Laxatives

Bizarre warfare through the ages

By Philip Sidnell  
Pen and Sword, £8.99

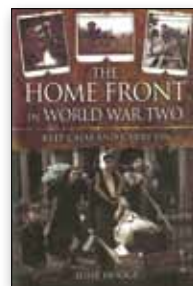
THE COVER promises entertaining, informative and funny. Well, funny is subjective, but I only smiled once – at the footnote defining the difference between public and comprehensive schools for the benefit of foreign readers.

For my money, it fell short of the mark. The story of Flying Officer Lloyd Trigg's VC, entirely thanks to the recommendation of the commander of a U-boat he destroyed, was interesting.

But the prize for informative goes to the veggie robot tank – the Energetically

Autonomous Tactical Robot – which in my view could cut terrorism at a stroke by devouring the opium crops in Afghanistan (before deploying to South America to strike a blow for the war on drugs).

*Midget Ninja* isn't the sort of book you'd want to read in one sitting, with its relentless anecdotal value is more ephemeral – waiting for your dental appointment, say – or it could be useful if you're composing a best-man speech that needs livening up. **DP**



# The Home Front in World War Two

By Susie Hodge  
Pen and Sword, £19.99

WHILE comprehensive and informative, I wasn't exactly overwhelmed by the author's passion for the subject.

In fact, it reads more like an exam paper, stuffed with facts – some of which are repeated, though perhaps this can be put down to poor proofing.

The flyleaf promises that it is "packed with interviews" but in reality you sense they are squeezed between rafts of text which overwhelm the personal stories. Crime and unsavoury activities get a mention, but

the tone is mostly positive, just like the upbeat messaging conveyed by the government during the war.

The quality is diluted by the lack of decent images, some of which are blurred.

All that aside, it is an interesting read about life on the Home Front and includes many recipes that get the best from your rations, offering money-saving tips that wouldn't go amiss now. In fact, I can't wait to try out a few of the adventurous vegetarian dishes on my sister. **DP**



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\* Our fees are reviewed annually

ANYONE CAN DEVELOP A HERNIA,  
BUT WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

# BATTLE OF THE BULGE: HERNIAS



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

Hello from Whale Island in Portsmouth. You probably know someone who's had an operation for a hernia. Hernias are 12 times more common in men than in women and, overall, three per cent of men will have surgery for this condition at some point in their lives. In fact, the NHS performs more than 100,000 hernia operations every single year.

So, just what is a hernia? A hernia (or rupture) is usually caused when part of the bowel pokes out through a weakness in the abdominal muscles, causing a lump under the skin.

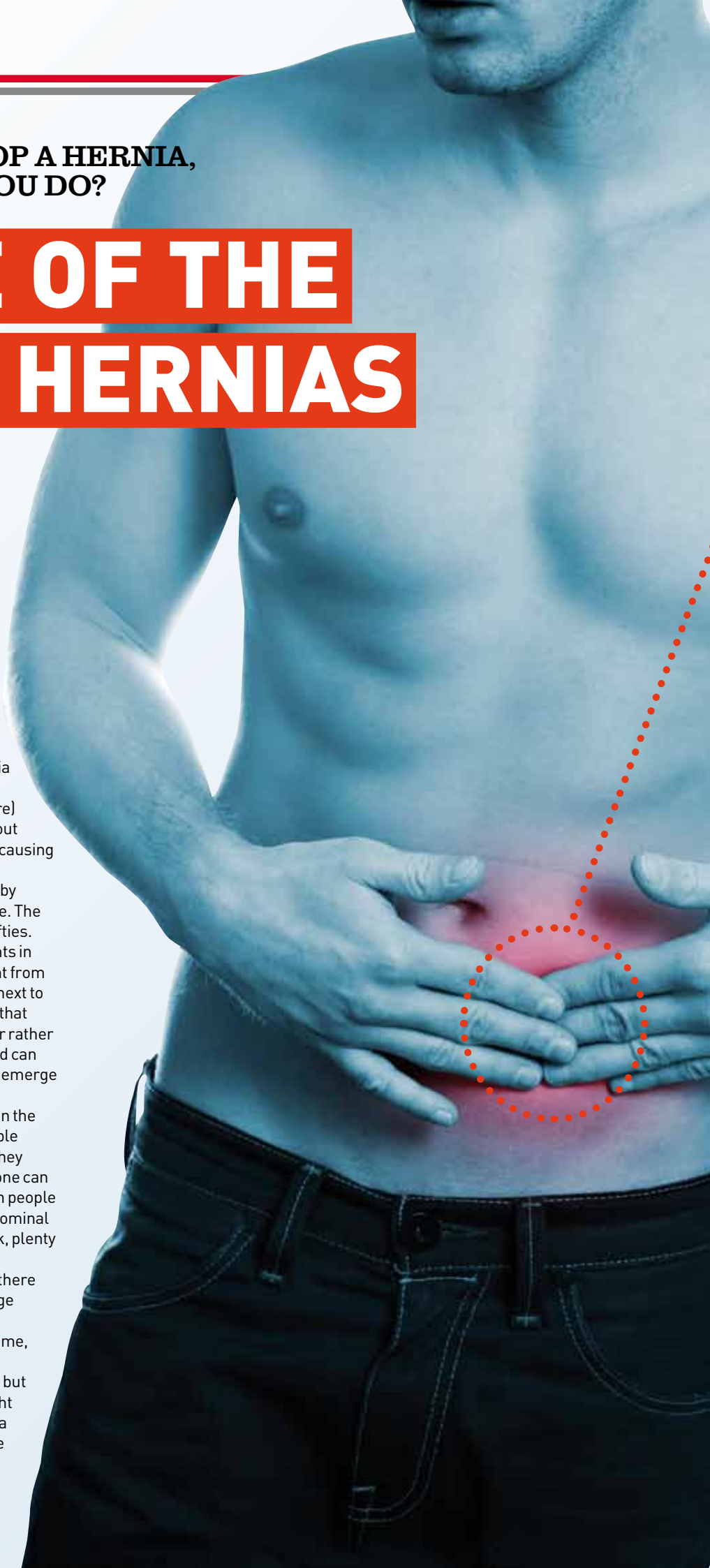
Some hernias are present when you're a baby (congenital), but they usually come on in later life. The most common age to suffer with one is in your fifties.

Hernias tend to appear at natural weak points in the abdominal muscles which have been present from birth. The most likely areas are in the groin and next to the navel. Groin hernias can get so large in men that they go down into the scrotum, which can appear rather strange. A scar from a previous operation wound can also be a weak point through which a hernia can emerge – this is called an incisional hernia.

Sometimes, they can appear suddenly, when the abdominal muscles are under strain – for example when lifting a heavy weight. More often though they develop slowly, over months or even years. Anyone can develop one, but they're more likely to develop in people who are overweight or regularly strain their abdominal muscles. This might be from heavy manual work, plenty of exercise in the gym, or chronic constipation.

How would you know if you had one? Often, there are no symptoms other than a painless, soft bulge which appears when you stand up or strain and disappears when you lie flat or press it in. Over time, the hernia may get bigger and start to ache.

The main risk with a hernia is if it comes out but then doesn't go back in easily – it might get caught or become 'strangulated'. This causes pain and a blockage in the intestine. The blood supply to the affected piece of bowel gets cut off and the area







“ Anyone can develop one, but they’re more common in people who are overweight or regularly strain their abdominal muscles ”


can become gangrenous.

Not surprisingly, a strangulated hernia requires an emergency operation to free it. Occasionally we have to land servicemen and women from sea who have a painful hernia requiring surgery.

An old-fashioned truss can be used to relieve symptoms of a hernia – it’s basically a pad on a belt that is worn to hold the hernia inside. To actually ‘cure’ a hernia though, surgery is required. This is usually a straightforward operation, performed as a day case in most hospitals.

If you think you might have a hernia I’d advise you to have a chat with your medical team to see whether treatment is necessary. This is especially important if you may be deploying in the near future as it can affect your medical category. If you haven’t got one, reduce your risk of developing one in years to come by avoiding straining your muscles, eating a diet rich in fibre and keeping to a sensible weight.

Stay healthy and I’ll see you next month.

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

# TIME TO VOTE

## ARMED FORCES URGED TO TAKE ACTION TO MAKE THEIR VOICES HEARD



Members of the British Armed Forces could lose their chance to vote in local elections this year unless they act now, the independent elections watchdog, the Electoral Commission, has warned.

“Local elections give people the chance to have their say on issues that affect their everyday lives and those of their families,” explains Samantha Mills, the Electoral Commission’s Head of Campaigns. “We are concerned that thousands of Service personnel miss out because they have not registered for a vote.

“Registration levels among Service personnel are much lower than the national average. One of the main reasons is because members of the Armed Forces are so mobile. They may move house frequently and forget to update the register with their new address details, or they may be deployed overseas and not realise they can still vote, and therefore not register.”

The Commission is urging Service personnel to register now by printing off the form at [www.aboutmyvote.co.uk/armedforces](http://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk/armedforces). They are working with the Ministry of Defence

to help raise awareness with an advertising campaign and hundreds of “registration days” being held at units worldwide.

Local government elections will take place in many parts of England this year, including Boston, Colchester, parts of Cambridgeshire, Suffolk, Oxfordshire and Lincolnshire - and also in Anglesey.

“If you are deployed overseas, you can still vote by applying for a postal vote, or to vote by proxy,” explains Mills. “Voting by proxy is where you ask someone you trust, such as a partner, parent or friend, to cast your vote for you. It may not be ideal, but sometimes it’s the only option to guarantee you can have your say on election day. This is especially true for those deployed in a very remote place, where it takes ages for post to reach you.

“Your vote is important; we don’t want you to lose it.”



# SUDOKU

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

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

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

Solution to the February 2013 puzzle

# CHESS



Compiled by: Carl Portman

I am very pleased with myself. The January chess grading list showed my grade as 175 which is the highest rating I have ever had. This despite the fact that

I recently celebrated my 49th birthday! So much for chess just being a young man's game then. I have proved to myself that age is not a barrier to improving; what is required is hard work and sacrifice. Of course improvement brings its own extra challenges and now I am playing on board one for my club – Banbury.

The first game I played was against a 232 grade and my second opponent looks like being a 203 so there's plenty of room (indeed a demand) for further improvement still. I relish the challenge however and won't let such opposition worry me unduly. I aim to learn from these games. I believe that losses incurred now can be harnessed to create wins further down the line. When I lose, I won't lose the lesson. Of course I aim to win as well and to this end I will play a couple of weekend tournaments so that I can try to play opponents of equal rating, and there's always chess online of course. Sleeves up



then and head down...

Beat a world champion. It is you as black to play against the great Capablanca. The actual game was Capablanca-Lewis New York 1941. I've used the old-style pieces as befits the time. So, black to play and win...

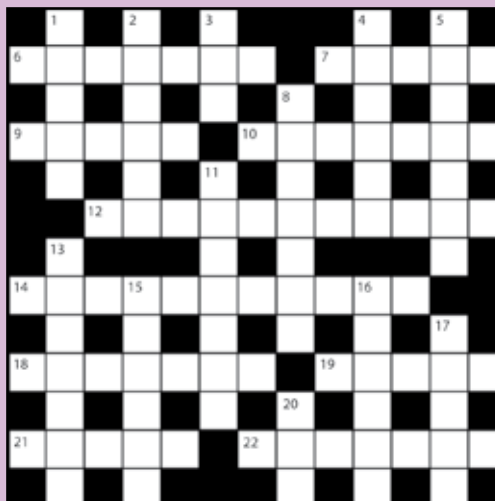
Send your answers to me at carl.portman@hotmail.co.uk please. The first correct answer selected wins a copy of the legendary Kingpin magazine (back issue).

The answer to February's problem was: 1...Bh3+ 2.Kh2 (if he takes the bishop then 2...Qh1 mate) 2...Rxf2+ 3.Kxh3 Qh1 mate. Winner to be announced. Winner of the Dec/Jan problem was Alan Nelson from 14 Regiment Royal Artillery.

# TOPICAL CROSSWORD

## ACROSS

- 6. Country which had a hostage crisis in January 2013 (7)
- 7. Marsupial native to Australia (5)
- 9. Long-necked wading bird (5)
- 10. Heroic pilot and adventurer created by the writer WE Johns (7)
- 12. Actor whose films include *The Hunt For Red October* and *The Untouchables* (4,7)
- 14. Television programme that provides a factual report (11)
- 18. See 2 Down
- 19. Very large expanse of sea (5)
- 21. Flattish French cap of felt or cloth (5)
- 22. US President portrayed on film by Daniel Day-Lewis (7)



## DOWN

- 1. Wind instrument made from a tube with holes along it (5)
- 2. And 18 Across. Film star who played Doug Ross in the television series *ER* (6,7)
- 3. Silvery-white metal used in the alloy bronze (3)
- 4. Sidse Babbett Knudsen plays the Prime Minister in this Danish television series (6)

## SOLUTION (NO PEEKING)

- Down**
- 1. Flute 2. George
  - 3. Tin 4. Borgen
  - 5. Algebra 8. Risotto
  - 11. Integer 13. Boulder
  - 15. US Open 16. Rocco
  - 17. Vault 20. Six
- Across**
- 6. Algeria 7. Koala
  - 9. Stork 10. Biggles
  - 12. Sean Connery
  - 14. Documentary
  - 18. Clooney 19. Ocean
  - 21. Beret 22. Lincoln

- 5. Branch of mathematics using letters and symbols (7)
- 8. Italian dish of rice cooked in stock (7)
- 11. Whole number (7)
- 13. Large rock (7)
- 15. Tennis Grand Slam won by Andy Murray in 2012 (2,4)
- 16. Style of architecture involving elaborate ornamentation (6)
- 17. Secure room in a bank (5)
- 20. Big hit in cricket (3)





**PRIZE**  
Win a relaxing and chic two-night break for two at Leeds stylish Viva Urban Spa

## SPA BREAK IN LEEDS

The Viva Urban Spa is offering one reader a two-night break for two in the Village Leeds North Hotel.

Whether it's shopping, theatre, sport or nightlife that you love, or simply a chance to

escape for a spa break, Village Leeds North Hotel is a great choice.

Vibrant Leeds city centre is on the doorstep or spend the day at the hotel's relaxing spa.

Prize includes breakfast,

champagne on arrival, dinner on both evenings in the Verve Bar & Grill, a choice of two spa treatments, plus a deluxe manicure and pedicure.

Contemporary en suite rooms include Wi-Fi, complimentary

parking and use of leisure facilities including indoor pool.

### Terms & Conditions

Prize is for two adults sharing a twin or double room and includes a three-course set menu and specified spa treatments. Valid Sunday to Thursday until 31 October subject to availability. Visit [www.village-hotels.co.uk/hotels/leeds-north](http://www.village-hotels.co.uk/hotels/leeds-north)

### READER OFFER

Free back massage with any Espa/Dermologica 55-minute facial booked, saving £32 until 31 October. Quote *Defence Focus*. Call: 0871 222 4594.

### TO WIN

**Email your name, address and phone number to [dmc-newsdesk@mod.uk](mailto:dmc-newsdesk@mod.uk) by 20 April. Include Village Leeds North in the subject line.**



**PRIZE**  
Two readers will win a family ticket to this year's War and Peace event from 17 to 21 July



## WAR AND PEACE

Two lucky readers will win family tickets to this year's War and Peace event – the greatest gathering of military vehicles – where you can get into the Dunkirk spirit.

RAF Westenhanger, now Folkestone Racecourse, is the new venue for War and Peace from 17 to 21 July. Combining education and entertainment, the five-day military-fest features action-

packed battle re-enactments to give you a taste of life at the front line, living history, arena events, vintage entertainment, shopping and a funfair, promising a great family day out.

The Vintage Village features civilian displays from the Thirties to the Sixties including Home Front, classic cars, tanks, artillery, armoured and amphibious vehicles,

jeeps, bicycles and much more. There is something for everyone whether you're into the military side or just admire vintage living. Live music day and night gives a real festival feel to the world's biggest military vehicle event.


Getting there is easy, with the new showground being just a couple of minutes off Junction 11 of the M20 and the mainline Westenhanger station next door with direct access from London stations. For those travelling from the continent, the Channel Tunnel terminus is

just five minutes away.

*Defence Focus* readers can claim a 20 per cent discount by 8 April. Current military personnel will need their ID cards to obtain a child rate. Visit [www.thewarandpeacerevival.co.uk](http://www.thewarandpeacerevival.co.uk) or call 01304 813337/813945. Email [rex@warandpeace.uk.com](mailto:rex@warandpeace.uk.com).

### TO WIN

**Email your name, address and phone number to [dmc-newsdesk@mod.uk](mailto:dmc-newsdesk@mod.uk) by 20 April. Include War and Peace in the subject line.**



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from **up there**

to ensure smooth passage  
**down here**

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